

# WHAT THE FOUNDERS REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT RACE

*The White Consciousness of U.S. Statesmen*



**JARED TAYLOR**

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# Today, the United States officially takes the position that all races are equal.

Our country is also committed—legally and morally—to the view that race is not a fit criterion for decision-making of any kind, except for promoting “diversity” or for the purpose of redressing past wrongs done by Whites to non-Whites.

Many Americans cite the “all men are created equal” phrase from the Declaration of Independence to support the claim that this view of race was not only inevitable but was anticipated by the Founders. Interestingly, prominent conservatives and Tea Party favorites like Michele Bachman and Glenn Beck have taken this notion a step further and asserted that today’s racial egalitarianism was the nation’s goal from its very first days.<sup>1</sup>

They are badly mistaken.

Since early colonial times, and until just a few decades ago, virtually all Whites believed race was a fundamental aspect of individual and group identity. They believed people of different

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1. Speaking at an “Iowans for Tax Relief” event in January, 2011, Rep. Bachmann claimed, “It didn’t matter the color of their skin, it didn’t matter their language, it didn’t matter their economic status. Once you got here, we were all the same. Isn’t that remarkable?” Taking up the slavery issue, Bachmann continued, “We also know that the very founders that wrote those documents worked tirelessly until slavery was no more in the United States.” She would later defend her position when questioned by journalists. Bachmann’s speech can be viewed on YouTube: <http://youtu.be/hGSCF712FCA?t=9m>.

Glenn Beck has been equally enamored with historical revisionism. Throughout his “Founding Fathers’ Fridays” series on his (now discontinued) television program, Beck featured speakers who theorized that “American history can be described as one long Civil Rights struggle” and who told tales of the indispensable contributions of Blacks to the Revolutionary War as well as racially mixed churches in 18th-century. Such an episode can viewed on YouTube: [http://youtu.be/um1uxsKG1\\_0](http://youtu.be/um1uxsKG1_0).

Bachmann and Beck are representative of a broader tendency among conservatives. For instance, in 2011, Tennessee Tea Party activists demanded that public schools teach children that the Founders “brought liberty into a world where it hadn’t existed, to everybody—not all equally instantly.” See *The Commercial Appeal*, 13 January 2011, <http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2011/jan/13/tea-parties-cite-legislative-demands/>.

racess had different temperaments and abilities, and built markedly different societies. They believed that only people of European stock could maintain a society in which they would wish to live, and they strongly opposed miscegenation. For more than 300 years, therefore, American policy reflected a consensus on race that was the very opposite of what prevails today.

Those who would impute egalitarianism to the Founders should recall that in 1776, the year of the Declaration, race slavery was already more than 150 years old in North America and was practiced throughout the New World, from Canada to Chile.<sup>2</sup> In 1770, 40 percent of White households in Manhattan owned Black slaves, and there were more slaves in the colony of New York than in Georgia.<sup>3</sup> It was true that many of the Founders considered slavery a terrible injustice and hoped to abolish it, but they meant to expel the freed slaves from the United States, not to live with them in equality.

Thomas Jefferson's views were typical of his generation. Despite what he wrote in the Declaration, he did not think Blacks were equal to Whites, noting that "in general, their existence appears to participate more of sensation than reflection."<sup>4</sup> He hoped slavery would be abolished some day, but "when freed, he [the Negro] is to be removed beyond the reach of mixture."<sup>5</sup> Jefferson also expected whites eventually to displace all of the Indians of the New World. The United States, he wrote, was to be "the nest from which all America, North and South, is to be peopled,"<sup>6</sup> and the hemisphere was to be entirely European: "...nor can we contemplate with satisfaction either blot or mixture on that surface."<sup>7</sup>

Jefferson opposed miscegenation for a number of reasons, but one was his preference for the physical traits of Whites. He wrote of their "flowing hair" and their "more elegant symmetry of form," but emphasized the importance of color itself:

Are not the fine mixtures of red and white, the expressions of every passion by greater or less suffusions of colour in the one [whites], preferable to that

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2. Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, p. 142.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 128.

4. "Notes on the State of Virginia," Jefferson.

5. *Ibid.*; quoted in Nash and Weiss, *The Great Fear*, p. 24.

