



Teaching about Racial Discrimination in the Jim Crow Era  
with Resources from the Center for Legislative Archives at  
the National Archives

Guiding Question:

How did Jim Crow laws and practices limit the freedom of Black Americans?

# Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr at the 1963 March on Washington



“Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation....But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free; one hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination... I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today!...”

# Archives.gov/legislative

Five lessons on the problem of racial inequality:

- Reviewing the Civil War and Reconstruction
- Was Reconstruction a Revolution?
- Discussing Equality
- ★ The Impact of Racial Discrimination on the Lives of Black Americans in the Jim Crow Era.
- Congress Protects the Right to Vote: the Voting Rights Act of 1965

### Lesson Plans

The Center for Legislative Archives—part of the National Archives—maintains some of the most historically valuable documents created by the federal government: the records of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. Educators can use these historical documents to teach about representative democracy, how Congress works, and the important role Congress has played throughout American history.



FUNDAMENTAL  
PRINCIPLES OF  
GOVERNMENT



CONGRESS  
IN HISTORY



HOW  
CONGRESS  
WORKS

Teaching about racial discrimination from the earliest days of the Colonial Era on presents moral challenges:

- Europeans exploited and dispossessed Native American tribes
- Europeans instituted long-lasting systems of race-based enslavement

Teaching about racial discrimination after the ratification of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment has both moral and constitutional dimensions.

# Reviewing the Civil War and Reconstruction

## Summary

In this lesson students will analyze primary sources to review major issues related to the Civil War, Reconstruction, and Civil Rights.

## Rationale

Students develop critical thinking skills by analyzing primary sources representing major issues of the Civil War and Reconstruction Era.

## Guiding Question

How did the Civil War and Reconstruction change the Constitution and civil rights?

## Materials

[4 Graphic Organizers](#) 

[12 Primary Source Sheets](#) 

[Reflection Question Worksheet](#) 

## Recommended Grade Levels

9 - 12

## Courses

U.S. History

No. 7

Dred Scott - Petitioner  
vs  
John F. A. Sanford  
Respondent

In error to the Circuit Court of the  
United States for the District of  
Missouri.

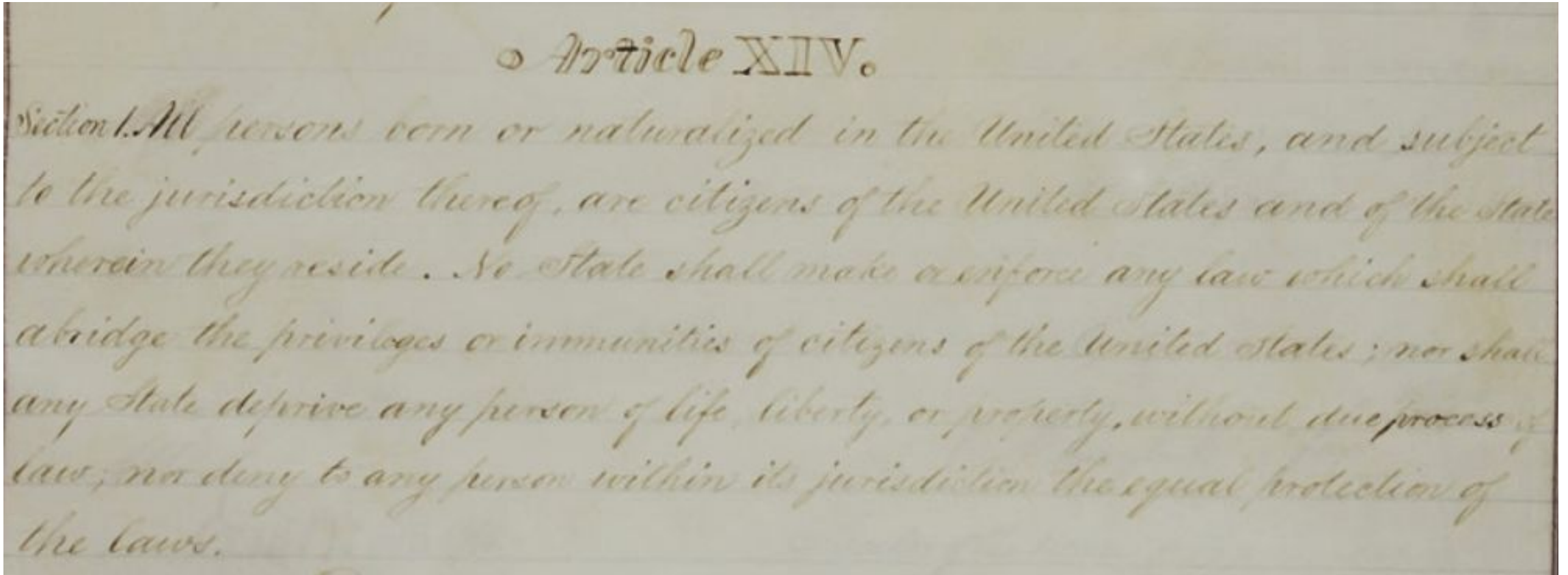
This cause came on to be  
heard on the transcript of the record  
from the Circuit Court of the United  
States for the District of Missouri and  
was argued by counsel - On Consider-  
ation (whereof it is now here ordered  
and adjudged by this Court that the  
judgment of the said Circuit Court  
in this cause be and the same is  
hereby reversed for the want of juris-  
diction in that Court and that this  
cause be and the same is hereby  
remanded to the said Circuit Court  
with directions to dismiss the case  
for the want of jurisdiction in that  
Court. -

J. W. Ch. J. Sawyer  
5<sup>th</sup> March 1857

“The question is simply this: Can a Negro whose ancestors were imported into this country, and sold as slaves, become a member of the political community formed and brought into existence by the Constitution of the United States, and as such, become entitled to all the rights and privileges and immunities guaranteed to the citizen?... We think they are not, and that they are not included, and were not intended to be included, under the word "citizens" in the Constitution...” 1857

Judgment in the U.S. Supreme Court Case Dred Scott v. John F. A. Sanford NAID 301674

## A Constitutional Guarantee of Equality



14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, Section 1.

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. NAID 1408913



# Was Reconstruction a Revolution?

## Summary:

Students will examine several historical congressional records from the Reconstruction period to assess whether the documents show evidence that the Reconstruction period of American history should or should not be viewed as a revolution.

## Rationale:

Students will develop analytical skills by working with primary sources and will appraise each document's value as a contribution to understanding the historical relevance of the Reconstruction time period.

## Guiding Question:

To what extent was Reconstruction a revolution?

## Materials:

7 Document facsimiles

1 Handout

## Recommended Grade Levels:

Grades 10 – 12

## Courses:

American history; U.S. government

**S. 1.**

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

DECEMBER 1, 1873.

Mr. SUMNER asked and, by unanimous consent, obtained leave to bring in the following bill; which was read twice and ordered to be printed.

