

HIST3617 Lecture 4

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Section 1

African American life in the age of Jim Crow

1.0.1 Keywords

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1.1 An Elusive Freedom

1.2 The Strange Career of Jim Crow

1.2.1 Who is Jim Crow?

He's a fictional character from the 1820s-1830s. He was often played by a white person in blackface or by an actual black person.

- The character was meant to poke fun at black men

1.3 African American life: South and North

- The term "urban" in this time period was actually used to describe an area where a lot of black people lived
- The blacks living in the south were subject to harsher sentences for small crimes such as stealing, leading to convict labour
- Conversely, the ones living in the north were of a higher socioeconomic status and were able to hold down more middle class jobs like tailors, barbers, preachers, etc.
- The north didn't have segregation enshrined in law unlike the south

1.4 The Crisis of the 1890s: Disenfranchisement, Legal Segregation, Lynching, etc

1.4.1 Lynching

- Lynching is named after a judge named Lynch and it was a punishment where the convict is hung from a tree
- Lynching in the 1900s was extrajudicial, so it wasn't authorities carrying it out.

- Between 1890 to 1968, 4742 black americans were lynched
- Lynching didn't become a federal crime until 1968
- Over 200 anti lynching bills were put forth to congress from 1890 to the 1950s, but failed to pass due to **southern democrat opposition**
- The excuse of lynching was accusations of sexual violence against white women perpetrated by black men. Most of these cases were baseless.
- Ida B. Wells was an anti lynching crusader who postulated that victims of lynching were lynched because they became successful at something, rather than committing unspeakable crimes.