

**There's More Online!**

- ✓ **BIOGRAPHY** W.E.B. Du Bois
- ✓ **BIOGRAPHY** Booker T. Washington
- ✓ **VIDEO** The Rise of Segregation
- ✓ **INTERACTIVE SELF-CHECK QUIZ**



## LESSON 5

# The Rise of Segregation

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS** • *Why do people migrate?* • *How is urban life different from rural life?*

Reading **HELPDESK**



### Academic Vocabulary

- **discrimination**

### Content Vocabulary

- **poll tax**
- **segregation**
- **Jim Crow laws**
- **lynch**

### TAKING NOTES:

#### **Key Ideas and Details**

**Organizing** Use a graphic organizer similar to the following to list the ways that states disenfranchised African Americans and legalized discrimination.



## IT MATTERS BECAUSE

*After Reconstruction ended, Southern states began passing laws that weakened the rights of African Americans by introducing segregation and denying voting rights. African American leaders struggled to protect civil rights and improve their quality of life.*

## Resistance and Repression

**GUIDING QUESTION** *How did African Americans resist racism and try to improve their way of life following Reconstruction?*

After Reconstruction, many African Americans in the rural South lived in poverty. Most were sharecroppers, landless farmers who gave their landlords a large portion of their crops as rent. Sharecropping usually left farmers in chronic debt. Many eventually left farming and sought jobs in Southern towns or headed west to claim homesteads.

In the mid-1870s, Benjamin “Pap” Singleton became convinced that African Americans would never be given a chance to get ahead in the South. He began urging African Americans to move west, specifically to Kansas, and form their own independent communities. His ideas soon set in motion a mass migration. In less than two months, approximately 6,000 African Americans left their homes in the rural South and headed to Kansas. The newspapers called it “an Exodus,” like the ancient Jews’ escape from Egyptian bondage referred to in the Bible. The migrants themselves came to be known as “Exodusters.” The first Exodusters, many possessing little more than hope and the clothes on their backs, arrived in Kansas in the spring of 1879.

While some African Americans fled the South, others joined poor white farmers who had created the Farmers’ Alliance. Alliance leaders urged African Americans to form a similar organization. In 1886 African American farmers established the Colored Farmers’ National Alliance, which numbered about 1.2 million members by 1890.



In 1879 an estimated 6,000 to 15,000 African Americans known as Exodusters left the rural South and headed to Kansas.

### ► CRITICAL THINKING

**Examining** Why did the Exodusters migrate to Kansas?

but what is the good of lying? They are interfered with, and we are obliged to do it, and we may as well tell the truth.”

### ✓ READING PROGRESS CHECK

**Summarizing** What did the Democratic Party do to prevent the Populists from gaining too much power?

When the Populist Party formed in 1891, many African American farmers joined the new organization. This posed a major challenge to the Democratic Party in the South. If poor whites joined African Americans in voting for the Populists, the coalition might be unbeatable. To win back the poor white vote, Democratic leaders began appealing to racism. In addition, election officials began using various methods to make it harder and harder for African Americans to vote. As one Democratic leader in the South told a reporter, “Some of our people, some editors especially, deny that [African Americans] are hindered from voting;

## Imposing Segregation

**GUIDING QUESTION** *What laws did Southern states pass to impose segregation and deny African Americans their voting rights?*

After Reconstruction ended in 1877, the rights of African Americans were gradually undermined. Attempts to unify whites and African Americans failed. Instead, a movement to diminish the civil rights of African Americans gained momentum as the century ended.

### Taking Away the Vote

The Fifteenth Amendment prohibits states from denying citizens the right to vote on the basis of “race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” However, it does not bar states from denying the right to vote on other grounds. In the late 1800s, Southern states began imposing restrictions. Though they did not mention race, they were meant to make it hard or impossible for African Americans to vote.

In 1890 Mississippi began requiring all citizens registering to vote to pay a **poll tax** of \$2, a sum beyond the means of most poor African Americans or poor whites. Mississippi also instituted a literacy test, requiring voters to read and understand the state constitution. Few African Americans born after the Civil War had been able to attend school, and those who had grown up under slavery were largely illiterate. Even those who knew how to read often failed the test because officials deliberately picked passages that few people could understand. Other Southern states adopted similar restrictions. The number of African Americans registered to vote in Southern states fell drastically between 1890 and 1900.

Election officials were far less strict in applying the poll tax and literacy requirements to whites, but the number of white voters also fell

**poll tax** a tax of a fixed amount per person that had to be paid before the person could vote

significantly. To let more whites vote, Louisiana introduced the “grandfather clause.” This allowed any man to vote if he had an ancestor who could vote in 1867. This provision, adopted in several Southern states, exempted most whites from voting restrictions.

## Legalizing Segregation

African Americans in the North were often discriminated against, but **segregation**, or the separation of the races, was different in the South. Southern states passed laws that rigidly enforced **discrimination**. These laws became known as **Jim Crow laws**.

