

Lesson 23:

The Reconstruction Era

To what extent did Reconstruction bring African Americans closer to full citizenship?

Lesson 23: Section 5 – Reconstruction Reversed



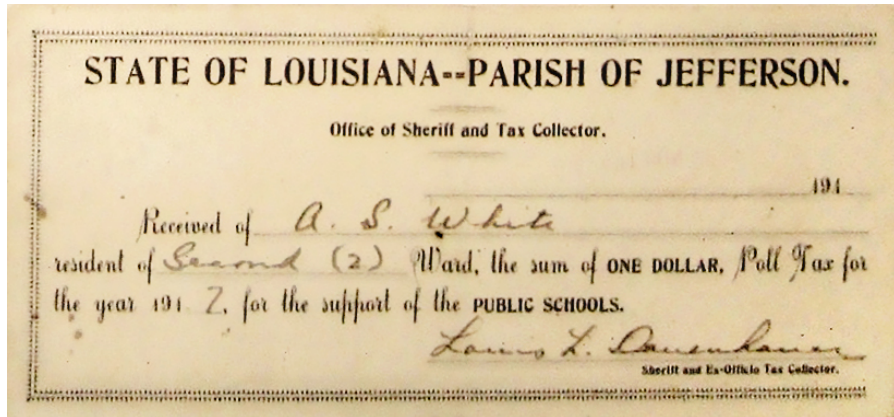
- With Reconstruction over, Southern leaders talked of building a “New South” humming with mills, factories, and cities.
- Still, most Southerners, black and white, remained trapped in an “Old South” of poverty.

Lesson 23: Section 5 – Losing Ground in Education



- When Southern Democrats regained control of states, however, they cut spending on education.
- By the 1880s, only about half of all black children in the South were attending school.

Lesson 23: Section 5 – Losing Voting Rights



- Southern Democrats also reversed political gains made by freedmen after the war.
- Many Southern states passed laws requiring citizens who wanted to vote to pay a poll tax. The tax was set high enough that voting, like education, became a luxury that many black Southerners could not afford.

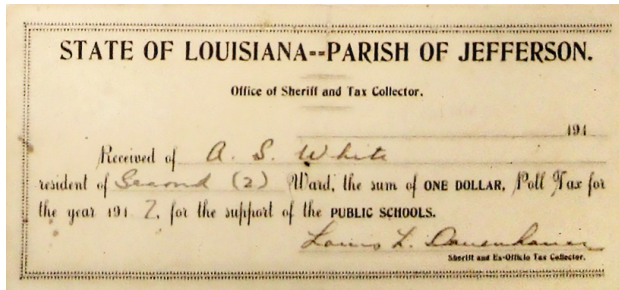
Lesson 23: Section 5 – Losing Voting Rights

The State of Louisiana
Literacy Test (This test is to be given to anyone who cannot prove a fifth grade education.)
Do what you are told to do in each statement, nothing more, nothing less. Be careful as one wrong answer denotes failure of the test. You have 10 minutes to complete the test.

1. Draw a line around the number or letter of this sentence.
2. Draw a line under the last word in this line.
3. Cross out the longest word in this line.
4. Draw a line around the shortest word in this line.
5. Circle the first, first letter of the alphabet in this line.
6. In the space below draw three circles, one inside (engulfed by) the other.
7. Above the letter X make a small cross.
8. Draw a line through the letter below that comes earliest in the alphabet.
Z V S B D M K I T P H C
9. Draw a line through the two letters below that come last in the alphabet.
Z V B D M K T P H S Y C
10. In the first circle below write the last letter of the first word beginning with "L".
① ② ③ ④ ⑤
11. Cross out the number necessary, when making the number below one million.
10000000000
12. Draw a line from circle 2 to circle 5 that will pass below circle 2 and above circle 4.
① ② ③ ④ ⑤
13. In the line below cross out each number that is more than 20 but less than 30.
31 16 48 29 53 47 22 37 98 26 20 25

- Some Southern states also required citizens to pass a literacy test to show they could read before allowing them to vote.
- These tests were designed so that any African American, regardless of his education, would fail.

