

# A Brief History on Racism & Discrimination in Maine 1630 - 1970



Civil rights march down Congress Street following Martin Luther King's assassination in 1968.

1492: Christopher Columbus landed in the Bahamas and launched the conquest and colonization of the Americas.





**1524 — Florentine explorer Giovanni da Giovanni Da Verrazzano arrives on Maine's shores. The local Abenacki mooned him, likely because they had previously encountered Europeans and had some bad experiences.**



*Estevan Gomez*



*Monument to Estevan Gomez in Bangor*

**1525 — Portuguese explorer Estevan Gomez comes to Maine and kidnaps 58 native men and women to sell into slavery.**



*The Paxton Boys, frontiersman of Scots-Irish Mostly Ulster Protestants origin from along the Susquehanna River in central Pennsylvania, who formed a vigilante group to attack local American Indians in 1763.*

**Early 1700s: wealthy land barons known as the "Great Proprietors" encouraged the Scotch Irish of Northern Ireland to colonize midcoast Maine and fight off indigenous tribes who were defending their territory from encroachment. They described indigenous people as savages, as they had also called the Irish during the conquering and colonization of Ireland several years earlier.**



French Jesuit missionary Father Sebastian Rale killed by the British at the Battle of Norridgewock in 1724.

**1675 and 1763 — The British and the French/Wabanacki Confederacy (Mi'kmaq, Maliseet and Abenaki) wage a continuous series of wars over land and resources.**



By His HONOUR

**SPENCER PHIPS, Esq;**

Lieutenant-Governor and Commander in Chief, in and over His Majesty's Province of the Massachusetts-Bay in New-England.

**A P R O C L A M A T I O N.**

**W**HEREAS the Tribe of Penobscot Indians have repeatedly in a perfidious Manner acted contrary to their solemn Submissions unto His Majesty long since made and frequently renewed;

**I**n consequence, at the Desire of the House of Representatives, with the Advice of His Majesty's Council, thought fit to issue this Proclamation, and so to declare the said Tribe of Indians to be Enemies, Rebels and Traitors to His Majesty King **G E O R G E** the Second: And I do hereby require His Majesty's Subjects of this Province to resist all Opportunities of paroling, capitulating, holding and keeping all and every of the aforesaid Indians.

**A N D W H E R E A S** the General Court of this Province have voted that a Bounty or Encouragement be granted and allowed to be paid out of the Publick Treasury, to the marching Forces that shall have been employed for the Defence of the English and Welsh Provinces, from the First to the Twenty-fifth of this Instant November;

**I**n consequence do hereby declare, that there shall be paid out of the said Treasury to all and any of the said Forces, over and above their Bounty upon Joinment, three Shillings and Sixpence, the Summs as followeth, viz.

For every Male Penobscot Indian above the Age of Twelve Years, that shall be taken within the Time aforesaid and brought to Boston, Fifty Pounds.

For every Scalp of a Male Penobscot Indian above the Age aforesaid, brought in as Evidence of their being killed as aforesaid, Forty Pounds.

For every Female Penobscot Indian taken and brought in as aforesaid, and for every Male Indian Prisoner under the Age of Twelve Years, taken and brought in as aforesaid, Twenty-five Pounds.

For every Scalp of such Female Indian or Male Indian under the Age of Twelve Years, that shall be killed and brought in as Evidence of their being killed as aforesaid, Twenty Pounds.

Given at the Council-Chamber in Boston, this Third Day of November 1755, and in the Twenty-ninth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord **G E O R G E** the Second, by the Grace of GOD of Great-Britain, France and Ireland, KING, Governor of the said Parts, &c.

By His Honor's Command,  
**J. Willard, Secy.**

S. Phips.

**G O D** Save the **K I N G**.

BOSTON: Printed by John Draper, Printer to His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor and Council. 1755.

**1755 — Spencer Phips, lieutenant governor of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, issues a proclamation declaring the Penobscot people enemies, rebels, and traitors to King George II, and promising a bounty to be paid for the scalp of every Penobscot Indian man, woman and child. The Phips Proclamation contributed to the annihilation of the Wabanaki Confederacy and the freeing up of land for Europeans to colonize, divide up into private property and extract wealth from.**



**July 2, in 1755 — Colonel James Cargill of Newcastle, slaughtered and scalped a party of peaceful Penobscot men, women in children in Owl's Head and Thomaston. The previous year, Abenaki Indians, who had been protesting the encroachment of English settlements into their territory along the Kennebec River, had attacked the colonial fort at Norridgewock. The Massachusetts government responded by putting a bounty on Abenaki scalps, but exempted Penobscot Indians because they repeatedly professed their desire for peace.**

**Nevertheless, Colonel Cargill assembled a scalp-hunting posse and traveled eastward into Penobscot territory. In Thomaston, his party encountered a friendly family of Penobscots and proceeded to murder and scalp the man, woman and child.**

**Shortly after Cargill and his men opened fire on an encampment of Penobscot people who were returning from a peace conference at St. George's Fort, killing and scalping nine of them. The unprovoked attacks sparked another war with the Indians that eventually defeated the Penobscot tribe and opened up the backcountry to white settlement. A jury in York later acquitted Cargill of his crimes.**

