Video Script:

1. **Intro**

Narrator: *Growing up in Richmond, ...*

I live/I have lived my whole life in a city that is bursting with contradiction, weighed down by a historical phantom that somehow still exists.

Richmond is very frequently known around the country and the world as being the former capital of the confederacy, yet that period in its history lasted less than 4 years. But the years after the war are not often given such emphasis, even though an incredible amount of activism and organization occurred between then and now.

The social, economic, and political realities of Richmond's history are rarely learned from when examining our present situation. Perhaps nowhere else in the world have the forces of Race and Class meant so much to a country's existence, but contemporary analysis fails to include it as little more than background noise. Here we will examine many historical accounts of the city since Emancipation which show how these two giant forces worked together and worked against each other.

While Race and Class are the main topics, and the narrative revolves around Richmond specifically, it would be impossible to talk about these forces without also giving the context about the history of Black civil rights and voting rights in Virginia, as well. So, attention will be paid to major events pertaining to that, too!

2. **Confederate Richmond - Quick Exposition**

"The Confederate Capital City was chosen as Montgomery, Alabama for only 2 months in 1861 (National Park Service). The capital came to Richmond in the same year to take advantage of its industrial strength compared to the rest of the more rural southern cities (U.S. National Park Service, "Richmond, Embattled Capital, 1861-1865"). After 4 years with Richmond as their capital, Union troops converged on the city. In an act of desperation, the Capital moved to Danville for only about 8 days as Union troops took over Richmond in April of 1865. Much of Richmond burned to the ground and the confederacy had fallen. The

newly emancipated Black Richmonders saw a bright sunrise on the horizon, but the blood red clouds of Federal Union Troops and the surviving vestiges of old Virginia power still hung in their skies."

3. <u>Reconstruction Richmond (1865-1877) & Nadir of Race Relations (1877-1902) – Detailed</u>

"There were glimmers of hope in this period, and not just glimmers, but real sparks as well! High water marks were made! But towards the end of Reconstruction, the currents shifted, and the waves unfortunately rolled back."

Narrator: When someone considers the post-civil war situation in the fallen confederate Capitol, one could not be blamed for thinking it was probably a bleak situation for Black People and Abolitionists. As the first military district in the newly rejoined southern states, Virginia became a microcosm of greater racial and Class Tensions throughout the country. The pass system imposed by federal troops hindered the free movement of recently emancipated Black Virginians to such an extent that until it ended, it was hard to truly feel free. However, this also meant that there were key progressive forces in Virginia that mirrored the greater country wide efforts to transcend and bridge this racial divide. These forces are not often discussed when learning about Virginia's history, and many seem to be purposefully veiled by regressive forces wishing to subvert the true narrative of Virginia's long fight for Civil Rights.

Still, it is important to start this talk giving context to the struggles immediately after Black Emancipation. Though freed from the grizzly system of chattel slavery, more subtle methods of oppression began.

- **VA Progressive Constitution of 1870; "Underwood Constitution"**

Twenty-four African Americans were elected to roles as delegates in ratifying the Virginia Constitution of 1868, despite backlash from many of the ex-confederate locals (Hume). The Constitutional Convention was held in Richmond, Virginia, beginning in December of 1867 and ending in April of 1868. It included 104 delegates in total, mostly Virginia natives. There were many very important decisions made at this convention, one of which made public schools free to every child. It also greatly expanded the local government systems which made it more reminiscent of what we have today. The

landmark decision, however, was in giving suffrage to all men of twenty-one years and older regardless of race.

This convention was led by John C. Underwood, who was a staunch abolitionist in Virginia for decades and a Republican federal judge. Quite the radical of his time, he attempted to argue at this convention for the suffrage of women as well but was unsuccessful. Nevertheless, he was well-known at the time for his “radical” sentiments and almost certainly drew ire from ex-confederates for his want of retributive justice.

