
ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

Jim Crow

By Susan Deily-Swearingen
Resources

If you can read only one book

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year.
Woodward, C. Vann	<i>The Strange Career of Jim Crow</i> . New York: Oxford University Press, 1955.

Books and Articles

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year. “Title,” in <i>Journal</i> ##, no. # (Date): #.
Barber, Lucy Grace	<i>Marching on Washington: The Forging of an American Political Tradition</i> . Berkeley, CA, CA: University of California press, 2004
Chafe, William H., Raymond Gavins, and Robert Korstad	<i>Remembering Jim Crow: African Americans Talk about Life in the Segregated South</i> . New York: New Press, 2021.
Draper, Deborah Riley, and Travis Thrasher	<i>Olympic Pride, American Prejudice: The Untold Story of 18 African Americans Who Defied Jim Crow and Adolf Hitler to Compete in the 1936 Berlin Olympics</i> . New York, NY: Atria Paperback, 2021.
Gates, Henry Louis	<i>Stony the Road: Reconstruction, White Supremacy, and the Rise of Jim Crow</i> . New York: Penguin Books, 2020.
Gilmore, Glenda Elizabeth	<i>Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920</i> . Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019.
Knott, Cheryl	<i>Not Free, Not for All Public Libraries in the Age of Jim Crow</i> . Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015.

Litwack, Leon F.	<i>Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow</i> . New York: Vintage Books, 2006.
Luxenberg, Steve	<i>Separate: A Story of Race, Resistance, and America's Journey from Slavery to Segregation</i> . W. W. Norton, 2019.
Oshinsky, David M.	<i>"Worse than Slavery": Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice</i> . New York: Free Press Paperbacks, 1997.
Pilgrim, David, and Henry Louis Gates	<i>Understanding Jim Crow: Using Racist Memorabilia to Teach Tolerance and Promote Social Justice</i> . Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2015.
Young, Ralph F.	<i>Dissent: The History of an American Idea</i> . New York: New York University Press, 2018.

Organizations

Organization Name	Description, Contact information including address, email
Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia	<p>The Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia at Ferris State University is envisioned as an international leader in the anti-racism movement. The museum will serve as a base for quality scholarship addressing the complexities of race, race relations, and racism. The museum will encourage collaborative work with high schools, universities, museums, government agencies, and human rights organizations, including, but not limited to, producing original research, planning and hosting tours and conferences, and conducting anti-racism training sessions.</p> <p>Ferris State University 1010 Campus Drive Big Rapids, MI 49307 https://jimcrowmuseum.ferris.edu/ (231) 591-5873</p>

Web Resources

URL	Name and description

Other Sources

Name	Description, Contact information including address, email

Scholars

Name	Email
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Topic Précis

The Jim Crow system of segregation adopted by the states of the U.S. Southeast was devised in an attempt to reestablish the system of white supremacy that existed in the Colonial, Early Republican, and Antebellum eras of the U.S. The Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, passed in January and ratified in December of 1865 outlawed slavery. That same year the first of the “Black Codes,” or restrictive laws which applied only to those of African descent, were passed in Mississippi and South Carolina. In response to the black codes Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1866, then the 14th Amendment in 1868 guaranteeing equal protection under the law and the right to vote. The 15th amendment was passed in 1870 reinforcing voting rights. In response to illegal acts by the Ku Klux Klan, three anti-Klan acts were passed in 1871 and a revised Civil Rights Act was passed in 1875. By 1877 Northern interest in protecting Southern African Americans and reconstructing the South had evaporated and Jim Crow became firmly established. “Jim Crow” was originally a minstrel show character first performed by Thomas Rice in 1828. The character was a grotesque stereotype of an African American man, played by a white man in black face, with exaggerated lips, over-the-top dialect, and a peculiar, to white audiences, style of dance. The character also performed an eponymous song while he danced, “Jump Jim Crow:” later sold as popular sheet music and Rice’s show was a hit in the north and in England and Dublin. Jim Crow and other black-faced characters continued to be performed well into the twentieth century. Perhaps the most iconic images of the Jim Crow Era are the “Whites Only” signs in front of public bathrooms and water fountains, as well as signs directing African American passengers to the backs of buses and trains. “The

Jim Crow system was undergirded by the following beliefs or rationalizations: whites were superior to blacks in all important ways, including but not limited to intelligence, morality, and civilized behavior; sexual relations between blacks and whites would produce a mongrel race which would destroy America; treating blacks as equals would encourage interracial sexual unions; any activity which suggested social equality encouraged interracial sexual relations; if necessary, violence must be used to keep blacks at the bottom of the racial hierarchy.” The most significant case to test the constitutionality of physical segregation was *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896 which established the doctrine of separate but equal, the foundation of Jim Crow segregation. The consequences for violating any aspect of the Jim Crow laws could be fines or imprisonment, but it was often the case that violators were maimed or killed in acts of extra-judicial violence. Lynching became a national epidemic from 1880 to 1940. In the post-World War II years, through the efforts of groups like the NAACP, the Southern Christian Leadership Council, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, sympathetic lawmakers, and countless activists, significant Civil Rights protections were achieved. Slowly, challenge cases in the court reversed the institutional segregation protected by the Plessy decision. The U.S. Armed forces were desegregated in 1948. In 1954, *Brown v. Board of Education* ended legal segregation in schools. In 1964, almost exactly one hundred years since the Reconstruction Civil Rights Act was passed, President Lyndon Johnson signed The Civil Rights Act of 1964. The following year the Voting Rights Act was passed and signed by the President. These two pieces of legislation marked the official end of Jim Crow Segregation. However, the words in these documents meant nothing without enforcement, as many in the South had already shown their willingness to ignore decisions made in Washington D.C. The struggle for Civil Rights in practice persisted, even as Civil Rights on paper were achieved. Klansmen and their sympathizers continued to commit atrocities against African Americans throughout the Jim Crow era. Fourteen-year-old Emmett Louis Till was tortured and murdered in the summer of 1955. Nine years later, volunteers Cheney, Goodman, and Schwerner, who were working during “Freedom Summer” to register African Americans to vote, were murdered and their bodies dumped in a shallow grave. State officials and law enforcement played their own role in the brutality against Civil Rights advocates. Bull Connor, a Birmingham Sheriff, and the men under his command, terrorized African Americans in that city with fire hoses and attack dogs. Police also brutalized marchers attempting to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge from Selma to Montgomery in 1965. In sum, Jim Crow was a durable and extensive systems of laws and practices that propped up racial segregation and aided racial violence. It officially ended with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, but this legislation alone is not to be credited with its demise. The people who were brutalized, intimidated, and murdered deserve the credit for finally sending Jim Crow to his grave.
