The Strange Career of Jim Crow Study Guide

The Strange Career of Jim Crow by C. Vann Woodward

BOOKRAGS

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Plot Summary

The term Jim Crow refers to a large body of law and social custom which served to establish and maintain segregation of the races in the South following the end of Reconstruction and moving into the mid-twentieth century. In his book, The Strange Career of Jim Crow, C. Vann Woodward provides a complete historical accounting and significant analysis of its advent, its impact on race relations within and outside of the South, and its legal demise by 1965.

Woodward posits the existence of two "reconstructions" in the South. The first occurred at the end of the Civil War, with the occupation by radical Republican forces, who enforced the emancipation and equal rights Amendments to the Constitution. This first reconstruction lasted until 1877, when the Great Compromise allowed the peaceful election of a President and the removal of all Northern occupational forces from the South. At this point, the South had choices to make regarding race relations, and the victorious approach was to establish a large body of codified statutes, named Jim Crow, to vigorously and completely separate whites and blacks. The second reconstruction began quietly at first, with desegregation of a few institutions, most notably the U.S. military, and a series of Supreme Court decisions, providing for integration of public facilities and institutions, most notably state-operated public schools. As blacks and white liberals pushed for implementation of new law and Court decisions, however, an independent, recalcitrant South fought back. The resultant conflict between Southern state governments and forces for integration, supported by the federal government, opened old wounds, to be certain, and periods of violence and backlash have ensued. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, officially marked the end of Jim Crow.

Jim Crow is legally dead. To conclude that its demise has resulted in the concurrent demise of segregation, anger, and bitterness between the races, however, is fallacious. Attitudes, beliefs, social customs and de facto segregation cannot be legislated. Certainly the growth of large urban centers in the South and the movement of the United States into a leadership role in a world in which the white race is a minority, together with more opportunity for races to converge, has promoted greater social and economic equity for a growing middle class black population. The majority of blacks, however, remain in urban slums in both the North and South, with less than equal opportunity to pursue the "American Dream" of Martin Luther King. Until these inequities are resolved, moreover, racial tension will continue to impact not just the South, but the entire nation.

Introduction

Introduction Summary and Analysis

Southern history can be seen in four segments: 1) the "old" South of plantations and slavery, supported by law, church, schools, and press, 2) the new order of Reconstruction, occupation and a changed federal Constitution, 3) the third regime, following Reconstruction, which was the longest, characterized by the regime of "Jim Crow," and 4) the newest phase, comprising the demise of Jim Crow and the renewed ardor of the federal government and civil rights leaders to establish racial equality. Each segment of Southern history has been inextricably bound to the relationship between the races, specifically the legal and social status of blacks, and this work is essentially a study of the third segment - the rise and entrenchment of Jim Crow.

In 1877, the Great Compromise ended Reconstruction in the South. Federal troops and occupational government officials walked out, leaving the plight of the Negro to "redeemed" local and state governments, which, of course, did not see the freedmen as equals. By the turn of the century, therefore, the black person was relegated to the lowest rung of the ladder in all aspects of life. The laws that kept blacks in this position came to be known as "Jim Crow," a term perhaps from an old song, but one which came to name the rigid laws which codified segregation in virtually all institutions and social settings - churches, schools, transportation, restaurants, sports, hospitals, prisons, cemeteries, and hospitals. The new segregation was considered permanent and given credence by the North, which looked the other way, and by the Negro himself, by his own resignation to the status quo.

Yet again, the established "order" in the South is undergoing revolution, an invasion of impatience with the status quo, with its roots in several current "causes." The Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954 certainly had an impact—add to that the pressure from civil rights organizers and activists on the part of both races, in all parts of the country, and the combination of executive orders, Congressional legislation, and actions of federal agencies—and the walls of segregation begin to crumble. Non-governmental organizations (corporations, labor unions, churches, etc.) have followed suit, as well as the U.S. military. The "Second Reconstruction" has not been a political or military occupation; it has been the result of socioeconomic progressions, political liberal thought, urbanization, and the growth of business centers in the South. "Few sections of the segregation code have escaped attack, for the assault has been leveled at the Jim Crow system in trains, buses, and other common carriers; in housing and working conditions; in restaurants, theaters, and hospitals; in playgrounds, public parks, swimming pools, and organized sports, to mention a few examples" (p.9). How history will look upon this "new Reconstruction" has yet to be known. Suffice it to say, however, that the current breadth and depth of change has and will continue to usher in a complete revolution in Southern race relations.

Of Old Regimes and Reconstruction

Of Old Regimes and Reconstruction Summary and Analysis

The current relations between blacks and whites in America is certainly influenced by slavery but, as well, by the pervasive historical Anglo-Saxon belief in its superiority over the Negro race. Exploitations of inferiors thus naturally occurred, and slavery was actually only one method by which whites ensured the subordination of blacks. Segregation following slavery was based upon premises no different from these historical beliefs, but it certainly was not a practical policy during the period of Southern slavery.

In order to have slaves, there was by necessity a closeness of proximity and even an intimacy between whites and blacks. Most plantations were walled compounds where owners and foremen supervised, policed, and provided medical care to slaves. Domestic slaves lived and worked within the household and often developed intimate relationships with their masters, but these were a small minority of a plantation's bondsmen. Close physical proximity and even intimacy did not in any way, however, plant seeds of growing camaraderie or friendship, and certainly no thought of racial equality was remotely considered.

Antebellum South was home to a few hundred thousand free blacks, living primarily in cities, which were certainly small by today's standards. Here the Negro found the beginnings of segregation, for he was not afforded equality in legal, social, or economic areas. Freemen were not allowed access to restaurants, theaters, or hotels, and they were housed separately in hospitals and prisons. (New Orleans was perhaps the most glaring exception, with its complex racial mixtures). Interestingly, however, blacks and whites often lived in the same neighborhoods, a phenomenon that never occurred in the North. As well, they gathered together in certain places, notably "grog shops, mixed balls, and religious meetings"(p.15). Night activities were quite integrated and involved women as well. It must be remembered, however, that the pre-Civil War South was primarily rural, cities comprising just a small percentage of the entire population. City life, then, was not truly compatible with slavery and, in fact, was in a steady state of decline between 1820 and 1860.

Full-fledged segregation occurred not in the South, but in the North, and was transported to the South after the Civil War. While Northern blacks were free, they were not by any means given any legal or social status, the doctrine of white supremacy being a theme song of both political parties. By both law and social ostracism, the black was relegated to a barely human status. Government and social institutions (prisons, hospitals, schools, churches, housing, etc.) had clear racial separation. Each major city had its "Negro" section, exhibiting sub-standard housing and facilities, and there was no public concern for social needs of the "inferiors." As free blacks moved into newer "free" states and territories, they found attitudes and laws even harsher. Allowed areas of

settlement were clearly restricted, as was movement within the state or territory. As territories became states, moreover, no blacks were enfranchised, and, in fact, only five free states, all in the Northeast, allowed male Negro voting by 1860. Within the court systems, Negroes could not serve as jurors nor could they give testimony in any trial involving a white. This pervasive maintenance of blacks in a subservient, economically depressed and disenfranchised condition led to deprivation of basic liberties and a disproportionate number in prison populations.

Even as abolitionists and civil rights advocates called for black freedom and equality, and as the Civil War loomed, the federal government position on segregation was clear. Lincoln himself openly expressed the belief in white supremacy and the continued necessity of keeping the races separate in all aspects of American life. The Emancipation Proclamation may have abolished slavery; it did not, however, change the position of blacks in society. It is thus difficult to understand how the Northern victors were in any position to "instruct" the South on one of its professed goals of Reconstruction - racial equality.

