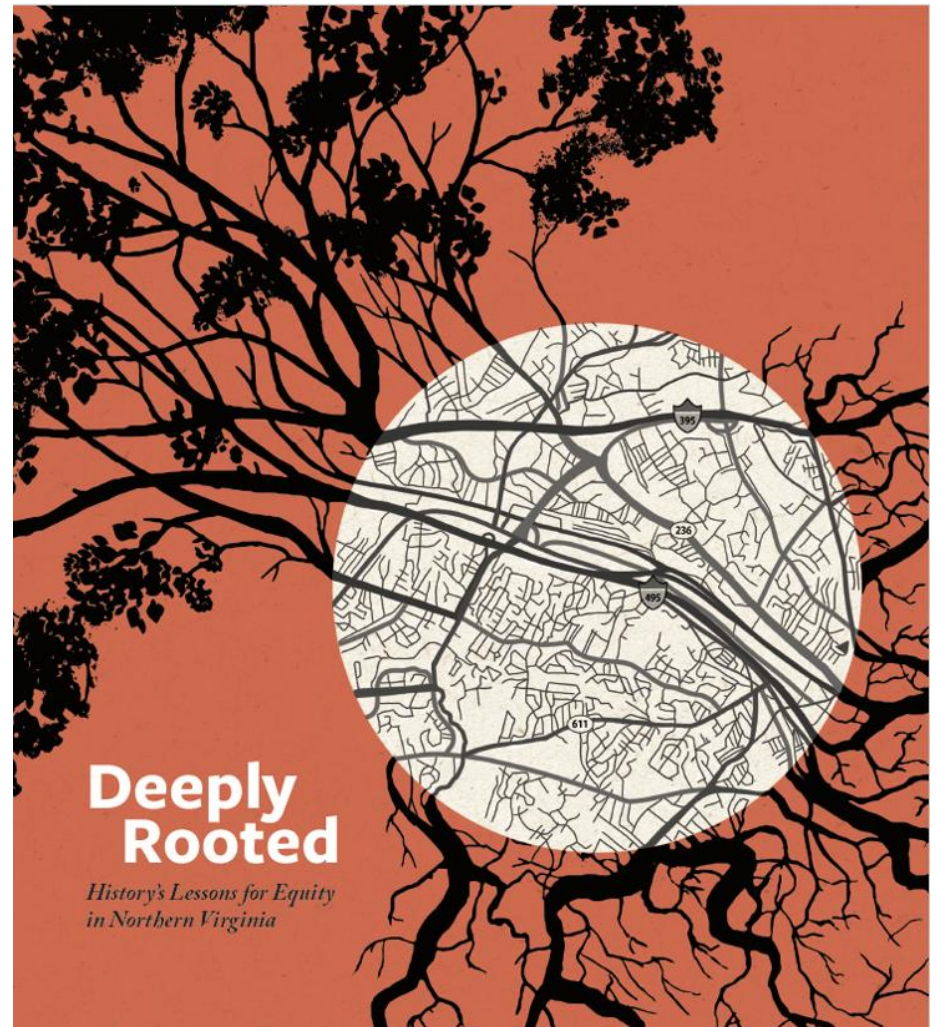


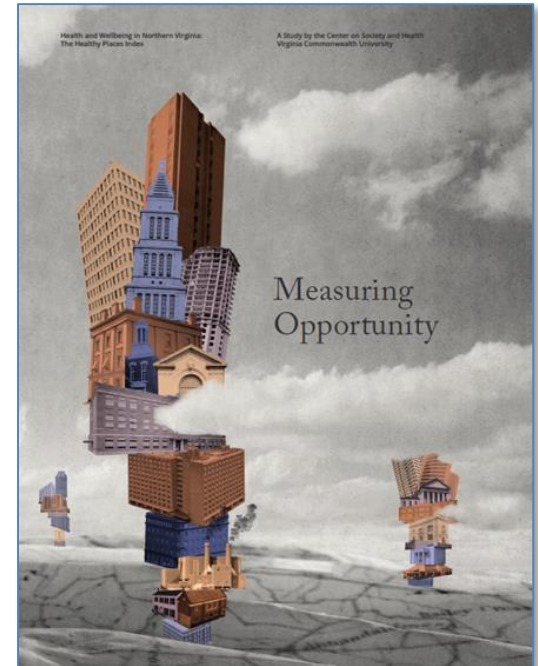
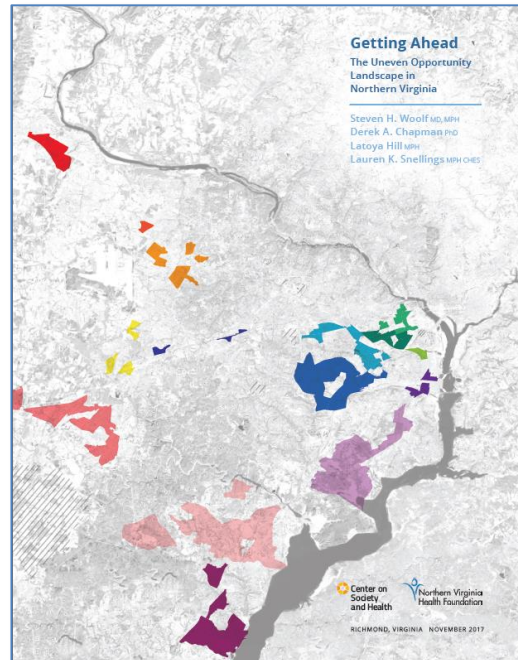
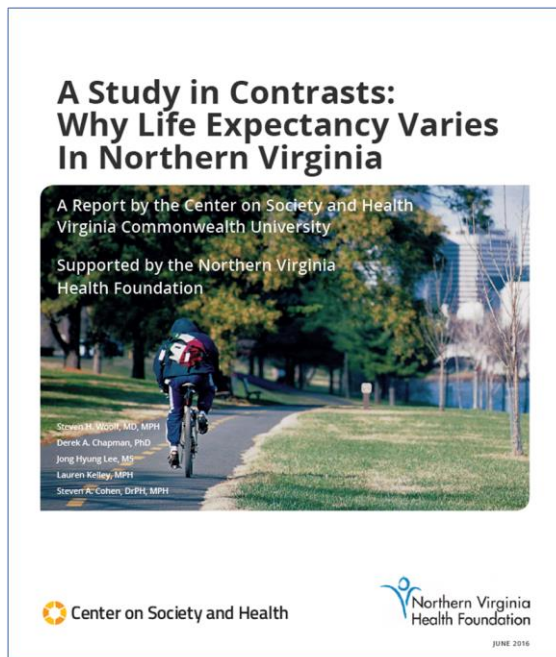
# ***Deeply Rooted: History's Lessons for Equity in Northern Virginia***

