

OBSERVANCE STARTER KIT PHASE 1 - JUNE 2018

REMEMBERING JAMESTOWN
OCTOBER 12-18, 2019

400 Years of Inequality is a diverse coalition of organizations and individuals calling on everyone - families, friends, communities, institutions - to plan their own solemn observance of 1619, learn about their own stories and local places, and organize for a more just and equal future. We are dedicated to dismantling structural inequality and building strong, healthy communities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Call to Remember Jamestown	4
Introduction	6
Observance Planning – Overview	10
Phase I: Organize	12
Phase I Resources	18
Information Sheet/Poster	18
400 Years of Inequality Timeline	19
7 Generations Meditation	20
I am in the Ecology of Inequality Protocol	22
I Don't Want to Live in the House of White	
Supremacy Protocol	26
Reading Guide : Voices Of a People's History	28
Readings from Voices of a People's History	29
Hidden Treasures of Orange	30
Collective Recovery	30
Links	31

A Call to Remember Jamestown

We call on everyone to prepare observances for the 400th Anniversary of the arrival in 1619 at Jamestown of the first Africans to be sold into bondage. These Africans were the first of millions that followed as slaves to work on plantations established on land stolen from the indigenous peoples of the continent.

Colonialism and slavery were soon codified into laws promoting inequality and legitimating oppression and terror. These laws and the practices they encouraged were and remain formidable barriers against efforts by Native Americans, African Americans, poor whites, and numerous other groups, to unite against the dispossession and occupation of lands, and exploitative and oppressive life and work conditions.

Some hundred years after the beginning of the trade in humans, principles that explicitly and emphatically contradicted structures of inequality and dehumanization were enshrined in the Declaration of Independence. Years later, however, the Constitution would advance one of the most pernicious accountings of human worth by asserting that slaves counted as only 3/5's of a person. The contradictions and hypocrisy evident in the founding documents is manifest today as an elaborate network of social, economic, political and spiritual divisions that reproduce ever more elaborate forms of inequality.

This accounting of personhood established in the Constitution diminishes the humanity of vast groups of people while elevating others to the status of "natural" supremacy. This ledger of worth and legitimacy constrains all our lives, including the lives of oppressors, for it is spiritually impoverished and forecloses the building of diverse, caring, joyful, and free communities.

We need desperately to link arms in radical equality.

Starting now, we can renew and strengthen the long struggle for full emancipation, equity, and justice by coming together to remember the events at Jamestown and the pernicious and persistent devaluing of persons that has been a central structure of U.S. history. We need to unify, account for the past, and assume the rights and responsibility of the future for all if we are to meet the challenges ahead. These challenges include climate change, decaying physical infrastructure, rapidly evolving jobs, underperforming schools, uneven access to health care, and a lack of affordable housing.

We call on everyone to prepare observances for the 400th Anniversary of Jamestown. We do this to denounce structures of inequality. We do this to foreground our fundamental and unconditional equality. We remember and in doing so we refuse to participate in and reproduce structures of dehumanization, exploitation, oppression, and inequity.

INTRODUCTION

Hello! Thank you for your interest in the 400 Years of Inequality initiative, specifically the Remembering Jamestown observances from October 12-18, 2019 of the anniversary of the arrival in 1619 at Jamestown of the first Africans to be sold into bondage. We have called for these observances in the conviction that, when we gather intentionally to mark the anniversaries in our lives and the lives of our communities, we both remember the events that have made our world and renew our collective commitment to the future.

The memories of Jamestown are deeply painful. They tell of centuries of bondage, enslavement, and multiple other forms of exploitation, discrimination, and oppression. These traumas live with and within us. Yet, to remember Jamestown is also to recall how people have come together repeatedly and courageously to refuse oppression and inequality. Many of us are in movements today that carry forward into the future the wisdom, energy, and dreams of our elders', including their demands for freedom and struggles against inequality. The observance of this anniversary is a time when we denounce again the inequalities of the past and announce again our vision for a world of full equality for all.

