



Duval County Public Schools

African American Studies

Exploring Primary & Secondary Sources



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Social Studies Skill-Based Standards for 9–12th Graders

SS.912.A.1.2: Utilize a variety of primary and secondary sources to identify author, historical significance, audience, and authenticity to understand a historical period.

SS.912.A.1.3: Utilize timelines to identify the time sequence of historical data.

SS.912.A.1.4: Analyze how images, symbols, objects, cartoons, graphs, charts, maps, and artwork may be used to interpret the significance of time periods and events from the past.

SS.912.A.1.5: Evaluate the validity, reliability, bias, and authenticity of current events and Internet resources.



Look out for this symbol while you are reading!

This symbol means that a text or image contains historical information related to Duval County or the state of Florida.

UNIT 1

Introduction: Ancient Africa

African American history begins in Africa. From early in its history, Africa was a land of wealthy and powerful empires, with over 800 spoken and written languages. The great empires of Mali, Songhay, and Benin were part of global trade networks with European and Arabic ports. The capital of Benin was one of the largest cities in the world in the 16th century, and the great city of Timbuktu in Mali was an international center of learning. Africans were among the first to explore the Americas, traveling through Mexico, Peru, and the American Southwest in the early 16th century, and Africans often joined Spanish and French expeditions. However, when Europeans began to colonize both the Americas and the Caribbean islands, they viewed Africans not as equals but as a source of involuntary labor. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to enslave African people to bring them to the Americas, but soon Spain, Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, and Denmark joined Portugal in building the transatlantic slave network. The first Africans brought to North America were seized from West Central Africa and eventually taken to the James River Valley area of Virginia in 1619.

Key Terms:

- Oral Tradition of History
- Manuscript
- Nubia
- Temple of DeBod
- Sundiata
- Manden Charter
- Empire of Mali
- Mansa Musa
- Islam
- Hajj

Standards:

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- SS.912.A.1.5: Evaluate the validity, reliability, bias, and authenticity of current events and Internet resources.



Leader Spotlight.

QUEEN HATSHEPSUT

Queen Hatshepsut (ca 1508–1458 B.C.) ruled Egypt as pharaoh during the Eighteenth Dynasty. She is known for re-establishing important trade routes. She masterminded the expansion of Egyptian trade with Punt, a kingdom in eastern Africa, and supervised the building of the magnificent temple at Deir el-Bahri.

Ancient and Medieval Sub-Saharan States

This map of ancient and medieval African empires shows the many different political systems of West African history. These empires had strong economic, political, legal, and cultural practices. The empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai (also known as the Songhay Empire) were the richest and most powerful of the empires. These empires had larger trade systems compared to European nations at the time.