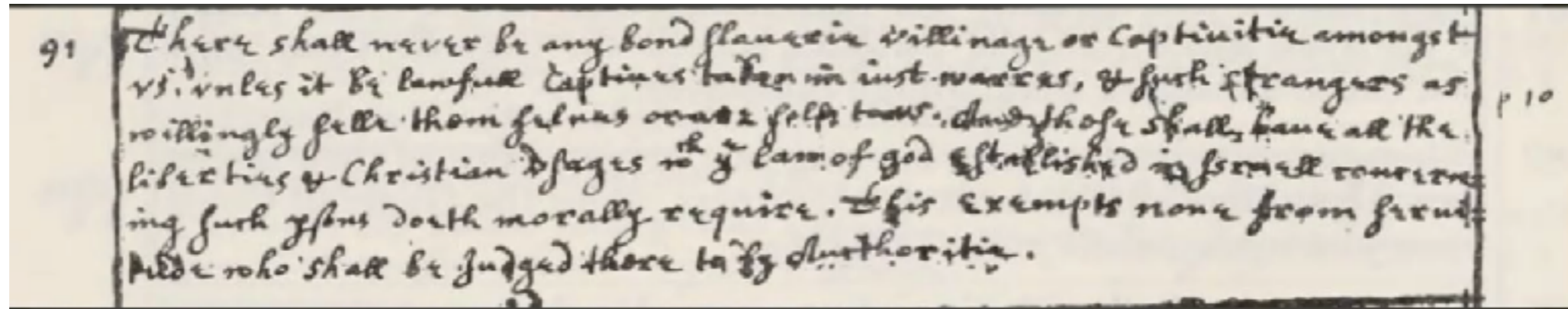


**“Racism in the United States developed as a justification for the enslavement of African-Americans in order for capital to extract wealth from their labor and build the foundation of the economy in early America.”**

- **In the 1620s, White settlers discovered that they could make a lot of money growing tobacco, but it was only profitable if they forced people to grow it.**
- **Colonial planters tried to use enslaved indigenous people, but found the labor unreliable.**
- **Colonists also used indentured servants from Europe, but this created class conflicts in their home countries and the servitude was only for seven years, so the servants would eventually become landowners and competition for the planters**
- **Finally the colonists decided to kidnap people from Africa and force them into bondage to produce wealth for the colonies.**

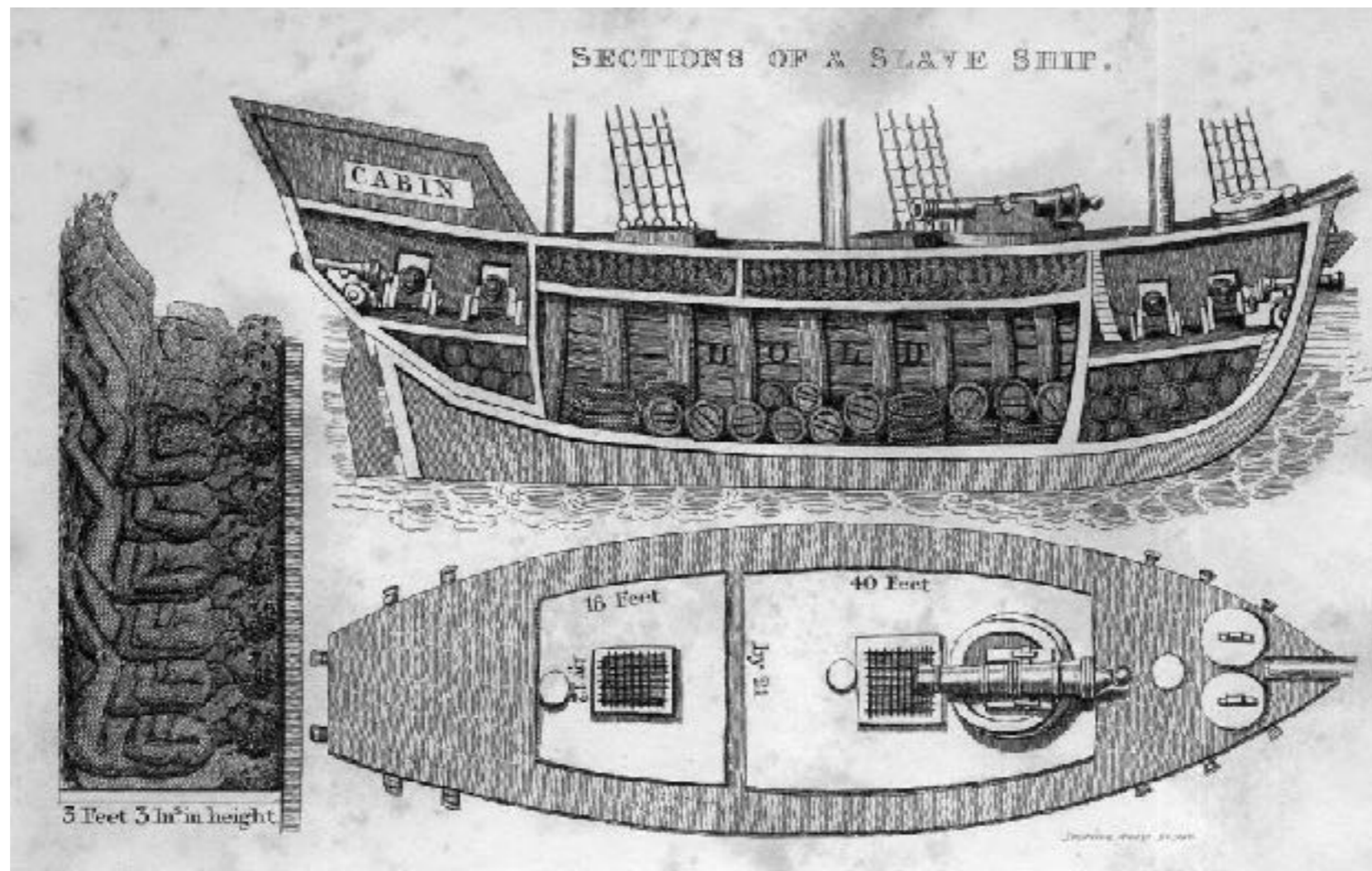


**1641 – Massachusetts (which Maine was a part of) becomes the first colony to legalize slavery through the passage of the Body of Liberties.\***