Another man who participated in the convention was Thomas Bayne, a Black man and a dentist, who escaped slavery from Norfolk to Massachusetts in 1855. After the Civil War, he returned to Norfolk, knowing that a Union victory would not in itself guarantee black civil rights in Virginia, and began advocating for and organizing his community. He was perhaps the most influential of the Black Republicans at the convention and had attempted unsuccessfully to advocate for an integrated school system. His strong role throughout Virginia was felt, however, and this was not his first or last convention.

One of the more tense provisions in the new Constitution was the disenfranchisement of ex-Confederates throughout the state. It would have ensured that anyone who held a political office in the former Confederacy would no longer be eligible for any future office. A “test oath” would have also been required to vow that the person had never taken up arms against the Union or aided its enemy. Knowing the controversy of these provisions, the delegates decided to allow them to specifically be voted on separately from the rest of the Constitution.

It was ratified in July of 1869 in a vote of 210,585 to 9,136. Unsurprisingly, the clauses pertaining to confederate disenfranchisement was voted down by the Virginia electorate. Regardless, the decade of Radical Reconstruction was certainly a high-water

mark in Richmond's racial history, one which unfortunately began to pull back rather quickly in the subsequent decades.

- **CNLU (Ended 1871)**

The so-called "Colored" National Labor Union was created in 1869 in Washington DC. It was formed in response to the larger organization of the same name, the National Labor Union barring entry to Black American workers. With this disunity among the laboring class, it was easy for the business and industrial elite to break strikes from both sides of the racial divide. The CNLU's meeting in Richmond set the tone for Organized Labor militancy throughout the city for decades, as it gave formal voice to the social networks that had formed in the years following Emancipation. Though the CNLU lost most of its influence by 1872 and faded away, the spirit wasn't lost. Little more than a symbolic victory politically, the historic election of 3 Black City Council Members was a barometer that the Black Community was refusing to cede fully to the forces of regression. Out of 30 Council Members, however, little could be done materially. All three men had also been elected from Jackson Ward, meaning that the gerrymandering had worked to a large extent.

- **Jackson Ward Disenfranchisement:**

The Richmond City Council, fearing the unified and organized force of Black Richmond, continued their efforts in political containment and carved up Richmond into six wards. The majority of the Black population in Richmond was strategically placed inside of a single ward, still known today as Jackson Ward, though the boundaries since have changed immensely. The other five wards each had a white majority, which diluted the newly found political power of Black Richmonders rather successfully. This did not, however, tamp down their political ambitions. Unified once more against these efforts of opposition and containment, three Black Richmonders were nominated for City Council from Jackson Ward and won. Though more of a symbolic victory than a substantial gain,

it proved the resilience and adaptability of this progressive force in Richmond. By 1873, much of the institutional power had unfortunately been rolled back, but underground social networks maintained their presence and kept up the fight.

- **Black Labor Convention of 1875 in Richmond:**

With the Depression of 1873-1879, the working class of all races in the United States suffered, and this seemed to some like an opportunity to bridge the divide, even in the former capital of the Confederacy. However, the failures of past coalitions to bring about lasting change had soured the opinions of many Black Richmonders. They sought instead to build power independent from their paternalistic White allies. The Black Labor Convention of 1875 occurred in Richmond and gave voice to these anxieties (Rachleff 77). The speakers criticized the failures of radical progressive Republicans and presciently warned of the conservative Democrats' policies of disenfranchisement, all in front of delegates across the state from 40 counties. Whether industrial or racial concerns should take the central focus of Black political organization led to a soft split in the convention. What began as a hopeful rise out of a depression soon turned into a second trough, and due to the harsh economic conditions, Black political organizations once again suffered the hardest.

- **Poll Tax in 1876**

With conservative victory throughout the 1870s in Richmond, it became a clear goal to repeal and hinder the rights that were gained by Black people in the years following the Civil War's end. A constitutional amendment was proposed and ratified by the conservative majority in 1876 that imposed restrictions on voting rights towards petty criminals and required a Poll Tax to be paid 6 months in advance of the elections (Tarter 43). This was strategic by the forces of regression to disenfranchise as many black voters as they could, but it was a temporary backslide. The tug-of-war continued, and thanks to the rise in prominence of the Readjuster Party, which we will discuss more about in a

second, the poll tax was repealed in 1882. In 1884, however, conservatives once again held a majority in both houses of the Virginia General Assembly and used it to impose election restrictions that emphasized newly created electoral board members chosen by the General Assembly. This would give whoever had control of the General Assembly free reign over officiating and controlling elections.