Emancipation, defeat, and Reconstruction created new sets of circumstances in race relations in the South. The physical proximity and intimacy which characterized slavery now became an impossibility. Freemen left the plantation on which they had lived and worked, often for generations, and struck out on their own to find jobs or become sharecroppers. Whites no longer had an obligation to care for the sick and elderly former slaves. Society was in a state of change and discomfort, searching for a new set of "rules" for co-existence. Blacks left white churches to form their own congregations; indeed, in all aspects of life, blacks and whites withdrew from one another, out of fear, discomfort, or basic confusion over definitions of their new roles. The Reconstruction occupation forbade laws which denied equality to Negroes but approved and legitimized practices of segregation, most notably in public schools, colleges, and facilities.

Separation was so entrenched, in fact, that by the end of Reconstruction, the Jim Crow laws merely codified what were already de facto conditions. And these laws remained intact until the mid-twentieth century. There were exceptions to this separation during the tenuous period between defeat and Jim Crow. Blacks did appear on juries; some blacks became educated through university levels; some voted and became local and state government officials. Sessions of Reconstruction state legislatures commonly ended the existing bans on black use of "common carriers," specifically steamboats, railroads, and street cars. In some states, Negroes pressed for and achieved the right to use public accommodations of all types. The majority of blacks did not press civil rights issues, however, and preferred to avoid uncomfortable and strained situations. Many publicly stated that social equality was not on their agendas and withdrew to the "comfort" of their own neighborhoods and institutions.

Forgotten Alternatives

Forgotten Alternatives Summary and Analysis

Once Redemption (the Compromise of 1877 ending Reconstruction) occurred, and Southerners were again in control of their states, there were choices regarding the relative status of whites and blacks, because there was still great flexibility in their relationships. In fact, between 1870 and 1900, while schools and other public institutions remained segregated, there was also a gradually expanding comfort level with integrated housing and privately-owned facilities. Blacks were tolerated and even accepted on public transport, as well as in the voting booth, on police forces, and in many public facilities. Some distinctions among states were noted, however. The older Eastern coastal states were more tolerant of racial proximity than the newer states further inland. All these phenomena were really outgrowths of the previous intimacy and proximity of the races during slavery.

At the same time, other phenomena were also appearing, namely brutality, exploitation, and cruelty. Indeed, the forces of racism and white supremacy, which ultimately won, were already afoot. In the period between 1877-1900, "Exploitation there was...as in other periods and in other regions, but it did not follow then that the exploited had to be ostracized. Subordination there was also, unmistakable subordination; but it was not yet an accepted corollary that the subordinates had to be totally segregated and needlessly humiliated by a thousand daily reminders of their subordination. Conflict there was, too, violent conflict in which the advantage lay with the strong and the dominant, as always; but conflict of some kind was unavoidable so long as there remained any contact between the races whatever"(p. 44). The South had choices to make regarding the status of the races. These choices included the rigid segregation which eventually came to pass, but other alternatives could have been selected as well. There were, ultimately, three other alternatives for the region, other than that of the pervasive racism which won out, and each of the three - liberal, conservative, and radical - were devised and promoted by native Southerners.

The liberal position was perhaps the least espoused at that time and was, in fact, totally rejected as an alternative. This was the position of equal access and equal rights. Southern liberals, such as George Washington Cable (author of The Silent South, 1885) and Lewis H. Blair (author of Prosperity of the South Dependent Upon the Elevation of the Negro, 1889), insisted that blacks should be entitled to all the rights and privileges of whites, in the court system, in access to public facilities, and in employment. Schools should be integrated, so that blacks had an equal opportunity for appropriate education. Liberals attacked the notion of inherent white superiority and called paternalism a policy of degradation. Further, they criticized the North for its segregation practices and hypocrisies, demanding that it clean up its own ghettos while it "preached" to the South.

The conservative position grew out of traditional relationships between the races in the South, some formulated policies following Reconstruction, and a basic belief that in a

multi-race society, one race must naturally be superior. As radical Republicans pushed for complete integration at all levels, conservatives reminded blacks that this civil rights movement was for political purposes only, certainly not the result of a deeply-held belief in equality for all men. Further, conservatives argued, the movement of Negroes to the radical view would create a backlash by Southern whites, potentially wiping out all they had gained. The conservative position toward blacks was paternalistic, in that it posited the care and protection of the inferior race and the provision of legal protections, social services, and jobs. Negroes were not, then, to be ostracized or degraded, but, rather, accepted and welcomed in a subordinate societal role and given civil rights and liberties suited for that role. This position was largely held by middle and upper class white Southerners, "clearly an aristocratic philosophy of paternalism and 'noblesse oblige'...and it was inevitable that the attitude should have acquired class associations in the mind of both its advocates and its opponents" (p.49). Lower class whites were generally opposed to this philosophy because the position of blacks would closely emulate their own. While the aristocrat had no fear of co-mingling and found no need to degrade the Negro, the poor white (commonly referred to as a "cracker") felt threatened and pushed to place greater distance between himself and blacks.

Once Reconstruction ended and the Constitutional Amendments were passed, civil rights and protection of Southern blacks declined as a federal priority. Blacks turned to the conservatives for assistance and protection, not because they wanted to remain "Uncle Toms" but, rather, because they feared the wrath of the crackers. And conservative whites happily pushed for greater Negro enfranchisement in order to garner support for political candidates of the Southern Democratic Party. Unlike widely held belief, the period immediately following Reconstruction was not characterized by massive black disenfranchisement, though intimidation, coercion, and some defrauding certainly occurred. As well, blacks continued to hold governmental and political positions during the twenty-plus years following Reconstruction, especially in the coastal states and in Louisiana.

The alliance between conservative whites and Negroes was certainly symbiotic. Southern Democrats faced challenges forming a new Populist movement that threatened their stronghold on Southern politics. Opposing the Democrats' capitulation to railroads, corporations and the interest of business, third party groups, such as Greenbackers and Readjusters, began to emerge as the champions of white agrarians. By capturing the black vote, Democrats hoped to maintain their majority. Blacks, on the other hand, needed the protective wing that conservatives promised. This "fusion principle," as it came to be called worked well for both groups, who would meet and agree upon the number of offices to be held by blacks, for a while. Two phenomena gradually emerged, however, which ended the unstable alliance. First, as these early conservative Democrats moved on to federal positions or retired from public office, the presence of Negroes in the political systems faded, and Negrophobes began to take control of the party. Second, Negroes themselves became "confused and politically apathetic." Black leaders began to question how much they really had in common with this new Democrat, who enticed them with tokens but no serious economic benefits, and yet they could not embrace the thoroughly white-dominated Republican party that now seemed to have abandoned them.

The third alternative was that of Southern radicals, eventually consolidating in the views of the Populist Party. Rejecting the patronizing view of the Republicans and the paternalistic approach of Southern Democrats, Populists preached a more realistic view of limited "egalitarianism" based upon common grievances and economic woes. To the Populists, self-interest of members of both races who were economically depressed would bind them together in political activity. Tom Watson, perhaps the most well-known leader of the Southern Populists, firmly believed that he could unite the depressed whites and blacks, who, together, could muster a majority in all electoral contests. Clearly, he understood the deep-rooted divisions between the two groups but was willing to take drastic action against seemingly insurmountable odds. Together, white and black Populist leaders attempted to convince their potential supporters (laborers, sharecroppers, and small farmers of both races) that they had been encouraged to hate and fear one another so that the monied interests could remain in power. Acting upon their philosophy of full integration, Populists placed blacks in equal positions on their executive committees and councils and as convention delegates. While the Populist position never took hold, in it blacks saw some glimmer of hope for equal standing.

Certainly, in the three decades following the end of Reconstruction, there was hostility toward and fear of the freedmen. Further, the belief that blacks were inherently inferior was the majority opinion throughout the country, not just within the South. Nonetheless, policies of "proscription, segregation, and disenfranchisement that are often described as the immutable 'folkways' of the South"(p. 65) actually came later and were not a necessary or logical consequence of Reconstruction itself.

