

# Segregation and Discrimination

## MAIN IDEA

Racial discrimination ran through American society in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

## WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Modern American society continues to face the problems caused by racism and discrimination.

## TERMS & NAMES

racial discrimination

Jim Crow

segregation

*Plessy v. Ferguson*

Booker T. Washington

W. E. B. Du Bois

NAACP

Ida B. Wells

## ONE AMERICAN'S STORY

African-American sisters Bessie and Sadie Delany grew up in North Carolina in the early 20th century. Almost 100 years later, they described their first taste of **racial discrimination**, different treatment on the basis of race.

### A VOICE FROM THE PAST

We were about five and seven years old. . . . Mama and Papa used to take us to Pullen Park . . . and that particular day, the trolley driver told us to go to the back. We children objected loudly, because we always liked to sit in the front. . . . But Mama and Papa just gently told us to hush and took us to the back.

Sarah L. Delany and A. Elizabeth Delany, *Having Our Say*



Bessie (left) and Sadie Delany

As you will read in this section, racial discrimination was common throughout the United States.

### Taking Notes

Use your chart to take notes about changes in civil rights.

Changes in American Life

## Racism Causes Discrimination

As you read in earlier chapters, racist attitudes had been developing in America since the introduction of slavery. The low social rank held by slaves led many whites to believe that whites were superior to blacks. Most whites held similar attitudes toward Asians, Native Americans, and Latin Americans. Even most scientists of the day believed that whites were superior to nonwhites. However, no scientists believe this today.

Such attitudes led whites to discriminate against nonwhites across the country. The most obvious example of racial discrimination was in the South. Southern blacks had their first taste of political power during Reconstruction. (See Chapter 18.) But when Reconstruction ended in 1877, Southern states began to restrict African Americans' rights.

## Segregation Expands in the South

One way for whites to weaken African-American political power was to restrict their voting rights. For example, Southern states passed laws that set up literacy, or reading, tests and poll taxes to prevent African Americans from voting. White officials made sure that blacks failed literacy tests by giving unfair exams. For example, white officials sometimes gave blacks tests written in Latin. Poll taxes kept many blacks from voting because they didn't have enough cash to pay the tax.

Such laws threatened to prevent poor whites from voting, too. To keep them from losing the vote, several Southern states added grandfather clauses to their constitutions. Grandfather clauses stated that a man could vote if he or an ancestor, such as a grandfather, had been eligible to vote before 1867. Before that date, most African Americans, free or enslaved, did not have the right to vote. Whites could use the grandfather clause to protect their voting rights. Blacks could not.

In addition to voting restrictions, African Americans faced Jim Crow laws. **Jim Crow** laws were meant to enforce **segregation**, or separation, of white and black people in public places. As a result, separate schools, trolley seats, and restrooms were common throughout the South.

### *Plessy v. Ferguson*

African Americans resisted segregation, but they had little power to stop it. In 1892, Homer Plessy, an African American, sued a railroad company, arguing that segregated seating violated his Fourteenth Amendment right to “equal protection of the laws.”

In 1896, the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* reached the Supreme Court. The Court ruled against Plessy. It argued that “separate but equal” facilities did not violate the Fourteenth Amendment. This decision allowed Southern states to maintain segregated institutions.

But the separate facilities were not equal. White-controlled governments and companies allowed the facilities for African Americans to decay. African Americans would have to organize to fight for equality.

Segregation forced African Americans to use separate entrances from whites and to attend separate, usually inferior, schools like the one shown below.

#### ReadingHistory

**A. Recognizing Effects** What was the purpose behind literacy tests, poll taxes, and grandfather clauses?

#### ReadingHistory

**B. Identifying Problems** Why was a policy of “separate but equal” unfair?



## African Americans Organize

**Booker T. Washington** was an early leader in the effort to achieve equality. He had been born into slavery. But after the Civil War, he became a teacher. In 1881, he founded the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama to help African Americans learn trades and gain economic strength. Washington hired talented teachers and scholars, such as George Washington Carver.

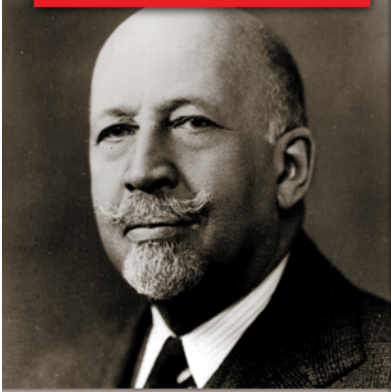
To gain white support for Tuskegee, Washington did not openly challenge segregation. As he said in an 1895 speech in Atlanta, in “purely social matters” whites and blacks “can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress.”