- **Readjuster Party of VA from 1877 to 1895**

The Readjuster Party in Virginia began in 1877 and it enjoyed a varied amount of support from both sides of the political aisles. From former conservatives that disagreed with their party's new policies of austerity, to former radical Republicans that fought for full Black suffrage, people from many political camps were unified, centrally on the issue of funding for the public school system (Rachleff 83). Though Black Richmond was understandably skeptical and wary of any white paternalism, and both radical Republicans and Black Independents openly spoke out against them, eventually there was enough support from Black people in Virginia to propel them into control of the General Assembly. The leader and creator of the party, William Mahone, who was also a former Confederate General, was elected to the Virginia Senate through these victories. Thanks to these electoral victories, in 1880 through criminal justice reforms, black people were serving on court juries for the first time in Virginia history (Rachleff 91). They also facilitated the almost doubling of the amount of Black schools in Virginia in just a year. The limitations of the Readjusters were quite obvious to their black electorate, however. Despite pressure from independent black organizations, the Readjusters failed to support key issues such as anti-lynching measures and the decriminalization of interracial marriages. In fact, interracial marriages would be kept illegal in Virginia until 1967, with the Supreme Court decision of Loving v. Virginia ("Loving v. Virginia").

- **Knights of Labor Richmond Convention 1886**

The Knights of Labor were one of the first large bottom-up labor organizations in the early United States (Foner and Lewis). They sought to unite "all branches of honorable toil" in America. Their peak membership was around 700,000 men, and they left the largest mark on 19th century American Labor History than any other organization. Their inclusion of women and African Americans as well, were absolutely radical for their time, and this garnered both widespread support and condemnation from the American populace. Their opposition to convict labor was also a unifying message among workers of all races.

In 1886, it was decided that the Knights of Labor General Assembly would be held in Richmond, Virginia. However, conflict arose before the convention began. A month before the event was scheduled, the owner of a Richmond Hotel learned that a delegate from New York, Frank Ferrell, was black. The owner informed them that there were no blacks allowed. Rather than abandoning their black delegate and replacing him for a white one, they instead chose to lodge elsewhere at a black-owned hotel called Harris' Hall. Much attention was paid to this convention by local media outlets in Richmond, mostly focusing on the racial questions rather than for their support of labor rights. For instance, activities happening at Harris' Hall were reported in *The State* newspaper, to foment anger against the integrated Knights in the hotel.

Assembly 49 from New York had wanted Frank Ferrell to introduce the Governor of Virginia to the Convention. However, the head of the Knights, Mr. Powderly decided that this act would be too provocative to Richmond, and instead came up with a compromise. Mr. Ferrell would instead introduce Mr. Powderly and continue to sit on stage with the Governor, a similarly charged but less instigative move. Some press critics deriding Powderly's speech itself for using "new slavery" as a term, thinking that slavery was no longer an issue and that it was improper to bring up the past. But not much was mentioned of Mr. Ferrell's activity on stage.

On October 5th, their attendance at a performance of Hamlet at the Richmond Academy of Music incensed many more locals when Frank Ferrell sat in the White's only section of the theater. The fear of other such events drove the police force to be doubled and a crowd of several hundred or several thousand (sources differ) to amass at another theatre to stop it from occurring, though no others ever did.

Powderly and the other Knights' betrayal or fear of social equality brought them limited success in the south, this also greatly limited their impact on the lives of black workers in the south. The Barrett Resolution was passed among the Knights that formally allowed southern branches to discriminate along racial lines. Eventually, the prevailing powers had won out, and social equality was a vanishing sentiment in the southern Knights of Labor. Still, their contributions to both economic and social equality in the south cannot be underplayed, as during this time, there were quite literally no other organizations performing these important tasks and fostering these important conversations. Despite its subsequent decline, it pushed the envelope on contemporary issues in a way that had lasting social effects far outside and independent of their organization.