*There shall never be any bond slavery, villeinage, or captivity amongst us unless it be lawful captives taken in just wars, and such strangers as willingly sell themselves or are sold to us. And these shall have all the liberties and Christian usages which the law of God established in Israel concerning such persons doth morally require. This exempts none from servitude who shall be judged thereto by authority.*

\* This became part of the Articles of New England Confederation, which legalized the slave trade in Massachusetts and eventually the rest of New England, according to the Massachusetts Historical Society,



*Courtesy of Monticello Digital Classroom*

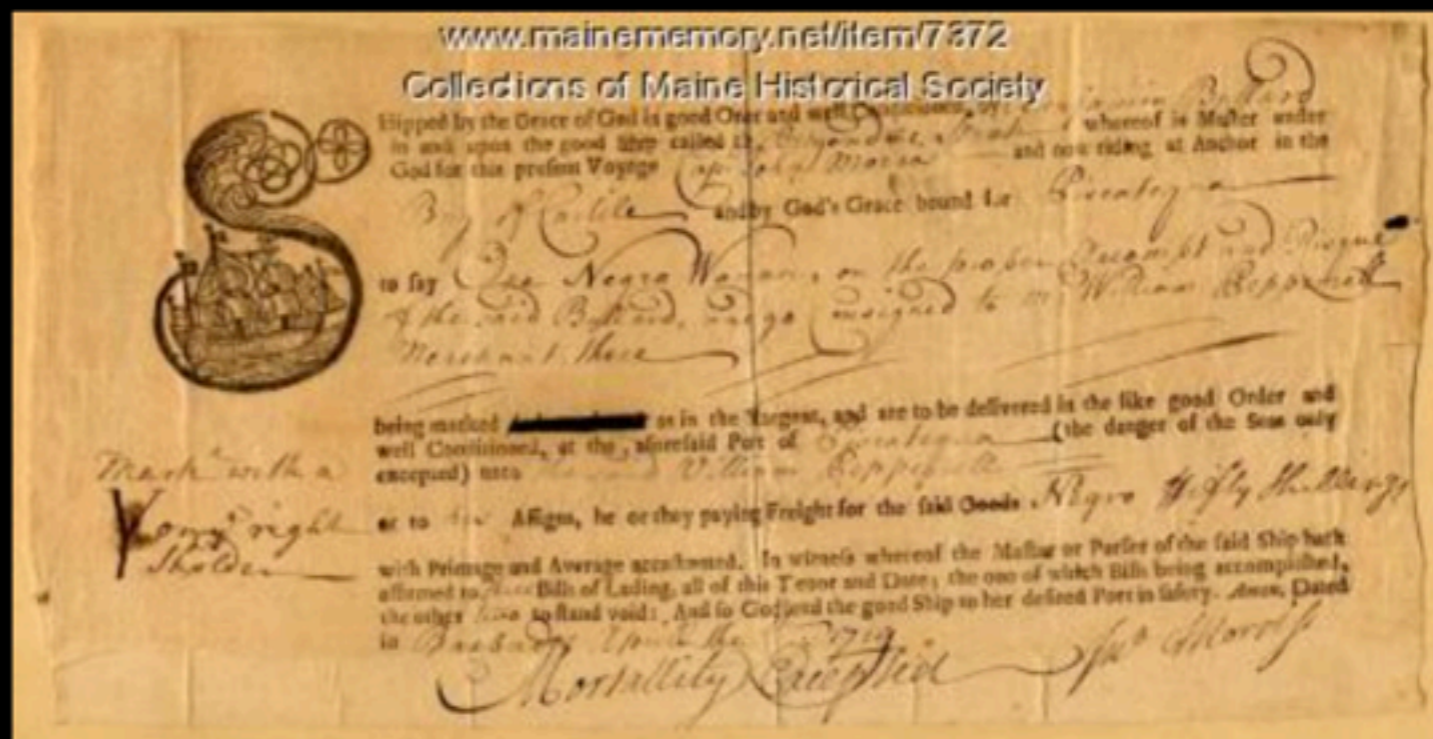
- **1670** The Bodies of Liberties was amended to include the enslavement of a slave woman's offspring to be a legal slave. This guarantees that offspring of all enslaved people were considered as the same legal status as their mother, a slave.

**1705** Massachusetts enacts a duty of £4 on all slaves imported to the colony. Massachusetts enacts a law against interracial marriages.

*From Massachusetts Historical Society*



**William Pepperell**



**A receipt for one African woman consigned to William Pepperell**

**1719 – Receipt for “One Negro Woman... Consigned to M: William Pepperell” (left) of Kittery. Chattel slavery existed in Maine as early as the 1650s. White Mainers were also active in the transatlantic slave trade, building slave ships or sailing to Africa to pick up human cargo, which they traded for sugar in the West Indies that was sold to the rum distilleries in New England. Slaves were also purchased off the boat in York and Wells from ships traveling from slave markets in Boston and Portsmouth.**



*Franklin Stanwood (1852-1888), a self-taught painter and sailor from Portland, painted this large canvas of a slave ship escaping from a British cruiser. Courtesy Maine Historical Society*

Known Maine-built slave ships prior to 1808 include:

- Snauw *Knutsford* (1761) - Berwick, 230 embarked, 197 disembarked at Bonny
- Ship *Hereford* (1770) Sheepscutt River (Sheepscot) 352 embarked, 287 disembarked at Charleston. Makes additional journeys in 1775, 1776, 1779.
- Brig *Rising Sun* (1772) - Biddeford, 241 embarked, 0 disembarked (wrecked all perished)


*Courtesy of Kate McMahon*

# Slavery in Maine

**The economy of Colonial New England was built by extracting wealth from land taken from indigenous peoples and from the bodies of Africans, which were transported in ships built by Mainers and traded for sugar that was sold to the rum distilleries in Portland and the rest of New England.**

- **Maine merchants, banks and insurance firms were entangled in slave economy**
- **Most prominent New England families in the 18th century owned slaves of African or indigenous descent**
- **Researchers have identified over 1600 people of color lived in Maine before 1800**
- **Cuba was Portland's #1 trading partner in the 19th century - Cuba was the hub of the illicit slave trade.**
- **90 percent of all legal slaving voyages under the US flag were out of Massachusetts, Maine and Rhode Island**

**\* Research & text courtesy of Kate McMahon**


 New-England. D N<sup>o</sup>. 688.  
 THE  
**B O S T O N**  
 WEEKLY  
**Post-Boy.**  
 MONDAY, *January 25.* 1748.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T S

**T**O BE SOLD, by Job Lewis, Esq; the House he lives in at the South End of Boston, with a good Garden, Chaise House, Stable, &c. Also the Flats thereto belonging down to low Water Mark.

