

The Jim Crow Era is the stretch of time from 1865 - 1968 immediately following the ratification of the **13th Amendment**. In this era, the Jim Crow Laws were passed, legalizing **racial segregation**. This topic often isn't covered in history textbooks because many people are ashamed by our past. Learning about these laws might make people uncomfortable, but it's important to learn about this part of our past. But how can we, as historians, share the stories of our past to create a better world today? Well, informing of the past, can effect the present, because learning about the past will teach us what went wrong, so we hopefully won't repeat our mistakes.

How were the Jim Crow Laws created?

The Jim Crow Laws started with the supreme court case **Plessy V Ferguson**. This court case started it all, saying that, "Separate, but equal" was not against the 13th Amendment, thus the passing of the *"Separate, but equal" Doctrine*. This created the Jim Crow Laws. The problem with "separate, but equal", is that it is very expensive to create 2 of everything. What's their solution? Get rid of the "equal" part. "Isn't that against the law?" I hear some of you shout. The problem with that, is that all the courts were controlled by former **confederate soldiers**, which made it almost impossible for a black to win a court case.

Black Activists

An African-American woman named Ida B. Wells is one of the most notable **activists** of the Jim Crow Era. She refused to leave a first-class train car designed only for whites. The conductor forcibly removed her from the train car, and then Ida went on to sue the railroad. She was successful, until it was overturned by a higher power. Ida then devoted herself to fighting against the Jim Crow Laws. She became the co-owner of the "Memphis Free Speech and Headlight" Newspaper, and



This image shows a black kid standing by a segregated drinking fountain.

13th Amendment - The amendment that abolished slavery.

Racial Segregation - Separating people based on race.

Plessy V Ferguson - The supreme court case that legalized "Separate, but equal"

Confederate Soldiers - soldiers that fought for the south in the Civil War

Activist - A person who campaigns for a legal change



This image shows a sign that reminds people to pay their poll tax



This image is a picture of a sign pointing to a waiting room for blacks.

Poll Taxes - A tax placed on the polls to try and stop black's from voting.

Black Codes - Strict laws that told blacks what they could and couldn't do.

Brown v Board of Education - The Supreme Court case that ended educational segregation.

Educational Segregation - Separating students into different schools based on a certain factor (most commonly race).

Unconstitutional - Not following the Constitution.

used her position to take on school segregation and sexual harassment. She went all over the south to publish her work. Eventually, a mob group shut down her newspaper and threatened her with death. Ida fled north to continue her work.

Another notable activist was Charlotte Hawkins Brown. Charlotte was a black teacher, who's school lost funding. She then started a fundraiser to create her own school which she called the "Palmer Memorial Institute". She became the first black woman to create a black school in North Carolina, and throughout her education became an opponent of the Jim Crow Laws.

What did the Jim Crow Laws do?

The most notable thing that the Jim Crow Laws did was racial segregation. Segregating schools, restaurants, restrooms, drinking fountains, and countless other things. That's not the only thing that the Jim Crow Laws did, however. Another thing added was **poll taxes** and **black codes**.

The end of the Jim Crow Era

In 1954, the Supreme Court case **Brown v Board of Education** realized that **educational segregation** was **unconstitutional**, bringing an end to "separate but equal" education. In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the *Civil Rights Act* which ended the segregation created by the Jim Crow laws. In 1965, the *Voting Rights Act* stopped people from keeping blacks from voting, and in 1968, the *Fair Housing Act of 1968* was passed, which ended discrimination in renting and selling homes.

Important Documents

- The "Separate, but equal" Doctrine which stated that keeping blacks separate from white was not unconstitutional, as long as they were equal
- The Civil Rights Act which ended segregation
- The Voting Rights Act which made it illegal to deter blacks from voting
- The Fair Housing Act of 1968 which ended discrimination in renting and selling homes.