

After the disputed election of 1876 resulted in the end of Reconstruction, Whites in the South regained political control of the region, after mounting intimidation and violence in the elections. Systematic disfranchisement of African Americans took place in Southern states from 1890 to 1908 and lasted until national civil rights legislation was passed in the mid-1960s.

- ↳ During this period, the white-dominated Democratic Party regained political control over the South. The Republican Party—the "party of Lincoln"—which had been the party that most blacks belonged to, shrank to insignificance as black voter registration was suppressed. By the early 20th century, almost all elected officials in the South were Democrats.
 - ↳ During the same time as African Americans were being disfranchised, white Democrats imposed racial segregation by law.
- ↳ Characteristics of the post-Reconstruction period.
 - ↳ Racial segregation
 - ↳ Disenfranchisement, such as barriers to voting participation for blacks
 - ↳ Exploitation, such as economic oppression
 - ↳ Violence against blacks by police and other state-sponsored entities

The Early Civil Rights Movement, 1896-1954

The conditions which pre-stage the modern movement
(Page 1 of 2)

The situation for blacks outside the South was somewhat better (in most states they could vote and have their children educated, though they still faced discrimination in housing and jobs).

Stauder v. West Virginia (1880)

- ↳ Supreme Court ruled that African Americans could not be excluded from juries.
 - ↳ Blacks were routinely barred from jury service, however by roles which reserved it for voters only.

1896, the National Association of Colored Women is formed by the merger of smaller groups.

- ↳ Their original intention was "to furnish evidence of the moral, mental and material progress made by people of color through the efforts of our women".
- ↳ the NACW became involved in campaigns in favor of women's suffrage and against lynching and Jim Crow laws. They also led efforts to improve education, and care for both children and the elderly. By 1918, when the United States entered the First World War, membership in the NACW had grown to an extraordinary 300,000 nationwide.

Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)

- ↳ ...the Supreme Court upheld state-mandated discrimination in public transportation under the "separate but equal" doctrine.
- ↳ ...case did not address Yick Wo v. Hopkins (1886) involving discrimination against Chinese immigrants which held that a law that is race-neutral on its surface, but is administered in a prejudicial manner, is an infringement of the Equal Protection Clause in the 14th Amendment of the Constitution.

Williams v. Mississippi (1898)

- ↳ The Supreme Court upheld state laws which imposed poll taxes and literacy tests for voting.

1898, Louisiana enacts the first state-wide 'grandfather clause' that provided exemption for illiterate whites to voter registration literacy test requirements. People of African heritage, however, are not exempt.

Booker T Washington

- ↳ Preached a message of self-reliance. He urged blacks to concentrate on improving their economic position rather than demanding social equality until they had proven they deserved it (in the eyes of whites)
- ↳ Publicly he accepted the continuation of Jim Crow laws and segregation in the short term, but privately helped to fund court cases challenging the laws.

W.E.B. DuBois

- ↳ Rejected Washington's apology for segregation.
- ↳ Advocated for universal "manhood" suffrage, elimination of all forms of racial segregation and extension of education – not limited to the vocational education that Washington emphasized – on a nondiscriminatory basis.

1901, President Theodore Roosevelt meets with Booker T Washington.

- ↳ Their dinner is condemned by Senator Benjamin Tillman of South Carolina, saying "the action of President Roosevelt in entertaining that nigger will necessitate our killing a thousand niggers in the South before they learn their place again."

The Brownsville Affair, 1906

Arose out of racial tensions between the white residents of Brownsville, Texas, and the all-black infantrymen of the 25th US Regiment at nearby Fort Brown.

As a result of racial discrimination, a fight broke out between a black soldier and a local white merchant. The city then barred all black military soldiers from entering Brownsville. August 13, shots are fired and two whites are killed. In spite of reports that all blacks were in their barracks at the time, whites (and the media). President Theodore Roosevelt ordered all 167 soldiers dishonorably discharged.

1972 (!), Congress re-investigates and finds the accused soldiers innocent; Nixon overturned all charges, but refused to grant their families the back pay in pensions due them.

Jim Crow Laws were persistent throughout the South

- ↳ These laws mandated racial segregation in regard to public schooling, public places and public transportation, and the segregation of restrooms, restaurants and drinking fountains. The US military was also segregated.

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

- ↳ Founded in 1909 by black leaders (W.E.B. DuBois) and white activists (many of them Jews)
- ↳ NAACP concentrated in using the courts to attack Jim Crow laws and disenfranchising constitutional provisions.

National Urban League formed in 1910 (originally called National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes)

- ↳ The League is devoted to facilitating African American economic self-reliance, parity, power and civil rights. Focused on education.

The Great Migration

Millions of African Americans left the South to escape prejudice and racism, as well as to seek jobs in the industrialized cities.

