



**Truth and Reconciliation Commission
Final Minutes - Emblematic Meeting #3
via Teams January 25, 2024**

A public meeting was held on January 25, 2024, starting at 1:00pm. Meeting opened at 12:59 by Ann Miller. Members of the Commission present were Melody Mackin, Mia Schultz, Faith Yacubian, Michele Olvera, Adam Kersch and Ann Miller.

Members of the Public included: Samantha O., Jules, Emma Merritt-Cuneo, Middlebury college Race and Racism in VT (Class), SS., Rachel, Matthew LeFluer, Aishah, Lexi Krupp, Wayne Maceyka, Lindsey Owen, Karen Tronsgard-Scott, Von Dora, Chief Gagne, Elena Naughton (ICTJ), Erin (ICTJ), Logan O'Hartigan, Camilla, and cell number 802-582-2786.

Commissioner Mackin started the meeting with the accessibility portion. If there is a need for an interpreter (language or ASL), please let us know in advance of any meeting and we will do our very best to accommodate. Our email was placed in the chat for public ease in access.

Staff introductions were made. There had been some unintelligible public interruptions via cell phone participation. It was explained that there would be time later for official public participation in this meeting.

Land Acknowledgement was read by Commissioner Schultz. Full Land Acknowledgement is on the 1st page of the attached PowerPoint Presentation. A quote by Mary Lyons was read. *"It is a mixture of our blood, our past, our current and our future, and we carry our ancestors inside of us and they are around us."*

Commissioner Mackin reviewed the agenda and explained **Working Pledge and the Declaration of Understanding**. Staff introductions were made.

Executive Director Faith Yacubian went through the **Timing and Civility** of the Emblematic Meeting. Protocols were explained and can be found on page 8 of the attached PowerPoint Presentation.

Commissioner Mackin shared a personal story about accessibility when intruding the first Case Study: *“Society is not accessible for all people and the exclusion of some has been completely normalized. Federal ADA laws state public accommodations must be accessible, and discrimination based upon race, color, religion, and national origin are prohibited (with exceptions). Yet, we know that access to physical spaces, access to services, and access to places of enjoyment or even family is a privilege. I would like to share a story. When planning a site visit for a colleague in 2023, I connected with the site prior to the visit to make sure it was physically accessible, which included parking, ramps, and elevators. It was assured it was. Upon arrival, the elevator had not been working for months and to get up the hill to an accessible building, it was dangerous with the route we had to take and steepness of the hill, especially for the chair user. Then, we could only access the site via the service entrance in the back of the building. The ramps were not up to code, and it was very difficult to get into the library. That was not an isolated incident.*

I have met folks that are immune-compromised that still cannot attend family gatherings due to lowered precautions surrounding COVID, which if you watch the news, is currently surging with a new very contagious variant JN1. Isolation from others has become normalized for those who are at risk and cannot risk infection.

Language barriers persist and translation services still have some room to expand. If even one person cannot access public accommodations, does equity exist? As human beings, we all deserve the right of connection. The pursuit of happiness for some has been replaced by isolation and exclusion. We can do better. “

General Legal Counsel Olvera reviewed the **Agenda for Case Reviews** which the VTRC has selected for this 3rd emblematic meeting and then explained that the Commissioners will vote if appropriate for VTRC purview after each individual session.

The topics highlighted in this session were: **Public Accommodations, Historic Context for Present Truths and Incarceration**. These cases are broadly emblematic of various forms of discrimination or oppression that exists in Vermont. This is not a complete list of the cases received or of those reviewed. Discussions will be about the systems involved, the injury or harm in the case, any resolutions that have happened, and then the Commissioners polled as to their thoughts on instances of discrimination and if in the VTRC's purview. Following each section, the JAM board is opened for public discussion and participation.

Executive Director Yacubian placed the Jam Board link in the chat session, giving public access throughout the meeting.

Legal Counsel Olvera introduced the facts of the first session in **Public Accommodations**, and asked the Commissioners what themes they see in the cases discussed. The main goal was to create themes together and get an understanding of what the public wants from the VTRC. Following the Commissioners comments, Admin Assist Miller explained the **Jam Board** and how it works. To view the full results of the Jam Board, please see the attachment to these meeting minutes (starting at page 10).

Lead Researcher Kersch continued with **Public Accommodations**. Commissioners Mackin and Schultz agreed that each case reviewed is under VTRC purview.

Some comments from the public regarding Public Accommodations include Matthew LeFluer: *“Lack of responsibility by the State, who has no notion of trying to deliberately escape the process of that. They don’t want to take responsibility even if they know at fault, making it worse for society.”*

Additionally, Matthew LeFluer: *“what I realize is changing the way VT system and sees itself as meaning it is focusing on just college education? Individuals statewide. Is it meeting this commitment on feeling individual access needs of the individual itself? My needs are different than any other person or people across the state. Why hasn’t my actuality been met by the State? It is complex. Why is VT making it hard to access social tools and resources?”*

2:00 pm: Break for 5 minutes.

Historic Content for Present Truth

Commissioner Mackin introduced this session. Refer to page 30 of the attached Power Point Presentation and shared the following: “All ideas, societies, and happenings within history are spurred from the flow of what came before. Isabel Wilkerson's book *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent*, is very relevant today as we highlight our collective past and seek to understand the flow of events and ideas. She wrote:

“America is an old house. We can never declare the work over. Wind, flood, drought, and human upheavals batter a structure that is already fighting whatever flaws were left unattended in the original foundation. When you live in an old house, you may not want to go into the basement after a storm to see what the rain has wrought. Choose not to look, however, at your own peril. The owner of an old house knows that whatever you are ignoring will never go away. Whatever is lurking will fester whether you choose to look or not. Ignorance is no protection from the consequences of inaction. Whatever you are wishing away will gnaw at you until you gather the courage to face what you would rather not see.”
“We in the developed world are like homeowners who inherited a house on a piece of land

that is beautiful on the outside, but whose soil is unstable loam and rock, heaving and contracting over generations, cracks patched but the deeper ruptures waved away for decades, centuries even. Many people may rightly say, "I had nothing to do with how this all started. I have nothing to do with the sins of the past. My ancestors never attacked indigenous people, never owned slaves." And yes, not one of us was here when this house was built. Our immediate ancestors may have had nothing to do with it, but here we are, the current occupants of a property with stress cracks and bowed walls and fissures built into the foundation. We are the heirs to whatever is right or wrong with it. We did not erect the uneven pillars or joists, but they are ours to deal with now. And any further deterioration is, in fact, on our hands."

In this section, we enter Vermont's house, we begin with its foundation. A few questions to ponder: Are you comfortable with our house and how have we accommodated and built upon the limited structure that was originally conceived? If we could build a new foundation, what are the values you might use as building material? What type of house could we all thrive in?

Legal Counsel Olvera shared the first case (Murder of John Harrison) page 32 of the attached Power Point Presentation. Legal Counsel Olvera explained the case in detail and polled the Commissioners for their opinion of the VTRC purview, which was agreed upon as affirmative.

Public Comments: Middlebury College Race and Racism Group *"The students have done a log of archival research, found an indentured contract with a boy names Tamer ("poor infant mulatto child") which put this child into the service of ebenezer Huntington. Class willing to share this work and archive with VTRC."*

Public Comments: Chief Brenda Gagne: *"Vt is one of the whitest states in the US and they sell it as being white. Lack of diversity, race and discriminatory."*

Public Comments: Phone in caller named Logan: *"Want to push back on the above comment. Not saying that individuals aren't racist, I personally have never come across anything racist from the government in my lifetime." "There is historical racism and discrimination that has occurred, but there are gaps in the system with lack of resources, not discrimination and to complete the two is a disservice to real discrimination." "Cannot say I have all experiences, don't know what others have been through, just clarifying if from State Government being discriminatory. Jim Crow South and actual racist policies that have existed, I don't deny that racism has existed or still exists today.?"*

Lead Researcher Kersch shared the next case (Enslavement in VT) page 39 of the attached powerpoint. Commissioners Mackin and Schultz agreed this case is within the VTRC purview. Continued with The Irasburg Affair (page 48 of the attached powerpoint).

