The Declaration of Independence of the Thirteen Colonies
In CONGRESS, July 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of
America, (Preamble and the right of the people to control their
government)

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one
people to dissolve (melt) the political bands which have connected
them with another, and to assume (take as if true) among the powers
of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of
Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the
opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes
which impel (push) them to the separation.

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

We hold these truths to be self-evident (clear or obvious), that all men
are created equal, that they are endowed (given) by their Creator with
certain unalienable Rights (cannot be taken away), that among these
are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. --That to
secure(protect) these rights, Governments are instituted (present)
among Men, deriving (receiving) their just (fair) powers from the
consent (blessing) of the governed (the citizens), --That whenever
any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends (is no
longer fair or doing more than the people allow), it is the Right of the
People to alter (change) or to abolish it (get rid of it), and to institute
(form or establish) new Government, laying its foundation on such
principles(fairness and doing what the people ask) and organizing its
powers in such form (keeping the wants of the people in mind), as to
them shall seem most likely to effect their (the citizens) Safety and
Happiness.

________________________________________

________________________________________
AMENDMENT 13

SLAVERY ABOLISHED (1865)

Section 1. Abolition of slavery. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Section 2. Enforcement. Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

AMENDMENT 14

CIVIL RIGHTS GUARANTEED (1868)

Section 1. Definition of citizenship. All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Section 2. Apportionment of representatives. Representatives shall be apportioned among the several states according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each state, [excluding Indians not taxed.] But when the right to vote at any election for the choice of electors for President and Vice President of the United States, representatives in Congress, the executive and judicial officers of a state, or the members of the legislature thereof, is denied to any of the [male] inhabitants of such state, [being twenty-one years of age] and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such [male] citizens shall bear to the whole number of [male] citizens [twenty-one years of age] in such state.
girls who did not. Nevertheless, there was enough fire beneath the smoke of these sensational revelations to make the Problem of the Younger Generation a topic of anxious discussion from coast to coast.

The forces of morality rallied to the attack. Dr. Francis E. Clark, founder and president of the Christian Endeavor Society, declared that the modern "indecent dance" was "an offense against womanly purity, the very fountainhead of our family and civil life." The new style of dancing was denounced in religious journals as "impure, polluting, corrupting, debasing, destroying spirituality, increasing carnality," and the mothers and sisters and church members of the land were called upon to admonish and instruct and raise the spiritual tone of these dreadful young people. President Murphy of the University of Florida cried out with true Southern warmth. "The low-cut gowns, the rolled hose and short skirts are born of the Devil and his angels, and are carrying the present and future generations to chaos and destruction." A group of Episcopal church-women in New York, speaking with the authority of wealth and social position (for they included Mrs. J. Pierpont Morgan, Mrs. Borden Harriman, Mrs. Frederick Phipps, Mrs. James Roosevelt, and Mrs. E. H. Harriman), proposed an organization to discourage fashions involving an "excess of nudity" and "improper ways of dancing." The Y. W. C. A. conducted a national campaign against immodest dress among high-school girls, supplying newspapers with printed materials carrying headlines such as "Working Girls Responsive to Modesty Appeal" and "High Heels Losing Ground Even in France." In Philadelphia a Dress Reform Committee of prominent citizens sent a questionnaire to over a thousand clergymen to ask them what would be their idea of a proper dress, and although the gentlemen of the cloth showed a distressing variety of opinion, the committee proceeded to design a "moral gown" which was endorsed by ministers of fifteen denominations. The distinguishing characteristics of this moral gown were that it was very loose-fitting, that the sleeves reached just below the elbows, and that the hem came within seven and a half inches of the floor.

Not content with example and reproof, legislators in several states introduced bills to reform feminine dress once and for all. The New York American reported in 1921 that a bill was pending in Utah providing fire and imprisonment for those who wore on the streets "skirts higher than three inches above the ankle." A bill was laid before the Virginia legislature which would forbid any woman from wearing skirt-waists or evening gowns which displayed "more than three inches of her throat." In Ohio the proposed limit of decolletage was two inches; the bill introduced in the Ohio legislature aimed also to prevent the sale of any "garment which unduly displays or accentuates the lines of the female figure;" and to prohibit any "female over fourteen years of age" from wearing "a skirt which does not reach to that part of the foot known as the instep."

Meanwhile innumerable families were torn with dissension over cigarettes and gin and all-night automobile rides. Fathers and mothers lay awake asking themselves whether their children were not utterly lost; sons and daughters evaded questions, lied miserably and unhappily, or flared up to reply rudely that at least they were not dirty-minded hypocrites, that they saw no harm in what they were doing and proposed to go right on doing it. From those liberal clergymen and teachers who prided themselves on keeping step with all that was new came a chorus of reassurance: these young people were at least franker and more honest than their elders had been; having experimented for themselves, would they not soon find out which standards were outworn and which represented the accumulated moral wisdom of the race? Hearing such hopeful words, many good people took heart again. Perhaps this flare-up of youthful passion was a flash in the pan, after all. Perhaps in another year or two the boys and girls would come to their senses and everything would be all right again.

They were wrong, however. For the revolt of the younger generations was only the beginning of a revolution in manners and morals that was already beginning to affect men and women of every age in every part of the country.