A report to the  
Region Forward Coalition  
Metropolitan Washington  
Council of Governments  
January 28, 2022

Steven H. Woolf, MD, MPH  
Center on Society and Health  
Virginia Commonwealth University



# Prior studies commissioned by Northern Virginia Health Foundation

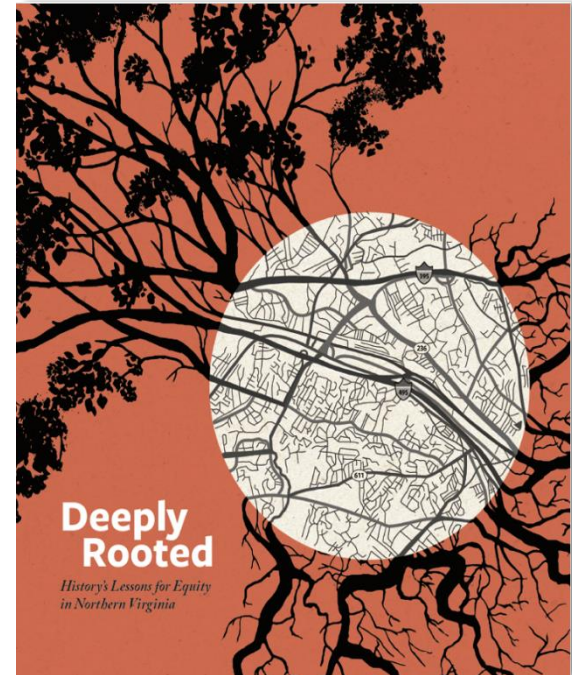


# Rollout of “Deeply Rooted”: November 15, 2021



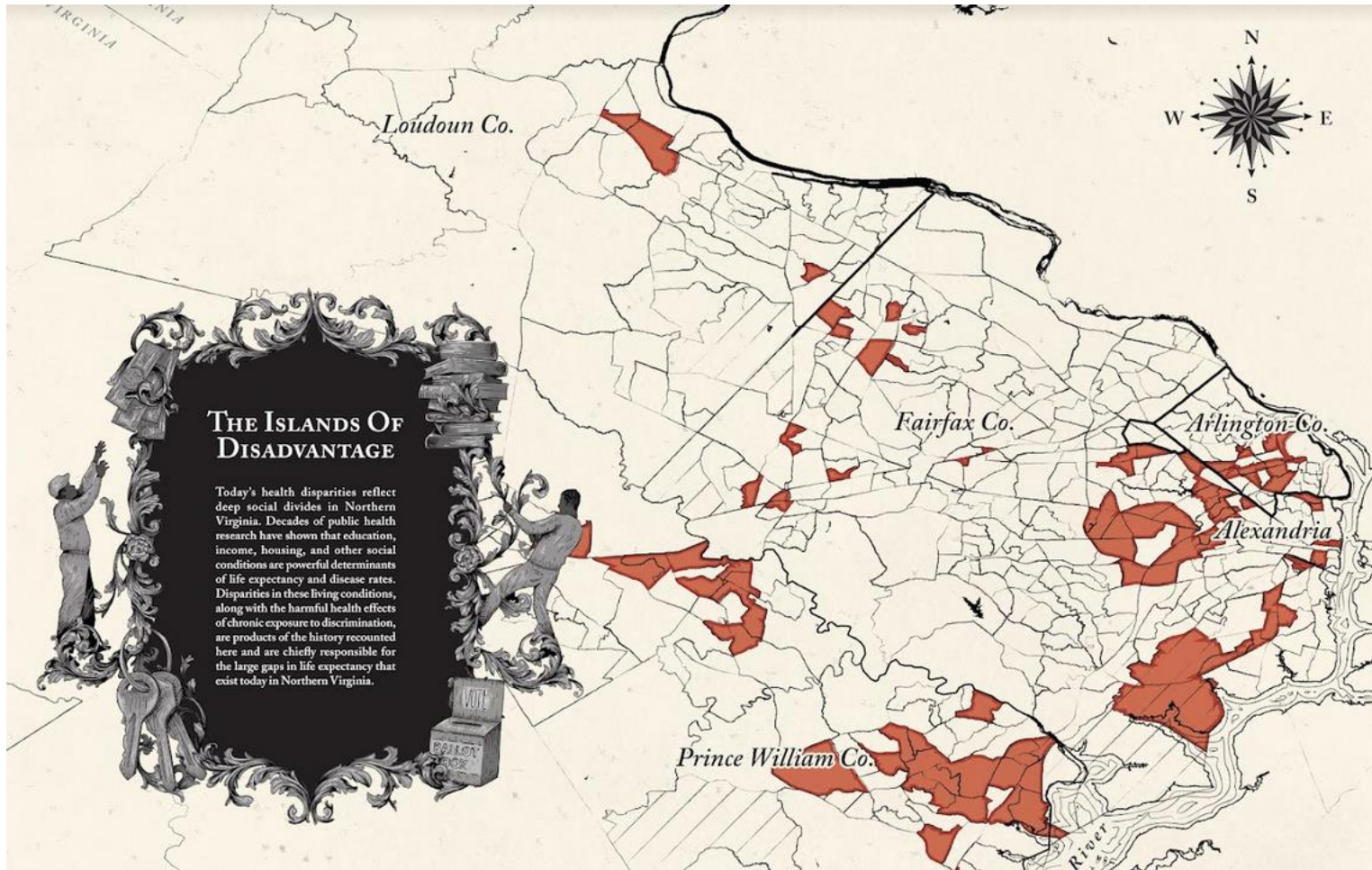
**Project website**

<https://historyfortomorrow.org/>



**Publication**

# 15 “Islands of Disadvantage” in Northern Virginia



# Themes of report

- Looking back: what history teaches us
  - Colonialism and the birth of systemic privilege
  - Historic and systemic barriers to opportunity
    - Freedom and safety
    - Wealth building and property
    - Education
    - Jobs
    - Civil liberties
  - Resilience
  - Resistance
- Looking forward: history's lessons for tomorrow

If past policies produced the present, today's policies can change the future

# Project details

- Conducted 2020-2021
- Focus on African American experience
- Anchored to 15 “islands of disadvantage”
- Historical research, archival materials, photography, newspaper articles, broadcast recordings, local libraries, private collections
- Northern Virginia defined as the City of Alexandria, Arlington County, Fairfax County, Loudoun County, and Prince William County (and the independent cities of Fairfax City, Falls Church, Manassas, and Manassas Park).
- 14-member advisory group

