

6/15/18

## An Historical Timeline of Reparations Payments Made by the United States

Government, States, Cities, and Universities

By Allen J. Davis, Ed.D.

### Methodology:

With the superb assistance and encouragement of Mary Hubbard, Assistant Director of the Peterborough Library (NH), Andrew Reiter, Professor of Transitional Justice, Mount Holyoke College, and Lisa Di Valentino, MLIS, JD, PhD, Law Librarian at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, I have completed a comprehensive review of the reparations payments literature, with regard to the United States, online and in books, articles, and academic journals.

I look forward to hearing about reparations payments that my research missed.

Definition of Reparations: The act of making amends, offering expiation, or giving satisfaction for a wrong or injury (Merriam-Webster).

### Reparations Payments Made in the United States by the Federal Government, States, Cities, Religious Institutions, and Colleges and Universities

1866: Southern Homestead Act: "Ex-slaves were given 6 months to purchase land at reasonable rates without competition from white southerners and northern investors. But, owing to their destitution, few ex-slaves were able to take advantage of the program. The largest number that did were located in Florida, numbering little more than 3,000...The program failed."

1969: The Black Manifesto was launched in Detroit as one of the first calls for reparations in the modern era. Penned by James Forman, former SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) organizer, and released at the National Black Economic Development Conference, the manifesto demanded \$500 million in reparations from predominantly White religious institutions for their role in perpetuating slavery. About \$215,000 was raised from the Episcopalian and Methodist churches through rancorous deliberations that ultimately tore the coalition apart. ("BLACK AND BLUE CHICAGO FINDS A NEW WAY TO HEAL" by Yana Kunichoff and Sarah Macaraeg, YES Magazine, Spring, 2017)

1971: \$1 billion + 44 million acres of land: Alaska Natives Land Settlement (The payments from 1971-1988 are taken from the booklet, Black Reparations Now! Part 1 40 Acres, \$50.00 and Muel by Dorothy Benton-Lewis; and borrowed from N'COBRA (National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America).

1980: \$81 million: Klamaths of Oregon

1985: \$105 million: Sioux of South Dakota for seizure of their land

1985: \$12.3 million: Seminoles of Florida

1985: \$31 million: Chippewas of Wisconsin

1986: \$32 million 1836 Treaty: Ottawas of Michigan

1988: Civil Liberties Act of 1988: President Ronald Reagan signed a bill providing \$1.2 billion (\$20,000 a person) and an apology to each of the approximately 60,000 living Japanese-Americans who had been interned during World War II. And, \$12,000 and an apology were given to 450 Unangans (Aleuts) for internment during WW II. Plus, a \$6.4 million trust fund was created for their communities

(The reparations payments from 1994-2016, with the exception of Virginia Governor Mark Warner's 2002 apology and Georgetown University's actions, come from "BLACK AND BLUE CHICAGO TRIES A NEW WAY TO HEAL" by Yana Kunichoff and Sarah Macaraeg in Yes Magazine, Spring, 2017).

1994: The state of Florida approved \$2.1 million for the living survivors of a 1923 racial pogrom that resulted in multiple deaths and the decimation of the Black community in the town of Rosewood.

1998: President Clinton signed into law the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Study Site Act, which officially acknowledges an 1864 attack by seven hundred U.S. soldiers on a peaceful Cheyenne village located in the territory of Colorado. Hundreds, largely women and children, were killed. The act calls for the establishment of a federally funded Historic Site at Sand Creek.

2002: Governor Mark Warner of Virginia issued a formal apology for the state's decision to forcibly sterilize more than 8,000 of its residents.

2014: The state of North Carolina set aside \$10 million for reparations payments to living survivors of the state's eugenics program, which forcibly sterilized approximately 7,600 people.

2015: The City of Chicago signed into law an ordinance granting cash payments, free college education, and a range of social services to 57 living survivors of police torture. Explicitly defined as reparations, which totaled \$5.5 million, the ordinance includes a formal apology from Mayor Rahm Emanuel and a mandate to teach the broader public about the torture through a memorial and public school curriculum.

2016: Georgetown University has acknowledged that the school has profited from the sale of slaves and said it would "reconcile" by naming two buildings after African Americans and offer preferred admission to any descendants of slaves who worked at the university.

2016: The state of Virginia, one of more than 30 other states that practiced forced sterilizations, followed North Carolina's lead and will soon begin awarding \$25,000 to each survivor.

2018: The Supreme Court, in a 4-4 deadlock, let stand a lower court's order that the state of Washington make billions of dollars worth of repairs to roads, where the state had built culverts-below-road channels and structures- in a way that prevented salmon from swimming through and reaching their spawning grounds, that had damaged the state's salmon habitats and contributed to population loss. The case involved the Stevens Treaties, a series of agreements in 1854-55, in which tribes in Washington State gave up millions of acres of land in exchange for "the right to take fish." Implicit in the treaties, courts would later rule, was a guarantee that there would be enough fish for the tribes to harvest. Destroying the habitat reduces the population and thus violates these treaties. This decision directly

affects the Swinomish Tribe. "A Victory For A Tribe That's Lost Its Salmon," by John Eligon, The New York Times, June 12, 2018

Footnote #1:

2017: Congressman John Conyers, D-Michigan, introduces a newly revised H.R. 40 bill, which was initially proposed to the House of Representatives in 1989 and every year since: "Commission to Study and Develop Reparations Proposals for African Americans Act: This new bill was drafted to reflect "the advances in the legal and societal discussion in the transatlantic slave trade and reparations. In the past the focus on the social effects of slavery, segregation and its continuing implications remained largely ignored by mainstream analysis...the call for reparations represents a commitment to entering a constructive dialogue on the role of slavery and racism in present-day conditions both in our community and the present-day society as a whole.

Footnote #2:

To provide an historical and world-wide context, here are a few illustrative examples of reparations paid by other countries:

(The payments from 1952-1990 are taken from Dorothy Benton-Lewis' work mentioned above).

1952: Germany: \$822 million to Holocaust survivors: German Jewish Settlement (ABC 20/20)

1988: Canada: 250,000 Sq. Miles of Land: Indians and Eskimos

1988: Canada: \$230 million: Japanese Canadians

1990: Austria: \$25 million: Holocaust Survivors

2014: France: More than 700 claims have been filed under an agreement between U.S. and France in which French officials have agreed to pay out \$60 million for the deportations carried out by SNCF, the France's railway system. In exchange, the U.S. Government agreed to ask courts to dismiss any lawsuits against SNCF or the French government.

2015: Japan: \$8.3 million to provide old-age care to Korean "Comfort Women" survivors plus a new apology.

2016: France: The State Department has paid or approved 90 claims for a total of \$11 million in reparations by France to former WW 11 prisoners who were carried to Nazi Death Camps in French trains—the first French reparations paid to Holocaust survivors in the U.S.