Narrator: *After the Knights of Labor faded from prominence in 1888, much like the many other working-class coalitions in Richmond, it was a swift return to the status quo of racial discrimination.*

Even after Reconstruction ended in 1877, the drive to form biracial coalitions and independent black organizations was still very much alive into the 1890s. From the end of the war and somewhat into the 1890s, these progressive coalitions such as the readjuster party and the knights of labor, were able to influence Virginia politics and even win elections in Richmond and elsewhere. Though by the late 1890s and early 1900s, as well as with the enactment of a new undemocratic 1902 Virginia constitution, this drive was eroded and the regressive forces had made up considerable ground.

4. Jim Crow Richmond (1902-1950) – Detailed

"Black Richmond and its allies never gave up the struggle, and despite over 80% of Black men losing their rights to vote through poll taxes and grandfather clauses, Richmond remained a vital stronghold for what some historians call the "Long Civil Rights Movement. Political failures of Black Richmonders would be a theme of the first half of the 1900s, but where there was political failure, there was also modest social and economic success. Owing to their unfortunate and purposeful isolation in the city, Jackson Ward became an economic powerhouse for a decently thriving black community."

- **Regressive Constitution of 1902; electorate not consulted for ratification**

However, the backlash to Reconstruction was strong. After years of rollbacks, the return to conservative rule culminated in another Constitutional Convention in 1902 that sought to disenfranchise the suffrage of black people and poor white people alike to work around the 14th and 15th Amendments (Holt). Virginians would not even be allowed to vote on this constitution, however, as the delegates feared electoral rejection. And so, they decided with a vote of 47 to 38 to pass it without referendum.

John Goode was the convention's president, and he was also a former Confederate Army Colonel. It was dominated by conservative Democrats, and they were very open about their intentions to disenfranchise the black population of Virginia. John Goode himself had said to delegates that "the bestowal of universal suffrage upon the negro was a grievous wrong to both races." One of the impositions upon suffrage from the convention was a poll tax of $1.50 which was required to be paid six months before elections. However, Civil War veterans, including confederate ones, would be exempt. This had the effect of reducing the amount of poor white people that would have been disenfranchised by the tax. Carter Glass had a large standing at the convention, being elected to the Virginia Senate in 1899. Some of the convention's provisions were

worrying to other delegates, who saw the possibility of these measures taking voting rights from white people, however Carter Glass was able to assuage their fears, saying very bluntly, “The article of suffrage…does not necessarily deprive a single white man of the ballot, but will inevitably cut from the existing electorate four-fifths of the negro voters,”

Another new policy imposed was an “understanding” clause, which would have required a prospective voter to explain a section of the new constitution to a registration board in order to be “granted” the right to vote. There was also an expansion of restrictions for those convicted of crimes, which was not as contentious as the other issues at the time but would have widespread ramifications for decades to come in terms of convicted felons’ voting rights. Other provisions were shot down, however, such as the "double-vote" or "plural voting" plan proposed by Raleigh C. Minor from Charlottesville. It would have given landowners a vote that counted twice as much as nonlandowners.

The results of this constitution were sweeping and incredibly damaging, with estimates of a black Virginia electorate almost 200,000 strong before the ratification now dwindling to approximately only 15,000-20,000. In Richmond, an electorate of 6,427 had been sheered down to only 780 (Randolph and Tate 105). There were also 88,000 fewer ballots cast overall between the gubernatorial elections of 1901 and 1905. The General Assembly of Virginia, heavily dominated by conservative Democrats, also were granted sole authority to appoint judges and local officials and abolished the county court system. This was certainly a time of great tribulation to much of the black population in Virginia, and it would unfortunately remain in place for decades until the ratification of the Virginia Constitution of 1971.