**A BILL**

Supplementary to an act entitled "An act to protect all citizens of the United States in their civil rights, and to furnish the means for their vindication," passed April ninth, eighteen hundred and sixty-six.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*  
3 That no citizen of the United States shall, by reason of race,  
4 color, or previous condition of servitude, be excepted or ex-  
5 cluded from the full and equal enjoyment of any accommoda-  
6 tion, advantage, facility, or privilege furnished by inn-keepers;  
7 by common carriers, whether on land or water; by licensed  
8 owners, managers, or lessees of theaters or other places of  
9 public amusement; by trustees, commissioners, superintend-  
10 ents, teachers, and other officers of common schools and  
11 public institutions of learning, the same being supported by  
12 moneys derived from general taxation or authorized by law;  
13 also of cemetery associations and benevolent associations sup-

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S. 1, Sumner Civil Rights bill, as introduced, 1873 NAID 1986640

*How does this bill enforce the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment?*

Memorial of the Board of President and  
Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools against  
the school integration clause of the Civil Rights  
bill, endorsed June 16, 1874

NAID 1991060

MEMORIAL OF THE BOARD OF PRESIDENT AND DIRECTORS  
OF THE  
ST. LOUIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

To the Honorable the Senators and Representatives of the State of Missouri, in the Congress of the United States: MESSRS. CARL SCHURZ, LOUIS V. BOGY, ERASTUS WELLS, E. O. STANARD, WM. H. STONE, ROBT. A. HATCHER, RICHARD P. BLAND, H. E. HAVENS, T. G. CRITTENDEN, ABRAM COMINGO, ISAAC C. PARKER, IRA B. HYDE, JOHN B. CLARK, JR., JOHN M. GLOVER, A. H. BUCKNER.

The undersigned, in behalf of the Board of President and Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools, beg leave herewith to present their memorial praying your honorable body, the delegation of the State of Missouri in the Congress of the United States, to interpose your influence to prevent the passage of any bill through Congress which shall compel all common schools or public institutions of learning or benevolence, supported in whole or in part by public taxation, to admit to the same rooms and classes both white and colored children, unless there shall have been a failure to provide equally for the education of both races in separate schools or institutions.

Your memorialists represent that in St. Louis, public schools have been provided for the colored people in sufficient number to accommodate all who apply for admission, and of as good quality as those schools opened for white children.

Your memorialists would further represent that the passage of a bill, which, like the so-called "Civil Rights Bill," necessitates the admission of both races to the same schools and classes in all instances, would work irreparable injury, if not total destruction, to the Public School system of St. Louis, by causing the withdrawal of large numbers of white children from the Public Schools, and by strengthening the cause of those who are hostile to Public Schools, to such an extent as to secure the repeal of the public tax by which they are supported.

Your memorialists would further represent that the danger which threatens the school interests under their charge, by the passage of a bill of the nature described, is not a danger affecting only a small section of the country, but one that affects in a similar manner the city school systems of at least one-half of the entire country.

In conclusion, your memorialists would beg leave further to express their conviction that the attempt to enforce the establishment of schools common to both races, would seriously injure the cause of education among the colored people themselves, a cause which has made very rapid progress during the past few years, and which has excited the warm interest of your memorialists.

Submitted on behalf of the Board of President and Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools.

Seal

*Levin Cozart*

President.

*Wm. L. Harris*

Superintendent.

ATTEST:

*Milton H. Wash*

Secretary.

Your memorialists represent that in St. Louis, public schools have been provided for the colored people in sufficient number to accommodate all who apply for admission, and of as good quality as those schools opened for white children.

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"Public schools have been provided for the colored people... of as good quality as those schools opened for white children."

Opening school admissions to children of both races in the same schools would cause "the withdrawal of large numbers of white children from the Public Schools."

*Have racial attitudes been changed by the Civil War and the 14th Amendment?*

# Discussing Equality: Who is Included within the Phrase “We the People”

## Summary

Students analyze primary sources to identify groups of Americans granted or denied equal rights and equal status in society at various points in history.

## Rationale

The Constitution’s opening phrase establishes a government based on popular sovereignty and implies that the United States is a society whose citizens enjoy equal rights and equal status. In 1787, however, only a small fraction of America’s population enjoyed equal rights and social equality. Expanding the number of people included within the phrase “We the People” has been a long process slowed by racial, gender, and ethnic resistance to rights and equality. In this lesson, students study primary sources to assess the equal status and equal rights of groups of Americans, by asking, metaphorically, about their inclusion or exclusion from “We the People.”

## Guiding Question

How has the number of Americans included in the constitutional phrase “We the People” changed over time?

## Materials

[2 worksheets](#) 

[17 primary source documents](#) 

## Grade Levels

7 – 12

## Time Required

Two 45 minute class periods

## Courses

U.S. History, Civics, Government

Chinese Exclusion Act(excerpt of transcript), 1882; [NAID 5752153](#). See also, [DocsTeach: https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/chinese-exclusion-act](#)

**Transcript:**

An Act to execute certain treaty stipulations relating to Chinese.

Whereas in the opinion of the Government of the United States the coming of Chinese laborers to this country endangers the good order of certain localities within the territory thereof:

Therefore,

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That from and after the expiration of ninety days next after the passage of this act, and until the expiration of ten years next after the passage of this act, the coming of Chinese laborers to the United States be, and the same is hereby, suspended; and during such suspension it shall not be lawful for any Chinese laborer to come, or having so come after the expiration of said ninety days to remain within the United States.

*What does this legislation indicate about racial attitudes after Reconstruction?*

## Plessy v Ferguson, 1896

That petitioner was a citizen of the United States and a resident of the state of Louisiana, of mixed descent, in the proportion of seven-eighths Caucasian and one-eighth African blood; that the mixture of colored blood was not discernible in him, and that he was entitled to every recognition, right, privilege, and immunity secured to the citizens of the United States of the white race by its constitution and laws; that on June 7, 1892, he engaged and paid for a first-

“We cannot say that a law which authorizes or even requires the separation of the two races in public conveyances is unreasonable...”

*What is the relevance of the underlined text?*

Teaching with visual primary sources:

