

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Join us on Zoom to engage in a conversation about confronting the painful parts of US history.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2022 AT NOON



THANKS TO OUR THOUGHT LEADERS



Rev. Dr. Richelle Foreman Gunter (she/her)
Associate Minister, St. Paul's Baptist Church
Vice President, NAACP West Chester



Mayra Castillo (she/her)
Coordinator of Student Diversity & Inclusion, Cecil College
Vice President, Casa Guanajuato

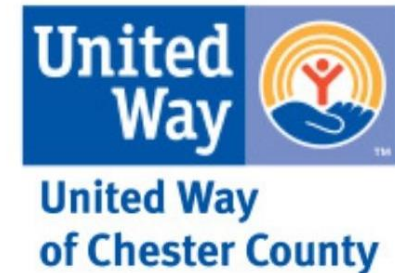
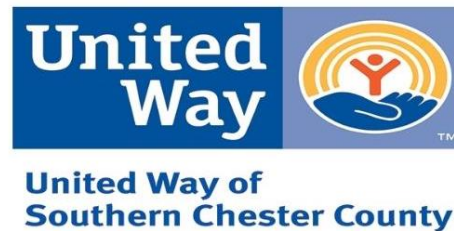
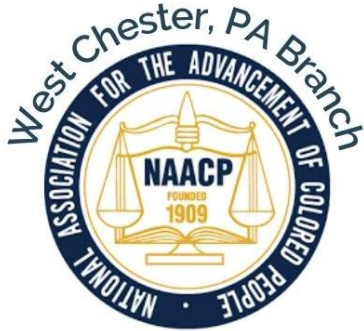


Renee Washington (she/her)
Charles A. Melton Arts & Education Center
Treasurer, NAACP West Chester

SCHEDULE

12 | Welcome & Overview
12:05 | Topic Overview
12:30 | TED Talk
12:50 | Breakout Rooms

THANKS TO OUR PROMO PARTNERS



A FEW HOUSEKEEPING NOTES

- Please be mindful and respectful to all.
- Some may have never have dealt with these topics before while others may have lived through traumatic experiences.
- Please mute yourself and turn off your video during the TED Talk video streaming.
- Feel free to eat your lunch while viewing the video.
- Please unmute yourself and turn on your video immediately after the TED Talk video streaming to encourage open dialogue.





Hard History – Troubling aspects of the past that make us feel uncomfortable

Wealth Gap – The difference of earnings among different races and genders

Presentism – Judging the past by present day moral and ethical standards

Structural Inequality – A system where prevailing social institutions offer an unfair distinction between different segments of the population in a specific society

Gentrification – The process whereby the character of a poor urban area is changed by wealthier people moving in

Redlining – Systematic denial of services (ex. mortgages, loans) to residents of certain areas, based on their race or ethnicity





Presentism is the introduction of present day morals and ethics into depictions or interpretations of the past. Presentism is a controversial topic among historians.

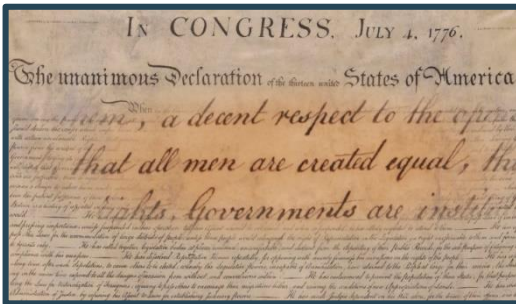
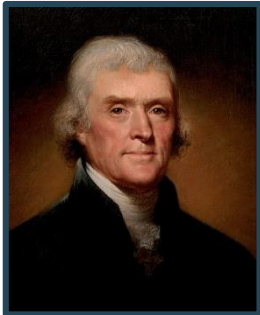
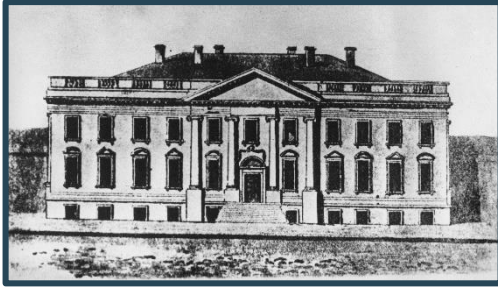
However, many Black historians argue...

- **There is no standard or neutral interpretation** of the past due to the persistence of racism, white supremacy, and racial inequality everywhere in American society.
- Supposedly **objective scholarship has long promoted racist narratives** and suppressed Black history by deemphasizing the contributions of people of color.

For instance, were it not for scholars like Du Bois (pictured right), we would still be relying on racist accounts of Reconstruction.

