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# TIMELINE: 1860-1920

to accompany the Seminar Toolbox  
 “The Making of African American Identity”  
 Vol. II: 1865-1917

**1860 EIGHTH CENSUS:** U.S. population totals 31.4 million, including 4.4 million African Americans (14%). Nine out of ten blacks are enslaved in the South.  
 South Carolina secedes from the Union.

**1861 PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION:** Abraham Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin become president and vice president (Republican).

**CIVIL WAR BEGINS** with the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor.

**1862** Congress bans slavery in the territories and the District of Columbia.

**1863 EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION** is signed by Lincoln, freeing the slaves in the Confederate states.

The all-black 54th Massachusetts Volunteers charges Fort Wagner in Charleston, S.C.

**1864** Black Union and Confederate soldiers fight in battles throughout the South. Congressional Medal of Honor is awarded to 24 African American soldiers after the war.

**1865 PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION:** Abraham Lincoln and VP Andrew Johnson (Union).

**CIVIL WAR ENDS.** Four million enslaved African Americans are freed, including Booker T. Washington.

**LINCOLN IS ASSASSINATED** in Washington, D.C.

**13<sup>th</sup> AMENDMENT** bans slavery in the U.S.

Freedmen’s Bureau is established (closed in 1872).

Colored citizens’ conventions throughout the South issue calls for equal rights and suffrage.

The Ku Klux Klan is organized in Tennessee. The first Black Codes are passed in Mississippi. The convict-lease system spreads throughout the South.

Sharecropping becomes institutionalized in the South.

**1866** Black leaders including Frederick Douglass present blacks’ goals of equal rights and suffrage to President Johnson.

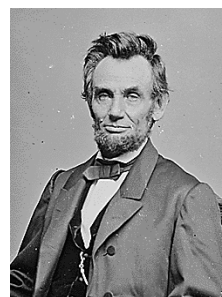
Winslow Homer completes the painting known as *At the Cabin Door*.

**1867 RECONSTRUCTION ACTS** are passed by Congress.

Howard University (D.C.), Morehouse College (Georgia), and Atlanta University are founded.

Edmonia Lewis sculpts *Forever Free* in marble while studying in Rome.

Over 600 African Americans emigrate to Liberia on the *Golconda*.



Arriving in Wilmington, N.C., April 1865



Lewis, *Forever Free*

BUCHANAN  
 LINCOLN  
 CIVIL WAR  
 ANDREW JOHNSON

**1868 14<sup>th</sup> AMENDMENT** grants citizenship to African Americans and guarantees “equal protection of the laws” to all U.S. citizens.

Attempt to impeach President Johnson for his opposition to Reconstruction policies fails.

The Freedmen’s Bureau publishes regular reports of mob violence and intimidation in the South.

Hampton Institute is founded in Hampton, Virginia.

W. E. B. Du Bois is born in Massachusetts of free black parents.

**1869 PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION:** Ulysses S. Grant and VP Schuyler Colfax (Rep.).

41<sup>st</sup> Congress (1869-’71) includes first black members (House–2, Senate–1).

National Convention of Colored Men convenes in Washington, D.C., electing Frederick Douglass as its president.

Colored National Labor Union is formed in Washington, D.C.

Black artist Edward Bannister paints the canvas *Newspaper Boy*.



Currier & Ives, “The First Colored Senators and Representatives,” 1876

**1870 NINTH CENSUS:** U.S. population totals 39.8 million, including 4.9 million African Americans (12.7%).

**15<sup>th</sup> AMENDMENT** grants suffrage to African Americans.

U.S. Senate holds hearings to investigate violence against blacks in the South.

**1871 42<sup>nd</sup> Congress** (1871-’73) includes five black members (House–5, Senate–0).

Jubilee Singers of Fisk University conduct first national tour.

**1872** In this period, southern blacks are elected as legislators and state officials. P. B. S. Pinchback serves briefly as governor of Louisiana, the only black state governor until 1990.