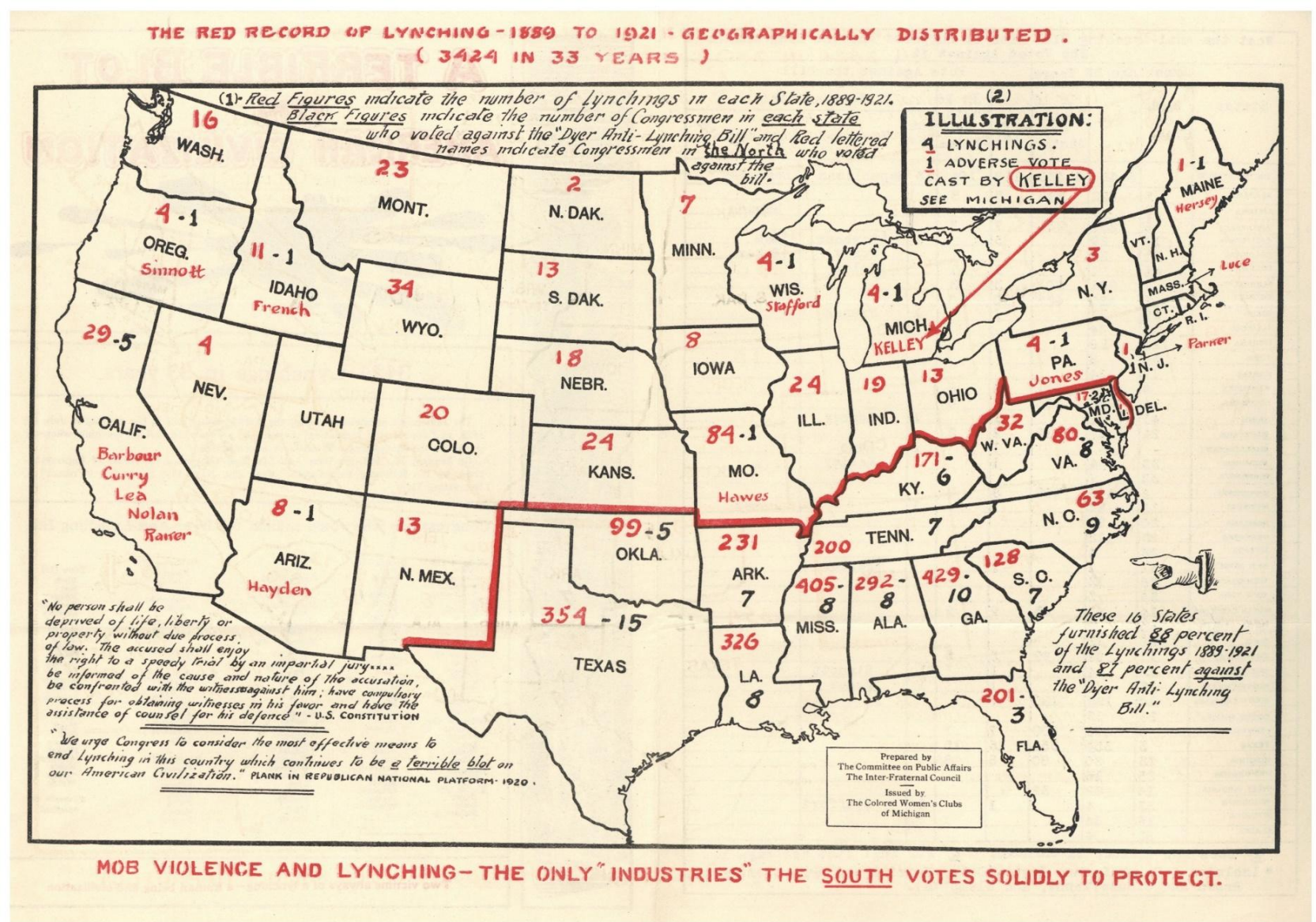
Many records empower historians to “hear” the voices of Americans

Others enable historians to “see” their actions



How can this visual primary source be used to teach about the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment?

*These 16 States furnished 88 percent of the Lynchings 1889-1921 and 87 percent against the "Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill."*



Record of Lynching Map, 1922. (Map submitted to Congress by the Colored Women's Clubs of Michigan to support an anti-lynching bill, H. R. 13, introduced by Representative Leonidas Dyer of Missouri.)

*How/what does this image communicate to its viewer?*



The Ku Klux Klan parade on Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, DC, 1928 (Note the Capitol in the background.) NAID 541885

# The Impact of Racial Discrimination on Black American Lives in the Jim Crow Era (1944 – 1960)

Center for Legislative Archives

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## Summary:

Students analyze documents from the holdings of the National Archives to assess the impact of legalized racial segregation on the lives of Black Americans from 1944 – 1960.

## Rationale:

Students analyze historical documents and discuss how Jim Crow, a system of laws and practices set in place to maintain white supremacy, limited the freedom of African Americans. These documents from 1944 – 1960 express the words and actions of people or institutions working to either remove or reinforce race-based barriers to equality.

## Guiding Question:

How did Jim Crow laws and practices limit the freedom of Black Americans?

## Lesson Materials:

12 Primary Source Documents

2 Worksheets

Background Information

## Grade Levels:

9 – 12

## Time Required:

Two 45 minute class periods

Apply two sample questions from the lesson to the following documents:

1. How do the actions called for or opinions expressed in this document illustrate how Jim Crow, a system of laws and practices set in place to maintain white supremacy, limited the freedom of African Americans?
2. What underlying attitudes about racial equality can you discern in this document?

## The Context: The Segregated Armed Forces in World War II

Roughly one million African Americans joined the U.S. armed forces during World War II; approximately half served overseas.

While thousands of black troops served in combat—among them the army's 92nd and 93rd all-black divisions, as well as the famed 99th Pursuit Squadron known as the Tuskegee Airmen.

The most common assignments for black servicemen were rear-guard mopping-up actions and menial supply and requisition roles.

Source:

<https://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/BAIC/Historical-Essays/Keeping-the-Faith/Second-World-War/>

C O P Y

A letter from a soldier in Rome Italy to his wife, who works in the War Department.

Italy

9-17-44

My Dearest \_\_\_\_\_

All my life, I've been hustling nickels and dimes to contribute to the Red Cross. Every since I can remember, in school and in church, I've scuffled to belong to the various Red Cross enterprises.

You're forever telling me about working for the U.S.O. - contributing to the Red Cross. . . . ., I don't believe that anything you could do would make me any more angry that to hear of you giving another penny, or spending another minute at a U.S.O. club.

Transcript of a Letter from a Soldier Stationed in Italy, 1944, NAID 6922054 (excerpt from page 1)

The Frenchmen, whom the American Army fought against in North Africa, the same Frenchmen who have been responsible for the killing of American soldiers have access to all the facilities of the American Red Cross. The Italians, who before they were conquered, were Allies of the Germans, and who have been responsible for the taking of thousands of American lines (sic) – these soldiers, provided they are wearing the American uniform have access to all the facilities of the American Red Cross. This same organization, to whose benefits the Negro has contributed, stands solidly on its feet, and bluntly tells the American born Negro soldier that – “We have a regulation that does not include Negroes in our program.” I have found that one of the most insufferable fates that can happen, is to be born an American Negro.

*How do the actions called for or opinions expressed in this document illustrate how Jim Crow, a system of laws and practices set in place to maintain white supremacy, limited the freedom of African Americans?*

# The Context: Segregated public recreation facilities in post-war America

“Cities began to racially segregate pools throughout the north, and it then extended...all throughout the United States. And black Americans were typically relegated, if a pool was provided at all, to a small indoor pool that wasn't nearly as appealing as the large, outdoor resort pools that were provided for whites.” “A History of Racial Disparity in American Public Swimming Pools.” Mejia, Carlos. Marketplace. NPR, 6/6/2018

<https://www.wnpr.org/post/history-racial-disparity-american-public-swimming-pools> accessed on

## Pool Segregation Issue Left Pending in Krug's Approval of By-Laws

**Board Chairman Calls Meeting to Complete Action on Rule Changes**

Secretary of the Interior Krug today notified the District Recreation Board of his approval of proposed changes in the board's by-laws in anticipation of the board's taking over Interior's playground facilities here. The agreement, however, leaves to later negotiations the question whether the board may operate

*The Evening Star,*  
Washington, DC

7/19/1949

Jackson, MS  
*Advocate*  
9/23/50

## Non-Segregated Swimming Pools To Remain In D. C.

Washington, Sept. 20.—(ANP) —The non-segregated swimming pools in Washington are here to stay according to Edward J. Kelly, superintendent of the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior.

In a letter to Elmer W. Henderson, director of the American Council on Human Rights, Superintendent Kelly expressed satisfaction with the operation of the pools during the past season. There were no disorders of any kind said Mr. Kelly and “in fact I do not recollect any previous year when order at the pools has been better than during the past summer,” he added.

*The Evening Star,*  
Washington, DC  
3/9/50

**Hopes to Avoid Trouble.**  
Mr. Chapman said he “hopes and believes” there will be no repetition of the racial troubles this year. He said he is most anxious to avoid any comment at this time that would aggravate the issue.