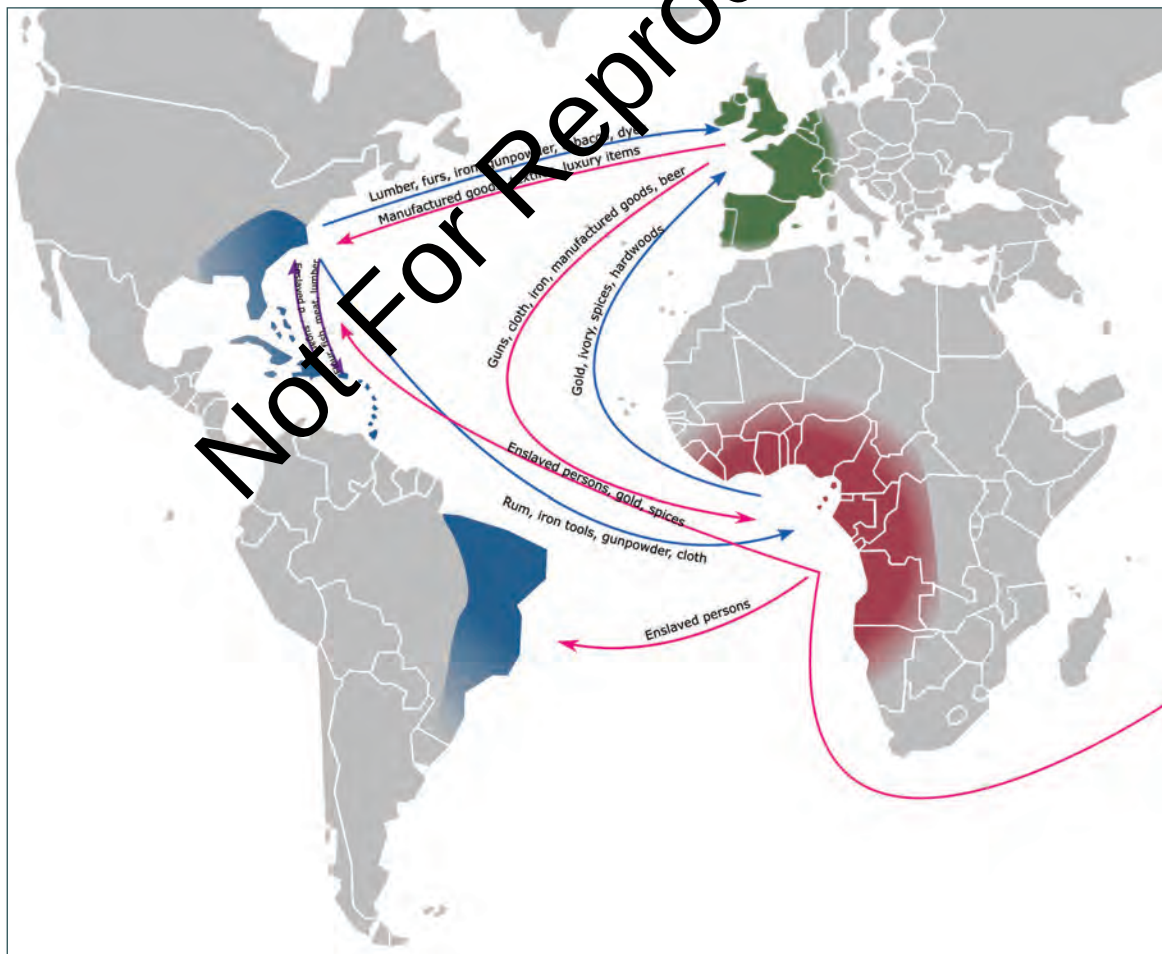
Temple of Debod

Adikhalamani was king of the Kush Empire during the 2nd century BCE. The Kingdom of Kush was located in the African city of Nubia. King Adikhalamani built the Temple of Debod. The temple sat on the east bank of the Nile River near the religious center in Philae. The temple was dedicated to the goddess Isis and the god Amun. The Temple of Debod is one example of the sophisticated building techniques used by Nubian artisans. When Nubia converted to Christianity in the 6th century CE, the temple was no longer used. In the 16th century CE, Nubia came under the control of Egypt. In 1968, the construction of a dam threatened to damage the temple, so Egypt donated it to Spain as thanks for Spain's help preserving other at-risk temples. Pictured here in a photograph taken in 2019, the Temple of Debod is now located in a park near the royal palace in Madrid.



Triangular Trade Map

Triangular trade is a historical term for a trade system between three different ports or locations. From the 16th through the 19th centuries, at least 12 million African people were captured and sold as part of the Atlantic triangular trade. There were three stages of the Atlantic triangular trade. In the first leg of the trade, the British sailed to ports in western Africa and sold weapons, wine, and textiles to Africans in exchange for captured African people. The second stage was the “Middle Passage,” the ocean journey of the captured Africans to the Americas. The third and final piece of the trade was the sale of the captured African people at auctions to the highest bidder and the subsequent enslavement of those African people. The Atlantic triangular trade was not only the largest forced migration in history, but it was also exceptionally brutal. From capture to enslavement, approximately 40 out of every 100 African persons died along the way. They died from violent physical attacks, malnourishment, disease, and some even committed suicide to escape brutal treatment. This map shows the routes of the Atlantic triangular trade.



The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano

Olaudah Equiano was from the Nigeria region of Africa and was enslaved when he was an 11-year-old child. He was taken to the Caribbean and sold to a British naval officer who renamed him Gustavus Vassa. During his enslavement, he had his own small trade business and saved enough money to purchase his freedom from an English merchant in 1766. In London, he joined the Sons of Africa, a group of free Africans living in England who were part of the British abolition movement. His autobiography, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, was one of the first books by a Black African writer to be published in Europe. It told Equiano's life story and exposed the inhumanity of slavery. An enormous success, Equiano's autobiography was republished nine times in his lifetime. His vivid descriptions of the abuse and torture of slavery helped sway public opinion against the slave trade. This influenced the passage of the Slave Trade Act of 1807, which ended British participation in the slave trade. An excerpt from Olaudah Equiano's autobiography is included here.

Excerpt from *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*

... With the loathesomeness of the stench and the crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat, nor had I the least desire to taste anything. I now wished for the last friend, Death, to relieve me.

Soon, to my grief, two of the white men offered me eatables and on my refusing to eat, one of them held me fast by the hands and laid me across the windlass and tied my feet while the other flogged me severely. I had never experienced anything of this kind before. If

I could have gotten over the nettings, I would have jumped over the side, but I could not. The crew used to watch very closely those of us who were not chained down to



the decks, lest we should leap into the water. I have seen some of these poor African prisoners most severely cut for attempting to do so, and hourly whipped for not eating. This indeed was often the case with myself.

I inquired of these what was to be done with us. They gave me to understand we were to be carried to these white people's country to work for them. I then was a little revived, and thought if it were no worse than working, my situation was not so desperate. But still I feared that I should be put to death, the white people looked and acted in so savage a manner. I have never seen among my people such instances of brutal cruelty, and this not only shown towards us blacks, but also to some of the whites themselves. [. . .]

One white man in particular I saw, when we were permitted to be on deck, flogged so unmercifully with a large rope near the foremast that he died in consequence of it, and they tossed him over the side as they would have done a brute. This made me fear these people the more, and I expected nothing less than to be treated in the same manner.

At last, when the ship we were in had got in all her cargo, they made ready with many fearful noises, and we were all put under deck, so that we could not see how they managed the vessel.

