



Oklahoma's Senate Bill 1

“An Act to promote the comfort of passengers on railroads, street cars, urban, interurban, suburban cars, and at railroad stations”

Inquiry Design Model (IDM) Blueprint™

Oklahoma History Center Museum Learning and Education Department

Compelling Question

How do we determine what is important?

Standards and Practices

OKH.5.2 Examine multiple points of view regarding the evolution of race relations in Oklahoma, including:

B. Passage of Senate Bill 1 establishing Jim Crow Laws

Practice 2. Analyze and Address Authentic Civic Issues

Students will utilize interdisciplinary tools and master the basic concepts of the social studies in order to acquire and apply content understanding in all related fields of study.

Staging the Question

The teacher will ask students what laws brand new states might consider passing. The teacher will observe that the first few laws passed would probably be considered very important to the people of the state. The teacher will show a photograph of the signing of the Jim Crow law, sharing that this segregation law was the first law passed once Oklahoma became a state.

<https://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc231947/>

Supporting Question 1

What opportunities and challenges did African Americans face as the twentieth century began?

Formative Performance Task

Students will use the featured sources to create a T-Chart describing the opportunities and challenges of the time for African Americans.

Students need to understand that white supremacy was powerful nationwide at the beginning of the twentieth century. They need to be aware that from 1896 to 1907, African Americans began moving out of the South into cities and building institutions and wealth. They did this within a framework of severe limitations, as the Plessy decision allowed cities and states to enact comprehensive systems of segregation, while smaller groups of actors repeatedly used violence against African Americans. The primary sources offer images of African American life that should allow students to recognize that African American experiences and material wealth varied. Secondary sources provide context and information about the challenges facing African Americans.

Featured Sources

Primary

“W. E. B. Du Bois’ Hand-Drawn Infographics of African-American Life, 1900”

<https://publicdomainreview.org/collection/w-e-b-du-bois-hand-drawn-infographics-of-african-american-life-1900>

“On the Beach, the Kids’ Ball Game, 1904-1910”

<https://www.historicnewengland.org/explore/collections-access/gusn/189873/>

“African American Sharecroppers, 1907”

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/emmett-sharecropping-mississippi/>

“East Side Pharmacy, Tennessee, 1907” <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47dd-f3de-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a9>

“Skaters at Rock Creek, 1905,” http://collections.si.edu/search/detail/edanmdm:siris_sic_9266

“African American Girl with Teddy Bear, 1900.”

<https://collections.ctdigitalarchive.org/islandora/object/40002:14021>

“Mrs. Frances Smith; Keeper of Boarding House, Battle Creek, Mich., 1907.”

<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47df-a1e5-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

“Mrs. Anna Nemor; A great business woman, 1907.”

<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47df-a1d8-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

“African American class, 1906.” <https://www.loc.gov/item/2002717904/>

“Howard Law School Graduates, 1900.” <https://www.loc.gov/item/2001699684/>

“Mechanical Drawing at Tuskegee, 1902.” <https://www.loc.gov/item/2014646488/>

Secondary

“Background: African American Experience at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century.” (included)

Supporting Question 2

As Oklahoma becomes a state, to what degree do leaders and their supporters in Oklahoma share in the racism of the nation?

Formative Performance Task

Students will briefly answer the questions: After reading the *Daily Oklahoman* articles, what arguments did supporters of Jim Crow laws use to try and convince others that it was necessary? What arguments did the opposition use?

Students need to understand that the Oklahoma legislators and their supporters shared racist beliefs with other Americans and acted upon those beliefs. They also need to be aware that Black communities mounted a strong defense. Students will read the newspaper articles and identify the central arguments used to gain support for the Jim Crow legislation. They will read a brief article on the law that informs them of the outcome.

Featured Sources

Primary (Included)

"Gives Justice to Both the Races." Editorial by Roy E. Stafford. *Daily Oklahoman*, September 13, 1907.

Muskogee Cimenter, December 20, 1907.

Orlando Clipper, December 13, 1907.

"Jim Crow Bill." Letter to Editor by Joe Sherman. *Fairview Republican*, December 27, 1907.

"The Jim Crow Bill." *Tulsa Democrat*, December 6, 1907.

"An Open Letter." T. S. E. Brown and B. C. Franklin. *Daily Ardmoreite*, December 18, 1907.

Secondary

Larry O'Dell, "Senate Bill One," *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*,
<https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry?entry=SE017>.

