

Jim Crow South Source Analysis

Overview:

The period of Reconstruction lasted from 1865 to 1877, and involved putting the country back together after the Civil War. The Civil War was fought and won by the North and the United States was preserved; but a number of new problems were created. Four million slaves were suddenly freed, but did not have jobs, an education, places to live, or a guarantee of basic civil rights. Northerners and Southerners, who had just spent five years slaughtering each other by the thousands, bitterly resented one another and were now forced to share the country once again. Many Southern whites had their land or families destroyed during the Civil War, and had to rebuild their lives from scratch. Those who survived still held many of the same racist attitudes and resentments towards blacks, and did not want to include them in society.

1. Based on the paragraph above, list four (4) problems that the Civil War caused?

Plessy vs. Ferguson Case Background

Although the Declaration of Independence affirmed that “all men are created equal,” and had inalienable rights including liberty, African Americans were systematically denied their liberty with the institution of slavery. Even after the Civil War and the passage of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments, segregation was a fact of life in the United States. Throughout the country, the races remained separated by both custom and law.

With the end of Reconstruction, every southern state, as well as some northern ones, passed what came to be termed Jim Crow laws. These policies required segregation in public places. African Americans were denied equal access to public facilities like transportation, education, and the voting booth. In 1878, the Supreme Court held that states could not require integration on interstate common carriers. In 1890, the Court held that Mississippi could require segregation on modes of interstate transportation.

Five years later, Homer Plessy, a resident of Louisiana, decided to challenge a Louisiana law requiring segregation on railcars by purchasing a train ticket and sitting in a “whites only” car. Because Plessy was an “octoroon” (1/8th black), he was subject to the black codes of Louisiana. When he was questioned as to his status, he admitted to being an octoroon, and was arrested when he refused to leave the car. He appealed his case to the Supreme Court of Louisiana and eventually the United States Supreme Court, claiming that the Louisiana law violated the Fourteenth Amendment.

Directions: Below is a questions that you could see as a DBQ question with attached documents. Instead of writing a DBQ, you will be writing 2-3 sentences per document about how it applies to the prompt. When you finish breaking down the documents, you will create an outline for the DBQ.

1. Analyze the changing status of African Americans between 1863-1900.

Document 1: Emancipation Proclamation (1863)

"That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

Document 2: The 13th Amendment (1865)

Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.....

Document 3: The 14th Amendment (1868)

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws....

Document 4: Southern Black Codes

- I. "No negro or freedmen shall be allowed to come within the limits of the town of Opelousas without special permission from his employers. Whoever breaks this law will go to jail and work for two days on the public streets, or pay a fine of five dollars."
- II. "No negro or freedman shall be permitted to rent or keep a house in town under any circumstances. No negro or freedman shall live within the town who does not work for some white person or former owner."
- III. "No public meetings of negroes or freedmen shall be allowed within the town."
- IV. "No freedman shall be allowed to carry firearms, or any kind of weapons. No freedman shall sell or exchange any article of merchandise within the limits of Opelousas without permission in writing from his employer."
- V. "Every negro is to be in the service of (work for) some white person, or former owner."

Document 5: Civil Rights Cases, 1883

[Federal civil rights] legislation cannot properly cover the whole domain of rights appertaining to life, liberty, and property, defining them and providing for their vindication. That would ... make congress take the place of the state legislatures and to supersede them.

It is absurd to affirm that, because the rights of life, liberty, and property ... are by the [Fourteenth] Amendment sought to be protected against invasion on the part of the state without due process of law, Congress may, therefore, provide due process of law for their vindication in every case; and that,

because the denial by a state to any persons of the equal protection of the laws is prohibited by the amendment, therefore congress may establish laws for their equal protection

Document 6: Majority Opinion (6-1), Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896

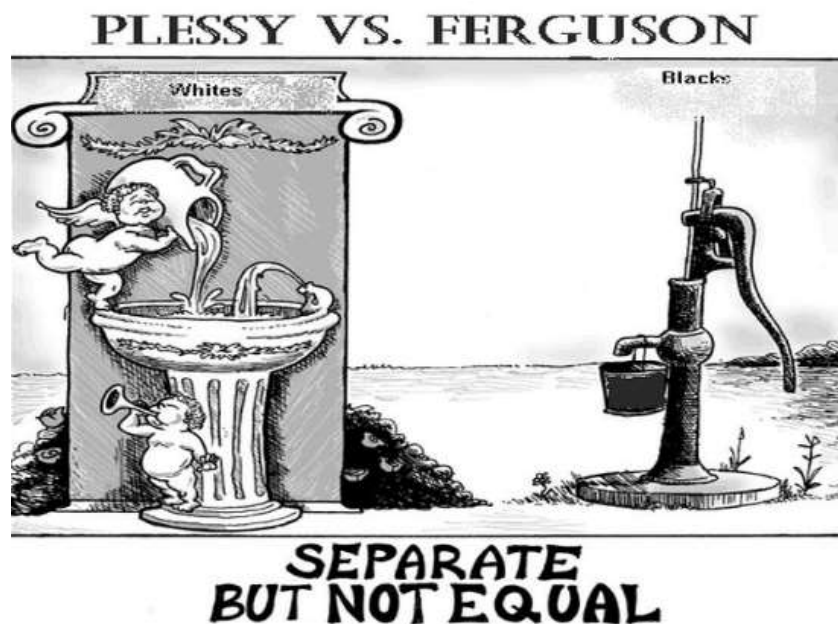
The object of the [Fourteenth] Amendment was undoubtedly to enforce the absolute equality of the two races before the law, but, in the nature of things, it could not have been intended to abolish distinctions based upon color, or to enforce social, as distinguished from political, equality, or a commingling of the two races upon terms unsatisfactory to either. Laws permitting, and even requiring, their separation, in places where they are liable to be brought into contact, do not necessarily imply the inferiority of either race to the other, and have been generally, if not universally, recognized as within the competency of the state legislatures in the exercise of their police power....