- ↳ The 1st Great Migration (1910-1930) witnessed 2 million blacks leave.
- ↳ The 2nd Great Migration (1940-1970) witnessed seven million depart.
 - ↳ What causes them to leave the South?
 - ↳ They left to escape the discrimination, lynching violence and racial segregation and Jim Crow laws.
 - ↳ The boll weevil infestation of Southern cotton fields in the late 1910s forced many sharecroppers and laborers to search for alternative employment opportunities.
 - ↳ The enormous expansion of war industries in the North created job openings for blacks – not in the factories but in the service jobs vacated by the new factory workers who had left service jobs)
 - ↳ World War I and the Immigration Act of 1924 effectively put a halt to the flow of European immigrants to the emerging industrial centers in the Northeast and Midwest, causing shortage of workers in the factories.
 - ↳ The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 displaced hundreds of thousands of African American farmers.

1914, newly elected President Woodrow Wilson orders physical re-segregation of federal workplaces and employment after nearly 50 years of integrated facilities.

- ↳ Why? He supported the 'separate but equal' mindset.
- ↳ Wilson didn't interfere with entrenched Jim Crow laws in the South.

Lynching

There were at least 3,446 lynchings of blacks and 1,297 lynchings of whites between 1882-1968

- ↳ There were several motives behind the lynchings
 - ↳ One motive for lynchings, particularly in the South, was the enforcement of social conventions – punishing perceived violations of customs, later institutionalized as Jim Crow laws, mandating segregation of whites and blacks.
 - ↳ Financial gain and the ability to establish political and economic control provided another motive.
- Lynching peaked in the 1960s as white supremacists resorted to terrorism to discourage blacks from voting.

1915, 'The Birth of a Nation' is released in movie theaters.

- ↳ A racist film which romanticized the Lost Cause mentality of the South; the film is credited as inspiring the second incarnation of the KKK.
- ↳ Riots broke out in response to the film!
- ↳ NAACP protests in cities across the country, convincing some not to show the film.

“Garveyism” / Universal Negro Improvement Association

- ↳ Created by Marcus Garvey (who came to the US in 1916), it made strides in organizing new communities among the internationalist-minded "New Negro" movement in the early 1920s.
- ↳ Garvey's program pointed in the opposite direction from mainstream civil rights organizations such as the NAACP.
- ↳ Instead of striving for integration into white-dominated society, it encouraged economic independence within the system of racial segregation in the United States.
- ↳ Garvey's movement was a contradictory mix of defeatism, accommodation and separatism: he married themes of self-reliance that Booker T. Washington could have endorsed and the "gospel of success" so popular in white America in the 1920s with a rejection of white colonialism abroad and any hope of reform of white society at home.

During the Strike of 1917, blacks were hired as strikebreakers, which increased the resentment and suspicion of them in the eyes of whites.

Buchanan v. Warley (1917)

The Supreme Court upholds that racially segregated housing violates the 14th Amendment to the Constitution.

Red Summer of 1919

Bloody race riots. In most instances, whites attacked African Americans in more than three dozen American cities. In some cases, blacks responded to an attack. Several hundred blacks killed.

Moore v. Dempsey (1923)

- ↳ Supreme Court case significantly expanded the federal courts oversight of the states criminal justice systems.

Rosewood (Florida) Massacre, 1923

Six African Americans and two whites die in a week of violence when a white woman claims she was beaten and raped by a black man.

1925, 35,000 KKK members march on Washington DC (to show support for the ideals of the KKK)

Scottsboro Boys case, 1931

- ↳ 9 African Americans were falsely accused of raping two white women in Paint Rock, Alabama.
- ↳ The NAACP (wanted attorney Clarence Darrow) and American Communist Party (wanted Jewish lawyer Samuel Leibowitz) vied for who would take the lead in supporting the defendants, with the ACP securing the lead.

1941 President Roosevelt issues Executive Order 8802.

- ↳ This “Fair Employment Act” requires equal treatment and training of all employees by defense contractors.

The Early Civil Rights Movement, 1896-1954

The conditions which pre-stage the modern movement

(Page 2 of 2)

Minor victories...

- ↳ December 1943, singer and activist Paul Robeson became the first black man to address baseball team owners on the subject of integration.
- ↳ Jackie Robinson's major league debut, April 1947

1946, Paul Robeson founds American Crusade Against Lynching.

- ↳ Many prominent intellectuals were members, including Albert Einstein.
- ↳ The organization was labeled a ‘communist front’ by the FBI, and members were branded as communist sympathizers.

Executive Order 9981 is signed by President Truman in 1948 (starts 1951)

- ↳ This integrated the United States army.

December 1951 the Civil Rights Congress (a Communist-affiliated group) delivered the petition “We Charge Genocide: The Crime of Government Against the Negro People” to the United Nations.

- ↳ The petition argued that the United States government, by failing to act against lynching, was guilty of genocide.
- ↳ The anti-Communist fervor in American society gave pause to the prior supporters of the organization – including the NAACP and mainstream Black America; it was a matter of survival that they distance themselves from anything and anyone Communist supported

Home of NAACP activists Harry and Harriette Moore is bombed by the KKK. Both are murdered.

1952, the Regional Council of Negro leadership organized a successful boycott of gas stations in Mississippi that refused to provide restrooms for blacks. Medgar Evers is heavily involved in this.

T.R.M. Howard also led campaigns to expose brutality by the Mississippi highway patrol and to encourage blacks to make deposits in the black-owned Tri-State Bank in Tennessee which, in turn, gave loans to civil rights activists who were victims of a credit squeeze by the White Citizens Council.