

## African-American History

**MIDDLE PASSAGE, SLAVERY, EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION  
CIVIL WAR, RECONSTRUCTION, JIM CROW SEGREGATION  
GREAT MIGRATION, URBANIZATION, HARLEM RENAISSANCE  
TWO WORLD WARS, CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT  
DE JURE EQUAL RIGHTS**

**Middle Passage:** Middle Passage was the Transatlantic journey of slaves from Africa to the Americas. It was the middle leg of the triangular trade between Europe, Africa and America. Conditions on the transport ships were brutal and overcrowded. The expected mortality rate for African captives was between 10 and 40% for each ocean crossing.

**Slavery:** Africans were enslaved in the Americas for almost 400 years. Most captives were brought to islands in the Caribbean or to South America.

**Emancipation Proclamation:** Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, during the Civil War. The decree freed all slaves in territories in a state of rebellion against the United States.

**Civil War:** The Civil War (1861-1865) was the bloodiest conflict in American history. Slavery was a key factor bringing about the War.

**Reconstruction:** The period after the Civil War is called Reconstruction (1865-1877). As the Army of the North occupied the defeated Confederacy, it was a time of new opportunities for freed blacks as well as serious disappointments.

**Jim Crow:** Jim Crow was the name for the Southern system of segregation put into effect after the Civil War. Blacks and whites lived practically in two separate worlds. The name derives from a blackface minstrel song and dance show of the 1830's.

**Great Migration:** In the late 1800's and early 1900's over a million blacks left the south and moved north or west.

**Urbanization:** In the early 20th Century southern blacks began to populate in very large numbers major American cities, especially in the northeast and midwest. The availability of manufacturing jobs spurred migration.

**Harlem Renaissance:** In the 1920's, the black neighborhood just north of New York City's Central Park became a mecca of black cultural creativity in music, dance, and literature, as well as economic upward mobility.

**Two World Wars:** Blacks fought in segregated units during both world wars.

**Civil Rights Movement:** The Civil Rights Movement was a nationwide effort by African-Americans and their supporters to end racial segregation and to gain equal rights in access to education, employment, and housing.

**De Jure Equal Rights:** *De jure* is a Latin term which means "based on law." Equal treatment of Americans, regardless of race, is now required by law (*de jure*). Equality may be *de jure* but not *de facto* (based on fact) when it is practiced in theory but not practice.

## **FIRST ROUND OF ASSOCIATIONS**

**Gold Coast:** The Gold Coast is present day Ghana in West Africa, where the Portuguese in the late 1400's first established a successful trading colony, which would eventually become the center of the highly lucrative African slave trade.

**4 Million:** At the outbreak of the Civil War, the population of the southern states was nine million. Four million were black slaves.

**Abraham Lincoln:** Lincoln was the 16th President of the United States. He was the first Republican, and opposed to the expansion of slavery. His election in 1860 precipitated the secession of those southern states that would come to be known as the Confederacy.

**Slavery?:** Historians who analyze the causes of the Civil War have different views of the relative importance of slavery compared to other major causes such as sectionalism and states' rights.

**Black Codes:** After the end of the Civil War in 1865, in order to return blacks to a subservient role in the defeated South, each southern state instituted a series of oppressive rules and requirements on former slaves. These were the Black Codes, which eventually became Jim Crow segregation laws throughout the south.

**Separate Worlds:** Segregation created a system of strict racial separation enforced by law and custom throughout the south between 1876 (the end of Reconstruction) and 1965 (passage of the Civil Rights Act). The system was similar to apartheid in South Africa. There were separate facilities for whites and blacks, restricting nearly every area of public and private life, including education, transportation, employment, housing and entertainment.

**Movin' Up North!:** In the early 20th century, the mechanization of farming in the south, which lessened the need for black field hands, and the availability of new northern factory jobs, especially with the outbreak of World War I, caused a large migration of southern blacks to northern cities such as Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Pittsburgh and New York.

**Ghettos:** Housing patterns in the north and south were highly segregated. Often, whites would not sell houses to blacks. As such, most African-Americans rented within rundown areas of the city, which came to be known by the 1960's as "ghettos," a word derived from Jewish urban enclaves in Europe.

**Langston Hughes:** Hughes was a poet, playwright and columnist who came to symbolize the genius of the Harlem Renaissance.

**Segregated Army:** The United States military services were segregated in both World War I and World War II. With few exceptions, white officers commanded black units.

**Martin Luther King, Jr.:** Iconic leader of the Civil Rights Movement, Dr. King was a brilliant writer and inspirational speaker. He was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee on April 4, 1968 at the age of 39.

**De Facto?:** - Latin term meaning "based on fact." Regardless of changes in the Constitution, the practice of racial discrimination toward African-Americans was accepted social custom throughout America, north and south.

## **SECOND ROUND OF ASSOCIATIONS**

**Slave Castles:** Slave castles were fortresses built on the Gold Coast of Africa between the 15th and 18th Centuries, first to store and protect European trade goods such as gold and mahogany, but later used to hold thousands of slaves, bound for transport to the New World.