Researcher Kersch went into **Unmarked Graves and State institutions** (thank you to Representative Donahue for her work on this subject), and then the **Irasburg Affair**.

The discussion was turned over to the Commissioners. Commissioner Mackin expressed approval of these projects being in the purview of the Commission. Commissioner Schultz agreed.

Public Comments: Chief Brenda Gagne: *“Curious how this (unmarked graves) works differently for indigenous burial grounds. Indigenous people, you have to find two or three bodies before they can do anything like that.” “When they discover these unmarked graves, do they stay? Clarification? Where do they go?” “There will be bodies that the State is even looking for, they take children, and some didn’t come home. Bodies in different places. Thank you to the VTRC for what you are doing.”*

Five-minute break taken.

Commissioner Schultz started the session back at 3:05 pm with the question *“Why;”* for this particular category, I started thinking about *“Why”* The first question that I ask is Why do we incarcerate people? And so, to get the answer I did what anyone would do when they have questions? In googling it... The general consensus on incarceration as we can probably assume is to punish people when they commit crimes, so my next question is: Why do people commit crimes? As you can imagine the google result for this was quite controversial a lot of people have written psychology case studies and the like to answer this but there are some undisputable overarching themes that come from a discussion on why people commit crimes: Including: Socioeconomic Disparities and Crime -Substantial data correlates low socioeconomic standing—low income, poor financial literacy, or poverty—with a high likelihood of incarceration. While poverty itself is typically not the root cause of crime, it can lead to other psychosocial, environmental, or psychological conditions that may correlate with the likelihood of committing a crime, such as:
Substance misuse disorder
Education access –
Mental health challenges

Why are marginalized people incarcerated the most? Again, a complicated question that seems to be up for debate in some cases but what I am drawn to the most reasonable explanation that researchers find links between high incarceration rates among people of color and policy changes that criminalized social problems experienced by many people living in poverty (who are disproportionately people of color). The United States has the highest incarceration rate, not only of any Western democracy but also in the world. It wasn’t always this way. From the 1920s until the early 1970s, the U.S. rate of incarceration was stable and in line with other countries. However, between 1973 and 2009, the rate more than quadrupled.

Understanding what drove the dramatic increase is complicated. In this category we will specifically go over incarceration rates in Vermont. But at the end of the day in order for us to do this work of reckoning with the truth in our state we must be clear of Why we are in this situation in the first place. The situation of high incarceration rates especially for marginalized people and we must start the conversation to work together to remedy what we know are root causes that are neglected.

General Legal Counsel Olvera picked up the meeting from there. Refer to pages 63 -65 of the attached PowerPoint Presentation regarding **Incarceration**. First up is Medical Care and Incarceration (page 64 of attached power point). Second is Racial Disparities in Prisons (page 68 of the attached power point).

Commissioners Schultz and Mackin agreed that the cases presented are within the purview of the Commission. The jamboard was accessed again with plenty of time under each session for time allowed for public to add comments themselves or speak their comments for ease and staff would add any comments to the jamboard for them. Both manners were used throughout the jamboard sessions.

Public Comment: Chief Brenda Gagne: “Saddened to see the statistics and data, press puts focus on minorities, which doesn’t help. People in the communities don’t know full story.”

To wrap it up, Kersch explained that those are the emblematic cases for the day. Our next meeting for emblematic cases is going to be **March 20th 1:00 to 4:00** and we certainly appreciate input from the public.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann Miller, Administrative Assist

Faith Yacubian, Executive Director

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First, we must acknowledge that Vermont is part of the homeland of the Mohican people and the Alnôbak, the Western Abenaki people.

We are all part of the circle of creation and the health of our human communities has an impact on all our relations, human and nonhuman.

We want to take this moment to recognize the land itself, Mother Earth, and the many blessings that we are given. We hope you will take the time to think about your relationship to place and what land means to you.



EMBLEMATIC CASES – DAY 3

Vermont Truth and Reconciliation Commission

AGENDA

Emblematic Cases –Public Meeting #3

1:00 pm	Accessibility (including ASL Communication needs)	Melody
3 Min	Land Acknowledgement	Mia
2 Min	Attendance & Welcome (<i>place name, pronouns, where from, email, in chat; optional unless speaking during meeting</i>)	Melody
3 Min	Agenda	Melody
10 Min	Working Pledge and Declaration of Understandings	Melody
3 Min	Explanation of Timing and Civility (* <i>Content Disclaimer</i>)	Faith
5 Min	Case Review Explanation	Adam
2 Min	Explanation of Jam Board	Ann
45 Min	Public Accommodations	5 minutes per case
	Public Comment	3 minutes per person
45 Min	Historic Context for Present Truths	5 minutes per case
	Public Comment	3 minutes per person
45 Min	Incarceration	5 minutes per case
	Public Comment	3 minutes per person
4:00 pm	Adjourn	



WORKING PLEDGE

As we explore complex and challenging topics such as race, disability, oppression, and discrimination, we collectively pledge to approach these discussions with a commitment to extend grace, humility, and empathy with each other. We recognize that we are all on both an individual and collective journey to dismantle oppression and discrimination from our culture and systems. Therefore, we pledge to cultivate dignity and respect even in moments of disagreement and discomfort. We expect and accept non-closure and with that we engage in courageous conversations with curiosity and an open mind. We dedicate ourselves to refrain from judgement, embrace active listening, and use “I” statements to foster open communication. In this space, we understand the “Platinum Rule” where we pledge to abide by each other's unique preferences thereby building better relationships and collaboration. We come into this with good intentions but also recognize that even when we do not intend to do harm there is an impact. We commit to prioritizing Act 128 Communities and acknowledge that there is no such thing as a single-issue struggle, our lives are interconnected. We vow to treat each other, our stories, our dreams and struggles with sacred care. We honor vulnerability. We embrace the spirit of co-creation; we affirm that we are the active agents of change and we are committed to doing the work to create understanding amongst and with each other.

The journey to collective liberation is filled with discomfort and painful truths but the final destination is community where everyone can thrive together. This is a shared space, grounded in the principles of this pledge.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION DECLARATION OF UNDERSTANDING

- **The VTRC is charged with examining discrimination that has been perpetrated by the state. The definition of discrimination that is being referenced today is: "The treatment or consideration of people differently based on their perceived or real group, class, or category, rather than on individual merit. Discrimination can involve granting or denying privileges, rights, or opportunities to a certain class arbitrarily or unfairly. "**
- **Today the VTRC is not taking testimony or conducting interviews. This constitutes one of the processes aimed at extracting themes that will serve as valuable guides in shaping our work.**
- **The VTRC has not been tasked with distribution of money in the form of reparations.**

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION DECLARATION OF UNDERSTANDING

- **The VTRC understands that painful tension and different truths exist, and therefore, we are declaring the following acknowledgements and understandings for the VTRC in this special meeting on Emblematic cases.**
- **The VTRC's mission is to create pathways to healing and community. We will honor the rights of individuals and groups who have actively advocated for and earned them.**
- **The VTRC is not a judicial body, and this is not a court of law. This is a commission empowered by the State of Vermont to review laws and policies and their relationship to discrimination. This will be done through the power of truth telling from the perspective of the communities who have been historically and presently invisible.**

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION DECLARATION OF UNDERSTANDING

- **The VTRC understands that race and identity classification are social constructs that have “*roots in colonial history, devised to legitimize the enslavement of Africans and the genocide of Native Americans*” (Brown 2023). For this reason, we have made an intentional decision to discuss identity as self-affirming, without ignoring the way stereotyping leads to inaccurate labeling.**
- **The VTRC also understands that gender is a social construct, culturally and historically contextualized, and has real consequences relative to human rights and constitutional protections.**
- **The VTRC recognizes the World Health Organization declaration that disability is part of being human (World Health Organization 2023). Almost everyone will temporarily or permanently experience disability at some point in their life.**
- **The VTRC understands that people do not fit into neat categories or boxes. For example, race, ethnicity, religion, and gender are reflections of one’s inner self.**
- **What we hear today might be stressful and activating. If it gets to be too much, self-care is prioritized and please take breaks.**