In 1883 the Supreme Court set the stage for legalized segregation when it overturned the Civil Rights Act of 1875. That law had prohibited keeping people out of public places on the basis of race and barred racial discrimination in selecting jurors. The Supreme Court, however, ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment provided only that “no state” could deny citizens equal protection under the law. Private organizations, such as hotels, theaters, and railroads, were free to practice segregation.

Encouraged by the Supreme Court’s ruling and by the decline of congressional support for civil rights, Southern states passed a series of laws establishing racial segregation in virtually all public places. Southern whites and African Americans could no longer ride together in the same railroad cars or even drink from the same water fountains.

In 1892 an African American named Homer Plessy challenged a Louisiana law that forced him to ride in a separate railroad car from whites.

**segregation** the separation or isolation of a race, class, or group

**discrimination** different treatment or preference on a basis other than individual merit

**Jim Crow laws** statutes enacted to enforce segregation



## ANALYZING SUPREME COURT CASES



### PLESSY v. FERGUSON, 1896

#### Background to the Case

When Homer Adolph Plessy, a light-skinned man who was one-eighth African American, took a seat in the whites-only section of an East Louisiana Railway train and refused to move, he was arrested. Convicted of breaking a Louisiana law enacted in 1890, Plessy appealed his case to the Louisiana Supreme Court, then to the United States Supreme Court. The incident was planned in advance to test the statute to emphasize the folly of the law.

#### How the Court Ruled

The Court upheld the right of states to make laws that sustained segregation. The majority of justices wanted to distinguish between political rights guaranteed by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments and social rights. Although the words *separate but equal* do not appear in the Court’s responses, the ruling of the Court allowed for the separation of the races in public facilities. This phrase came to describe a condition that persisted until 1954.



A conductor orders an African American off a whites-only train car in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

- 1 Identifying Central Ideas** Why did the words *separate but equal* become associated with the Supreme Court ruling against Homer Plessy?
- 2 Making Generalizations** How do you interpret the fact that it took the Supreme Court until 1954 to change the *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling?



### Ida B. Wells (1862–1931)

Born in Holly Springs, Mississippi, Ida B. Wells is best known for her strong criticism of lynching, which she called “our country’s national crime.” Wells’s political and reform activities included other issues such as segregation and women’s suffrage. In 1913 she marched with an integrated group of suffragists in Washington, D.C. Wells married Chicago lawyer and editor Ferdinand L. Barnett in 1895. In 1910 she formed the Negro Fellowship League. She and her husband moved to an all-white Chicago neighborhood to challenge restrictive housing agreements.

#### ► CRITICAL THINKING

**Describing** How did Ida B. Wells try to stop the practice of lynching?

**lynched** to execute, by hanging, without lawful approval

He was arrested for riding in a “whites-only” car. In 1896 the Supreme Court, in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, upheld the Louisiana law and the doctrine of “separate but equal” facilities for African Americans. The ruling established the legal basis for discrimination in the South for more than 50 years. While public facilities for African Americans in the South were always separate, they were far from equal.

#### ✓ READING PROGRESS CHECK

**Summarizing** What was the purpose of the “grandfather clause”?

## The African American Response

**GUIDING QUESTION** How did African American community leaders respond to legalized segregation?

Historian Rayford Logan characterized the last decade of the nineteenth century and the opening of the twentieth century as the nadir, or low point, of African American status in American society. The African American community responded to violence and discrimination in several ways. Ida B. Wells, Mary Church Terrell, Booker T. Washington, and W.E.B. Du Bois each used different approaches to address these issues.

### Ida B. Wells

In the late 1800s, mob violence increased in the United States, particularly in the South. Between 1890 and 1899, there was an average of 154 people **lynched**—executed, by hanging, without a legal trial—each year.

In 1892 Ida B. Wells, a fiery young African American woman from Tennessee, launched a fearless crusade against lynching. After a mob drove Wells out of town, she settled in Chicago and continued her campaign. In 1895 she published a book denouncing mob violence and demanding “a fair trial by law for those accused of crime, and punishment by law after honest conviction.” Although Congress rejected an antilynching bill, the number of lynchings decreased significantly in the 1900s, due in part to the efforts of activists such as Wells.

### Mary Church Terrell

One lynching victim had been a close friend of Mary Church Terrell, a college-educated woman who had been born during the Civil War. This death, and President Benjamin Harrison’s refusal to publicly condemn lynching, started Terrell on her lifelong battle against lynching, racism, and sexism. Terrell worked with woman suffrage workers such as Jane Addams and Susan B. Anthony. She helped found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. She also formed the Women Wage Earner’s Association, which assisted African American nurses, waitresses, and domestic workers.

Terrell led a boycott against department stores in Washington, D.C., that refused to serve African Americans. In an address to the National American Woman Suffrage Association, Terrell said, “With courage, born of success achieved in the past, with a keen sense of the responsibility which we shall continue to assume, we look forward to a future large with promise and hope. Seeking no favors because of our color, nor patronage because of our needs, we knock at the bar of justice, asking an equal chance.”