<https://newrepublic.com/article/167680/presentism-history-debate-black-scholarship>





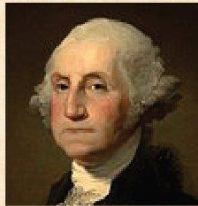
- Many of our founding fathers owned slaves
- At least **12 U.S. presidents owned slaves** at some point in their lives
- The White House was built (and rebuilt in 1814) by enslaved people
- George Washington owned slaves and only freed them upon his death
- Thomas Jefferson, the same man who wrote “all men are created equal” in the Declaration of Independence, owned hundreds of enslaved people all his life

<https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/founding-fathers-views-slavery>

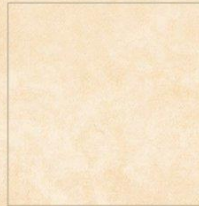
<https://www.whitehousehistory.org/slavery-in-the-presidents-neighborhood-faq>



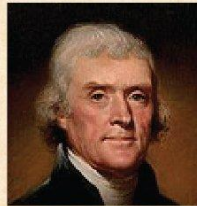
Presidents of the United States of America who owned slaves



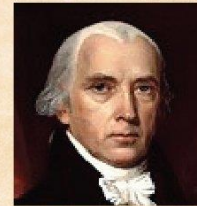
1.
George Washington
600+ SLAVES



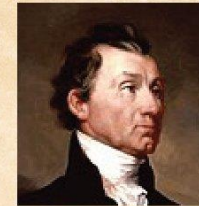
2.
John Adams
No slaves



3.
Thomas Jefferson
600+ SLAVES



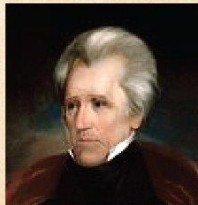
4.
James Madison
100+ SLAVES



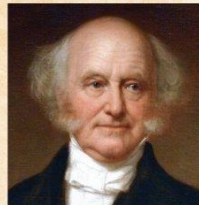
5.
James Monroe
75 SLAVES



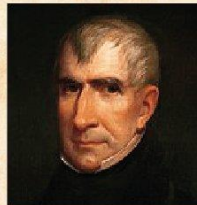
6.
John Quincy Adams
No slaves



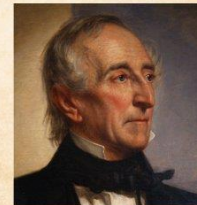
7.
Andrew Jackson
200 SLAVES



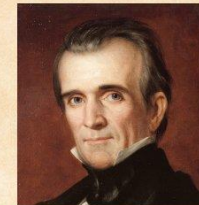
8.
Martin Van Buren
1 SLAVE



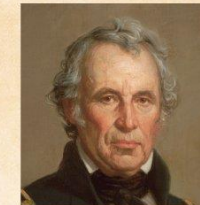
9.
William Henry Harrison
11 SLAVES



10.
John Tyler
29 SLAVES



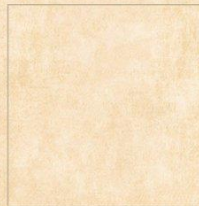
11.
James K. Polk
56 SLAVES



12.
Zachary Taylor
300 SLAVES



13.
Millard Fillmore
No slaves



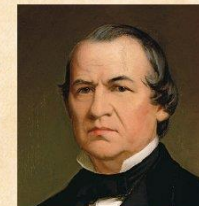
14.
Franklin Pierce
No slaves



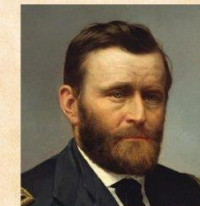
15.
James Buchanan
No slaves



16.
Abraham Lincoln
No slaves



17.
Andrew Johnson
9 SLAVES



18.
Ulysses S. Grant
1 SLAVE

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_presidents_of_the_United_States_who_owned_slaves



August 19, 1791

African American scientist, surveyor and farmer, Benjamin Banneker (November 9, 1731 – October 9, 1806) sent a manuscript to Thomas Jefferson with the goal of getting him to change his stance on slavery.

In the letter, Banneker accused Jefferson of criminally using fraud and violence to oppress his slaves, stating:



“Sir, how pitiable is it to reflect, that although you were so fully convinced of the benevolence of the Father of Mankind, and of his equal and impartial distribution of these rights and privileges, which he hath conferred upon them, that you should at the same time counteract his mercies, in detaining by fraud and violence so numerous a part of my brethren, under groaning captivity and cruel oppression, that you should at the same time be found guilty of that most criminal act, which you professedly detested in others, with respect to yourselves.”