## 6 Pools to Be Opened On Non-Segregated Basis This Spring

**Chapman Is Hopeful Racial Trouble Will Be Avoided This Year**

By Nelson M. Shepard  
Secretary of the Interior Chapman said today he would reopen six swimming pools here in the spring on a non-segregated basis. The pools are under the control of the Interior Department. They are Bannecker, Francis, Takoma, East Potomac, McKinley and Anacostia.

Until last spring, only the Bannecker and Francis pools were used by colored swimmers. The other four were traditionally white pools even though the Interior Department had long had an announced policy of non-segregation.

However, as the swimming season began last year, colored swimmers began using Anacostia and McKinley. Trouble broke out at Anacostia with the result that it was closed. Then white patrons gradually stopped using McKinley and it remained open all summer with a preponderance of colored swimmers.

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VAL-KILL COTTAGE  
HYDE PARK, DUTCHESS COUNTY  
NEW YORK

August 15, 1950

Dear Mr. President:

Mr. Joseph D. Lohman of the National Committee on Segregation in the Nation's Capital has just written me of the success they have had in St. Louis in keeping their swimming pools unsegregated.

He tells me that the courageous attitude shown by the administration in supporting democratic principles in the Washington situation has helped the situation all over the country. You and Secretary Chapman have shown great courage in bring this about. It is these step by step achievements which will in the end bring us real equal rights in our own nation.



Very cordially yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, which reads "Eleanor Roosevelt".

Letter from former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt to President Harry S. Truman referring to racial segregation in public swimming pools in St. Louis, MO and Washington, DC, 1950

*How do the actions called for or opinions expressed in this document illustrate how Jim Crow, a system of laws and practices set in place to maintain white supremacy, limited the freedom of African Americans?*

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# Context: Segregated Schools

Complaint in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 6/19/1951  
NAID 6997520

*The Evening Star*, Washington, DC  
6/9/52

**Gov. James F. Byrnes of South Carolina has said that if his State loses its fight in the courts to maintain segregation, the public school systems there will be abandoned.**

**Other Southern States—notably Georgia, Virginia and Alabama—have taken steps which could lead to abolition of the public school system in favor of privately operated classrooms.**

## Supreme Court Agrees To Decide Appeals on School Segregation

Will Hear Arguments On Two Cases in Term Starting Next October

### BULLETIN

The Supreme Court held, 6 to 3, today that Negro employes performing the same duties as white brakemen on the Frisco Railroad, were illegally discharged under a contract with a union made up only of white members.

By the Associated Press

The Supreme Court today agreed to say whether segregation of white and Negro children in elementary public schools should be outlawed.

The court granted hearings on two appeals by Negro parents from Kansas and South Carolina, who claim segregation is a "stigmatizing badge of inferiority" which has a bad effect on their children. They contend segregation therefore violates the constitutional guarantee of equal protection of the laws.

The appeals contest the validity of segregation only in schools in Topeka, Kans., and Clarendon County, S. C. However, the outcome of the cases will affect public school segregation generally.

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FILED

JUL 23 1951

HARRY M. WASHINGTON, Clerk

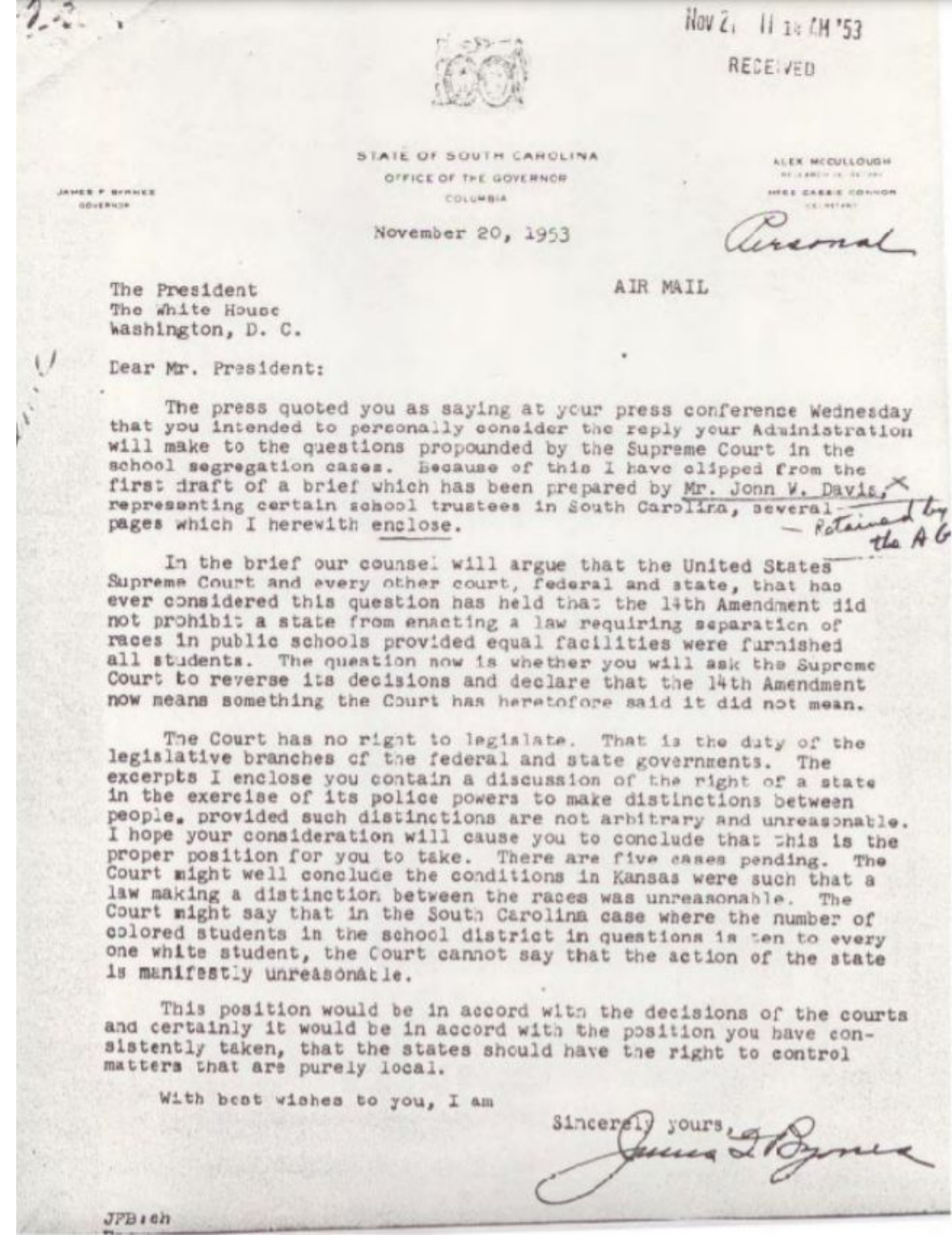
By: *[Signature]* Deputy



“Our counsel will argue that the United States Supreme Court... has held that the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment did not prohibit a state from enacting a law requiring separation of races in public schools provided equal facilities were furnished all students...”

James F. Byrnes, Governor of South Carolina,  
November 20, 1953

Letter from South Carolina Governor James E. Byrnes to  
President Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953, NAID 12171148



The court has no right to  
legislate...

