

Black Land Ownership in Rural America

presented by Chris Carr



This workshop will present a general breakdown and understanding of the history of land ownership in the United States and the issues specifically present for people of African descent as they relate to—

- Conservation
- Legislation
- Access to land, and ownership

I will discuss my experiences with advocacy, partnering with other conservation groups, and concerns that may not be visible to the majority demographic.

This presentation will include a timeline from the 1820s until now of land ownership legislation.

Who are you?
Who am I



WHAT IS RURAL?

Urbanized Areas: Any area with a population of 50,000 or more is considered urbanized.

Urban Clusters: These are areas with a population between 2,500 and 50,000.

Rural Areas: These encompass all population, housing, and territory not included within an urbanized area or urban cluster.

The USDA definition considers an area rural if it's not part of a densely populated city or its adjacent suburban areas. This definition is primarily used for various agricultural and rural development programs to distinguish between urban and rural regions and to allocate resources accordingly.

Types of Rural Land Use

Transportation

Agricultural

Commercial

Cropland

Developed land

Forest

Grasslands

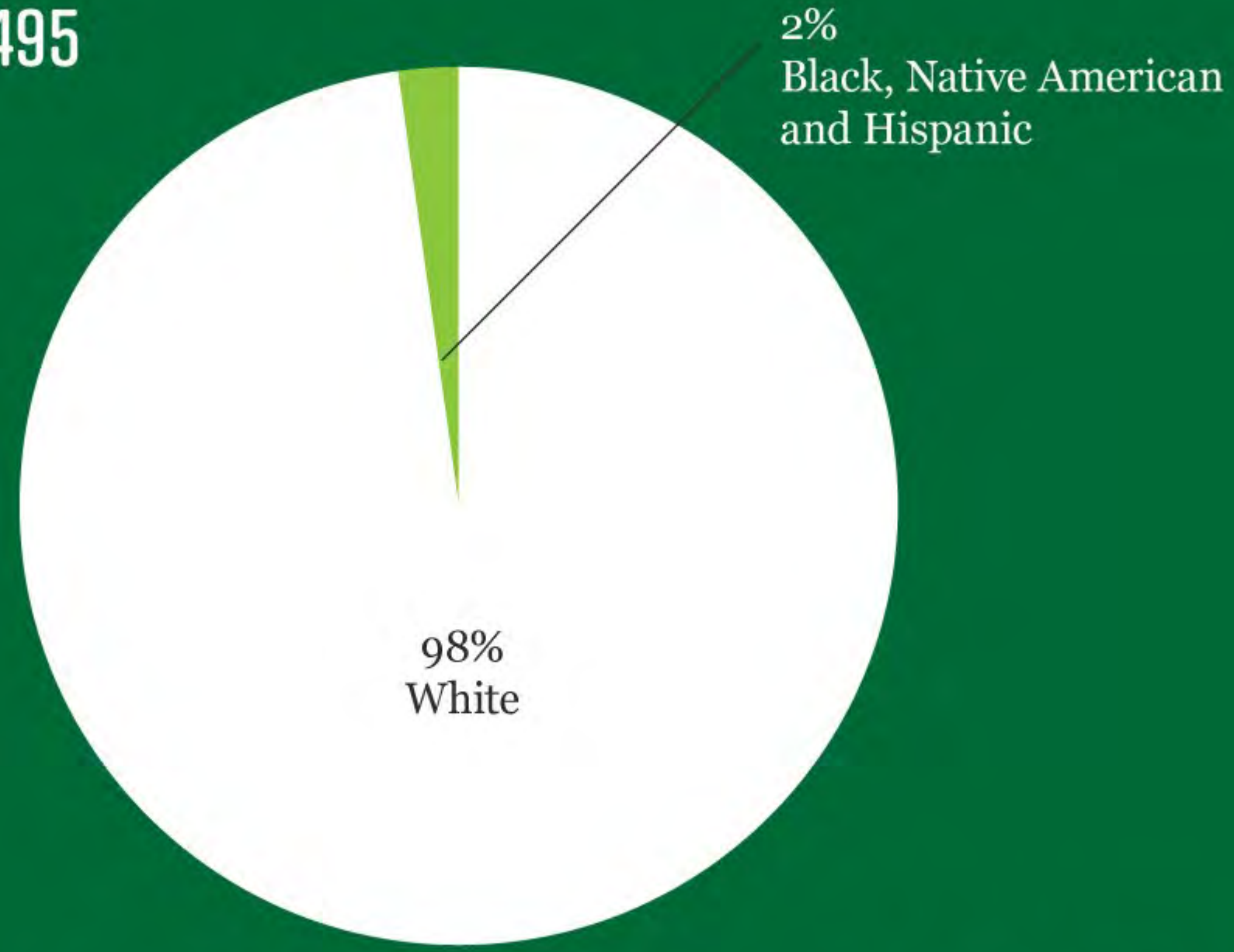
Pastureland

Recreational

Residential

ACRES OWNED OF ALL PRIVATE U.S. AGRICULTURAL LAND

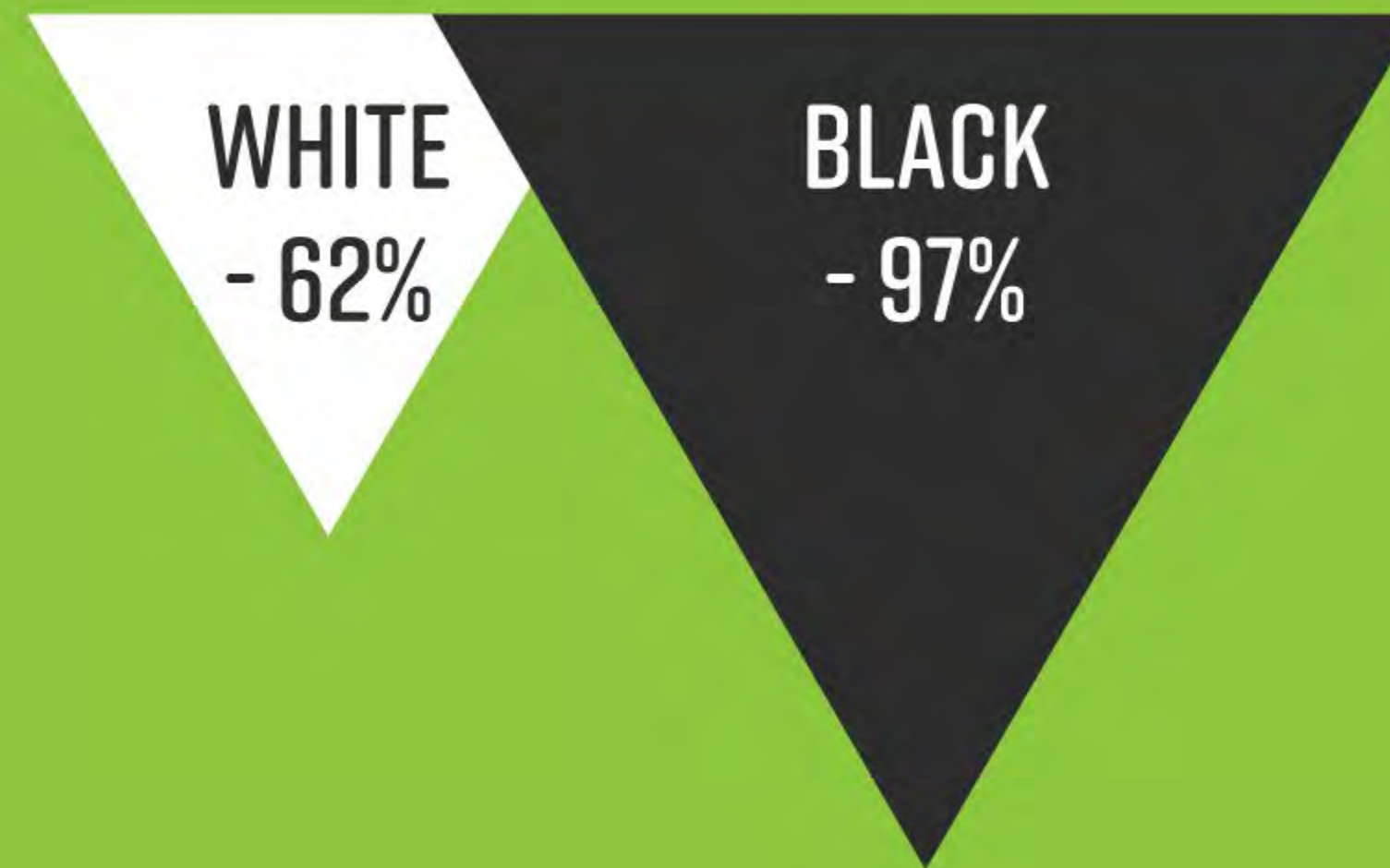
TOTAL: 932,495



**WHITE: 856,051 / BLACK: 7,754 / NATIVE AMERICAN: 3,398
ASIAN: 964 / OTHER: 4,640 / HISPANIC: 12,888**

Gilbert, Jess, et al. "Who Owns the Land? Agricultural Land Ownership by Race/Ethnicity." USDA.gov, Rural America Volume 17, Issue 4/Winter 2002, www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/46984/19353_ra174h_1_.pdf. Accessed 13 July 2020.

