The "N" word through the years

1619 -1865

DURING SLAVERY

During the time of slavery, the "N" word was used as a derogatory term for African American slaves. It was commonly put in front of the slaves names. Even with the end of slavery, many songs and games had the 'N' word featured in them.

MODERN

The "N" word has come to mean something completely different than it did several hundred years ago. It's now used synonomously to mean friends or family by any races and ethnicities.

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had no choice but to answer to the "N" word, but we, in 2017 don't have to. And we shouldn't.

Public organizations such as the NAACP and NFL, have explicitly banned the use of the "N" word, stating that its offensive background shouldn't be celebrated. The NFL even has a set punishment of a 15 yard penalty every time the word is used.

In 2014, Seattle Seahawks wide receiver Doug Baldwin stated that the NFL banning the use of the "N" word was "absurd" and that, "we've turned it into a term of endearment."

Of all the words to describe the "N" word, endearing shouldn't be one of them. It wasn't endearing as slave owners yelled it while beating their slaves senseless, and even years later it wasn't endearing as it was being yelled at African Americans being hosed down, having tear gas thrown at them, being kicked and beaten senseless yet again.

Another Seahawks player, cornerback Richard Sherman, told ESPN banning the word was "an atrocious idea" and that, "it's weird that they're targeting one specific word. Why wouldn't all curse words be banned then?"

An 'atrocious idea' is gathering a group of people, forcing them to leave the only homes they've ever known and make them work for slave owners. It's an 'atrocious idea' to profit off of selling humans like they are animals. The history and meaning that the "N" word holds is what makes it one of the most disgusting words in the English language.

American culture would not be where it is today without the help of African Americans. Regardless of whether or not a person has contributed to America, they deserve respect.

And the ongoing fight about the "N" word is further separating us from that.

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And why existence is still an issue

Hard "r" or not, the "N" word is arguably one of the most controversial words which is used in many Americans' vernacu-

There is no "right" way or situation to use it. The fight over the "N" word shouldn't be a fight about which group of people can say it, because regardless of race, social or political background, no one should say it. Instead, the fight over the "N" word is about being progressive and moving on. America has more issues to worry about than who should be 'al-

lowed' to say the "N" word, and because this is still a topic of discussion, it only goes to show Ameri-

BY KLARIA HOLMES

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sion. From the very beginning, African Americans were classified as the 'lower race' by their white counterparts, with the African slave trade starting in 1619, when the first slaves were brought to the North American colony of Jamestown, Va.

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The "N" word was used as a derogatory, racial slur for slaves. Little has changed from the 1600s. African Americans are still struggling to fit into a world that has shown it doesn't want them, and Americans are still focusing on whether or not they should be 'allowed' to say the "N" word.

We, African Americans, have been living in America's systematic oppression since our ancestors were forced to leave our homes, get on a boat, and work our butts off for second class treatment.

We were beaten, treated like animals, and robbed of the life and opportunities others were given when they arrived here.

As African Americans, we're still being treated as second class citizens in the country most of us were born in, and every time you say the "N" word, you take us right back to that time period.

You belittle the progress the Civil Rights Movement for African had Americans. Our ancestors