

Introduction to Community Land Trust: History of Cooperative Communities in the U.S., and Informal Land Trusts



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What is a Cooperative Community

Modern Term includes “Intentional Community”, may be CLT

Planned Residential/Self-Sustaining Community that has a high level of

- A. Social, political, or spiritual agreement, unity, and purpose
- B. Cohesion may be based on collective decisions or elected representation and shared teamwork
- C. Internal Economy or External Income or capital generation

What is a Community Land Trust

1940-Present Cooperative Community Project: Purchase of land by marginal, excluded, or intentional persons/groups (with support of external benefactors) in permanent trust for - Rental/Purchase by Occupants

More Secular/Non-religious

Collective Decisions - Membership

Internal Economy (Farming)

External Economy (Fund raising, External Income or Congregation Contribution)

Legal / Formal CLT - Francis' Presentation

Community Land Trusts

How does a community land trust work?

Various sources of public and philanthropic capital...

- Public donors
- Public housing authorities
- Chartered property
- Community foundations
- Anchor institutions

...are used by community land trusts...

CLT

...to acquire homes in a geographic focus area.



Community land trusts tweak the normal process of homebuying...

A new resident buys their house outright...



They pay an annual fee to the CLT to support its operations...

CLT

...but leases the land underneath from the CLT.



...and the CLT retains permanent ownership of the land.

...to make housing permanently affordable.

A new resident buys the house at a price that's been kept affordable...



A new resident buys the house at a price that's been kept affordable...

CLT ...while the CLT retains the land.



...and agrees to the same requirements around resale.

Why CLTs Matter

Although the first community land trust in the US was started in rural Georgia in 1870 by coal rights lessees to help poor black farmers, today, the majority of the country's nearly 200 community land trusts are today located in urban areas.

CLTs create affordable housing while still allowing low-income residents to build equity as homeowners. Moreover, because the CLT retains ownership of the underlying land, the housing remains permanently affordable, even as the original beneficiaries of an affordable home price sell and move on. This long-term, continuing benefit makes CLTs an especially efficient use of affordable housing subsidies.

By locking permanent access to affordable housing, CLTs can play an important role in countering the market-driven displacement associated with gentrification. And by awarding neighborhood land for the public good, not speculative profit, CLTs have played an equally important role in stabilizing communities by preventing unnecessary transactions.

CLTs are typically governed by:

- $\frac{1}{3}$ CLT residents
- $\frac{1}{3}$ Other community residents
- $\frac{1}{3}$ Experts and stakeholders

CLT

The CLT's geographic focus allows it to not only provide affordable housing, but to play an important role in stabilizing neighborhoods.



As it diversifies its portfolio, the CLT can also own land in trust for permanently affordable rental housing or community-focused commercial developments.

Community Land Trust



Historical Memory

First Cooperative Communities on this land were established, formed and advanced by Indigenous/Native Peoples, sometimes referred to as “Indians”.

Many Early Rural/Farm Cooperatives Copied Native Communities;

Some included native populations.

History: Cooperative Communities (CC)