# Colonialism and the Birth of Systemic privilege

# The arrival of the British landed gentry

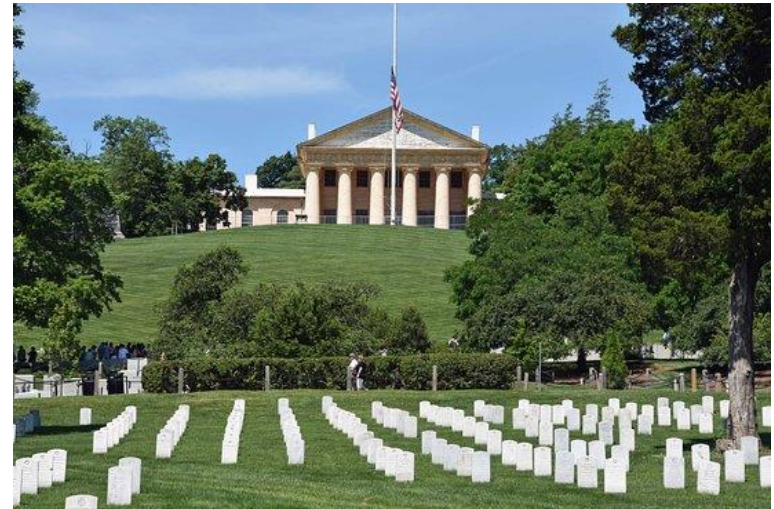
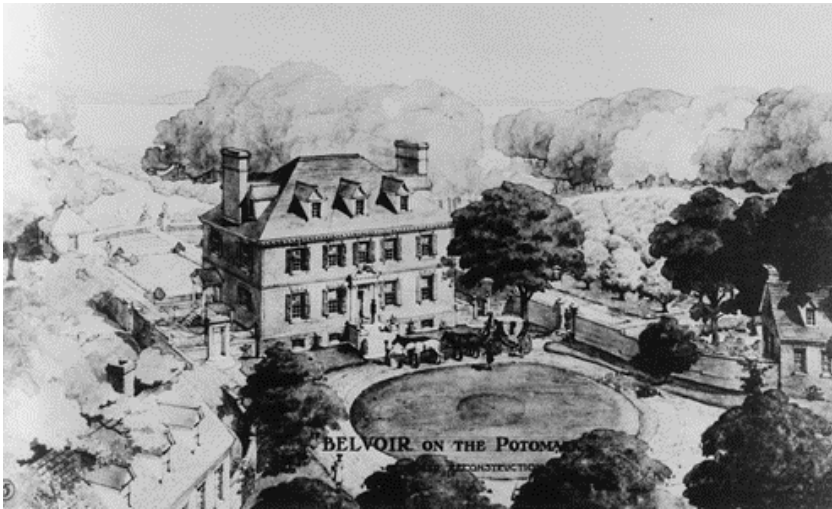


Northern Neck Proprietary, granted by Charles II in 1649





# Plantation legacy in Northern Virginia



# Freedom and Safety

# Enslavement in Northern Virginia

- Began in early 1600s
- By 1782, 41% of Fairfax County population was enslaved
- Port of Alexandria: center of slave trade
- Virginia: largest enslaved population of any Confederate state



Price, Birch, and Company, Alexandria, Virginia, ca. 1861  
Originally owned by Franklin & Armfield, the nation's largest slave trading firm

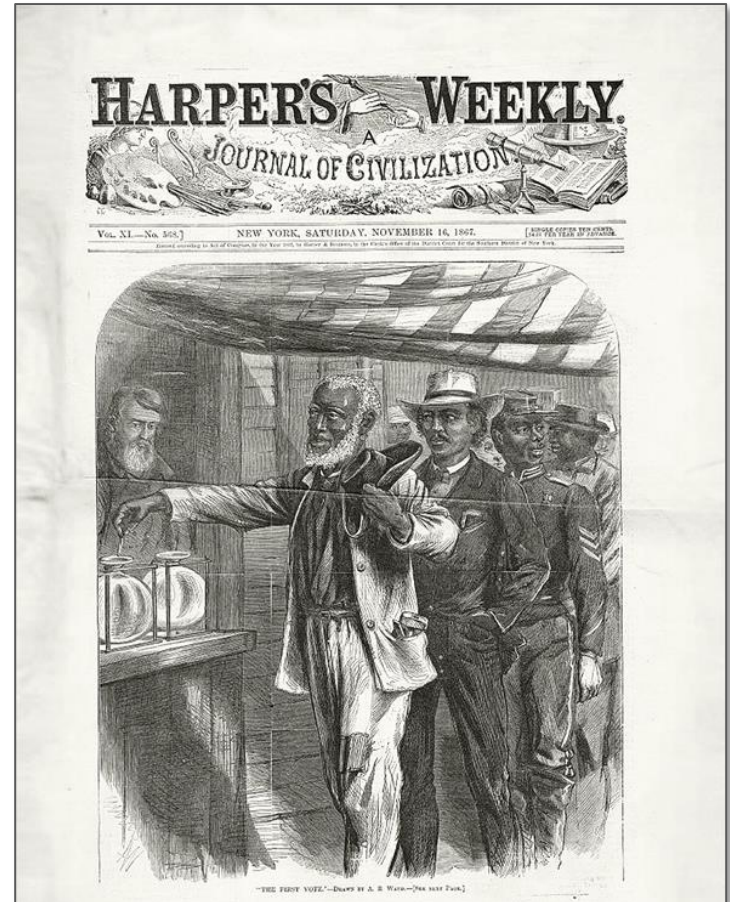
# Reconstruction reforms, and the backlash

## Reforms

- 1865: 13<sup>th</sup> amendment
- 1866: Civil Rights Act
- 1867: Virginia State Constitutional Convention
- 1868: 14<sup>th</sup> amendment
- 1870: 15<sup>th</sup> amendment