“To keep eternally ablaze the sacred fire of a fervent devotion to a pure Americanism”

KU KLUX KLAN DECLARATION

The revival of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s spoke to the rising racism, xenophobia and anti-Catholicism that marked the
The dubious organization had been founded in the Reconstruction South to resist the Northern occupation, including efforts to elevate the status of blacks in society.

In 1922, white Protestant men revived the Klan to maintain, among other things, the supremacy of whites and "pure Americanism." Dressed in white sheets, the KKK terrorized blacks, immigrants and Catholics—not just in the South. They commonly lynched blacks with the tacit approval of police.

The rise of the KKK represented one of the more virulent strains of intolerance that has plagued the nation’s history. As this 1922 proclamation makes clear, however, KKK members saw their role in a very different, very noble light.

We solemnly declare to all mankind: that the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, incorporated, is the original Ku Klux Klan organized in the year 1866, and active during the Reconstruction period of American history; and by and under its corporate name is revived, remodeled and expanded into a ritualistic, fraternal, patriotic society of national scope, duly incorporated (under the laws of the State of Georgia) in the years of 1915 and 1916, and dedicated to the same principles and spiritual purposes as more particularly set forth in Article II, of the Constitution and Laws of the society.

We do further declare to the world: that our original Prescript used as the governing law of the Ku Klux Klan, during the period of its former activities, and all official titles, mannerisms, usages and things therein prescribed have not been abandoned by us; but on the contrary, all of these, together with designs of paraphernalia, regalia, flags, banners, emblems, symbols, or other insignia and things prescribed or previously used by or under the authority of the Ku Klux Klan are the property of the Ku Klux Klan under and by virtue of its corporate name of Knights of Ku Klux Klan, and are held sacred by us as a precious heritage, which we shall jealously preserve, forever maintain and valiantly protect from profanation.

The Imperial Proclamation

To the lovers of law, order, peace and justice of all nations, people, tribes and tongues of the whole earth, Greetings:

I, and the citizens of the Invisible Empire, through me, make declaration to you:

We, the members of this order, desiring to promote patriotism toward our civil government; honorable peace among men and nations; protection for and happiness in the homes of our people; manhood, brotherhood, and love among ourselves, and liberty, justice and fraternity among all mankind; believing we can best accomplish these noble purposes through a mystic, social, patriotic, benevolent association, having a perfected lodge system, with an exalted ritualistic form of work and an effective form of government, not for selfish profit, but for the mutual betterment, benefit and protection of our oath-bound associates, and their loved ones; do physically, socially, morally and vocationally:

Proclaim to the World

That we are dedicated to the sublime duty of providing generous aid, tender sympathy and fraternal assistance amid fortune and misfortune in the effulgent light of life and amid the sable shadows of death, and to the exalted privilege of demonstrating the practical utility of the great (yet most neglected) doctrine of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man as a vital force in the lives and affairs of men.

We invite all men who can qualify to become citizens of the Invisible Empire to approach the portal of our beneficent domain, join us in our noble work of extending its boundaries, and in disseminating the gospel of “Klancraft,” thereby encouraging, conserving, protecting and making vital the fraternal relationship in the practice of an honorable clannishness; to share with us the glory of performing the sacred duty of protecting womanhood; to maintain forever the God-given supremacy of the White race; to commemorate the holy and chivalric achievements of our fathers; to safeguard the sacred rights, privileges and institutions of our civil government; to bless mankind and to keep eternally ablaze the sacred fire of a fervent devotion to a pure Americanism.

The Invisible Empire is founded on sterling character, and immutable principles based upon sacred sentiment and cemented by noble purposes. It is promoted by a sincere, unselfish devotion of the souls of men, and is governed by their consecrated intelligence. It is the soul of chivalry, virtue's impenetrable shield and the devout impulse of an unconquered race.

Done in the aulic of His Majesty, the Emperor of the Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, in the Imperial Palace, in the Imperial City of Atlanta, Commonwealth of Georgia, United States of America.

This the 29th day of November, Anno Domini, Nineteen Hundred and Twenty-two,

1919-1941: Boom, Bust, and The New Deal
“He had seen four of his six brothers die by violence, three of them killed by white men”

MALCOLM X

Born in the 1920s, Malcolm X suffered the sting of the Ku Klux Klan’s tactics as a child. His father, a minister who preached the word of African nationalist Marcus Garvey, was the frequent target of the KKK and other white supremacist groups. His grandfather was a white man who had raped Malcolm X’s black grandmother. Four of Malcolm X’s uncles, in addition to his father, would be killed by white men.

Malcolm X recalled this violence-ridden childhood in his 1965 autobiography. In describing the environment in which he and other blacks lived—and were powerless to do anything about for many years—he helped to highlight the courage of blacks who later fought against racism in the 1950s and explain the resentment of blacks in the 1960s.

