

Jim Crow Laws

Jim Crow was the name of the racial caste system which operated primarily, but not exclusively in southern and border states and was named after a Black minstrel show character. Under Jim Crow, African Americans were relegated to the status of second class citizens. There were many Christian ministers and theologians taught that white people were the Chosen people, that blacks were cursed to be servants, and that God supported racial segregation.

The roots of Jim Crow laws began as early as 1865, immediately following the ratification of the 13th Amendment to the US Constitution, which abolished slavery in the United States. These laws—which existed for about 100 years, from the post-Civil War era until 1968—were meant to marginalize African Americans. Those who attempted to defy Jim Crow laws often faced arrest, fines, jail sentences, violence, and death.

The passage of the 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution had granted blacks the same legal protections as whites. However, after 1877 and the election of Republican Rutherford B. Hayes, southern and border states began restricting the liberties of blacks.

Black codes were strict local and state laws that appeared throughout the South as a legal way to put Black citizens into indentured servitude; to control where they lived; how they traveled; and to seize children for labor purposes. Blacks were denied the right to vote by grandfather clauses - laws that restricted the right to vote to only people whose ancestors had voted before the Civil War, poll taxes - fees that were charged to poor blacks, and literacy tests for example, one was Name all the Vice Presidents and Supreme Court Justices throughout America's history. They were denied the right to hold jobs, get an education and were excluded from public transportation and facilities, juries, and neighborhoods.

These statutes and codes also severely regulated social interactions between the races. Jim Crow signs were placed above water fountains, door entrances and exits, and in front of public facilities. There were separate hospitals for blacks and whites, separate prisons, separate public and private schools, separate churches, separate cemeteries, separate public restrooms, and separate public accommodations. In most instances, the black facilities were grossly inferior -- generally, they were older and less-well-kept. In other cases, there were no black facilities at all -- no colored public restroom, no public beach, no place to sit or eat.

With laws came Jim Crow etiquette norms. A couple examples are:

- A black male could not offer his hand (to shake hands) with a white male because it implied being socially equal.
- Blacks were not allowed to show public affection toward one another in public, especially kissing, because it offended whites.
- White motorists had the right-of-way at all intersections.

Jim Crow was more than a series of rigid anti-black laws. It was a way of life.

The 1619 PROJECT was a major venture of *The New York Times* and was developed by staff writer Nikole Hannah-Jones and released on August 18, 2019.

In August of 1619, a ship appeared on the horizon, near Point Comfort, a coastal port in the British colony of Virginia. It carried more than 20 to 30 enslaved Africans, who were sold to the colonists. The United States was not yet the United States, but this was the moment it began. Their arrival inaugurated a barbaric system of chattel slavery that would last for the next 250 years.

Out of slavery — and the anti-black racism it required — grew nearly everything that has truly made the US exceptional: its economic might, its industrial power, its electoral system, diet and popular music, the inequities of its public health and education, its astonishing penchant for violence, its income inequality, the example it sets for the world as a land of freedom and equality, its slang, its legal system and the endemic racial fears and hatreds that continue to plague it to this day. The seeds of all that were planted long before our official birth date, in 1776, when the men known as our founders formally declared independence from Britain. The goal of The 1619 Project is to reframe American history by considering what it would mean to regard 1619 as our nation's birth year. Doing so requires us to place the consequences of slavery and the contributions of black Americans at the very center of the story we tell ourselves about who we are as a country.

American history cannot be told truthfully without a clear vision of how inhuman and immoral the treatment of black Americans has been. By acknowledging this shameful history, by trying hard to understand its powerful influence on the present, perhaps we can prepare ourselves for a more just future.

Critical Race Theory

The basics. What is critical race theory?

Critical race theory is a legal academic concept that was developed in the 1970s and 80s that started at university law schools. It is a way of studying systemic racism and its impact on society and how it has permeated the many aspects. It argues the legacy of white supremacy remains embedded in modern-day society through laws and institutions that were fundamental in shaping the United States. But that does not mean all individual white people are racist. Critical race theory argues that individuals are not bad because they are white but there are systems that have evolved over time that create disparity based on race.

As Kimberle Crenshaw explains, critical race theory found that the so-called American dilemma was not simply a matter of prejudice but a matter of structured disadvantages that stretched across American society. The critical race theory academics do not contend that race is the only thing that is important, they just think that race, as with class, as with gender and as with sexual orientation has to be a core concern.

For example, you could debate about raising the tipped minimum wage and stick to whether it will cause food prices to go up, whether restaurants would close if they could not afford it, or you could debate it and talk about the fact that we have a tipped minimum wage as a result of a bargain during the New Deal to get Southern segregationist members of Congress not to block the regular minimum wage.

Conservatives, since the 1960s, have increasingly defined United States society as a colorblind society, in the sense that maybe there were some problems in the past, but it has corrected itself, and we now have these laws and institutions where anybody, regardless of race, can achieve the American dream.

Journalist Christopher Rufo started collecting “evidence”. For example, in July 2020. An employee of the city of Seattle documented an anti-bias training session – Upon reading the information, Mr. Rufo spotted political kindling and recognized a political opportunity. He summarized his findings: “Under the banner of antiracism, Seattle’s Office of Civil Rights is now explicitly endorsing principles of segregationism, group-based guilt, and race essentialism - ugly concepts that should have been left behind a century ago. He then developed the executive order for then President Donald Trump to abolish critical race theory training from the federal government — “to stamp out this destructive, divisive, pseudoscientific ideology.”

Another of his goals is to have the public read something crazy in the newspaper and immediately think 'critical race theory'. He has stated that they have decodified the term and will recodify it to annex the entire range of cultural constructions that are unpopular with Americans.

This critical race theory conflict has most prominently played out in public school districts, as parents, teachers and school administrators grapple with how to teach race, discrimination and inequality in the classroom.

The reactions we have been experiencing this time around are mainly to the Black Lives Matters movement - being perceived as a dominant group status threat and that it is unsettling “power” for white US citizens.

“My country wasn’t what I thought it was” – they want to hold on and maintain that power; and divide any social movement towards justice.