## Backlash in Virginia

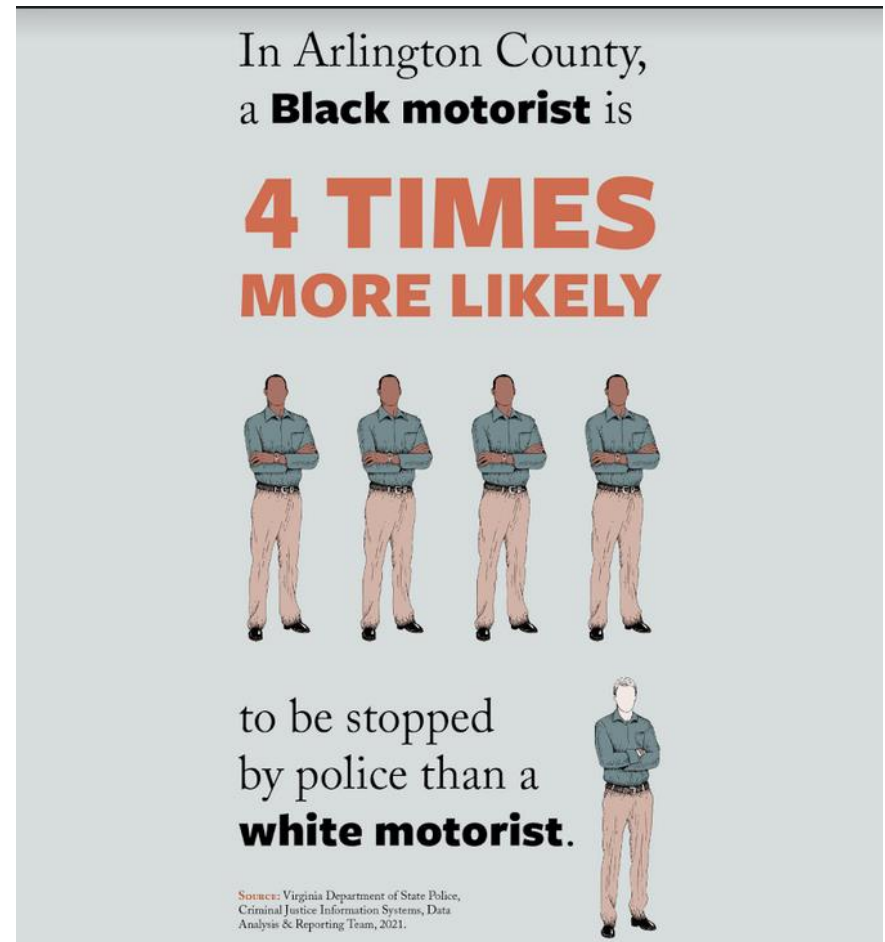
- 1873: Virginia General Assembly passes racially restrictive laws
- 1876: Poll tax instituted by General Assembly
- 1883: Civil Rights Act ruled unconstitutional
- 1894: Literacy test instituted by General Assembly
- Black passengers beaten on Northern Virginia trolley cars
- Ku Klux Klan activity
- Lynchings in Leesburg and Alexandria
- 1902 Virginia State Constitutional Convention



"The First Vote." Cover of November 16, 1867 issue of *Harper's Weekly*

# Changing the Future: Promoting freedom and safety today

- *“Leaders in Northern Virginia should ensure that all residents have a voice and can participate in decision-making and leadership. Initiatives aimed at improving the safety of people of color in Northern Virginia are urgent.”*
- Systemic racism in law enforcement and criminal justice
- Sentencing reforms



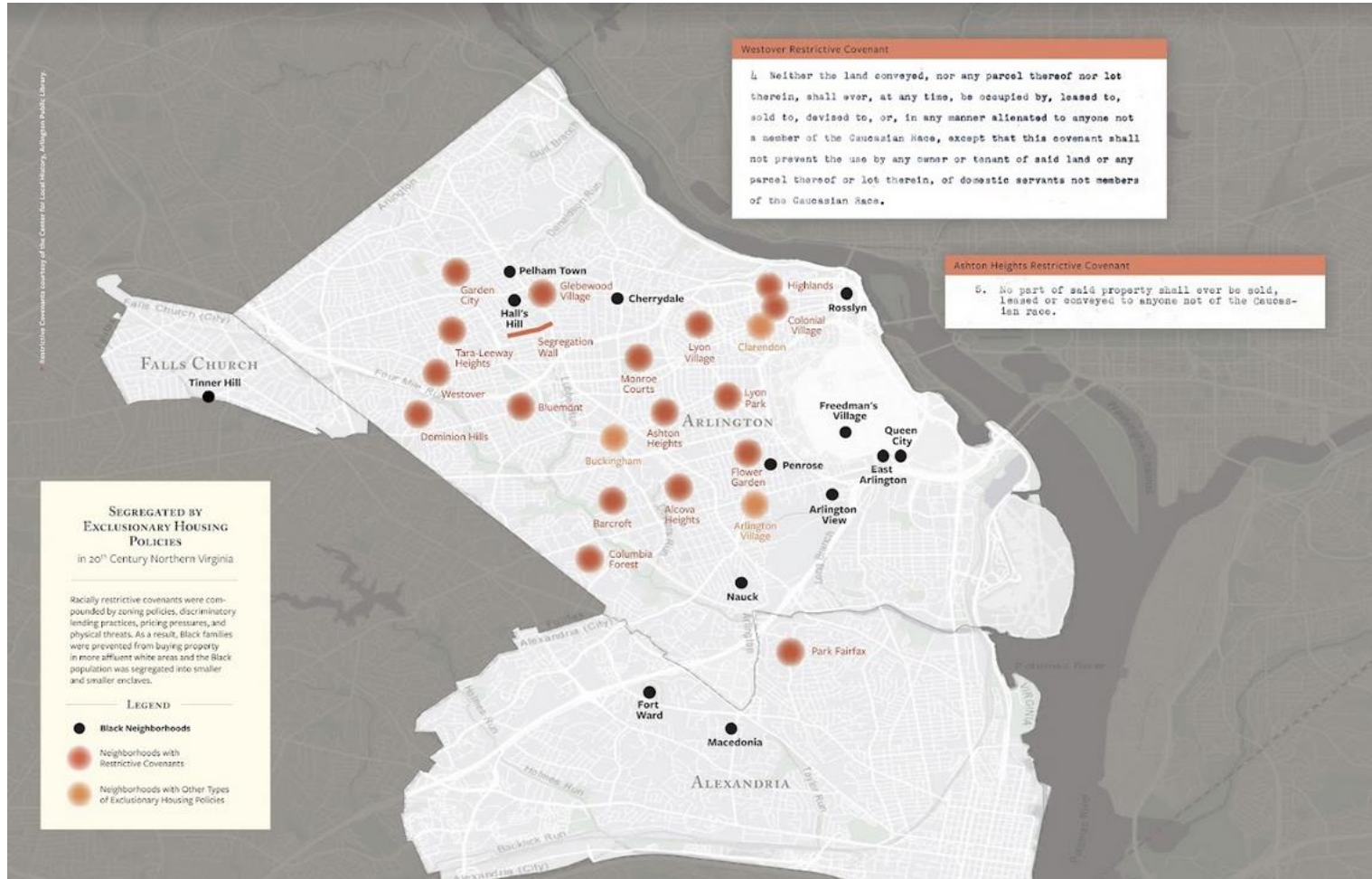
# Wealth Building and Property

# Growth in Black land and home ownership



Tinner family home in Falls Church, late 1800s

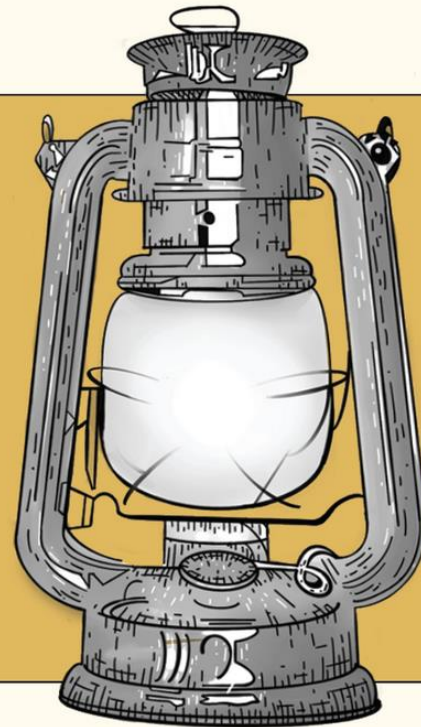
# Barriers to expansion of property ownership