**A** Healthy, strong young Negro Man to be hired out by the Year. Enquire at the Post Office.

**A**LL Persons indebted to the Estate of Mr. Joseph Prince late of Stratford in Connecticut; Coaster, deceased, and all to whom the said Estate is indebted, are desired speedily to settle Accounts with Mr. William Beach Merchant, or Mrs. Hannah Prince of said Stratford, Executors to said Estate.

**A**LL Persons that have had any Dealings with Mrs. Eunice Rogers of Newbury, or since her Marriage with Capt. Anthony Farmer, and the Account remains unsettled, are desired forthwith to settle the same with said Farmer (his Wife being dead and he going to Sea.) Also a stout, healthy Molatto Woman brought up in the Baking Business, and fit for a Farmer; and a Molatto Girl about 7 Years old, are to be Sold by said Capt. Farmer at Newbury

**R**AN away from Ichabod Goodwin of Berwick, a Negro Man named Pompey, a short thick-set Fellow: Had on when he went away a Homespun double breasted, light colour'd Jacket plain Pewter Buttons; one of his Ears cut: There went a white Boy of fourteen Years of Age with him, with little Hair and short, pretty slim and has a white Eye. Whoever shall take up said Negro and Lad and secure them so that I the said Goodwin may have them, shall have Four Pounds old Tenor Reward by me  
Ichabod Goodwin.

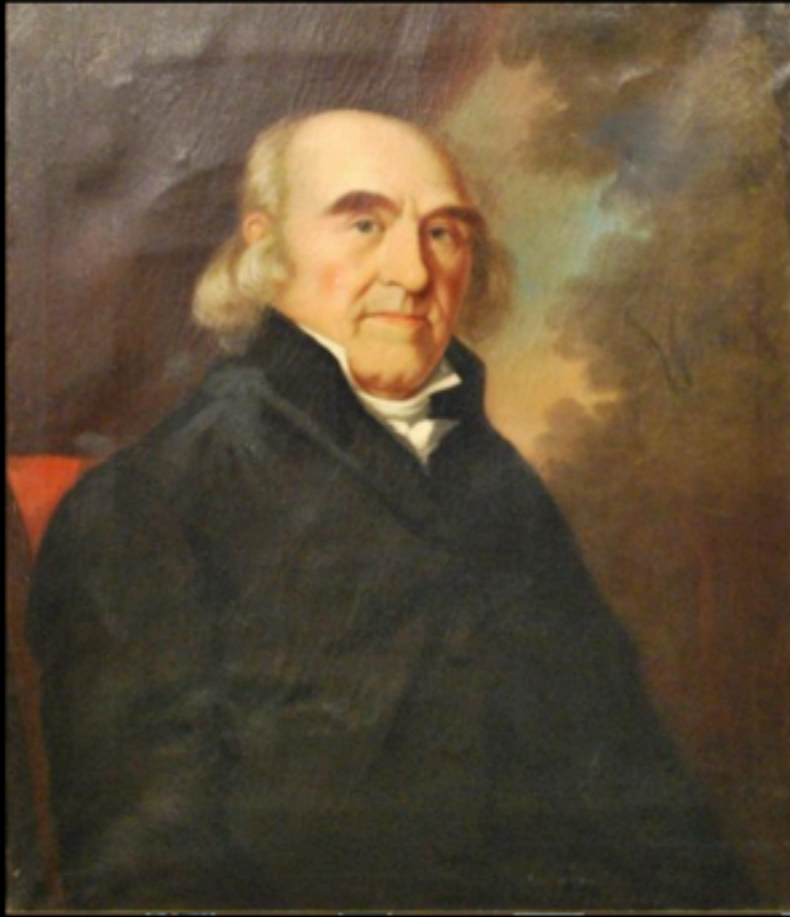
1748 advertisement for a reward for the capture of an escaped enslaved man name Pompey of Berwick, Maine.

**Textile manufacturing, which was Maine's largest industry for much of the 19th century, relied on cheap cotton picked by enslaved people. Some Maine mills produced low quality "negro cloth," sold to slave owners to clothe enslaved people.**



***Ad for the Continental Mills in Lewiston.***





*Josiah Little*



*Henry Knox*



*James Bowdoin*

**1760s - early 1820 — A group of mercantile capitalists from Massachusetts laid claim to vast tracts of Maine wilderness based largely on patents granted to a handful of wealthy English gentlemen by King Charles I, dating back as far as 1629. Through political connections, heredity, and legal manipulation, three major land companies secured dubious legal rights to millions of acres where Indian tribes formerly**