Capitulation to Racism

Capitulation to Racism Summary and Analysis

The year 1898, found south Carolina struggling with the merits of a Jim Crow law regarding railroad cars. A Charleston newspaper, largely espousing the conservative view, pointed to the ridiculousness of the law by taking the concept of Jim Crow to the extreme, even to the point of different governmental offices for the races to pay their taxes or the setting aside of counties where only blacks would live. What this satirical piece became, however, was a prediction of the reality which eventually took hold in the South - complete segregation in all public facilities. Just how this extreme racism came to be was not so much a matter of the forces behind it becoming stronger so much as the opposition to it losing its vigor. Conservatives, liberals, and Populists simply became complacent, weakened, and discredited.

The first and perhaps most important group to wane in the cause of black civil liberties was the Northern liberals. Their abandonment of the freedmen was the result of the following:

1. Sectional reconciliation became important as America moved forward as a powerful nation. Thus, liberals came to accept the Southern view of the "race problem" in its less extreme forms. This view included the belief that blacks were inferior, less intelligent, incapable of performing in responsible employment positions and thus less capable of full participation in white society. The Northern press and journals began to espouse these views, as well, as national white reconciliation was sought.

2. A series of Supreme court decisions between 1870-1900 chipped away at the fourteenth amendment and Congressional civil rights legislation. Beginning with the Slaughter House Cases in 1873, and ending with Plessy v. Ferguson and Williams v. Mississippi, the Court negated much of the federal protection of the freedmen. Segregation was allowed on "common carriers" (trains, trolleys, boats); while states could not deny civil rights to blacks, individuals could discriminate and segregate (business owners, realtors, church boards, etc.); the "separate but equal" doctrine allowed segregation of public facilities, most notably state-operated public schools, and literacy tests could be used to determine one's ability to cast a vote. Thus, the Supreme Court sought reconciliation between the federal government and Southern state governments at the expense of the blacks. Severe segregation was institutionalized in the South and practiced to a lesser, but nonetheless serious degree, by measures in the North (predominantly in schools and housing).

3. In the late 1800's, America launched an imperialistic campaign in the Caribbean and the Pacific. Millions of non-white people suddenly came under the authority of the federal government, described by American journalists, statesmen, intellectuals, and military leaders as "inferior races" that should not be given electoral rights. It became the "White Man's Burden" to civilize inferior races but never to grant them equal footing

in political, social, or economic terms. Southerners used these statements to justify radical discrimination and segregation in their own states.

4. Scholars and intellectuals fed racism during the late nineteenth century by supporting the concept of each race as wholly distinct in both physical and intellectual characteristics, the Caucasian race, of course, being the superior one. Biologists, sociologists, historians, anthropologists, and writers all converged upon this doctrine and lent further credence to southern leaders who were happy to have their beliefs justified by the intelligentsia of the time.

The second group to retreat from black advocacy were the southern conservatives, those paternalists who had believed that the protection of the freedmen was their charge, as well as their method of securing the black vote. These conservatives were quite powerful at the end of Reconstruction, having been given the credit for ridding the South of the carpetbaggers. Their loss of power and leadership within the Southern Democratic party was the result of financial scandals in at least seven state governments, their courting of moneyed interests to the detriment of white agrarians, and the growing anger of the white supremacist wing of the party, who objected to the patronage of freedmen. When the agrarian depression of the 1880's and 1890's occurred, conservatives were met with an angry populace, and white supremacists assumed control of the party.

The third group to lose its footing in the potential move toward civil rights for blacks was the Populist Party. Appealing to both races, Populists sought to expose the truth that both poor whites and poor blacks had been exploited and ignored by the Democratic Party. Unifying these two groups and providing equality for both, said the Populists, was the only way for the common man to control his own fate. The efforts to divide the races by conservatives, however, were successful, and gradually the bi-racial cooperation dissolved into bitterness. Blacks became apathetic about politics and, while some whites saw the blacks as victims of the political "games," they nonetheless largely blamed them for the demise of the Populist movement in the South. Perhaps it was doomed from the beginning, however, given the inherent suspicion and prejudice on the part of poor whites, who comprised the one group most threatened by black equality.

Frustration and anger, fed by the lengthy depression of the late-nineteenth century, lead to aggression, and the easy target of such aggression was the Negro. There evolved a "permission to hate" from sources that had once supported at least racial harmony, if not equality. The federal court system, through its opinions, had backed away from its earlier staunch support of equality, the northern liberals had abandoned their efforts in order to achieve greater reconciliation; Southern conservatives gave up their paternalistic policies of moderation in order to destroy the Populist Party, and America as a whole was rejoicing in its imperialistic adventures, which subdued non-whites in foreign territories. The Negro, already somewhat apathetic, was told by Booker T. Washington, to retire from politics, subdue himself, and become the humble and menial person he was supposed to be (Atlantic Compromise Address of 1895). It appears, then, that the Negro was little more than a tool, and then, eventually, the scapegoat, as political factions argued, fought, and attempted to reconcile. The final scapegoat

position was as the target of anger, frustration, and hatred, so that two factions of Southern whites could unify against a common enemy. White supremacy and black degradation became an effective rallying point by 1900, and it was within this climate that the steady and pervasive implementation of Jim Crow came to fruition in the South.

Eliminating the Negro's right to vote was the logical first step, and this was accomplished by a number of maneuvers. Because Southern elections had been so corrupt, it was argued that disenfranchising the black man would eliminate him from being used and abused during elections - "punishing the victim," as one Virginian journalist wrote. Mississippi was probably the most creative in terms of devising means of disenfranchisement, and other states followed her lead, contributing their devices as well. First came the property ownership requirement, eliminating vast numbers in one swoop. Next came literacy tests, which were often different for blacks and whites. Whites who could meet neither qualification were given "loopholes," such as the "grandfather clause" (anyone whose grandfather had voted could also vote). The second most frequently used device was the poll tax, which had to be paid by a certain date, and the receipt for which had to be kept and shown at the polling site. If a Negro were to somehow meet all of the qualifications, there was one final method of decimation - the white primary. Statewide white primaries were adopted in thirteen states between 1896 and 1915, effectively leaving out any minority in the nomination of political candidates for the predominant Democratic Party. The new disenfranchisement required new laws and state constitutional amendments. To garner the necessary support, white supremacists played upon the white man's fear of power loss. The press assisted by making headlines of every local black crime, from alleged rape and murder down to "surliness" and "arrogance," intimating that the race was poised on the brink of insurrection. Relations between blacks and whites deteriorated as a result of such propaganda and pressure and caused, inevitably, violent responses on the part of whites. In 1898, a four-hundred men mob in North Carolina burned the black town of Wilmington, killing and wounding many. In 1906, Atlanta was sieged with four days of murder and lynching.

The more the Negro drew back in fear, the more he became the target of attack and aggression by whites. Even the appointment of a postmaster in South Carolina threw whites into a burning, killing rage. Three days of murder and violence in New Orleans was certainly a statement of the viciousness of white aggression, given that New Orleans was traditionally the most "color blind" of all Southern cities. Some conservatives expressed dismay at the events, insisting that the Negro had no designs on pressing for equality. Most, however, capitulated and either failed to speak out or, for political reasons, joined the racists. Red shirts became the symbol of white supremacy, and in all states, success of the racists was measured by the turnout for "red shirt" parades, events that often ended with mob violence against blacks. Racist politicians would gauge their success by the numbers of white Populists who joined them, for if they could succeed in converting them, the cause of white reconciliation in the name of total segregation would be a success. And successful it was, as former Populists in state legislatures voted in favor of Negro disenfranchisement. Even Tom Watson, the last holdout leader of the Populist crusade, convinced himself of the political expediency

of black disenfranchisement and joined the racists and conservatives in its eventual success in all Southern states.