The Court might well conclude the conditions in Kansas were such that a law making a distinction between the races was unreasonable. The Court might say that in the South Carolina case where the number of colored students in the school district in question is ten to every one white student, the Court cannot say that the action of the state is manifestly unreasonable.

*How do the actions called for or opinions expressed in this document illustrate how Jim Crow, a system of laws and practices set in place to maintain white supremacy, limited the freedom of African Americans?*

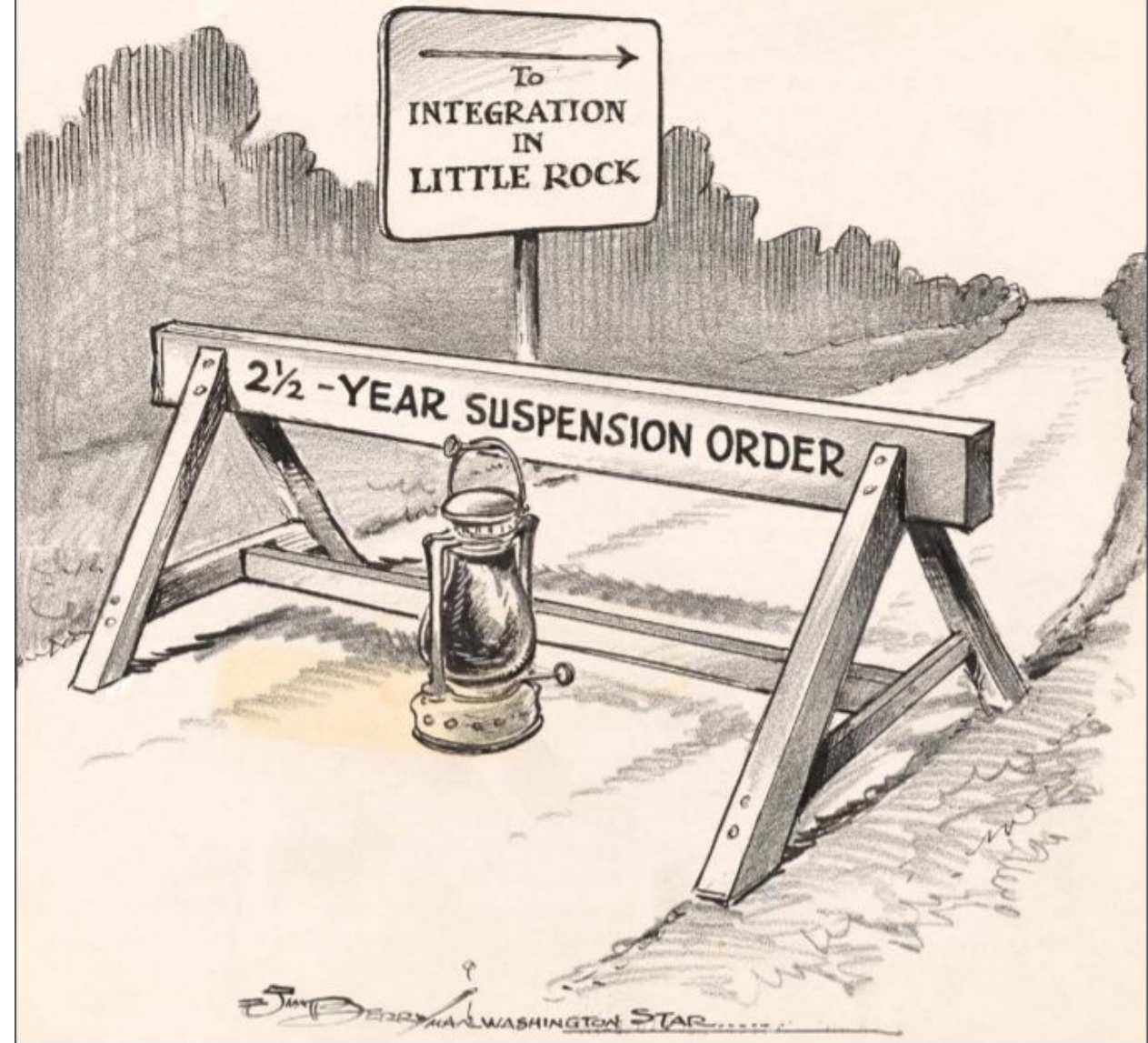
*What underlying attitudes about racial equality can you discern in this document?*

**Cartoon 56** Roadblock...Or Repair Work Ahead?

June 24, 1958. Although federal troops enforced a partial integration of Little Rock's schools in 1957, the city struck back the following year with a plan to push off integration for two and a half more years.

Jim Berryman  
National Archives Identifier: 5743262

*What underlying attitudes about racial equality can you discern in this political cartoon?*



Source: eBook, *A Visual History, 1940–1963*  
[Archives.gov/legislative](https://www.archives.gov/legislative)

# The Context: Segregated Public Transportation

*How does this document illustrate how Jim Crow laws and practices limited the freedom of African Americans?*

Name **Parks** **Rosa** **L.** Classification **28 MO 72**  
Surname Given Name Middle Name  
 Alias \_\_\_\_\_ Reference \_\_\_\_\_  
 Nickname: \_\_\_\_\_  
 No. **79521** Color **C.** Sex **Female**  
**79521** **RIGHT HAND**

1. Thumb	2. Index finger <b>m</b>	3. Middle finger <b>0</b>	4. Ring finger	5. Little finger <b>✓</b>
<b>LEFT HAND</b>				
6. Thumb	7. Index finger <b>m</b>	8. Middle finger <b>✓</b>	9. Ring finger	10. Little finger

Impressions taken by **May Cannon** (Signature of official taking prints)  
 Note amplifications \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signatures of person fingerprinted: **ROSA L. PARKS** x **Rosa L. Parks**

Files searched by \_\_\_\_\_

Four fingers taken simultaneously		Four fingers taken simultaneously	
<b>Left Hand</b>	<b>Left thumb</b>	<b>Right thumb</b>	<b>Right Hand</b>


BROWN PRINTED IN MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 10M-7-55


Fingerprint Card of Rosa Parks was produced in association with her arrest for refusing to obey orders of a bus driver on December 1, 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama.

NAID 641627

Context:  
Ku Klux Klan  
Violence

Join The Citizens' Council  
STATE RIGHTS, RACIAL INTEGRITY  
AND CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT  
**The Mississippi Society**  
of the  
**Sons of the American Revolution**





OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-REGISTRAR  
Byron de La Beckwith,  
33161 Memorial Drive,  
Greenwood Miss.  
9/12/58

President of the United States,  
 Dwight D. Eisenhower,  
The White House,  
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Eisenhower →  
I wish to praise you in your speech last night telling the Chinese to negotiate or fight.  
Now then to another subject — this summer we were host to the National Society S.A.R. Every S.A.R. who came to Mississippi saw, participated in and approved your way of segregation. 98% of the S.A.R.s are infuriated over forced integration and are doing something to stop forced integration — nearly every one of us except you — do you still choose to be on a par with the S.A.R.s? We wish you would get hold of yourself and again order segregation. This seems unlikely thus far it appears to us that you

(over)

Amalgamation

REMEMBER LITTLE ROCK

REMEMBER LITTLE ROCK

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-REGISTRAR

Byron de La Beckwith

33161 Memorial Drive

Greenwood Miss.

9/12/58

President of the United States

Dwight D. Eisenhower

The White House

Washington, D.C.