Merger of 3 Strains of Ideas and Practice

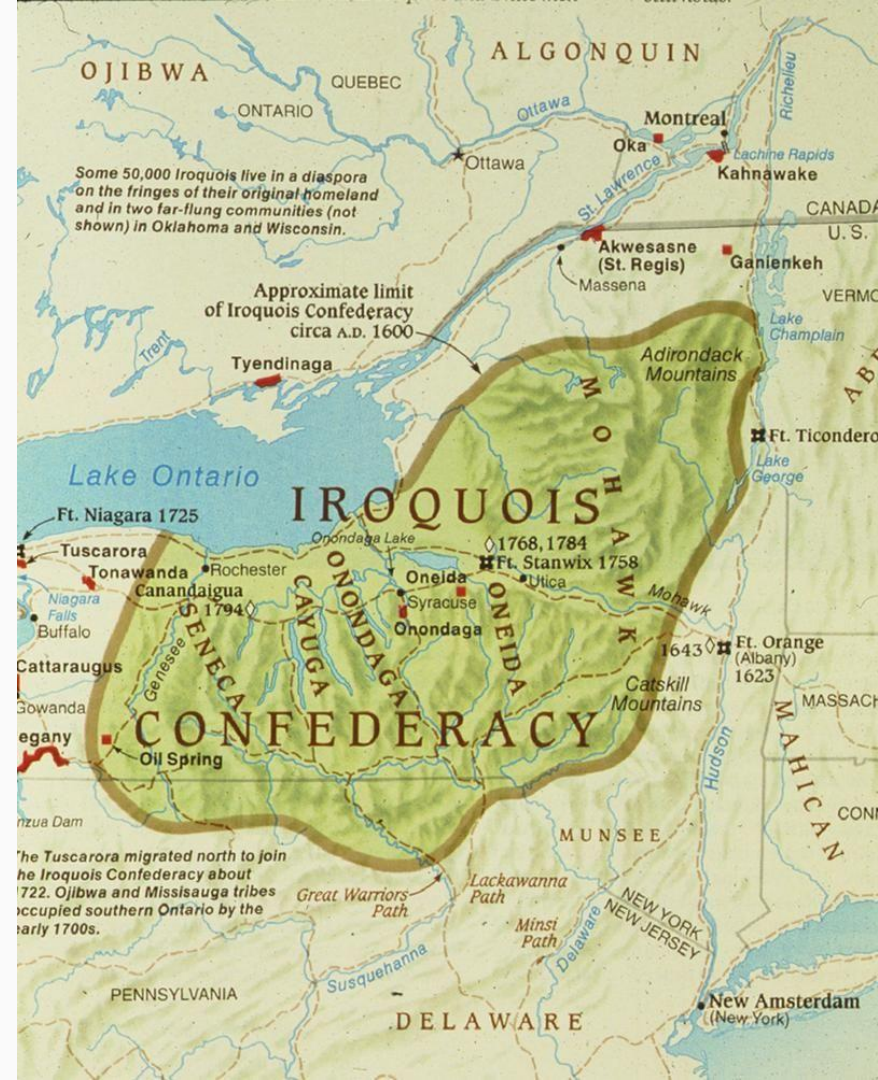
- A. Indigenous
- B. European/Euro-American
- C. Africans/Africans in America
 - a. 4th Infusion of Gandhists - India 1930s - on

Native Peoples

Native/Indigenous Peoples

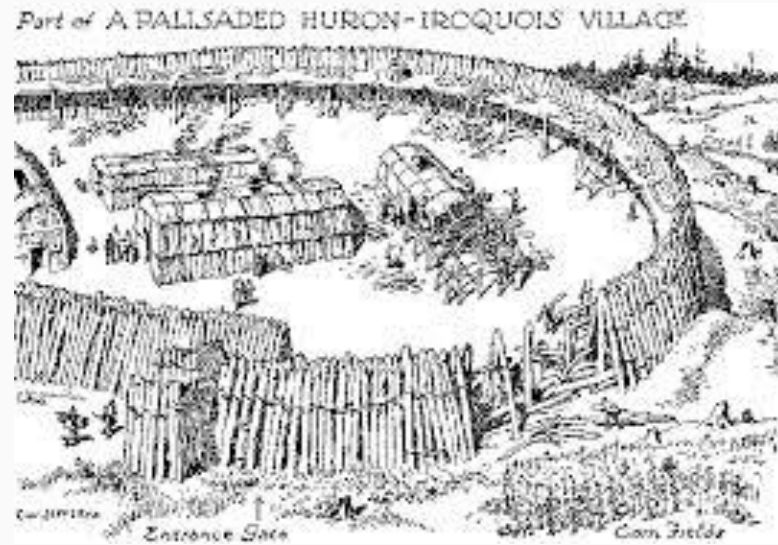
Normal/Natural Collectives

- A. Scattered Groups of People gather for Cooperative Production/Distribution
- B. Collective Rabbit Hunts; Shared Bounty
- C. Fishing Communities - channelled entire catch to elders whose role was to assure equitable distribution according to need.



D. Iroquois Communities

1. 4 - 5 communities in cooperation and decision making
2. Political/Social organization - Bases for U.S. Constitution and Representative Government



White Settler Cooperatives

European Background

Reaction to transition from Feudal Social Structure (allowed common lands) to merchant and industrial capitalism; deepening class divisions/class struggle.)
People worked both as capital and to generate capital.

Privatization of common/public space

Levellers, Shakers, Amish : Secular or spiritual movements that opposed private ownership of public lands

U.S. Formation and Expansion as a Settler Colony/Nation

Background 1600 - 1930

In large part, driven by the expansionist European merchant capital,:

- a. Through Colonial conquest & almost total liquidation of Indigenous Peoples
- b. Capture, Enslavement, and Importation of African Peoples to conquered lands;
- c. Imposition on non-whites strict racial segmentation enforced by force;
- d. Established and maintained image of “white superiority” universally imposed;
- e. White led Cooperative Communities generally subscribed to supremacy creed;
- f. White supremacy masks profound internal class inequality and segmentation



Theory/Practical Foundations U.S. 1800 - 1920

1744 - 1920s Shakers Community in the U.S.