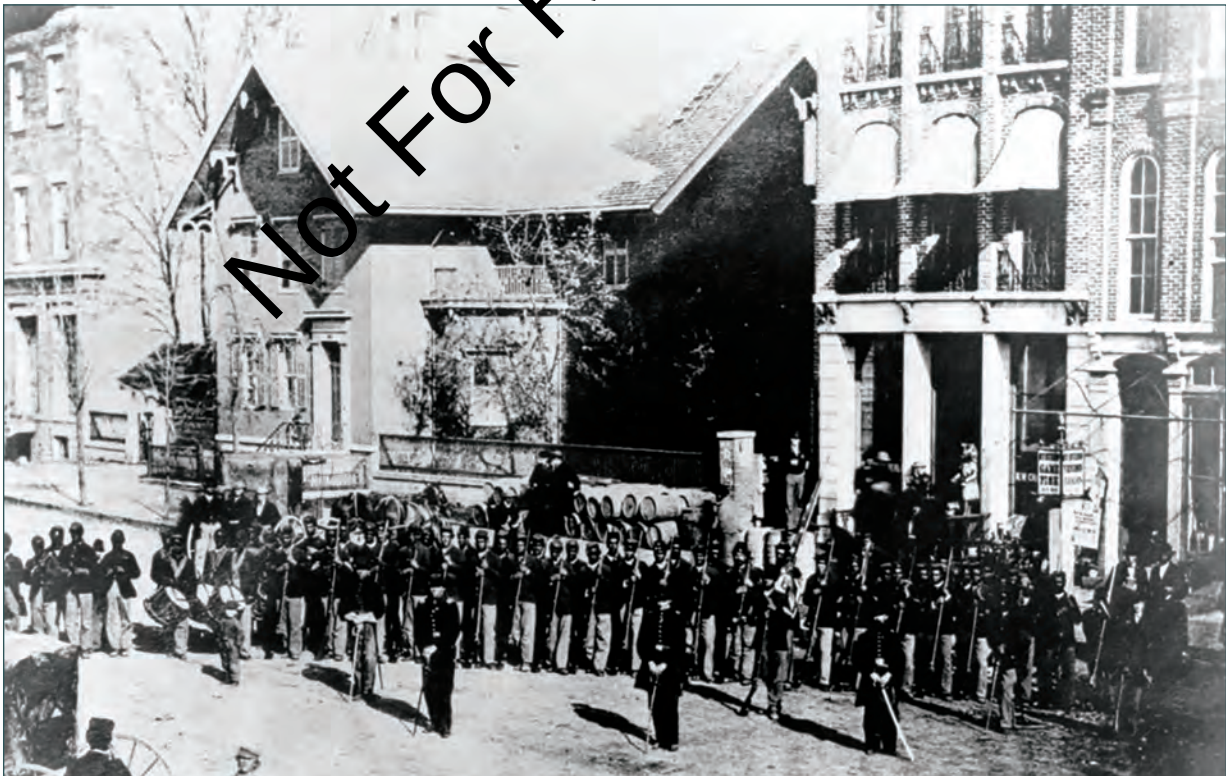
The stench of the hold while we were on the coast was so intolerably loathsome, that it was dangerous to remain there for any time. . . . Some of us had been permitted to stay on the deck for the fresh air. But now that the whole ship's cargo were confined together, it became absolutely pestilential. The closeness of the place and the heat of the climate, added to the number of the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us.

This produced copious perspirations so that the air became unfit for respiration from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died—thus falling victims of the improvident avarice, as I may call it, of their purchasers. This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling of the chains, which now became insupportable, and the filth of the necessary tubs [toilets] into which the children often fell and were almost suffocated. The shrieks of the women and the groans of the dying rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable.

Happily perhaps for myself, I was soon reduced so low that it was necessary to keep me almost always on deck and from my extreme youth I was not put into fetters. In this situation I expected every hour to share the fate of my companions, some of whom were almost daily brought upon the deck at the point of death, which I began to hope would soon put an end to my miseries. Often did I think many of the inhabitants of the deep much more happy than myself. I envied them the freedom they enjoyed, and as often wished I could change my condition for theirs. Every circumstance I met with, served only to render my state more painful and heightened my apprehensions and my opinion of the cruelty of the whites.

Treatment of African American Soldiers During the Civil War

During the Civil War, many African American men and women were ready to join the war effort to end slavery in the United States. After President Abraham Lincoln issued the *Emancipation Proclamation* on January 1, 1863, African Americans were allowed to enlist in the military and join the Union effort. As many as 180,000 African American men were soldiers during the Civil War. African American men saw combat in racially segregated units and were assigned to many noncombatant jobs, serving as mechanics, laborers, scouts, and spies. African American soldiers faced racial prejudice and discriminatory practices that made their service challenging. Soldiers were rarely commissioned as officers but fought in 449 battles in the Civil War. They were sometimes given inadequate medical treatment, forced to use inferior equipment, and received unequal pay and clothing allotments. The African American soldiers in the 54th Massachusetts Infantry refused their pay until it was made equal to their White counterparts. If captured by the Confederate Army, African American soldiers were threatened with enslavement and were often whipped or murdered. This photograph shows the African American 157th Regiment Ohio Voluntary Infantry in Delaware, Ohio in 1863.



Abraham Lincoln's Letter to Charles Sumner

The approximately 180,000 African American soldiers who enlisted in the Union Army during the Civil War faced significant racism. They were often subject to abusive treatment and assigned only menial tasks. They had to fight for equal pay and equipment and were not always guaranteed the same military benefits as the White soldiers. When African American Major Lionel F. Booth was killed by a Confederate sniper, his wife Mary Elizabeth Wayt Booth met with Abraham Lincoln at the White House. She argued to the President that the widows and children of African American soldiers killed in the war should receive the same benefits as the surviving families of White soldiers. In the following letter from Abraham Lincoln to Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner, Lincoln agrees with Mrs. Booth. Lincoln's letter may have led Senator Sumner to introduce a new law that guaranteed pensions to the surviving families of African American soldiers killed in the war.

Transcription:

May 19, 1864

Hon. Charles Sumner

My dear Sir,

The bearer of this is the widow of Major Booth, who fell at Fort Pillow—She makes a point which I think is very worthy of consideration, which is, widows and children in fact, of colored soldiers who fall in our service, in peace or war, the same as if their marriages were legal so that they can have the same provisions made [illegible] of widows and orphans of white soldiers. Please see and hear Mrs. Booth.