More than 300 American men, women and children were enslaved at Montpelier and played vital roles throughout the founding era of our country

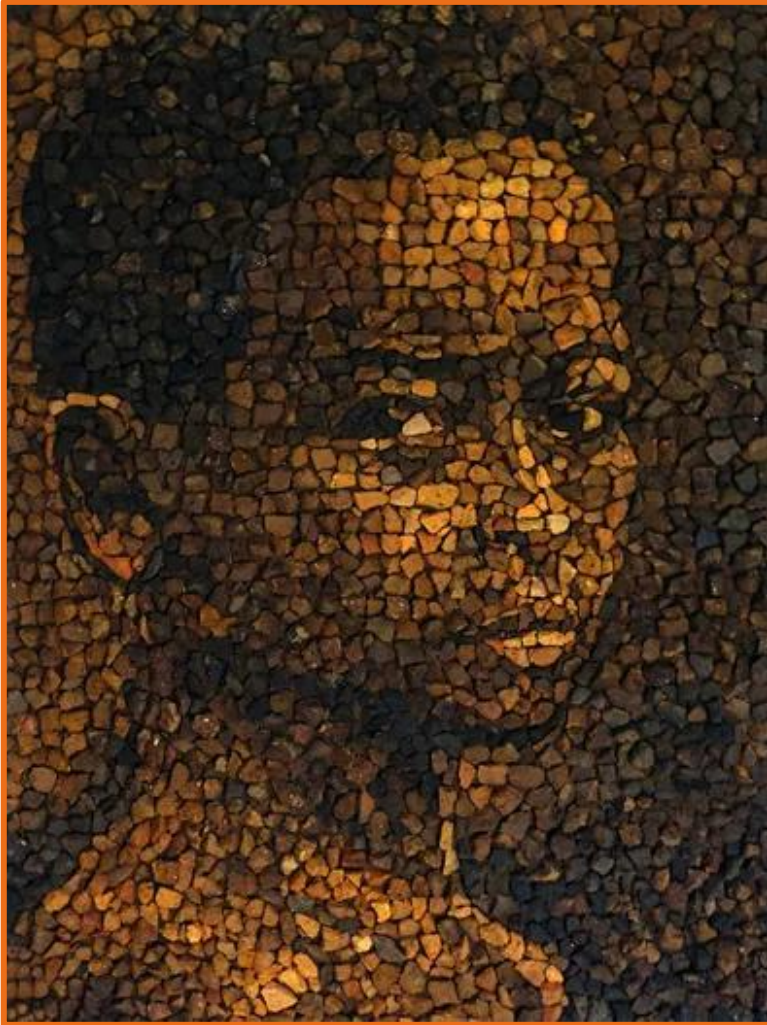


James Madison's estate

South Yard slave dwellings and work buildings



<https://savingplaces.org/stories/the-mere-distinction-of-colour-tells-story-slavery-montpelier#.Y1lCunbMI2w>



"E Pluribus Unum" by Rebecca Warde is a mosaic created from pieces of brick excavated at living quarters of enslaved people across Montpelier. On many plantations, bricks were made by enslaved women and children.



A piece of a slave shackle found during a metal detecting survey at Montpelier

Why we must confront the painful parts of US history

By Hasan Kwame Jeffries



To move forward in the United States, we must look back and confront the difficult history that has shaped widespread injustice. Revisiting a significant yet overlooked piece of the past, Hasan Kwame Jeffries emphasizes the need to weave historical context, no matter how painful, into our understanding of modern society -- so we can disrupt the continuum of inequality massively affecting marginalized communities.

*“The library in which James Madison conceives and conceptualizes the Bill of Rights **rests on a foundation** of bricks made by the children that he enslaved. And **this is hard history.**”*

*“What we love is nostalgia. Nostalgia. **We love stories about the past that make us feel comfortable about the present.** But we can't keep doing this.”*

*“We must do the things that will bend the arc of the moral universe towards justice.
To do nothing is to be complicit with inequality.”*

DATE/TIME	TOPIC
November 15th 12-1pm	Racism & History
January 17th 12-1pm	Immigration
February 14th 12-1pm	Black History
March 7th 12-1pm	Food Access
April 18th 12-1pm	Healthcare
May 16th 12-1pm	Intersectionality
June 13th 12-1pm	Black Wall Street

Brief Intros

- Who are you? What brought you to today's Community Conversation?
- What did you want to learn? What have you learned?

Discussion Questions

- Why do we, individually and as a society, avoid confronting hard history?
- Is it “fair” to judge the past through the lens of present-day social morals and ethics?



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