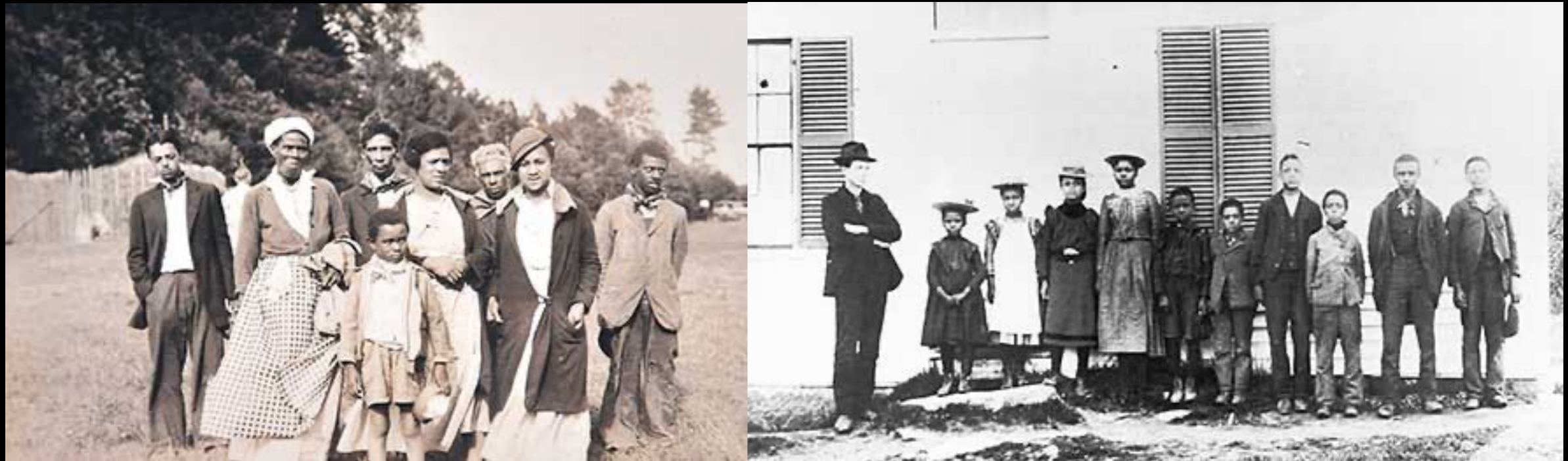
*Settlers clearing land on Paris Hill — 1802*

**1775 -1790 — Maine's population triples to nearly 100,000 as Massachusetts veterans of the Revolutionary War and their families came to claim their slice of the new nation on former Indian land to live off God's bounty — free from bosses, lords and masters.**



*Mum Betts AKA Elizabeth Freeman*

**1781 — A Massachusetts slave named Mum Betts who later changed her name to Elizabeth Freeman, successfully sued in court for her freedom, arguing that slavery was not consistent with the state constitution's guarantee that "all men are born free and equal and have certain natural, essential and unalienable rights." On July 8, 1783, the Massachusetts Supreme Court effectively abolished slavery in Massachusetts and Maine.**