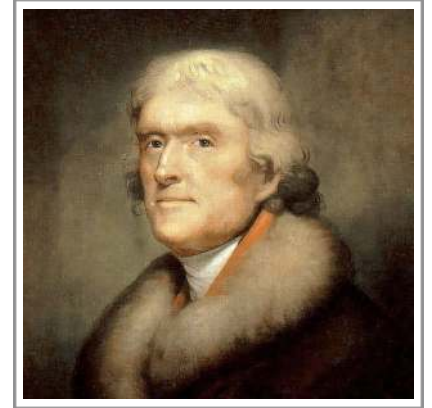
6. *Papers of Jefferson*, Vol. IX, p. 218; quoted in Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*, p. 86.

7. Lipscomb and Bergh, eds., *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. X, p. 296; quoted in Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*, p. 92.

eternal monotony, which reigns in the countenances, that immovable veil of black, which covers all the emotions of the other race?<sup>8</sup>

Like George Washington, Jefferson was a slave owner. In fact, nine of the first 11 Presidents owned slaves, the only exceptions being the two Adamses. Despite Jefferson's hope for eventual abolition, he made no provision to free his slaves after his death.

James Madison agreed with Jefferson that the only solution to the race problem was to free the slaves and expel them: "To be consistent with existing and probably unalterable prejudices in the U.S. freed blacks ought to be permanently removed beyond the region occupied by or allotted to a White population."<sup>9</sup> He proposed that the federal government buy up the entire slave population and transport it overseas. After two terms in office, he served as chief executive of the American Colonization Society, which was established to repatriate Blacks.<sup>10</sup>



Benjamin Franklin wrote little about race, but had a sense of racial loyalty that was typical of his time:

[T]he Number of purely white People in the World is proportionably [sic] very small.... I could wish their Numbers were increased.... But perhaps I am partial to the Complexion of my Country, for such Kind of Partiality is natural to Mankind.

Franklin therefore opposed bringing more Blacks to the United States:

[W]hy increase the Sons of Africa, by Planting them in America?"<sup>11</sup>

John Dickinson was a Delaware delegate to the constitutional convention and wrote so effectively in favor of independence that he is known as the "Penman of the Revolution." As was common in his time, he believed that homogeneity, not diversity, was the new republic's greatest strength:

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8. "Notes on the State of Virginia," Thomas Jefferson: *Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1984), pp. 264-65.

9. Letter from James Madison to Robert J. Evans, June 15, 1819, *Writings* 8:439-47.

10. Weyl and Marina, *American Statesmen on Slavery and the Negro*, pp. 105-107.

11. Franklin, "Observations Concerning the Increase in Mankind," (1751).

Where was there ever a confederacy of republics united as these states are...or, in which the people were so drawn together by religion, blood, language, manners, and customs?<sup>12</sup>

Dickinson's views were echoed in the second of *The Federalist Papers*, in which John Jay gave thanks that "Providence has been pleased to give this one connected country to one united people,"

a people descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, attached to the same principles of government, very similar in their manners and customs."<sup>13</sup>

After the Constitution was ratified in 1788, Americans had to decide who they would allow to become part of their new country. The very first citizenship law, passed in 1790, specified that only "free white persons" could be naturalized,<sup>14</sup> and immigration laws designed to keep the country overwhelmingly white were repealed only in 1965.

Alexander Hamilton was suspicious even of European immigrants, writing that "the influx of foreigners must, therefore, tend to produce a heterogeneous compound; to change and corrupt the national spirit; to complicate and confound public opinion; to introduce foreign propensities."<sup>15</sup> John Quincy Adams explained to a German nobleman that if Europeans were to immigrate, "they must cast off the European skin, never to resume it."<sup>16</sup> Neither man would have countenanced immigration of non-Whites.

Blacks, even if free, could not be citizens of the United States until ratification of the 14th Amendment in 1868. The question of their citizenship arose during the Missouri crisis of 1820 to 1821. The Missouri constitution barred the immigration of Blacks, and some northern critics said that to prevent Blacks who were citizens of other states from moving to Missouri deprived them of protection under the privileges and immunities clause of the Constitution. The author of that clause, Charles Pinckney of South Carolina, was still alive, and denied that he, or any other Framers, intended the clause to apply to Blacks: "I perfectly

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12. "Observations on the Constitution Proposed by the Federal Convention," No. 8, by "Fabius" (John Dickinson).

13. Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers*, p. 38.

14. Quoted in Brimelow, *Alien Nation*, p. xii.

15. Quoted Grant and Davison, *The Founders of the Republic on Immigration, Naturalization, and Aliens*, p. 52.

16. Quoted in Wattenberg and Buchanan, "Immigration."

knew that there did not then exist such a thing in the Union as a black or colored citizen, nor could I then have conceived it possible such a thing could have ever existed in it.”<sup>17</sup>

## THE ABOLITION MOVEMENT

Today, it is common to think of the antebellum North as united in the desire to free the slaves and to establish them as the social and political equals of Whites. Again, this is a distorted view. First of all, slavery persisted in the North well into the post-Revolutionary period. It was not abolished in New York State until 1827, and it continued in Connecticut until 1848.<sup>18</sup>

Nor was abolitionist sentiment anything close to universal. Many Northerners opposed abolition because they feared it would lead to race mixing. The easiest way to stir up opposition to Northern abolitionists was to claim that what they were really promoting was intermarriage. Many abolitionists expressed strong disapproval of miscegenation, but the fact that speakers at abolitionist meetings addressed racially mixed audiences was sufficiently shocking to make any charge believable. There were no fewer than 165 anti-abolition riots in the North during the 1820s alone, almost all of them prompted by the fear that abolition would lead to intermarriage.<sup>19</sup>

The 1830s saw further violence. On July 4, 1834, the American Anti-Slavery Society read its Declaration of Sentiments to a mixed-race audience in New York City. Rioters then broke up the meeting and went on a rampage that lasted 11 days. The National Guard managed to bring peace only after the society issued a “Disclaimer,” the first point of which was: “We entirely disclaim any desire to promote or encourage intermarriages between white and colored persons.”<sup>20</sup>

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17. Annals of Congress. The Debates and Proceedings in the Congress of the United States. “History of Congress.” 42 vols. Washington, D.C.: Gales & Seaton, 1834--56.  
[http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/a4\\_2\\_1s15.html](http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/a4_2_1s15.html)

18. Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, p. 128.

19. Lemire, “*Miscegenation*,” p. 90. This count was reported by the three leading anti-slavery newspapers of the period.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 59, 83.

Philadelphia suffered a serious riot in 1838 after abolitionists, who had had trouble renting space to hold their meetings, built their own building. On May 17, the last day of a three-day dedication ceremony, several thousand people—many of high social standing—gathered at the hall and burned it down while the fire department stood by and did nothing.<sup>21</sup>

Sentiment against Blacks was so strong that many Northern Whites supported abolition only if it was linked, as Jefferson and Madison had proposed, to plans to deport or “colonize” Blacks. Most abolitionist activism therefore reflected a deep conviction that slavery was wrong, but not a desire to establish Blacks as social and political equals. William Lloyd Garrison and Angelina and Sarah Grimké favored equal treatment for Blacks in all respects, but theirs was very much a minority view. Henry Ward Beecher, brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe who wrote *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, expressed the majority view: “Do your duty first to the colored people here; educate them, Christianize them, and *then* colonize them.”<sup>22</sup>

The American Colonization Society was only the best known of many organizations founded for the purpose of removing Blacks from North America. At its inaugural meeting in 1816, Henry Clay described its purpose: to “rid our country of a useless and pernicious, if not dangerous portion of the population.”<sup>23</sup> The following prominent Americans were not just members but served as *officers* of the society: James Madison, Andrew Jackson, Daniel Webster, Stephen Douglas, William Seward, Francis Scott Key, Winfield Scott, John Marshall, and Roger Taney.<sup>24</sup> James Monroe, another President who owned slaves, worked so tirelessly in the cause of “colonization” that the capital of Liberia is named Monrovia in recognition of his efforts.

