



Oberlin Heritage Center Statement on Racism

Our nation is reeling and our hearts are with the family and friends of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery and all Black people who have been killed, threatened, judged, searched, discouraged, and unheeded. The horrific and senseless treatment, past and present, must end.

The actions, the grief, and the outrage of today are direct responses to the racism and prejudice at the core of American and pre-American history. For those who will never experience racial injustice, let us get this right this time and once and for all. Meaningful change begins with every person, every family, every organization, every town. The Oberlin Heritage Center stands united with Black community members and all who combat racism and hate in our country.

In its unwavering commitment to its mission “to preserve and share Oberlin’s unique heritage and to make our community a better place to live, learn, work, and visit,” the Oberlin Heritage Center’s historical resources are as important as ever to current community members as well as the next generation of leaders. Despite its reputation as a bastion of equality, racism has existed throughout Oberlin’s history, and is overtly and casually recorded in letters, memoirs, newspaper articles, drawings, oral histories, and the physical landscape of the community, as well as through notable absences in the historic record. To acknowledge and react to that history is just as important as celebrating ordinary and extraordinary accomplishments.

As the Oberlin Heritage Center continues to seek and share the stories of all Oberlinians, we will reflect on ways that we can address the ongoing inequities in our society. Moving forward must include questioning the past, calling out the present, and changing the future. We will find strength in each other to stand up and be active participants to end racism and discrimination.

In unity and community,

Oberlin Heritage Center

Oberlin History Resources

To learn more, below are reading materials that only begin to explore the history of racism in Oberlin. This list will also be posted as a [Google Doc](#) so that additional resources can be added over time.

- *Elusive Utopia: The Struggle for Racial Equality in Oberlin, Ohio*. Book by Carol Lasser and Gary Kornblith.
- *Constructing Black Education at Oberlin College: A Documentary History*. Book by Roland Baumann.
- [Racial Progress at Oberlin College, 1940-1946](#). Paper by William Bigglestone.
- [Integrating Oberlin's Barbershops, 1944-45](#). Blog post by Mary Manning.
- [Citizens vs. The City: Reexamining the Events of May 8, 1970](#). History Feature by Mary Manning.
- [The Segregation of Black Students at Oberlin College After Reconstruction](#). Journal article by Cally L. Waite. [Availability depends on journal access.]

Additional Antiracism Resources and Histories

Website

- ["Talking About Race."](#) Resources from the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Books

- *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. By Michelle Alexander.
- *I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness*. By Austin Channing Brown.
- *Between the World and Me*. By Ta-Nehisi Coates.
- *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*. By Robin DiAngelo.
- *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*. By Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz.
- *How to Be an Antiracist*. By Ibram X. Kendi

- When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir. By Patrisse Khan-Cullors and asha bandele.
- The Making of Asian America. By Erika Lee.
- So You Want To Talk About Race. By Ijeoma Oluo.
- An African American and Latinx History of the United States. By Paul Ortiz.
- The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America. By Richard Rothstein.
- Me and White Supremacy. By Layla F. Saad.

Reading Lists for Youth

- [Coretta Scott King Book Award Winners](#)
- [Social Justice Books](#)