When my mother was pregnant with me, she told me later, a party of hooded Ku Klux Klan riders galloped up to our home in Omaha, Nebraska, one night. Surrounding the house, brandishing their shotguns and rifles, they shouted for my father to come out. My mother went to the front door and opened it. Standing where they could see her pregnant condition, she told them that she was alone with her three small children, and that my father was away, preaching, in Milwaukee. The Klansmen shouted threats and warnings at her that we had better get out of town because “the good Christian white people” were not going to stand for my father’s “spreading trouble” among the “good” Negroes of Omaha with the “back to Africa” preachings of Marcus Garvey.

My father, the Reverend Earl Little, was a Baptist minister, a dedicated organizer for Marcus Aurelius Garvey’s U.N.I.A. (Universal Negro Improvement Association). With the help of such disciples as my father, Garvey, from his headquarters in New York City’s Harlem, was raising the banner of black-race purity and exhorting the Negro masses to return to their ancestral African homeland—a cause which had made Garvey the most controversial black man on earth.

Still shouting threats, the Klansmen finally spurred their horses and galloped around the house, shattering every window pane with their gun butts. Then they rode off into the night, their torches flaring, as suddenly as they had come.

My father was enraged when he returned. He decided to wait until I was born—which would be soon—and then the family would move. I am not sure why he made this decision, for he was not a frightened Negro, as most then were, and many still are today. My father was a big, six-foot-four, very black man. He had only one eye. How he had lost the other one I have never known. He was from Reynolds, Georgia, where he had left school after the third, or maybe fourth grade. He believed, as did Marcus Garvey, that freedom, independence and self-respect could never be achieved by the Negro in America, and that therefore the Negro should leave America to the white man and return to his African land of origin. Among the reasons my father had decided to risk and dedicate his life to help disseminate this philosophy among his people was that he had seen four of his six brothers die by violence, three of them killed by white men, including one by lynching. What my father could not know then was that of the remaining three, including himself, only one, my Uncle Jim, would die in bed, of natural causes. Northern white police were later to shoot my Uncle Oscar. And my father was finally himself to die by the white man’s hands.

It has always been my belief that I, too, will die by violence. I have done all that I can to be prepared.

I was my father’s seventh child. He had three children by a previous marriage—Ella, Earl, and Mary, who lived in Boston. He had met and married my mother in Philadelphia, where their first child, my oldest full brother, Wilfred, was born. They moved from Philadelphia to Omaha, where Hilda and Philbert were born.

I was next in line. My mother was twenty-eight when I was born on May 19, 1925, in an Omaha hospital. Then we moved to Milwaukee, where Reginald was born. From infancy, he had some kind of hernia condition which was to handicap him physically for the rest of his life.

Louise Little, my mother, who was born in
Grenada, in the British West Indies, looked like a white woman. Her father was white. She had straight black hair, and her accent did not sound like a Negro's. Of this white father of hers, I know nothing except her shame about it. I remember hearing her say she was glad that she had never seen him. It was, of course, because of him that I got my reddish-brown "marinry" color of skin, and my hair of the same color. I was the lightest child in our family. (Out in the world later on, in Boston and New York, I was among the millions of Negroes who were insane enough to feel that it was some kind of status symbol to be light-complexioned—that one was actually fortunate to be born thus. But, still later, I learned to hate every drop of that white rapist's blood that is in me.)

Our family stayed only briefly in Milwaukee, for my father wanted to find a place where he could raise our own food and perhaps build a business. The teachings of Marcus Garvey stressed becoming independent of the white man. We went next, for some reason, to Lansing, Michigan. My father bought a house and, as had been his pattern, he was doing free-lance Christian preaching in local Negro Baptist churches, and during the week he was roaming about spreading word of Marcus Garvey.

He had begun to lay away savings for the store he had always wanted to own when, as always, some stupid local Uncle Tom Negroes began to funnel stories about his revolutionary beliefs to the local white people. This time, the get-out-of-town threats came from a local hate society called The Black Legion. They wore black robes instead of white. Soon, nearly everywhere my father went, Black Legionnaires were reviling him as an "uppity nigger" for wanting to own a store, for living outside the Lansing Negro district, for spreading unrest and dissension among "the good niggers."

As in Omaha, my mother was pregnant again, this time with my youngest sister. Shortly after Yvonne was born came the nightmare night in 1929, my earliest vivid memory. I remember being suddenly snatched awake into a frightening confusion of pistol shots and shouting and smoke and flames. My father had shouted and shot at the two white men who had set the fire and were running away. Our home was burning down around us. We were lunging and bumping and tumbling all over each other trying to escape. My mother, with the baby in her arms, just made it into the yard before the house crashed in, showering sparks. I remember we were outside in the night in our underwear, crying and yelling our heads off. The white police and firemen came and stood around watching as the house burned to the ground.

The Immigration Act of 1924

Congress

Soured by the United States' experience in World War I and alarmed by the number of southern European immigrants who were arriving in the United States, Congress passed the Immigration Act of 1921. This historic piece of legislation set a limit on the number of foreigners allowed into the country, imposed country quotas and placed a cap of three percent of immigrants in relation to the number of nationals in the country, based on the 1910 census.

Three years later, however, Congress decided that they had not been restrictive enough in their impositions. From their nativist perspective, too many immigrants from places other than northern and western Europe were piling into the country. The Immigration Act of 1924 remedied this. The number of immigrants permitted by nationality was reduced to two percent and the base date was changed to 1890, when there were significantly fewer southern Europeans in the United States.

