

THE HISTORY OF AFRICAN AMERICANS THROUGH MILESTONE DOCUMENTS.

The Deleted Passage of the Declaration of Independence (1776) This controversial passage of the Declaration authored by Thomas Jefferson condemning slavery was removed by the Continental Congress delegates gathered at Philadelphia.

Benjamin Banneker's Letter to Thomas Jefferson (1791) Banneker responds to Thomas Jefferson's recently articulated views about the inferiority of the black race.

The Fugitive Slave Act (1793) was a measure passed by Congress regarding the institution of slavery.

In 1808, the U.S. Congress passed the **Slave Importation Ban**. It ended the legal importation of enslaved persons of African ancestry into the United States.

The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 gave far more power to southern slave hunters in capturing fugitive slaves who escaped to the North.

In 1857 the Supreme Court ruled the **Dred Scott v. Sanford** case. It stated that enslaved people were property protected by law in every state, that the enslaved are not entitled to use the courts, and that enslaved people and their descendants could never be citizens.

By the end of 1862, President Abraham Lincoln issued the **Emancipation Proclamation**. It proclaimed that on January 1, 1863, all enslaved people in the Confederate States or portions of those states that were not then controlled by Union forces should be free people. From that point forward the Union Army would free slaves.

The Reconstruction Amendments (1865-1870) were the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the U.S. Constitution. The 13th amendment abolished slavery, the 14th declared former enslaved people citizens of the nation, and the 15th gave former enslaved males the right to vote.

Tennessee Segregation (Jim Crow) Laws (1866) listed all of the racially restricted legislation passed by the State of Tennessee. Those laws were recaptured by other Southern states' legislatures and remained implemented till **1955**.

The Civil Rights Act (1866). This act of Congress was the first attempt to protect the civil rights of the newly freed African Americans.

The Mississippi Black Codes (1866). These are among the first post-Civil War statutes designed to establish the rights and regulate the behavior of ex-slaves at the state level.

The Reconstruction Acts (1867-1868). These four measures enacted on March 2, March 23, and July 19, 1867, and March 11, 1868, established the basic provisions for Congressional Reconstruction in the ex-Confederate states including allowing suffrage for African American men.

The Slaughter House Cases (1873). The U.S. Supreme Court distinguishes between "state citizenship" and "federal citizenship" and narrows the scope of the 14th Amendment in regard to state actions.

The Civil Rights Act of 1875 (1875). Congress attempts to provide a number of rights to African American during the Reconstruction era.

The Civil Rights Cases (1883). The U.S. Supreme Court rules Congress does not have the authority to restrict segregation in public accommodations and public conveyances. The decision curtails the Civil Rights Act of 1875.

Ferguson v. Giles (1890). The Michigan Supreme Court ruled that William Ferguson's civil rights were violated when he was expelled from a Detroit restaurant for refusing to dine in its "colored" section.

Plessy v. Ferguson (1896). The U.S. Supreme court upholds the validity of a Louisiana statute requiring separation of white and black races in railway coaches.

Williams v. Mississippi (1898). The U.S. Supreme Court rules that poll taxes and literacy tests do not violate the Constitution.

The Louisiana Grandfather Clause (1898). This amendment to Louisiana's Constitution effectively prohibited most African American males from voting in that state's elections.

Guinn v. United States (1915). This U.S. Supreme Court Decision strikes down the Grandfather Clause.

McLaurin v. Oklahoma (1950). The U.S. Supreme Court rules against classroom and social segregation on the basis of race.

Henderson v. United States Et. Al. (1950). The U.S. Supreme Court rules railroad dining car segregation is unequal treatment and thus violates the Interstate Commerce Act.

Brown v. Board of Education (1954). This unanimous Supreme Court decision declared unconstitutional all school segregation mandated by state law.

Brown v. Board of Education, II (1955). This ruling is a reiteration of the Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* although in this instance mandating that school desegregation proceed "with all deliberate speed."

Zora Neale Hurston Criticizes Brown v. Board of Education (1955). Zora Neale Hurston is best known as a major literary figure in the Harlem Renaissance and the Great Depression years. During her later years she became supporter of conservative causes. In this letter to the *Orlando Sentinel* on August 11, 1955, she criticizes the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision that ordered the desegregation of public schools.

Gayle v. Browder (1956). The U.S. Supreme Court upholds a lower court ruling banning segregation on Montgomery, Alabama buses.

The Civil Rights Act of 1957. This measure, the first civil rights legislation enacted since Reconstruction, provides guarantees for African American voting rights in the South. The Act also creates the U.S. Civil Rights Commission to investigate issues regarding race relations and racial discrimination.