DECREASE IN NUMBER OF FARMERS IN THE U.S. FROM 1900 - 1997

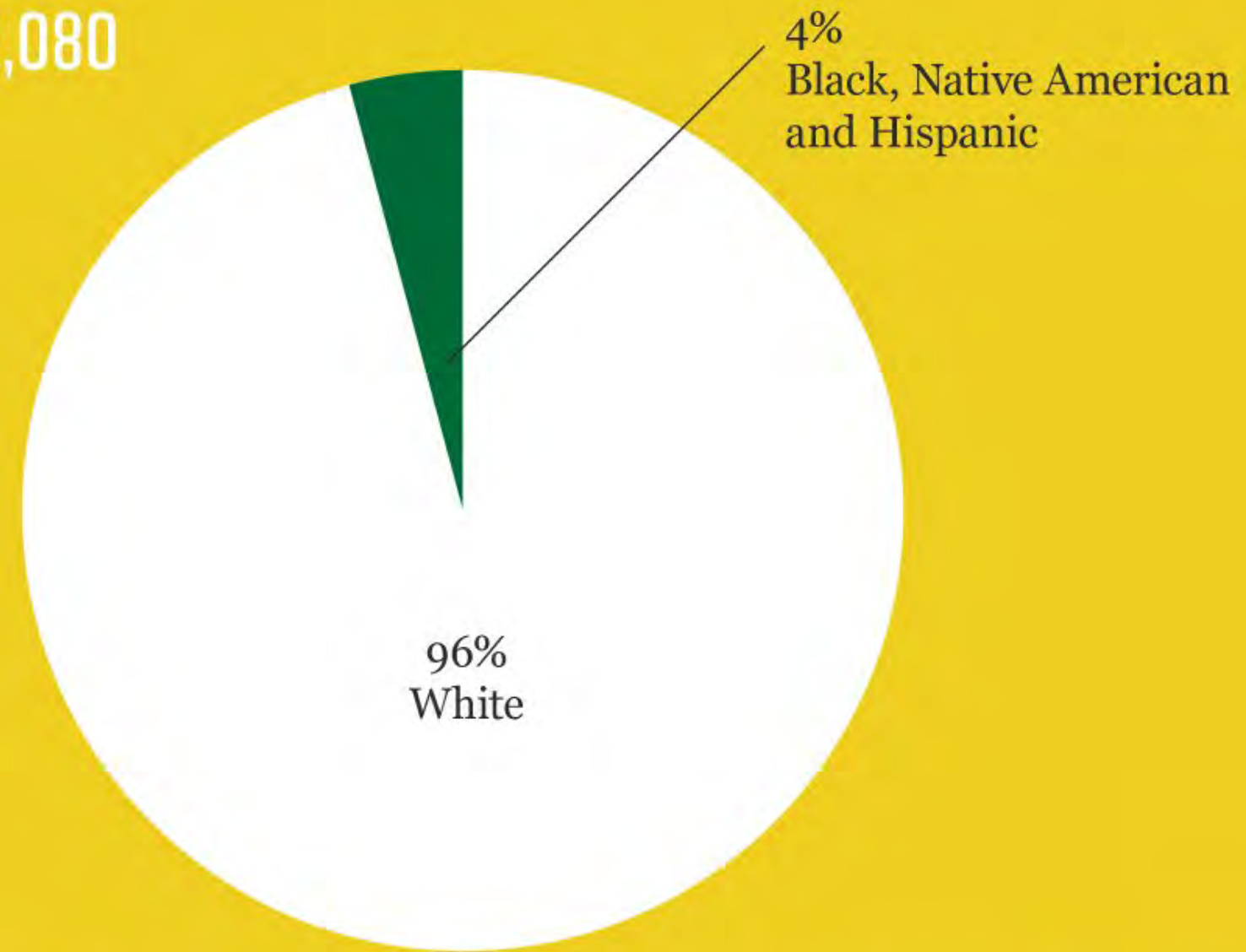


Factors that have led to the decrease in number of African-American farmers in the U.S. include segregation in farm organizations, violence, trickery, and unfair treatment under the law.

"Black Land Loss" Duke Sanford World Food Policy Center, <https://wfpc.sanford.duke.edu/media/black-land-loss>. Accessed 20 July 2020.