The "Immigration Act of 1924" which supplants the so-called quota limit act of May 19, 1921, the latter having expired by limitation at the close of the fiscal year just ended, makes several very important changes not only in our immigration policy but also in the administrative machinery of the Immigration Service. Some of the more important changes in these respects will be briefly referred to.

It will be remembered that the quota limit act of May, 1921, provided that the number of aliens of any nationality admissible to the United States in any fiscal year should be limited to 3 percent of the number of persons of such nationality who were resident in the United States according to the census of 1910, it being also provided that no more than 20 percent of any annual quota could be admitted in any one month. Under the act of 1924 the number of each nationality who may be admitted annually is limited to 2 percent of the popula-
1) John Harlan, dissenting opinion on the case of Homer Plessy, an African-American who in 1896 appealed to the Supreme Court after being convicted by a Louisiana court for riding in a white only railway car.

The white race deems itself to be the dominant race in this country. And so it is, in prestige, in achievements, in education, in wealth, and in power. But in view of the Constitution, in the eye of the law, there is in this country no superior, dominant, ruling class of citizens. There is no caste here. Our Constitution is color-blind and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens.

In respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law. The humblest is the peer of the most powerful. The law regards man as man and takes no account of his surroundings or of his color when his civil rights as guaranteed by the supreme law of the land are involved. It is therefore to be regretted that this high tribunal, the final expositor of the fundamental law of the land, has reached the conclusion that it is competent for a state to regulate the enjoyment by citizens of their civil rights solely upon the basis of race.

Sixty millions of whites are in no danger from the presence here of 8 million blacks. The destinies of the two races in this country are indissolubly linked together, and the interests of both require that the common government of all shall not permit the seeds of race hate to be planted under the sanction of law. What can more certainly arouse race hate, what will more certainly create and perpetuate a feeling of distrust between these races than state enactments, which, in fact, proceed on the ground that colored citizens are so inferior and degraded that they cannot be allowed to sit in public coaches occupied by white citizens?

http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAharlanJ.htm

(1) William Billings Brown, explaining why he believed Homer Plessey had been rightly convicted by a Louisiana court for riding in a white only railway car.

Laws permitting, and even requiring, their separation in places where they are liable to be brought into contact do not necessarily imply the inferiority of either race to the other, and have been generally, if not universally, recognized as within the competency of the state legislatures in the exercise of their police power. The most common instance of this is connected with the establishment of separate schools for white and colored children, which has been held to be a valid exercise of the legislative power even by courts of states where the political rights of the colored race have been longest and most earnestly enforced.

The case reduces itself to the question whether the statute of Louisiana is a
reasonable regulation, and with respect to this there must necessarily be a large discretion on the part of the legislature. In determining the question of reasonableness, it is at liberty to act with reference to the established usages, customs, and traditions of the people, and with a view to the promotion of their comfort, and the preservation of the public peace and good order. Gauged by this standard, we cannot say that the law which authorizes or even requires the separation of the two races in public conveyances is unreasonable or more obnoxious to the Fourteenth Amendment than the acts of Congress requiring separate schools for red children in the District of Columbia.

We consider the underlying fallacy of the plaintiff's argument to consist in the assumption that the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with a badge of inferiority. If this be so, it is not by reason of anything found in the act, but solely because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it.

http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAharlanJ.htm
Jim Crow Laws

Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, & Kentucky

By Jessica McElrath, About.com

By the 1890s, as the gains of Reconstruction were stripped away, southern states began enacting Jim Crow laws that enforced separate facilities for blacks and whites. Here are samples of the laws enacted by various states.

Alabama

Health Care

No person or corporation shall require any white female nurse to nurse in wards or rooms in hospitals, either public or private, in which negro men are placed.

Transportation

All passenger stations in this state operated by any motor transportation company shall have separate waiting rooms or space and separate ticket windows for the white and colored races.

The conductor of each passenger train is authorized and required to assign each passenger to the car or the division of the car, when it is divided by a partition, designated for the race to which such passenger belongs.

Public Facilities

It shall be unlawful to conduct a restaurant or other place for the serving of food in the city, at which white and colored people are served in the same room, unless such white and colored persons are effectually separated by a solid partition extending from the floor upward to a distance of seven feet or higher, and unless a separate entrance from the street is provided for each compartment.
It shall be unlawful for a negro and white person to play together or in company with each other at any game of pool or billiards.

Every employer of white or negro males shall provide for such white or negro males reasonably accessible and separate toilet facilities.

**Arizona**

**Marriage**

The marriage of a person of Caucasian blood with a Negro, Mongolian, Malay, or Hindu shall be null and void.

**Florida**

**Marriage/Cohabitation**

All marriages between a white person and a negro, or between a white person and a person of negro descent to the fourth generation inclusive, are hereby forever prohibited.

Any negro man and white woman, or any white man and negro woman, who are not married to each other, who shall habitually live in and occupy in the nighttime the same room shall each be punished by imprisonment not exceeding twelve 12 months, or by fine not exceeding five hundred dollars.

**Education**

The schools for white children and the schools for negro children shall be conducted separately.

