

## ***Scene on Radio***

### **On Crazy We Built a Nation (*Seeing White*, Part 4) Transcript**

<http://podcast.cdsporch.org/episode-34-on-crazy-we-built-a-nation-seeing-white-part-4/>

**John Biewen:** Before we pick up where we left off in the last episode, post-1776, let's dip back into Colonial America for just a couple minutes...

**Suzanne Plihcik:** In 1613, a very famous marriage takes place in Virginia. Who got married?

**John Biewen:** ...with Suzanne Plihcik of the [Racial Equity Institute](#), at that anti-racism workshop.

**Suzanne Plihcik:** Pocahontas? John Smith marries Pocahontas? Well, it was Pocahontas but it wasn't John Smith, who was it? John Rolfe. Yeah, don't get your history from Disney. So, John Rolfe marries Pocahontas. Now, is this the great love story Disney tells? No.

What's John looking to do? What's his goal here. He's making an alliance as one might have made in Europe, in order...? [Voices in distance.] Power's always right. If I ask a question, just say power. [Laughter.] And yes, it is about power but it's specifically about obtaining land, so that he might build wealth. Now, how does John turn out? Does he turn out fairly well economically? He does. He's our first tobacco magnate. John turns out very well.

**John Biewen:** Suzanne mentions this marriage so she can connect it to something that happens decades later. When the Virginia House of Burgesses, in 1680, effectively defines a white man for purposes of colonial citizenship.

**Suzanne Plihcik:** So their first definition, and I paraphrase grossly, this is the essence, was, a white man is someone with no blood whatsoever that is Negro or Indian, as they would have said, and we will assign the following rights and privileges. Now what would be the problem with such a definition?

**John Biewen:** The problem was, that definition would have excluded the descendants of John Rolfe and Pocahontas. And by then, those descendants were big shots, rich landowners.

**Suzanne Plihcik:** So we have a problem. We have a conundrum in the colony of Virginia.

**John Biewen:** What to do?

**Suzanne Plihcik:** What we didn't do is even more illustrative than what we did. What we didn't do is say "a white man is someone with no blood whatsoever, etc. etc., however, we will allow these Indian people," as they would have said, "to maintain their wealth and maintain their land as Indians." Uh-uh. That's not what we do. That's not how this goes. What we said is, a white man is someone with no blood whatsoever, etc., except for the descendants of John Rolfe and Pocahontas. We made them white. Is that the power to define reality?

**John Biewen:** All right, but that's just some 17<sup>th</sup> century weirdness, right? Well, two and a half centuries later, the now Commonwealth of Virginia, in the United States of America, was passing its Racial Integrity Act of 1924, amidst the eugenics craze – trying to prevent "race mixing." The Act adopted the one-drop rule for black people, declaring those with **any** African ancestry "colored." But the state held on to the Pocahontas Exception. It defined as white people with up to 1/16<sup>th</sup> Native American ancestry, keeping John Rolfe's and Pocahontas's aristocratic descendants inside the white people tent.

**Suzanne:** Is this a little bit crazy? It gets crazier. It gets crazier, and we need to understand that. Because, folks, on crazy we built a nation. We did. We did.

**John Biewen:** I'm John Biewen, it's *Scene on Radio*, part four of our series, *Seeing White*. We're turning the lens, exploring race by looking straight at white America and whiteness itself, where it came from and how it works.

Most Americans, including, I think, most of us who've come to be called white, will agree: the country has a long and painful history of racism. But in the mainstream of our culture, in our schools and movies and certainly in our political talk, we frame that history as a blemish. Maybe a big blemish. But a blemish, nonetheless, on our overarching national story, which is ... great. Really great.

**Barack Obama:** Tonight, we gather to affirm the greatness of our nation.

**John Biewen:** Here's Barack Obama, looking so much younger, in that 2004 Democratic Convention speech that propelled him toward the presidency.

**Barack Obama:** Our pride is based on a very simple premise, summed up in a declaration made over 200 years ago. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. [Cheer, applause.] That they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That is the true genius of America. [Applause.]