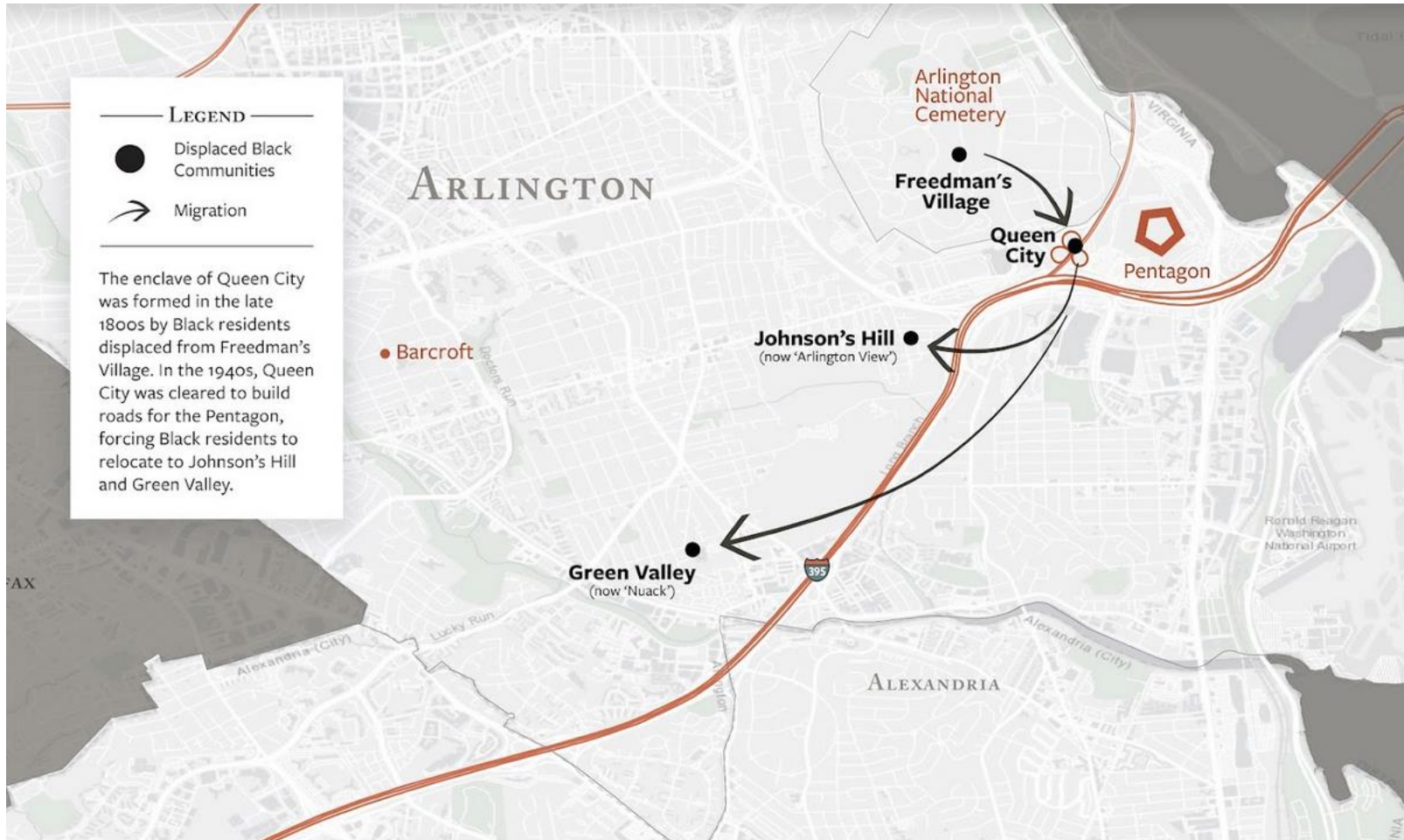


# Restrictions in utilities and economic resources for Black communities

*In the 1930s and 1940s, it was common for residents of Black enclaves like Hall's Hill to place lanterns in their windows to light the streets at night.*



# Displacement: a historic pattern



# Eminent domain and the Pentagon



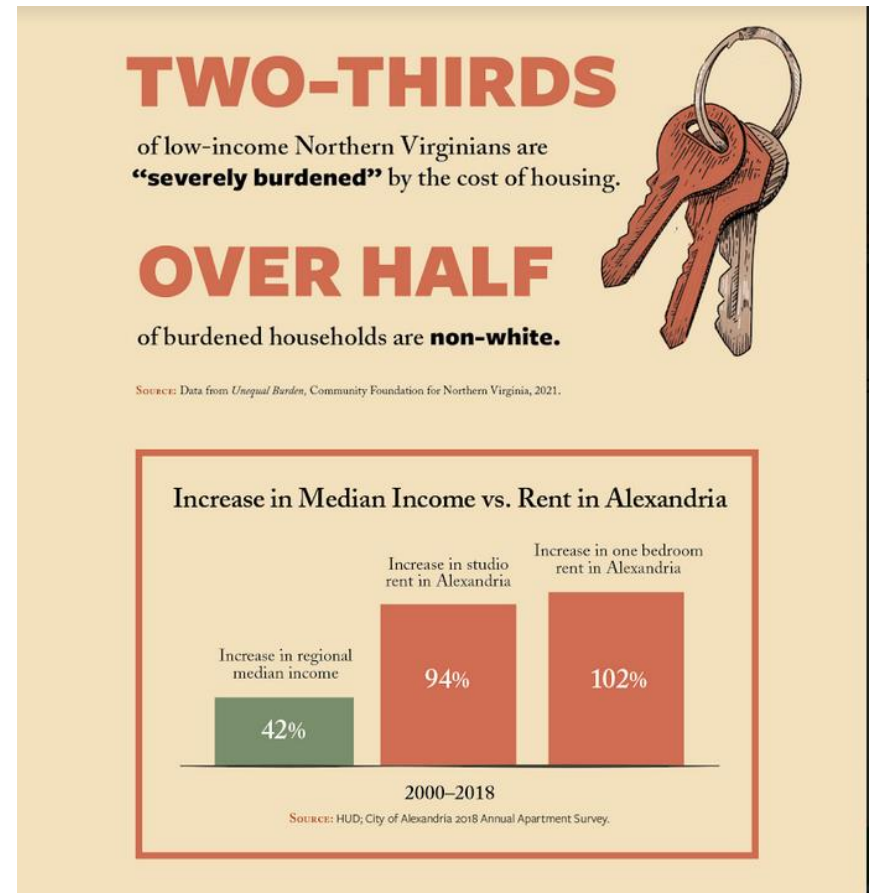
# The price of a cloverleaf



*Trailer camp for displaced Black residents, Arlington, 1942. Library of Congress.*