Summative Performance Task

Argument

Students will respond to "In what ways did Oklahoma's politicians and their constituents align with the dominant, national, white perspective on African Americans? Did you identify any differences?" with a strong thesis and specific, historical information to support their claims in an essay outline or verbal defense.

Extension

What other measures did the architects of Oklahoma statehood pass to create a system of segregation in Oklahoma?

- School Segregation Appendix contains the original language in the Oklahoma Constitution establishing two school systems. For additional information, see <https://www.oklahoman.com/article/2884332/jim-crow-laws-in-oklahoma>
- Denial of Women's Suffrage Brown, Diane. "How Women Got the Vote in Oklahoma." *League of Women Voters*, 1978. <https://my.lwv.org/sites/default/files/howwomengotvote.pdf>
- Defeat of African American legislator Bruce, Michael L., "Hamlin, Albert Comstock," *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, <https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry?entry=HA015>
- Grandfather Clause Jager, S. (2012, August 19) *Guinn v. United States* (1915). Retrieved from <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/guinn-v-united-states-1915/>

Taking Informed Action

Students can educate themselves about techniques and issues surrounding misinformation today.

Background Sheet: The Elements of Jim Crow

Plessy v. Ferguson and the Expansion of Jim Crow Segregation

In 1892, Homer Plessy challenged a Louisiana law enacting a “whites only” car in the first-class section of railway cars. This case reached the United States Supreme Court, and the decision established the doctrine of “separate but equal” in public facilities. The opinion’s author, Justice Henry Billings Brown, argued that separate treatment did not automatically result in unequal status. He stated that governments have the authority to make laws like this to protect the peace.¹

Cities and states throughout the South and West began passing segregation laws that strictly separated African Americans from whites in public facilities and private businesses. They were not afforded “separate but equal” alternatives, either. In Alabama, one county spent \$15 on every white child’s education and 33¢ for each African American student.² City governments refused to build parks in African American neighborhoods, and those residents remained barred from the white parks. Laws and ordinances required segregation in hospitals and ambulances; most communities could not afford two separate health care systems, so they usually fully funded the white one and left the one serving the African American community to fend for itself. Most communities kept a separate Bible for African Americans to swear on before testifying.

Disenfranchisement*

Because the Fifteenth Amendment granted the right to vote to African American men, it became increasingly important for the governments that built these systems of inequality and segregation to prevent African Americans from voting; otherwise, they would vote for people who promised to get rid of those laws. Communities did this through a variety of methods. Many passed a poll tax that required paying a fee to vote. This eliminated a sizable number of rural sharecroppers because they did not have the money, however modest the tax, to spare. Many other communities used the literacy test to limit African American voting. This method took advantage of the limits in educational opportunity because of slavery and the minimal funding offered to African American public education during this time. In addition, the literacy test required the test taker to both read and “correctly” interpret any passage in the United States or state constitution. Whether the test taker “correctly” interpreted the passage was left to the registrar, who knew to refuse African Americans regardless of how they answered.

*In this context, “franchise” meant the right to vote.

Violence

The most important tool used to ensure that African Americans stayed away from the polls was also used to ensure that they conformed to segregation laws with minimal protest. Whites also employed violence against African Americans to scare them away from competing for jobs and housing in cities. Although whites directed many different types of violence against both individuals and groups since the days of slavery, lynching and riots emerged as two major forms of violence. Lynching is the killing of a person by a group that lacks the legal authority to do so. In the South, white communities rapidly embraced lynching as an instrument of terror to use on the African American community. Individuals who became targets of lynch mobs never had the opportunity to defend themselves. The white mobs used horrific violence to kill the victim.

In urban centers, another form of racist violence, riots, erupted in 1906 and 1908. In Atlanta in 1906, white mobs formed after newspapers published numerous false stories about Black men attacking white women. These mobs attacked people, killed more than a dozen people, and injured hundreds.³

In 1908, more allegations of Black men attacking white women resulted in a mob of about 5,000 whites, which resulted in the burning of African American neighborhoods and businesses and the killing of two African American men. Lynchings and race riots continued throughout the early twentieth century. One of the earliest and longest initiatives by the NAACP was the passage of anti-lynching legislation at the federal level.

Movement and Change

The hostility exhibited by white neighbors and expanding opportunities in cities fueled a sustained outmigration of African Americans from the rural South. Some elected to move west to the growing All-Black towns in Oklahoma and Kansas, while others moved to cities in both the South and the North. Overcrowded and expensive living conditions and the effort of white workers to block African Americans from accessing industrial jobs on an equal footing meant that conditions remained challenging for African Americans.