For the past year we have come together as a team to study the history of inequality. Our journey is rich in learning and comradeship. We read together and discuss how the foundations of colonialism and slavery support elaborate architectures of inequality that affect everyone's lives today. Our growing knowledge and understanding is helping us see what we have to contribute to a people's platform dedicated to realizing the desires for freedom and equality rooted in our shared histories and central to our visions of the future.

We see the 400 Years of Inequality initiative has consisting of three phases:

Phase I: Organize your team

Learn about the history of inequality in the U.S. by engaging with the voices of those who experienced and reflected on critical elements of this history.

We believe that inequality affects everyone. Structures of inequality are embedded in our institutions and practices forming a complex network we call the "ecology of inequality." To learn about the expanding structures of inequality and efforts of individuals and collectives to resist and dismantle them, we recommend coming together with others to read from Voices of a People's History and discussing what you hear. Thanks to the publisher, Seven Stories Press, you can **use this link** to get a copy at 50% off.

Phase II: Observe 1619

Prepare and hold a Remembering Jamestown observance with members of the communities with which you are connected. Participants share their histories of inequality and their efforts to expand freedom, justice, and equity.

We have designated October 12-18, 2019, as Remember Jamestown Observance Week. During that week, we envision that schools, religious organizations, civic groups, parks, monuments, and museums will hold exhibitions, assemblies, marches, installations, performances and many other kinds of observances. This thorough examination of the story of inequality will enable us to move forward

on more solid ground, toward equality and wholeness. Our partner organization, the <u>University of Orange</u>, will prepare materials to help organization's consider their local history and plan an observance. We recommend reading together with others Ernest Thompson and Mindy Thompson Fullilove's book, <u>Homebody Came to Orange:</u> <u>A Story of People's Power</u>, which describes Thompson's use of coalition to build people's power in Orange, NJ.

Phase III: Build What You're For

Build a people's platform to guide ongoing efforts to replace the era of inequality with one rooted in equity. ONE DC, another project partner, will help groups that participate in Remembering Jamestown observances articulate a People's Platform for Justice and Equality. We view this platform as one of the key outcomes of this project. It is a tool for the continuing work to dismantle the systems that reproduce and generate new forms of inequality. We want to replace them with resources and practices that uphold the rights of all when a society is truly committed to equality. We recommend reading together Reverend William Barber's. Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics, and the Rise of a New Justice Movement, which describes the building of a fusion coalition in contemporary North Carolina, which is growing into a national movement for justice.

This Starter Kit assembles the frameworks and tools we developed and gathered as we have moved through the first of these three phases. We hope they inspire and support you to gather with friends and allies and to develop your Remembering Jamestown observance.

The processes and resources outlined in the toolkit are truly just a starting point. Each Remembering Jamestown observance team will have its own way of working and will develop a way to observe the anniversary that draws on the memories, wisdom, and practices of the communities and places in which it is located. Please use what is useful or revise and replace what we provide so that your team has what it needs to move forward. Most important is that you, working as a team, create an observance that speaks to the heart of who you are, your communities, and the memories that live in the places that make you who you are.

Observance Planning – Overview

Phase I: Organize

A team of four or five people is a great help in organizing an anniversary observance. The observance you plan will reflect your local story and your values!

To begin, the team looks inward by asking why it is important to Remember Jamestown, specifically, what the observance of this memory can do for you and your communities. Learn the national and local history and identify what you want to get out of your collective efforts.

Phase II: Observe

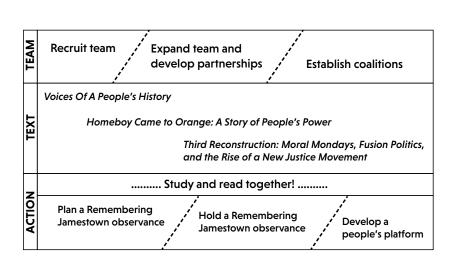
Remembering Jamestown observances are scheduled for October 12-18, 2019. You and your team determine how best to observe this anniversary. For example, it might include a performance, an exhibit, a tree planting, even a citywide potluck meal. Whatever it is, the event should be true to the goals the team identifies for the observance event.

