HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

As the nation sought to move beyond the devastation of the Civil War and tumultuous Reconstruction years, Southerners looked to rebuild their region and improve their position both in the national economy and political landscape. A “New South” emerged that focused on promoting the South as a region full of economic opportunities for Northern investors. The proponents of the New South, lead by spokesperson Henry Grady, emphasized the natural resources of the region such as timber, iron ore, and rich farmland. New South promoters lauded the area’s hardworking people, both black and white, as a ready labor force untainted by unions and willing to work for lower wages.

During the New South period, African Americans worked to make the most of the gains of Reconstruction. With the passage of the 15th Amendment in 1870, the first African American elected officials took office, from local posts to state houses to Congress. Leaders such as Booker T. Washington built schools and sought to build partnerships with white leaders to extend new economic opportunities to black communities. The emergence of a black middle class led to racial tensions, which New South promoters downplayed. In the most horrific attempts to keep African Americans “in their place,” lynchings rose across the South.

Democrats, many of them former Confederates, pushed to recover political power and maintain the supremacy of elite white leaders into the future. These Redeemers overturned laws passed by Republicans during the Reconstruction period, passed the first Jim Crow laws, and sought ways to suppress black voters. Their efforts were given federal support with the 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson decision that upheld the constitutionality of “separate but equal” facilities, such as schools and railroad cars.

FROM THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS:

- The African-American Experience in Ohio, 1850-1920
- From Slavery to Civil Rights: A Timeline
- African American Odyssey
- Crossing the Veil: A Young W.E.B. DuBois in Rural Tennessee
- Teaching with Primary Sources - MTSU Newsletter: June 2016: The New South
- Jim Crow and Segregation Primary Source Set
- After Reconstruction: Problems of African Americans in the South
- Meet Amazing Americans: W.E.B. DuBois

ALSO SEE:

- Tennessee’s Self-Made Men
- Reconstruction: A Moment In The Sun
- Rise of Industrial America
- Reconstruction
SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

The ending of the Civil War brought with it more questions than answers. With the defeat of the Confederacy and the passing of the Old South, what would replace “King Cotton”? More importantly, what would be the fate of the many ex-slaves that had fueled the Old South’s economy and way of life? This primary source set features newspapers, photographs, and texts provided by the Library of Congress that tell the stories of the men and women who lived in such turbulent times and shaped the future of the New South.

Enclosed are sources about Henry Grady and the New South, the election of African Americans to the General Assembly, the yellow fever epidemic, Booker T. Washington and the rise of Jim Crow. This set of primary sources is perfect for building compare and contrast skills. Use the two sources to the right as an example. Group students into pairs and have them draw a Venn diagram. While they are working in groups, draw a large Venn diagram on the board or a piece of poster paper. Appoint a scribe in each group that is responsible for coming to the front of the class and writing 2-3 of their responses on the board/poster paper. Pair the Venn diagram with an exit ticket for a quiz or participation grade. In addition, if the large Venn diagram is on poster paper put it up in the classroom or hallway to display student work.

Which visual source do you find to be the most effective? Which parts of Henry Grady’s vision of the New South were accomplished? Which parts of Henry Grady’s vision were not accomplished? How do the political cartoons and illustrations of the period compare with modern political cartoons and illustrations? Why were cities like Memphis susceptible to the yellow fever? What challenges did African American legislators face while in office? How were Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois different? How would you feel if you were an African American in the New South? What challenges would you face? How would you react?
Carnival of blood! Republicans to be massacred at the polls! Secret Democratic circular. Tilden’s desperate plan to carry a solid South ... New York 1876. [1876]

Giving the other fellow a chance / Dalymple. [1895]

The new South. A description of the southern states, noting each state separately, and giving their distinctive features and salient characteristics. [1887, pg. 386]

The queen of industry, or the new south / Th. Nast. [1882]
The first colored senator and representatives in the 41st and 42nd Congress of the United States, [1872]

Jubilee Singers, Fisk University, Nashville, Tenn. [1870-1880]

Public ledger., November 14, 1882, Image 1 [1882, sixth column from right]

Radical members of the first legislature after the war, South Carolina, [ca. 1876]

Nashville union and American., November 02, 1872, Image 2. [1872, second column under The Radical Ticket]
Public ledger, October 22, 1873, Image 2 [1873, second column]

Yellow Fever National Relief Commission, 1879 [1893]

Perspective map of the city of Memphis, Tenn. 1887 [1887]

Yellow Jack monster / Matt Morgan, [1873]

Public ledger, October 13, 1873, Image 2 [1873, fourth column]
W.E.B. DuBois to Booker T. Washington, September 21, 1895, Autograph Letter, [1895, Courtesy of Mr. David G. DuBois]

Booker T. Washington (three-quarter length portrait, seated and facing slightly left, holding newspaper, [ca. 1890]

Atlanta Exposition Speech, September 18, 1895, [1895]

Tuskegee History Class, [1902]

[African American men preparing to serve a meal in an outdoor setting among trees] [between 1890-1910]
The Roanoke daily times., May 19, 1896, Image 1. [1896 second column]

The "New South". [ca. 1890]

Southern Standard., March 22, 1890, Page 4, Image 4. [1890, third column]

Distribution of the Colored population of the United States: 1890 [1898]

TEXTS:
- Letters of Mr. William E. Chandler relative to the so-called southern policy of President Hayes, together with a letter to Mr. Chandler of Mr. William Lloyd Garrison ...
- Daily tobacco leaf-chronicle., April 09, 1890, Image 2—(anti-New South editorial talking about connections to convict lease labor) (left column; second story)
- Knoxville weekly chronicle., April 15, 1874, Page 4, Image 4—(In the second column Senator Brownlow discusses segregation and education.)
Teachers: Providing these primary source replicas without source clues may enhance the inquiry experience for students. This list of citations is supplied for reference purposes to you and your students. We have followed the Chicago Manual of Style format, one of the formats recommended by the Library of Congress, for each entry below, minus the access date. The access date for each of these entries is 6/13/16.