# Changing the Future: Promoting wealth building and property ownership

- “Policies to reduce racial inequities in wealth distribution and property ownership in Northern Virginia are a recognized priority of state and local governments.”
- Limits on exclusionary zoning
- Rental assistance
- Landlord-tenant laws and evictions
- Low-interest loans
- Full-service banking
- Mixed-income neighborhoods
- 2019 MWCOG targets
- Land banks
- Housing conservation districts
- Housing choice voucher programs
- Baby bonds



# Education

# Enthusiasm for education in the Black community of Northern Virginia



Falls Church Colored School, 1930s

# Virginia's policy of "Massive Resistance"

**The Weather**  
RICHMOND: Sunny, not so cold today. Increasing cloudiness, rain Friday.  
VIRGINIA: Fair, high 25-45 today. Mostly cloudy, rain or snow Friday.  
Local Data on Page 2

**Adolf Hitler**  
Was Hitler mad? No, says his personal valet, in today's chapter on the Fuehrer's life. Page 20.

## Richmond Times-Dispatch

105th Year    Volume 105 Number 288    Daily and Sunday, by mail, \$20 a year.    Richmond 11, Virginia, Thursday, December 1, 1955    Dial 7-1851    Second-Class Mail Privilege Authorized at Richmond, Va.    5 Cents

### Stanley Asks Swift Gray Bill Approval

#### Assembly Agrees to Limit Action to Referendum Plan

**By James Latimer**

The Virginia General Assembly moved with deliberate speed yesterday to meet Governor Stanley's call for a swift, far-reaching revision of public school policy.

Stanley told the legislators "it is imperative to act now" and adopt emergency legislation providing for an early constitutional referendum urged in the Gray Commission's program for averting compulsory racial integration in the schools.

There were increasing signs the Assembly would respond favorably and pass the one bill it was called into special session to consider—the referendum bill—by Friday or Saturday.

Opposition to the bill, which would have Virginians vote on whether a constitutional convention should make possible the use of public funds for private schooling, apparently was weakening among Assembly members—though many opponents from outside the Legislature attacked the measure at a prolonged public hearing that began yesterday afternoon and continued late into the night.

Some 50 speakers for and against the constitutional change paraded before the Senate and House Committees on Privileges and Elections, which conducted the hearing, between 3 P. M. and 11:56 P. M., when the commit-

**On the Inside Read:**  
Interposition movement deferred until regular 1956 Assembly session. Page 2.

and the vital" step in the Gray Commission's program.

A joint resolution limiting the special session to consider only those bills and joint resolutions recommended by the Governor or introduced by unanimous consent was approved quickly and without dissent.

This effectively closed the special session door to any other controversial legislation—except possible amendments to the referendum bill—and postponed until the regular session any action on proposals that Virginia inter-



**RECORD CROWD PACKS HOUSE FOR HEARING**—What seemed to be the largest crowd ever to turn out for a legislative hearing jammed the hall of the House of Delegates yesterday for the public debate on the Gray Commission's referendum bill. Standing, sitting, and some kneeling, the unsegregated audience listened patiently as

### Sharp Debate Held

—MAG PHOTO

**Charles E. Hughes—**  
Accused of Bribe Offer

Richmond Times Dispatch, December 1, 1955. "What seemed to be the largest crowd ever to turn out for a legislative hearing..."

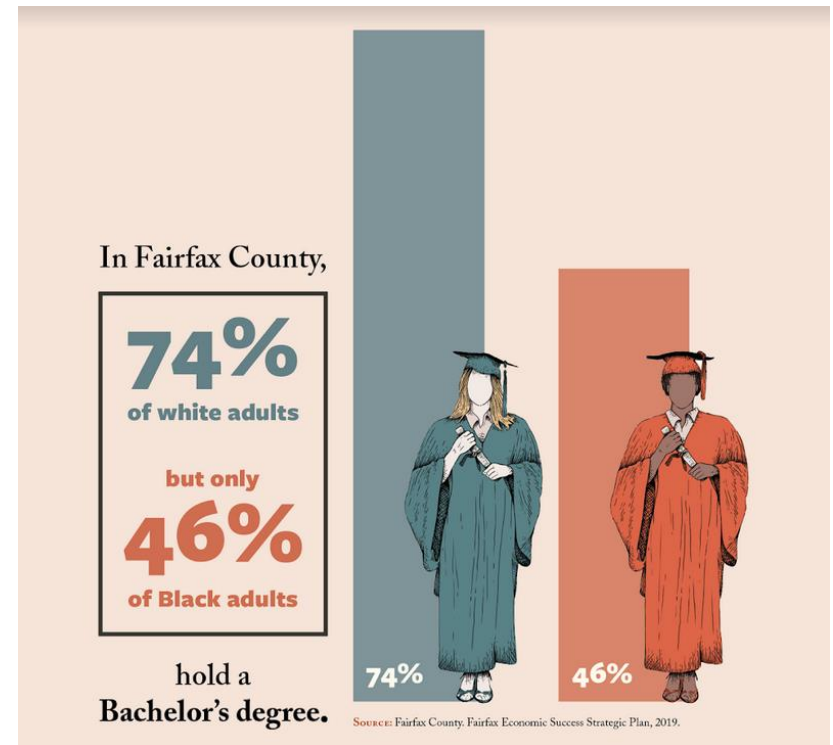


# Stratford Junior High School, Arlington, February 1959



# Changing the Future: Promoting education for all

- “School districts in Northern Virginia should strengthen initiatives to reduce dropout rates among students of color, increase high school graduation rates, and prepare students adequately for college or vocations.”
- Attendance boundaries
- Funding formulas
- Investments in under-resourced divisions
- Broadband access
- Disciplinary suspensions
- Diversity of teacher workforce
- Mentorship programs
- Early childhood education
- Access to college



# Jobs

# Barriers to employment

- Education
- Discrimination
  - Hiring
  - Wages
  - Promotion
- Discrimination in U.S. Civil Service jobs



