

DOCUMENTS:

DOCUMENT A: THE RECONSTRUCTION AMENDMENTS

13TH AMENDMENT: 1865

SECTION 1. 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.

14TH AMENDMENT: 1868

SECTION 1. ALL PERSONS BORN OR NATURALIZED IN THE UNITED STATES . . . 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.

15TH AMENDMENT: 1870

SECTION 1. THE RIGHT OF CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES TO VOTE SHALL NOT BE DENIED OR ABRIDGED BY THE UNITED STATES OR BY ANY STATE ON ACCOUNT OF RACE, COLOR, OR PREVIOUS CONDITION OF SERVITUDE.

DOCUMENT B: BLACK CODES

SECTION 1. NO NEGRO SHALL BE ALLOWED TO COME WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE TOWN OF OPELOUSAS WITHOUT SPECIAL PERMISSION FROM HIS EMPLOYERS.

SECTION 3. NO NEGRO SHALL BE PERMITTED TO RENT OR KEEP A HOUSE WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE TOWN UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

SECTION 4. NO NEGRO SHALL RESIDE WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE TOWN OF OPELOUSAS WHO IS NOT IN THE REGULAR SERVICE OF SOME WHITE PERSON OR FORMER OWNER.

SECTION 5. NO PUBLIC MEETINGS OF NEGROES SHALL BE ALLOWED WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE TOWN OF OPELOUSAS UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES WITHOUT THE PERMISSION OF THE MAYOR OR PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF POLICE. THIS, HOWEVER, DOES NOT PREVENT THE FREEDMEN FROM ATTENDING THE USUAL CHURCH SERVICES.

SECTION 7. NO FREEDMAN WHO IS NOT IN THE MILITARY SERVICE SHALL BE ALLOWED TO CARRY FIREARMS, OR ANY KIND OF WEAPONS, WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE TOWN OF OPELOUSAS WITHOUT THE SPECIAL PERMISSION OF HIS EMPLOYER, IN WRITING, AND APPROVED BY THE MAYOR OR PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF POLICE.

SECTION 11. ALL THE FOREGOING PROVISIONS APPLY TO FREEDMEN AND FREEDWOMEN.

SOURCE: BLACK CODE FROM OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA, JULY 3, 1865.

DOCUMENT C: EDUCATION

MANY OF THE NEGROES . . . COMMON PLANTATION NEGROES, AND DAY LABORERS IN THE TOWNS AND VILLAGES, WERE SUPPORTING LITTLE SCHOOLS THEMSELVES. EVERYWHERE I FOUND THEM HOPING TO GET THEIR CHILDREN INTO SCHOOLS. I OFTEN NOTICED THAT WORKERS IN STORES AND MEN WORKING IN WAREHOUSES, AND CART DRIVERS ON THE STREETS, HAD SPELLING BOOKS WITH THEM, AND WERE STUDYING THEM DURING THE TIME THEY WERE NOT WORKING. GO OUTSIDE ANY LARGE TOWN IN THE SOUTH, AND WALK AMONG THE NEGRO HOUSING, AND YOU WILL SEE CHILDREN AND IN MANY CASES GROWN NEGROES, SITTING IN THE SUN ALONGSIDE THEIR CABINS STUDYING.

SOURCE: SIDNEY ANDREWS QUOTED IN THE JOINT REPORT ON RECONSTRUCTION, 1866.

THE DOCUMENT ABOVE IS AN EXCERPT FROM A REPORT BY A NORTHERN WHITE MAN TO THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IN 1866.