Early Americans wrote their opposition to miscegenation into law. Between 1661 and 1725, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and all the southern colonies passed laws prohibiting inter-racial marriage and, in some cases, fornication.<sup>25</sup> Of the 50 states, no fewer than 44 had laws prohibiting inter-racial marriage at some point in their past.<sup>26</sup> Many Northern Whites were horrified to discover that some Southern slave owners had Black concubines. When

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21. *Ibid.*, pp. 87-91.

22. Quoted in Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, p. 115.

23. Weyl and Marina, *American Statesmen on Slavery and the Negro*, p. 133.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 132.

25. Elise Lemire, “*Miscegenation*,” p. 57.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Bostonian Josiah Quincy wrote an account of his 1773 tour of South Carolina, he professed himself shocked to learn that a “gentleman” could have relations with a “negro or mulatto woman.”<sup>27</sup>

Massachusetts prohibited miscegenation from 1705 to 1843, but repealed the ban only because most people thought it was unnecessary.<sup>28</sup> The new law noted that inter-racial relations were “evidence of vicious feeling, bad taste, and personal degradation,” so were unlikely to be so common as to become a problem.<sup>29</sup>



Liberia College, established in Monrovia 20 years after the American Colonization Society’s first settlement of African American emigrants in Liberia. In 1951, the college became the University of Liberia. (*Photo: Library of Congress*)

The northern “free-soil” movement of the 1840s is often described as friendly to Blacks because it opposed the expansion of slavery into newly acquired territories. This is yet another misunderstanding. Pennsylvania Democrat David Wilmot started the movement when he introduced an amendment banning slavery from any territories acquired after the Mexican-American War. The “Wilmot Proviso” was certainly anti-slavery, but Wilmot was not an abolitionist. He did not object to slavery in the South; only to its spread into the Western territories. During the congressional debate, Wilmot asked:

whether that vast country, between the Rio Grande and the Pacific, shall be given up to the servile labor of the black, or be preserved for the free labor of the white man? . . . The negro race already occupy enough of this fair continent; let us keep what remains for ourselves, and for our children.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

28. Legal opposition to miscegenation lasted many years. In 1967, when the Supreme Court finally ruled anti-miscegenation laws unconstitutional in *Loving v. Virginia*, 16 states still had them on the books. The laws were only sporadically enforced, but state legislatures were unwilling to rescind them.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 139.



Wilmot called his amendment the “white man’s proviso.”<sup>30</sup>

The history of the franchise reflects a clear conception of the United States as a nation ruled by and for Whites. Every state that entered the Union between 1819 and the Civil War denied Blacks the vote. In 1855, Blacks could vote only in Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and Rhode Island, which together accounted for only four percent of the nation’s Black population. The federal government prohibited free Blacks from voting in the territories it controlled.<sup>31</sup>

Several states that were established before the Civil War hoped to avoid race problems by remaining all White. The people of the Oregon Territory, for example, voted not to permit slavery, but voted in even greater numbers not to permit Blacks in the state at all. In language that survived until 2002, Oregon’s 1857 constitution provided that “[n]o free negro, or mulatto, not residing in this state at the time of the adoption of this constitution, shall come, reside, or be within this State, or hold any real estate.”<sup>32</sup>

Despite Charles Pinckney’s confirmation in 1821 that no Black could be an American citizen, the question was taken up in the famous *Dred Scott* decision of 1857. The seven-to-two decision held that although they could be citizens of states, Blacks were not citizens of the United States and therefore had no standing to sue in federal court. Roger Taney, the chief justice who wrote the majority decision, noted that slavery arose out of an ancient American conviction about Negroes:

They had for more than a century before been regarded as beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations; and so far inferior, that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit.<sup>33</sup>

Abraham Lincoln’s time was well beyond the era of the Founders, but many Americans believe it was “the Great Emancipator” who finally brought the egalitarian vision of Jefferson’s generation to fruition.

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30. Earle, *Jacksonian Antislavery and the Politics of Free Soil, 1824-1854*, pp. 138-39.

31. Keyssar, *The Right to Vote*, p. 55.

32. Peter Prengaman, “Oregon’s Racist Language Faces Vote,” Associated Press, Sept. 27, 2002.

33. Full text of the decision is available here:  
<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?navby=case&court=us&vol=60&invol=393>

Again, they are mistaken.