- **Redlining and FDR**

The Richmond City Council in 1911 began a trend throughout the state that allowed for the legal ordinance of residential segregation, and the Virginia General Assembly

followed suit a year later in making it a statewide ordinance ("Timeline of Housing Events"). However, the 1917 Buchanan v. Warley decision by the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that these ordinances were unconstitutional. Another legal segregation effort was in Virginia's 1929 Racial Integrity Act, which meant that one was not allowed to live in a neighborhood where they couldn't marry the majority population. Since there were still so-called miscegenation laws on the books in Virginia, this was an attempted legal maneuver to legalize and enforce the segregation that already existed residentially. It was ruled unconstitutional in less than a year, however Housing Covenants for specific neighborhoods began to arise in Richmond city and lasted until 1948 when they were finally struck down as unconstitutional, as well. For one example, we can see a specific instance where the neighborhood of Windsor Farms had an explicit provision in their Conditions and Restrictions that barred Black Richmonders from living there. Except for "servants," the neighborhood was to remain White's only, and as we will see later on, not much has changed.

The Home Owners' Loan Corporation worked closely with real estate agents in Richmond to draw up boundaries within the city to designate where giving out loans would be safest. This system was very blatantly based upon the racial composition of neighborhoods, and in many cases, white neighborhoods were given lesser ratings explicitly for being close to black or mixed neighborhoods. As one can see from the map, these areas to this day are black majority neighborhoods. The effects of these designations were directly felt for decades, as investments other than federal public housing practically dried up in the D listed areas. This created a cycle of poverty in these neighborhoods which exists into the present. Even after these real estate restrictions were deemed illegal, many of the practices remained on the private market, where redlining became joined with steering practices, aka selling homes in white neighborhoods to other

whites and vice versa, as well as blockbusting, where a home would be sold to a black person to initiate the flight of whites in that neighborhood and sell more homes.

- **Southern Negro Youth Congress 1937-1949 first meeting held in Richmond**

The Southern N*gro Youth Congress was a profoundly influential civil rights organization that was founded in 1937 (Hughes). It had its first conference at the Fifth Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia on February 13th, 1937. They sought to bring together an interracial coalition to further the rights to work and vote for African Americans. Many members were younger participants of the National N*gro Congress in Chicago the year prior who wished to build further strength among the youth for a mass anti-racist and anti-classist movement, specifically in the south. This was also partially due to the NNC's membership being mostly from the North. They also had members from student organizations like the American Youth Congress and the American Student Union, which also saw a need for a strong southern coalition force, or a Popular Front, against these retrograde forces.

There were 534 delegates in attendance from across the country that were there to represent approximately 250,000 young folks across 23 states. The demands were plain but broad, and they would not come without significant friction from the powerful white officials. Among the demands were the right to equal education and employment, an end to the poll tax, and the right to labor unions. They also sought an end to lynching and joined forces with many other organizations such as the NAACP in order to classify lynching as a federal crime. It was decided at this first conference to establish a permanent headquarters for the organization in Richmond, VA.

One of the first successful campaigns that was achieved by the SNYC was the unionization of over 5,000 tobacco workers in Richmond, VA (Hughes 45). This union, called the Tobacco Stemmers' and Laborers' Union was able to win a wage increase, as well as a 40-hour work week and an 8-hour work day for the factory workers. The

Carrington and Michaux tobacco plant strikes in April had kicked off the chain reaction, and soon many other factories took inspiration and conducted the same tactics. All these initial efforts had been mostly started by the black women workers themselves, one of whom, Mrs. Louise "Mamma" Harris was the organizer behind the spontaneous I.N. Vaughan factory strike in May (Albano).

Much of this success was also attributed to the organizing work of leaders such as James E. Jackson and C. Columbus Alston, who went on to work with CIO to create the Tobacco Stemmers Laborers Union. However, obstacles would soon be placed in front of these organizations by the white establishment. In the subsequent decades, right to work laws would begin to decimate the organizing and unionizing potentials of workplaces and would start to roll back the progress that had been made.