Yours truly

A. Lincoln

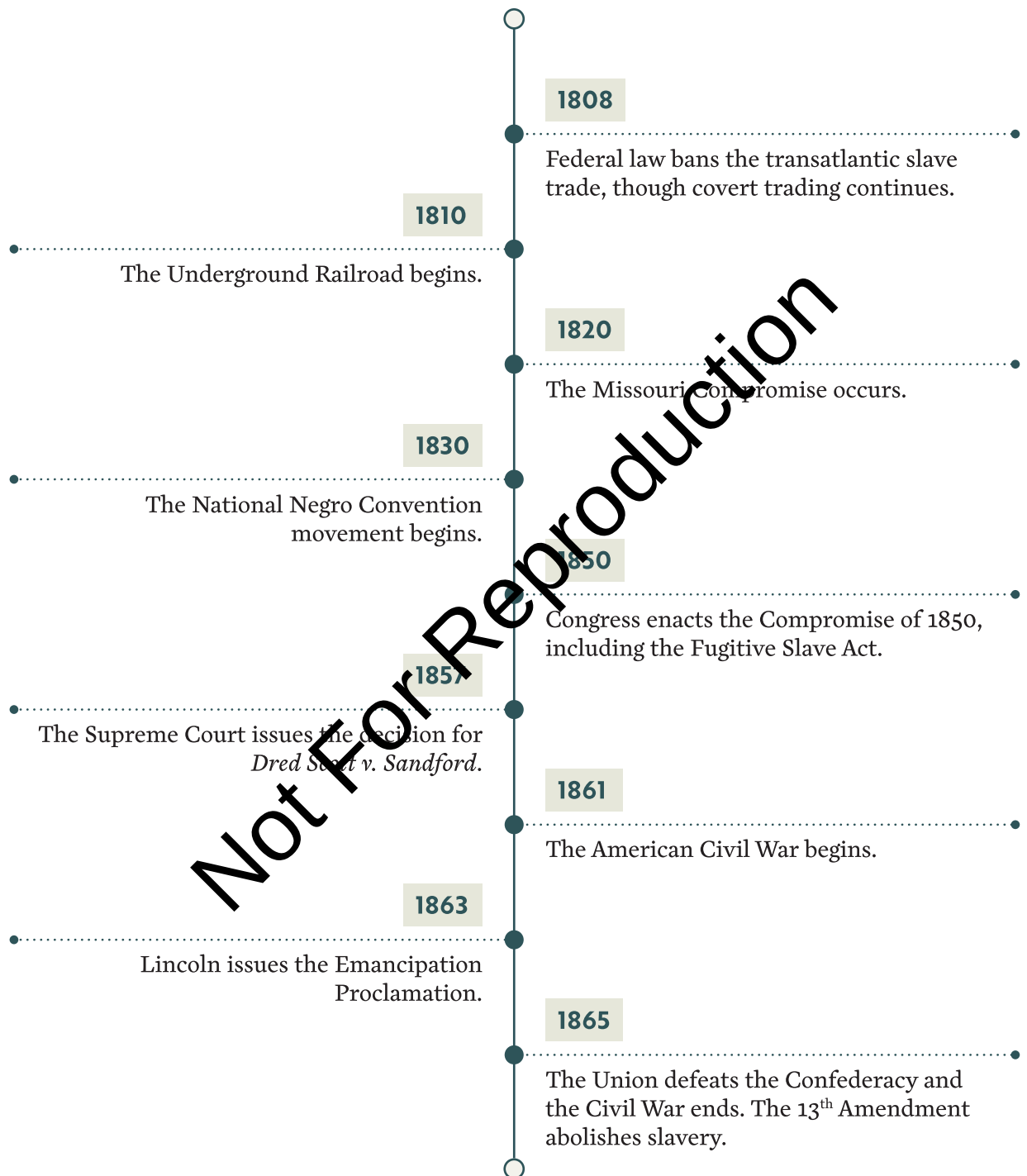
Executive Mansion,
Washington, May 19, 1864.
Hon. Charles Sumner,
My dear Sir:
The bearer of this
is the widow of Major Booth,
who fell at Fort Pillow—
She makes a point, which I
think very worthy of considera-
tion which is, ^{widows} ~~widows~~ and chil-
dren in fact, of colored sol-
diers who fall in our service,
his pleasure in law, the same
as if their marriages were legal,
so that they can have the same
fit of the provisions made for the
widows & orphans of white sol-
diers. Please see & hear Mrs.
Booth.
[AC/4.515] A. Lincoln.

Aaron Anderson: Medal of Honor Recipient

Aaron Anderson was the first African American to receive the Medal of Honor, the highest military honor conferred by the United States. Anderson was born in Arkansas in 1811 but spent most of his life in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he worked as a cook. In 1863, at the age of 53, Anderson joined the Union Army. He was stationed on the *USS Wyandank* as a landsman, which is the lowest rank in the Navy. The *Wyandank* was one of the ships tasked with keeping the Confederate Navy from reaching Washington, D.C. On March 17, 1865, Anderson and several other African Americans became oarsmen on a boat that carried a howitzer, which is artillery that can fire long distances. The boat was sent to confront the Confederate Navy on Mattox Creek, where the men tried to destroy Confederate schooners that appeared to be abandoned. At that point, the boat was attacked by about 400 Confederates, who had not abandoned their schooners but had concealed themselves along the shore. Confederate gunfire destroyed half of the boat's oars and damaged the boat itself. While most of the oarsmen bailed water out of the boat, Anderson and a few other oarsmen helmed the remaining oars to rapidly escape the trap set by the Confederates. For their heroic actions that day, Anderson and an Irish immigrant named Patrick Mullen both received the Medal of Honor. This image is a photograph of a Navy poster about Aaron Anderson.



Timeline: Slavery and the Civil War



Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)

On May 18, 1896, the United States Supreme Court ruled that segregation was constitutional. Commentary and excerpts from *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) are included.

Commentary and Excerpts from *Plessy v. Ferguson*

What Was *Plessy v. Ferguson* About?

Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) was a United States Supreme Court case that limited the civil rights of African Americans. After the Civil War, many White Southerners were angry about the end of slavery and the new rights African Americans had. They enacted Jim Crow laws to segregate African Americans in public facilities and on transportation. Segregation enforced an oppressive system of racial inequality in all parts of life. In 1892, a civil rights group in Louisiana asked shoemaker Homer Plessy to challenge the state's Separate Car Act (1890). Plessy was seven-eighths White and one-eighth African American. Plessy bought a first-class train ticket on June 7, 1892 and sat in the "Whites Only" train car. He told the conductor that he was one-eighth African American. When the conductor ordered him to move to the segregated car for African American people, he refused to move. Plessy was arrested and convicted of violating the Separate Car Act. He appealed the case, arguing that Judge John Ferguson violated Plessy's rights under the 13th Amendment that abolished slavery and the 14th Amendment right to equal treatment under the law.

Why Did the Supreme Court Decide to Hear *Plessy v. Ferguson*?

The Supreme Court's primary responsibility is to review the constitutionality of laws passed in the United States. The Court recognized that Louisiana's Separate Car Act needed to be examined to see if it violated the 14th Amendment's establishment of equal citizenship and equal protection under the law.

What Did the Supreme Court Decide?

The Supreme Court decided 7-1 that Homer Plessy's civil rights were not violated by the Separate Car Act. In the majority opinion, Justice Henry Billings Brown dismissed the 13th Amendment as irrelevant to the case, but he commented extensively on the 14th Amendment, arguing that separation did not imply inferiority and that the Constitution provided states with the power to maintain separate accommodations as long as those accommodations were equal. He wrote:

The object of the [14th] amendment was undoubtedly to enforce the absolute equality of the two races before the law, but in the nature of things it could not have been intended to abolish

distinctions based upon color, or to enforce social, as distinguished from political, equality, or a commingling of the two races upon terms unsatisfactory to either. Laws permitting, and even requiring, their separation in places where they are liable to be brought into contact do not necessarily imply the inferiority of either race to the other, and have been generally, if not universally, recognized as within the competency of the state legislatures in the exercise of their police power [. . .]

So far, then, as a conflict with the 14th amendment is concerned, the case reduces itself to the question whether the statute of Louisiana is a reasonable regulation, and with respect to this there must necessarily be a large discretion on the part of the legislature. In determining the question of reasonableness, it is at liberty to act with reference to the established usages, customs, and traditions of the people, and with a view to the promotion of their comfort, and the preservation of the public peace and good order. Gauged by this standard, we cannot say that a law which authorizes or even requires the separation of the two races in public conveyances is unreasonable, or more obnoxious to the 14th amendment than the Acts of Congress requiring separate schools for colored children in the District of Columbia, the constitutionality of which does not seem to have been questioned, or the corresponding acts of state legislatures [. . .]

We consider the underlying fallacy of the plaintiff's argument to consist in the assumption that the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with a badge of inferiority. If this be so, it is not by reason of anything found in the act, but solely because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it. . . . The argument also assumes that social prejudices may be overcome by legislation, and that equal rights cannot be secured to the negro except by an enforced commingling of the two races. We cannot accept this proposition. If the two races are to meet upon terms of social equality, it must be the result of natural affinities, a mutual appreciation of each other's merits and a voluntary consent of individuals. . . . Legislation is powerless to eradicate racial instincts or to abolish distinctions based upon physical differences, and the attempt to do so can only result in accentuating the difficulties of the present situation. If the civil and political rights of both races be equal one cannot be inferior to the other civilly or politically. If one race be inferior to the other socially, the Constitution of the United States cannot put them upon the same plane."

However, there was a lone voice of strenuous disagreement. In his dissenting opinion, Justice John Marshall Harlan wrote:

In respect of civil rights, common to all citizens, the constitution of the United States does not, I think, permit any public authority to know the race of those entitled to be protected in the enjoyment of such rights [. . .]

I deny that any legislative body or judicial tribunal may have regard to the race of citizens when the civil rights of those citizens are involved. Indeed, such legislation as that here in question is inconsistent not only with that equality of rights which pertains to citizenship, national and state, but with the personal liberty enjoyed by [everyone] within the United States [. . .]

It was said in argument that the statute of Louisiana does not discriminate against either race, but prescribes a rule applicable alike to white and colored citizens. But this argument does not meet the difficulty. [Everyone] knows that the statute in question had its origin in the purpose, not so much to exclude white persons from railroad cars occupied by blacks, as to exclude colored people from coaches occupied by or assigned to white persons [. . .]

But in view of the constitution, in the eye of the law, there is in this country no superior, dominant, ruling class of citizens. There is no caste here. Our constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens. In respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law. The humblest is the peer of the most powerful. The law regards man as man, and takes no account of his surroundings or of his color when his civil rights as guaranteed by the supreme law of the land are involved. It is therefore to be regretted that this high tribunal, the final expositor of the fundamental law of the land, has reached the conclusion that it is competent for a state to regulate the enjoyment by citizens of their civil rights solely upon the basis of race [. . .]

The thin disguise of 'equal' accommodations for passengers in railroad coaches will not mislead any one, nor atone for the wrong this day done.

How Did *Plessy v. Ferguson* Change the United States?

The Supreme Court's decision that "separate but equal" public facilities and transportation was constitutional opened the door for more segregation laws. Within a few short years, segregation defined nearly every facet of life in the Southern states and Washington D.C. In addition to railroad cars (and later buses), schools, restaurants, churches, neighborhoods, and even cemeteries were segregated. Under segregation, African Americans had little freedom and few opportunities. They were denied basic human rights along with civil rights, effectively pushing them into situations akin to slavery. This oppression caused approximately 6 million African Americans to leave the South and move north and west, resulting in a historic population shift called the Great Migration. Justice Harlan was also proved correct when he predicted in his dissenting opinion that segregation would do the nation great harm and would cause conflict between Americans. Decades of legal efforts to overturn *Plessy* reached legal success in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), which inspired the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s.