Black laborers at the coal yard wharf in Alexandria, Civil War

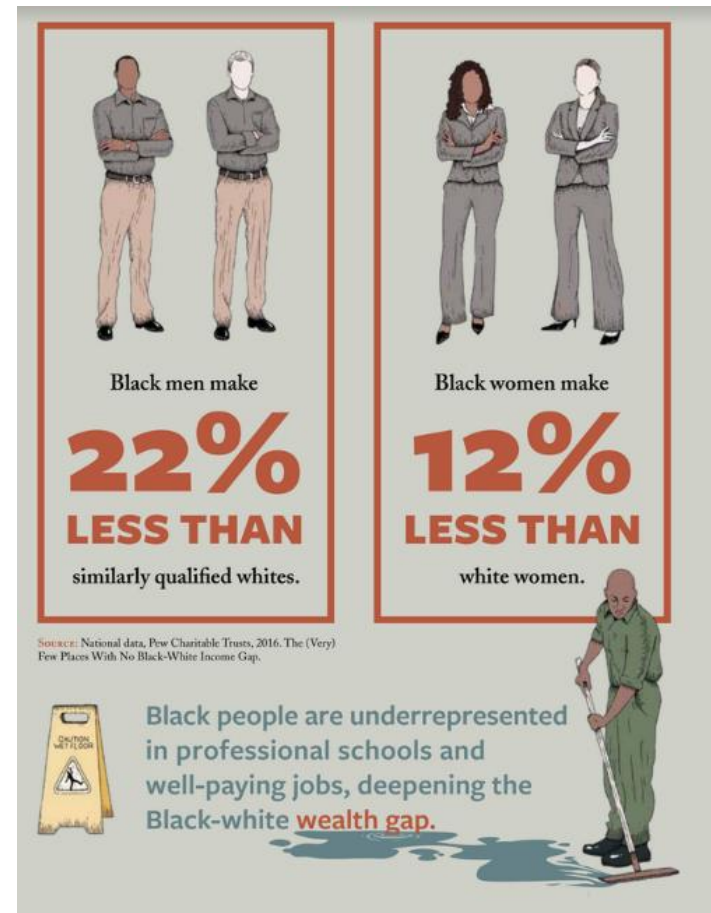
# Black-owned small business



Richard Walker at his business in Nauck, the only shoe repair shop in Arlington that served black customers

# Changing the Future: Promoting job opportunities and living wages

- “In addition to efforts to improve educational attainment among youth (see earlier), vocational training programs are needed to help workers transition to 21st century jobs.”
- Equal opportunity regulations to eliminate racial bias in hiring and promotions
- Living wage and the gig economy
- Job training programs
- Infrastructure jobs
- Anchor institutions



# Civil Liberties

# 1902 Virginia Constitution

## NO WHITE MAN TO LOSE HIS VOTE IN VIRGINIA.

This Assurance Given by Men Who Are Most Competent to  
Speak with Authority.

A Meeting was Held in Richmond on October 17, 1901, at which Chairman Ellyson  
President and Hon. John Goode and Mr. Montague Made Speeches—All Three  
Declared the Policy of the Convention in Language That Cannot Be  
Mistaken. Great Enthusiasm Aroused.

### STATE CHAIRMAN ELLYSON.

"The best men in this Commonwealth have been selected as the  
representatives of their people in the convention. They will not fail to  
be responsive to the wishes of their constituents, for every Democrat in  
that convention knows that the convention would never have been held  
but for the desire of the white people of this Commonwealth to have  
enacted such a constitutional provision as would take away from the  
negro the right to vote, and at the same time preserve to the white men of  
the Commonwealth their right of suffrage.

"I have enjoyed the best opportunities for frequent conferences and  
consultation with the members of the convention on this question. I  
think I know their views as well as any other man in the State, and I do  
not hesitate to give to you and through you to the white men of this  
Commonwealth both my personal and official assurance that that conven-  
tion has the fixed and unalterable intention of enacting a clause which  
will accomplish the end I have just mentioned and which will forever re-  
move the negro as a factor in our political affairs and give to the white  
people of this Commonwealth the conduct and control of the destinies  
which they have the right to shape and determine.

"The Democrats of Virginia have always kept the pledges made to  
the people and they will not fail to do so in this instance."—Hon. J. Tay-  
lor Ellyson, Chairman of the State Democratic Committee.

### HON. JOHN GOODE.

"The Democratic party is pledged in its platform to eliminate the  
ignorant and worthless negro as a factor from the politics of this State  
without taking the right of suffrage from a single white man, and speak-  
ing for my colleagues in the convention, I solemnly declare to you that  
they will keep this pledge to the letter."—President Goode of the Con-  
stitutional Convention.

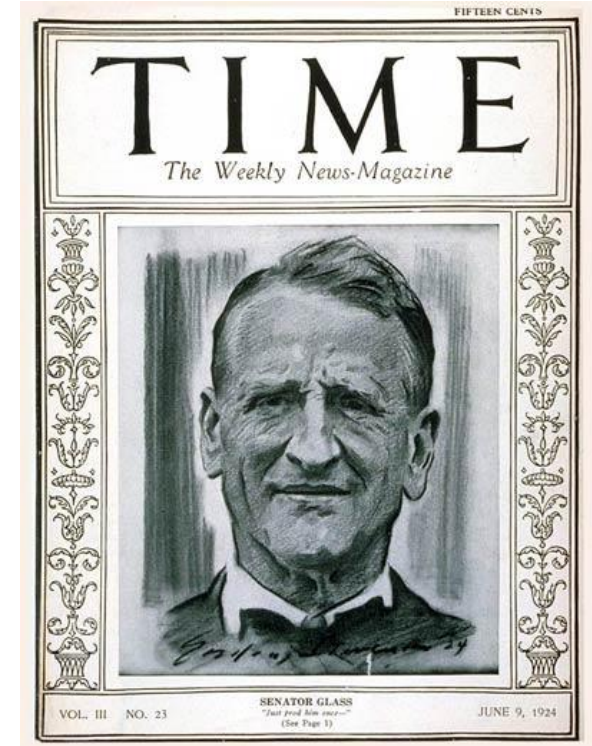
### HON. A. J. MONTAGUE.

"The Democratic party, through its representatives in the conven-  
tion, is slowly, but surely, framing a law that will so effectually exclude  
the idle, shiftless and illiterate of the negro race from the suffrage that  
the gates of republican wrath cannot prevail against it. The trouble  
with our opponents is that they realize now that we will accomplish this  
and keep the pledge that no white man will be disfranchised. I stand  
here and declare it, for I do know it is the truth."—Hon. A. J. Monta-  
gue, Democratic nominee for Governor.