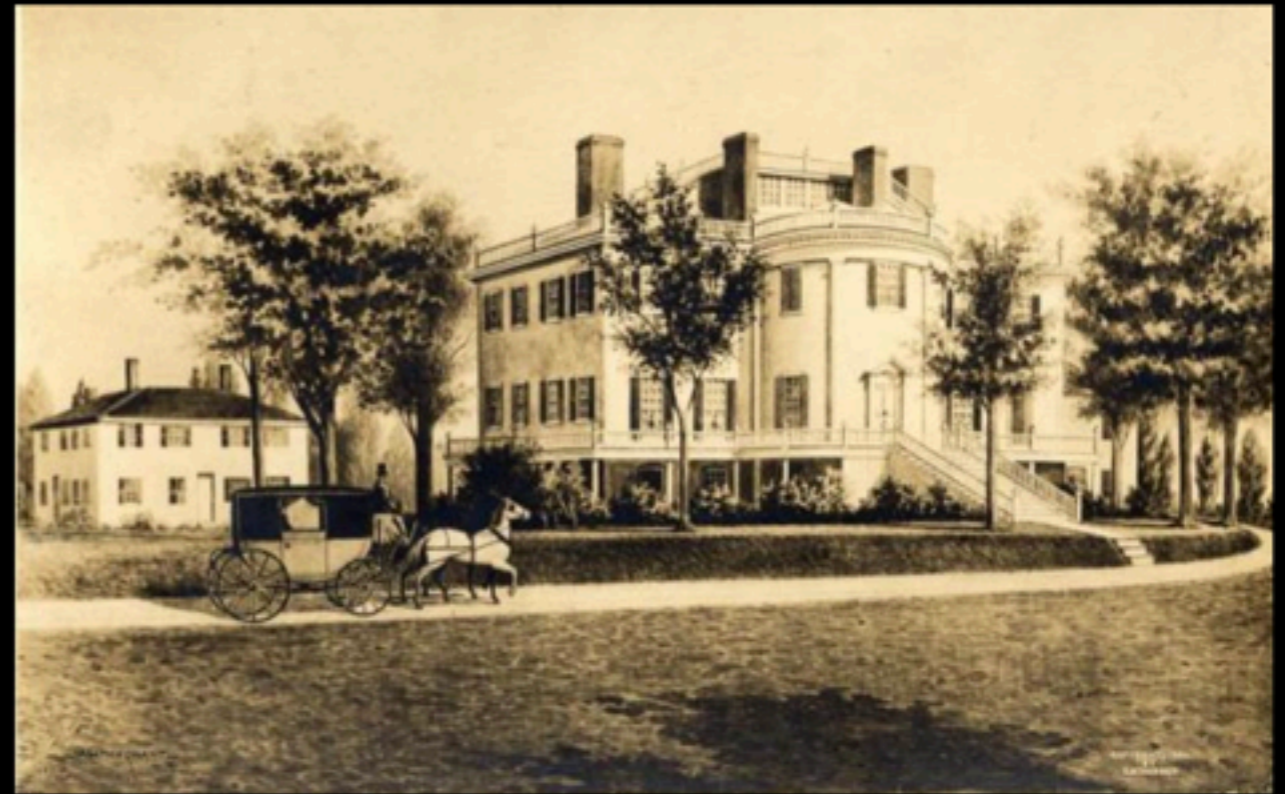


*Residents of Peterborough, a free black community in Warren; circa 1930s*

**1780s — Free Black farming communities were formed by Black revolutionary War veterans in Warren and Machias.**



*19th century Maine pioneer cabin*



*Home of General Henry Knox in Thomaston*

**1760s - 1820 - After wealthy aristocrats began demanding high payments for the former Indian land white settlers squatted on, desperate farmers known as “Liberty Men” took up arms and fought back against land agents, lawmen and lawyers enforcing the Proprietors’ claims. Land agents and surveyors were mobbed, shot at and otherwise driven from the area. Eventually, the back country resistance was defeated and the wealth derived from these land payments helped give the Proprietors the capital they needed to finance the construction of mills, dams and other commercial investments in the 1820s and ’30s.**



*Portland City Hall in 1885.*

**1866 First strike among black Maine workers in Maine: The construction of Portland's new City Hall sparked conflicts between workers and contractors. When "colored men" were hired to work on the building in the summer of 1866, it angered many who thought that white men should have been given preference in hiring. Local whites complained that the city had a "no white need apply" policy as it brought the "party of negroes" to Portland from Boston. The conflict was exacerbated by the rumor that the "negroes worked for \$1.75 a day, while those seeking work were willing to labor for \$1.50 a day." The "colored men and brothers" soon went on strike for higher wages, however, and hope was expressed that the "white folks may now have a chance if they be wanted again."**

- **1877: the North pulled its troops out of the South in the aftermath of Reconstruction and a reign of terror swept through the South, overthrowing state governments and murdering and disenfranchising Blacks.**
- **From 1882-1968, 4,743 lynchings occurred in the United States.**



# "The Colored Race" — Bangor Daily News Editorial, 1906

***The colored man at the north is finding his conditions less favorable for advancement every decade. Forty years ago the colored man was looked upon by New England residents with a tolerant charity that led to easy employment," he wrote. "Today a negro is viewed with suspicion — at times with alarm. New England conservatism finds the negro shifty and unreliable. He is fond of pleasure and prefers idleness and poverty to thrift.***

***The Indian and the negro present no menace in any field of industrial competition. Both races have wide areas of usefulness. They make the bravest soldiers in the world. They are industrious when they can be induced to work. But as soon as they have earned a few dollars beyond their immediate wants, the desire to spend the surplus is overmastering. Neither the petting of philanthropists nor the efforts of teachers can overcome their inherent laziness and lack of foresight. The end of the Indian is in sight. Indications are that the negro is going in the same direction.***







**1911 - On Malaga Island, a mixed race community was forcibly evicted by a legislative decree in 1912 based on racist pseudoscientific views that they were “degenerate” and “feeble minded.”**

**1917-1919 - 350,000 Black soldiers serve in World War I and come home, newly emboldened to demand basic rights. The Great Migration of Southern Blacks to the Northern cities face violence and lynchings in their communities by white mobs in the Red Summer of 1919.**



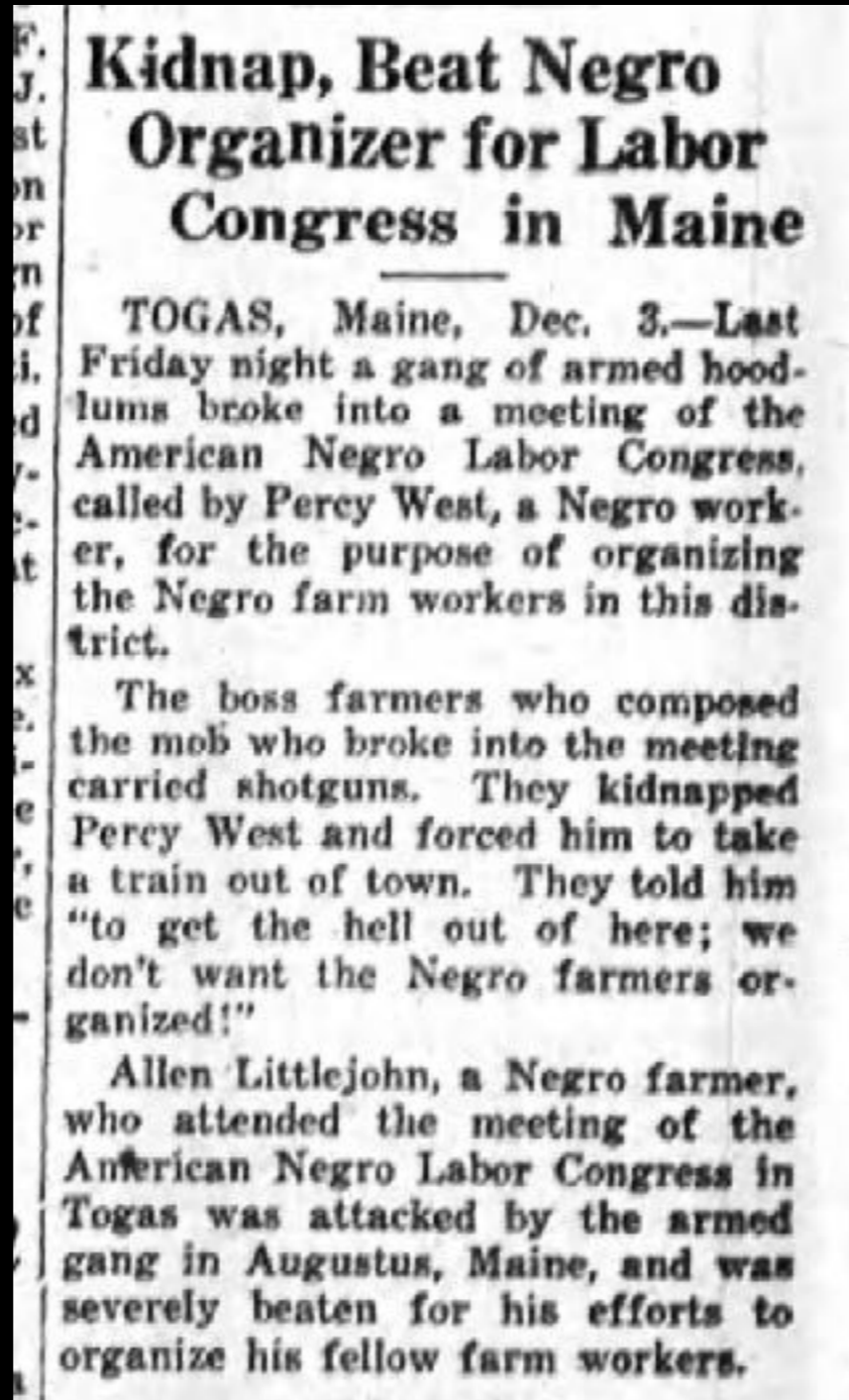
***Roger and Samuel Courtney, two African-American brothers who were “tarred” and feathered by a white mob at the UMniversity of Maine in 1919.***