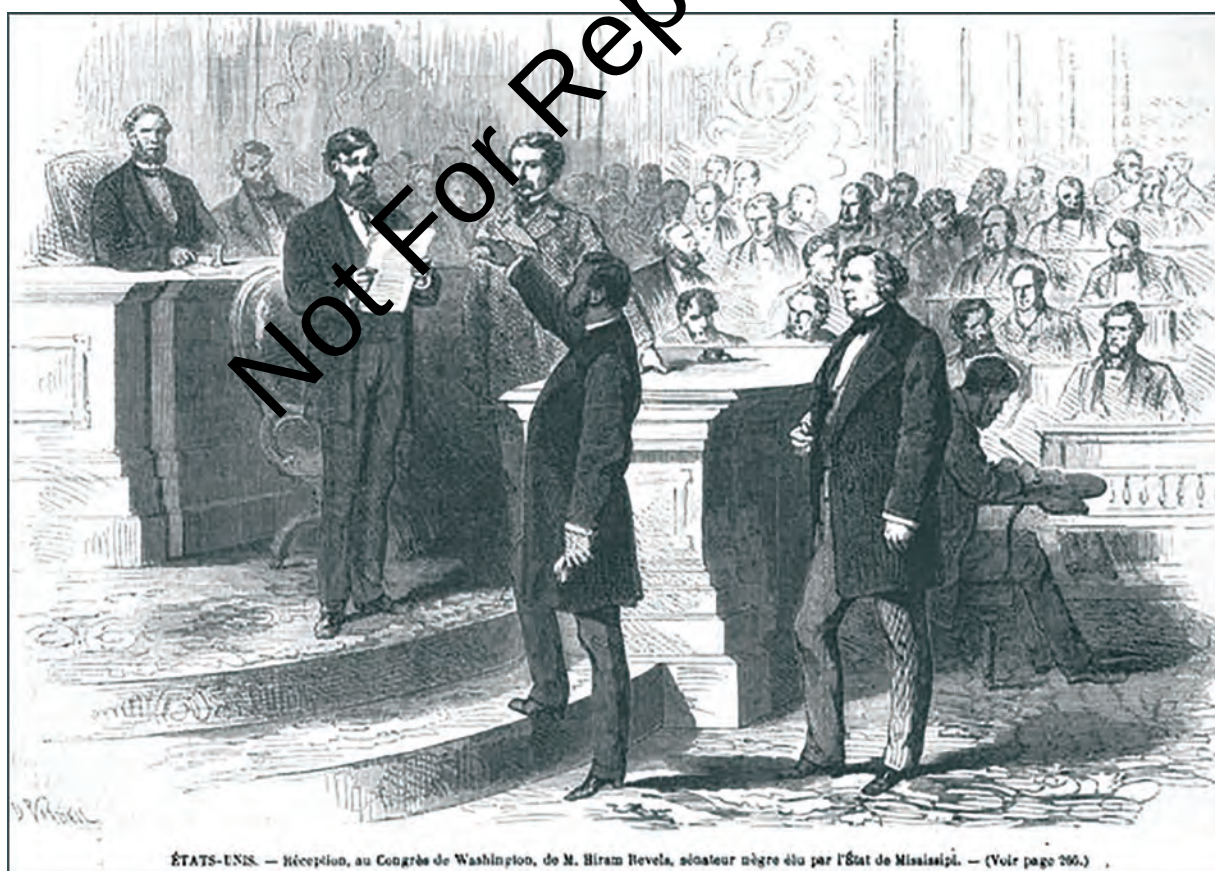
African American Representation in Government

African American men were elected to local, state, and federal office throughout the South following the Civil War. Activism by African Americans themselves was the most important factor in building more African American political representation during and after the Reconstruction era. Within the African American community, parades, voting drives, meetings, and petitions called for more African American representation in government. African Americans formed Equal Rights Leagues throughout the former Confederate states. The Equal Rights Leagues held local and state conventions calling for more equal treatment under the law. This political activity helped secure the passage of the 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution, which mandated equal protection under the law, due process of law, and voting rights for all men regardless of “race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” The lithograph included below was created by famed American illustrators Currier and Ives. It portrays the first African American federal senator and members of the House of Representatives, and includes, seated from left to right, Senator Hiram Rhodes Revels, Representative Benjamin Turner, Josiah Walls, Joseph Rainey, and Robert Brown Elliott. Standing left to right are Robert De Large and Jefferson Long. All were Republicans, and five of the elected men had been previously enslaved.



Life of Hiram Rhodes Revels

Hiram Rhodes Revels of Mississippi was the first African American elected to the United States Senate. He was sworn into office on February 25, 1870. The seat he assumed had formerly belonged to Jefferson Davis, who had resigned from the Senate to become the President of the Confederacy. Revels was born in 1827 to free African American parents in North Carolina. A college graduate and Christian minister, Revels had a diverse career before becoming a senator. He served as a Union Army chaplain during the Civil War, formed African American military units to serve in the Union Army, and worked with the Freedmen's Bureau to start schools for formerly enslaved Africans. His appointment to the Senate was controversial. Senate Democrats from the South tried to block Revels by arguing that he had only been a citizen for two years, since the passage of the 14th Amendment in 1868. They were outvoted. As a senator, Revels fought for greater equality for African Americans, including school desegregation in Washington, D.C. Abolitionist Wendell Phillips described Senator Revels as "the 15th Amendment in flesh and blood." This drawing of Hiram Rhodes Revels being sworn into office as a United States Senator was printed in a French newspaper.



