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Rise and Fall of Jim Crow

Have you ever wondered about how life today came to be? Have you ever wondered how black people got their rights after being forced into slavery, and having no rights whatsoever? Well let's look back into a dark period, 1901-1920, this period is about segregation, racism, and excelling problems.

First we start off with "The Souls of Black Folk." W.E.B Du Bois published a book called "The Souls of the Black Folk" which was a collection of essays in 1903. It was acclaimed as an extraordinary work of literature. It covered a variety of subjects, from Freedmen's Bureau and black music to Du Bois' experiences teaching in rural Georgia and Tennessee. It includes one of his most famous lines: "The problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line" (PBS 1).

After that we have "The Niagara Movement." W.E.B Du Bois, a professor, exasperated by Booker T. Washington's continued policies towards whites and his enormous power within the black community, decided to call a meeting to form an organization to offer a militant alternative to Washington. This was called "The Niagara Movement," because the meeting was held at Niagara Falls. The group was representative of some of the intellectual elite of the African-American community. The meeting was supposed to be held on the American side of the falls but it couldn't because racist delegates would not let them.

The next topic is about the “Brownsville Affair” which was a racial incident. That led into racial tensions between whites in Texas with blacks stationed at Fort Brown. Right after they got stationed in Fort Brown they were being negatively talked about just because they were black. Then they were going to get persecuted for a crime they did not commit if the white generals did not stand up for them and provide proof that they were there and not at the crime scene. They later found a way to persecute them they said that they found rifle shellings and they matched army model rifles. Later, in 1909, a riot happened where 8 blacks were killed and dozens wounded. People would rampage housings, properties, and businesses. There would then be a conference of civil rights activists.

In 1902 Woodrow Wilson promised fairness and justice for blacks if elected. In a letter to a black church official, he said, “Should I become President of the United States they may count upon me for absolute fair dealing for everything by which I could assist in advancing their interests of the race” (PBS 1). But he changed his tune after the election.

On the evening of March 21, 1915, President Woodrow Wilson attended a special screening at the White House. The screening was “The Birth of a New Nation,” which brings us to the next topic, “A Birth of a New Nation.” The film was directed by D.W. Griffith and based on “The Clansman,” a novel written by a good friend of Wilson’s, Thomas Dixon. The film showed a distorted portrait of the South after the Civil War, denigrating blacks. It falsified the period of Reconstruction by presenting blacks as dominating Southern whites, and sexually forcing themselves upon white women.

So this just concludes that in 1901-1920, the dark period which dealt with racism, slavery, segregation, wars, and excelling problems. The time period, in which no one wants to live. A time period that no one wants to remember. A time period that shaped our society today. A society where there's no racism, no segregation, and equal rights.