

Jim Crow Laws: Oklahoma

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Following the pattern of states bordering the Confederacy, Oklahoma strongly supported separation of the races with 18 Jim Crow laws passed between 1890 and 1957. An Oklahoma City ordinance passed in 1925 made it illegal for black bands to march with white bands. Two laws were passed that restricted voting rights.

1890: Education [Statute]

Every three years an election for school electors to be held to vote for or against separate schools for white and colored children.

1897: Education [Statute]

A separate district will be established for colored children wherever there are at least eight black children. Unlawful for any white child to attend a school for black children (or vice versa).

1907: Education [Constitution]

Separate schools for white and colored children to be provided by the legislature.

1907: Voting rights [Statute]

Indigent persons housed in a poorhouse at public expense excluded from voting. Exception made for Federal, Confederate, and Spanish American veterans.

1907: Voting rights [Statute]

Required electors to read and write any section of the state Constitution. Exempted those who were enfranchised on January 1, 1866, and lineal descendants of such persons. Declared unconstitutional in 1915; however, provision for literacy was upheld.

1908: Education [Statute]

Public schools within Oklahoma to be operated under a plan of separation between the white and colored races. Penalty: Teachers could be fined between \$10 and \$50 for violating the law, and their certificate cancelled for one year. Corporations that operated schools that did not comply with the law were guilty of a misdemeanor and could be fined between \$100 and \$500. White students who attended a colored school could be fined between \$5 and \$20 daily.

1908: Railroads [Statute]

All railroad and streetcar companies to provide separate coaches for white and black passengers, "equal in all points of comfort and convenience." Penalty: Railway companies that violate the law fined \$100 to \$1,000. Passengers who fail to comply can be charged with a misdemeanor punishable by a fine from \$5 to \$25. Conductors could be fined \$50 to \$500 for failing to enforce the law.

1908: Miscegenation [Statute]

Unlawful for a person of African descent to marry any person not of African descent. Penalty: Felony punishable by a fine of up to \$500 and imprisonment from one to five years in the penitentiary.

1915: Public accommodations [Statute]

Required telephone companies to maintain separate booths for white and colored patrons.

1921: Miscegenation [Statute]

Prohibited marriage between Indians and Negroes.

1921: Education [Statute]

Misdemeanor for a teacher to teach white and colored children in the same school. Penalty: Cancellation of teaching certificate without renewal for one year.

1921: Public accommodations [Statute]

Required maintenance of separate accommodations for colored persons in public libraries in cities with a Negro population of 1,000 or more.

1925: Entertainment [City Ordinance]

Black bands were prohibited from marching with white bands in Oklahoma City parades. Also, white Golden Gloves boxers were prohibited from sparring against black boxers.

1937: Public carriers [Statute]

Public carriers to be segregated.

1949: Health Care [Statute]

Called for a consolidated Negro institution to care for blind, deaf and orphans.

1954: Public accommodations [Statute]

Separate restrooms in mines required.

1955: Miscegenation [Statute]

Marriage of anyone of African descent to one who is not white prohibited. Penalty: Up to \$500 and one to five years imprisonment.

1957: Adoption [Statute]

Adoption petitions must state race of petitioner and child.