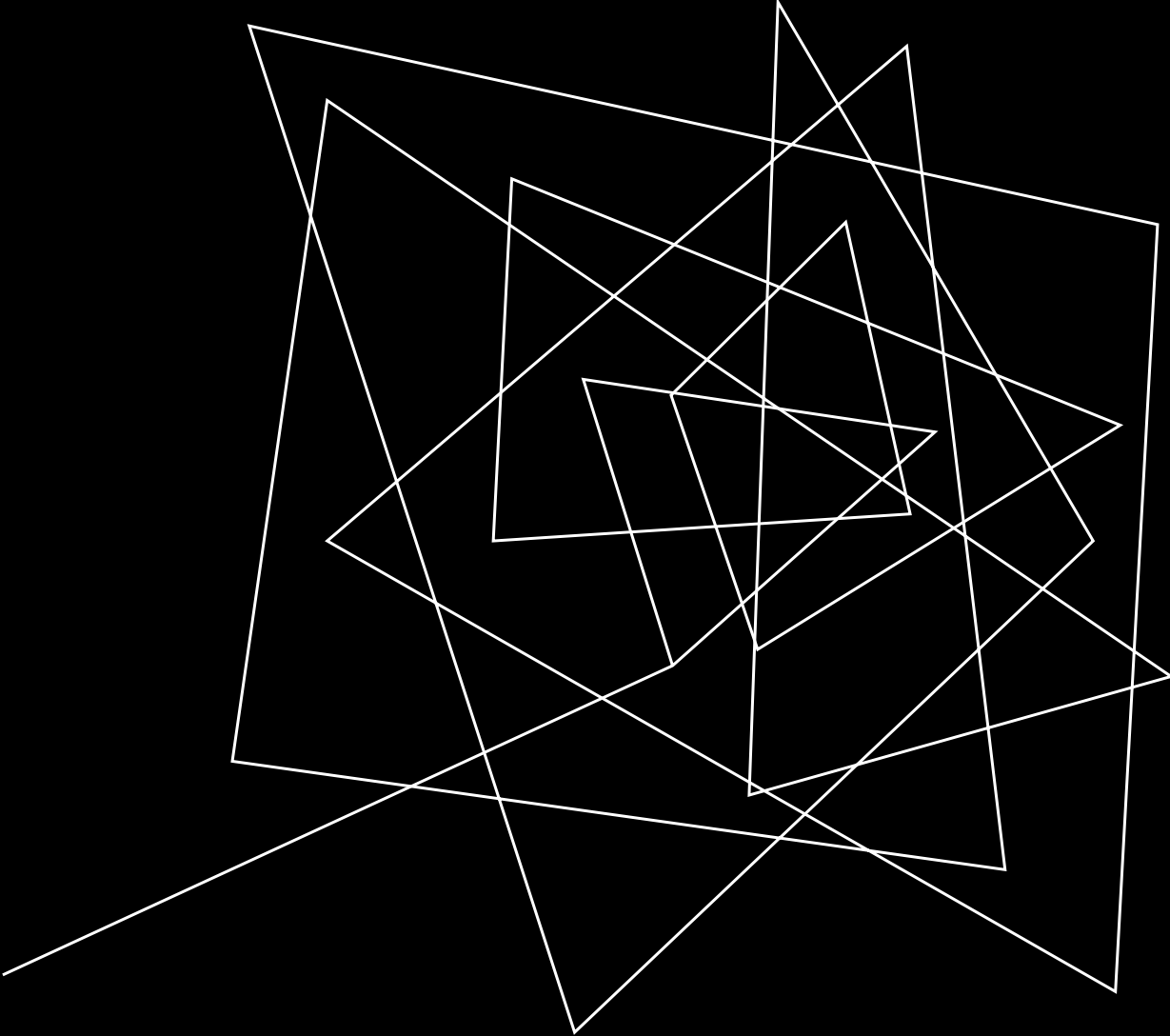
EXPLANATION OF TIMING AND CIVILITY

- **Personal Responsibility and Community Support (1-minute warnings in the chat)**
- **Uphold VTRC Agreements for Public Meetings (slide 4)**
- **Consequence for Neglecting Agreements**
 - **First – a warning and gentle reminder of VTRC Agreement that was violated.**
 - **Second – person’s speaking/contribution privileges are revoked.**
 - **Third – person will be removed from meeting.**

AGENDA FOR CASE REVIEW

Introduction

- Why we chose these cases
- The case categories -introductions by Commissioners
- Categories are: (45 minutes each)
 - Public accommodations
 - Historical context for present truths
 - Incarceration
- Present the facts of each case
- Determine if it is within the VTRC's purview
- Create themes on Jam Board
- Primary Goal: To create themes together



PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS



PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS IN VERMONT

Waterbury Summer
Camp and Disability

Language and Public
Accommodations

Care for People with
Developmental
Disabilities

WATERBURY SUMMER CAMP AND DISABILITY

Facts

- The Vermont Human Rights Commission sued the Town of Waterbury government for discriminating against a disabled boy.
- One day at camp, when a ball hit the boy and children began to yell at him and tell him to leave a game, the boy yelled, ran away, hid, and threw backpacks and tennis balls over a fence.
- The former recreation director physically restrained the boy until police arrived.
- At the time of the event, neither the rec director nor the police knew of the boy's needs and/or disability.
- When the adoptive parents of the boy emailed the rec director to notify her of their son's disabilities, the director responded, "this is not an ADA camp."
- The parents were told that their child was not welcome to return to the camp.

WATERBURY SUMMER CAMP AND DISABILITY CONT.

- After the incident, the boy's adoptive father contacted the Municipal Manager, asking for some accommodations such as designating some trusted adults to work with the child when he was upset. The Manager replied that their child was not welcome back to the camp.
- The talks for the case continued out of court after the VHRC and the town could not reach a settlement agreement after six months. The town's perspective was that it had done nothing wrong.
- VHRC found "reasonable grounds" that the town had discriminated against the boy by not accommodating his disability.

IS THIS WITHIN THE VTRC'S PURVIEW

Is this a case of discrimination against an Act 128 community or another group?

***Discrimination:** *The treatment or consideration of people differently based on their group, class, or category, rather than on individual merit. For example, discrimination against a person or people class of people on the based on their age, ancestry, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. Discrimination can involve granting or denying privileges, rights, or opportunities to a certain class arbitrarily or unfairly.*

*Is this an instance of institutional, structural and systematic discrimination in **Vermont** that has been permitted by state laws and policies?*

WATERBURY SUMMER CAMP AND DISABILITY

Issues presented

Failure to accommodate disabilities for the children attending camp

Failure to apply de-escalation techniques

Systems involvement and resolution

The Town of Waterbury

The Human Rights Commission

Injury or harm resulting

Harm to this child from learning that resolution doesn't happen

Harm to the other children from not getting resolution

Harm to families with children that are excluded from the camp due to disabilities

JAM BOARD

[Emblematic Cases – Google Jamboard](#)

Right click and open the link above in order to join

LANGUAGE AND PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS

- It is federal law that any entity receiving federal money must ensure that people who speak or sign languages other than English can access that entity's services, programs, and activities.
- Likewise, 1 VSA § 332 gives any person a right to an interpreter when that person is conducting business with a State board or agency, participating in any State-sponsored activity (such as public hearings and public meetings), or is participating in any State legislative activities.
- Failure to provide translation or interpretive services can further perpetuate certain populations' exclusion from society and essential services.

LANGUAGE AND PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS

- During emergencies, having access to timely information can be a matter of life and death.
- The Office of Racial Equity's Language Access Report found that most of the State's emergency communication is only available English and are "seldom translated into ASL or other signed languages."
- 1 in 5 requests for interpreters at Vermont courts are for ASL interpretation.
- During recent flooding in Vermont, people who speak or sign languages other than English did not receive the same level of emergency warnings as English speakers.

LANGUAGE AND PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS

- Some people receive information outside of typical emergency communication channels. For example, many people prefer to use WhatsApp to communicate and may be looking for timely information there.
- Some people may prefer non-written communication and require videos rather than solely text.
- State employees had to rely upon community partners to provide timely information to people who speak or sign languages other than English.
- State websites have information available in languages other than English, but this information is not always timely and doesn't provide active updates. These issues extend to accessing many other services and sources of information from the State of Vermont.