**John Biewen:** This is the story we tell ourselves: we're the first nation in the world **not** formed around an ethnic tribe that's lived in a place forever. Our country was built on a revolutionary idea. Yes, there were contradictions, especially early on. Lots of the founding fathers owned people. And they said all men were created equal except those who were three-fifths of a person. And we did commit near-genocide against Native Americans in the process of taking their land. And yes, it was 'all **men** are created

equal' and women didn't even get to vote for almost 150 years. But that's how the world was back then. Look how far we've come. That founding idea was genius and we've been working things out ever since, striding relentlessly toward that Jeffersonian ideal.

That's our story, and we're sticking to it, apparently. But how true is it? In the last episode, we saw that fourteen years after we declared to the world, "We hold these truths," the U.S. Congress made its first actual laws, and those laws said something different: this is a white man's country. So, which is it? We have two national characters, not one, and they're always fighting it out. Which side has done most of the winning?

Of course, right at the start, one man embodied the national contradiction almost ridiculously well all by himself. We know Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration **and** owned people. But, turns out, it's deeper than that.

**Nell Irvin Painter:** Yeah, Jefferson was a Saxonist, an Anglo-Saxonist. That was something I didn't know until I started my research.

**John Biewen:** Nell Irvin Painter, the Princeton History Professor emerita, author of seven books including *The History of White People*. She studied Jefferson's lesser-known writings, in which he extolled "our Saxon ancestors."

The notion of the Anglo-Saxon people is more popular in America than anywhere else, Painter says. It refers to the English, more or less, but includes other northern Europeans who migrated to Britain before the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Painter says the British themselves don't use the term much and it's almost never heard in the supposed original homeland of the Saxons.

**Nell Irvin Painter:** This sort of nether-netherworld between the Netherlands and Denmark, kind of in there, or Hannover in Germany. They don't use those words. They don't use "Anglo-Saxon."

**John Biewen:** Jefferson did. At the Continental Congress of 1776, the very moment when the founders were adopting his stirring Declaration, Jefferson proposed including in the great seal of the United States images of Hengist and Horsa. They were “the Saxon Chiefs from whom we,” he said, “claim the honor of being descended.” We? Seems Jefferson was comfortable defining the United States as a Saxon country. The proposal was not approved.

Nell Painter says Jefferson’s notions about his Saxon forebears were romanticized and just cockamamie.

**Nell Irvin Painter:** He has some strange ideas about British history in which the Romans leave no imprint, not only on the British population but also on the language. And the Normans leave no imprint on the language or the people. But he wanted purity. Racial purity was really important for Jefferson. As he was in there fornicating! [Laughs.]

**John Biewen:** And fathering six children with the biracial young woman he owned, Sally Hemings. Whatever Jefferson meant by “all men are created equal,” he apparently was not talking about people from Africa. Because on another day he wrote, “The blacks ... are inferior to the whites in the endowments of both body and mind.”

**John Biewen:** So, so I think we often let people off the hook by saying, well, that person was a man of his time and everybody....

**John Biewen:** That’s me putting a question not to Nell Painter but to Ibram Kendi, the University of Florida historian we’ve been hearing from. He says it’s just not accurate to say that in Jefferson’s time, everybody thought like he did.

**Ibram Kendi:** Jefferson in particular was constantly receiving letters from people in the United States and even in Western Europe who were challenging the ideas, the racist ideas, he put forth in his famous *Notes on the State of Virginia*. I mean, that was almost a regular thing. And he had these stock messages that he would send back to these

people. That “oh, I’m hoping that one day the races will become equal,” or “that’s something that I’m looking for,” or “I do oppose slavery, but...” Because he had to constantly, you know, respond to anti-racists who were challenging him.

**John Biewen:** In his award-winning book, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*, Kendi also writes a rich chronicle of *anti-racist* ideas and the people who tried to spread them, from Colonial times to the present day.

**Ibram Kendi:** Because clearly, these racist ideas have always been challenged by anti-racist ideas. But then it also, as you stated, it prevents apologists of these people to basically say they were products of their time, which basically means everybody was saying it, everybody was thinking that, so why would you criticize this person for thinking that way. Well actually, no, not everybody was thinking it.