What evolved in the South was its own brand of Progressivism, a powerful combined white population that achieved significant reform, taking on the "machines" and "bosses," corporations and railroads and adopting procedures such as initiative and referendum. Further, white state legislatures enacted laws protecting laborers, children and consumers against capitalist predators. The missing element in all of this Progressive reform, and not just in the South, was protection for the Negro. What distinguished Northern and Southern Progressivism was that, in the North, the black wasn't mentioned; in the South, he was openly and candidly decimated. As whites came to recognize their kinship, class, wealth, and property ownership would become less important as divisions among them. Southern Progressives elected to Congress were influential in gaining the election of Woodrow Wilson, some even obtaining cabinet positions. It was their hope that the North and West, too, would come to see the wisdom of total racial segregation and proscription of the black man.

The context of race relations by 1900, was tension, fear, hatred and certainly pessimism. Prevailing white views congealed into a progressive and thorough separation of the races through state legislation. As one state saw a new area of necessary segregation, so, too, did all other Southern state follow. Jim Crow laws mushroomed over a twenty-year period, until every aspect of life was controlled by one or more pieces of legislation and ordinances, usually at the local level. Little signs appeared everywhere stating "Whites Only" or "Colored," to designate restrooms, drinking fountains, waiting rooms, etc; blacks were given the least desirable jobs and denied any access to trade unions; some local ordinances detailed how far away from one another whites and blacks must stand; private institutions followed suit. As a whole, blacks were not allowed entry to state parks and facilities.

By 1920, segregation in housing was a "fait accompli" in the South. Early attempts included the designation of white and black "blocks" in the same residential neighborhood. Next, state legislatures authorized city councils to divide their metropolitan areas into segregated districts, which forbade either race from living in the other's district. All of these laws were struck down by the Supreme Court in 1917, but other methods of housing discrimination were quickly devised. Deed-restricted communities and restrictive covenants forbid the sale of property to anyone not meeting certain requirements, specifically, race or ethnicity. The most effective means by which housing was segregated, however, came about because whites made it quite forcefully understood that blacks were not to move into their neighborhoods and because Negroes, being on the lowest economic rung, could hardly afford to lie outside the "Darktown" slums of every Southern city. In some instances, entire towns refused to allow black residents, and, likewise, about thirty all-Negro towns were formed, all without legislative action. Additional laws and ordinances demonstrated the depth to which segregation was mandated. In education, it was carried to an extreme, with some states requiring even separate storage facilities for texts for black and white children. Where there were no laws, de facto segregation was the rule.

Contemporary writers ascribed little importance to the laws but stressed, instead, that segregation was a natural aspect of humankind, that members of one race simply separated themselves from others and followed their own "folkways" and "mores." Further, sociologists, anthropologists, and biologists posited the inferiority of the black race as a lazy, shiftless, intellectually incapable people, certainly unfit for education and professional positions. Segregation to these "men of letters and science" was an "innate idea" within all humans, and if the innate idea of Southern segregation were ever to be challenged, there would be serious risk of another civil war. The fallaciousness of this argument was that, indeed, integration and civil rights for blacks had been legislated by Reconstruction and, for a period of time, the two races had co-existed comfortably in integrated fashion in large parts of the South. The new thought was one of complete separation of a superior race from an inferior one, by aggression and abuse if necessary.

The Man on the Cliff

The Man on the Cliff Summary and Analysis

Southern segregation had reached such complete realization by 1915, that many compared it to the strict apartheid policies of South Africa. And it appeared that any Northern opposition, except for a few journalists, had withered away. Indeed, in the North, de facto discrimination and segregation was so commonplace that it did, in fact, encourage the South to press on. World War I brought new hope for the Negro, however. About 360,000 enlisted and, although segregated during service, they began to receive a good wage. Many others migrated North and were quickly employed in war industry jobs. This new prosperity, along with the national theme of the preservation and promotion of democracy worldwide, gave blacks the expectation that their status had and would continue to improve. They could not have been more incorrect.

As the war ended and white troops returned home, racial tensions rose in both North and South. Whites wanted their jobs back, and Negroes, with newly acquired strength, resisted. Race riots occurred in twenty-five Northern and southern cities during late 1919, the worst one in Chicago. Mobs ruled these cities for days, burning, lynching and looting. As Negroes defended themselves, the violence increased. The white message to blacks was clear - there would be no lasting change in status. Northern unions refused Negro membership, and factory jobs were returned to whites. Blacks were pushed to the lowest paying unskilled tasks. Government jobs for blacks decreased rapidly, as whites were employed to replace them. Southern discrimination and racism had become national.

During the 1920's, the Ku Klux Klan enjoyed its strongest period of power and influence, reaching a peak membership of five million. Because it directed its hatred and aggression toward all minorities, religious and racial, it attracted members across the nation. But in the south, it focused on the Negro and kept white supremest thought alive, encouraging violence and stronger segregation law. Though members held many local and state government positions and actually controlled governments in Texas and Oklahoma, its power declined by the end of the decade, with activities occurring only sporadically after that. From 1920 until well into the Depression years, Jim Crow laws were consistently tightened and expanded, as modernization changed urban life.

The common enemy of the Great Depression eased racial strife in the South, as both races looked to the Democratic Party for relief. Roosevelt's New Deal included blacks, in fact, and many were able to realize educational, health and housing improvements. Southern whites, even formerly discouraged liberals, began to see hope for a more harmonious co-existence. What they had not expected was the deluge of pressure and aggressive criticism from Northerners and the rise of formidable civil right leaders bent on forcing an abrupt end to segregation and discrimination. When this began to occur, the South saw a second forced "Reconstruction" on the horizon and determined to resist by any means necessary. This time, the battle would not be fought with guns and

violence. No civil war broke out; riots that occurred after World War I did not occur after World War II; and from that time to the present, the Jim Crow taboos, the "innate ideas," and the high walls of segregation have crumbled in significant ways, with no end in sight.

The earlier parallels between the American South and South Africa could no longer be drawn. While white South Africans saw themselves hanging from a cliff, not able to go up or down, and feeling the reproach of the world community, the American white Southerner was clearly being driven down a different path, pitying himself and yet changed by reproachful onlookers. Exactly how and why the "Second Reconstruction" occurred is still a matter for debate among historians. While they agree on the forces at work, the relative significance of each is still argued. There is agreement as well, that the same forces which caused each Reconstruction are certainly similar. The forces have been divided into two groups. First are the moral issues which were manifested in ideas and propaganda and growing groups of agitators and pressure groups. Thus, abolitionists of the nineteenth century impacted events leading to Civil War and Reconstruction, and civil and human rights activists lead to the "second" one. The second factor is comprised of those impersonal and amoral forces, such as economics and politics of a two-party system.

Ideas and moral issues related to the twentieth-century civil rights movement are difficult to measure in terms of effectiveness. Unlike emancipation from slavery, blacks themselves have been involved in this movement, associated with large organizations, which engaged in protests and demonstrations on moral grounds of equality for all. Founded in 1909, the NAACP gained strength after World War I and, along with the Urban League, began to be a national political force. Membership and support of whites served to give these organizations greater credibility. An additional force in engendering support for blacks were the artistic and literary achievements of the 1920's and 1930's, known as the "Harlem Renaissance." Another force to be mentioned is the "social gospel" movement of churches. Protestant churches of the North and South had essentially reunited and began to promote reversals of segregation and decimation of blacks. Not to be underestimated, moreover, are the principles of American democracy, which, from the founding of the nation, have provided the basis for appropriate social and political action. By 1940, a large body of Southern liberals used these principles to attempt to "shame" their fellow Southerners into relaxing Jim Crow. As politicians and journalists became involved, pressure was certainly applied. By 1950, civil rights legislation was plentiful, and more legislation continued to be proposed and passed each year.