**Plantations:** Large and luxurious sugar, cotton, or tobacco farms, especially in the Deep South, plantations came to symbolize the brutality and inhumanity of slavery.

**13th Amendment:** Passed seven months after the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, this Constitutional amendment abolished slavery in the United States.

**54th Massachusetts:** An African-American volunteer U.S. Army Infantry unit composed of free men, the “54th” was one of the first of such units in the Civil War. It was widely acclaimed for valor, spearheading the assault on Fort Wagner in South Carolina.

**14th Amendment:** The 14th Amendment provides a definition of citizenship in the United States. It requires all states to assure equal protection to everyone within their jurisdiction. It provides due process under the law (fairness) and full Constitutional rights to all citizens, regardless of race, sex or religious beliefs.

**Plessy v. Ferguson:** This Supreme Court decision (1896), ruled separation and segregation of the races legal as long as the races are treated equally -- “separate but equal.”

**Industrial Jobs:** Industry was booming in the north in the early 1900’s, but African-Americans were generally given the lowest, often most dangerous, jobs in the factories. Even so, the steady wages were much better than southern incomes, creating self-sufficiency, pride and upward mobility.

**New Middle Class:** In spite of discrimination, a small but significant African-American middle class arose after World War II, along with a smaller, very well educated professional class of doctors, lawyers and educators.

**Jazz:** The music that dominated the swinging 1920’s, Jazz was born in the Harlem Renaissance and was transmitted nationally by the new media of phonograph recordings and radio. Black Jazz musicians such as Louis Armstrong reached heightened status and economic power.

**Tuskegee Airmen:** First and most famous African-American fighter airplane unit in World War II, the “Red Tails” (their P-51 Mustangs sported distinctive red tail stabilizers) were discriminated against at every phase of their training, but triumphed with an outstanding service record in Europe, where they escorted bomber formations over Nazi Germany.

**Malcolm X:** Fiery speaker for African-American equality through black nationalism, the one-time spokesman for the controversial Nation of Islam publicly broke with the black separatist organization, and was assassinated less than a year later on February 21, 1965 at age 39.

**Affirmative Action**: Affirmative action is a set of government regulations and timetables put in place during the Presidential Administrations of Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon to accelerate the full and equal participation of historically discriminated against minorities in all aspects of American education, employment and housing. Affirmative action became controversial, as it was perceived by many as “reverse discrimination.”

### **THIRD ROUND OF ASSOCIATIONS**

**15 of 50 Million**: The total numbers are difficult to calculate, but approximately one-third of the 50 million captives departing Africa for the New World died during the “Middle Passage” across the Atlantic Ocean.

**“Peculiar Institution”**: White southerners avoided the word slavery in conversation and legislative debate, preferring to refer to the practice as “our peculiar institution.”

**Keep the British Out**: In need of the raw material of cotton for their mills, Great Britain considered supporting the Confederacy. But the British people opposed slavery. When Lincoln emancipated all slaves in rebelling states, any official British support for the south would have endorsed of the reestablishment of slavery, a position unacceptable to the British people.

**Liberation?**: Though the Emancipation Proclamation and 13th Amendment declared African-American freedom from slavery, liberation from a racially oppressive social and economic system became a struggle for future generations.

**Sharecropping**: A form of tenant farming instituted by plantation owners to reestablish southern agriculture after the Civil War, sharecropping bound former slaves and poor whites to the owner of the land in a relentless form of debt-based servitude.

**Brown v. Board of Education**: This landmark Supreme Court decision in 1954 ended segregation in public education. By a 9-0 ruling the Court reversed the “separate but equal” doctrine of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896).

**Cultural Diffusion**: In the new black neighborhoods of the north, African-Americans from different parts of the country and varying social classes, skills, and abilities, met, shared ideas, and grew in sophistication. Blacks also interacted with other ethnic groups, sometimes with with friction. Northern white culture was also greatly influenced by African-American culture.



**Redlining**: Redlining was a common practice after World War II in which banks and insurance companies literally drew red lines on city maps around predominantly African-American residential neighborhoods. Within those areas, loans, mortgages, and business insurance was restricted or not issued at all, thereby limiting greatly the economic opportunities of redlined residents.

**“New Negro”**: This was the name for a major literary movement within the Harlem Renaissance that challenged white stereotypes of African-Americans. It promoted a critical look at racism and championed progressive philosophies, including racial integration.

**Army Integration**: President Harry S. Truman desegregated the armed forces in 1948 by executive order.

**Civil Rights Act**: The Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed racial discrimination in employment, education, and public places.

**Barack Obama**: Obama was elected the 44th President of the United States in 2008 and re-elected for a second term in 2012. He is the first African-American President.

Songwriters-KJ Denhert & Lance Fialkoff; Guitar and Vocals-KJ Denhert; Bass- Robert Bard; Drums-Eric Palmer~Skytop Studio, New Paltz, NY © 2013. All Rights Reserved. Musical Media for Education (MME)