LANGUAGE AND PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS

- In Vermont, deaf Bhutanese people, who use Nepali sign language, face specific obstacles. Only the Howard Center offers ASL classes for immigrants. However, to take these classes a person must:
 - Have a developmental disability or be on the autism spectrum ***and***
 - Be a resident of Chittenden County.
- As a result, many deaf Bhutanese folks don't have a way to receive important information or to communicate outside of their community.

IS THIS WITHIN THE VTRC'S PURVIEW

Is this a case of discrimination against an Act 128 community or another group?

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*Is this an instance of institutional, structural and systematic discrimination in **Vermont that has been permitted by state laws and policies?***

LANGUAGE AND PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Issues presented

Impeded access to essential services and messaging, especially during times of emergency.

These difficulties are present among people living in Vermont who speak a language other than English; difficulties are amplified when a person uses a signed language.

Systems involvement and resolution

Vermont Language Justice Project, with funding from the Department of Health, released videos about flood safety in 16 different languages within 24 hours of the floods' beginning. This was a community effort.

Vermont Emergency Management released flood-related information in 9 languages. Its website also has an emergency preparedness workbook in 15 languages with varying topics.

Injury or harm resulting

Perpetuation of marginalization of peoples who speak or sign languages other than English.

Decreased safety for these populations, particularly during emergencies.

JAM BOARD

[Emblematic Cases – Google Jamboard](#)

Right click and open the link above in order to join

CARE FOR PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

- Before the creation of State institutions, people with developmental and other disabilities were frequently abused, starved, and isolated from others (Draper 1887).
- From the mid 1800s to the 1980s, Vermont's approach to addressing the needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities was to institutionalize them.
- In the first half of the 20th century, one of the chief justifications for institutionalization was to prevent this population from having children so they didn't "spread" their genetics among people without intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Vermont began the process of de-institutionalization along with most of the rest of the US with the goal of providing people with care that is based in the community and/or their family instead of placing them in an institution and isolating them from their loved ones.
- Long-term care largely passed from the State to local nonprofits.
- The problem is not de-institutionalization, but there are some problems with how de-institutionalization has been implemented.

CARE FOR PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

- In some instances, people are placed in “staffed living” placements, where a client lives with 24-hour staff.
- Many community nonprofits are facing severe staff shortages and funding challenges, meaning they are less able or unable to provide essential care and services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- In the past 6 years, 2 adults with autism have died in Vermont residential care. Reports have found that in one instance, the care provider did not notify their supervisors about the illness, did not record medical information, and did not consistently bring the patient to their doctor’s appointments.
- In some cases, people with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities have been placed in facilities guarded by local Sheriff’s offices.
- Vermont is not in compliance with 2014 federal rules that states that patient case managers should not work for the same entity providing services (VT Dept of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living (DAIL) has submitted a corrective plan for this to federal authorities).

CARE FOR PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

- Some family members of people in residential care complain that their loved ones are isolated from friends and family and that sometimes patients have unexplained injuries when they meet with family.
- In instances where someone's parent is a caregiver for a child or adult with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities, providing that care is often a full-time job. This makes it difficult for households to earn the income needed to pay for essential services for their loved ones.
- These caregivers are not paid because of concerns that doing this might encourage a disabled person to not have full independence. Some have advocated paying family members for caring for their loved ones; others have argued that this money should be spent on wages to attract better workers.
- Some parents are pushing the State to establish more residential programs.

IS THIS WITHIN THE VTRC'S PURVIEW

Is this a case of discrimination against an Act 128 community or another group?

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*Is this an instance of institutional, structural and systematic discrimination in **Vermont that has been permitted by state laws and policies?***

CARE FOR PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Issues presented

Care options for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities are severely limited.

State agencies are unable to provide necessary services because of staff shortages.

What is the State's culpability in the staffing shortages?

What systems of accountability exist for caregivers who are not acting appropriately?

Community care orgs are underfunded

Systems involvement and resolution

DAIL submitted a federal report detailing how it would address its noncompliance with federal rules.

Act 186 (H.720) requires people with developmental disabilities receive full information about their options are included in conversations about systems change, and created a limited service position to address this.

Injury or harm resulting

A lack of housing options for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities results in de facto discrimination against this group.

Parents who must care for their children with intellectual and developmental disabilities may have to endure financial hardship to do so.

Perpetuation of ableist discrimination that characterized the eugenics movement.

JAM BOARD

[Emblematic Cases – Google Jamboard](#)

Right click and open the link above in order to join

Public Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations

Harsh punishment

failure to see children with disabilities as normal children

Impact on other children with similar issues now cannot access

Law Policymaking Accessibility And Accommodations Services Options Opportunity For Individuals with Disability Input on Plain Language .

Creates a culture of exclusion of people with disabilities

Ableism

Exclusion

All children should have equal rights

The lack of a resolution that included all the children may have resulted in an impression in favor of exclusion.

Dehumanization

Accessible access in the same spaces as other access - keep people together no "out of sight out of mind"

Lack of accountability

Schools have to provide access so do municipal camps

How might we support those willing to speak up about accessibility who may not be in a position of power?

Accountability for these organizations?

Accessibility

Lack of care to all community members

Vermont has a dark history with discrimination against people with disability (eugenics)

Language Access including those with disability and who are immigrants

Lack of Responsibility. We are responsible for our own actions.

Intersectionality

English hegemony is a key feature of settler colonialism. Signed language in other than English is important for the State to offer as resource

What agencies of Vt government have jurisdiction over this issue and do they have the information, capacity, and funding to improve and take forward policy changes?

State, municipal, or other agencies' dismissal (willful or otherwise) should be considered illegal negligence.

Non-English speakers and signed speakers should be made included in Vermont

Federal laws for people with disabilities not being complied with

This seems like the same challenge of all parents-- the state pays for childcare but not for parents to stay with children

Childcare becomes adult care and there is no respite

Change the way VT System sees itself.

Treatment of people as individuals instead of an entire group

Difficulty to access basic care

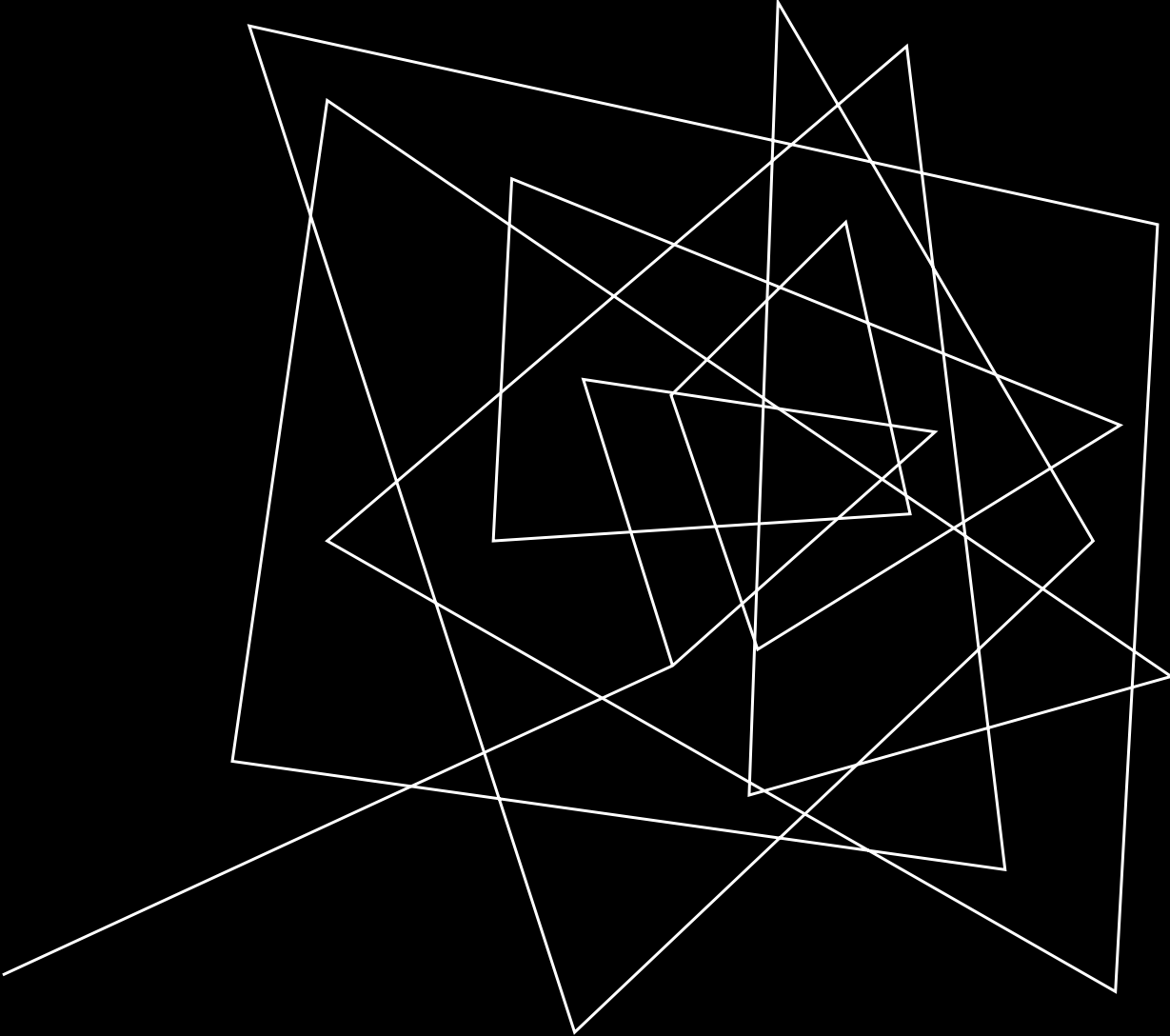
Access needs being individualized.