**Georgia**

**Health Care**

The Board of Control shall see that proper and distinct apartments are arranged for said patients, so that in no case shall Negroes and white persons be together.
**Marriage**

It shall be unlawful for a white person to marry anyone except a white person. Any marriage in violation of this section shall be void.

**Public Facilities**

No colored barber shall serve as a barber [to] white women or girls.

The officer in charge shall not bury, or allow to be buried, any colored persons upon ground set apart or used for the burial of white persons.

All persons licensed to conduct a restaurant, shall serve either white people exclusively or colored people exclusively and shall not sell to the two races within the same room or serve the two races anywhere under the same license.

It shall be unlawful for any amateur white baseball team to play baseball on any vacant lot or baseball diamond within two blocks of a playground devoted to the Negro race, and it shall be unlawful for any amateur colored baseball team to play baseball in any vacant lot or baseball diamond within two blocks of any playground devoted to the white race.

It shall be unlawful for colored people to frequent any park owned or maintained by the city for the benefit, use and enjoyment of white persons...and unlawful for any white person to frequent any park owned or maintained by the city for the use and benefit of colored persons.

All persons licensed to conduct the business of selling beer or wine...shall serve either white people exclusively or colored people exclusively and shall not sell to the two races within the same room at any time. Jim Crow laws were laws that restricted the freedom of African Americans from the 1880s to the 1960s. Here are sample laws enacted in various states.

**Kentucky**

**Reform Schools**
The children of white and colored races committed to the houses of reform shall be kept entirely separate from each other.

Here are some of the typical Jim Crow laws, as compiled by the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site Interpretive Staff:

- **Barbers.** No colored barber shall serve as a barber (to) white girls or women (Georgia).
- **Blind Wards.** The board of trustees shall...maintain a separate building...on separate ground for the admission, care, instruction, and support of all blind persons of the colored or black race (Louisiana).
- **Burial.** The officer in charge shall not bury, or allow to be buried, any colored persons upon ground set apart or used for the burial of white persons (Georgia).
- **Buses.** All passenger stations in this state operated by any motor transportation company shall have separate waiting rooms or space and separate ticket windows for the white and colored races (Alabama).
- **Child Custody.** It shall be unlawful for any parent, relative, or other white person in this State, having the control or custody of any white child, by right of guardianship, natural or acquired, or otherwise, to dispose of, give or surrender such white child permanently into the custody, control, maintenance, or support, of a negro (South Carolina).
- **Education.** The schools for white children and the schools for negro children shall be conducted separately (Florida).
- **Libraries.** The state librarian is directed to fit up and maintain a separate place for the use of the colored people who may come to the library for the purpose of reading books or periodicals (North Carolina).
- **Mental Hospitals.** The Board of Control shall see that proper and distinct apartments are arranged for said patients, so that in no case shall Negroes and white persons be together (Georgia).
- **Militia.** The white and colored militia shall be separately enrolled, and shall never be compelled to serve in the same organization. No organization of colored troops shall be permitted where white troops are available and where whites are permitted to be organized, colored troops shall be under the command of white officers (North Carolina).
- **Nurses.** No person or corporation shall require any White female nurse to nurse in wards or rooms in hospitals, either public or private, in which negro men are placed (Alabama).
- **Prisons.** The warden shall see that the white convicts shall have separate apartments for both eating and sleeping from the negro convicts (Mississippi).
- **Reform Schools.** The children of white and colored races committed to the houses of reform shall be kept entirely separate from each other (Kentucky).
- **Teaching.** Any instructor who shall teach in any school, college or institution where members of the white and colored race are received and enrolled as pupils for instruction shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof, shall be fined... (Oklahoma).
- **Wine and Beer.** All persons licensed to conduct the business of selling beer or wine...shall serve either white people exclusively or colored people exclusively and shall not sell to the two races within the same room at any time (Georgia).
Equal Rights

July 4, 1776 was the historic day on which the representatives of three millions of people vocalized Concord, and Lexington, and Bunker Hill, which gave notice to the world that they proposed to establish an independent nation on the theory that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The wonder and glory of the American people is not the ringing Declaration of that day, but the action then already begun, and in the process of being carried out, in spite of every obstacle that war could interpose, making the theory of freedom and equality a reality.

We revere that day because it marks the beginnings of independence, the beginnings of a constitution that was finally to give universal freedom and equality to all American citizens -- the beginnings of a government that was to recognize beyond all others the power and worth and dignity of man. There began the first of governments to acknowledge that it was founded on the sovereignty of the people. There the world first beheld the revelation of modern democracy.

Democracy is not a tearing down; it is a building up. It is not denial of the divine right of kings; it supplements that same with the assertion of the divine right of all men. It does not destroy; it fulfills. It is the consummation of all theories of government, the spirit of which all the nations of the earth must yield. It is the great constructive course of the ages. It is the alpha and omega of man's relation to man, the beginning and the end. There is, and can be, no more doubt of the triumphs of democracy in human affairs than there is of the triumph of gravitation in the physical world. The only question is how and when. Its foundation lays hold upon eternity. It is unconcerned with the idolatry, or despotism, or treason, or rebellion, or betrayal, but bows in reverence before Moses, or Hamden, or Washington, or Lincoln, or the lights that shone on Calvary.