Lesson 23: Section 5 – Losing Voting Rights

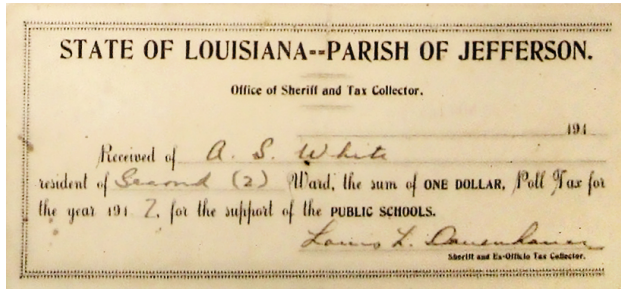


The State of Louisiana
Literacy Test (This test is to be given to anyone who cannot prove a fifth grade education.)
Do what you are told to do in each statement, nothing more, nothing less. Be careful as one wrong answer denotes failure of the test. You have 10 minutes to complete the test.

1. Draw a line around the number or letter of this sentence.
2. Draw a line under the last word in this line.
3. Cross out the longest word in this line.
4. Draw a line around the shortest word in this line.
5. Circle the first, first letter of the alphabet in this line.
6. In the space below draw three circles, one inside (engulfed by) the other.
7. Above the letter X make a small cross.
8. Draw a line through the letter below that comes earliest in the alphabet.
Z V S B D M K I T P H C
9. Draw a line through the two letters below that come last in the alphabet.
Z V B D M K T P H S Y C
10. In the first circle below write the last letter of the first word beginning with "L".
① ② ③ ④ ⑤
11. Cross out the number necessary, when making the number below one million.
1000000000
12. Draw a line from circle 2 to circle 5 that will pass below circle 2 and above circle 4.
① ② ③ ④ ⑤
13. In the line below cross out each number that is more than 20 but less than 30.
31 16 48 29 53 47 22 37 98 26 20 25

- In theory, these laws applied equally to blacks and whites and, for that reason, did not violate the Fifteenth Amendment.
- In practice, however, whites were excused from paying poll taxes or taking literacy tests by a **so-called** "grandfather clause" in the laws.
- This clause said the taxes and tests did not apply to any man whose father or grandfather could vote on January 1, 1867.
- Because no blacks could vote on that date, the grandfather clause applied only to whites.

Lesson 23: Section 5 – Losing Voting Rights



- African Americans protested that these laws denied them their constitutional right to vote.
- The Supreme Court, however, found that the new voting laws did not violate the Fifteenth Amendment because they did not deny anyone the right to vote on the basis of race.

The State of Louisiana
Literacy Test (This test is to be given to anyone who cannot prove a fifth grade education.)
Do what you are told to do in each statement, nothing more, nothing less. Be careful as one wrong answer denotes failure of the test. You have 10 minutes to complete the test.

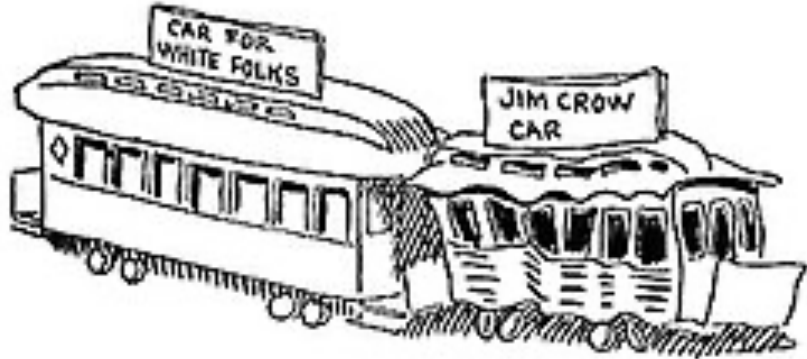
1. Draw a line around the number or letter of this sentence.
2. Draw a line under the last word in this line.
3. Cross out the longest word in this line.
4. Draw a line around the shortest word in this line.
5. Circle the first, first letter of the alphabet in this line.
6. In the space below draw three circles, one inside (engulfed by) the other.
7. Above the letter X make a small cross.
8. Draw a line through the letter below that comes earliest in the alphabet.
Z V S B D M K I T P H C
9. Draw a line through the two letters below that come last in the alphabet.
Z V B D M K T P H S Y C
10. In the first circle below write the last letter of the first word beginning with "L".
① ② ③ ④ ⑤
11. Cross out the number necessary, when making the number below one million.
1000000000
12. Draw a line from circle 2 to circle 5 that will pass below circle 2 and above circle 4.
① ② ③ ④ ⑤
13. In the line below cross out each number that is more than 20 but less than 30.
31 16 48 29 53 47 22 37 98 26 20 25

Lesson 23: Section 5 – Drawing a “Color Line”