However, this movement did build wealth and opportunity in the African American community. Some, such as Madame C. J. Walker and Maggie Walker, became wealthy entrepreneurs and business operators. Others trained at historically Black colleges like Howard University to become doctors, lawyers, and chemists. Thriving middle and upper classes grew. Institutions such as the NAACP, faith-based organizations, fraternal organizations, and the Black press developed to support African Americans throughout the United States.

¹ Plessy v. Ferguson. Oyez. Accessed April 10, 2020. [oyez.org/cases/1850-1900/163us537](https://www.oyez.org/cases/1850-1900/163us537).

² Norrell, Robert J. The House I Live In: Race in the American Century. Cary: Oxford University Press USA - OSO, 2006. Accessed April 10, 2020. ProQuest Ebook Central.

³ Atlanta Race Riot of 1906." Sweet Auburn Avenue. <http://sweetauburn.us/rings/raceriot.htm>.
"Springfield Race Riot, 1908." Illinois State Museum, museum.state.il.us/RiverWeb/landings/Ambot/Archives/vignettes/people/Springfield_20Race_20Riot.html.



Graphic Organizer: Oklahoma's Senate Bill 1

Part 1

Opportunities

Challenges

Part 2

After reading the articles, what arguments did supporters of the Jim Crow law use to convince others that it was necessary?

What arguments did the opposition use?

Article Transcript:

Negro Must Be Made to Know His Place—Should Have Equal Privileges But Entirely Separate
(By Roy E. Stafford.)

Give the negro a chance by making him understand that a line is drawn between the white and black races.

Educate him in a school that is presided over by negroes and whose pupils are all negroes.

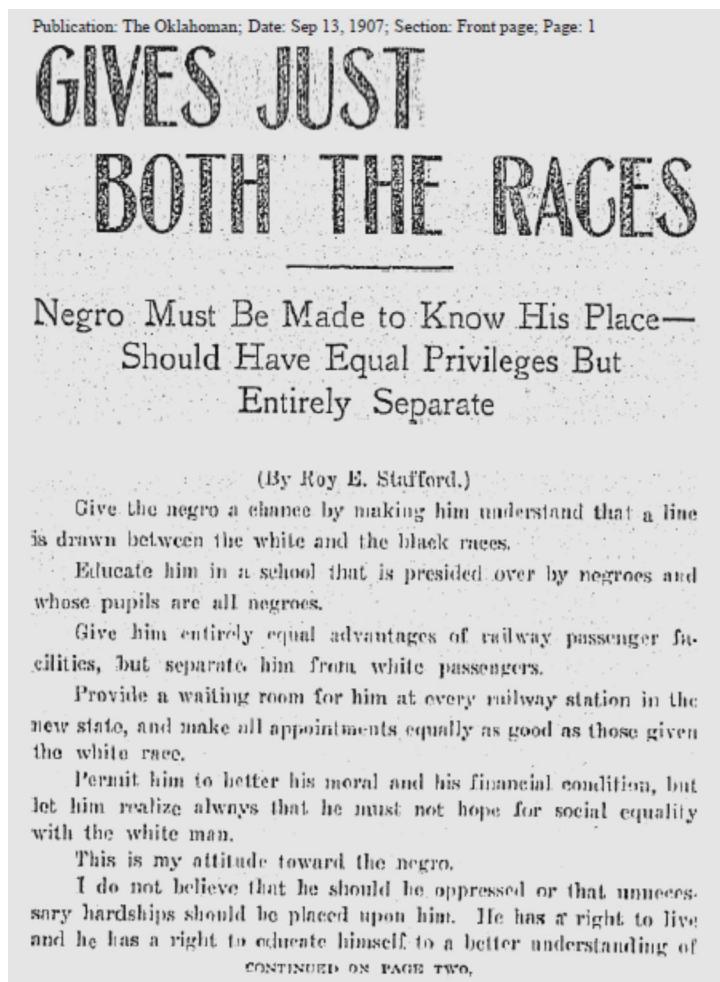
Give him entirely equal advantages of railway passenger facilities, but separate him from white passengers.

Provide a waiting room for him at every railway station in the new state, and make all appointments equally as good as those given the white race.

Permit him to better his moral and his financial abilities, but let him realize always that he must not hope for social equality with the white man.

This is my attitude toward the negro.

I do not believe that he should be oppressed or that unnecessary hardship should be placed upon him. He has a right to live and he has a right to educate himself to a better understanding...