Dear President Eisenhower

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Now then to another subject —

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(over)

would rather see white and negro bodies piled high in the streets so their blood will mingle freely in the gutters. This is the only way our blood will mix.

This is the last that you shall hear from me in so far as we begging and pleading for you to restore States Rights, Racial Integrity and Constitutional Government to the land. It is evident that you neither desire this for the people nor wish for them to obtain it. Never-the-less, we shall have it whether you wish it or not.

Many will suffer now but soon all will be better for the South and the Nation.

It is my purpose to make life happy for most of us by thwarting some of them who would destroy all of us.

Sincerely,  
Byron de La Beckwith  
Board of Governors, Miss. Society

would rather see white and negro bodies piled high in the streets so their blood will mingle freely in the gutters. This is the only way our blood will mix.

This is the last that you shall hear from me in so far as we begging and pleading for you to restore States Rights, Racial Integrity and Constitutional Government to the land. It is evident that you neither desire this for the people nor wish for them to obtain it. Never-the-less, we shall have it whether you wish it or not.

Many will suffer now but soon all will be better for the South and the Nation.

It is my purpose to make life happy for most of us by thwarting some of them who would destroy all of us.

Sincerely,  
Byron de La Beckwith  
Board of Governors, Miss. Society

Letter from Byron De La Beckwith, Mississippi Society, Sons of the American Revolution 1958 [NAID 6092867]





Join The Citizens' Council  
STATES' RIGHTS, RACIAL INTEGRITY  
AND CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT

The Mississippi Society  
of the  
Sons of the American Revolution

Details from Beckwith stationery


Dear President Eisenhower,


I wish to praise you in your speech last night telling the Chinese to negotiate or fight. Now then to another subject — this summer we were host to the National Society S.A.R (Sons of the American Revolution). Every SAR who came to Mississippi saw, participated in and approved of our way of segregation. 98% of the SAR are infuriated over forced integration and are doing something to stop forced integration — nearly every one of us except you — do you still choose to be and act like an SAR? We wish you would get hold of yourself and again order segregation. This seems unlikely therefore it appears to us that you would rather see white and Negro bodies piled high in the streets so their blood will mingle freely in the gutters. This is the only way our blood will mix. This is the last that you shall hear from me in so far as me begging and pleading for you to restore States' Rights, Racial Integrity and Constitutional Government to the land. It is evident that you neither desire this for the people nor wish for them to obtain it. Never-the-less, we shall have it whether you wish it or not. Many will suffer now but soon all will be better for the South and the nation. It is my purpose to make life happy for most of us by thwarting some of them who would destroy all of us.

Sincerely, Byron De La Beckwith Board of Governors, Miss. Society Sons of the American Revolution

What underlying attitudes about racial equality can you discern in this document?

Join The Citizens' Council  
 STATE RIGHTS, RACIAL INTEGRITY  
 AND CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT  
**The Mississippi Society**  
 of the  
**Sons of the American Revolution**





OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-REGISTRAR  
 Byron de la Beaulieu,  
 33161 Woodrow Wilson Drive,  
 9/12/58  
 W

President of the United States  
 Dwight D. Eisenhower,  
 The White House,  
 Washington, D.C.

President of the United States  
 Dwight D. Eisenhower  
 I wish to praise you in your speech last night telling the Chinese to negotiate or fight.

Now then to another subject - this summer we were host to the National Society S.A.R. Every S.A.R. who came to Mississippi saw, participated in and approved your way of segregation. 98% of the S.A.R.s are infuriated over forced integration and are doing something to stop forced integration - nearly every one of us except you - do you still choose to be on a par with an S.A.R.? We wish you would get hold of yourself and again order segregation. This seems unlikely thus far it appears to us that you

(over)

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Sincerely,  
 Byron de la Beaulieu  
 David S. Grayson, Miss. Society

Join The Citizens' Council  
 STATE RIGHTS, RACIAL INTEGRITY  
 AND CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT

# The Context: Congressional Obstacles to Civil Rights

## The Seniority System

- Power in Congress was based on seniority
- The one-party South was home to many powerful committee chairs
- Chairs used their power to block bills

## The Senate Filibuster

If a bill was before the full Senate, members could delay it and most likely kill it

Jim Berryman, *Evening Star*, Washington, DC 6/22/1957 NAID 5743243



*What underlying attitudes about racial equality can you discern in this document?*



# The Context: Challenging the validity the registrations of Black voters

*What underlying attitudes about racial equality can you discern in this excerpt?*