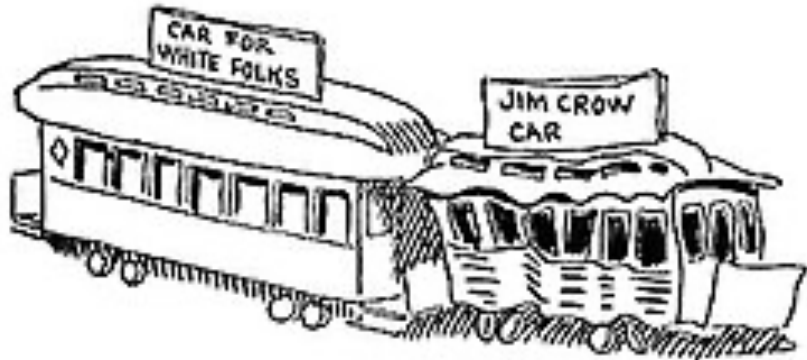
- During Reconstruction, most Southern states had outlawed segregation in public places.
- When Democrats returned to power, they reversed these laws and drew a “color line” between blacks and whites in public life.
- Whites called the new segregation acts Jim Crow laws after a black character, Jim Crow, in an entertainer's act in the mid-1800s.

Lesson 23: Section 5 – *Plessy v. Ferguson*



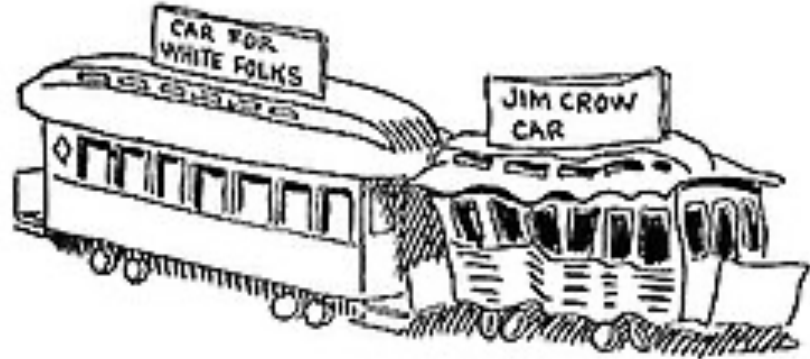
- African Americans argued that segregation laws violated the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of equal protection of the laws.
- Homer Plessy, who was arrested for refusing to obey a Jim Crow law, took his protest all the way to the Supreme Court.

Lesson 23: Section 5 – *Plessy v. Ferguson*



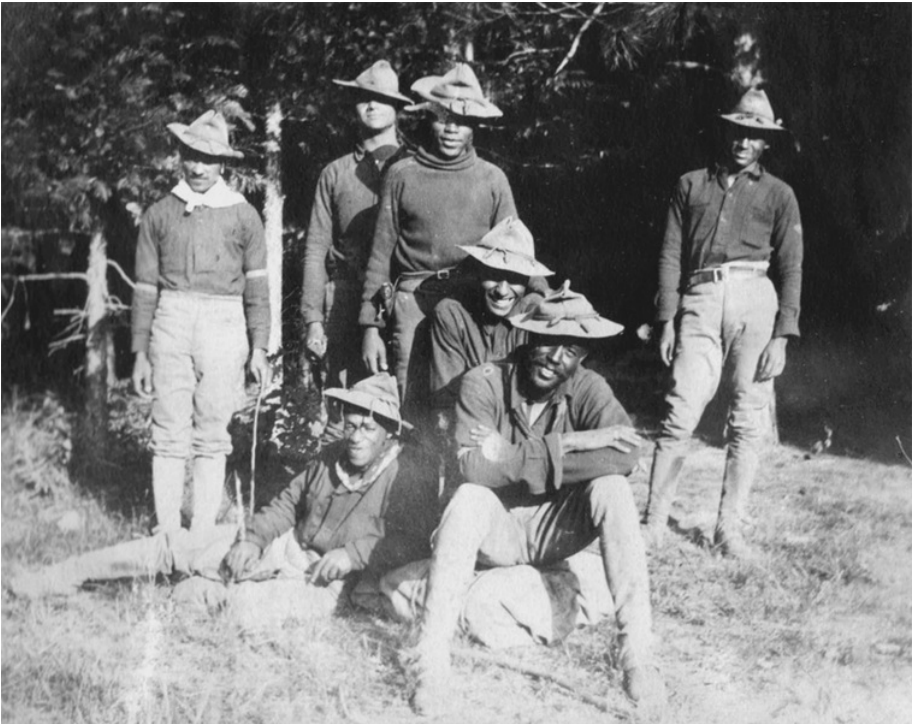
- The Supreme Court decided his case, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, in 1896. The majority of the Supreme Court justices found that segregation laws did not violate the Fourteenth Amendment as long as the facilities available to both races were roughly equal.
- Justice John Marshall Harlan, a former slaveholder, disagreed. In his dissenting opinion, he wrote, “Our Constitution is color blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens.”