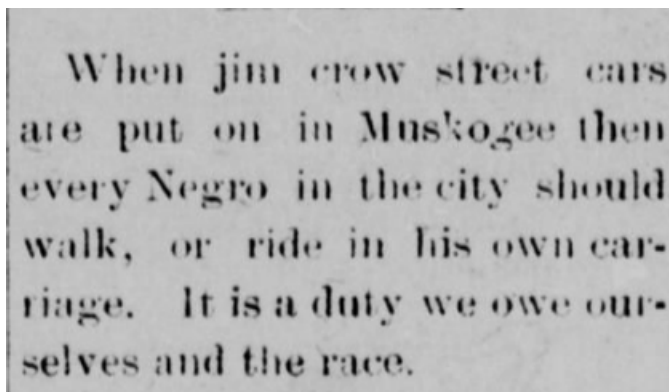


Primary Source: Muskogee Cimeter, December 20, 1907

[The Gateway to Oklahoma History, gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc70094/m1/1](http://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc70094/m1/1)

Article Transcript:

“When jim crow street cars are put on in Muskogee then every Negro in the city should walk, or ride in his own carriage. It is a duty we owe ourselves and the race.”



Primary Source: *Muskogee Cimeter*, December 20, 1907

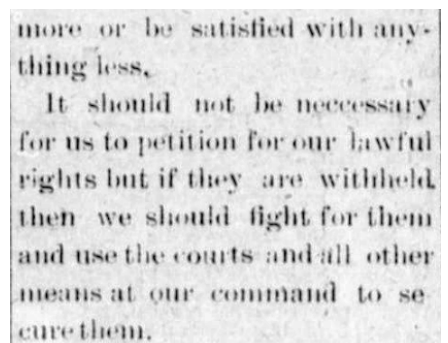
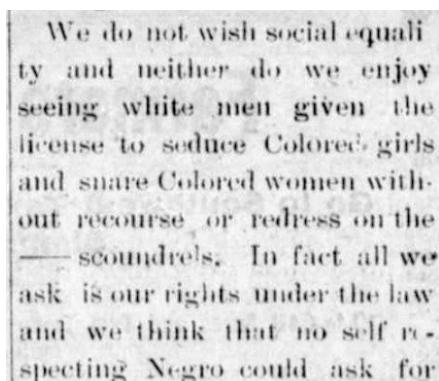
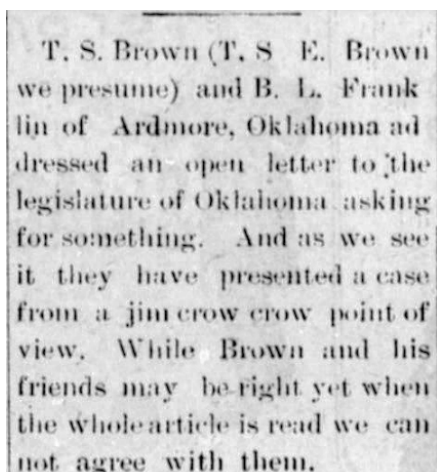
[The Gateway to Oklahoma History, gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc70094/m1/1](http://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc70094/m1/1)

Article Transcript:

“T. S. Brown (T. S. E. Brown we presume) and B. L. Franklin of Ardmore, Oklahoma addressed an open letter to the legislature of Oklahoma asking for something. And as we see it they have presented a case from a jim crow point of view. While Brown and his friends may be right yet when the whole article is read we can not agree with them.

We do not wish social equality and neither do we enjoy seeing white men given the license to seduce Colored girls and snare Colored women without recourse or redress on the —scoundrels. In fact all we ask is our rights under the law and we think that no self respecting Negro could ask for more or be satisfied with anything less.

It should not be necessary for us to petition for our lawful rights but if they are withheld, then we should fight for them and use the courts and all other means at our command to secure them.”