1825 New Harmony, Robert Owen (Socialist Thinker)

1848 - 1881 Oneida, NY (Photos)

1841 Brock Farm Transcendentalist Utopia, 80 Communities 1840s

1855 Amish

1856 Amana first NY - Iowa



Western Africa/Coastal Inland Communities

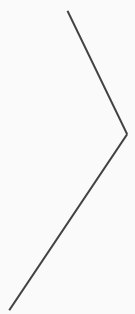
A. Natural Development of Communal/Cooperative Communities

B. Inter-community Conflict

- a. Short term
- b. Conflict over space / expanded population
- c. Hunter / former conflicts

C. Dominant Mode of Production: Cooperative

- a. Level of Productive Forces
 - i. Technical Skills
 - ii. Organization
 - iii. Sustained Production and Reproduction
 - iv. Established Cultural Participation
- b. Ownership - hierarchical, collective



Determines
Mode of
Production

D. African History Usurped

1. Euro African Wars: 800-1450 ACE
2. Transportation of generations of Africans to settler colonies
3. Slavery as Institution and Industry
4. Enslaved Africans established Co-op. Communities: Re-establish/recover collective history & mode production

ECONOMIC
CO-OPERATION
AMONG
NEGRO AMERICANS

Report of a Social Study made by Atlanta University, under the patronage of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, D. C., together with the Proceedings of the 12th Conference for the Study of the Negro Problems, held at Atlanta University, on Tuesday, May the 28th, 1907



Black - Led Independent Cooperatives/Shared Lands 1862 - Present

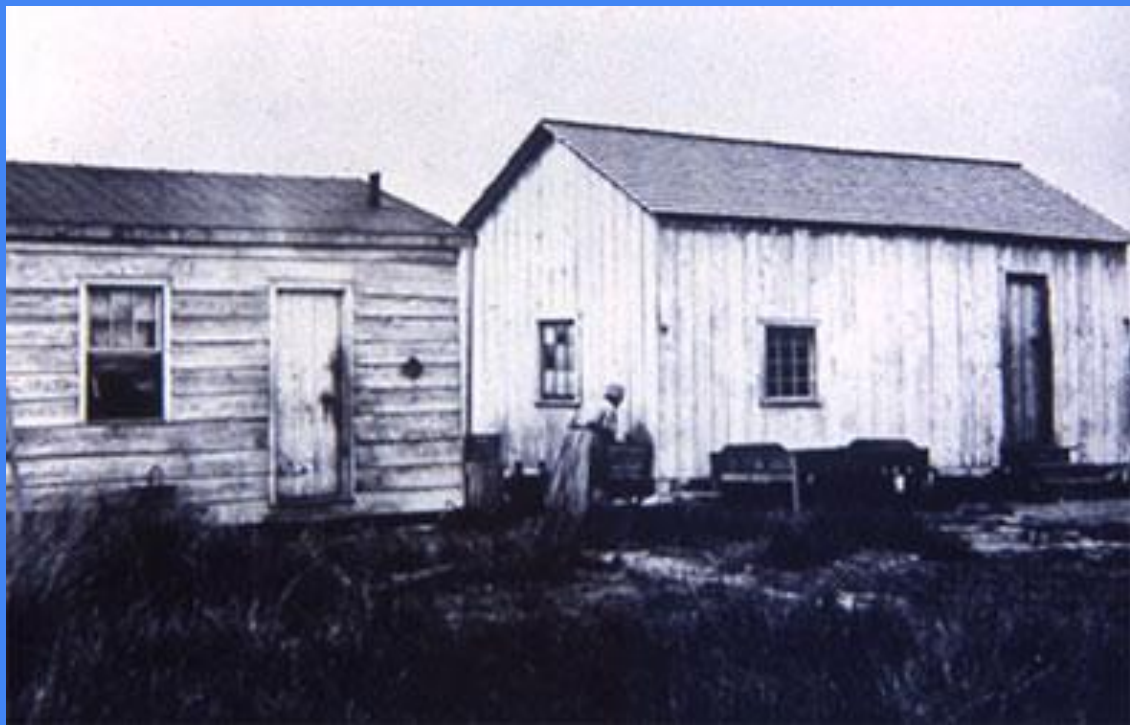
South Carolina/Georgia Sea Island Communities (See Map)

Gullah/Geechee (Dialect) - 1862 First Mass Communal Land Purchase by Blacks; Cape Fear to Jacksonville

300 - families bought property as Communal Lands - succession is through Heir Property, Oral Land titles

- Marked in Diaries/Bibles/True Book
- Blacks were not allowed to register with the county





Mitchellville, South Carolina

1866-Harriet Tubman Travelled to Mitchellville to learn how to replicate Freedmen's Towns - (crops include cotton, timber, nuts; also crab/oyster)