The Civil Rights Act of 1960. This legislation established federal inspection of local voter registration rolls and introduced penalties for anyone who attempted to block a citizen's attempt to register to vote or to actually vote.

Gomillion v. Lightfoot (1960). In this case the U.S. Supreme Court rules that the Alabama Legislature violated the 15th Amendment when it enacted Act 140 in 1957 which redrew district lines in and around Tuskegee, Alabama, to dilute the voting strength of black voters.

Executive Order 10925 (1961). This order issued by President John F. Kennedy on March 6, 1961 created the Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity and required that projects financed with federal funds “take affirmative action” to ensure that hiring and employment practices would be free of racial bias.

NAACP v. Button (1963). The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that minority group organizations may provide legal services to its members for the purpose of helping them in asserting their legal rights. The Court concluded that the activities of the NAACP in Alabama were legal.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964. This measure bans discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965. This act applies a nationwide ban against the denial or abridgement of the right to vote and implements special enforcement provisions in areas of the nation with a history of discrimination against prospective voters.

Executive Order 11246 (1965). This Presidential Order names and introduces a new strategy for achieving equal employment opportunity, affirmative action.

Loving v. Virginia (1967). The U.S. Supreme Court outlaws all state laws banning interracial marriage.

Jones v. Alfred H. Mayer Co. (1968). The U.S. Supreme Court rules that Congress can regulate the sale and rental of all public and private property to prevent racial discrimination

The Civil Rights Act of 1968 (1968). This measure, also known as the Fair Housing Act, outlawed racial discrimination in the sale, rental, leasing, or subleasing of housing throughout the United States.

DeFunis v. Odegaard (1974). A white student previously denied admission to the University of Washington took the university to court, claiming that his scores were higher than some minorities admitted. DeFunis was admitted, but in his final year the school reversed their decision. The Supreme Court ruled that he would be allowed to complete his studies.

University of California Regents v. Bakke (1978). *University of California Regents v. Bakke* (1978). The U.S. Supreme Court rules against quotas for minority medical school applicants but upholds the use of race in hiring decisions.

Wygant Et. Al. v. Jackson Board of Education Et. Al. (1985). The U.S. Supreme Court rules that a collective bargaining agreement between the Jackson Board of Education and a teacher's union which permitted nonminority teachers to be laid off before minority teachers with less experience was a violation of the Equal Protection Clause.

United States v. Paradise (1987). In a case involving the State of Alabama Department of Public Safety, the U.S. Supreme court ruled that the department had systematically discriminated against African Americans in its thirty-seven year history and upheld a lower federal court's mandate that quotas be used to correct the situation. The court determined that the use of strict quotas in this case was one of the only means of combatting the department's overt and defiant racism.

The City of Richmond v. Croson (1989). The Supreme Court ruled that affirmative action must be subject to strict scrutiny and is unconstitutional unless racial discrimination can be proven to be widespread throughout a particular industry.

Shaw v. Reno (1993). The U.S. Supreme Court rules against a North Carolina redistricting plan that created majority black congressional districts.

Adarand Constructors, Inc. v. Peña (1995). The Supreme Court again called for strict scrutiny in affirmative action cases saying that such program must fulfil a compelling government interest and must be narrowly tailored to fit the particular situation.

Hopwood v. State of Texas (U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals) (1996). Four white students who had been denied admission to the University of Texas claimed that they had been unfairly rejected because minority candidates had taken their places. It is ruled that the University of Texas can not use race as a means of determining who to admit to their school.

California Proposition 209 (1996). This voter-approved statewide initiative amended the state constitution to effectively end affirmative action programs in the State of California.

Washington Initiative 200 (1998). This voter-approved statewide initiative made affirmative action programs illegal in the State of Washington.

Gratz v. Bollinger (2003). The Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional the University of Michigan's use of race as a factor in undergraduate admissions when based upon a formula of awarding of points for racial or ethnic background.

Gruttner v. Bollinger (2003). On the same day the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the University of Michigan's policy of rewarding points for racial background in its undergraduate admissions policy, the Court upheld the University of Michigan's Law School admission policy that said race can be one of many factors considered by colleges and universities when selecting students because it furthers a compelling interest in obtaining the educational benefits that flow from a diverse student body.

The Michigan Civil Rights Initiative (2006). This is the ban on affirmative action in Michigan passed by the voters in the November 2006 state election. It became law on December 22, 2006.

Nebraska Civil Rights Initiative 424 (2008). Nebraska becomes the fourth state to invalidate affirmative action programs.