The lack of budget advanced by the State is the same argument advanced by eugenicists who considered people with disabilities a

You mention past institutions where violations had occurred. It would be interesting to learn more about that history and whether

Vermonters deserve better quality assurances and the State needs to be held more accountable

The continued harm done is reminiscent of the eugenics



HISTORIC
CONTEXT FOR
PRESENT TRUTHS



HISTORIC CONTEXT FOR PRESENT TRUTHS

Enslavement in
Vermont

Murder of John
Harrison – Black
Minister

The Irasburg Affair

Unmarked Graves
and State Institutions

MURDER OF JOHN HARRISON A BLACK MINISTER 1880S

Confession

An article in the *St. Albans Messenger* in 1896 says William Eastman was badly injured, and “supposing himself on his deathbed,” he made a confession that he and three others murdered Harrison, “then buried the body in the cellar of his house” (Krupp 2024).

NORWICH – LEFT FOR DEAD ON "DARKEY CORNER"

Newspapers in Burlington at the time said:

That in the fall of 1890, about two weeks before Harrison disappeared, “the two Eastman boys made Harrison 'a call,' and left him for dead.”

The description of what they did to Harrison is hard to read. It says: “The boys had pounded the negro on the head with an iron kettle until the bale broken and left a big ridge across his forehead. The boys then went up the village and told what they had done, and it is said that they afterward boasted that they would ‘finish him yet.’”

JOHN HARRISON

John Harrison was a son of parents who died when he was very young. His father had been enslaved. He was adopted by a white family and became a preacher as a young man. Moving to Vermont made sense because rural ministers were scarce, and he became a minister that traveled to preach and drew crowds. But he was targeted by racial violence that was made nearly invisible despite the newspapers and a full confession. The racial names for him and his land have lasted as they appear still on the deed of people living on the spot his house existed.

IS THIS WITHIN THE VTRC'S PURVIEW

Is this a case of discrimination against an Act 128 community or another group?

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*Is this an instance of institutional, structural and systematic discrimination in **Vermont** that has been permitted by state laws and policies?*



FRANK SHEPHERD '31

MURDER OF A BLACK MINISTER

Issues presented

Racist violence

Public coverup

Legacy of racism in
Vermont

Systems involvement and resolution

Justice System inaction

Injury or harm resulting

John Harrison was murdered

The message to other Black
people that they aren't
welcome in Vermont

JAM BOARD

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ENSLAVEMENT IN VERMONT

- Slavery was not fully illegal in Vermont until 2023.
- The part of the State Constitution that outlawed slavery did not outlaw slavery for men under the age of 21 or women under the age of 18; enslaving children remained legal.

ENSLAVEMENT IN VERMONT

There were no enforcement mechanisms for antislavery legislation

“Vermont slavery continued for nearly thirty years after the advent of the state constitution. It persisted in two distinct ways.

First, enslavers defied the law by purchasing and selling slaves. The limited evidence does not point to enslavers exhibiting any sort of embarrassment in breaking the law. Indeed, those individuals who continued owning slaves included some of the most respectable citizens of the state, ranging from judges to military officers.

Second, some white Vermonters stylized African Americans as ‘servants’ but this euphemism merely hid the fact that some of these people were either chattel or de facto slaves. As Guyette and Winter show, indentured Black children live in extraordinarily dangerous situations in a state that allowed child slavery. They could easily be sold out of state before they reached majority age, which would have offered pecuniary benefits to their owners.

The open violation of the constitution and continued enslavement of African Americans was implicitly condoned.

The scattered examples of slavery’s open persistence can be found in bills of sale, probate records, court proceedings, church records, and town histories. These instances exist across the state, indicating that the widespread practice of continued enslavement was not confined to a single town or region of Vermont.”

- Harvey Amani Whitfield in *The Problem of Slavery in Early Vermont, 1770-1810* (2014, 19).

ENSLAVEMENT IN VERMONT

- In 1780, a man, an enslaver, moved to Bennington to become pastor for the Congregational Church there. He brought an enslaved woman with him. Although some people in town were outraged that he did so, no one attempted to enforce Vermont's antislavery laws. The pastor and enslaver, David Avery, was a prominent member of town and was frequently around people such as Moses Robinson who became a governor, senator, and Supreme Court Justice.
- In the late 1770s, Pompey Brakkee sued Elijah Lovell for enslaving him. Lovell claimed to have a bill of sale that he thought demonstrated Brakkee was his property. Lovell failed to appear in court three times. Judges awarded Brakkee 412 pounds.
- In 1782, a man and enslaver named John Armstrong died without a will. Commissioners divided his estate which included "one Negro boy" valued at 60 pounds. According to historian Harvey Amani Whitfield (2014, 22), "The meaning of the word 'Boy' is not clear. Given that Black children in Vermont were seen as being worth less than adults because of the pecuniary costs of having to raise a child before she/he could provide valuable labor, it seems likely that the slave was not underage." The fate of this person is unknown.

ENSLAVEMENT IN VERMONT

- One of the more famous instances of enslavement in Vermont involves Dinah Mason, a Black woman who Stephen Jacob enslaved. Dinah was brought to Windsor where John White sold her to Stephen Jacob in 1793. Jacob received a bill of sale that a town leader witnessed.
- By the time Dinah was 47 years old, she had become sick. Jacob threw out Dinah, who requested town support. Windsor residents denied her request by a vote.
- Voters urged the town Selectman to try Jacob for the money instead. Jacob, a judge, presided over this trial and dismissed the charges.
- The case made its way to the Vermont Supreme Court, and Jacob recused himself from the case (Forbes 1910).
- The plaintiffs, the town Selectman, produced a bill of sale showing that Dinah was Jacob's "property." However, the judges ruled that because slavery is illegal in Vermont, Jacob was not responsible for paying to support her.
- After this trial, Dinah was "warned out" of Windsor and a deacon's son assaulted her. She refused to leave and died in poverty.