**1873 PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION:** Ulysses S. Grant and VP Henry Wilson (Republican).

43<sup>rd</sup> Congress (1873-’75) includes seven black members (House–7, Senate–0).

**SLAUGHTERHOUSES CASES:** U.S. Supreme Court rules that the 14<sup>th</sup>-Amendment guarantee of “equal protection of the laws” extends only to federal civil rights, thus removing southern states from the duty to protect the civil rights of African Americans.

**1874** Father Patrick F. Healy becomes the first black president of a predominantly white university (Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.).

**1875 CIVIL RIGHTS ACT** is passed by Congress granting equal rights to black citizens in public accommodations and jury duty (declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1883).

44<sup>th</sup> Congress (1875-’77) includes eight black members (House–7, Senate–1).

First Jim Crow legislation to segregate public transportation is passed in Tennessee, as well as a vagrancy law and a contract labor law to assert more control over black labor.

Mob violence against blacks in Mississippi leads President Grant to send federal troops to the state (and to S.C. in 1876).

Convention of Colored Newspapermen is held in Cincinnati.



Homer, *Visit from the Old Mistress*, 1876

**1876** Edward Bouchet becomes the first African American to earn a Ph.D. from an American university (Yale, in physics).

Winslow Homer completes the painting *Visit from the Old Mistress*.

**1877 PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION:** Rutherford Hayes and VP William Wheeler (Rep.).

45<sup>th</sup> Congress (1877-'79) includes four black members (House-3, Senate-1).

**RECONSTRUCTION ENDS** with the Hayes-Tilden Compromise. Union troops end the occupation of the former Confederacy and their protection of southern black citizens. Whites soon regain political control and eradicate black involvement.

**1878** Over 200 African American emigrants sail to Liberia on the *Azor*.

**1879 BLACK EXODUS:** Thousands of southern blacks migrate to Kansas, many inspired by black businessman Benjamin "Pap" Singleton.

White groups, fearful of losing the South's black labor force, organize to discourage or intimidate blacks from migrating west.

46<sup>th</sup> Congress (1879-'81) includes one black member (House-0, Senate-1).

**1880 TENTH CENSUS:** U.S. population totals 50.1 million, including 6.6 million African Americans (13%).

U.S. Senate holds hearings on the "Negro Exodus" from the South.

**1881 PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION:** James Garfield and VP Chester Arthur (Rep.). Later in the year, Garfield is assassinated and Vice President Arthur becomes president.

47<sup>th</sup> Congress (1881-'83) includes two black members (House-2, Senate-0).

Tuskegee Institute (Alabama) and Spelman College (Atlanta) are founded.

**EXPANSION of "JIM CROW":** Tennessee amends its earlier Jim Crow law to mandate separate train cars for black passengers. Florida, Mississippi, and Texas pass similar laws later in the decade. More southern states follow in the 1890s and 1900s.

**1882** 49 blacks and 64 whites are lynched.\*

**1883 CIVIL RIGHTS CASES:** U.S. Supreme Court rules that Congress can regulate only state action regarding racial discrimination, not private action, i.e., that the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment does not empower Congress to ban racial discrimination in public facilities, as they are privately owned.

48<sup>th</sup> Congress (1883-'85) includes two black members (House-2, Senate-0).

53 blacks and 77 whites are lynched.

**1884** 51 blacks and 160 whites are lynched.

**1885 PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION:** Grover Cleveland and VP Thomas Hendricks (Dem.).

49<sup>th</sup> Congress (1885-'87) includes two black members (House-2, Senate-0).

74 blacks and 110 whites are lynched.

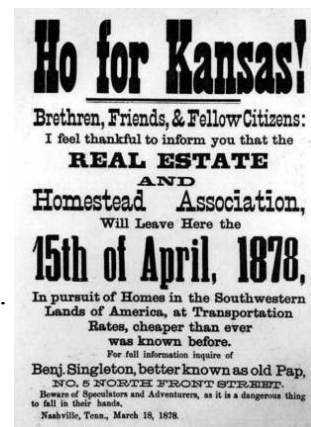
**1886** 74 blacks and 64 whites are lynched.