A good way to start envisioning what you will do is to look at how anniversaries are already marked where you live. What works about these existing processes that you can build on? How can you make clear the ways in which local histories connect to long histories of inequality?

Phase III: Build

ORGANIZE

It is helpful when organizing for change to have a platform that summarizes the what, how, and why of the movement. After organizing your team, engaging your communities, and observing the 400th anniversary of Jamestown, you will have some clear ideas of what we need to do to stop the machinery of inequality. Work with your team to compose your visions for a People's Platform for Equality.



OBSERVE

BUILD

PHASE I: ORGANIZE

1) Work as a Team

The events that began at Jamestown 400 years ago have formed collective memories. To gather these memories, we must come together to share and learn. Therefore, the first step is to organize a team. Ask four or five friends, coworkers, members of your congregation—anyone you like who cares about the future of your communities and our shared world—to be on your Remembering Jamestown team. A strong, supportive team will help make this a truly meaningful process.

Resources: 400 Years of Inequality Poster Gallery

Action:

Post or circulate the 400 Years of Inequality information sheet/poster and the Call to Observance in either print or digital form (or both). See who takes note of and responds to the information. You can place your contact information on the poster and invite people to contact you if they are interested in learning more and may be interested in helping to organize a local observance of the anniversary.



2) Learn Together

To form, a team needs time to look inward. As members of the team share and hear one another's stories and read and learn together, the team's shared values, goals, and hopes for the future become clear. Taking time to listen, learn, and discuss why you are committed to this anniversary will be a great help in Phase II of the process, when the team becomes outward looking, starts to build community-wide interest, and designs a place-based observance.

Resources:

- i. 400 Years of Inequality Timeline
- ii. 7-20 Generations Meditation (p. 13-14)
- iii. I am in the Ecology of Inequality Protocol (p. 15-16)
- iv. I Don't Want to live in the House of White Supremacy Protocol (p. 17)

Action:

Review the timeline of inequality we have provided. If you have the resources to print the timeline and can mount it to a wall in a regular meeting space it will be a constant learning tool and reminder of why we need the Remembering Jamestown observances. If you have access to a computer and LCD projector, you can project the timeline on a wall so that everyone can see it. Alternately, you can gather around one or more laptops to review the timeline, or you can ask each member of the team to review the timeline and select (and maybe even print) an event or two from each century they would like to highlight.

While the timeline provides a sense of the scope of the history of inequality, our stories and the stories of our people—our families and communities—connect past to present and future actions. The "7-20 Generations" meditation and "I am in the Ecology of Inequality" and "I Don't Want to live in the House of White Supremacy" protocols invite the sharing of stories and guide discussions that draw together the knowledge within those stories. Schedule a few hours to undertake these activities together will really help strengthen your team.



3) Read Together

The history we learned in school often left out or misrepresented the history of inequality and our people's long fight for redress and a different society, one based on equality and equity. In order to plan the observances of the anniversary in 2019, we need to revisit the past together and learn as a community about efforts to win freedom and equality.

Resources:

- i. Readings from Voices of a People's History
- ii. Reading Guide (will be released Fall 2018)

Action:

We recommend reading together from Howard Zinn and Anthony Arnove's Voices of a People's History. This substantial anthology contains speeches, letters, poems, and songs authored by the unrecognized and underappreciated protagonists of history, including women, people of color, and members of social movements. Their voices are a testament to the stubborn optimism of ordinary people and the courageous acts of disobedience and dissent used to demand and manifest justice. Among the voices are those of Frederick Douglass, Chief Joseph, Sacco and Vanzetti, Patti Smith, Cesar Chavez, June Jordan, Malcolm X, Naomi Klein, and members of the Dream Defenders and Day Laborers movements.