**John Biewen:** The first antiracist tract that Kendi found in colonial America was published in 1688 by Mennonite immigrants from Germany and Holland: *The Germantown Petition Against Slavery*. Kendi also writes of John Woolman, a New Jersey Quaker who launched a traveling ministry and abolitionist campaign in the 1750s. “No one is inferior in God’s eyes,” Woolman wrote. Eventually, Woolman even found his way to what Kendi argues is a central lesson of race history: that racist ideas and beliefs *result from* oppression, not the other way around. I’m gonna say that again: racist ideas do not *lead to* oppression, they *result from* it.

John Woolman put it this way in the 1760s, quote: “Place on Men the ignominious Title SLAVE, dressing them in uncomely Garments, keeping them to servile Labour, tends gradually to fix a Notion in the mind, that they are a Sort of People below us in Nature.” He went on to say that, for white people, “Where false Ideas are twisted into our Minds, it is with Difficulty we get fair disentangled.”

Thomas Jefferson heard arguments like these, and he sometimes voiced them. He referred to the “deep rooted prejudices entertained by the whites.” But his thinking was

all over the place. He couldn't imagine white and black people living together as equals. One very telling reason in his mind: all the abuse white people had dished out to black people, "the injuries they have sustained," as he put it. Nell Painter sums up that part of Jefferson's thinking:

**Nell Irvin Painter:** It's too hard. [Laughs.] I can't figure out how to get out of this. Jefferson said, we have a lion by the ears—a wolf by the ears. You know, we can't hold on and we can't let go.

**John Biewen:** Jefferson could not, or would not, let go of the 130 people who ran things for him at Monticello. His argument with himself raged but his self-interest won out. He still owned those people when he died in 1826, famously, 50 years to the day after the publication of his words about the equality of all men.

I'm pretty sure they didn't use the term "thought leader" back then, but Thomas Jefferson? One of the towering Founding Fathers, our third president, founder of the University of Virginia. And, Ibram Kendi says, Jefferson's book espousing his ideas about the superiority of White people, and Anglo-Saxons in particular, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, was *the* most-read nonfiction book in America well into the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

The man who was perhaps the most towering intellectual figure in American life during the 1800s as a whole has a more uncomplicated, less tainted reputation than Thomas Jefferson. But maybe he shouldn't.

**John Biewen:** Now, I, I didn't know a lot about Ralph Waldo Emerson, I confess....

**Nell Irvin Painter:** Yeah!

**John Biewen:** But that was really, that really stood out for me. I thought wow, he's the transcendentalist and he's kind of a groovy guy....

**Nell Irvin Painter:** Yeah.

**John Biewen:** In her *History of White People*, Nell Painter writes at length about Emerson, who is known as a critic of slavery.

**Nell Irvin Painter:** Emerson was infinitely better educated, more sophisticated and more eloquent than 99.99% of other American authors. So he was the go-to man for knowledge. I did not know about the book *English Traits* until I started writing the book, as I was trying to figure out what the path was from Blumenbach into American thought.

**John Biewen:** Meaning the German scientist, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach. We mentioned him a couple of episodes ago. In the late 1700s, Blumenbach theorized five human races, with white people, or Caucasians, as he named us, at the top of the heap. Emerson cites Blumenbach by name in his now-mostly-forgotten book dealing with race, which came out in 1856.

**Nell Irvin Painter:** *English Traits* is a racial tract. It has fallen out of favor and nobody reads it.

**John Biewen:** But that doesn't mean its ideas weren't spread widely in their time. The book pulled together themes from lectures Emerson gave for decades, lectures with titles like, "Permanent Traits of English National Genius." For Emerson, the real Americans, and the most admirable by far, were New Englanders of a certain "stock," as he would have put it.

**Nell Irvin Painter:** Well, the best race was Saxons. Like him. Descendants of the Northmen, the beautiful, virile, vicious Northmen. And then below that were the others, and he didn't talk about them that much. But it would have been, notably, the Celts. He takes for granted that the black people are not in the running. He was not viciously anti-



black, but he thought, you know, black people are enslaved because basically they're kind of a slavish race. But mostly it's about how admirable the Saxons are.

**John Biewen:** Emerson saw Anglo-Saxons as intelligent and freedom-loving, but also beautiful. "The English face," he wrote, combines "decision and nerve" with "the fair complexion, blue eyes and open florid aspect. Hence the love of truth, hence the sensibility, the fine perception, and poetic construction." He went on like this. And on.