LAND OWNERS OF ALL PRIVATE U.S. AGRICULTURAL LAND

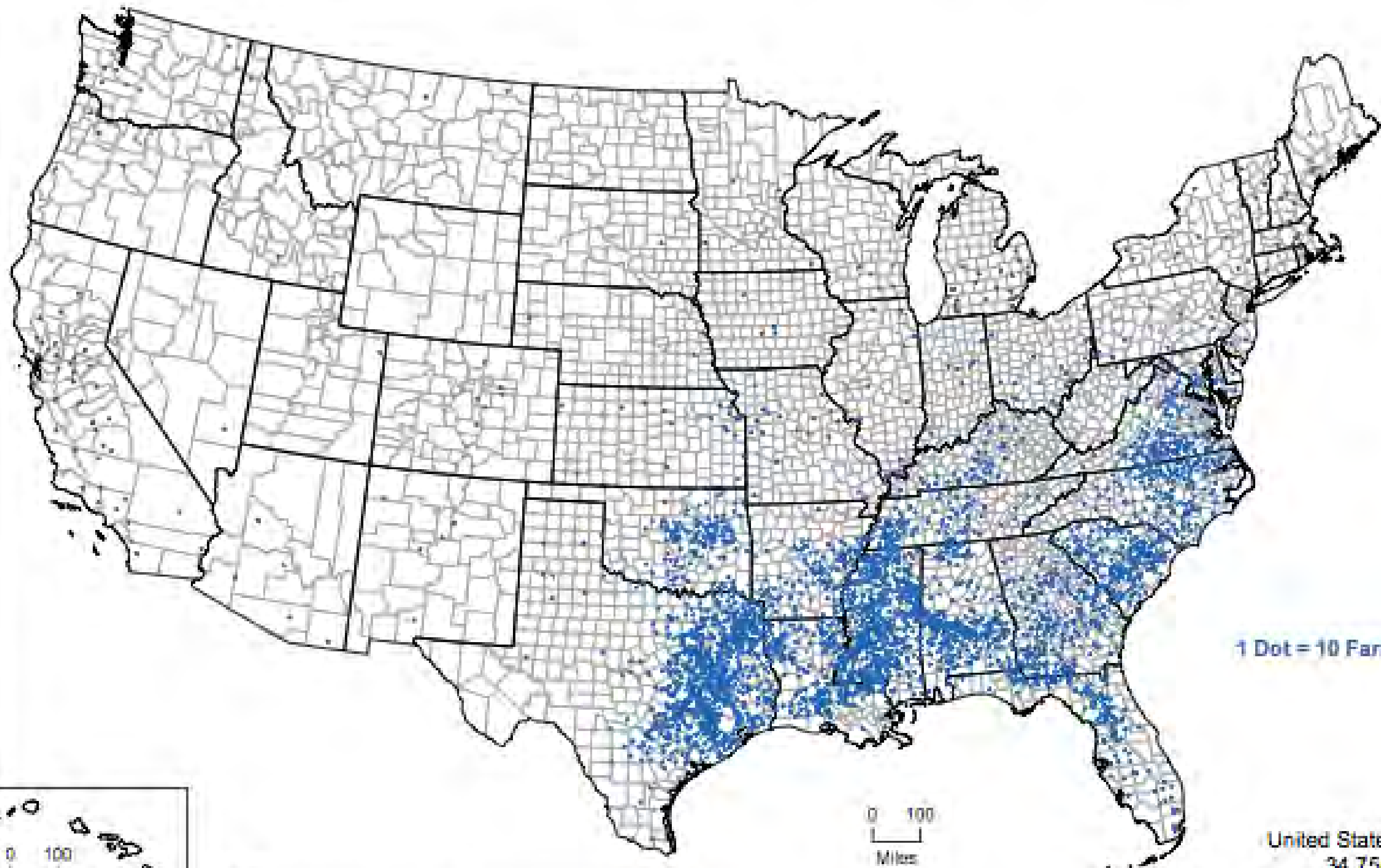
TOTAL: 3,412,080



WHITE: 3,218,751 / BLACK: 68,056 / NATIVE AMERICAN: 23,266
ASIAN: 8,158 / OTHER: 27,290 / HISPANIC: 47,223

Gilbert, Jess, et al. "Who Owns the Land? Agricultural Land Ownership by Race/Ethnicity." USDA.gov, Rural America Volume 17, Issue 4/Winter 2002, www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/46984/19353_ra174h_1_.pdf. Accessed 13 July 2020.