Booker T. Washington's *Atlanta Compromise Speech*

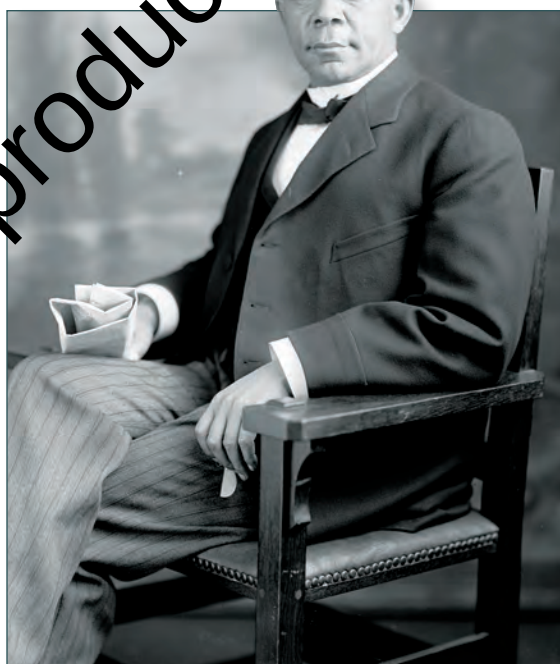
Booker T. Washington was one of the foremost leaders and spokespersons for African Americans from the 1880s until his death in 1915. Washington was born into enslavement in Franklin County, Virginia in 1856. When slavery was abolished in 1865, Washington was able to get an education, including starting college at age 16. In 1881, Washington founded Tuskegee Institute to provide academic and vocational training to African Americans. He believed that training and education was one of the ways that African Americans could emerge from the sharecropping cycle of poverty. At the Cotton States Exposition in 1895, Washington delivered the *Atlanta Compromise*. An excerpt of the speech is included below.

Excerpt of Washington's *Atlanta Compromise Speech*

Mr. President and gentlemen of the Board of Directors and citizens.

One third of the population of the South is of the Negro race. No enterprise seeking the material, civil, or moral welfare of this section can disregard this element of our population and reach the highest success. I must convey to you, Mr. President and Directors, and Secretaries and masses of my race, when I say that in no way have the value and manhood of the American Negro been more fittingly and generously recognized, than by the managers of this magnificent exposition at every stage of its progress. It is a recognition that will do more to cement the friendship of the two races than any occurrence since the dawn of our freedom. Not only this, but the opportunities here afforded will awaken among us a new era of industrial progress.

Ignorant and inexperienced, it is not strange that in the first years of our new life we began at the top instead of the bottom, that a seat in Congress or the state legislature was more sought than real estate or industrial skill, that the political convention of some teaching had more attraction than starting a dairy farm or a stockyard.



Booker T. Washington.



Bombing of Harry T. Moore and Harriette Moore's Home

On Christmas Day in 1951, a bomb exploded at the Moore family home in Mims, Florida. This date was also the Moore's wedding anniversary. Though the perpetrators have never been identified, it is widely believed that Ku Klux Klan members planted the bomb under the Moore home. Harry died on the day of the bombing, and Harriette died nine days later in the hospital. The bombing drew national attention, and African Americans organized nationwide protests and memorials to honor the couple. In March 1952, the NAACP organized a memorial service and fundraising gala on behalf of the Moore family in New York City. Fifteen thousand people attended the event and listened to speakers, including Langston Hughes, to commemorate the Moore family and condemn the racist terror attack. In 1993, the site of the Moore's home in Mims became a Historical Heritage Landmark of the state of Florida. The letter included is from a college student to President Truman about the attack.



Moore's home after the bombing on Christmas Day, 1951.

Letter from Arden Rapport to President Truman

1/23
To file
January 21, 1952
FILE - M.V.
M.P. Neal
Sarah Lawrence College - Bronxville, New York

Dear Mr. Truman,

I am a student at Sarah Lawrence College, and for the past eight or nine years, my schooling has emphasized principles that our country stands for — freedom to think and act as an individual, equality for all men, protection for the citizen to maintain his ideals. I cannot help but feel puzzled when I read about such incidents as the murder of Harry T. Moore and his wife. Is our philosophy of action different from the high ideals which we advocate?

It seems to me that the course we, as a nation standing for freedom & equality for all men, must take is to pursue the ruthless democratic men who killed this citizen for

trying to assert the natural rights of his people. These men should be apprehended and punished, as a living example that the United States not only preaches high moral values, but lives and acts by her own dictates & principles.

Sincerely,
(Miss) Arden Rapport



Ballad of Harry Moore

James Mercer Langston Hughes is one of the greatest American literary figures. An African American poet, writer, and civil rights activist, Hughes is mostly known as a leader of the Harlem Renaissance, the great flowering of African American cultural achievement in the early 20th century. From 1942 to 1962, he wrote a widely-read column in *The Chicago Defender*, a major African American newspaper still published today. In the following poem, Hughes commemorates the lives of Harry and Harriette Moore, a married African American couple affiliated with the NAACP who fought for civil rights in Florida. On December 25, 1951, their home in Mims, Florida was bombed, most likely by the Ku Klux Klan. The Moores died as a result of the injuries they sustained in the bombing.

Ballad of Harry Moore

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Florida means land of flowers.
It was on Christmas night
In the state named for the flowers
Men came bearing dynamite.

Men came stealing through the orange groves
Bearing hate instead of love,
While the Star of Bethlehem
Was in the sky above.

Oh, memories of a Christmas evening
When Wise Men traveled from afar
Seeking out a lowly manger
Guided by a Holy Star!

Oh, memories of a Christmas evening
When to Bethlehem there came
“Peace on earth, good will to men”—
Jesus was His name.

But they must've forgotten Jesus
Down in Florida that night
Stealing through the orange groves
Bearing hate and dynamite.

It was a little cottage,
A family, name of Moore.
In the windows wreaths of holly,
And a pine wreath on the door.