We consider the underlying fallacy of [Plessy's] argument to consist in the assumption that the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with a badge of inferiority. If this be so, it is not by reason of anything found in the act, but solely because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it....

The argument also assumes that social prejudices may be overcome by legislation, and that equal rights cannot be secured to the negro except by an enforced commingling of the two races. We cannot accept this proposition. If the two races are to meet upon terms of social equality, it must be the result of natural affinities, a mutual appreciation of each other's merits, and a voluntary consent of individuals....

Legislation is powerless to eradicate racial instincts, or to abolish distinctions based upon physical differences, and the attempt to do so can only result in accentuating the difficulties of the present situation. If the civil and political rights of both races be equal, one cannot be inferior to the other civilly or politically. If one race be inferior to the other socially, the constitution of the United States cannot put them upon the same plane.

Document 7: Plessy v. Ferguson Cartoon



Now:

1. Write your thesis based on the lines below.
2. In the space below, you will outline your body paragraphs (main points you will use to support your thesis).

Paragraph 2:

Paragraph 3:

Paragraph 4:

Outside Info:

Complexity Point Focus:

Document A: Booker T. Washington (Modified)

Booker T. Washington was born a slave in 1856 and was nine years old when slavery ended. He became the principal of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, a school designed to teach blacks industrial skills. Washington was a skillful politician and speaker, and he won the support of whites in the North and South who donated money to the school. On September 18, 1895, Booker T. Washington spoke before a mostly white audience in Atlanta.

Ignorant and inexperienced, it is not strange that in the first years of our freedom we began at the top instead of at the bottom; that a seat in Congress or the state legislature was more attractive than starting a dairy farm or garden.

A ship lost at sea for many days passed a friendly ship and sent out a signal, "Water, water; we die of thirst!" The answer from the friendly ship at once came back, "Cast down your bucket where you are." A second time the signal, "Water, water; send us water!" ran up from the distressed ship, and was answered, "Cast down your bucket where you are" . . . The captain of the distressed vessel (ship), at last heeding (listening to) the injunction (order), cast down his bucket, and it came up full of fresh, sparkling water.

To those of my race I would say: "Cast down your bucket where you are" — cast it down in making friends with the Southern white man, who is your next-door neighbor. Cast it down in agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service. . . . No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem. It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top.

To those of the white race who look to foreign immigrants for the prosperity of the South, I would repeat what I say to my own race, "Cast down your bucket where you are." Cast it down among the eight millions of Negroes, whose fidelity (loyalty) and love you have tested. . . . As we have proved our loyalty to you in the past . . . so in the future, in our humble way, we shall stand by you with a devotion that no foreigner can approach. . . . In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress.

Source: Excerpt from Booker T. Washington's 'Atlanta Compromise' speech, 1895

Historical Context:	Intended Audience:	Purpose:	Author's Point of View:	What is the document saying?

Document B: W.E.B. DuBois (Modified)

The most influential public critique of Booker T. Washington came in 1903 when black leader and intellectual W.E.B. DuBois published an essay in his book, *The Souls of Black Folk*. DuBois rejected Washington's message and instead called for political power, insistence on civil rights, and the higher education of African-American youth. DuBois was born and raised a free man in Massachusetts and was the first African American to earn a PhD from Harvard.

The most striking thing in the history of the American Negro since 1876 is the rise of Mr. Booker T. Washington. His leadership began at the time when Civil War memories and ideals were rapidly passing; a day of astonishing commercial development was dawning; a sense of doubt and hesitation overtook the freedmen's sons. Mr. Washington came at the psychological moment when whites were a little ashamed of having paid so much attention to Negroes [during Reconstruction], and were concentrating their energy on dollars.

Mr. Washington practically accepts the alleged inferiority of the Negro races. Mr. Washington withdraws many of the high demands of Negroes as men and American citizens. He asks that black people give up, at least for the present, three things—

First, political power; Second, insistence on civil rights; Third, higher education of Negro youth,

— and concentrate all their energies on industrial education, the accumulation of wealth, and the pacifying (calming down) of the South. As a result of this tender of the palm-branch (peace offering), what has been the return? In these years there have occurred:

1. The disfranchisement (taking away the right to vote) of the Negro; 2. The legal creation of a distinct status of civil inferiority for the Negro; 3. The steady withdrawal of aid from institutions for the higher training of the Negro.
2. Mr. Washington's doctrine has tended to make the whites, North and South, shift the burden of the Negro problem to the Negro's shoulders and stand aside as critical spectators (onlookers); when in fact the burden belongs to the nation, and the hands of none of us are clean if we do not all work on righting these great wrongs.

Source: W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago, 1903).

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