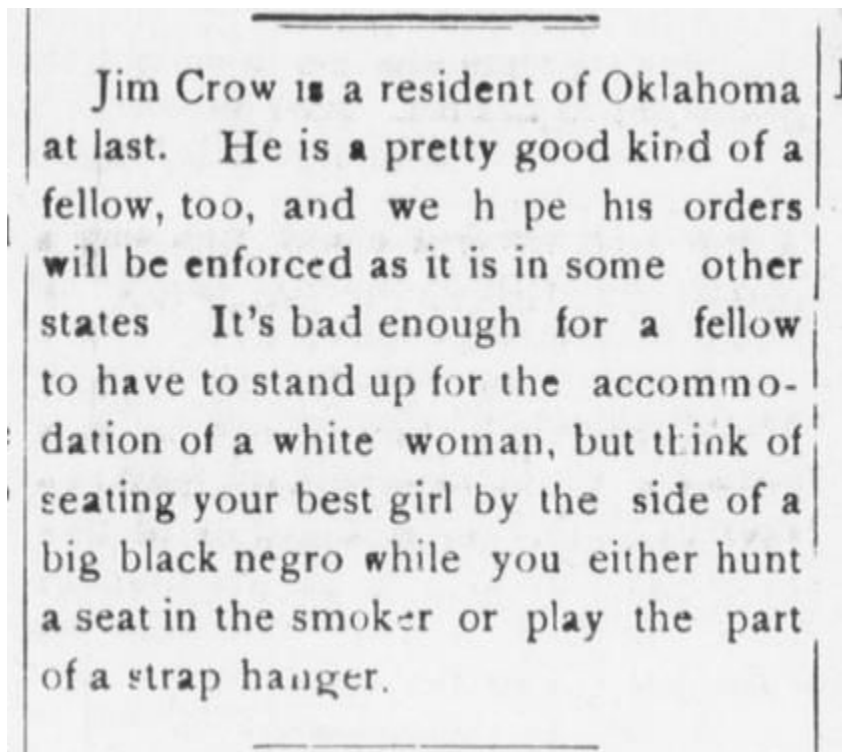


Primary Source: *Orlando Clipper*, December 13, 1907

The Gateway to Oklahoma History, gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc305766/m1/4/

Article Transcript:

Jim Crow is a resident of Oklahoma at last. He is a pretty good kind of fellow, too, and we hope his orders will be enforced as it is in some other states. It's bad enough for a fellow to have to stand up for the accommodation of a white woman, but think of seating your best girl by the side of a big black negro while you either hunt a seat in the smoker or play the part of a strap hanger.



Primary Source: *Fairview Republican*, December 27, 1907

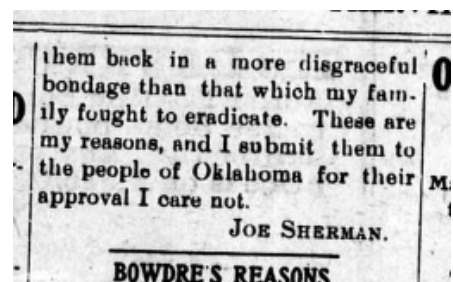
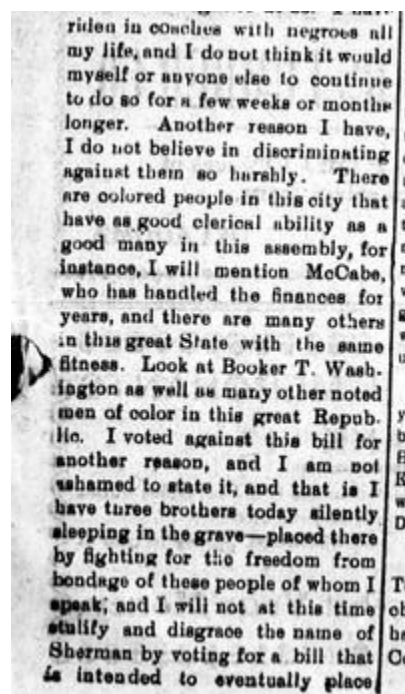
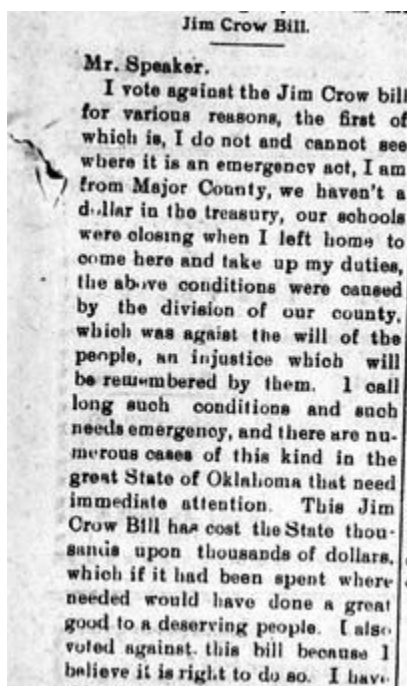
The Gateway to Oklahoma History, gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc848562/m1/1/

Article Transcript:

Mr. Speaker.