Amoral forces impacted the second emancipation and reconstruction as well. First, black demographics changed. During World War II and its aftermath, the population of blacks living outside the South climbed from 2.3 million to 4.6 million. As of this book's revised edition (1966), more than half of the black population lives outside the south. The largest influx of blacks occurred, naturally, in industrial cities of the North, but the impact was that the "peculiar problem of the South was not longer a regional monopoly, but a national problem." (p. 128). As Negro urbanization has continued, so, too, has the pressure for equitable jobs, pay, housing and education. Blacks have also migrated to

the Democratic Party, as it has become more liberal and civil rights oriented. Perhaps one of the most salient factors in the new push for equal rights has been the continually growing black middle class, which is making its presence and power felt. Producers of consumer products must now compete for this market and have had to revise their employment and wage/salary practices. As well, blacks have entered all professional careers, in both the North and South.

International relations has had an impact on civil rights progress. When the U.S. fought Hitler, it was not just because of his aggression but his immoral philosophy of white supremacy and destruction of non-white ethnic groups. The purpose of the war was not lost on Americans as they looked inward at their own laws, policies and practices. The post-war struggle between Communism and Democracy brought further introspection, as Communists railed against the U.S. for its racist policies. Americans began to be seen as hypocrites in the eyes of a world with a non-white majority, and an effective fight against Communism demanded greater justice and equality at home. As the Supreme Court began to hear cases on public school segregation, the then Attorney General stated, "It is in the context of the present world struggle between freedom and tyranny that the problem of racial discrimination must be viewed...Racial discrimination furnishes grist for the Communist propaganda mills, and it raises doubt even among friendly nations as to the intensity of our devotion to the democratic faith" (p. 132). Thus, the fight against Communism at home and abroad required swift and sweeping action to attain greater justice and equality in all areas of life - employment, education, health and welfare, housing, travel, and leisure.

The "Second Reconstruction" can be divided into two periods. The first period, encompassing the time between the Supreme Court decisions of the mid-1920's through the end of 1945 was one of largely executive and judicial activity. Congress and the public played a rather passive role. Both Presidents Roosevelt and Truman issued executive orders and established commissions to attack the issue of equal rights for minorities. Perhaps Truman's most impressive action was to eliminate discrimination and segregation in federal employment and the entire military through executive order. The Army procrastinated, but, as the Korean conflict began, got on board. Unlike the dire predictions, integration of the military was a monumental, peaceful success. Eisenhower attacked housing and employment in Washington, D.C., but, unfortunately, remained staunch in his conservative philosophy to maintain states' rights and was thus reluctant to exert federal control over state segregation laws and practices.

The Supreme court was generous in its decisions. In an "about face" from the first Reconstruction, the Court began to reverse its previous decisions, promising federal action in the elimination of legal segregation at the state level. From transportation to housing to the white primary and judicial rights, the Court marched forward. In the area of education, it began with higher education and then moved to public schools, culminating in the momentous Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas decision, declaring that separate schools could never be equal. This single case truly marked the beginning of the end for Jim Crow, but it would not be an easy road. The second period of this new "reconstruction" was far from smooth.

The Declining Years of Jim Crow

The Declining Years of Jim Crow Summary and Analysis

The Court decision of 1954 put a symbolic and legal end to Jim Crow segregation of public schools. The issue of implementation, however, was something else entirely, and thus commenced the second period of the "new Reconstruction." While the public outside the South verbally supported the new direction, it was by no means ready to fervently press for immediate compliance. The immediate reaction of the Southern states' governments to the Brown decision was moderate. Border states announced their intention to integrate their schools. Without deadlines given in the decision, however, "Deep South" states interpreted the decision to mean they could procrastinate indefinitely. As well, it was generally felt that, so long as Southerners had swallowed increased black voting, court participation and local and state black officials, as well as integration of the military, school desegregation would not cause a major backlash. When the Court eventually set up an implementation plan, charging the federal district courts with the process, Southerners put their faith in the district judges who were Southerners themselves, but to no avail. Within a year, nineteen lower court decisions backed up the Supreme Court. Blacks began to realize that they had the power of the government on their side and were ready to claim their rights—the NAACP filed suits with one-hundred-seventy school boards. Southern white response was resistance, in the form of a variety of maneuvers, to thwart any form of school integration. When a riot occurred at the University of Alabama over the admission of a female black student, Northerners and Southern liberals both began to advise moderation in pressing forward on the issue.

National leaders of both parties were hesitant to take a strong stand on school integration, and both political conventions of 1956 skirted around the issues with vacuous, timid calls for moderation. As with the administration and mood of the country after the first Reconstruction, there was a war-hero President, who lacked enthusiasm for the enforcement of somewhat radical changes not wholly supported, and an overall desire among citizens to focus on pursuit of prosperity and "self-indulgence." But, unlike the South of the first Reconstruction, this new South was strong, independent, recalcitrant, and fully represented in national politics. Southern state leaders took their lead from constituents and defied school integration in any way possible. Governor Orville Faubus (Arkansas) became a regional hero when he openly defied the admission of black students to Central High School in Little Rock. Violence erupted in many states, and desegregation virtually came to a halt, in the name of prevention of violence. Congress attacked the Supreme Court for its recent decisions, and Eisenhower remained virtually silent.

The key year for civil rights was 1960, with the birth of the "sit-in" and the election of John Kennedy. A progression of youthful, non-violent sit-ins, demonstrations, parades

and boycotts, lead by Martin Luther King, Jr. and others, were supported by young people of both races. White supremacist response was explosive and violent, but, rather than achieve their goals, the actions rocked conservative complacency and goaded liberals to push harder. The election of 1960, moreover, demonstrated that the nation now had a strong commitment to civil rights and, specifically, to public school integration.

Southern resistance clearly began to crack with the integration of public schools in Little Rock, Arkansas, followed by schools in all states but Alabama, Mississippi, and South Carolina. Attempts on the part of Kennedy to force integration in Alabama and Mississippi resulted in violence. When a black church was bombed, killing four young girls and a teenage boy was shot in the back, blacks across the country rose up in mass demonstrations, supported by white liberals and radicals. Martin Luther King led a march in Washington and delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, and the pressure was on. Kennedy proposed sweeping civil rights legislation, and the South would capitulate in many ways from that point forward. It should be pointed out that the position of blacks in the North was no less frustrating. De facto segregation was the norm, as blacks were crowded into urban slums with all the accompanying social and economic ills. Northern protests were militant, often turning into riots that lasted for days in sections of large cities.

Lyndon Johnson's huge victory in 1964 followed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and signaled stronger civil rights legislation and enforcement. Despite continued defiance by Southern white supremacists, activists worked to register blacks to vote, and Congress passed the Voting Rights Bill of 1965. At this point, all three branches of the federal government had come together with the same equal rights statements, and Jim Crow as a legal entity was dead. The public was hopeful.

From legality to reality is often a large leap, and, so it is with civil rights. The legislation of the early 1960's has impacted mostly the rising, urban middle class black. What remains is a huge gap between the majority of blacks and whites in the areas of education, employment, disease, income, and opportunity, resulting in persistent de facto segregation. Hatred and bitterness are far from eradicated, and no legislation will resolve this. Jim Crow is dead, but "his ghost still haunts a troubled people, and the heritage he left behind will remain with them for a long time to come" (p.191).