The doctrine of the Declaration of Independence predicated upon the glory of man and the corresponding duty to society that the rights of citizens ought to be protected with every power and resource of the state, and a government that does any less is false to the teachings of that great document -- false to the name American. The assertion of human rights is not but a call of human sacrifice. This is yet the spirit of the American people. Only so long as this flame burns shall we endure, and the light of liberty be shed over the nations of the earth. May the increase of the years increase for America only the devotion to this spirit, only the intensity of this flame, and the eternal truth of [Lowell's] lines: "What were our lives without thee -- what all our lives to save thee? We recked not but we gave thee. We will not dare to doubt thee. But ask whatever else and we will dare."

This work is in the public domain in the United States because it was published before January 1, 1923.

The author died in 1933, so this work is also in the public domain in countries and areas where the copyright term is the author's life plus 75 years or less.

http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Equal_Rights
My countrymen, the menacing tendency of the present day is not chargeable wholly to the unsettled and feverish conditions caused by the war. The manifest weakness in popular government lies in the temptation to appeal to group citizenship for political advantage. There is no greater peril. The Constitution contemplates no class and recognizes no group. It broadly includes all the people with specific recognition for none, and the highest consecration we can make today is a committal of the Republican party to that saving constitutionalism which contemplates all America as one people and holds just government free from influence on the one hand, and unmoved by intimidation on the other.

It would be the blindness of folly to ignore the activities in our own country which are aimed to destroy our economic system and to commit us to the colossal tragedy which has both destroyed all freedom and made Russia impotent. This movement is not to be halted in throttled liberties. We must not abridge the freedom of speech, the freedom of press, or the freedom of assembly, because there is no promise in repression. These liberties are as sacred as the freedom of religious beliefs, as inviolable as the rights of life and the pursuit of happiness. We do hold to the right to crush sedition, to stifle a menacing contempt for law, to stamp out a peril to the safety of the Republic or its people when emergency calls, because security and the majesty of the law are the first essentials of liberty. He who threatens destruction of the government by force, or flaunts his contempt for lawful authority, ceases to be a loyal citizen and forfeits his right to the freedom of the Republic.

Let it be said to all of America that our plan of popular government contemplates such orderly changes as the crystallized intelligence of the majority of our people think best. There can be no modification of this underlying rule, but no majority shall abridge the rights of a minority. Men have a right to question our system in fullest freedom. But they must always remember that the rights of freedom impose the obligations which maintain it. Our policy is not of repression. But we make appeal today to American intelligence and patriotism, when the Republic is menaced from within, just as we trusted American patriotism when our rights were threatened from without.

We call on all America for steadiness, so that we may proceed deliberately with the readjustment which concerns all the people. Our party platform fairly expresses the conscience of Republicans on industrial relations. No party is indifferent to the welfare of the wage earner. To us, his good fortune is of deepest concern, and we seek to make that good fortune permanent. We do not oppose, but approve, collective bargaining, because that is an outstanding right, but we are unalterably insistent that its exercise must not destroy the equally sacred right of the individual in his necessary pursuit of a livelihood. Any American has the right to quit his employment, so has every American the right to seek employment. The group must not endanger the individual, and we must discourage groups preying upon one another. And none shall be allowed to forget that government's obligations are alike to all the people.

Retrieved from "http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Liberty_Under_the_Law"
Categories: Spoken works | Speeches | 1920 works
though, they shared in the freedom that drew jazzmen and poets to the City of Lights. For the first time in his life, Ossian experienced what it was like not to be branded an inferior. Small pleasures must have been so invigorating: to walk into a café off the Boul'Mich without having to wonder whether he would be turned away; to be called “monsieur” by a shopkeeper; to have a white man surrender his seat on the streetcar to Gladys, now uncomfortably large with their baby, to have a white woman smile at him as he held open a door to let her pass. Simple courtesies that in the United States he would never have received: that’s what Ossian remembered from his springtime in Paris.71

Only one incident marred the Sweets’ time abroad. As Gladys’s due date drew closer, Ossian set out to make arrangements for a hospital stay; better to have her surrounded by professionals in case of emergency. The obvious choice was the American Hospital in the nearby suburb of Neuilly-Sur-Seine, an excellent private institution founded by well-to-do expatriates to care for Americans living in the city. Knowing that the hospital depended on donations to pay its operating expenses, Ossian contributed three hundred francs—not a major sum but generous enough for a couple of a tight budget—on the assumption that administrators would reciprocate by assuring Gladys a bed. He was wrong. Shortly before his wife’s delivery date, Ossian was informed that the hospital couldn’t accept Gladys. The white Americans who made up the vast majority of patients, he was told, wouldn’t be comfortable with the idea of sharing a ward with a colored woman.72