I vote against the Jim Crow bill for various reasons, the first of which is, I do not and cannot see where it is an emergency act, I am from Major County, we haven't a dollar in the treasury, our schools were closing when I left home to come here and take up my duties, the above conditions were caused by the division of our county, which was against the will of the people, an injustice which will be remembered by them. I call long such conditions and snob needs emergency, and there are numerous cases of this kind in the great state of Oklahoma that need immediate attention. This Jim Crow Bill has cost the State thousands upon thousands of dollars, which if it had been spent where needed would have done a great good to a deserving people. I also voted against this bill because I believe it is right to do so. I have ridden in coaches with negroes all my life, and I do not think it would myself or anyone else to continue to do so for a few weeks or months longer. Another reason I have, I do not believe in discriminating against them so harshly. There are colored people in this city that have a good clerical ability as a good many in this assembly, for instance, I will mention McCabl, who has handled the finances for years, and there are many others in this great State with the same fitness. Look at Booker T. Washington as well as many of the noted men of color in this great Republic. I voted against this bill for another reason, and I am not ashamed to state it, and that is I have three brothers today silently sleeping in the grave—placed there by fighting for the freedom from bondage of these people of whom I speak; and I will not at this time stultify and disgrace the name of Sherman by voting for a bill that is intended to eventually place them back in a more disgraceful bondage than that which my family fought to eradicate. These are my reasons, and I submit them to the people of Oklahoma for their approval I care not.

Joe Sherman.



Primary Source *Tulsa Democrat*, December 6, 1907

The Gateway to Oklahoma History, gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc1076584/m1/4/

Article Transcript:

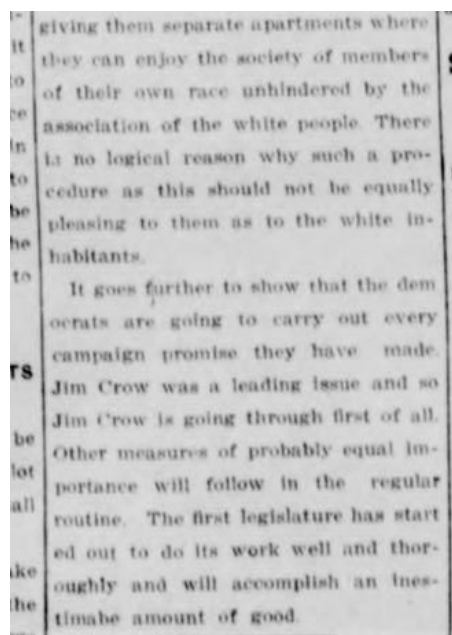
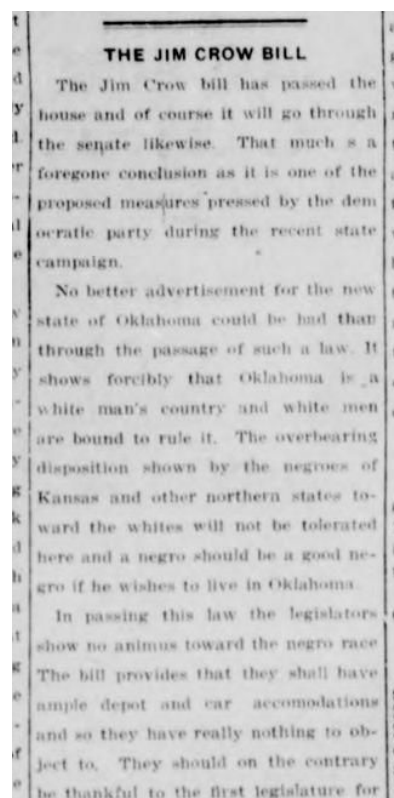
The Jim Crow Bill

The Jim Crow bill has passed the house and of course it will go through the senate likewise. That much is a forgotten conclusion as it is one of the proposed measures pressed by the democratic party during the recent state campaign.

No better advertisement for the new state of Oklahoma could be had than through the passage of such a law. It shows forcibly that Oklahoma is a white man's country and white men are bound to rule it. The overbearing disposition shown by the negroes of Kansas and other northern states toward the whites will not be tolerated here and a negro should be a good negro if he wishes to live in Oklahoma.

In passing this law the legislators show no animus toward the negro race. The bill provides that they shall have ample depot and car accommodations and so they have really nothing to object to. They should on the contrary be thankful to the first legislature for giving them separate apartments where they can enjoy the society of members of their own race unhindered by the association of the white people. There is no logical reason why such a procedure as this should not be equally pleasing to them as to the white inhabitants.

