

## The Case for Reparations Part 1

**Link:** <https://youtu.be/O-8UePv7j9Y> USA Today (July, 2020 [1.5 mins])

"What reparations to Black descendants of slavery might look like in the US | Just The FAQs" on YouTube

This video quickly addresses the forms that reparations—"making amends to someone or a group of people who have been wronged"—have taken and the conversation regarding the fact that the United States has never addressed reparations for descendants of enslaved persons.

**"Can reparations help right the wrongs of slavery?"** YouTube

**Link:** <https://youtu.be/oy2H9M85Jng> PBS NewsHour (Aug 2019 [10 mins])

In 1838, the Jesuits at Georgetown University sold 272 "owned" enslaved persons into the much harsher and violent deep south plantations in order to keep the university afloat. Recently Georgetown University, mostly due to the diligence of a few people, was able to identify the decedents of some of the people sold off. The moral and financial questions and responsibilities that surfaced: what is owed to them and their descendants? In addition to renaming buildings, legacy descendent students were offered scholarships. While it was extremely emotional, one older woman and former cook talks about her experiences as a descendent student at Georgetown.

Duke economist William Darity and his wife, forklorist Kirsten Mullen talk about what was promised to formally enslaved African Americans and the reparations that are owed to them through their descendants—especially because "tremendous amounts of wealth were amassed because of [Black Americans]". While aspects of reparations can take the forms of education, business and community supports, there must also be a part that is in the form of a check. To the question: "But is there no statute of limitations on historical injustices?" Darity responds, "Well, there's no statute of limitation if those injustices are still wreaking havoc. The Fundamental problem is the inadequate resources that Blacks can transfer from past generations that creates the racial wealth gap. And that dynastic effect is associated with our whole history of white supremacy and racism in the United States." Mullen adds, "On those rare occasions when we did manage to buy land and develop it, all too often, something happened, something insidious. They were cheated, someone was lynched in the family, the timing of a fire."

Not everyone agrees. A Brown University economist argues against reparations with the arguments that reparations can't address the injury of slavery and that the poverty of African Americans should not be prioritized over other poverty. (Earlier in the video, the issue was raised that some Black Americans are not in favor of reparations as they believe it will raise hostilities towards them.)

**[The History of Reparations - YouTube](#)** Origin of Everything PBS (December, 2020 [14.21 mins])

This PBS Origins of Everything addresses:

1. Reparations have happened around the world (often limited over time in scale)
  - a. Other Countries
    - i. German reparations to Jews and to Israel
    - ii. South Africa often in the apart of acknowledgement
  - b. In the US

- i. Japanese
- ii. Native Americans
  1. These are not the only examples but establish the pattern that the US has made amends for historical injustices through legislation or payments or both
2. Arguments for and Against Reparations for Black Americans
  - a. The promised—and the breaking of the promised—“40 acres and a mule” for newly freed (formally enslaved) persons during Reconstruction
    - i. Sherman Special Field Order 15—passed by Lincoln and rescinded shortly thereafter by Andrew Johnson (returning the land to the former owners)
    - ii. 40 Acres and a Mule continues to be a rallying cr
  - b. Tuskegee Syphilis Study (1932-72) where men were told by doctors that the disease was being treated but were intentionally given placebo treatment in order to observe the natural evolution of the disease
    - i. The disease progressed and partners were infected
    - ii. Financial and other reparations were awarded to victims and their survivors
  - c. The City of Chicago
3. Reparations Arguments in the US. NOW
  - a. “Nobody today is still alive”
    - i. Native American precedent that US Govt addressed harm with descendants
  - b. Ta-Nehisi Coates: Historic disparities (housing, health, wealth gap slavery legacies)
  - c. How would reparations be addressed?
    - i. 2019 The House of Reps considered starting a commission on reparations...
    - ii. Katrina Foresster “Reparations, History and the Origins of Global Justice”

**Additional Resources:**

2014, Ta-Nehisi Coates published a seminal article in The Atlantic that went viral, Coates made the Case that Black Americans were owed reparations

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

[https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/katrinaforrester/files/forrester\\_reparations\\_history\\_and\\_the\\_origins\\_of\\_global\\_justice.pdf](https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/katrinaforrester/files/forrester_reparations_history_and_the_origins_of_global_justice.pdf)