Luckily, Gladys didn’t need any special medical care this time. On May 29, 1924, she gave birth to a healthy baby girl, the first daughter of freedom’s third generation. The Sweets gave her a suitably Gallic name, Marguerite, though they soon took to calling her Iva. Even as he rejoiced in the safe arrival of their child, however, Ossian couldn’t bring himself to forgive the hospital’s insult. Here was the truly cutting pain of Jim Crow. With its casual rejection, handed down simply as a matter of course, the American hospital had imperiled the health, and perhaps the life, of his wife and child, and there was nothing he could do but endure the affront. Timing made it all the worse. By late May, the Sorbonne’s academic year was drawing to a close. Ossian and Gladys had already booked passage aboard the S.S. Paris, sailing out of Le Havre on June 21. During the Sweets’ last precious weeks in Paris, while Gladys fussed over the baby, Ossian had time to dwell on the hospital’s callous reminder of the world awaiting his family when they went back home.73

Through most of June 1925, the rumor passed up and down Garland Avenue. It was handed off in casual conversations, tossed across kitchen tables, turned over on front porches, where people liked to gather when the weather turned warm. The bungalow on the corner had been sold, neighbors told each other, and a colored man had bought it. Right off, people had been concerned, but they knew better than to believe every bit of gossip that came their way. The couple who owned the bungalow kept to themselves mostly—folks didn’t even know their names—and no one dared to ask them whether the story was true. So there was no panic until Sunday, July 12, when the posters were nailed to the lampposts.1

The posters’ tone was temperate enough, as such things went: there was none of the wild ranting of the Klan broadsides plastered around town, no skull-and-crossbones warnings crudely copied out. This message read as if a real estate agent had written it. “Do you want to maintain the existing good health conditions and environment for your little children?” the flyer asked. “Do you want to see your neighborhood kept up to its present high standards?” Those who shared those goals were invited to organize “in self-defense” at what the Waterworks Park Improvement Association was calling a mass meeting. It was to be held at the schoolhouse on Tuesday evening, two nights after the signs went up. No one had ever heard of the Waterworks Park Improvement Association, but the message was clear enough. Standing on the sidewalk,
staring at the poster hanging limply on the rough wood, people knew the Negroes were coming.²

There was no stopping the panic then. In the privacy of their flats, husbands and wives talked nervously of fragile family budgets, mortgages years from being repaid, and the specter of plunging property values. Children heard the fear in their parents’ hushed voices and spun out the horrors that the Negroes would bring to their homes, terrifying and thrilling themselves with thoughts of assault and pillage. Out on the streets, there was rage at the audacity of the coloreds, moving where they didn’t belong, buying the best goddamn house on the block.³

Seven hundred people turned out on Tuesday night, July 14, for the meeting at the elementary school, far more than organizers had expected. Despite its size, it was a polite, orderly crowd: foremen washed and groomed after a day’s work; salesmen and clerks in their crisp white shirts; young mothers; teenage boys with arms crossed and faces set, all gathered on the schoolhouse lawn. The chairman of the Waterworks Park Improvement Association, a local man named Harold McGlynn who lived a dozen doors up from the bungalow in question, said a few words about the need for neighbors to band together. Then he turned the meeting over to the keynote speaker, and the attitude of the evening changed.⁴

He was a stranger, an outsider, and the moment he began talking everyone knew he was a hard case. He had come to tonight’s meeting, he said, as a representative of the Tireman Avenue Improvement Association, and that alone riveted folks’ attention. For weeks, the violence in and around Tireman had been front-page news: three times in the past month Negroes had tried to move into that neighborhood, and three times whites had driven them out. So heated had the conflict been that the mayor publicly appealed for calm, saying that Detroit was heading down the same bloody path as East St. Louis, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. But the speaker on that summer evening hadn’t come to Garland to preach the peace the mayor hoped for: He shouted so that even those on the far reaches of the crowd could hear him say how vital the fight was that lay ahead. Tireman’s homeowners didn’t want coloreds in their neighborhood: Negroes were a pestilence, a plague. The Tireman Avenue Improvement Association had done its duty. Now Garland should do the same. Use legal means if possible, force if necessary. But put the niggers out. Put them out.⁵

The assembly cheered. Not just a few rabble-rousers, not just the

Klansmen, but all of them, although some standing amid the crush were ashamed afterward. Before the speaker could even finish his address, the entire crowd, seven hundred decent, hard-working, sober citizens cheered harder than they had the entire evening, their applause rolling across the schoolyard, rumbling through the clear summer night, and echoing off the bungalow on the opposite corner not a hundred feet away.⁶

“If I had known how bitter that neighborhood was going to be,” Ossian said later, “I wouldn’t have taken that house as a gift.” It was the sort of thing he had to say then, when his life depended on striking just the right tone. But it wasn’t true. To be sure, Ossian and Gladys didn’t have an intimate knowledge of the surrounding area. But in the summer of 1925, there was no missing the hatred seething through the streets of Detroit. And there was no reason to think that Garland Avenue was immune from its contagion.⁷

The Sweats had returned to the States on June 28, 1924 and within a day or two were back at the Mitchells’ cozy house on Cairney Street. It was a triumphant homecoming, with a baby to show off and, when Gladys needed a rest, to hand off to doting grandparents. Ossian had his sparkling new credentials: no new degrees to add to his name, but his stories of Baron von Eiselsberg and Madame Curie were more than enough to impress anyone who cared to listen. And the Sweats undoubtedly had their tales of travel—the wonderful details of the exotic sights they’d seen, the strange foods they’d eaten, the tourists’ misunderstandings and mistakes that seemed so funny in the retelling. Gladys seemed to have acquired an air of sophistication in her year abroad, acquaintances remarked, and Ossian seemed to stand just a bit taller, if such a thing were possible.⁸