Christmas, 1951,
The family prayers were said
When father, mother, daughter,
And grandmother went to bed

The father's name was Harry Moore.

The N.A.A.C.P.
Told him to carry out its work
That Negroes might be free.

So it was that Harry Moore
(So deeply did he care)
Sought the right for men to live
With their heads up everywhere.

Because of that, white killers,
Who like Negroes "in their place,"
Came stealing through the orange groves
On that night of dark disgrace.

It could not be in Jesus' name,
Beneath the bedroom floor,
On Christmas night the killers
Hid the bomb for Harry Moore.

It could not be in Jesus' name
The killers took his life,
Blew his home to pieces
And killed his faithful wife.

It could not be for the sake of love
They did this awful thing—
For when the bomb exploded
No hearts were heard to sing.

And certainly no angels cried,
“Peace on earth, good will to men”—
But around the world an echo hurried
A question: When? . . . When? . . . When?

When will men for sake of peace
And for democracy
Learn no bombs a man can make
Keep men from being free?

It seems that I hear Harry Moore.
From the earth his voice cries,
No bomb can kill the dreams I hold—
For freedom never dies!

I will not stop! I will not stop—
For freedom never dies!
I will not stop! I will not stop!
Freedom never dies!

So should you see our Harry Moore
Walking on a Christmas night,
Don't run and hide, you killers,
He has no dynamite.

In his heart is only love
For all the human race,
And all he wants is for every man
To have his rightful place.

And this he says, our Harry Moore,
As from the grave he cries:
No bomb can kill the dreams I hold
For freedom never dies!

Freedom never dies, I say!
Freedom never dies!

..... ● ● ● ●

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Ax Handle Saturday in Jacksonville

Like most Southern cities, Jacksonville was segregated prior to the Civil Rights Movement. On August 13, 1960, civil rights activists began a series of sit-ins to protest segregation at local lunch counters, where they were taunted, spat on, and abused. On August 27, an integrated group of members of the Youth Council of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) held a sit-in at a segregated lunch counter. A mob of 200 White male Ku Klux Klan members gathered in Hemming Park, armed with ax handles and baseball bats. They chased the activists out of the lunch counter and attacked them in the streets. The White mob began to assault any African American person they found. Police observed but did nothing until a group of African Americans called Boomerangs, which the press referred to as a “street gang,” arrived to protect activists. Only then did police intervene and arrest members of the Boomerangs and African Americans who tried to stop the beatings. A transcription of a 1960 newspaper article on Ax Handle Saturday is included below.

Transcription of 1960 Newspaper Article on Ax Handle Saturday

VIOLENCE FLARES IN JACKSONVILLE

50 Injured as White Gangs Clash With Negroes—16-Year-Old Stabbed

By: United Press International

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., August 27—

Angry bands of club-swinging whites clashed with Negroes in the streets of downtown Jacksonville today. At least fifty persons were injured. A white youth was stabbed and two Negroes suffered minor bullet wounds. Patrolmen armed with shotguns and threatening to use fire hoses succeeded in dispersing most of the crowd of 3,000 that gathered in the downtown area. However, there were reports of incidents far into the night, particularly in Negro districts and outlying areas.

Streets Blocked

The police said they had one unconfirmed report that a Negro woman was cruising streets in a panel truck urging Negroes, over a loudspeaker, to stand up for their rights. Streets in several sections of the downtown area where crowds had gathered earlier were blocked.

The Florida National guard was ordered to stand by in case the situation grew worse, according to William Durden, administrative assistant to Gov. LeRoy Collins. He said,

however, that Jacksonville authorities had advised him that there was no immediate need for troops.

Jacksonville officials said they had more than 200 city, county and state policemen on duty. They said sixty-two persons had been arrested on charges ranging from disorderly conduct to inciting to riot. Forty-eight were Negroes and fourteen whites. Officers at the police complaint desk estimated that about fifty had suffered injuries ranging from slight to serious in the beatings and fights. The Duval Medical Center said two Negro youths, 12 and 18, had received minor bullet wounds.

Police Inspector Emmet Lee said the shootings had allegedly occurred when a small group of Negroes threw bottles at a white man riding past in a car in a suburban neighborhood. The man was reported to have stopped the car and opened fire with a pistol.

Three other Negroes were beaten by bands of whites in the downtown disorders.

A white taxi cab company employee, identified as Wayne Heidler, was burned when four Negro men hurled potash in his face as he stopped his car for a red light in a Negro section, the police said.

The racial unrest broke into the open today after repeated sit-in demonstrations at two downtown variety stores.

Yesterday a hair-pulling scuffle occurred between a white and Negro woman in front of one of the stores and several other white women were knocked to the pavement.

Whites, armed with baseball bats, ax handles and heavy walking sticks began gathering in the downtown area about mid-morning. Some carried Confederate flags. About noon a handful of Negroes appeared and several approached the crowd of whites.

Three were beaten before the police managed to rescue them. The whites then discovered another small band of Negroes on a side street. They rushed to the Negroes, who momentarily [[illegible]] their ground and then turned and ran.

Mayor Haydon Burns said at midafternoon that the situation appeared to be under control in the downtown section. But small crowds continued to form in various other areas and Police Inspector W.L. Bates said isolated fights were occurring "all over town."

A hospital spokesman at Duval Medical Center estimated twenty persons or more—both Negroes and whites—had been treated for cuts, bruises, and other injuries.

The 16-year-old white youth who was stabbed was taken to St. Luke's Hospital in serious condition with a wound in the left chest.

The hospital identified him as William Howard Pellham of Jacksonville. He told attendants he had been stabbed by a Negro man who had stopped his car in a suburban area.

One of the white men passed out mimeographed sheets signed by the "Segregation Forces of Duval County."