Jim Crow and the Poll Tax

Revised 2007-08 School Year Utilizing 2006 Social Studies Frameworks Including 2007 Arkansas History Amendments and 2007 School Library Media Frameworks

See Butler Center Lesson Plan Based On Chapter Five, “The Coming of Jim Crow”
From Race Relations in the Natural State by Grif Stockley
2007 Butler Center Publication
ADE Textbook Adoption
For Order Information:
http://www.butlercenter.org/publication/books.html

The lesson is designed to help describe the restrictive legislation and other methods used to deny rights to African-Americans during Arkansas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Grades: 7th – 12th

Objective:
Students will be able to identify some of the ways African-Americans were kept from participating in mainstream Arkansas and the other Southern states.

Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks:

Arkansas History Student Learning Expectations:

SR.5.AH.7-8.3 Discuss how the Union and Confederate governments exerted power to fight the war
SR.5.AH.7-8.4 Compare the Confederacy to the government under the Articles of Confederation
RP.6.AH.7-8.1 Describe the Reconstruction Era in Arkansas
SR.5.AH.9-12.2 Define confederacy and describe the weaknesses of the Confederacy
SR.5.AH.9-12.3 Analyze how the Union and Confederate governments exerted powers to fight the war
SR.5.AH.9-12.4 Compare and contrast the Confederacy to the government under the Articles of Confederation
RP.6.AH.9-12.1 Examine the Reconstruction Era in Arkansas

Social Studies Student Learning Expectations:

H.6.8.25 Investigate late 19th century social and political reform movements
School Library Student Learning Expectations:

A.4.7.1, A.4.8.1, A.4.9.1, A.4.10.1, A.4.11.1, A.4.12.1 – Use resources and/or technology tools for a predetermined task

Related Encyclopedia of Arkansas Entries:
Jim Crow Laws; Lynching; Segregation and Desegregation; Streetcar Segregation Act of 1903; Separate Coach Law of 1891

Introduction:
The teacher will select the appropriate student learning expectations for his or her class, review the key terms, and make copies of selected resources as needed. Collaboration with the school library media specialist for assistance with the utilization of the technology resource tool for Arkansas History is suggested. See above links or visit the online Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture at http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net. The school library media specialist can also make suggestions for other resources.

Key Terms:

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<th>Lynching</th>
<th>Agricultural Wheel</th>
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<td>Plessy v. Ferguson</td>
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Key Terms Defined:
Lynching – murder by mob, often of blacks; included illegal hanging, shooting, burning
Agricultural Wheel – national farmers’ political organization (made up of blacks and whites)
Poll Tax – a tax passed that people must pay in order to vote; passed to disenfranchise African Americans
Plessy v. Ferguson – the 1896 United States Supreme Court decision that accepted the principle of “separate but equal”; became the foundation for several laws and the practice of segregation
Segregation – the deliberate and forced separation of one group of people from another
Jim Crow – the segregation of African Americans by law and by custom in the former Confederate states (and some border states)

Background: Arkansas used the poll tax, adopted as a voting requirement in 1892, as one of the ways to discourage black voting. The poll tax did not involve a large amount of money, but many blacks (and poor whites) either could not or would not pay it. The courts voided the first poll tax amendment to the Arkansas Constitution, but another amendment was passed in 1908.

The "Jim Crow" laws attempted to separate whites and blacks. In 1891 segregation on railway trains was made compulsory and in 1899 separation of the races was extended to waiting rooms in railway stations. Later measures included laws requiring separate seating on streetcars and separating white and black prisoners in jails and in the state penitentiary.

The segregation system became much more extensive and complete than state laws indicate. City ordinances, local customs, and public sentiment enforced the pattern. Whites and blacks were separated practically everywhere except in stores and on the streets and
sometimes even this was attempted. Blacks could not serve on juries and black lawbreakers were sometimes punished far more severely than whites who had committed the same crime.

When an African-American committed a serious crime, especially when a white man or woman was involved, white mobs sometimes took the law into their own hands. In Arkansas during the period 1882-1937 a total of 285 persons were lynched without trial. Blacks were the victims in 226 of those cases.

**Procedure:**

**Activity:** Find a copy of a poll tax receipt to display as a way to introduce the subject. Use the following study questions to guide teacher led discussion leading to student research for the oral report on illustration project. The teacher can use the key terms in discussion or for evaluation purposes.

**Study Questions:**
1. Give examples of legally-enforced segregation.
2. Explain how segregation affected how black citizens traveled.
3. What effect do you think these laws had on white people?
4. Why did the federal government not help?

**Student Research Products:**
1. Use library resources and make an oral report on one of the following:
   a. the poll tax in the South
   b. Jim Crow laws in other states
   c. lynching
2. Draw a cartoon illustrating the Jim Crow laws.

**Evaluation:** Teacher will decide on evaluation procedures. These could vary from a participation grade in the class discussion to an evaluation of the oral report or cartoon. If the cartoon is chosen, then further research may be needed and collaboration with the art teacher is suggested.

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