In many ways, 1924 was a pivotal year for Ossian, a moment of passage from one age to another. It wasn’t simply that his twenties were coming to a close—he turned twenty-nine on the thirtieth of October—or that he now had the responsibility of fatherhood. It was more a matter of expectations. With his reputation secure and his credentials now dramatically enhanced, the time had come to move beyond the strict frugality of his early days in Detroit. He could demand a new status. Rather than driving his old Model T, which was hopelessly out of fashion, he bought a brand-new Buick touring car, an automobile to match the fine machines his senior colleagues parked outside Dunbar
too convoluted to be convincing. But everyone knew that it was nothing more than a prelude. At three o'clock sharp, Darrow sidled up to the rail in front of the jury box. Instantly, the normally clamorous courtroom fell into a deep silence, so that the only sound came from the defendant's gentle, weary voice. "If the court please and gentlemen of the jury," he began, "I wish it was not my turn, that I didn't feel it was my duty to talk to you in this case. It is not an easy matter to talk about a case of this sort, and I am afraid it won't be an easy matter to listen but you can't help it any more than I can." 69

With that, Darrow was off and running. He spoke until half past six that evening, spent another night on the town, and when court resumed the next morning at nine o'clock, he started up again, sweeping the courtroom with a great torrent of softly spoken words. There were almost no histrionics; Darrow "just chatted with [the jurors]." Toms said later, drawing them and the audience gathered around them into his confidence, challenging them as he'd challenged so many before them to abandon the self-deceptions that gave them comfort and to face the world as it truly was. 70

First, he talked of "the everlasting problems of race and color and creed that have always worked their evil in human institutions." He talked of prejudices "that have been taught to us and that began coming to us almost with our mother's milk, and they stick almost as the color of the skin sticks." He talked of the evils that prejudice produces, the way "it will take good, kindly, human men and women and make them fiends [who] throw reason to the wind and throw justice to the wind and throw mercy to the wind." And he admitted, the way only a man of Darrow's confidence could admit, that the jurors surely were prejudiced themselves, as was he, though he liked to think otherwise. "I would guess that some of you—maybe most of you—believe that colored people should have one neighborhood and white people the other," he said. "If you ask me what I think about it, I would say I don't know. That is an idea—I have an idea that that is not the right way, but I can very well understand that many very rational and considerate white people believe it; I can very well understand it." As he spoke, wrote David Lilienthal, "the old man with the unalterably sad face and the great stooped shoulders seemed no mere lawyer pleading for hire. He seemed, instead, a patriarch out of another age, counseling his children, sorrowing because of their cruelty and hatred, yet too wise in the ways of men to condemn them for it."

When Darrow turned to the weeks of testimony, though, his sorrow became tinged with gall. He understood, he said, that the seventy people who testified for the state were "in the ordinary affairs of life honest and decent... But in this case man and woman and child alike have come into this court and under oath have deliberately lied to send eleven people to the penitentiary for life... and there is not an officer who has testified in this case that is not partially guilty of this murder and who to shield himself has not perjured himself on account of the character of this case." No one was fooled, though, because there wasn't a person in the courtroom, "whether he be a policeman, a neighbor, a prosecutor, a juror, a mere spectator, that does not know what happened" on Garland Avenue that terrible night.

Then with the seasoned lawyer's dexterity, Darrow smoothly slid the tragedy into the political conflict that had roiled Detroit for the past year, transforming the people of Garland from ordinary folks into proxies for the Klansmen that the men of the jury—all of them members of the city's sprawling working class, all of them connected in some fashion to the immigrant masses—were likely to despise. "Up and down the street were the lines of these Noble Nordics"—that phrase again, so perfectly chosen—"father and mother and child, a lodger, a boarder, a tenant, and friends coming from far and near, lined up on their front porches and cast a glassy eye over toward the Sweet house and waited to see what happened... They were gathered together just the same as the Roman Coliseum used to be filled with a great throng of people with their eyes cast to the door where the lions would come out; they were gathered together just as in the old days a mob would assemble to see an outdoor hanging and waiting for the victim with their eyes set on the gallows... And they were gathered together to awe and to intimidate the poor black family which had bought the corner house and who had a right to buy it under every law of the land. That is why they were there." And they'd done it all—the conspiracy, the mobbing, the perjury—"in behalf of what they think is their noble Nordic race."

And that, said Darrow, was the story's bitter irony. For the testimony proved that the ignoble Nordics of Garland Avenue were determined to purge from their neighborhood—"not especially a high-toned neighborhood at that, nothing swell about it"—people who were clearly their betters. "We have presented witnesses that are as intelligent, as attractive, as good-looking as any white man or woman," he insisted, "and who are as far above the bunch which testified against these men as the heavens are above the earth and you know it and they know it." Think of Gladys's friends Edna Butler and Serena Rochelle,