

I. Overarching themes

- **Historical Racism** – Slavery existed on Long Island from 1620 to 1827. By 1770, New York had over 19,000 enslaved people residing in the area with about half of them living on Long Island. Also, by 1770, most of the enslaved people were born in the United States. Slavery as an institution on Long Island has been overlooked mostly. Long Island institutions do not recognize the contributions of enslaved Americans. There are limited markers in communities that highlight the existence of enslaved people. Arguably school curriculums do not incorporate the topic of slavery on Long Island.
- **Planned Communities** – Exclusion was built into the foundation of Long Island. Garden city and Levittown
- **De Jure Segregation/De Facto Segregation** – Richard Rothstein argues that there is no “de facto” segregation that is different from “de jure” (by law) segregation.
- **Governance** – There are 2 cities, 3 towns, 64 incorporated villages and over 100 unincorporated villages in Nassau County.

II. Timeline:

1869: Alexander Turney Stewart began planning the development of Garden City, N.Y. an exclusive town.

1917: Buchanan v Warley case stated unanimously that a Louisville, Kentucky city ordinance prohibiting the sale of real property to Blacks in white-majority neighborhoods or buildings and vice versa violated the Fourteenth Amendment’s protections for freedom of contract.

1924: On July 4th, 30,000 spectators looked on as 2,000 robed Klansmen marched down Main Street in Freeport, NY. One out of eight white residents in Nassau and Suffolk counties were members.

1929: Long Island State Park Commissioner Robert Moses opens Jones Beach State Park. Moses considered African Americans inherently dirty and took special measures to deny them access to parks and beaches. Permits required for buses to enter public parks often were denied to Black groups, especially permits for Jones Beach. Moses believed that African Americans did not like cold water and specifically kept the water ice cold in swimming pools to keep Blacks out.

1930: Yaphank hosted Nazi rallies and residents were required to be German.

1934: Federal Housing Administration created. The FHA created coded communities in which redlined communities or African American communities were considered to be the worst for lending. Through an overt practice of denying mortgages based upon race and ethnicity, the FHA played a significant role in the legalization and institutionalization of racism and segregation.

1937: The first families arrive in the community of Greenbelt, Maryland. This was a public and private funding housing experiment that had everything, businesses, schools, roads, libraries as well as low-cost housing to create a wholesome community. Applications were sent out. All residents selected were white.

1947: The William Levitt of Levitt & Sons built the first modern suburb which had affordable housing into the community unofficially perpetuating segregation.

1947: William Levitt of Levitt & Sons built the first modern suburb which had affordable housing. This suburb Levittown was an enormous success. Only whites were allowed to move into the community. They tried to justify their decision to sell homes to only white families by saying that it was in the best interest for business. He stated that their actions were not discriminatory but intended to maintain the value of their properties.

1948: Shelley v Kraemer case banned the use of federal courts to enforce racial covenants stating the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause prohibits racially restrictive housing covenants from being enforced.

1950: Clause 25 of the standard lease agreement signed by the first residents of Levittown, who had an option to buy their homes, stated in a letter that the house could not be occupied by any person who was not white.

1955: President Eisenhower signed legislation that extended the Federal Housing Program clearing the way for affordable housing to be built in Freeport (Rigby housing project) to combat slum living on Long Island.

1957: A crowd of approximately 400 people protested the first Black family moving into Levittown.

1968: Case Jones v Alfred H. Mayer Company stated that housing discrimination is a badge of slavery and that Congress can regulate the sale of private property to prevent racial discrimination.

1968: Fair Housing Act is passed protecting buyer or renter from landlord or owner discrimination.

1988: Congress passed the Fair Housing Act Amendments of 1988, which increased the penalties for violations of the law, and provided the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development with greater authority to investigate claims of discrimination.

2004: Zoning classification that would have prevented multi-family housing from being built was overruled by a judge. A federal court has ruled that a 2004 zoning decision by the Village of Garden City discriminated against African Americans and Latinos.