Number of Farms with Black or African American Operators: 2012



1 Dot = 10 Farms

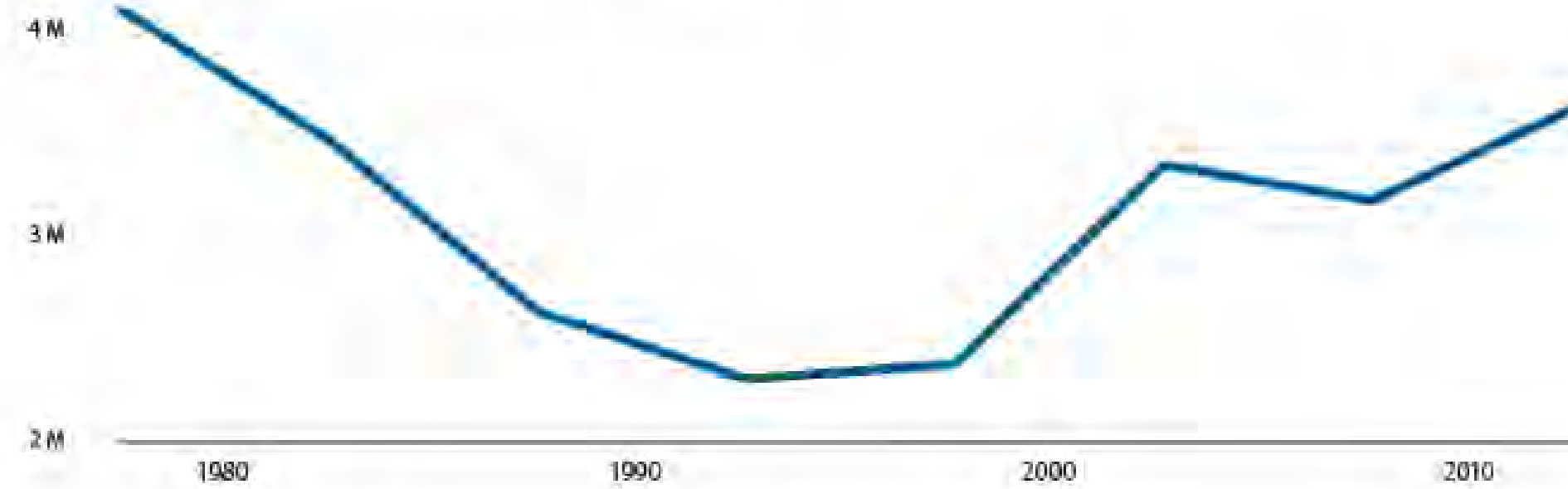
United States Total
34,758



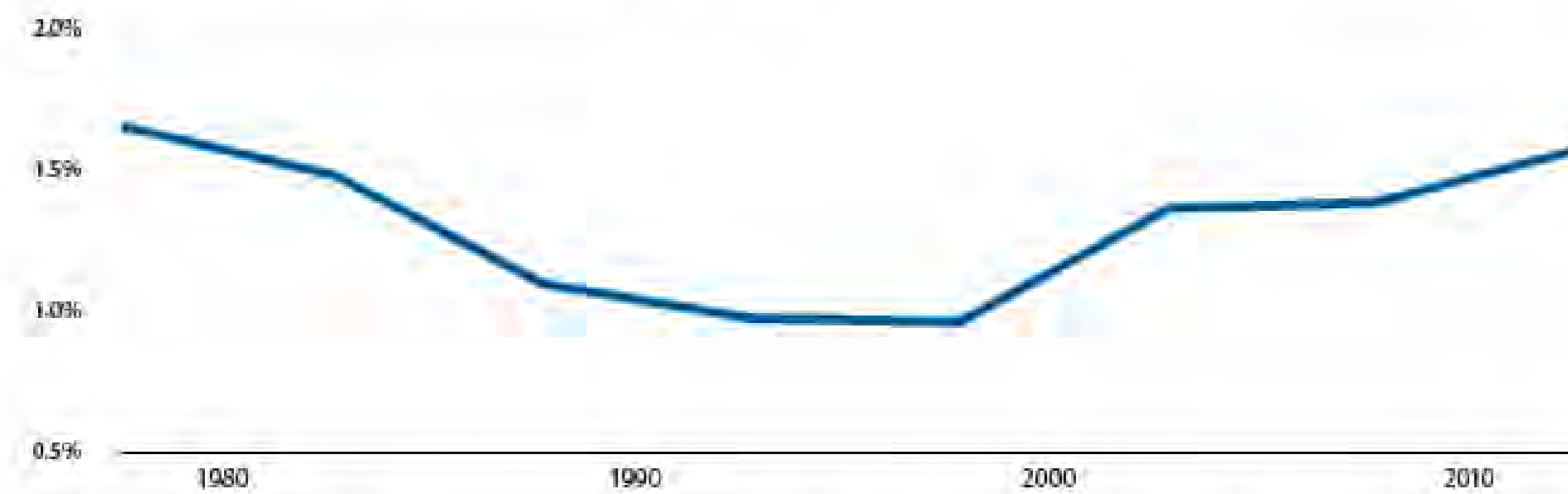
FIGURE 1

Black farming has increased since the 1990s

Total acreage operated by black farmers, 1978–2012



Total percent of farmers who are black, 1978–2012



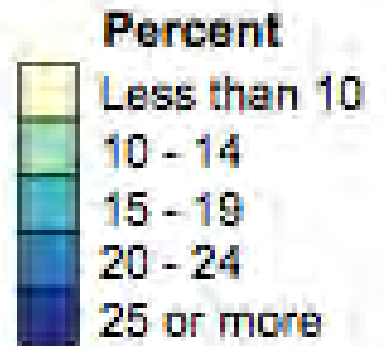
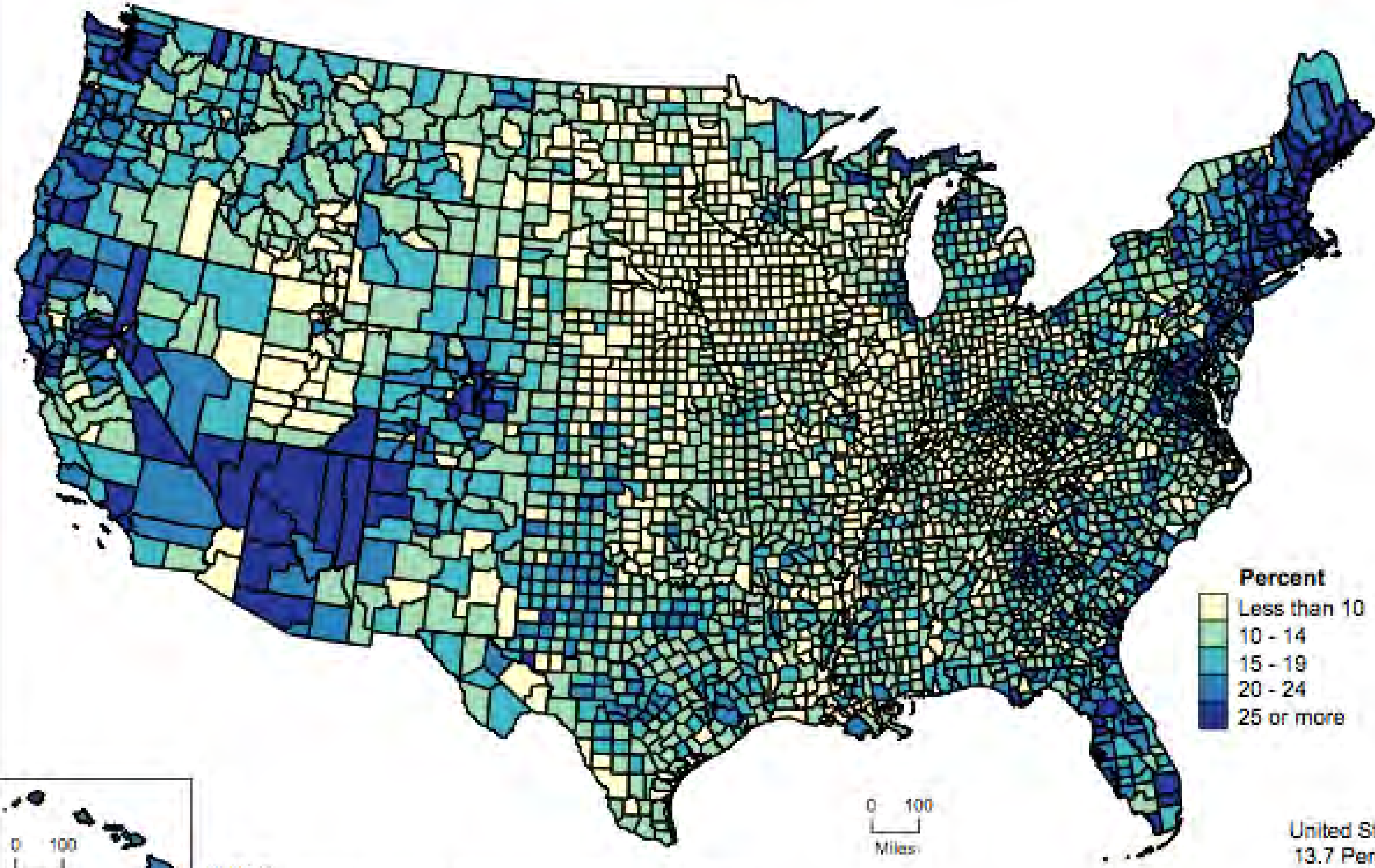
Note: The underlying data source uses 'black or African American' when referring to this group. For the purposes of this figure, the authors use 'black.'

Sources: National Agricultural Statistics Service, "2012 Census of Agriculture, Table 60. Selected Farm Characteristics by Race and Principal Operator: 2012 and 2007" (Washington: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2014), available at https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2012/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_1_US/st99_1_060_060.pdf; National Agricultural Statistics Service, "2002 Census of Agriculture, Table 47. Selected Farm Characteristics by Race and Principal Operator: 2002" (Washington: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2004), available at <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/AgCensusimages/2002/01/51/1708/Table-47.pdf>; National Agricultural Statistics Service, "1997 Census of Agriculture, Table 17. Selected Characteristics of Farms by Specified Racial Groups, Sex of Operators, and Persons of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino Origin: 1997 and 1992" (Washington: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1999), available at <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/AgCensusimages/1997/01/51/1604/Table-17.pdf>; National Agricultural Statistics Service, "1992 Census of Agriculture, Table 37. Operators by Selected Racial Groups: 1992 and 1987" (Washington: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1994), available at <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/AgCensusimages/1992/01/51/1575/Table-37.pdf>; National Agricultural Statistics Service, "1997 Census of Agriculture, Table 7. Land Use: 1997, 1992, and 1987" (Washington: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1999), available at <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/AgCensusimages/1997/01/51/1604/Table-07.pdf>; U.S. Census Bureau, "1982 Census of Agriculture, Volume 1" (Washington: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1984), available at <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/AgCensusimages/1982/01/51/1982-01-51.pdf>.