### Calls for Compromise

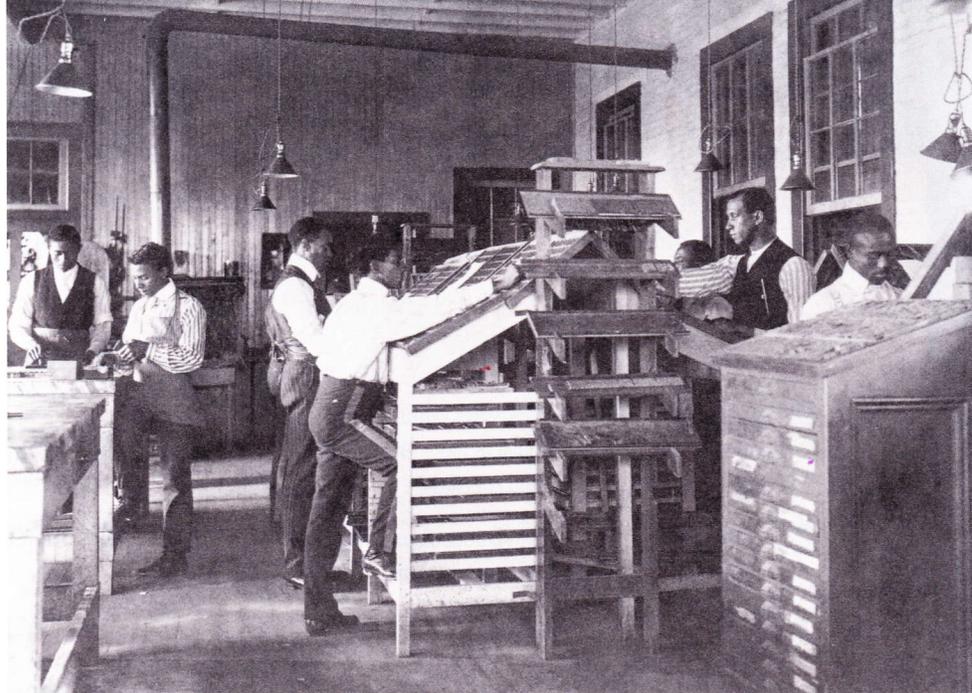
One of the most famous African Americans of the late nineteenth century was the influential educator Booker T. Washington. He proposed that African Americans concentrate on achieving economic goals rather than political ones. In 1895 Washington summed up his views in a speech before

a mostly white audience in Atlanta. Known as the Atlanta Compromise, the speech urged African Americans to postpone the fight for civil rights and instead concentrate on preparing themselves educationally and vocationally for full equality.

#### PRIMARY SOURCE

“The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremest folly, and that progress in the enjoyment of all the privileges that will come to us must be the result of severe and constant struggle rather than of artificial forcing. . . . It is important and right that all privileges of the law be ours, but it is vastly more important that we be prepared for the exercises of these privileges. The opportunity to earn a dollar in a factory just now is worth infinitely more than the opportunity to spend a dollar in an opera-house.”

—Booker T. Washington, from *Up From Slavery*, 1901



With the help of Booker T. Washington, Tuskegee Institute was founded in 1881 to teach African Americans trades and agricultural skills. In this image, students are working in the Tuskegee Institute print shop.

#### CRITICAL THINKING

**Drawing Conclusions** What do you think was Booker T. Washington's economic goal for establishing the Tuskegee Institute?

### Du Bois Rejects Compromise

The Atlanta Compromise speech provoked a strong challenge from W.E.B. Du Bois, the leader of a new generation of African American activists. In his 1903 book *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois explained why he saw no advantage in giving up civil rights, even temporarily. He was particularly concerned with protecting and exercising voting rights. “Negroes must insist continually, in season and out of season,” he wrote, “that voting is necessary to proper manhood, that color discrimination is barbarism.” In the years that followed, many African Americans worked to win the vote and end discrimination. The struggle, however, would prove to be a long one.

#### READING PROGRESS CHECK

**Describing** What was the nature of the compromise urged by Booker T. Washington in the Atlanta Compromise speech?

PHOTO: Frances Benjamin Johnston/Historical/CORBIS

## LESSON 5 REVIEW



### Reviewing Vocabulary

**1. Explaining** Explain the importance of Jim Crow laws and how these laws contributed to segregation.

### Using Your Notes

**2. Describing** Use your notes on the forms of discrimination to describe the conditions in which many African Americans in the South lived after Reconstruction.

### Answering the Guiding Questions

**3. Identifying Cause and Effect** How did African Americans resist racism and try to improve their way of life following Reconstruction?

**4. Identifying** What laws did Southern states pass to impose segregation and deny African Americans their voting rights?

**5. Differentiating** What are the different ways African American community leaders responded to legalized segregation?

### Writing Activity

**6. INFORMATIVE/EXPLANATORY** Imagine that you are living in the 1890s. Write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper explaining your view of the Supreme Court ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson*.