Reading together offers a way of drawing from and sharing excerpts from Voices of a People's History.

We have included links to video recordings we have made of people reading from the book. You are welcome to circulate these or use them as part of your gatherings.

However you choose to share selections from Voices of a People's History, we strongly recommend that you make it a routine element of just about everything you do as a group. For example, you can open and close your planning meetings by having team members and others read selections from the book. Also, you might insert readings just before and after you begin the 7-20 Generations Meditation and the "I am in the Ecology of Inequality" and "I Don't Want to live in the House of White Supremacy" protocols.

Get a copy of the book - thanks to the publisher, Seven Stories Press, you can use this link for 50% off!

15



4) Be Place-Based

The observance you plan will reflect your local story and your values! The Call to Observe does not define precisely why, how, and where you and other teams across the country will hold your Remembering Jamestown observance. This is because places have their own histories and ways of remembering. A standard observance will eclipse these rich and important manifestations of inequality and local movements toward equity and justice. Remembering Jamestown observances are, in large part, ways to tell place-based stories.

Resources:

- i. <u>University of Orange Hidden Treasures of Orange</u>
- ii. Building Collective Recovery into What You DO workbook

Actions:

The University of Orange is a founding partner of 400 Years of Inequality. It has a mission to record and share the history of Orange, NJ, "the most historic city in the US." Explore their website, Hidden Treasures of Orange, to get ideas for how to gather and organize this history of the place in which you and your communities live and where you will hold your Remembering Jamestown observance.

The Collective Recovery book describes how a team of people affected by the events of 9/11 in New York City came together to develop place-based observances that aimed to help communities heal and grow together. This too may inspire actions you can take to have people take up the history of 400 years of inequality with the goal of working toward a future of equity and justice.



PHASE I RESOURCES

1) Work as a Team

I. 400 Years of Inequality Information Sheet/Poster

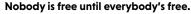
Download Posters from our Gallery Here













2) Learn Together

I. 400 Years of Inequality Timeline

Download full PDF Timeline Here





II. 7-20 Generations Meditation

Hear the meditation read aloud by Angel Acosta with music here.

Gather 400 Years of Inequality team members and others in a quiet, comfortable place. Have everyone introduce themselves and provide a brief overview of the 400 Years of Inequality initiative, particularly the Remembering Jamestown observance.

Read: Please close your eyes.

This meditation is an invitation to reflect on our ancestry. It is inspired by the Native American principle of 7 generations, which proposes that our thoughts and actions have effects that reverberate seven generations into the future just as the actions of the previous seven generations still shape our current lived experience.

Through this meditation, we invite you to connect to your ancestral lineage, to think back as far as you can to the lived experiences of your forebears.

[This section is optional] In a few moments you will hear the sound of the bamboo flute [insert link to listen to and download file]. Let the sound take you back as far as you can.

Sit back in your chair comfortably. Relax your shoulders and your legs. Breath in an out gently.

The meditation guides you to consider how your forebears have contributed to, experienced, and survived different levels of inequality. You will remember, think, and feel. Sit with what comes up for you. Continue breathing in and out gently.

We begin with a minute of silence.

Continue to notice your breathing—softly inhale and exhale.

Think of your ancestors, beginning with your nearest elders, those who are one generation older than you. Where are they from? What have they lived with and through in their lives? How have they experienced inequality? How has inequality defined this generation?

Now think back further to your great grand elders and their elders. Deepen your reflection until you have reached back 7 generations. If you wish, consider a 400 year or 20 generation timespan.

You are unlikely to know the names or stories of individuals. Draw on what you know from the histories you have learned to imagine the worlds in which these older generations lived. What inequalities did they experience and how were their lives and the lives of their people defined by these structures?

As you open yourself to these memories, what do you see? What do you hear? What do you feel?

Gently open your eyes. Feel yourself coming back into your room.

The work of reflecting on our ancestral lineage is powerful. It allows us to engage our collective history in a more personal and intimate way. Over the coming days and maybe weeks hold what came up for you during this short meditation. Remember that our ancestors continue to teach us.