Percent of Farms with Female Principal Operator: 2012

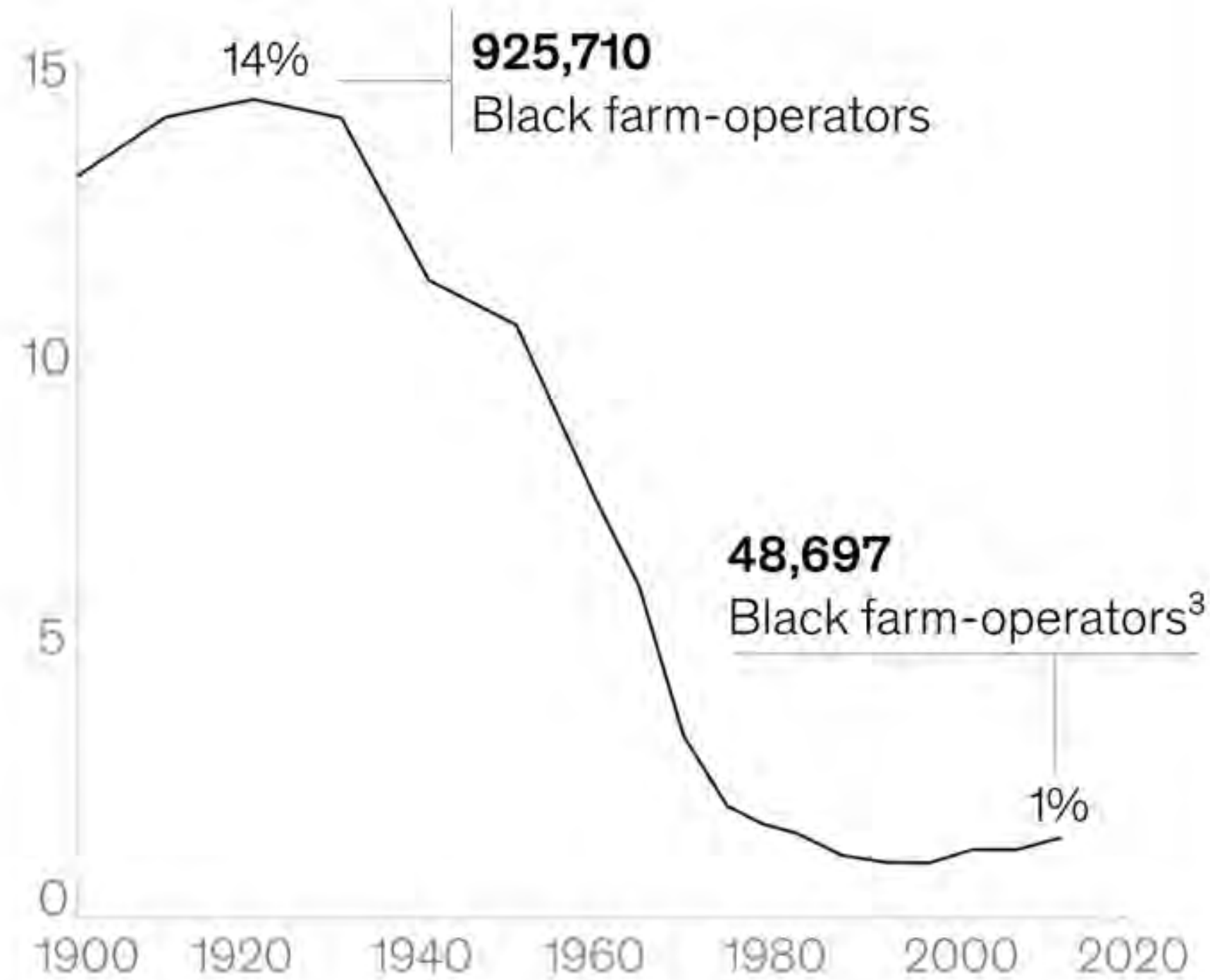


12-M126
U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service

United States
13.7 Percent

The share of Black farmers has declined significantly over the last century; today just 1.4 percent of farmers identify as Black.

Black farm operators (key decision makers)¹ have declined significantly since 1900, % of total²



Today, 1.4% of farmers are Black and 0.5% of total US farm sales are from Black farmers



1.4%

of farmers identify as **Black or African American**



1/3

the **average acres per farm** compared to all farms; <1% of farmland¹



<0.5%

of **total US farm sales**



1.3x

more likely to **generate a net loss** in 2017⁴



48%

is focused on **cattle & dairy farming**



3.8x

less likely to use **long-term production contracts**⁴

As a result, Black farmers' performance lags peers.