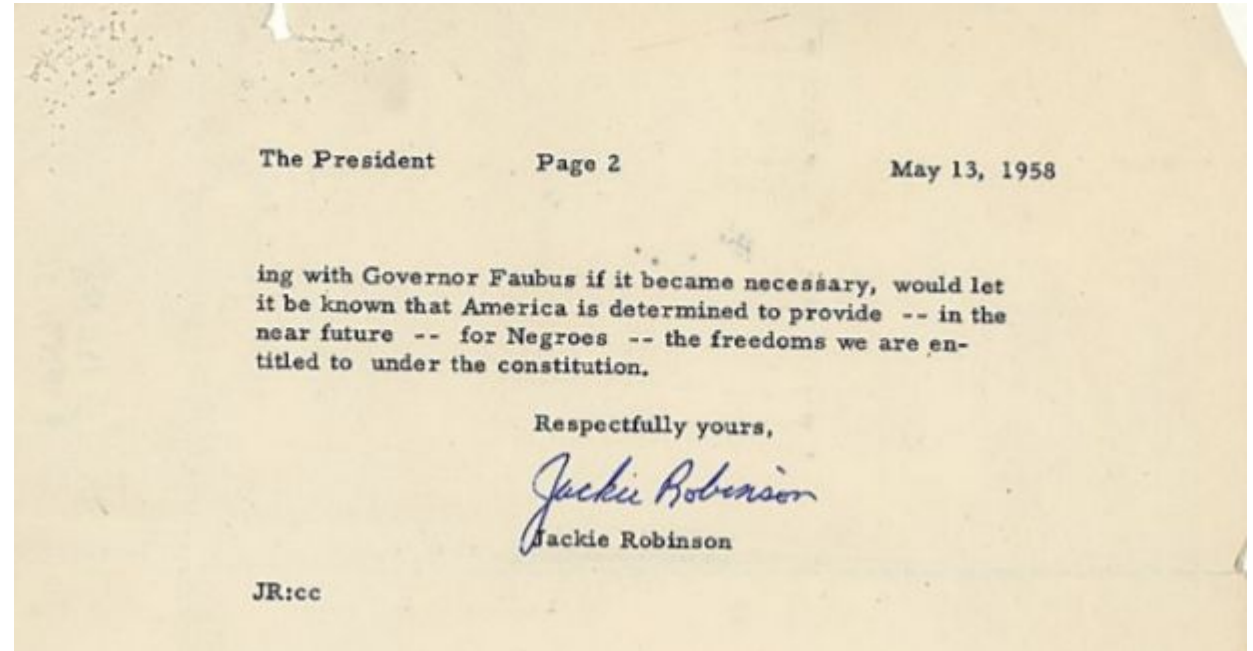
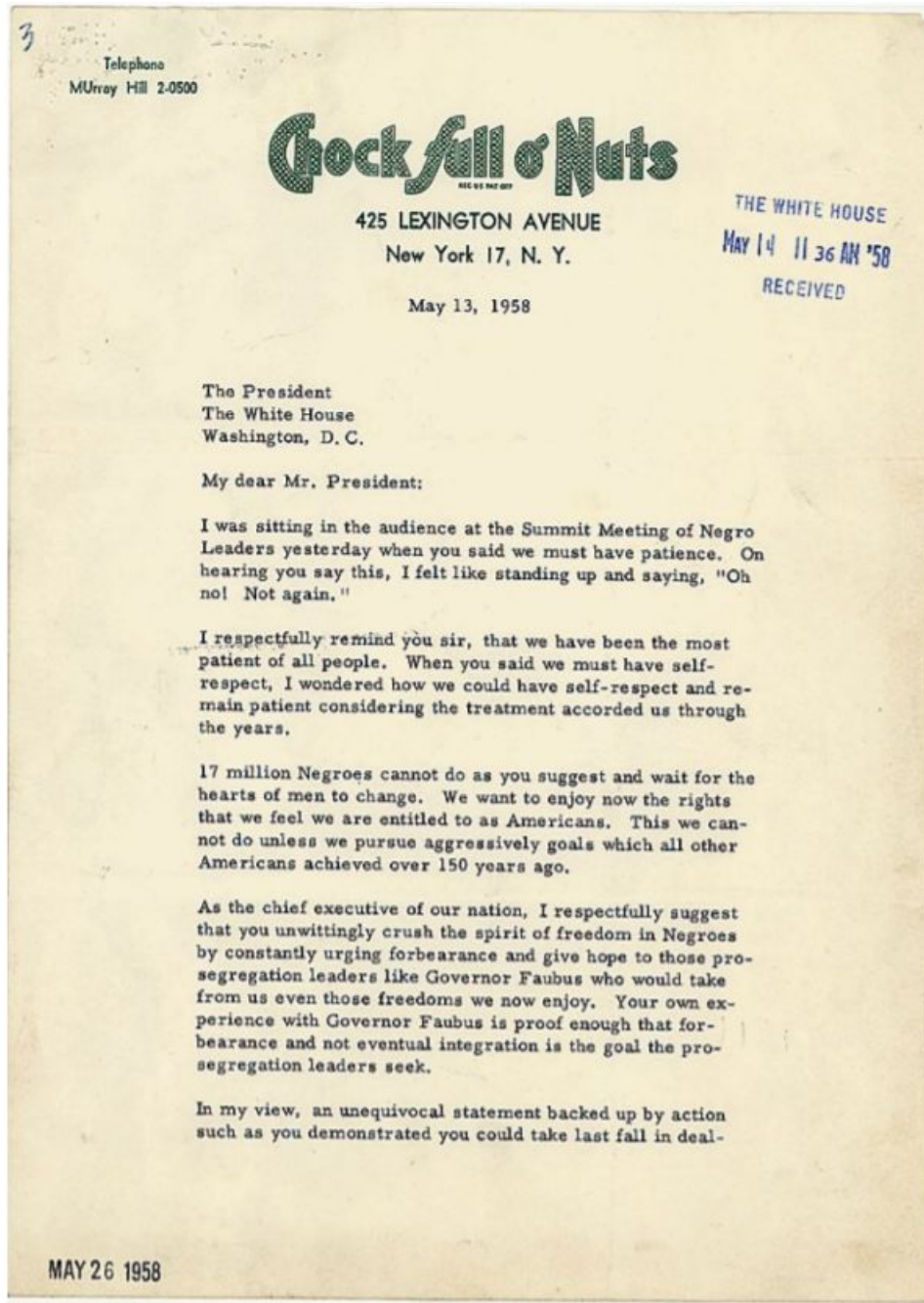
An excerpt from a press release issued by the Attorney General William P. Rogers on the Proposed Civil Rights Legislation before the Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights of the Senate Judiciary Committee, 2/14/1957.

NAID 12167080

First, let me refer to the situation which developed last year in Ouachita Parish, Louisiana.

In March, 1956, certain members and officers of the Citizens Council of Ouachita Parish commenced an examination of the register of the voters of Ouachita Parish. Thereafter, they filed approximately 3,420 documents purporting to be affidavits but which were not sworn to before either the registrar or deputy registrar, as required by law. In each purported affidavit it was alleged that the affiant had examined the records on file with the registrar, that the registrant's name therein was believed to be illegally registered and that the purported affidavit was made for the purpose of challenging the registrant to remain on the roll of registered voters. Such affidavits were filed challenging every one of the 2,389 Negro voters in Ward 10. None of the 4,054 white voters in that ward were challenged. With respect to another ward, Ward 3, such affidavits were filed challenging 1,008 of the 1,523 Negro voters. Only 23 of the white voters in Ward 3 were challenged. The registrar accepted their affidavits even though she knew that each affiant had not examined the registration cards of each registered voter he was challenging. On the basis of these affidavits, citations were mailed

# The Context: Assumptions and attitudes that obstruct the movement for Civil Rights



Letter from Jackie Robinson, 1958 [NAID 186627]

My dear Mr. President:

I was sitting in the audience at the Summit Meeting of Negro Leaders yesterday when you said we must have patience. On hearing you say this, I felt like standing up and saying, "Oh no! Not again."

I respectfully remind you sir, that we have been the most patient of all people. When you said we must have self-respect, I wondered how we could have self-respect and remain patient considering the treatment accorded us through the years.

17 million Negroes cannot do as you suggest and wait for the hearts of men to change. We want to enjoy now the rights that we feel we are entitled to as Americans. This we cannot do unless we pursue aggressively goals which all other Americans achieved over 150 years ago.

As the chief executive of our nation, I respectfully suggest that you unwittingly crush the spirit of freedom in Negroes by constantly urging forbearance and give hope to those pro-segregation leaders like Governor Faubus who would take from us even those freedoms we now enjoy. Your own experience with Governor Faubus is proof enough that forbearance and not eventual integration is the goal the pro-segregation leaders seek.



CLASS OF SERVICE  
This is DL unless its deferred character is indicated by the proper symbol.

# WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM

SYMBOLS  
DL = Day Letter  
NL = Night Letter  
LT = International Letter Telegram

W. P. MARSHALL, PRESIDENT

1201

The filing time shown in the date line on domestic telegrams is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination.

KA062 DEB226

DE LLS168 PD AR=FAX DETROIT MICH 22 359PME=7

THE HONORABLE HARRY S TRUMAN=

INDEPENDENCE MO=



VARIOUS PRESS REPORTS IN DETROIT THIS WEEK PARTICULARLY  
DETROIT NEWS, SUNDAY, MARCH 20 AND DETROIT TIMES, MONDAY,  
MARCH 21 QUOTE YOU WITH REFERENCE TO STUDENT SIT DOWN P  
PROTEST AGAINST LUNCH COUNTER SEGREGATION IN THE SOUTH AS  
SAYING, "IF ANYONE CAME INTO MY STORE AND TRIED TO STOP  
BUSINESS I'D THROW HIM OUT...THE NEGRO SHOULD BEHAVE  
HIMSELF AND SHOW HE'S A GOOD CITIZEN. COMMON SENSE AND

Telegram from the NAACP and President Truman's response, 1960 [NAID 40020096]

WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM

Independence, Missouri  
March 24, 1960

EDWARD M TURNER PRESIDENT  
ARTHUR L. JOHNSON EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
DETROIT BRANCH NAACP  
DETROIT MICHIGAN