1940s Mitchellville - Land stolen/confiscated

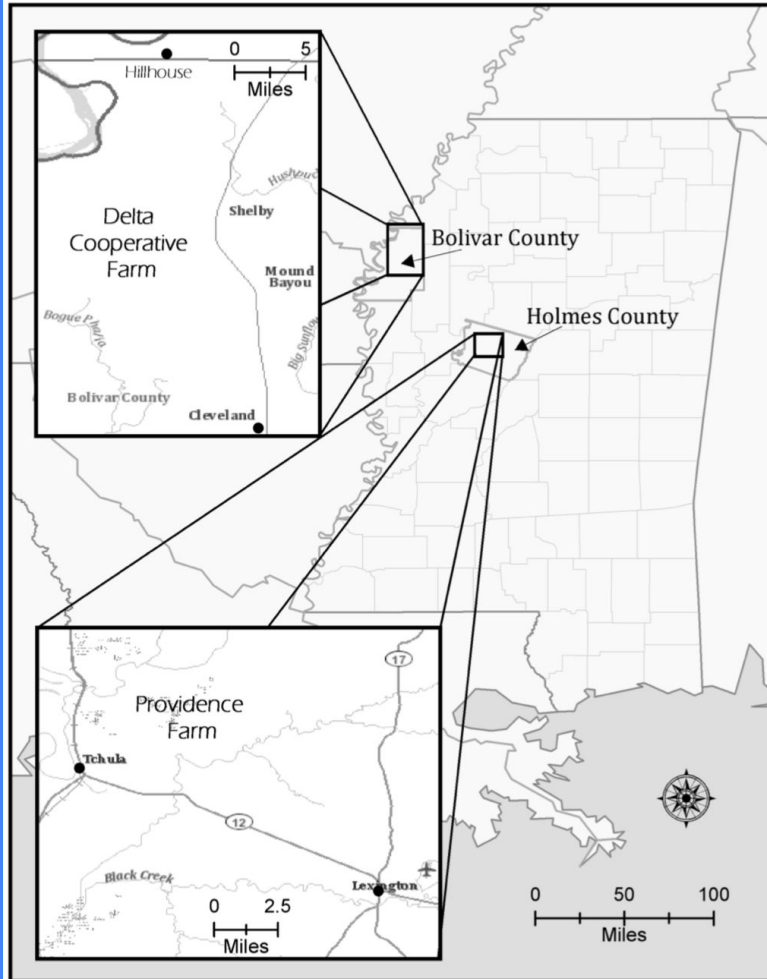
Later - Hilton Head/Hotel Plantation; Major Golf/Resorts

- Church Cooperatives
- Black Townships (Mound Bayou, Miss.)
- Black Settlements (California, Oklahoma, Kansas Post Civil War)
- Miss. Farm Cooperatives: 1930's-1960's

Delta Cooperative in Bolivar County, Miss

Providence Farm, Holmes County, Miss

Figure 1: Map of Delta Cooperative Farm and Providence Farm, Mississippi



Black Led Cooperatives in Mississippi

The Delta Cooperative Farm 1936 - 1942 , one of the 1st communities defined as an Intentional Community, called a “Communitarian Space”

- Cooperative counsels
- Collective work groups

Providence Farm, Holmes County 1943 - 1961

- Black only
- Black self-help cooperative community; Informal Land Trust
- Fannie Lou Hamer and Hartman Turnbow
- Broken up by Miss. Sovereignty Commission

Tent Cities, Tennessee 1959 - 1966 , Black voter registration-eviction of tenant farmers/ sharecroppers. Several blacks pooled lands to set up tent city cooperative. More than 2500 lived on “Freedom Farm.” Crops included lumber, walnuts, winter apples, produce.

- James Foreman, future SNCC executive secretary, supported the project/organized funds based at Roosevelt Univ., Chicago.



Recent Examples

USA- Utopian Community Models Post-WWI

- Berkeley Post War, Coop Movement; Berkeley Bowl, CCFCU. Cleaner/ Taxi Service, Pacifica Foundation, Coop Housing/Apartments

Yamato Colony, Livingston, CA

Japanese Christian Utopian Colony

Livingston Cooperative Society Estab. 1914

1955- PRESENT

(Pre-CLT CLTs)

1964 COFO Catfish Farm Cooperative

1963: Miss. Freedom Labor Union

1967: New Communities Georgia

1968: CBE Washington DC – (Drum and Spear Bookstore/ Press,
SECROUSER (Oil Products Imports; 14th St. Brownstone Cooperative,)

Garrett's personal involvements