Lesson 23: Section 5 – *Plessy v. Ferguson*



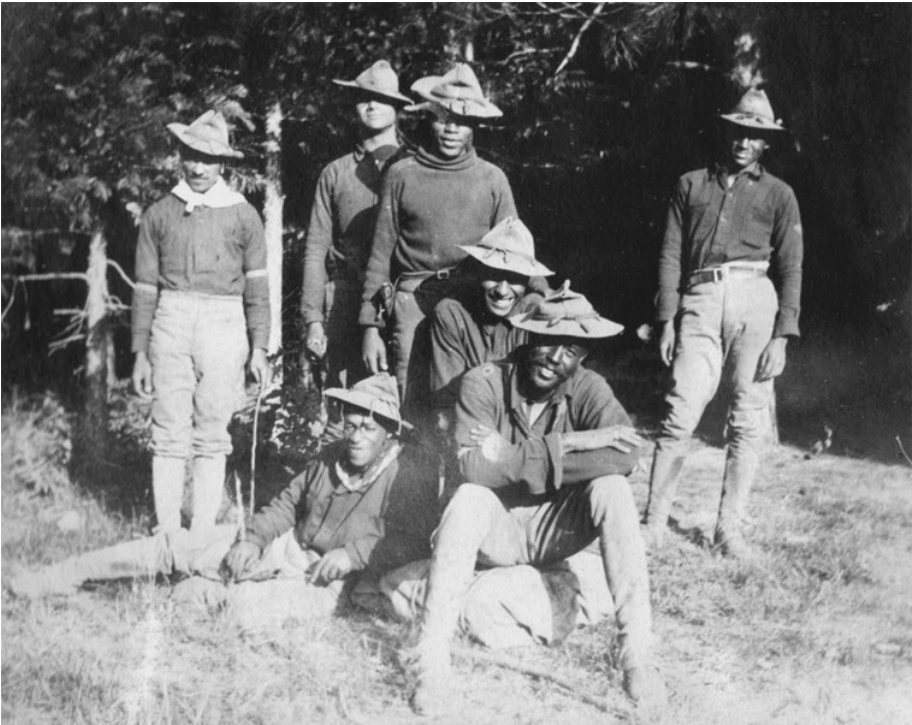
- Despite the Court's decision that these separate facilities must be equal, those set aside for African Americans were almost always **inferior** to facilities labeled “whites only.”

Lesson 23: Section 6 – Responding to Segregation



- African Americans responded to segregation in many ways.
- The boldest protested openly, but doing so was dangerous. Blacks who spoke out against “white rule” risked being attacked by white mobs, and some were lynched, or murdered, often by hanging.

Lesson 23: Section 6 – African American Migration



- Thousands of African Americans responded to segregation by leaving the South.
 - A few chose to return to Africa. In 1878, some 200 Southern blacks chartered a ship and sailed to Liberia, a nation in West Africa that had been founded in 1821 for the settlement of freed American slaves.

Lesson 23: Section 6 – African American Migration



- Many more African Americans migrated to other parts of the United States.
- Not only were they pushed from the South by racism and poverty, but they were pulled by the lure of better opportunities and more equal treatment.

Lesson 23: Section 6 – African American Migration



- Some sought a new life as wage earners by migrating to cities in the North.
- They competed for jobs with recent immigrants from Europe and often faced racism, if not Southern-style segregation.

Lesson 23: Section 6 – African American Migration



- Others headed to the West, where they found work as cowboys and Indian fighters.
 - Two all-black U.S. Cavalry units known as the "Buffalo Soldiers" fought on the front lines of the Indian wars, while some blacks found new homes with American Indian nations.

Lesson 23: Section 6 – African American Migration



- Most African Americans, however, remained in the South.
- Families, churches, and communities also banded together to build schools and colleges for black children.
- Because of these efforts, literacy among African Americans rose rapidly. When slavery ended in 1865, only 5 percent of African Americans could read. By 1900, more than 50 percent could read and write.