

## Jim Crow Laws: Mississippi

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Enacted 22 Jim Crow statutes, and a law restricting voting rights between 1865 and 1956. Six miscegenation laws were enacted, four school and three railroad segregation acts were passed. Three segregation laws were passed after the 1954 Brown decision. The sentence for violating the state's 1865 miscegenation law was life imprisonment. In later years, the miscegenation laws became more complex. In 1880, those persons with one quarter or more Negro blood were considered "colored." By 1890 the law had become more stringent, marking those with one-eighth or more Negro blood as non-white. In 1906, the miscegenation law was amended to include not only blacks but Asians as well in the list of unacceptable mates for Caucasians. During the Reconstruction era, Mississippi passed five civil rights laws, permitting miscegenation, protecting voting rights and barring public carrier and school segregation.

### **1865:** Miscegenation [Statute]

Declared a felony for any freedman, free Negro, or mulatto to intermarry with any white person. Penalty: Imprisonment in state penitentiary for life.

### **1865:** Railroad [Statute]

Unlawful for any freedman, Negro, or mulatto to ride in any first-class passenger cars used by white persons. Penalty: Misdemeanor punished by a fine between \$50 to \$500; and imprisonment in county jail until fine and costs of prosecution are paid. Half of the fines to be paid to the informer, the other half to the county treasury where offense was committed.

### **1867:** Barred court testimony discrimination [Statute]

Negroes given the right to testify on the same terms as white persons.

### **1867:** Jury selection [Statute]

Negroes declared incompetent to serve as jurors.

### **1868:** Voting rights protected [Constitution]

Removed the limitation of suffrage to white persons only.

### **1868:** Barred public carrier segregation [Constitution]

All citizens had the right to travel on all public transportation.

### **1871:** Barred anti-miscegenation [State Code]

Omitted miscegenation or intermarriage statute.

### **1871:** Barred school segregation [State Code]

All children from five to twenty-one years of age shall have in all respects equal advantages in public schools.

### **1872:** Barred prison segregation [Statute]

No distinction on account of race or color or previous condition in working convicts.

### **1873:** Barred public accommodations segregation [Statute]

### **1878:** Education [Statute]

Prohibited teaching white and black children in the same school.

### **1880:** Miscegenation [State Code]

Revised state code to declare marriage between white persons and Negroes or mulattoes or persons of one-quarter or more Negro blood as "incestuous and void." Penalty: Fine up to \$500, or imprisonment in the penitentiary up to ten years, or both.

### **1888:** Railroad [Statute]

New depot buildings were to provide separate rooms for the sexes and the races if deemed proper by the board. Equal but separate accommodations to be provided for white and colored passengers. Penalty: Misdemeanor for railroad companies failing to comply, with a fine up to \$500. Conductors who failed to enforce the law could be fined from \$25 to \$50 for each offense.

### **1890:** Miscegenation [Constitution]

Prohibited marriage of a white person with a Negro or mulatto or person who has one-eighth or more of Negro blood.

### **1890:** Education [Constitution]

Separate schools to be maintained for white and black children.

**1896: Education [Statute]**

Separate districts established for the schools of white and black children.

**1904: Streetcars [Statute]**

Streetcars were to provide equal but separate accommodations for white and colored passengers. Penalties: Passengers could be fined \$25 or confined up to 30 days in county jail. Employees liable for a fine of \$25 or confinement up to 30 days in jail. A streetcar company could be charged with a misdemeanor for failing to carry out law and be fined \$100 and face imprisonment between 60 days and six months.

**1906: Railroads [Statute]**

Railroad commission to provide separate waiting rooms for white and black passengers. Separate restrooms were to be provided also.

**1906: Miscegenation [Statute]**

Prohibited marriage between a white person with a Negro or mulatto or a person with one-eighth or more Negro blood, or with an Asian or person with one-eighth or more "Mongolian" blood.

**1920: Miscegenation [Statute]**

Persons or corporations who printed, published or circulated written material promoting the acceptance of intermarriage between whites and Negroes would be guilty of a misdemeanor. Penalty: Fine up to \$500 or imprisonment up to six months, or both.

**1930: Education [State Code]**

Required schools to be racially segregated, and the creation of separate districts to provide school facilities for the greatest number of pupils of both races. In addition, authorized the establishment of separate schools for Native Americans.

**1930: Miscegenation [State Code]**

Miscegenation declared a felony. Nullified interracial marriages if parties went to another jurisdiction where such marriages were legal. Also prohibited marriages between persons of the Caucasian race and those persons who had one eighth of more Asian blood.

**1942: Voting rights [Constitution]**

Instituted poll tax requirement.

**1942: Miscegenation [State Code]**

Marriage between white and Negro or Asian void. Penalty: \$500 and/or up to ten years imprisonment. Anyone advocating intermarriage subject to fine of \$500 and/or six months.

**1942: Health Care [State Code ]**

Segregated facilities at state charity hospital and separate entrances at all state hospitals.

**1956: Education [State Code & Constitution]**

Separate schools to be maintained. All state executive officers required to prevent implementation of school segregation decision by "lawful means." Governor may close any school if he determines closure to be in best interest of majority of children.

**1956: Public carriers [State Code]**

Public carriers to be segregated.

**1956: Public accommodation [Statute]**

Firms and corporations authorized to choose their clientele and the right to refuse service to any person.

**1958: Recreation [Statute]**

Authorized goveronr to close parks to prevent desegregation.