It goes further to show that the democrats are going to carry out every campaign promise they have made. Jim Crow was a leading issue and so Jim Crow is going through first of all. Other measures of probably equal importance will follow in the regular routine. The first legislature has started out to do its work well and through and will accomplish an inestimable amount of good.



Primary Source: *Daily Ardmoreite*, December 18, 1907

The Gateway to Oklahoma History, <https://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc80621/m1/4/>

Article Transcript:

AN OPEN LETTER

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Oklahoma:

Most Worthy and Honorable Gentlemen: We venture to address you this open letter on the proposed "Jim Crow bill," so called.

Just now, since our admittance into the union, there seems to be an urgent and popular demand for the separation of the races (we mean yours and ours) in the common carriers of the state, that is passenger trains and street cars.

We are aware of the fact that many of you have gone to the legislature pledged to your constituency to see the so called "Jim Crow" bill becomes a law. We do not write you with the hope of having you break your pledges or promises to your constituency, but rather in a humble way, to insist that he serves his constituency best and serves humanity best.

It is not the nature of the colored man to obtrude himself into the society of the white man, and generally, even when is persistently insisted upon to do so, he consents very gingerly. Hence it is therefore not because of any desire upon the race's part to mix socially with your race, that this letter is written, but it is because of our great desire to have our wives and dependent ones escape the humiliation and demoralization that seem to be the inseparable concomitants of the "Jim Crow" system.

In all the states where the separate coach law exists the different legislatures provide that "there shall be separate, but equal accommodation for persons of African descent etc., but how has this proviso been construed by the railroads? What has been the result?

There is not a place on the face of the globe where this separate but equal accommodation law exists but what we will find separate but unequal accommodation. Where this peculiar system exists, we have tangible, visible and living evidence of the fact of the above declaration. Wherever you find the "Jim Crow" law extant, you see the women of color, without respect to decency, culture, or good-breeding of the ability to pay for a better fare, indiscriminately caged in a "smoker" with the thugs, vags and all the motley horde of the underworld. In there you will see the little colored girl of culture breathing fetid air and hearing and seeing things that will haunt her all through life, possibly. And in this connection we wish to reiterate that it is not the desire of our people to mix with yours socially that causes us to protest against this separation, but it is because of the baneful results that emanate from this "equal (?) but separate accommodation."

We honor and admire your great zeal to redeem and carry out to the letter your pledges made to those who entrusted you with their suffrage. Gratitude to ones constituency is a great virtue, abut in your many and noble efforts to serve a confiding constituency, we ask that you remember and do nothing to that will react upon and hurt them in the end.

It takes great souls to build up a splendid commonwealth—it really takes true statesmanship.

National virtue is the end that all great souls strive to attain and they think that anything short of that is not worth while.

In our humble judgment, it seems to us, that the twofold question of "How shall I build a state so as to advance and promote the interest of the strong and favored, and at the same time protect, encourage and inspire the weak and less fortunate," should engage the minds of all the state builders of our infant commonwealth.

We are not protesting against race separation, socially, for we all know that there is an impassible chasm between the two races, but we do ask that you define and make more specific, the phrase "separate but equal accommodation, etc."

Shall we be entitled to and allowed to have separate chair cards and separate sleepers for our wives, daughters and mothers, those of us who are able to enjoy such luxuries? Certainly the railroads are fully able to prepare decently for us, and ought to prepare decently for us, and ought to be compelled to do so. Or shall we be required to ride in coaches that are used in part by the newsboy for his news and fruit stands and partly by the conductor for his counting room? Assure us that equal accommodation really means equal accommodation and we will cease to worry, assure us this face and we will be unto you a most grateful people.

Give us a fair field, offer us all the encouragement possible, and we will contribute to the greatness of this splendid infant commonwealth in such a material way that your unborn generation will say that you builded wisely.

Without respect to party or politics, we contend that there is a higher and nobler duty to preform that those incident to party fealty. The duty of man to man is a divine one, and the duty of an enlightened and Christian people to a people who by force, were attached from the soil of their nativity, and transplanted upon foreign lands to become citizens, is a duty to which all others are really subservient.

The colored man is a citizen of the American soil, by adoption. His home is here and he is here to stay. Now how shall you treat him so as to make him manifest an undiminished interest in this country? Oklahoma has a chance to teach her older sisters how to make useful people more useful by treating them kindly and humanely. If history is true oppression never helped a people, nor in the long run benefited a nation.