Characters

Southern Conservatives

Southern conservatives comprised a group of middle and upper-class whites, whose influence began to be felt near the end of the first Reconstruction, and who believed that race relations could be peacefully determined. Growing out of the traditional relationships between owners and slaves, conservatives held a basic belief that a multi-race society could be preserved, so long as one race was clearly and naturally superior. The position toward blacks was paternalistic, that is, the belief that blacks should be protected and given employment and rights appropriate for their inferior role in society. In an effort to thwart the forces of radical Republicanism, Southern conservatives wooed the black vote, by pointing out the potential threats to that race by "crackers" and other white supremacists and the ploy of the Republican Party merely to use them for its own political gain. For a time following Reconstruction, the conservative view was predominant. Southern conservatives were the largest component of the Democratic Party following Reconstruction, but, as they moved on to national political positions and retirement, their position declined, allowing more radical segregationists to capture control of the Party.

Populists

The Populist movement was nationwide in the late 1800's, primarily in support of the common man, specifically the small farmer and laborer. Populists believed that the majority of Americans were largely ignored in a country focusing on industry, commerce, growth and the rise of powerful big business conglomerates that largely controlled Washington. In the South, the Populists, led primarily by Tom Watson, attempted to unite poor whites and blacks, by appealing to the commonalities of their situations. According to the Populists, the Republicans and Democrats were attempting to keep these poor whites and blacks apart for selfish political gains, and neither party had the interests of the Southern poor at heart. Populists stressed the economic and social distress of both whites and blacks, stating that, only by coming together to press for their own rights, would both be made economically whole. For a time, Populists enjoyed some support by lower-class members of both races, but, given the attitudes and moods of fear and distrust, the alliance of largely disenfranchised blacks and whites was tenuous at best. The Populist popularity declined rather quickly by 1900.

Uncle Tom

Originally from Harriett Beecher Stowe's novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin, the term came to refer to all blacks, following Reconstruction, who accepted and maintained the subservient, inferior status that existed during slavery. These individuals were seen as kind, gentle, and accepting of their permanent role as second-class citizens, not

desiring to upset the status quo and risk the anger of Southern whites. For the most part, this group embraced the ideas of Booker T. Washington, who counseled Southern blacks to retire from political life and become humble, menial members of society. Thus, the "Uncle Toms," afraid and timid, withdrew from any of the controversy surrounding the relationships between blacks and whites throughout the nineteenth and well into the twentieth centuries.

Orval Faubus

A powerful governor of Arkansas during the 1950's, Faubus became a regional hero by his strong defiance of all integration attempts. Among his activities included calling out national guard troops to stop the entry of nine black students to Central High School in Little Rock. When that failed to achieve the results he desired, and when the Supreme Court refused any further postponement of integration, he closed all high schools in Little Rock for an entire school year. Because of his strong segregationist beliefs and activities, Faubus was overwhelmingly elected to several terms. Faubus kept Arkansas strongly in the "Lower South" camp, in which white supremacy reigned.

George Wallace

Elected as Governor of Alabama in 1962, George Wallace declared that he was "drawing a line in the dust and tossing the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny, and I say segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever." He supported all efforts of Mayor Eugene Connor of Birmingham, when he closed all public parks and recreational facilities rather than submit to a federal court order to integrate them, stating he would "not be a party to any....compromise on the issues of segregation." He remained defiant when ordered to allow the first two blacks to enroll in the University of Alabama, and this began his fight with President Kennedy over school integration. His attempts to "stand in the doorway" of schools and eventually to seal off all schools in Birmingham were met with the federalization of the Alabama National Guard to enforce Kennedy's orders for integration. The ensuing violence and murders in Birmingham, including the deaths of four young girls when a black church was bombed, ignited people throughout the country and certainly muddied Wallace's reputation outside the South.

Martin Luther King

A major figure in the civil rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's, King promoted non-violent protest through sit-ins, demonstrations, marches and boycotts, citing India's Gandhi as his model. Throughout the South, King lead peaceful protests and was regularly arrested. Perhaps the greatest event was his participation in the March on Washington in August, 1963, and the delivery of his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

Thomas Dixon

Famous author during Redemption and after, writing romance novels which typified the Negro in a newly-degrading manner. His most famous work was a trilogy titled, The Leopard's Spots: A Romance of the White Man's Burden, 1865-1900; The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan; and The Traitor: A Story of the Fall of the Invisible Empire. In these works, the black was represented as a clearly inferior being, lacking intellectual capacity to be a responsible citizen, lazy and shiftless, and certainly in need of complete white domination and supervision.

Tom Watson

The most well-nown leader of the Southern Populist Party, Watson attempted to unite poor whites and blacks in an effort to promote their economic well-being. Watson believed that self-interest motivated men more than any other belief, philosophy or attitude, and that lower class members of both races would come together with that self-interest in mind. When his efforts were unsuccessful, he eventually came to believe that, until the black was eliminated from any political power whatsoever, the Populist principles had no chance in the South.

Negrophiles

The term Negrophile was born in the years following Redemption and referred to those individuals who supported civil rights for blacks, no matter what the purpose.

Negrophobes

The term used to refer those individuals, usually lower-class Southern whites and white supremacists, who felt threatened by promotion of black civil rights and feared that black political and economic growth would bring disaster to the South.

Chief Justice Earl Warren

Earl Warren was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court when the Court handed down its decision in the Brown v. Board of Education case. In explaining the decision, Warren stated, "We conclude that in the field of public education, the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." The decision of the Court was unanimous and was the beginning of the end for Jim Crow.

Objects/Places

Redemption

In 1877, the Great Compromise officially ended Reconstruction in the South. This event is known as the "Redemption."

Jim Crow

That body of law, formulated between 1877 and 1954, which served to completely segregate whites and blacks in the South.

Mason Dixon Line

Imaginary line dividing the North and South.

Harlem Renaissance

An awakening of black arts in the 1920's and 1930's, supported by white philanthropists and intellectuals.

Selma, Alabama

Site of march led by Martin Luther King in support of black voting rights, in 1965, which lead to violence and the focus of the entire nation on civil rights violations.

Montgomery, Alabama

Site of a year-long boycott of bus transportation by blacks which seriously injured the finances of the city.

Watts

Black section of Los Angeles which experienced a days-long race riot in the summer of 1965.

The Lower South

That section of the South which has traditionally been stronger in its attitudes of white supremacy and segregation, usually referring to South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama.

Plessy v. Ferguson

A Supreme Court decision of 1896 stating that "separate but equal facilities" for blacks and whites was constitutional.

Brown v. Board of Education

A 1954 Supreme Court decision, related specifically to public education, which stated that "separate but equal" facilities were not possible and therefore were unconstitutional.

Freedom Rides

The efforts of blacks to board and ride public transport reserved for whites only, during the early 1960's.

Old South

The primarily agrarian South prior to the late 1800's, during which most of the population lived in rural areas and in which the blacks were either in slavery or in largely subservient positions.

New South

The South that has grown since the late 1800's characterized by large urban centers, industrialization, and a decline in the black agrarian life.

Themes

Southern History is Inexorably Tied to Race Relations

Any serious student of Southern history will ultimately reach the conclusion that its major events, movements, conflicts, and societal upheavals have one common element - the relationship between blacks and whites. When slavery came to the South, its agrarian society flourished with a large body of free labor, which had to be maintained and supervised. There were necessarily codes which regulated and restricted what slaves could and could not do. Colonial planters, for the most part, and most assuredly for practical reasons, cared for their slaves in order to keep them physically fit. Slaves, for their part, were wholly owned and dependent upon their masters and those whites employed to supervise them.