Lincoln considered Blacks to be—in his words—“a troublesome presence”<sup>34</sup> in the United States. During the Lincoln-Douglas debates he stated:

I am not nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors of negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people; and I will say in addition to this that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will for ever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality.<sup>35</sup>

His opponent Stephen Douglas was even more outspoken (in what follows, audience responses are recorded by the *Chicago Daily Times*, a Democratic paper):

For one, I am opposed to negro citizenship in any form. [Cheers—*Times*] I believe that this government was made on the white basis. [‘Good,’—*Times*] I believe it was made by white men for the benefit of white men and their posterity forever, and I am in favor of confining the citizenship to white men—men of European birth and European descent, instead of conferring it upon negroes and Indians, and other inferior races. [‘Good for you. Douglas forever,’—*Times*]<sup>36</sup>

Douglas, who was the more firmly anti-Black of the two candidates, won the election.

Lincoln opposed the expansion of slavery outside the South, but was not an abolitionist. He made war on the Confederacy only to preserve the Union, and would have accepted Southern slavery in perpetuity if that would have kept the South from seceding, as he stated explicitly.<sup>37</sup>

Indeed, Lincoln supported what is known as the Corwin Amendment to the Constitution, passed by Congress shortly before he took office, which forbade any attempt by Congress to amend the Constitution to give itself the power to “abolish or interfere” with slavery. The amendment therefore recognized that the federal government had no power over slavery

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34. Ginsberg and Eichner, *Troublesome Presence*, p. ix.

35. See Basler, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Vol. II, pp. 235-236.

36. Holzer, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, pp. 54f.

37. See, for instance, Lincoln’s 1862 letter to Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune*:

"[M]y paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and it is not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that." Available online: [http://www.learner.org/workshops/primarysources/emancipation/docs/lin\\_greeley.html](http://www.learner.org/workshops/primarysources/emancipation/docs/lin_greeley.html)

where it already existed, and the amendment would have barred any future amendment to give the government that power. Outgoing President James Buchanan took the unusual step of signing the amendment, even though the President's signature is not necessary under the Constitution.

Lincoln referred to the Corwin Amendment in his first inaugural address<sup>38</sup>, adding that he had “no objection” to its ratification, and he sent copies of the text to all state governors.<sup>39</sup> Ohio, Maryland, and Illinois eventually ratified the amendment. If the country had not been distracted by war, it could well have become law, making it more difficult or even impossible to pass the 13th Amendment.

Lincoln's Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation of September 22, 1862 was further proof of his priorities. It gave the Confederate states 100 days to lay down their arms, and threatened to emancipate only those slaves living in states still in “rebellion.” Lincoln always overestimated Unionist sentiment in the South, and genuinely believed that at least some of the Southern states would accept his offer of union in exchange for the preservation of slavery.<sup>40</sup>

As late as the Hampton Roads conference with Confederate representatives—this was in February 3, 1865, with the war almost won—Lincoln was still hinting that the South could keep its slaves if it made peace. He called emancipation strictly a war measure that would become “inoperative” if there were peace, and suggested that if the Confederate states rejoined the union, they could defeat the 13th Amendment, which had been sent to the states for ratification. Lincoln appears to have been prepared to sacrifice the most basic interests of Blacks if he thought that would stop the slaughter of white men.<sup>41</sup>

Throughout his presidency, Lincoln took the conventional view that if slaves were freed, they should be expatriated. Even in the midst of the war, he was making plans for colonization, and appointed Rev. James Mitchell to be Commissioner of Emigration, with instructions to find a place to which Blacks could be sent.<sup>42</sup>

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38. For the full text of the address, see <http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres31.html>.

39. Holzer, *Lincoln President-Elect*, p. 429.

40. Escott, *What Shall We Do With the Negro?*, p. 55.

41. *Ibid.*, pp. 206-211.