5. <u>Civil Rights Movement (1950-1970)</u>

"Tides were beginning to change again, but so too did the strategies of the racist elite…"

- **Richmond Crusade for Voters**

In 1956, the Richmond Crusade for Voters was founded on the heels and failure of "The Council to save Public Schools" when they unsuccessfully lobbied against a statewide referendum to allow local governments to shut down public schools that had integrated. There was incredible backlash in Virginia after the landmark Brown v. Board of Education decision, and segregationists were coming out in full force to stall any progress (Hayter). Seeing the failure and the disappointing black voter turnout, the Richmond Crusade for Voters saw a need to educate and galvanize black voters to further participate. They had many campaigns to increase voter registration and voter awareness to adequately oppose Senator Byrd's "Massive Resistance" and Governor Stanley's "Stanley Plan".

Dr. William Ferguson Reid was a cofounder of the Crusade who grew up in Richmond and he is still alive today! He was elected to the Virginia General Assembly in

1968, making him the first African American elected since 1891, during Reconstruction. Other cofounders include John Mitchell Brooks, Dr. William S. Thornton, Ethel T. Overby and Lola Hamilton. These names should be known far more throughout Richmond, as their selfless dedication to changing the course of local history cannot be understated. Though progress was at first slow, their patience paid off. The civic associations that they had created throughout Richmond's predominantly black districts were able to elect some white moderates to the field, which in turn would appoint

More than just voter registration, they also made sure municipal services were being offered in black communities. By 1966, the number of registered Black voters in Richmond had risen to 32,000, almost 4 times what it had been since the organization had begun their efforts. This undoubtedly contributed to the success of L. Douglas Wilder's campaign for state senator in 1969, once again a first since Reconstruction, and he would also later become the first black governor in 1990. The Crusade still exists to this day, and unfortunately, so do many of the issues that motivated their formation. Gerrymandering, voter suppression, housing and educational disparities, all of these pernicious issues are still a factor to this day, but the Crusade played a major role in trying to fight them through legal and legislative change.

- **Jackson Ward Destruction for I-95**

A shadow of its former self, once described in glowing terms such as "Black Wall Street" and "The Harlem of the South", Jackson Ward has become yet another story of social and economic dissolution for Black America (Howard and Williamson). One of the most devastating blows to this once-thriving community was the expressway built at the demand of the Virginia General Assembly. An unpopular notion which was defeated twice before by voters, it was decided that the City Council, which was all-white, would instead delegate the task to the General Assembly, another all-white group, in order to stifle opposition and force the measures through (“Destroying a Community to Build a

Road"). Before all of this began, Jackson Ward was home to over 100 black-owned businesses, including six banks.

The 1942 creation of Gilpin Court, a public housing project created at the behest of white authorities, cut off a large portion of Jackson Ward (Howard and Williamson). The result was further isolation and segregation, where lower-income African Americans were funnelled into the housing projects of Gilpin Court and elsewhere after World War II. Creighton Court's creation in 1950 also helped to further entrench the East End's role as the segregated public housing area for African Americans, while poor White Richmonders were funneled to the Southside.

An estimated 4,700 housing units were destroyed in Black neighborhoods throughout the 1950s, including in Jackson Ward, and were replaced with only 1736 public housing units. Some of the most widespread destruction came from the creation of the Richmond-Petersburg Expressway (now I-95) and the Belvidere Street extension, which from 1955 to 1957, displaced approximately 7,000 African Americans and carved through the center of the historic ward (Howard and Williamson). The Downtown Expressway a decade later would lead to thousands more losing their homes.

- **Richmond 34**

Like many places around the United States at the time, Richmond had many civil rights demonstrations happen. One such event is dubbed the protest of the "Richmond 34," in honor of the 34 Black students that were arrested on their second day of sit-in demonstrations at the Thalhimers Department Store ("Protest of the Richmond 34 against Segregation, 1960"). The first day had included over 200 Virginia Union University students marching down Broad Street and into the White's only diner to demand service or shut the lunch counters down. They were successful in this initial endeavor, but when 34 students attempted to repeat this success two days later, they were arrested. 3 years

after this, they would have the cases against them overturned in the Supreme Court (Weinstein).