**1887** African American writer Charles Chesnutt publishes the short story "The Goophered Grapevine" in *Atlantic Monthly*.

50<sup>th</sup> Congress (1887-'89) includes no black members, as southern voter intimidation increases.

70 blacks and 50 whites are lynched.

**1888** 69 blacks and 68 whites are lynched.



Chesnutt

\* Lynching statistics from Tuskegee Institute Archives, as presented by Prof. Stephanie Browner, Berea College, at [www.berea.edu/faculty/browners/chesnutt/classroom/lynching\\_table\\_year.html](http://www.berea.edu/faculty/browners/chesnutt/classroom/lynching_table_year.html).



**1889 PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION:** Benjamin Harrison and VP Levi Morton (Republican).  
51<sup>st</sup> Congress (1889-'91) includes three black members (House-3, Senate-0).  
94 blacks and 76 whites are lynched.

**1890 ELEVENTH CENSUS:** U.S. population totals 63 million, including 7.5 million African Americans (12%).

**DISENFRANCHISEMENT BEGINS** with the "Mississippi Plan." To minimize the number of black voters, Mississippi institutes a literacy test, a poll tax, and the "grandfather clause." By 1910, most southern states pass similar laws.

Louisiana enacts Jim Crow legislation to segregate railroad cars.

Joel Chandler Harris, a white man, publishes the Uncle Remus tales.

85 blacks and 11 whites are lynched.

**1891** 52<sup>nd</sup> Congress (1891-'93) includes one black member (House-1, Senate-0).  
Alabama, Kentucky, Arkansas, and Georgia enact Jim Crow legislation.  
113 blacks and 71 whites are lynched.

**1892** Tennessee acts to disenfranchise black citizens.  
161 blacks and 69 whites are lynched.

**1893 PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION:** Grover Cleveland and VP Adlai Stevenson (Democratic).

53<sup>rd</sup> Congress (1893-'95) includes one black member (House-1, Senate-0).

Black leaders protest failure to include African American-related exhibits in the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

Black artist Henry Ossawa Tanner completes the painting *The Banjo Lesson*.

African American author Frances Harper publishes the novel *Iola Leroy*.

Arkansas acts to disenfranchise black citizens.

118 blacks and 34 whites are lynched.

**1894** 134 blacks and 58 whites are lynched.

**1895 ATLANTA EXPOSITION ADDRESS** is delivered by Booker T. Washington.

54<sup>th</sup> Congress (1895-'97) includes one black member (House-1, Senate-0).

South Carolina acts to disenfranchise black citizens.

Paul Laurence Dunbar publishes *Lyrics of Lowly Life*, a collection of poems.

Buddy Bolden, cornetist, forms the first documented jazz band (New Orleans).

Frederick Douglass dies in Washington, D.C., at age 77.

113 blacks and 66 whites are lynched.

**1896 PLESSY v. FERGUSON:** U.S. Supreme Court upholds Jim Crow segregation laws, declaring that "separate but equal" facilities do not violate the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

Ohio passes a state anti-lynching act.

National Association of Colored Women's Clubs is formed.

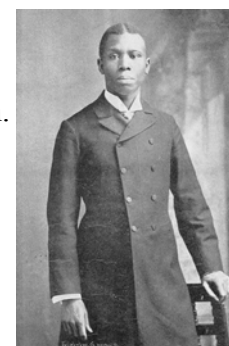
78 blacks and 45 whites are lynched.



Tanner, *The Banjo Lesson*



Washington



Dunbar



Buddy Bolden's band

**1897 PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION:** William McKinley and VP Garret Hobart (Republican).  
55<sup>th</sup> Congress (1897-'99) includes one black member (House-1, Senate-0).  
123 blacks and 35 whites are lynched.

