

Jim Crow Laws: Virginia

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With 25 statutes enacted between 1870 and 1960, Virginia passed a wide variety of Jim Crow laws, including seven public carrier, six school, four miscegenation and a residential statute to separate the races. An 1878 miscegenation law made it a crime for a white and black Virginian to marry outside the state. A 1912 statute authorized cities and towns to create "segregation districts" that would prevent blacks from moving into communities designated for whites only. This law set a precedent for many other states that adopted restrictive real estate covenants. One of the most dehumanizing segregation ordinances was passed by the city of Danville in 1960 to restrict library usage to white patrons.

1870: Education [Statute]

Prohibited white and colored children from being taught in the same school.

1873: Miscegenation [State Code]

White persons who married Negroes would be jailed for at least one year, and fined a minimum of \$100. Those who performed such ceremonies faced fines of \$200, of which one-half would go to the informer.

1878: Miscegenation [Statute]

White persons who intermarried with a colored person would be confined in the penitentiary between two and five years. Ministers who performed such ceremonies were to be fined \$200, of which the informer received half. "White and colored persons going out of the state to marry, shall be punished as if married in the state."

1882: Education [Statute]

White and colored children shall be taught in separate schools. "The determination as to who is a colored person lies with the board."

1900: Railroads [Statute]

Railroads required to offer separate cars for white and colored passengers. Conductors given the authority to judge the race of each passenger if a passenger refuses to disclose his race. Penalty: Railroads that failed to enforce this law were guilty of a misdemeanor, and could be fined from \$300 to \$1000 for each offense. Conductors who failed to enforce the law were guilty of a misdemeanor, and faced a \$25 to \$50 fine.

1900: Steamboats [Statute]

Call for the separation of white and colored passengers on steamboats while sitting, eating and sleeping. Penalty: Officers faced misdemeanor charges and were subject to a fine between \$25 and \$100. Passengers who refused to occupy the accommodations assigned to them were guilty of a misdemeanor and could be fined between \$5 and \$50, or confined in jail for 30 days, or both.

1901: Streetcars [City Ordinance]

Alexandria streetcars required to have separate compartments for white and black passengers. Penalty: Passengers who refused to occupy the place assigned to them were guilty of a misdemeanor and could be fined from \$5 to \$25.

1902: Education [Constitution]

Mixed schools prohibited. White and colored children not allowed to be taught in the same school.

1904: Railroads [Statute]

Railroad corporations empowered to reject and to refuse admittance to ride in their cars at their discretion.

1904: Steamboats [Statute]

Owners of steamboat wharves ordered to provide separate and "non-communicating rooms for the white and colored races." Did not apply to wharves at which boats arrived between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. that offered public houses while waiting. Penalty: Misdemeanor, punishable by a fine between \$5 and \$20 for each offense.

1906: Streetcars [Statute]

Streetcars required to provide separate but equal compartments to white and colored passengers. "In cold weather they shall reasonably heat the several compartments." Penalty: Passengers who failed to comply faced misdemeanor charges and fines from \$5 to \$25. Companies that failed to enact law were guilty of a misdemeanor and could be fined between \$50 to \$250 for each offense.

1912: Residential [Statute]

This act, noting that "the preservation of the public morals, public health and public order, in the cities and towns of this commonwealth is endangered by the residence of white and colored people in close proximity to one another," authorized

cities and towns that adopted the provision, to be divided into districts known as "Segregation districts." City councils ordered to prepare a map showing the boundaries of all such districts, detailing the number of white persons and colored persons residing within such segregation districts. One year from the passage of the ordinances adopting the provision of this act, unlawful for any colored person, not then residing in a district so defined and designated as a white district, to move into and occupy as a residence any building or portion thereof in such white district. Also unlawful for a white person to move into a colored district. Penalty: Misdemeanor, with fine for the first week between \$5 and \$50 and for each succeeding day of such residence the sum of \$2.

1930: Public accommodation [State Code]

Required segregation in every theater, movie theater, opera house or other place of public entertainment which accepts both white and colored audiences.

1930: Race classification [State Code]

Classified "Negro" as any person with Negro blood.

1930: Education [State Code]

Required racially segregated schools.

1930: Miscegenation [Constitution]

Originally entitled "A bill to preserve the integrity of the white race," tightened miscegenation provisions. The definition of "whiteness" was narrowed to state "no trace whatever" of non-white blood allowed. Nullified interracial marriage if parties went to another jurisdiction where such marriages were legal. For the first time Virginia prohibited marriage between whites and Asians and other non-white non-Negroes. Penalty: Felony for both parties if found guilty. Punishable by confinement in the penitentiary for between one and five years.

1950: Voting rights [State Code]

Required electors to pay poll tax.

1950: Public carriers [State Code]

Public carriers to be segregated.

1950: Miscegenation [State Code]

Unlawful for white person to marry anyone except another white, or person with no other admixture of blood than white and American Indian. Penalty: One to five years imprisonment.

1950: Health Care [State Code]

Establishment of separate hospitals for colored insane and epileptic patients.

1956: Race Classification [State Code]

The terms "Negro" and "colored person" were synonymous and included all persons with "any quantum whatever of Negro blood."

1956: Education [Statute]

Restricted public school funds to "efficient schools," which were defined as racially segregated schools.

1958: Education [State Code]

Upon enrollment of members of both races, schools must close; control transferred to governor.

1960: Public accommodations [Municipal Ordinance]

The city of Danville, Virginia, ordered the main library that had served whites only to be closed in order to avoid desegregation, a measure which city voters approved by a two to one margin. Soon the city council moved to reopen the library on terms defined in an April 1960 ordinance. Noting that city library facilities were overtaxed by the demands of its patrons, no further membership cards were to be issued. When blacks again sought service and were refused they went to court and won their suit. When the library reopened it was on a restricted basis. For a 90 day trial period the library opened on a "stand-up pick-up-your-books-and-go" basis only. Tables and chairs were removed so that patrons could not sit down. Browsing in the stacks was not allowed. The cost of a library card was \$2.50 and applicants were required to furnish two credit references and two character witnesses. When the trial period ended, chairs and tables were returned but were "well spread out." Only a few blacks applied for cards at the main library.

1960: Athletics [Statute]

"no athletic team of any school shall engage in any athletic contest of any nature within the state of Virginia with another

team on which persons of any other race are members."