42. Weyl and Marina, *American Statesmen on Slavery and the Negro*, p. 217.

On August 14th, 1862, Lincoln invited a group of free Black leaders to the White House to tell them, “there is an unwillingness on the part of our people, harsh as it may be, for you free colored people to remain with us.” He urged them to lead others of their race to a colonization site in Central America.<sup>43</sup> Lincoln was the first president to invite a delegation of Blacks to the White House—and he did so to ask them to leave the country. Later that year, in a message to Congress, he argued not just for voluntary colonization but for the forcible removal of free Blacks.<sup>44</sup>

## A CLEAR LEGACY

The record from colonial times through the end of the Civil War is therefore one of starkly inequalitarian views. The idea of colonizing Blacks was eventually abandoned as too costly, but until the second half of the 20th century, it would be very hard to find a prominent American who spoke about race in today’s terms.

Blacks were at the center of early American thinking about race because of the vexed question of slavery and because Blacks lived among Whites. Indians, of course, had always been present, but were of less concern. They fought rearguard actions, but generally withdrew as Whites settled the continent. When they did not withdraw, they were forced onto reservations. After the slaves were freed, Indians were legally more disadvantaged than Blacks, since they were not considered part of the United States at all. In 1884, the Supreme Court officially determined that the 14th Amendment did *not* confer citizenship on Indians associated with tribes. They did not receive citizenship until an act of Congress in 1924.<sup>45</sup> The traditional American view—Mark Twain called the Indian “a good, fair, desirable subject for extermination if ever there was one”<sup>46</sup>—cannot be retroactively transformed into incipient egalitarianism and celebration of diversity.

There was similar disdain for Asians. State and federal laws excluded them from citizenship, and as late as 1914 the Supreme Court ruled that the states could deny naturalization to

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43. Abraham Lincoln, “Address on Colonization to a Deputation of Colored Men,” quoted in Wilson Moses, *Classical Black Nationalism*, p. 211.

44. Weyl and Marina, *American Statesmen on Slavery and the Negro*, p. 227.

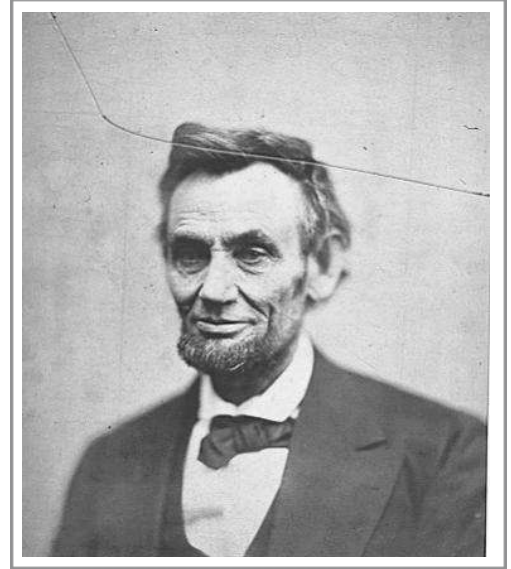
45. Keyssar, *The Right to Vote*, p. 165.

46. Mark Twain, “The Noble Red Man,” *The Galaxy*, Sept. 1870.

Asians.<sup>47</sup> Nor was the urge to exclude Asians limited to conservatives. At the 1910 Socialist Party Congress, the Committee on Immigration called for the “unconditional exclusion” of Chinese and Japanese on the grounds that America already had problems enough with Negroes.<sup>48</sup>

Samuel Gompers, the most famous labor leader in American history, fought to improve the lives of working people, but Whites were his first priority:

It must be clear to every thinking man and woman that while there is hardly a single reason for the admission of Asiatics, there are hundreds of good and strong reasons for their absolute exclusion.<sup>49</sup>



The ban on Chinese immigration and naturalization continued until 1943, when Congress established a Chinese immigration quota—of 105 people a year.<sup>50</sup>

Even if we restrict the field to American Presidents—a group notoriously disinclined to say anything controversial—we find that Jefferson’s and Lincoln’s thinking of race continued well into the modern era.

James Garfield wrote,

[I have] a strong feeling of repugnance when I think of the negro being made our political equal and I would be glad if they could be colonized, sent to heaven, or got rid of in any decent way.<sup>51</sup>

Theodore Roosevelt wrote in 1901 that he had “not been able to think out any solution to the terrible problem offered by the presence of the Negro on this continent.”<sup>52</sup> As for

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47. Ichioka, *The Issei*, pp. 211ff.