ENSLAVEMENT IN VERMONT

- Other Vermont enslavers include Levi Allen, Ethan Allen's daughter Lucy Hitchcock, Lewis Morris, Captain Moses Sage, among others.
- People who slaveowners freed still faced racism and hardship. Jeffrey Brace was a Black man who white slavers kidnapped as a teenager. Brace was sold to someone in Barbados, then an English ship captain.
- Brace fought in the French and Indian War and then eventually in the Revolutionary War. After his service, the man who "owned" him freed him.
- Brace moved to Vermont, knowing that slavery was outlawed there. He met his wife, Susannah Dublin, and they bought property in Poultney.
- Because of harassment, property damage, and their neighbor's desire to "bind out" the Brace's children as indentured servants, they moved to Sheldon, VT then to Georgia, VT.

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ENSLAVEMENT IN VERMONT

Issues presented

Chattel slavery was permitted in Vermont, despite its illegality.

State officials made little to no effort to uphold the law and de facto permitted enslavement.

The popular narrative in Vermont is that Vermont entirely outlawed slavery; people sometimes use this misunderstanding of history to point to Vermont's "progressive" racial politics.

Injury or harm resulting

The indescribable harm, violence, and dehumanization that chattel slavery involves.

An ongoing legacy of economic inequality that stems from slavery.

The tendency to deny that slavery ever existed in Vermont downplays and dismisses the reality of the treatment of Black people in Vermont.

ENSLAVEMENT IN VERMONT

Systems Involvement and Resolution

The 1786 Sale and Transportation Act attempted to fill in gaps in enforcement and acknowledged that slavery was still practiced in Vermont. It attempted to outlaw kidnapping Black people and the sale of enslaved people across State lines. It did not address the sale of enslaved people in Vermont.

The 1791 Negro and Mulatto Act attempted to overturn the 1786 law by allowing Vermonters to “indenture” “idle” Black people and encouraged people to hunt down runaway slaves. The law did not pass.

In 1806, the Act to Prevent Kidnapping introduced the law “because stealing and selling Black people became so noticeable and embarrassing that the government felt pressured to initiate action” (Whitfield 2014, 39).

Vermont continued to allow “slave transit” and “slaveowner sojourns”

Vermont finally outlawed slavery in 2023. The State still must contend with the ongoing legacy of slavery and continued anti-Blackness.

JAM BOARD

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THE IRASBURG AFFAIR

- Rev Johnson and his family moved from California to Vermont to escape racial unrest in California.
- In Vermont, on July 19, 1968, three men drove by in a car. One of the men fired shots at a house occupied by Reverend David Lee Johnson, a Black Baptist minister, his family, and a neighbor from California. Rev Johnson, a veteran, fired back. The shooters fled. Police focused on Rev Johnson rather than the perpetrators.
- Instead of focusing the investigation on the shooter, they focused on Rev Johnson, checking to see if his car was stolen property, if he was really a Reverend, investigated whether he was involved in "pimping," etc.
- State troopers placed a trooper to guard Rev Johnson's house. Three days after the incident, the Johnson family got a phone in their home. The police decided that was a form of protection and removed the guard.
- A resident of Glover, Larry Conley, the shooter, was charged with a "breach of peace" and pled no contest. He had been arrested before for verbally assaulting black children.
- The State AG recommended charging Conley with assault to kill, but instead the Orleans County State's Attorney filed breach of the peace charges. Conley received a suspended 6-month sentence and paid \$500.

THE IRASBURG AFFAIR

- Troopers withheld information from the AG.
- One of the troopers guarding Rev Johnson's house claimed to see Rev Johnson having sex with a white woman. Rev Johnson and his houseguest were charged with adultery and arrested at gunpoint.
- When police interviewed this woman, they only asked her about the shooting for 15 minutes and spent the rest of the interview discussing the alleged affair.
- The Johnson family received threats at their home, including that their home would be burned down. Rev Johnson was verbally assaulted at his home.
- The woman pled no contest, paid a fine, received a 6-12 month suspended sentence, and left the state. She later claimed her plea was coerced. She never returned to Vermont and the charges against Rev Johnson were eventually dropped. Rev Johnson refused to plead at all, citing racism in the process.
- The Orleans County State's Attorney, Leonard Pearson, flew to California to request the woman be extradited to Vermont. A California judge rejected this and the charges were dropped.

THE IRASBURG AFFAIR

- Newspapers continued to publish op-eds about Johnson's relationships with white women.
- Adultery was a rarely used charge at the time. The newspaper backlash focused more on it being an interracial relationship than it being a supposed extramarital affair.
- The trooper who made the claim later admitted that he wasn't sure of what he saw.
- Gov Hoff appointed a board of inquiry and found that State police acted inappropriately when they focused on the investigation against Rev Johnson instead of focusing on the shooting.
- Public Safety Commissioner EA Alexander refused to discipline his troopers and praised them instead.
- The Johnson family moved back to California.

THE IRASBURG AFFAIR

Several members of the public wrote the Governor to express their disapproval over how the State handled the case

One Black man writing to the governor said: "Had the conditions referred to in [the Life magazine article] occurred in Mississippi or one of the deep southern states I would not have been surprised. I have allywas [sic] been under the impression that your state was enlightened and above such atrocities but events proved it to be otherwise."

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THE IRASBURG AFFAIR

Issues presented

Racist threats, violence, and intimidation

State police did not comply with governor's orders

Systems involvement and resolution

Justice system, State police

The charges were eventually dropped but there were no restorative measures.

The public safety commissioner refused to follow the governor's orders.

Injury or harm resulting

Acute and intense trauma from the shooting.

Pain associated with being accused of adultery in a very public manner.

The media storm associated with this likely added to the stress.

Clear racism throughout the incident.

Letting a white shooter off the hook so easily could encourage others to do similar things.

JAM BOARD

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UNMARKED GRAVES AND STATE INSTITUTIONS

During the operation of State institutions like the Vermont State Hospital in Waterbury (1834-2011*), when a person died in the institution, their relatives had roughly 48 hours to claim bodies or provide instructions for burial.

Before, during, and after the Eugenics Survey of Vermont, the State placed people in these institutions because the State deemed them “defective.” The goal was to separate them from society to prevent their reproduction and socialization with “non-defectives.”

We will discuss these institutions more at another Emblematic Case Meeting.

*The Vermont State Hospital was founded as the Vermont Asylum for the Insane in 1834. The name was changed to the Vermont State Hospital for the Insane in 1898 and then to the Vermont State Hospital in 1943.

UNMARKED GRAVES AND STATE INSTITUTIONS

When bodies were unclaimed, one of two things happened:

- 1) Some people were placed in unmarked graves, sometimes with no formal record of the burial.
- 2) Up to this point, medical schools and institutions as well as medical students robbed graves to get cadavers to study anatomy. A law passed in 1884 to address graverobbing but allowed use of unclaimed bodies from those who died at State institutions for scientific and educational purposes. If a body was unclaimed, a doctor could request this body. This practice persisted into the 1960s at UVM; people did not explicitly provide consent for their bodies to be used in this manner.
 - Note: this was a common practice across the US. Doctors and medical students across the country disproportionately targeted Black bodies to use as cadavers (Nuriddin et al. 2020).

UNMARKED GRAVES AND STATE INSTITUTIONS

- In the case of an unmarked gravesite at the Waterbury hospital, this site was abandoned for decades.
- The site has somewhere between 19 and 30 people, who have not all been identified. One person in the gravesite is a woman who died in childbirth; she is buried with her child. We don't know why everyone in the gravesite died; one person died from being scalded to death. Some of the reasons for a person being an inmate at the hospital include "change of life," "genetics," and "masturbation."
- In 1991, a marker was placed at the gravesite, but the site was abandoned again until 2012 when the State began to maintain the site again.
- The site is now near a biking trail and will be maintained and fenced off.

UNMARKED GRAVES AND STATE INSTITUTIONS

- Vermont Representative Ann Donahue found in her research that there was likely a second unmarked site, but she has not yet been able to identify it.
- Poor farms and other state institutions may have more unmarked gravesites. Many have unmaintained gravesites and graves without named markers.
- These graves were most often for people that society had marginalized and discriminated against.
- The Rutland Poor Farm cemetery almost became a site for a Regional Transfer Station (waste disposal). Thomas Griffin, President of the Vermont Old Cemetery Association, worked to ensure that the people there would be remembered by placing a marble marker.