As tensions developed between the North and the South, the issue of slavery naturally erupted. Northerners, who had no need for a large agrarian work force, had no vested interest in slavery, and abolitionists easily persuaded them. To Southerners, an end to slavery meant an economic crisis, as well as a complete reformation in the relationship of the races. During Reconstruction, the issues revolved almost completely around the status of the new freedmen, with occupational forces in control. The end of Reconstruction, however, meant that the South had to carve out the relationships as sovereign states of the United States. While there were a number of options, legal segregation of the races was the choice made. The ramifications of this choice then impacted Southern history from the latter 19th century through contemporary times. Jim Crow laws continued to tighten as white supremacists gained control of the prevailing Democratic Party, even as the United States was fighting global wars and giving blacks more equity in employment and military service. As well, American principles of human rights as a "battle cry" against Hitler's persecution of minority races was clearly a signal that racism and discrimination at home would have to be addressed. The post-World War II era witnessed a renewed effort in civil rights and a recalcitrant, defiant response from Southern state governments. All major issues of the South have, since 1945, been issues of the status of blacks in political, economic and social life of that region. While Jim Crow is dead, many underlying race issues still haunt the South and will continue to influence the lives of all who live there.

The South has had two Reconstruction Periods

To Southerners, the term "reconstruction" has bitter connotations because it refers to a dismal period of time during which the South faced the humiliation of defeat and occupation after the Civil War. Many are also bitter about the ascendancy of the civil rights movement and the intrusion of the Supreme Court and the other branches of the federal government into their lives during the 1950's and 1960's that drastically altered their political/economic/social system once again. In retrospect, then, the South has had two "reconstructions," with similarities and differences. In both reconstruction periods,

there were liberals and radicals who pushed hard for change in the status of blacks. There were laws and Supreme Court decisions which challenged the existing order and attempted to "force" the South into compliance. As the "reconstructions" wore on, two war-hero Presidents lost interest in pressing for reforms, and the South began to think that it could revert to its own preferences. Differences have been apparent as well.

During the first reconstruction, the South was a defeated region with no national political influence, the state governments being under total control of radical Republicans from the North. The South had to swallow its pride and wait until the occupational period ended before it could again assert its authority over its social system and implement Jim Crow. The second reconstruction found the South a strong, defiant region with national influence, and, while there was no military confrontation over the assault on its legal and social institutions, there was, nonetheless violence. The capitulation of the South during the second reconstruction was not achieved by its defeat on the battlefield, but, instead, by the strength of the federal government in its enforcement of legislation and Supreme Court decisions and the persistence and pressure of civil rights activists. How the South now proceeds may not be so much a matter of its relationship with blacks or with the federal government, but with the more global requirements of a planet which is predominately non-white.

White Definition of Black Status Has Been Universal and Perv

Slavery was only one means by which the white man defined the position of blacks in his society. From the first contact between the races, as Africa was explored and conquered by Europeans, the assumption of Anglo-Saxon superiority was clear and fully promulgated. Even outside the realm of slavery, the Negro was to be used, abused, and exploited, permitting injustices and brutality, and relegating blacks to a clearly subordinate position. For these reasons, Apartheid was established in South Africa, and slavery became an appropriate economic solution for white planters in the West Indies and Southern colonies. In the late nineteenth century, Americans justified subjugation of non-whites through the views of biologists, anthropologists and sociologists, who lent "intelligence" to the concept of white superiority. Thus, the "white man's burden" became the challenge to civilize inferiors and bring them to minimum levels of social appropriateness. In the American North, free blacks could not be bought or sold but had no legal or social status and, in fact, were victims of prejudice, discrimination, and economic deprivation through the mid-twentieth century. The legal end to racial inequality in the United States has not resulted in the complete demise of racism, as many whites continue to define blacks as unequal and to promote that definition in their rhetoric and politics.

Style

Perspective

C. Vann Woodward wrote with a knowledge and understanding of the South that perhaps only a Southerner is able to have. Born in Arkansas at the height of Jim Crow, Woodward grew up in the era of complete racial segregation. Moving outside the South and eventually to Yale University, he was able to gain perspective on racial relationships in both regions, concluding that while de jure segregation was codified in the South, de facto segregation in the North created much the same conditions for black people. He abhorred both and became a leading white figure in the case for civil rights during the 1950's and 60's.

Even as Woodward deplored discrimination and racism, he obviously presented it academically in order to provide an objective analysis of how Jim Crow came to be, with the conclusion that it was not necessarily foreordained from the end of Reconstruction. Indeed, as he carefully looked at alternatives which post-Civil War Southerners had, it appears that self-serving political jockeying and gaming resulted in the choice finally made by the South - strict, regimented, and legally-defined segregation, which he compared to that of South African Apartheid. His analysis of the positions of all political players in both periods of "reconstruction," while factually objective, clearly demonstrate his disdain for the self-serving actions of politicians and the complacency of national leaders both of which served to abandon the black race at key points in their history. Had this not occurred, he believed, much of the upheaval and violence during the second "reconstruction" would have been avoided.

Tone

By the very nature of its subject matter, The Strange Career of Jim Crow is largely an objective, academic work focusing on periods and events of southern history from the end of Reconstruction through 1965. The use of the word "strange" in the title, however, certainly provides a hint to the reader regarding the author's analysis and interpretation of a volatile march through time, characterized by upheavals and lack of continuity that other regions of the U.S. did not experience.

Woodward's subjectivity and somewhat partisan view of that period knowns as "Redemption," (the end of Reconstruction through 1900), and the rise of Jim Crow, becomes evident. In Woodward's view, there were initial comfortable and natural movements toward friendly co-existence between the races. What destroyed this potential peace was the activity of various political forces, exploiting and fueling distrust and fear between blacks and whites for self-serving purposes. The ultimate result was a southern Democratic Party committed to white supremacy and total segregation. Had this not occurred, believed Woodward, Southern history and the relationships between the races might have progressed quite differently. Jim Crow is thus seen as "strange"

because it was neither an immediate reaction to nor an immutable pre-ordained consequence of reconstruction and Redemption.

Structure

The Strange Career of Jim Crow was originally published in 1955, as the text of a series of lectures given by Woodward at the University of Virginia. The original text, then, was organized quite simply, in chronological order of these lectures. The revised edition, however, includes commentary and analysis of events from 1955 to 1965, and these additions appear to have been interspersed throughout the text. Fortunately, the chronological treatment of Southern history remains intact and is enriched for the contemporary reader by the inclusion of an additional ten years of perspective.

Dividing chapters into generally recognized historical periods allows even the most unsophisticated student of history a complete and accurate accounting and analysis of the rise, reign and demise of Jim Crow. Within the context of this historical progression, moreover, the reader is able to grasp the clear relationship of events and prevailing attitudes to both past and present. For example, when the first Reconstruction ended, Southerners had choices to make regarding the status of the Negro and their relationship to whites, which was a relationship to be supported and nurtured between blacks and whites. Party politics and economic events, however, became the driving forces of impact on this delicate and as yet undefined relationship, to create a caste system, which inevitably could not survive and would throw the South into a second reconstruction.

Because Woodward is deceased, there will be no more revisions of this text; however, for any student of American history, it is a definitive, factually precise and excellently-organized work on Southern history.