48. *Ibid.*, pp. 293-6.

49. Samuel Gompers & Heran Gutstadt, “Meat vs. Rice: American Manhood Against Asiatic Coolieism,” quoted in Joshi, *Documents of American Prejudice*, pp. 436-438.

50. Lutton, *The Myth of Open Borders*, p. 26.

51. Quoted in Frederickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*, p. 185.

52. Quoted in Weyl and Marina, *American Statesmen on Slavery and the Negro*, p. 317.

Indians, he once said, “I don’t go so far as to think that the only good Indians are the dead Indians, but I believe nine out of ten are, and I shouldn’t inquire too closely into the health of the tenth.”<sup>53</sup>

William Howard Taft once told a group of Black college students, “Your race is adapted to be a race of farmers, first, last, and for all times.”<sup>54</sup>

Woodrow Wilson was a confirmed segregationist, and as President of Princeton he refused to admit Blacks. He enforced segregation in government offices<sup>55</sup> and favored exclusion of Asians: “We cannot make a homogeneous population of a people who do not blend with the Caucasian race.... Oriental coolieism will give us another race problem to solve and surely we have had our lesson.”<sup>56</sup>

Warren Harding wanted the races separate: “Men of both races [Black and White] may well stand uncompromisingly against every suggestion of social equality. This is not a question of social equality, but a question of recognizing a fundamental, eternal, inescapable difference.

Racial amalgamation there cannot be.”<sup>57</sup>

In 1921, Vice President-elect Calvin Coolidge wrote in *Good Housekeeping* about the basis for sound immigration policy:

There are racial considerations too grave to be brushed aside for any sentimental reasons. Biological laws tell us that certain divergent people will not mix or blend.... Quality of mind and body suggests that observance of ethnic law is as great a necessity to a nation as immigration law.<sup>58</sup>

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53. Theodore Roosevelt, *The Winning of the West*; quoted in Fikes, “Racist Quotes from Persons of Note, Part I,” p. 142.

54. Quoted in Fikes, “Racist Quotes from Persons of Note, Part I,” p. 142.

55. Letter to Oswald Garrison Villard, Nov. 11, 1913; quoted in Weyl and Marina, *American Statesmen on Slavery and the Negro*, p. 336.

56. Quoted in Robert Fikes, “Racist Quotes From Persons of Note, Part II,” p. 138.

57. *New York Times*, October 27, 1921; quoted in Lewis H. Carlson & George Colburn, *In Their Place*, p. 94.

58. Calvin Coolidge, “Whose Country is This?” *Good Housekeeping*, Feb. 1921, p. 13.

Harry Truman wrote: “I am strongly of the opinion Negroes ought to be in Africa, yellow men in Asia and white men in Europe and America.” He also referred to the Blacks on the White House staff as “an army of coons.”<sup>59</sup>

As recent a President as Dwight Eisenhower argued that although it might be necessary to grant Blacks certain political rights, this did not mean social equality “or that a Negro should court my daughter.”<sup>60</sup> It is only with John Kennedy that we finally find a president whose conception of race begins to be acceptable by today’s standards.

Today’s egalitarians are therefore radical dissenters from traditional American thinking. A conception of America as a nation of people with common values, culture, and heritage is far more faithful to vision of the founders. □

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59. Rick Hampson, “Private Letters Reveal Truman’s Racist Attitudes,” *Washington Times*, Oct. 25, 1991.

60. Quoted in Weyl and Marina, *American Statesmen on Slavery and the Negro*, p. 365.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**JARED TAYLOR** was born in Japan, where he lived until he was 16 years old. He has a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Yale University and a master's degree in international economics from l'Institut d' Etudes Politiques de Paris.

He has worked as an international lending office for a major New York bank and as a consultant to companies doing business in Japan. For three years he was the West Coast Editor of PC (Personal Computing) Magazine, and has published articles and essays in the following publications:

Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles Times, Chicago Tribune, Baltimore Sun, Washington Star, San Francisco Chronicle, Boston Globe, National Review, Chronicles.

Since 1994, Jared Taylor has been the president of New Century Foundation, which publishes *American Renaissance*, a monthly magazine devoted to issues of race and immigration (AmRen.com).



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