Thank you.

III. I am in the Ecology of Inequality Protocol

Preparation:

Meet in a quiet, comfortable space. Ensure there are sufficient chairs for everyone present. The chairs will be moved into different configurations to accommodate small group work and large group discussions. Provide paper and pens. We use Chenille Stems (Pipe Cleaners) for one of the activities. If you cannot supply Chenille Stems, you can ask participants to draw using differently colored markers, or use magazines, scissores, tape, glue, paper towel tubes, or other common household items. Have flipchart or other large sheets of paper taped to the wall so that you can take notes from the full group discussions.

Read/Paraphrase the instructions:

Inequality has been used to justify chattel slavery, the dispossession of Native American lands and resources, exploitation of workers, and the subordination of women. Employed strategically, inequality has dismantled coalitions and frustrated collective action. Inequality is entrenched in the nation's founding documents. These have served as blueprints for economic, political, cultural, and social formations meaning that inequality, in one form or another, is manifest in the social institutions that support and direct our lives. Inequality forms networks and flows of experiences and resources that shape our identities, social practices, and institutions. We do not get to stand outside of this ecology, this life world colored by inequality.

[Step 1: Reflection]

[You can include the "7-20 Generation" meditation at this point if you wish]

The Great Law of the Haudenosaunee, the founding document of the Iroquois Confederacy, calls on us to consider the impact our actions will have seven generations into the future. That is, as we move to act we must imagine standing before our descendants and explaining our decisions to them.

However, first we look back to learn how our present is shaped by those who have acted before us. Thinking of the approximately 20 generations that have come and gone over the past 400 years ask:

How do my communities and I embody histories of inequality?

What has been done to us and what have we done to others to foster, resist, or survive these histories?

Take 10-15 minutes to contemplate and write or diagram on the paper provided in response to these questions.

Step 2: Memories and Stories

Gather into groups of three to five.

Have each member of the group outline the histories of inequality to which they know or imagine they are connected, naming and describing the structures and mechanisms of inequality to which they are connected.

Once everyone has shared their thoughts, identify points of commonality and intersection. These connections may include extremely different positions, including those of perpetrators of oppression and those who are harmed by oppression.

Step 3: Mapping the Ecology

As noted earlier, inequalities form networks and flows of experiences and resources. These networks, flows, and resources shape our identities, social practices, and institutions. None of us lives outside this ecology, this life world colored by inequality. Ecologies have dimensions, formations, relationships, flows—using any materials you chose [such as Chenille Stems or using markers and paper], represent the three-dimensional shape of the "ecology" that is emerging from your reflections and stories.

[When groups have had time to construct their Ecology of Inequality models, call the groups together]

We are now going to gather into a large group and share the models we have constructed of the ecology of inequality in which we, and those we care for, live.

As people share their models, note points of commonality and intersection. Ask:

What is an ecology of inequality? How does it work?

How is it sustained? How might it be undone and remade?

[Once all the models have been shared, facilitate a discussion in response to the questions above. Have a note-taker record the response to these questions.]







IV. I Don't Want to Live in the House of White Supremacy Protocol

Preparation:

Meet in a quiet, comfortable space. Ensure there are sufficient chairs for everyone present. Provide paper and pens that participants can use to take notes. Have flipchart or other large sheets of paper taped to the wall so that you can take notes from the full group discussions.

Read/Paraphrase the instructions:

White supremacy is at the core of the ecology of inequality. It is an ideology and practice that works in concert with patriarchy, hetero-normativity, and capitalism to exploit difference in order to acquire and maintain economic, political, military, and cultural power. This power is maintained through multiple forms of symbolic and material violence that determines who is fully human and who is less-than-human. Numerous lives have been sacrificed to maintain various forms of supremacy and countless others have suffered as their life possibilities are narrowed and destroyed by terror and exploitation. While those who claim supremacy have access to goods and experiences others do not, their lives are spiritually diminished and damaged. They are cut off from that most essential quality of freedom, the loving encounter with others that is possible only when we meet at equally and fully human in our capacity for joy, suffering, curiosity, creativity, and learning. Equality is never possible in the house of white supremacy.