YOUR TELEGRAM REGARDING THE STATEMENT WHICH I MADE ABOUT SIT DOWNS  
IN THE RESTAURANT IS CORRECT. I WOULD DO JUST WHAT I SAID I WOULD.  
NAACP IS AN ORGANIZATION WHICH HAS BEEN WORKING FOR GOOD WILL AND  
COMMON SENSE IN THIS SITUATION WITH WHICH WE ARE FACED. WHEN THEY  
DO THINGS THAT CAUSE PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN AS FRIENDLY TO THEM AS  
I HAVE BEEN TO FEEL THAT THEY ARE DOING THE WRONG THING THEY ARE  
LOSING FRIENDS INSTEAD OF MAKING THEM.  
IF I WERE IN DETROIT I WOULD SAY THE SAME THING TO YOU PERSONALLY FOR  
ALL THE NEWSPAPERS AND TELEVISIONS IN THE COUNTRY. I CAN'T COME TO  
DETROIT BECAUSE OF ILLNESS IN THE FAMILY BUT IF I WERE THERE I WOULD  
TELL YOU EXACTLY WHAT I AM SAYING NOW. THIS IS NOT PERSONAL NOR  
CONFIDENTIAL

HARRY S TRUMAN

Telegram from  
the NAACP and  
President  
Truman's  
response, 1960  
[NAID  
40020096]

Telephone  
MUney Hill 2-0500

**Cock full o' Nuts**

425 LEXINGTON AVENUE  
New York 17, N. Y.

May 13, 1958

THE WHITE HOUSE  
May 14 11 36 AM '58  
RECEIVED

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. President:

I was sitting in the audience at the Summit Meeting of Negro Leaders yesterday when you said we must have patience. On hearing you say this, I felt like standing up and saying, "Oh no! Not again."

I respectfully remind you sir, that we have been the most patient of all people. When you said we must have self-respect, I wondered how we could have self-respect and remain patient considering the treatment accorded us through the years.

17 million Negroes cannot do as you suggest and wait for the hearts of men to change. We want to enjoy now the rights that we feel we are entitled to as Americans. This we cannot do unless we pursue aggressively goals which all other Americans achieved over 150 years ago.

As the chief executive of our nation, I respectfully suggest that you unwittingly crush the spirit of freedom in Negroes by constantly urging forbearance and give hope to those pro-segregation leaders like Governor Faubus who would take from us even those freedoms we now enjoy. Your own experience with Governor Faubus is proof enough that forbearance and not eventual integration is the goal the pro-segregation leaders seek.

In my view, an unequivocal statement backed up by action such as you demonstrated you could take last fall in deal-

MAY 26 1958

CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a Day Letter unless its deferred character is indicated by the proper symbol.

# WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM

W. P. MARSHALL, PRESIDENT

1201

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KA062 DEB226

DE LLS168 PD AR=FAX DETROIT MICH 22 359PME=1  
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WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM

Independence, Missouri  
March 24, 1960

EDWARD M TURNER PRESIDENT  
ARTHUR L. JOHNSON EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
DETROIT BRANCH NAACP  
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HARRY S TRUMAN

*What underlying attitudes about racial equality can you discern in these documents?*

# Congress Protects the Right to Vote: The Voting Rights Act of 1965

## Summary:

Using facsimiles of historical records from the files of the U.S. House of Representative Judiciary Committee, students will evaluate evidence and consider the constitutional issues that the committee encountered as it deliberated the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Students will examine the concept of federalism and weigh the proper balance of powers between Federal and state governments when protecting the right to vote.

## Rationale:

By analyzing evidence reviewed by the House Judiciary Committee related to the Voting Rights Act, students must wrestle with the same issues faced by the committee as it created landmark civil rights legislation. Ten primary source documents allow students to see multiple perspectives which enable them to evaluate Congress's actions and assess whether the Federal Government should have taken over from the states the power to qualify and register voters.

## Guiding Question:

Did the evidence presented to Congress in 1965 support the position that Federal Government action was necessary to ensure African Americans' right to vote?

## Materials:

[11 Document facsimiles or excerpts](#) 

[4 Worksheets](#) 

[1 Handout](#) 

## Recommended Grade Levels:

Grades 7 - 12

*Is this evidence of Jim Crow laws and practices?*

TABLE B-2(b).—*Voting age population and registered voters classified by race in those Alabama counties in which racial voting suits have been brought under 42 U.S.C. 1971A*

County	Per- cent <sup>1</sup>	White voting age popula- tion, 1960	White regis- tration	Per- cent	Nonwhite voting age population, 1960	Nonwhite registration	Per- cent
Bullock.....	38.5	2,387	2,631 (10/64)	110	4,450	1,386	31
Choctaw.....	31.7	5,192	3,697 (2/63)	71	3,982	176	4
Dallas.....	22.6	14,400	9,542 (8/64)	66	15,115	335	2.2
Elmore.....	43.7	12,510	12,022 (11/64)	96	4,808	592	12.3
Hale.....	25.5	3,600	3,674 (12/63)	100	6,000	200	3.3
Jefferson.....	37.3	256,319	134,939 (10/64)	52.6	116,160	27,013	23.2
Macon.....	32.6	2,818	2,946 (10/64)	100	8,493	4,188	49
Montgomery.....	31.6	62,911	40,234 (11/64)	64	33,056	7,250	22
Perry.....	29.6	3,441	3,260 (8/64)	94	5,200	364	7
Sumter.....	20.8	3,061	3,297 (11/64)	107	6,814	358	5.2
Wilcox.....	22.3	2,647	2,974 (5/64)	100	6,085	0	0

<sup>1</sup> This is the percentage of those of voting age who voted in the presidential election of 1964

Statement by Attorney General Nicholas deB. Katzenbach before the House Judiciary Committee on the proposed Voting Rights Act of 1965, March 18, 1965

President Lyndon B. Johnson's speech to Congress on voting rights: "The American Promise," March 15, 1965

There is no Negro problem. There is no Southern problem or Northern problem. There is only an American problem.

And we are met as Americans to solve it.

This was the first nation in the history of the world to be founded with a purpose. The great phrases of that purpose still sound in every American heart, North and South: "All men are created equal" -- "government by consent of the governed" -- "give me liberty or give me death."

\* \* \*

Those words are a promise to every citizen that he shall share in the dignity of man. This dignity cannot be found in a man's possessions or his power or his position. It rests on his right to be treated as a man equal in opportunity to all others. It says that he shall share in freedom, choose his leaders, educate his children, provide for his family according to his ability and merits as a human being.

"Their cause must be our cause too. Because it is not just Negroes, but really it is all of us, who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice. And we shall overcome."

Guiding Question:

How did Jim Crow laws and practices limit the freedom of Black Americans?

# Archives.gov/legislative

## Lesson Plans

The Center for Legislative Archives—part of the National Archives—maintains some of the most historically valuable documents created by the federal government: the records of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. Educators can use these historical documents to teach about representative democracy, how Congress works, and the important role Congress has played throughout American history.



FUNDAMENTAL  
PRINCIPLES OF  
GOVERNMENT



CONGRESS  
IN HISTORY



HOW  
CONGRESS  
WORKS

Five lessons on the problem of racial inequality:

- Reviewing the Civil War and Reconstruction
- Was Reconstruction a Revolution?
- Discussing Equality
- The Impact of Racial Discrimination on the Lives of Black Americans in the Jim Crow Era.
- Congress Protects the Right to Vote: the Voting Rights Act of 1965