**1898 SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR.** Five black Americans win the Congressional Medal of Honor.  
"Race riot" in Wilmington, N.C., sees worst mob violence against blacks since Reconstruction.  
U.S. Supreme Court upholds constitutionality of "Mississippi tests" that restrict black voting.  
(*Williams v. Mississippi*).  
Charles Chesnutt publishes the short story "The Wife of His Youth" in *Atlantic Monthly*.  
South Carolina enacts Jim Crow segregation legislation, as does North Carolina in 1899.  
Louisiana acts to disenfranchise black voters.  
101 blacks and 19 whites are lynched.



Homer, *The Gulf Stream*, 1899

**1899** Winslow Homer completes the painting *The Gulf Stream*.  
Scott Joplin composes *Maple Leaf Rag*.  
56<sup>th</sup> Congress (1899-1901) includes one black member (House-1, Senate-0).  
85 blacks and 21 whites are lynched.

**1900 TWELFTH CENSUS:** U.S. population totals 76 million, including 8.8 million African Americans (11.6%). Black-owned farms total 193,000.  
National Negro Business League is formed by Booker T. Washington.  
First federal anti-lynching bill receives three votes in Congress.  
Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins publishes the novel *Contending Forces*.  
"Lift Every Voice and Sing" is composed by J. W. and J. R. Johnson.  
The Paris World Exposition includes a "Negro Pavilion" displaying photographs of African Americans assembled by W. E. B. Du Bois.  
North Carolina passes "white supremacy amendment" and disenfranchises black citizens.  
106 blacks and nine whites are lynched.



photo in Du Bois album, 1900

**1901 PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION:** William McKinley and VP Theodore Roosevelt (Rep.).  
In September, McKinley is assassinated and Vice President Roosevelt becomes president.  
57<sup>th</sup> Congress convenes with no black members. Congress remains all white until 1929.  
Virginia and Alabama act to disenfranchise blacks.  
Booker T. Washington publishes *Up from Slavery: An Autobiography*.  
105 blacks and 25 whites are lynched.



Du Bois

**1902** 85 blacks and seven whites are lynched.  
**1903** W. E. B. Du Bois publishes *The Souls of Black Folk*.  
84 blacks and 15 whites are lynched.

**1904** Maryland enacts Jim Crow segregation legislation.  
Richmond, Virginia, black leaders organize a boycott to protest segregated streetcars.  
76 blacks and seven whites are lynched.

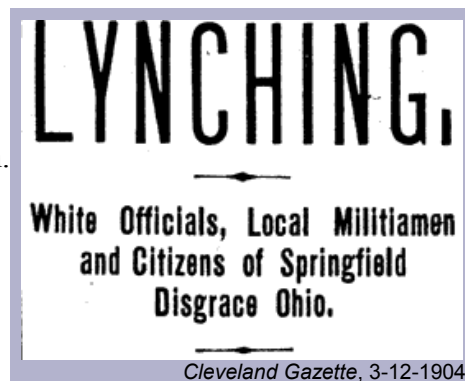
- 1905 PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION:** Theodore Roosevelt and VP Charles Fairbanks (Rep.).  
**NIAGARA MOVEMENT** is organized by W. E. B. Du Bois and other black leaders; issues a Declaration of Principles.

Alice Dunbar-Nelson writes the short story “The Stones of the Village” in this decade.

57 blacks and five whites are lynched.

- 1906** Four days of mob violence against blacks in Atlanta result in twelve dead and hundreds injured.  
 Black soldiers in Brownsville, Texas, riot against segregation.  
 62 blacks and three whites are lynched.

- 1907** Meta Warrick’s “Negro Tableaux” are exhibited at the Jamestown Tercentennial Exposition.  
 Oklahoma enacts Jim Crow segregation legislation.  
 58 blacks and three whites are lynched.