- **Johnson v. Virginia 1963:** Many landmark statewide legal cases were undertaken and were able to make significant progress towards finally cementing some political rights for Black Virginians. Southern Courtrooms were desegregated following the civil disobedience of a Black man when a judge told him to get out of the white's only section of the courtroom (Supreme Court Of The United States). The Supreme Court ruled that the policy of segregation in the smaller court was unconstitutional based on the precedent set by Brown v. Board of Education and other previous rulings.
- **Green v. New Kent 1968 school busing:** Another case was Green v. New Kent which began the school bussing program to continue desegregation efforts ("Green v. County Sch. Bd. Of New Kent County, 391 U.S. 430").
- **Loving v. Virginia 1967:** As mentioned previously, Loving v. Virginia overturned laws in seventeen states that once banned interracial marriage ("Loving v. Virginia"). Specifically for Virginia, it overturned the Racial Integrity Act of 1924, which as also mentioned previously, was used in the creation of White enclaves in Richmond such as Windsor Farms and Westover Hills.

This was a period of incredible social change, as the landscapes of race and class were changing radically, even in Richmond. With the national Civil Rights Movement gaining institutional steam throughout the 1960s, both the local Richmond forces of progress and backlash were waiting to strike in the 70s.

6. <u>(1970-2000)</u>

- **Annexation of Chesterfield**

There had been many attempts to annex parts of the surrounding counties in a dual effort to increase revenue and dilute Black Richmond's population, but none had truly stuck

until the annexation of a 23 square mile tract of Chesterfield County in 1969 (Tarter). This decreased the Black population of Richmond from a majority of 52%, down to 42%. The At-Large elections in Richmond meant that the new addition of mostly white Chesterfield would blatantly influence the composition of the city council. After being wrung through several courts, Curtis Holt had his lawsuit heard by the supreme court. With a tense 5 to 3 ruling, it was decided that a switch from at-large elections to single-member districts would satisfy the requirements of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. As a result of the electoral changes and organizers' abilities to adapt, Henry L. Marsh was appointed as the first Black Mayor of Richmond in 1977 (Hayter). These landmark results

- **White Flight to the West End continues from 50s and earlier**

Though tangible gains towards political equality were made in the 1970s, Black Richmonders faced a perpetual crisis of economic inequality. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 25.2% of Black people lived below the poverty line, whereas only 8.3% of White people did. 67.6% of people living in Gilpin Court lived below the poverty line. By the numbers, functional segregation increased in Richmond between the 1960s and the 1980s despite it being de jure illegal. White flight had exacerbated this problem since as early as the 1930s, and between the years of 1970 and 1980, 39,000 White people left the city (Hayter 206). With de facto segregation and economic sabotage rampant throughout the city, it was no surprise that Black Richmonders continued to suffer. Opportunities retreated to the surrounding suburbs and despite the best efforts and intentions of the newly elected Black leadership, greater forces of regression were at play.

7. <u>(2000-Present)</u>

Narrator: *To jump now to the present, we can clearly see the effects of this century-long tug-of-war in the neighborhood disparities that still exist.*

- **20 Year Life Expectancy difference between Gilpin Court and white neighborhood**

A 2015 study of life expectancy in Richmond showed that in less than 6 miles, life expectancy varied by 20 years. The stark realities of racism are held within this statistic, as Gilpin Court has an approximate life expectancy of 63 years, whereas it is 83 years in Westover Hills, 80 years in Windsor Farms, and 77 years in the Museum District ("Center on Society and Health"). Differences between these neighborhoods which led to these results are far too numerous to efficiently list, but to discuss just a few, it will become obvious that this is still a pervasive issue.