2013: Garden City rezoned county-owned land to build townhomes instead of multifamily affordable housing for fear of people of color moving into the area. The Village of Garden City was ordered to pay \$5.3 million for discriminatory intent.

2015: Hempstead Town Board passed a resolution asking the U.S. Census Bureau to drop the designation of a 3-square-mile stretch of Uniondale known as East Garden City. The region includes the Nassau Coliseum, Hofstra University, Museum Row and Roosevelt Field.

2016: Long Island community of Yaphank was ordered to end discriminatory restrictions (you need to be German) to enable residents to sell and list their homes.

2016: Square Realty Group, owner of the 107-apartment complex at 11 Mayfair Gardens in Commack, and its manager, Empire Management America Corp., both of Manhattan, have agreed to pay \$230,000 in damages and take steps to end their discriminatory practices.

2016: In May of 2016, the New York Attorney General settled with three prominent Nassau County real estate firms – Douglas Elliman, Empire State Equities, and Crifasi Real Estate for steering Section 8 voucher holders away from properties available for rent.

III. People Interviewed during 2018-2020:

Social worker
History professor
Two administrators of multi-service agency serving minority populations
Education equity organizer
Executive of a Historical Society in Nassau County
Two co-founders/administrators of advocacy organization
Activist
Public library program coordinator
Member of Long Island Latino Teacher's Association and high school teacher
Professor
Professor of social work
Co-founder and executive of Haitian organization
Co-founder and co-administrator, anti-racism project
Co-administrator, anti-racism project
Educator, long time resident of Long Island
Activist, co-founder and officer, anti-racism organization
CEO and founder of a women's network
Historian and director of education at historical museum

IV. Key Points from 2018-2020 Interviews

1. Greatest Challenges

- The tax system on Long Island is broken. Most of the taxes paid by residents are used to pay for the schools. For the schools to afford resources for students, property taxes are continuously raised every year making it difficult for some to afford to buy and stay on Long Island. Property taxes also come from businesses which means that if a town has very few businesses then less money is put into the schools. To help residents, tax caps are in place to slow the rising of taxes. All of this has led to school inequity and community inequity. Only those who can pay the taxes benefit the most.
- Affordable housing has become an issue because certain populations, particularly college graduates and seniors cannot find an inexpensive place to live. Zoning rules play a role in keeping affordable housing out of certain communities. The perception that building affordable housing will bring poverty to a community or that it will create a city-like environment instead of a suburban environment runs deep. Affordable housing could help with taxes if it was implemented in both counties.
- There are too many municipalities on Long Island that keep inequity in place. Having so many governments is costly.
- The hiring of diverse teachers is lacking across Long Island. Only about 8% of the teachers are of color meaning that students will most likely never have a non-White teacher.

2. Educational Inequity

- The type of education one receives is based on the area they live in. This is due to the current tax system in place that allows for unequal distribution of resources across Long Island schools.
- Segregation due to the housing policies on Long Island has led to segregated school districts. Districts are now more segregated than they have ever been.
- The ranking of school districts continues to perpetuate the idea that only certain places on Long Island have value despite the fact that resources are not distributed equally. To rank schools, inadequate tests are utilized.
- Expanding restorative justice practices needs be implemented.
- Teachers lack understanding of how to create a culturally responsive curriculum and learning environment.

3. Advocacy

- Organize around actionable items. Not just meeting to meet.
- Multifaceted action is needed. Right now, many organizations work in silos, working on many different agendas. If organizations come together to work on a few issues at a time it may yield better results.
- There are not enough trained organizers on the ground doing the day to day work of advocacy. Many individuals working in organizations sit on boards, do data collection, write reports etc. Not enough is being done to actually work and assist the people who are living with oppression.
- Cultural proficiency training is needed on Long Island due to the segregation that exists here.
- Diversity courses should be a component of every institution on Long Island.