However, some blacks disagreed with Washington’s views. **W. E. B. Du Bois** (doo•BOYS) encouraged African Americans to reject segregation.

### Background

Carver made important discoveries to improve farming.

### AMERICA'S HISTORY MAKERS



#### W. E. B. DU BOIS

1868–1963

W. E. B. Du Bois grew up in a middle-class home. He went to college and earned his doctorate at Harvard. Du Bois became one of the most distinguished scholars of the 20th century.

Du Bois fought against segregation. He believed that the best way to end it would be to have educated African Americans lead the fight. He referred to this group of educated African Americans as the “Talented Tenth”—the most educated 10 percent of African Americans.

**Why do you think Du Bois believed the Talented Tenth should lead the fight against segregation?**

### A VOICE FROM THE PAST

Is it possible . . . that nine millions of men can make effective progress in economic lines if they are deprived of political rights? . . . If history and reason give any distinct answer to these questions, it is an emphatic *No*.

W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*

In 1909, Du Bois and other reformers founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, or the **NAACP**. The NAACP played a major role in ending segregation in the 20th century.

## Violence in the South and North

Besides discrimination, African Americans in the South also faced violence. The Ku Klux Klan, which first appeared during Reconstruction, used violence to keep blacks from challenging segregation. More than 2,500 African Americans were lynched between 1885 and 1900.

**Ida B. Wells**, an African-American journalist from Memphis, led the fight against lynching. After three of her friends were lynched in 1892, she mounted an anti-lynching campaign in her newspaper. When whites called for Wells herself to be lynched, she moved to Chicago. But she continued her work against lynching. (See Interactive Primary Sources, page 624.)

Like Wells, many blacks moved north to escape discrimination. Public facilities there were not segregated by law. But Northern whites still discriminated against blacks. Blacks could not get housing in white neighborhoods and usually were denied good jobs. Anti-black feelings among whites sometimes led to violence. In 1908, whites in Springfield, Illinois, attacked blacks who had moved there. The whites lynched two blacks within a half mile of Abraham Lincoln’s home.

### ReadingHistory

#### C. Making

**Inferences** In what way did Washington and Du Bois disagree about how to achieve African-American progress?

## Racism in the West

Chinese immigrants who came to the West in the 1800s also faced severe discrimination. Chinese laborers received lower wages than whites for the same work. Sometimes, Chinese workers faced violence. In 1885, white workers in Rock Springs, Wyoming, refused to work in the same mine as Chinese workers. The whites stormed through the Chinese part of town, shooting Chinese people and burning buildings. During the attack, 28 Chinese people were killed and 15 were wounded.

At the same time, Mexicans and African Americans who came to the American Southwest were forced into peonage (PEE•uh•nihj). In this system of labor, people are forced to work until they have paid off debts. Congress outlawed peonage in 1867, but some workers were still forced to work to repay debts. In 1911, the U.S. Supreme Court declared such labor to be the same as peonage. As a result, the Court struck down such forms of labor as a violation of the Thirteenth Amendment.

Despite the problems caused by racism, many Americans had new opportunities to enjoy their lives at the turn of the century. In the next section, you will learn about changes in people’s daily lives.



The Workingmen’s Party of California produced this anti-Chinese poster during the 1880s.

### Background

The Thirteenth Amendment banned “involuntary servitude”—another term for slavery.

## Section 3 Assessment

### 1. Terms & Names

#### Explain the significance of:

- racial discrimination
- Jim Crow
- segregation
- *Plessy v. Ferguson*
- Booker T. Washington
- W. E. B. Du Bois
- NAACP
- Ida B. Wells

### 2. Using Graphics

Use a chart to identify people and events related to racial discrimination at the turn of the century.

People	
Events	

Which person do you think did the most to end racial discrimination?

### 3. Main Ideas

- What were Jim Crow laws?
- How did discrimination against African Americans in the North differ from discrimination in the South?
- What did Chinese immigrants and Mexican immigrants have in common?

### 4. Critical Thinking

**Solving Problems** What could have been done to end racial discrimination against nonwhites in the United States at the turn of the century?

#### THINK ABOUT

- attitudes of whites about nonwhites
- the efforts of nonwhites to find jobs and security
- competition for jobs

### ACTIVITY OPTIONS

#### LANGUAGE ARTS

#### TECHNOLOGY

Research a civil rights leader from the turn of the century. Write a short **biography** of that person or design a **Web site** devoted to the work of that person.