The proposed legislation which gives birth to this communication can hardly be called a party legislation, for it is a very common piece of information that a very large percent of the members of both parties desired it, and we bow to the inevitable, with the hope that we may, in fact, have "equal accommodation."

It remains to be seen whether you honorable gentlemen will so fix the law as to give the colored man equal accommodation in fact, or whether you will suffer him and his to be forced to the injustices and indignities that his brother bears in the older states.

It takes little statesmanship to suppress, retard the growth and development of the race, but the highest statesmanship, the profoundest philosophy, is shown in him who encourages the weak by lending to them manly aid, extending to them the olive branch of hope, peace and good will. Such a statesman builds not for the present only, but for all times to come.

We are most humbly yours,

T. S. E. Brown

B. C. Franklin, Ardmore, Okla.

(Note—The above letter was handed to the Ardmoreite yesterday, but too late for publication in Tuesday's issue.)

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The colored man is a citizen of the American soil, by adoption. His home is here and he is here to stay. Now how shall you treat him so as to make him manifest an undiminished interest in this country? Oklahoma has a chance to teach her

ed interest in this country? Oklahoma has a chance to teach her older sisters how to make a useful people more useful by treating them kindly and humanely. If history is true oppression never helped a people, nor in the long run benefited a nation.

The proposed legislation which gives birth to this communication can hardly be called a party legislation, for it is a very common piece of information that a very large percent of the members of both parties desired it, and we bow to the inevitable, with the hope that we may in fact have "equal accommodation."

It remains to be seen whether you honorable gentlemen will so fix the law as to give the colored man equal accommodation in fact, or whether you will suffer him and his to be forced to the injustices and indignities that his brother bears in the older states.

It takes little statesmanship to suppress, retard the growth and development of the race, but the highest statesmanship, the profoundest

philosophy, is shown in him who encourages the weak by lending to them manly aid, extending to them the olive branch of hope, peace and good will. Such a statesman builds not for the present only, but for all times to come.

We are most humbly yours,

T. S. E. BROWN,

B. C. FRANKLIN.

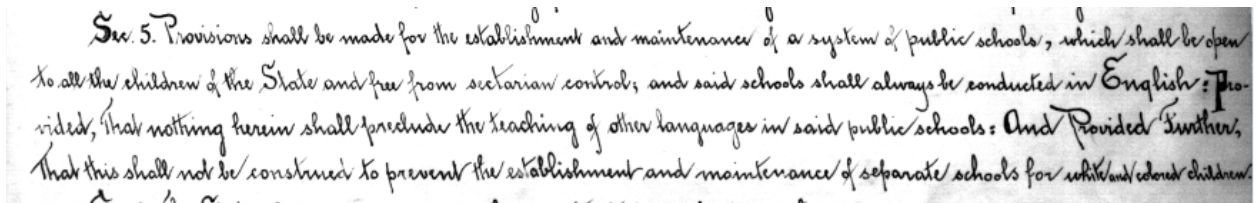
Ardmore, Okla.

(Note—The above letter was handed to the Ardmoreite yesterday, but too late for publication in Tuesday's issue.)

Appendix A: Oklahoma State Constitution

Article 1, Section 5, Oklahoma's Senate Bill 1

"Sec. 5 Provisions shall be made for the establishment and maintenance of a system of public schools, which shall be open to all children of the State and free from sectarian controls, and said schools shall always be conducted in English: Provided, that nothing herein shall preclude the teacher of other languages in said public schools: And Provided further that this shall not be constructed to prevent the establishment and maintenance of separate schools for white and colored children."



Sec. 5. Provisions shall be made for the establishment and maintenance of a system of public schools, which shall be open to all the children of the State and free from sectarian control, and said schools shall always be conducted in English: Provided, that nothing herein shall preclude the teaching of other languages in said public schools: And Provided further, that this shall not be construed to prevent the establishment and maintenance of separate schools for white and colored children.

Rubric for Summative Assessment

Did the student answer the question with a clearly stated thesis?

Complex

Yes

Thesis Section

No

Points Possible

Embedded but not clearly stated

Points Awarded

Did the student include at least three specific pieces of historical information as evidence to support the major points?

Comprehensive

Yes

Evidence Section

No

Points Possible

Incomplete

Points Awarded

Did the student explain how the historical information demonstrated the major points?

Complex

Yes

Analysis Section

No

Points Possible

Partial Analysis

Points Awarded