- 1908** Three-day “race riot” in Springfield, Illinois, leads to six deaths and serious property damage.  
 Former slave Allen Allensworth founds the black town of Allensworth, California.  
 Thurgood Marshall is born in Maryland; later becomes a U.S. Supreme Court justice.  
 Georgia acts to disenfranchise African Americans.  
 89 blacks and eight whites are lynched.



- 1909 PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION:** William Taft and VP James Sherman (Republican).  
**NAACP** is founded by white and black social activists (Natl. Assn. for the Advancement of Colored People).

White artist George Bellows completes the painting *Both Members of This Club*.

69 blacks and 13 whites are lynched.

- 1910 THIRTEENTH CENSUS:** U.S. population totals 93.4 million, including 9.8 million African Americans (10.7%). Black-owned farms total 218,000.

Baltimore passes first city ordinance to segregate neighborhoods, specifying the boundaries of black and white sections (ruled unconstitutional in 1917 by the U.S. Supreme Court). Many southern states and cities pass similar laws.

NAACP publishes first issue of its monthly journal, *The Crisis*.

Oklahoma acts to disenfranchise African Americans.

Jack Johnson defends his heavyweight championship by defeating white boxer Jim Jeffries. Mob violence breaks out in several cities after the fight.

67 blacks and nine whites are lynched.



Jack Johnson

- 1911** National Urban League is formed as a coalition of several black organizations.  
 60 blacks and seven whites are lynched.

- 1912** First black film production, a short entitled *The Railroad Porter*, is released.  
 James Weldon Johnson publishes the novel *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*.  
 62 blacks and two whites are lynched.

- 1913 PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION:** Woodrow Wilson and VP Thomas Marshall (Dem.).  
**50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY** of the Emancipation Proclamation is celebrated across the nation.  
 Booker T. Washington delivers the address “Negro Progress in Virginia” to the Negro Organization Society in Richmond.  
 Rosa McCauley [Parks] is born in Tuskegee, Alabama.  
 51 blacks and one white are lynched.
- 1914 WORLD WAR I** begins in Europe.  
 Monroe Trotter meets with President Wilson to protest his order to segregate federal workers’ facilities.  
 Meta Warrick Fuller completes the sculpture *Ethiopia Awakening*.  
 51 blacks and four whites are lynched.
- 1915** NAACP organizes nationwide protest against film *Birth of a Nation*.  
 U.S. Supreme Court declares use of grandfather clause to restrict black voting unconstitutional (*Guinn v. U.S.*).  
 Booker T. Washington dies in his late 50s.  
 First full-length film from an all-black studio, *Realization of a Negro’s Ambition*, is released.  
 New Orleans black musician Jelly Roll Morton publishes “Jelly Roll Blues,” the first published jazz arrangement.  
 56 blacks and 13 whites are lynched.
- 1916** 50 blacks and four whites are lynched.
- 1917 PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION:** Woodrow Wilson and VP Thomas Marshall (Dem.).  
**U.S. ENTERS WORLD WAR I.** 370,000 African-Americans are in the military.  
**MOB VIOLENCE** in East St. Louis, Illinois, leads to the deaths of 40-200 blacks and the destruction of the African American community.  
**SILENT PROTEST PARADE** in New York City is organized by the NAACP to protest riots and lynchings.  
 36 blacks and two whites are lynched.
- 1918 WORLD WAR I ENDS** with armistice in November.  
 Northern migration of blacks increases significantly after the end of World War I.  
 Federal anti-lynching bill is introduced into Congress. (Action is blocked in 1922. No further anti-lynching bills are considered until 1935).
- 1919 “RED SUMMER OF HATE.”** Racial violence breaks out in 26 cities, the worst in Chicago.  
 76 blacks and seven whites are lynched.
- 1920 FOURTEENTH CENSUS:** U.S. population totals 105.7 million, including 10.5 million African Americans (10%). Urban black population has grown by 33% since 1910.  
 Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Assn. holds first convention in New York City.  
 53 blacks and eight whites are lynched.



Canning exhibit, Virginia, 1913



Silent Protest parade, 1917