Nell Painter says when doing public talks about her book, she sometimes gets pushback from admirers of Emerson, including scholars.

**Nell Irvin Painter:** 'You are just so wrong!,' as people are wont to say these days. 'That's not the Emerson I know.'

**John Biewen:** She says that's because most people know Emerson criticized slavery but they haven't read *English Traits*, or his journals. In his private writings, Emerson made clear he did not oppose slavery out of concern for enslaved people. He wrote, "The captivity of a thousand negroes is nothing to me." Emerson thought slavery was bad for the enslavers, too barbaric for people like him.

Nell Painter traces a parade of elite Americans who trumpeted a romanticized Anglo-Saxon identity. From Jefferson and other Founding Fathers through Emerson, to Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the country's second-best-selling book in the 19<sup>th</sup> century after the Bible. To suffragists like Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century with Teddy Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Henry Ford....

**Nell Irvin Painter:** It's the idea that this is a Saxon nation or Anglo-Saxon nation, or this is a white man's country, Manifest Destiny, all bound up with Anglo-Saxons. Those were very, very prevalent ideas, to buttress or to explain or even to advance geographical capture. Or to feel good about oneself.

**John Biewen:** Fast-forward for now past the twists and turns of race thinking in the 20<sup>th</sup> century: eugenics and its downfall, the acceptance of the Irish and Slavs and Italians and Jews into mainstream Whiteness, the Civil Rights Movements. We'll get to some of that later in the series.

Here in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it almost seemed for a while there that these notions of a pure, superior white race had been chased to the nutty and pathetic fringes of society. But, well, here's one of the hosts of the morning TV show *Fox and Friends*, Brian Kilmeade, on the air in 2009.

**Kilmeade:** We keep marrying other species and other ethnics, and other....

**Gretchen Carlson:** Are you sure you're not suffering from some of the causes of dementia right now?

**Kilmeade:** The problem is, the Swedes have pure genes. Because they marry other Swedes, 'cause that's the rule. Finland, Finns marry other Finns so they have a pure society. In America, we marry everybody. So we'll marry Italians and Irish....

**John Biewen:** And in 2017, Steve King, sitting member of Congress from Iowa, with just one of the many comments he's made along these lines while being re-elected again and again.

**Steve King:** You cannot rebuild your civilization with somebody else's babies. You've got to keep your birthrate up. This Western civilization is a superior civilization...

**John Biewen:** Given the long-time dominance and persistence of this kind of thinking, is it any wonder that most of us white Americans have found it all so acceptable: Our society's profound oppression and shoving aside of people we don't count as white, in the past and present. Nell Painter agrees with Ibram Kendi about the cause-and-effect

relationship between racist policies and practices on one hand, and racist ideas on the other.

**Nell Irvin Painter:** I don't think that ideas of themselves cause anything.

**John Biewen:** Instead, she says, people like Jefferson and Emerson, and so many others, look at what's happening in the world, especially things that seem hard to justify—for example, one group of people oppressing and abusing another....

**Nell Irvin Painter:** And people cast about for explanations. And the ideas are the explanations.

**John Biewen:** Of course, the explanations people arrive at will often depend on where they stand in the social order. Painter quotes, in her book, the German sociologist, Max Weber. I had his quote in front of me so I read it back to her.

**John Biewen:** “The fortunate man is seldom satisfied with the fact of being fortunate. Beyond this, he needs to know that he has a right to his good fortune. [Painter: Yeah.] He wants to be convinced that he deserves it and above all, that he deserves it in comparison with others. [Painter: Yes!] Good fortune thus wants to be legitimate fortune.”

**Nell Irvin Painter:** Yes. Perfect, isn't it? [Laughs] It's not enough to come out on top. You have to come out on top because you're better.

**John Biewen:** So, Chenjerai. Have you ever been to the Jefferson [Memorial] in D.C.?

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** No, I don't think so.

**John Biewen:** It's impressive. It's inspiring. I think the first time I was there, which was probably 20, 25 years ago, I don't think it literally gave me chills but figuratively. I remember being quite inspired, as I am by the Lincoln Memorial.

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** I imagine I would get chills, too. You know what I mean? [Biewen laughs.] But it would probably be a different kind of chills, like 'I'm standing under the statue of a rapist, slave owning, white supremacist' chills. [Laughter.]