# The Rise of the Maine Ku Klux Klan



**Ku Klux Klan members from across Maine, along with their wives and children, gathered in Portland for a field day and parade on August 28, 1926. They posed for this photo behind the Portland Exposition Building, at right, where Hadlock Field now stands. — Collections of Maine Historical Society, courtesy of [www.MaineMemory.net](http://www.MaineMemory.net)**

Black workers continue to face violence throughout the 20th Century for standing up for workers' rights. Below is a newspaper clipping from December 3, 1929:



9-23-96

the receipt whereof we do hereby acknowledge, do hereby give, grant, bargain, sell and convey unto the said

Roy C. Lord and Donna C. Lord

as joint tenants and not as tenants in common, and their heirs and assigns, and the survivor of them, and the heirs and assigns of the survivor of them, forever, a certain lot or parcel of land, with the buildings thereon, situated in said Augusta, being Lot No. 65 in Belmont Park, a sub-division of house lots of certain premises conveyed by Titcomb Real Estate Association and others by deed recorded in Book 586 at Page 92 in Kennebec County Registry of Deeds. The plan of said house lots having been filed on August 24, 1920 in said Registry. It is understood and agreed that said lot shall never be occupied by a colored person and no house shall be erected thereon costing less than Two Thousand Dollars. All buildings shall be placed ten feet back from the front line of the lots.

Meaning and intending hereby to convey the same premises conveyed to us by deed of George A. Severance, et al, dated May 17, 1962 and recorded in said Registry of Deeds in Book 1263, Page 264.

It is hereby understood and agreed between the parties hereto that taxes assessed against said property for the year 1968 are to be prorated between said parties.