Quotes

"The people of the South should be the last Americans to expect indefinite continuity of their institutions and social arrangements. Other Americans have less reason to be prepared for sudden change and lost causes. Apart from Southerners, Americans have enjoyed a historical continuity that is unique among modern peoples. The stream of national history, flowing down from seventeenth-century sources, reaches a fairly level plain in the eighteenth century. There it gathered mightily in volume and span from its tributaries, but it continued to flow like the Mississippi over an even bed between relatively level banks. Southern history, on the other hand took a different turn in the nineteenth century. At intervals the even bed gave way under the stream, which sometimes plunged over falls or swirled through rapids. These breaks in the course of Southern history go by the names of slavery and secession, independence and defeat, emancipation and reconstruction, redemption and reunion." (p.3-4)

"Segregation in complete and fully developed form did grow up contemporaneously with slavery, but not in its midst. One of the strangest things about the career of Jim Crow was that the system was born in the North and reached an advanced age before moving South in force. Without forgetting evils peculiar to the South, on might consider Northern conditions with profit...the Northern free Negro enjoyed obvious advantages over the Southern slave. His freedom was circumscribed in many ways...but he could not be bought or sold, or separated from his family, or legally made to work without compensation...For all that, the Northern Negro was made painfully and constantly aware that he lived in a society dedicated to the doctrine of white supremacy and Negro inferiority." (pp. 28-29)

As a rule, however, Negroes (after the end of Reconstruction) were not aggressive in pressing their rights, even after they were assured them by law and protected in exercising them by the federal presence. It was easier to avoid painful rebuff or insult by refraining from the test of rights. Negroes rarely intruded upon hotels or restaurants where they were unwelcome. Whites often withdrew from desegregated facilities...Negro spokesmen constantly reiterated their disavowal of aspirations for what they called 'social equality,' and insisted that they were concerned only for 'public equality,' by which they apparently meant civil and political rights." (p.43)

"When Northern liberals and radicals began to lose interest in the freedmen's cause and federal protection was withdrawn, it was natural that the Negro should turn to the conservatives among upper-class Southerners for allies. While there was a certain amount of fawning Uncle-Tomism among the Negroes, there is little doubt that the prouder of them secretly despised the patronizing pose and self-flattering paternalism of the whites with whom they found refuge. It was no sentimentality for 'Ole Master' that inspired the freedmen, but the hot breath of cracker fanaticism they felt on the back of their necks." (p. 67)

"The impression often left by cursory histories of the subject is that Negro disenfranchisement followed quickly if not immediately upon the overthrow of

Reconstruction. It is perfectly true that Negroes were often coerced, defrauded, or intimidated, but they continued to vote in large numbers in most parts of the South for more than two decades after Reconstruction. As a voter the Negro was both hated and cajoled, both intimidated and courted, but he could never be ignored so long as he voted." (p.73-74)

"In a time when the Negroes formed a much larger proportion of the population than they did later, when slavery was a live memory in the minds of both races, and when the memory of the hardships and bitterness of Reconstruction was still fresh, the race policies accepted and pursued in the South were sometimes milder than they became later. The policies of proscription, segregation, and disenfranchisement that are often described as the immutable 'folkways' of the South, impervious alike to legislative reform and armed intervention, are of a more recent origin. The effort to justify them as a consequence of Reconstruction and a necessity of the times is embarrassed by the fact that they did not originate in those times. And the belief that they are immutable and unchangeable is not supported by history." (p.85)

"The South's adoption of extreme racism was due not so much to a conversion as it was to a relaxation of the opposition. All the elements of fear, jealousy, proscription, hatred, and fanaticism had long been present, as they are present in various degrees of intensity in any society. What enabled them to rise to dominance was not so much cleverness or ingenuity as it was a general weakening and discrediting of the numerous forces that had hitherto kept them in check." (p.92)

"If the psychologists are correct in their hypothesis that aggression is always the result of frustration, then the South toward the end of the eighteen-nineties was the perfect cultural seedbed for aggression against the minority race. Economic, political, and social frustrations had pyramided to a climax of social tensions...There had to be a scapegoat. And all along the line signals were going up to indicate that the Negro was an approved object of aggressions. These 'permissions-to-hate' came from sources that had formerly denied such permission. They came from federal courts in numerous opinions, from Northern liberals eager to conciliate the South, from Southern conservatives who had abandoned their race policy of moderation...from the Populists in their mood of disillusionment with their former Negro allies, and from a national temper suddenly expressed by imperialistic adventures and aggressions against colored peoples in distant lands." (pp.101-102)

"Public-spirited professional people of a humanitarian bent who gathered at periodic conferences to discuss the race problem took a deeply pessimistic or despairing view of the Negro. They laid great stress on the alarming increase in Negro crime as the race flocked to the cities and packed into crowded, filthy slums. They were convinced that the race was rapidly deteriorating in morals and manners, in health and efficiency, and losing out in the struggle for survival. They resolved that the Negro was incapable of self-government, unworthy of the franchise, and impossible to educate beyond the rudiments." (p.124-125)

"The concentration upon the South in these pages should not lead to the inference that the attitudes and policies described here were peculiar to the South. Indeed, if the evidence had been collected in authoritative studies, it would be a simple matter to point out the many parallel lines of prejudice and discrimination against the Negro in the North, prejudice that often worked as great a hardship upon the race as it did in the South. The trend toward racism in the North was amply illustrated in the years immediately following the First World War." (p.134)

"All the various forces, moral and amoral, whose importance the historians have disputed in explaining the first era of emancipation and Reconstruction have their counterparts in the historical background of the movement we are presently attempting to understand. For the modern development also has a background of ideas, propaganda, agitation, and pressure groups as well as a background of conflicting economic interests, power politics, and war. In both the nineteenth-century and the twentieth-century movements, emotional factors of face prejudice and sectional pride, as well as the compulsions of frustration and aggression, have played their parts." (p.143)

"The attack that led to the downfall of the old order in race relations had many preliminaries, as we have seen, but after the Second World War it moved into an accelerated phase the pace and radicalism of which would justify calling it a 'Second Reconstruction.' This historic movement falls into two fairly distinctive periods divided by the Supreme Court's decisions of 1954 and 1955 on segregation in public schools. In the first period the executive and judicial branches of the federal government took the initiative in inaugurating reform, while Congress and public opinion remained largely unresponsive. In the second period...massive Southern resistance challenged the whole movement. Civil rights groups responded with direct action that eventually aroused popular support and stirred Congress into unprecedented and effective action." (pp.155-156)

"All over the South the lights of reason and tolerance and moderation began to go out under the resistance demand for conformity. During 1957, 1958, and 1959 a fever of rebellion and a malaise of fear spread over the region. Books were banned, libraries were purged, newspapers were slanted, magazines disappeared from stands, television programs were withheld, films were excluded. Teachers, preachers, and college professors were questioned, harassed, and many were driven from their positions or fled the South. The N.A.A.C.P. was virtually driven underground in some states. Words began to shift their significance and lose their common meaning. A 'moderate' became a man who dared open his mouth, an 'extremist' one who favored eventual compliance with the law, and 'compliance' took on the connotations of treason. Politicians who had once spoken for moderation began to vie with each other in defiance of the government." (pp.183-184)

"The year 1965 would nevertheless remain one of historical importance in the record of American race relations. It did not mark the solution of a problem, but it did mark the end of a period - the period of legally sanctioned segregations of races. As a legal entity Jim Crow could at last be pronounced virtually a thing of the past. If Jim Crow was

dead, however, his ghost still haunted a troubled people and the heritage he left behind would remain with them for a long time to come." (p. 211)

Topics for Discussion

According to Woodward, the South has undergone two "Reconstructions." Discuss the similarities and differences between the two.

If the southern conservatives had managed to retain control of the Democratic Party, how might race relations have evolved?

The South had alternatives after Reconstruction, one of which was the Populist movement. How did the Populists hope to unite the races and, in your opinion, why did they fail?

What issues and events caused the Jim Crow South to take a path that differed from South African Apartheid?

In the 1950's, Southerners seemed to accept, albeit reluctantly, the end of segregation in a number of public venues. Further, they did not react negatively to integration in military barracks and mess halls. Why, then, do you believe, the response to public school integration was so vehement and defiant?

What aspects of the modern world from 1945 forward, created and continue to create pressure on the United States to exhibit a greater proactive stance in the area of civil rights and equality among all races?

In what ways are the "promises" to Negroes of the Southern Conservative Democrats of the late 1800's similar to those promised by the current Democratic Party? Are the motives the same? Support your position with specific data from the text.