Step 1: The Master's House

How can we remember the oppressions of the past without reproducing them?

How do we not rebuild the master's house by creating new forms of inequality?

Take 5-10 minutes to consider these questions. Note your responses.

Now discuss the question and your thoughts with a partner.

[Have the group arrange the chairs in a circle]

Share your and your partner's thoughts with the rest of the group.

[Facilitate a discussion in response to the opening questions. Record responses on sheets of paper taped to the wall]

As we review what is coming up in this discussion, what strategies and pathways are beginning to emerge to dismantle or transform systems and mechanisms of inequality and supremacy?

[Record responses on sheets of paper taped to the wall]

3) Read Together

I. Reading Guide: Voices Of a People's History

We have adopted Voices Of a People's History as the text to guide the first phase of our preparations to Remember Jamestown. Thanks to the publisher, Seven Stories Press, you can **use this link** to get a copy at 50% off.

We invite you to read Voices to yourself and with others using the approaches below or some of your own devising:

- 1. Read and post select a short passage and record yourself reading it. Post it to social media with the hashtag **#400yearsofinequality**.
- 2. Read with friends, family and colleagues. Bring the book to a family or group meeting and:
 - Invite people to select a short passage that they would like to read aloud.
 - Ask why they picked that passage.
 - After the readings, facilitate a discussion about what participants experienced while reading and listening.
- 3. Use with a class the Voices Of a People's History Foundation has lots of <u>educational materials</u> to help teachers use the book with their students at all levels.
- 4. Organize a performance Lots of organizations have given performances using readings from the book. Visit **Voices of a People's History** to see examples of this.

II. Readings from Voices of a People's History

Watch videos of readings on the 400 Years website or vimeo for reference or inspiration.



Nicole Loy reads "Letter to Sarah Logue" by Jermain Wesley Loguen (March 28, 1860)



Thelma Armstrong reads "Ain't I A Women" by Sojourner Truth (1851)



Matt Damon reads from Howard Zinn's 1970 speech, "The Problem is Civil Obedience"



John Legend Reads Muhammad Ali



Alana Arenas reads Sylvia Woods (1919)



Rami Nashashibi reads Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1967)

4) Be Place-Based

I. Hidden Treasures of Orange

Visit the Hidden Treasures of Our Orange website

II. Building Collective Recovery Into What You Do

Download the Collective Recovery Workbook





LINKS

Reading:

Voices of a People's History
https://www.sevenstories.com/books/3837-voices-of-a-people-s-history-of-the-united-states/?discount_code=azxhdt

Homeboy Came to Orange: A Story of People's Power https://newvillagepress.nyupress.org/books/9781613320327/

The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics, and the Rise of a New Justice Movement http://www.beacon.org/The-Third-Reconstruction-P1139.aspx

Resources:

400 Years of Inequality Poster Gallery http://www.400yearsofinequality.org/poster-gallery.html

400 Years of Inequality Timeline http://www.400yearsofinequality.org/400-years-timeline.html

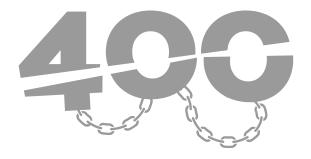
Readings from Voices of a People's History http://www.400yearsofinequality.org/voices-of-a-peoples-history.html

Hidden Treasures of Our Orange http://hiddentreasuresoforange.org/

Building Collective Recovery into What You DO workbook http://www.universityoforange.org/newsite/building-collective-recovery-into-what-you-do







Visit our website **www.400yearsofinequality.org** to download free resources, like Starter Kit 2, the Timeline, and a poster of The Call.

Follow us on Facebook, on Instagram @400yearsofinequality and on Twitter @400yrs