- **Environmental Racism (Increased Cancer Risks and Hotter Neighborhoods)**

The grim legacy of redlining never seemed to lose its effect upon the neighborhoods deemed undesirable by HOLC. Even after almost 100 years, these areas are still predominantly poor and black, and the data shows clearly that environmental degradation and pollution are still major issues in these neighborhoods. Disparities between modern census tracts still echo the housing grades of the 1930s, where for example the poverty rate is 15 times higher in Census Tract D5, a black east end neighborhood, than it is in Tract A3, a white west end neighborhood (Godoy). Tract D5 also has more than 3 times the rate of diabetes than Tract A3. The prevalence of food deserts and food swamps in the East End of Richmond and Henrico can probably account for many of these issues, as food insecurity in the city is more than double what it is in Chesterfield County and almost double that of Henrico County (Crutchfield). Infant mortality in Richmond was also nearly double the state average of 6.3% (Zimmerman et al.). Due to fewer green spaces, temperature differences between neighborhoods such as Gilpin Court and Westover Hills can reach up to 20 degrees during the hotter months, as tree coverage and more substantial urban highway planning allow for cooler streets and better air quality (Plumer and Popovich). However, while increasing green space in these areas is a noble

endeavor for the city to undertake, it must not also come with a cost of displacement and gentrification (Rigolon and Németh).

- **School Segregation and Poverty worsening in some metrics (VCU Study)**

A troubling statistic speaks to the need to continue the fight, where 24% of children in Richmond lived in poverty in 1969, it grew to 39% after the 2008-2009 Recession (Hayter 244). 80% of Richmond's public school population was Black in 2010, whereas the city's Black population was approximately 50%. The data is troubling on so many fronts.

The median annual income of Black Virginian families was 30% lower than white families according to a 2020 report from the University of Virginia, and this statistic has changed little in the last half-century (Barr).

A recent VCU and Pennsylvania State University study published in April of 2021 highlighted the cumulative effects that the long history of racist policies has created, as Black people regardless of income and class are still, on average, denied institutional resources and support. This comes in the form of still lower quality schools than majority white west end schools, much as it was in the days of legal segregation. The effects of decades of disinvestment and white flight sapped Richmond schools of resources and have left them in constant disrepair and disrepute. Since 2003, metrics have even shown that segregation in some of Virginia's metropolitan school systems have worsened (Siegel-Hawley et al., "Double Segregation by Race and Poverty in Virginia Schools").

- **Second Highest Eviction Rate**

Echoes of the days of HOLC and 1930s redlining existed quite obviously in the subprime mortgage lending practices of the 2000s ("Timeline of Housing Events"). Whereas only 5% of loans were subprime in majority White neighborhoods between 2004 and 2011, 31% of loans in majority Black neighborhoods were subprime, owing to the predatory lending practices that targeted vulnerable communities.The resulting

foreclosure and eviction crisis afterwards hit hardest in mostly Black neighborhoods and these wounds have yet to even be dressed.

According to the Princeton University Eviction Lab, Richmond has the second highest eviction rate of any major city in America, at a rate of 11.44% as of 2016 (Eviction Lab). These have disproportionately affected Black neighborhoods, of which 60% of these predominantly Black tracts face eviction rates north of 10% ("RVA Eviction Lab — Center for Urban and Regional Analysis").

Narrator: *And segregation still remains an issue in the city to this day. As an example, the Windsor Farms neighborhood we talked about earlier that explicitly barred Black people from living there now resides in Census Tract 506. In this area of the city, according to the December 2020 Census Redistricting Data, there are only 33 Black people reported to be living here out of a total of 2,637 (U.S. Census Bureau).*

8. Conclusion

With the demolition of the Confederate monuments in Richmond, a new era has begun. However, much like the initial Black electoral victories on City Council during Reconstruction, without substantive changes, this victory is little more than symbolic. It would be a mistake to see the absence of these monuments and think our mission is complete. An incredible amount of work still must be done, as one can see, and though progress has been significant, decades-long and centuries-long disparities still exist. "An incredible amount of information was contained within this video, and I encourage the audience to look into these topics for yourself, especially if I skimmed over them too quickly here. If you wish to learn more, stick around for the list of sources and recommended resources in the credits."

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