Comparison of averages between Black-led and all US farms

	Black-led farms	All farms
Acres per farm	132	441
Sales	~\$40K	~\$190K
Government payments	~\$7K	~\$14K
Expenses	~\$40K	~\$160K
Net income	~\$3.5K	~\$160K

Source: United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service

MAJOR TIME PERIODS

- PRE CIVIL WAR 1820 - 1863
- EMANCIPATION - 1865
- RECONSTRUCTION 1865 - 1880s
- JIM CROW - 1870s - 1960s
- TURN OF THE CENTURY 1900
- WWI/ GREAT DEPRESSION 1912 - 1930s
- NEW DEAL - 1930s
- WWII 1939 - 1945
- CIVIL RIGHTS ERA late 1950s - late 1960s
- POST CIVIL RIGHTS 1970s - on
- REAGAN ERA/ RECESSION early 80s
- TURN OF THE CENTURY 2000
- ECONOMIC DOWNTURN/HOUSING CRISIS 2008 - 2009
- COVID/SHUTTER IN PLACE 2020

- Missouri Compromise (1820): The Missouri Compromise was passed in 1820, admitting Missouri as a slave state and Maine as a free state.
- Mexican American War (1840): This war was followed by the annexation of Texas.
- Homesteading Act (Donation Land Claim Act of 1850): This act encouraged homesteading and land ownership.
- Civil War (1861-1865): The American Civil War took place in the United States during this time.

- Emancipation (1863): President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, during the third year of the Civil War. This proclamation declared freedom for all slaves in rebellious states.
- 40 Acres and a Mule (1865): Special Field Orders No. 15 was a post-Civil War promise proclaimed by Union General William Tecumseh Sherman on January 16, 1865, to allot family units, including freed people, a plot of land no larger than 40 acres.
- Lincoln Assassination (1865): On April 15, 1865
- Recension of 40 Acres by Andrew Johnson
- 13th Amendment (1865): This amendment, passed by Congress on January 31, 1865, and ratified on December 6, 1865, abolished slavery in the United States.

- Reconstruction/End of Reconstruction (1863-1877): The Reconstruction era in American history lasted from 1863 to 1877, involving significant changes and rebuilding efforts following the Civil War.
- KKK (1865): The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) was founded in 1865 and extended into nearly every southern state by 1870. It became a vehicle for white southern resistance to Reconstruction-era policies aimed at establishing political and economic equality for black Americans.
- Jim Crow Era Segregation (1877-mid-1960s): Jim Crow was the name of the racial caste system which operated primarily, but not exclusively, in Southern and border states between 1877 and the mid-1960s.
- Morrill Act of 1890: This act expanded the land grants for universities, specifically agricultural and technical schools.

- World War I (1914-1918): Known as the First World War or the Great War, this was a global conflict that lasted from 1914 to 1918, resulting in significant casualties.
- Great Migration (1916-1970): The Great Migration refers to the movement of 6 million African Americans out of the rural Southern United States to the urban Northeast, Midwest, and West between 1916 and 1970.
- Great Depression (1929-1930s): The Great Depression was the most severe economic downturn in U.S. history, starting in 1929 and continuing through the 1930s.
- The New Deal (1933-1939): The New Deal was a series of programs, public work projects, financial reforms, and regulations enacted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the United States between 1933 and 1939 to respond to the Great Depression.

- Redlining (1930s): Redlining is the systematic denial of various services by federal government agencies, local governments, and the private sector to residents of specific neighborhoods or communities, either directly or through the selective raising of prices.
- World War II (1939-1945)
- G.I. Bill (1944): The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, commonly known as the G.I. Bill, was a law that provided a range of benefits for returning World War II veterans.
- White Flight (1950s-1960s): Starting in the 1950s and 1960s, the terms 'white flight' became popular in the United States, referring to the large-scale migration of people of various European ancestries from racially mixed urban regions to more racially homogeneous suburban regions.
- Highways Built (1956): The construction of the highway system was authorized by the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956, coinciding with the growth of suburbs and the migration of people.

- Civil Rights Act of 1964: The Act outlawed discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, required equal access to public places and employment, and enforced desegregation of schools and the right to vote.
- Equal Housing Act (1968): The Civil Rights Act of 1968, also known as the Fair Housing Act, was signed into law by United States President Lyndon B. Johnson during the King assassination riots on April 11, 1968.
- 1980s Recession (Early 1980s): rollbacks
- Housing Market Crash (2007)
- Coronavirus Recession (Feb-April 2020): Economic challenges occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the expiration of eviction and mortgage moratoriums.

Additional Resources

YOUTUBE LINK TO LONG CONVO about timeline:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iIRm-KNp7WU>

Some good resources for folks in land-related issues:

<https://blacklandownership.com/resources-timeline/>