*Croakside 1901. N68*

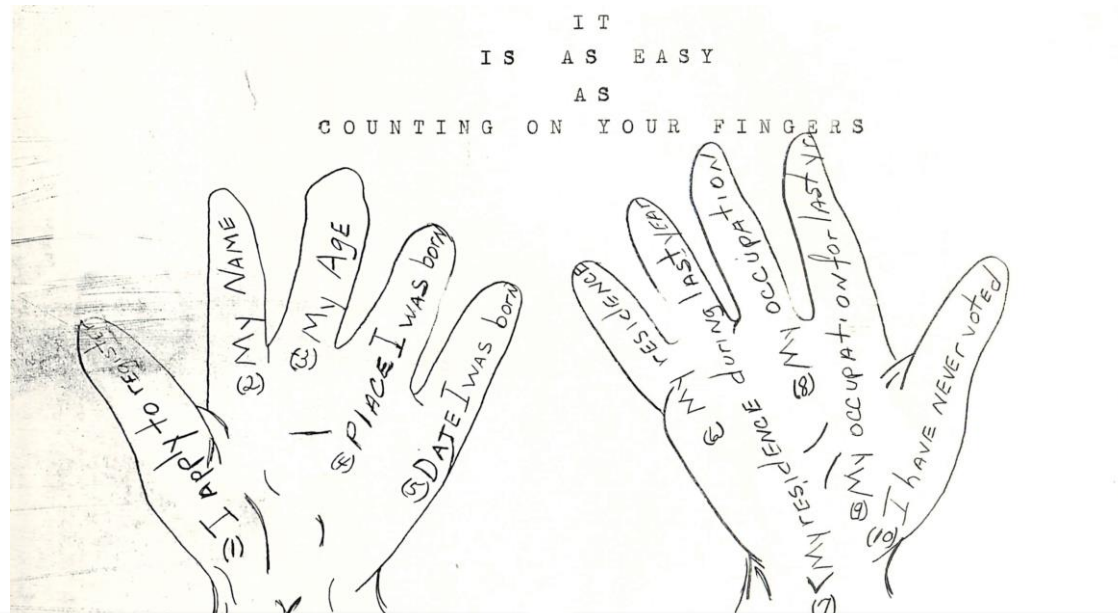
*"Discrimination! Why that is exactly what we propose... That exactly is what this convention was elected for – to discriminate to the very extremity of permissible action under the limitation of the federal Constitution, with the view to the elimination of every Negro voter who can be gotten rid of."*

Virginia Senator Carter Glass, 1902





# Voter suppression in Virginia



T O B E C O M E A Q U A L I F I E D V O T E R

1. PAY ALL POLL TAX DUE:

\$1.50 for one year, plus small interest.  
3.00 for two years, plus small interest.  
4.50 for three years, plus small interest.

A. POLL TAX THAT MUST BE PAID NOW: 1956, 1957 and 1958.

B. POLL TAX DEADLINE: May 3, 1958.  
To vote in the July Primary  
To vote in the November General  
(Elections)

L E A R N T H E S E T E N P O I N T S B E F O R E Y O U G O T O R E G I S T E R

Be able to write a letter stating them, for example:

I, ..... , age 21, apply to register. I was born in  
(1) (Your name) (3)

Maintown, Any state, on January 2, 1937. I live in ..... , Virginia, at or  
(4) (5)

near ..... I have lived there for the past year. I am a .....  
(6) (Your

..... , and have worked as such for the past year. I have never  
(7) (9) (10)

occupation) voted. (8)

.....  
(Sign Your Name)

REMINDER: To remain a qualified voter your poll tax must be paid each year  
between November 5 and December 5. Price: \$1.50.

# Jim Crow in Northern Virginia



Cherrydale Drug Fair, Arlington, 1960

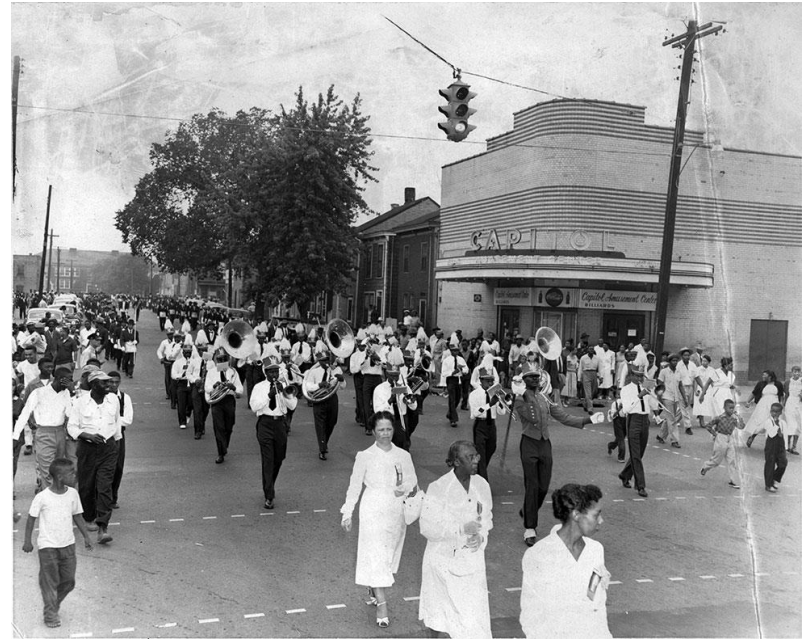
# Changing the Future: Civil Liberties

- *“The Commonwealth of Virginia and Northern Virginia jurisdictions should actively oppose efforts to roll back existing civil rights protections and continue working toward social justice for people of color.”*
- Voting rights legislation
- Access to the ballot box by formerly incarcerated people
- Discrimination and implicit bias in the workplace
- Racial equity audits of proposed legislation and budgets



# Resilience

# Creating a better life in Northern Virginia



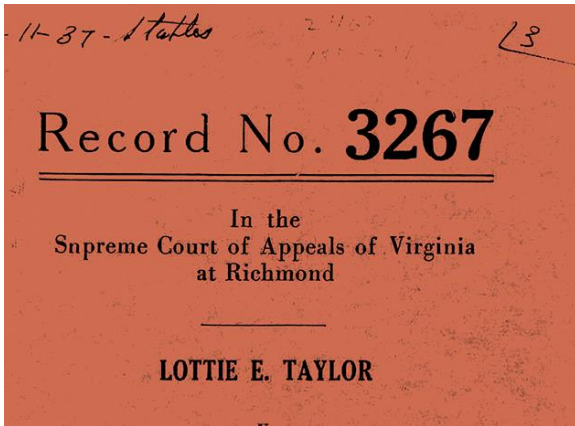
# Resistance

# Freedom to assemble



Black patrons arrested for using whites-only Alexandria public library 1939

# Desegregation of transportation



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James H. Thomas, 23, of Washington, D.C. boards the bus for a trip to Virginia on June 4, 1946, the day after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the Virginia law that mandated racial segregation of interstate buses.



# Conclusions

- *“The first step in addressing racial inequities in any community is to acknowledge the past, with honest and full transparency.”*
- Introspection necessary to expose the vestiges of systemic racism in current and proposed policies
- If past policies created inequities, today’s policies can change the future
- Bold action is required to redress embedded structures of racial hierarchy
- We must reimagine systems that emphasize fair and respectful treatment of everyone
- “Nothing about us without us.” Meaningful solutions must be designed with everyone at the table