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UNMARKED GRAVES AND STATE INSTITUTIONS

Issues presented

Unmarked and unknown gravesites mean that many instances of discrimination are now hidden. Further, the people interred in these sites have not had the dignity of marked graves or records that might better contextualize their deaths within specific instances of systemic discrimination.

Use of bodies of marginalization populations for medical research/education. UVM has not formally or publicly apologized for this practice.

Systems involvement and resolution

Vermont repealed the law allowing exhumation of corpses for scientific or educational purposes.

The legislature passed a resolution (H.555) asking that the unmarked gravesite at Waterbury hospital be maintained.

Rep Ann Donahue has introduced a bill (H.528) seeking to create an inventory of unmarked grave sites across the State - this could be a key step in providing closure for families and dignity for those who were buried.

Injury or harm resulting

Lack of dignity provided by a proper and marked burial.

Erasure of the context of their deaths, many of which likely deal with systematic discrimination against people with disabilities.

Lack of closure for the families of those who essentially disappeared in State institutions.

The use of corpses in medical research that the person never consented to while living.

JAM BOARD

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Historic Context for Present Truths

Not welcoming

Invisibility and Hypervisibility

Paradoxical

Racism

Normalization of racism

Impunity is the soul of white supremacy

The legacy of the name of the location living on is violent

Internalized superiority.

Lack of recognition of others as human beings

What is the role of the TRC beyond what the press has already investigated and reported?

Slavery persists through mass incarceration

Residual effect is racist social consciousness and lack of recursive examination of continued laws.

VT is the whitest state and they sell VT as being white. It is discriminatory.

Just because a place may be anti-slavery for the most part does not mean it is pro-black. Historically the same issues of racism and discrimination persist here

lack of knowledge about history of slavery in VT. "Vermont Exceptionalism"

Continued slavery was a way to mark Vermont as a white space

VT does not want Black people here

An extractive economic belief system that values wealth accumulation over human wellbeing and ecosystem stewardship

This is the foundation of Vermont - the unspoken happenings and the quiet racism. It is insidious. You never know where you fit in a place that is not upfront with their values. #fake

VT Sells being "white"

Vermont allowed enslaving children

The police never believe Black people

the government does not seek justice - they are complicit

Lack of safety

The Irasburg Affair still resonate today with Black Vermonters being hyper policed and white perpetrators having impunity

This impunity creates a lack of trust in police institutions in VT

Invisibility even in death

Throwing away of people

Definition of disability obscured by social constructs and perceptions

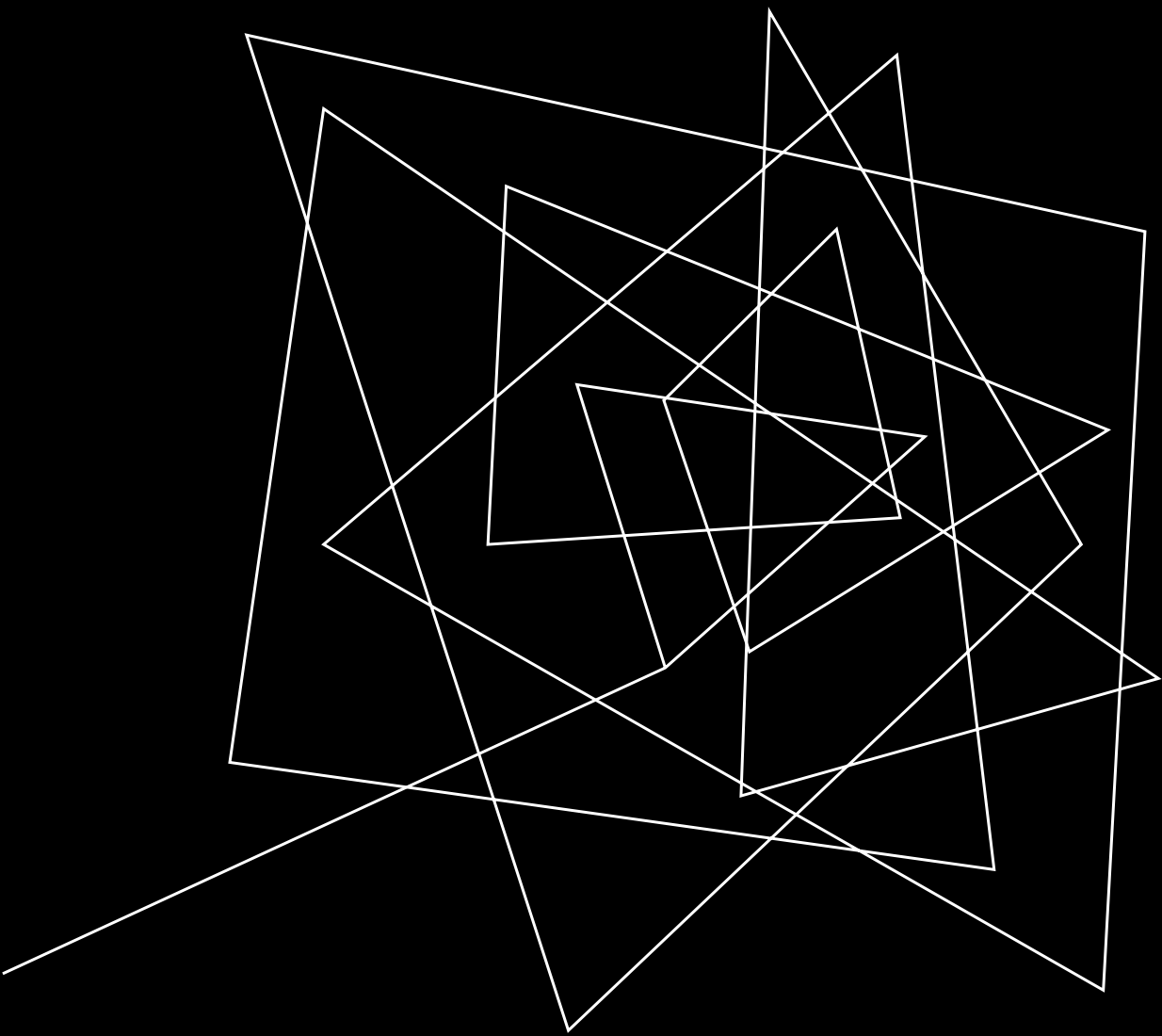
Even marked graves were violated

Habitually overlooking voices that are undervalued.

How about Indigenous burial grounds?

What laws and policies around burial grounds

Who are the people buried there? What are their names?



INCARCERATION



SENTENCING AND RACE

Medical care and
incarceration

Racial disparities in
prisons

MEDICAL CARE AND INCARCERATION

- A Black man complained of shortness of breath while incarcerated. On the night he died, he spent four hours asking to go to the hospital. Nursing staff told him to be quiet and threatened to move him to a cell without a bed if he did not stop. The next morning, staff found that the man was not breathing. He was transported to the hospital and pronounced dead.
- A white man had told prison staff about chest pain and difficulty breathing while incarcerated. The medical provider gave him a word search to help with his “anxiety.” The man died of bacterial endocarditis.
- In 2019 the ACLU and the Center of Law and Health Policy Innovation at Harvard Law School filed a lawsuit challenging the State’s refusal to treat inmates with chronic Hepatitis C, a dangerous and potentially fatal infectious disease. A drug is available that has few side effects and can cure Hepatitis C. Hepatitis C can be prevented.
- On October 18, 2021, the US DOJ reached a settlement with the VT DOC over failure to comply with the ADA, including for patients with mobility and hearing needs.

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MEDICAL CARE AND INCARCERATION

Issues presented

Inequitable access for care for prisoners with disabilities.

Lack of provision of essential medical care and technologies in Vermont prisons.

Lack of ADA compliance.

Systems involvement and resolution

DOC

VTDOC and USDOJ reached a settlement over failure to comply with the ADA. Recent court records argue the problem is ongoing.

Injury or harm resulting

Death.

Severe health outcomes, potentially including death, for individuals with Hepatitis C.

Lack of appropriate care for prisoners with disabilities.