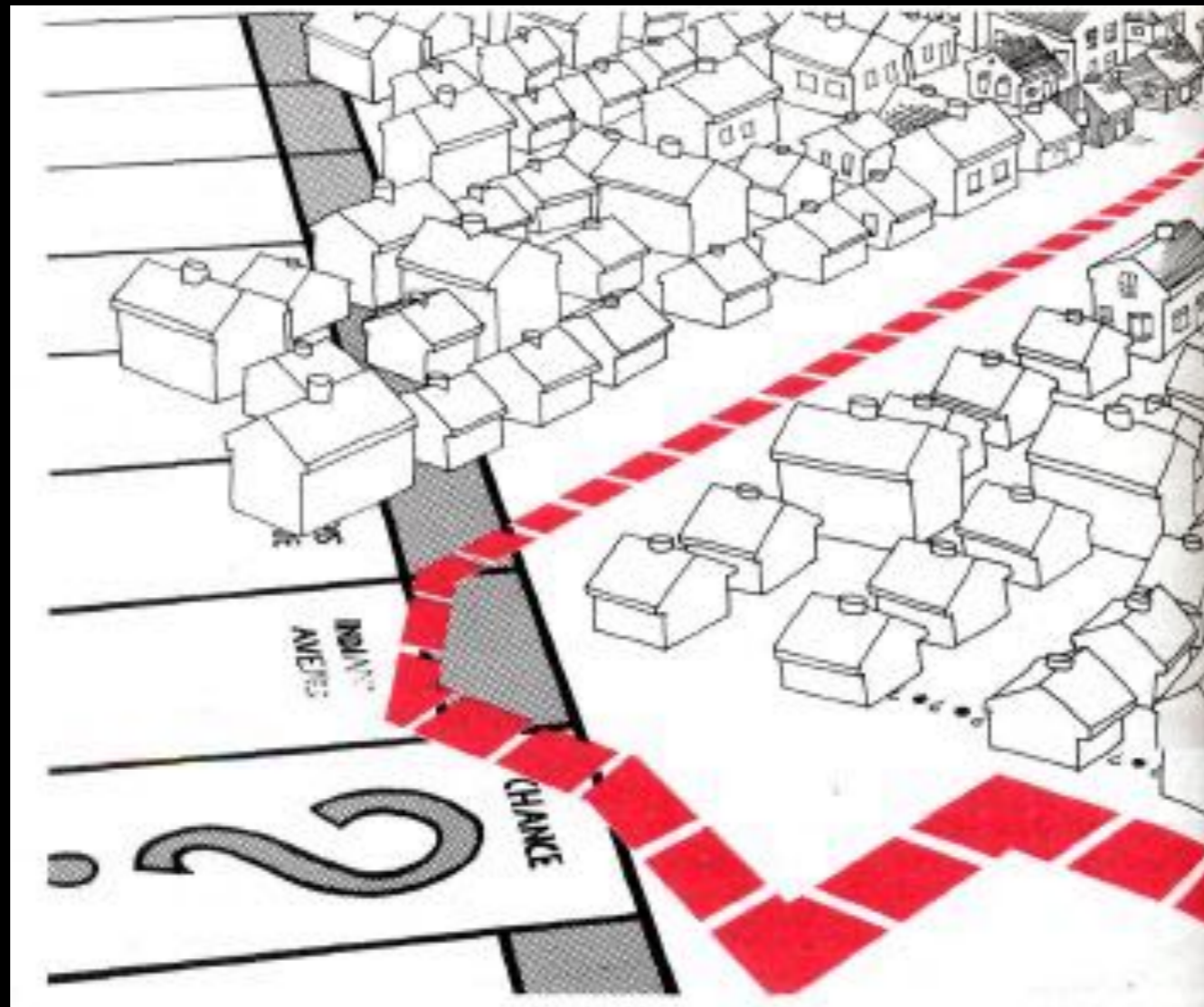
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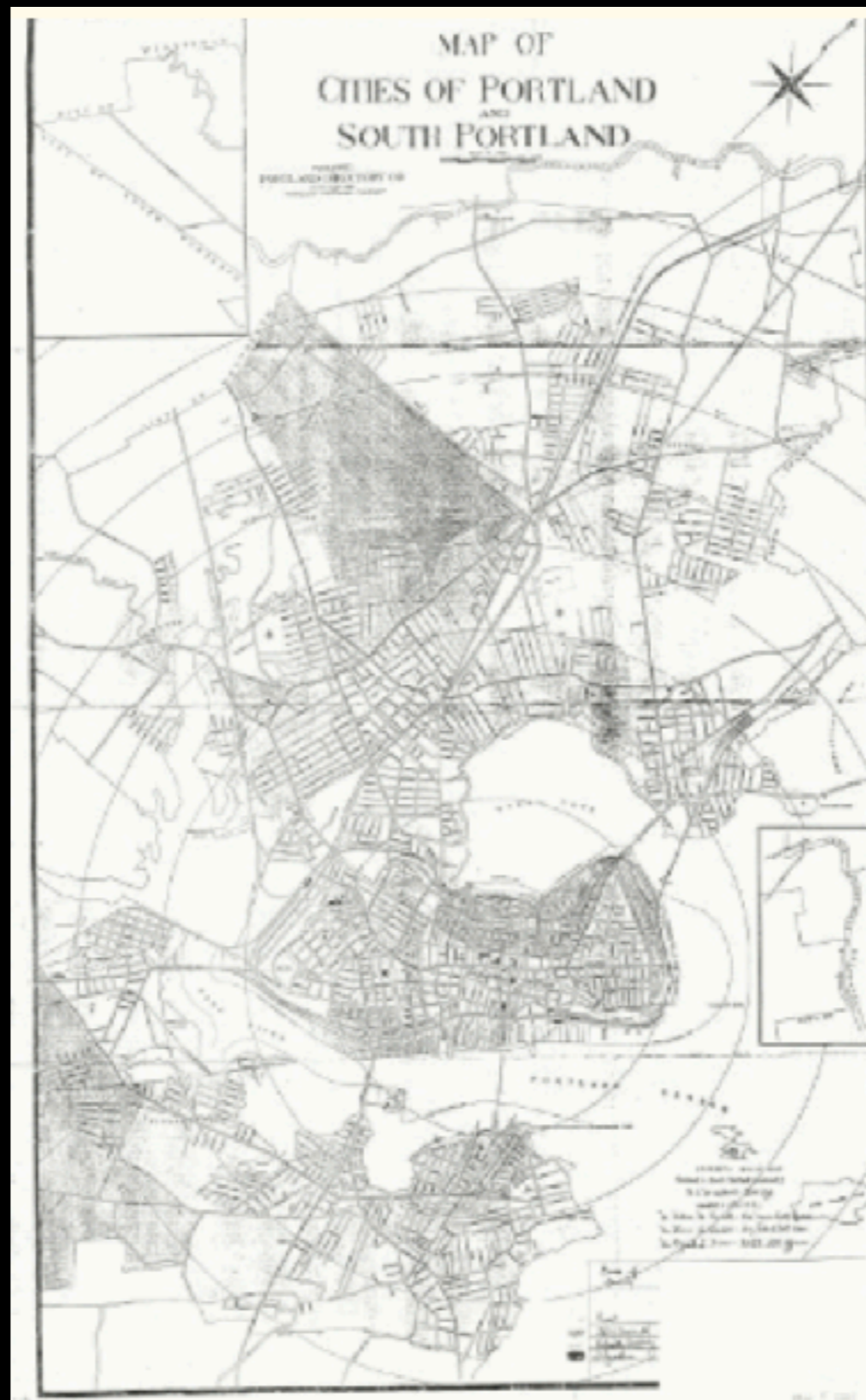


Kennebec Says Bk July 23

**Sellers' legal description of deed of house in Augusta showing explicit housing discrimination toward African-Americans: "It is understood and agreed that said lot shall never be occupied by a colored person...."**

**Redlining: New Deal government policies were primarily designed to provide housing to white, middle-class, lower-middle-class families in the suburbs while African-Americans and other people of color were left out of new suburban communities and pushed instead into urban housing projects.**





**1935 Residential Security Map detailing most desirable neighborhoods in Portland and South Portland in blue and the least desirable in red, considered the most risky for lending.**



**Maine residents returning from the March on Washington on August 29, 1963 — from left, Gerald Talbot, Larry Burris, Lawrence Graham, the Rev. Valton V. Morse, Elizabeth Aldrich, Mrs. Joseph Robey and the Rev. John C. Bruce. - Photo by Don Johnson/Courtesy of the Portland Public Library, Gannett Photo Collection**





**Maine Governor John Reed signing the Fair Housing Bill in May 1965.**