**John Biewen:** My friend Chenjerai Kumanyika. Our conversations are a regular feature of the *Seeing White* series. Chenjerai is a professor of communications and critical cultural media studies down the road at Clemson University. Until he moves to Rutgers in the fall. He's helping me unpack stuff.

**John Biewen:** I googled Ralph Waldo Emerson today, and when I hit Images what came up was, you know, of course some images of him. But also a lot of like little inspirational, almost hippie-ish quotations from Emerson saying things like, talking about having the courage to be yourself in a culture that wants you to be something else, or about achieving peace through understanding not violence. It's funny how we just forget large parts of someone's intellectual legacy and history, the parts that, you know, that would be unattractive when we want to keep someone as a kind of standard bearer for who we are as Americans.

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** No doubt. I mean, you know, when you say what you say, I think about the word forget. Right? Because I think that is how we think about it. But it's kind of like, saying that we "forgot" about some of these views Emerson had. It's almost like saying like the dude who dresses up as Santa Claus at the mall forgot that he wasn't really Santa Claus. You know, it's like, more than that, we just have to look at the way that it's consistent with a colonial project that's at work.

**John Biewen:** There were quotation marks around "forgot" when I said that. I don't know if you could hear them.

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** Right. Yeah. Yeah. Right. Because there's like an intentional forgetting. I feel that.

**John Biewen:** It's one of the main features, I think, of, of whiteness and of being an American, and of this story we tell ourselves. It requires a lot of willful forgetting, and we're very good at it. We have lots of practice.

So, if we use an image like the dual national characters, or the dual, split soul, or the two stories of America, however kind of loose and questionable way we want to talk about that, but, I imagine you have some thoughts about that? Which side of that battle has the better win-loss record over the last 240 years?

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** Yeah. I do have a take on that. [Laughs.] I mean, you're kind of looking at Jefferson as a key Founding Father, and looking at his sort of character and ethical failings on one hand, if you want to think about it that way. And then his beliefs, right. Really zooming in on his beliefs, which maybe some people were less familiar with, right? I think that there's this way that people treat the documents, founding documents, like the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, as somehow separate from those beliefs. And people treat it like maybe the Declaration of Independence and our founding documents, and thus our country, really rises above his wild beliefs, you know, racist beliefs and character failings.

**John Biewen:** And his actions.

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** And his actions, right. But I don't see it that way, right? I see it like, if you look at what Ibram Kendi is arguing, the Declaration of Independence wasn't really about ideas of universal freedom. It was about the people who signed the document getting, you know, becoming free of intervention and control of the British Crown.

**John Biewen:** Right.

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** So they wanted to be free to do basically more of what they were doing, which was to profit from slavery and other forms of exploitation. So, the life that they're talking about, like when they talk about life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, the life they're talking about definitely isn't the lives of people of color, African-Americans. The liberty they're talking about wasn't for us. And their pursuit of happiness was contingent on our exploitation.

**John Biewen:** Right. Right.

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** And that's actually, that's encoded in the document! And that's a core, you know, founding document that we refer to, many people refer to with great affection and nostalgia and as proof of what this country is about.

So that's one way to look at the scoreboard on the American story, but there's another way, too. And it's like if you look at, if you take this idea that we're seeing now about making America great, right, that Donald Trump talks about, and think of it not as just a contemporary phenomenon but something that goes all the way back to the beginning of this project. The question that I think we can ask, if you really want to understand what is the real American story, for me is, when people said they were trying to make America great back in the day through these different periods of history, what did they mean? When the most influential and powerful voices, voices of governance, said that, what did they mean? And what you see is, when it came to questions of citizenship, making America great, I mean they didn't use that exact language but when they talk about what the kind of citizenship that produced the kind of America they wanted, that was white supremacist America. And you know that continues all the way to the point where there actually has to be an extremely bloody civil war. And then after that civil war, there's still a project to return America to, you know, certain features of what had happened before the Civil War. And then you have like Jim Crow, so, and then you have the Civil Rights Movement. Right?

I mean, you have people having to fight, and you look at like the Dixiecrats, and you look at all these moments where people are fighting inclusion of various kinds, not even just race and ethnicity.