JAM BOARD

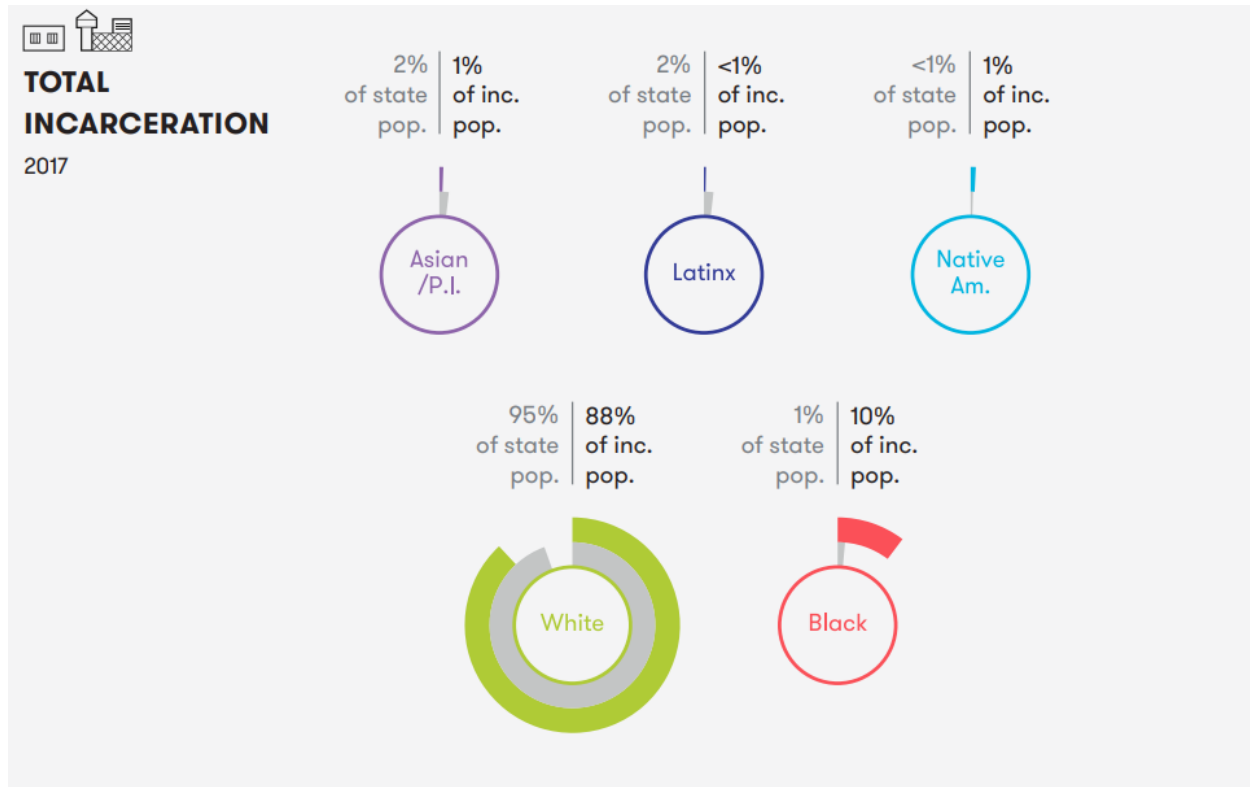
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RACIAL DISPARITIES IN PRISONS

- Vermont incarcerates more of its population (288 of 100,000) than the UK (129 per 100,000), Portugal, Canada, France, Belgium, Italy, and other countries. However, Vermont's incarceration rate is lower than the US's rate of 664 per 100,000 people.
- According to a 2016 report, Vermont has the highest rate of incarcerated Black adult men in the country and the third highest rate of incarceration for African-Americans overall (The Sentencing Project 2016).
- Black Vermonters make up 1% of the State's population but 10% of incarcerated Vermonters.
- Since 1978, Black incarceration in Vermont has increased 1904%.
- In 2017, Black people in Vermont were incarcerated at 7.6x the rate of White people.

RACE DISPARITIES IN PRISONS



- This is a chart from the Vera Institute showing incarceration trends in Vermont in 2017.
- Asian and Pacific Islanders make up 2% of the State population and 1% of the incarcerated population.
- Latinx/e people make up 2% of the state population and less than 1% of the incarcerated population.
- Native Americans make up less than 1% of the State population and 1% of the incarcerated population.
- White people make up 95% of the state population and 88% of the incarcerated population.
- Black people make up 1% of the State population and 10% of the incarcerated population.

RACIAL DISPARITIES IN PRISONS

- Black Vermonters are 14x more likely than white Vermonters to be a defendant in a felony drug case (Bastomski et al. 2022).
- Black Vermonters convicted of a felony drug offense are also 18% more likely to be incarcerated than white Vermonters, who are often given more alternatives to incarceration.
- Compared to white Vermonters, Black Vermonters are 3.5x more likely to be defendants in a misdemeanor case and 5.9x more likely to be defendants in felony cases.
- This is a result and legacy of enslavement.

RACIAL DISPARITIES IN PRISONS

- The impacts of the enslavement of millions of Africans continue to be felt today.
- Lack of ability to accumulate generational wealth because of discriminatory lending policies have contributed to lack of economic stability among Black people.
- In Vermont and across the country, Black people make up a disproportionate amount of the prison population and arrests.
- Black students make up 3% of the school population but 13% of school arrests and 9% of referrals to law enforcement (Police Out of Schools 2023).
- Black boys with disabilities have the highest overall arrest rates in schools; Black girls are the most disproportionately represented in school arrests.
- 72% of white households in Vermont own their homes compared to 24% of Black households (Vermont Housing Needs Assessment 2020).
- In Burlington, white non-Hispanic median income is \$63,000 compared to \$39,000 for Black Vermonters, and \$48,000 for Hispanic Vermonters.

RACE DISPARITIES IN INCARCERATION

- From school age to adulthood, Black people are told that they are criminals.
- Lack of economic opportunity means that people must pursue extralegal means to get financial security for themselves and their families.
- Black people are then disproportionately targeted by law enforcement and placed into institutions that are also disproportionately Black.
- In many states, prisoners perform hard labor at prison plantations, which produce roughly \$2 billion of goods annually (Moser 2023).
- As a result, the US is reaping benefits from the legacy of enslavement and ongoing violence against Black people and other people of color. Even in states where slavery is illegal, the legacy of enslavement continues to drive inequity.

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RACIAL DISPARITIES IN PRISONS

Issues presented

Vermont's justice system disproportionately imprisons Black Vermonters.

Systems involvement and resolution

Vermont justice system, VT DOC.

Introduction of S.108, a bill proposing establishment of Bureau of Racial Justice Statistics and the Bureau of Racial Justice Statistics Advisory Panel. It is in committee since 2021.

Injury or harm resulting

Lack of access to livelihoods, emotional health, familial health, etc., that is disproportionate among Black Vermonters relative to other Vermonters.

These disparities exacerbate systemic inequality and oppression in Vermont and send consistent messaging about who is and is not welcome in society.

These trends exemplify and contribute to stereotypes of Black people being more “dangerous” than other races. This messaging causes significant harm to Black Vermonters.

JAM BOARD

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Incarceration

Does the State of VT draw profits from the inmates' labor?

Medical care accessibility

Who are the inmates?
Poor & Working class or white collar criminal?

People who are incarcerated are expendable

The humanity with which we treat incarcerated people reflects who we are

Anyone who has hep C in VT should receive treatment (regardless of incarceration status)

Also how people are treated and how their health is will effect how they are able to manage when they rejoin the outside world

Racism is present in our criminal justice system

How do we have more Black people incarcerated than not

School to prison pipeline

Media influences the perception

It boils down to how we define crime which is highly racialized

also I wonder what the difference is for people charged versus incarcerated and how that percentage differs by race

Legacy of slavery but also the 'war on drugs'

Lack of opportunity and ability to thrive leads to crime

Root causes not addressed by state

Our ideas of punishment are related to how bad or good we think that person is inherently.

High Black-to-White ratio of incarceration in VT is an afterlife of slavery a way to reify white supremacy

The visible "invisibility" of marginalization in Vermont



THANK YOU!

Our next emblematic case meeting will be March 20th from 1-4pm.

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