**John Biewen:** Uh-huh.

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** It's often done under the banner of making America great, although they're not using that language. You go right up to now. So, to me, that's another way to look at the scoreboard and say well, damn, it seems like every time people say the phrase, the America they're talking about is one that is consistent with a like kind of a white supremacist vision. So, in that sense I would say yeah, that's kind of how I—I mean, if we're going to give America a national character, this is the character.

**John Biewen:** Yeah. Although I think that most people would agree that that there has been progress, in terms of human rights and civil rights, since 1776, it has been scratching and clawing and fighting all the way, right, against a reactionary force that has, that has won a whole lot of the time.

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** And I would say, whatever social justice victories have been won is not because of America, it's despite America. It's resisting America. Like, you're resisting the dominant laws of the land, even right now. Right? Like, what are you resisting. You're resisting, you know, the criminal justice system of the country! [Laughs.] I mean, unless you want to say the criminal justice system is not an important part of America. The economic system. You know, or like especially going back in these different phases of history. Because really this conversation doesn't start in a real way, Robin D.G. Kelley pointed out, this doesn't even start in a real way until after the Voting Rights Act. That wasn't very long ago.

**John Biewen:** That's right.

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** And do we even, do we still have that?

**John Biewen:** Right. So here we are in the 2010s with, with the heart of that actually being rolled back.

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** Right. I mean, you know, John, it's not fun for me to say this. But people are surviving **despite** America. Look, the whole story of people resisting during slavery, they were surviving despite America. It's amazing how in a way people take that and try to like recapture it and redeploy it as like 'an American story.' You know what I mean?

**John Biewen:** Uh-hm. But isn't it interesting that people, including Martin Luther King, for example, have actually appealed to those words, those founding words, in arguing for social justice. And actually in, in the March on Washington, what people think of as his "I Have a Dream" speech, he talks about a promise that America made that it's defaulting on, a promise "that all men—yes, black men as well as white men—would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." So, right, so he's appealing to the Declaration of Independence as something that was promised, so he seems to be, at least, maybe just rhetorically, appealing to that. As, well, if this is what the country says it's about, let's be that. Right?

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** That's a powerful rhetorical appeal. And for that reason, I understand why activists and organizers have not taken that off the table. But you know, I'm making a risky move of kind of pushing back against Dr. King a little bit, but it really wasn't a promise. That's not what Jefferson was promising. He wasn't promising the thing that Dr. King is talking about. He wasn't promising it to black people!

**John Biewen:** Right. As we heard.

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** So I mean, if we're honest about what Jefferson meant, right? Like I feel the power of that rhetorical appeal, but if we're honest about what Jefferson



meant, he was not promising that to black people. So you know, it's a tricky thing. Like, I think in different rhetorical situations, different audiences, I understand why people want to invoke that sense of patriotism by invoking those words. But I think that that comes with a cost. And the cost is that using that word, referring to Jefferson as though Jefferson did make a promise that was about, going to appeal to all people and was about justice for all people, that allows a lot of folks to indulge in the fantasy that that's actually what Jefferson meant, he actually did stand for that. And then we can do that intentional forgetting that he owned human beings and argued and fought for his right to do that and refused to release those human beings from bondage.

**John Biewen:** Right.

**Chenjerai Kumanyika:** And then wrote documents that weren't inconsistent with that! Because he wasn't talking about those people. You know, Howard Zinn has this line where he's like, it's not about indicting people in absentia. That's not the ultimate point of this. What I want us to try to understand is that, for people who want to, who are about transformative change, and giving people equal rights, and, you know, liberation is the language some people use, decolonization, Black Lives Matter, what you have to understand is, we're trying to become something this country has never been.

[Music.]

**John Biewen:** There's much more to come in this series. Next time, more history. We go to my hometown up north and tell the story of a bloody war on the prairie, and exactly how the people who look like me pried the land that I grew up on from the people whose homeland it was.

The editor of the series is Loretta Williams. Thanks again to the Racial Equity Institute, and Nell Irvin Painter and Ibram Kendi. I cannot recommend their books highly enough. Music this time by Lucas Biewen, Kevin MacLeod, and Blue Dot Sessions. [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), like us, follow us. Thank you for listening and for spreading the word about the

show, and for those iTunes ratings and reviews. You know who you are. *Scene on Radio* comes to you from the [Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University](#).