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# The Black Struggle for Equality in America

By D.R. Palmer

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## **Battle for The Black Struggle for Equality in America Civil-rights, The Conflict**

The African-American post slavery struggle for equality The Black Struggle for Equality

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in America was laced with both gains and losses, which bore a determination as strong as the founding The Black Struggle for Equality in America fathers had when establishing the United States of America.

In order to chronicle the African-American's struggle for civil-rights, one must first touch on the adversity, hardship, and pain that fueled their fire! The struggle for civil-rights was not just a struggle to get the right to vote or to sit at a food counter. The struggle was a fight to be treated as human beings, to be granted the basic, human and civil-rights guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. Indeed, for Blacks to demand these basic rights, which were supposedly The Black Struggle for Equality in America guaranteed to all by the Bill of Rights, was to risk one's very life!

During reconstruction, the South was forced to accept the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments to the United States Constitution. These amendments outlawed slavery, guaranteed due process of the law, and gave the right to vote to males with a minimum age of twenty-one years old.

Once the aforementioned amendments were in force, Black Americans were now considered a free people under the United States Constitution. The Black Struggle for Equality in America As such, they had earned the right to vote, The Black Struggle for Equality in America which gave them a power they had never known before. The power of the vote, along with better educational opportunities, allowed Blacks to seek and hold public office positions The Black Struggle for Equality in America on the local, state, and national levels. This gave rise to the construction of schools, churches, and The Black Struggle for Equality in America small businesses, which The Black Struggle for Equality in America were operated by Blacks living in those areas. The former slaves were now fully and equally protected under the law, which meant that they could begin to work toward personal and economic goals. However, this new-found freedom, and the opportunity to realize its rewards, came with tremendous road blocks that threatened the future of Blacks throughout American, as well as those living in the South.

Unfortunately, the gains made by Black Americans angered and were envied by White women, whom felt that they too should have the right to vote. Moreover, many White women felt outraged because Black men were given the right to vote ahead of them. In fact, White Southerners were so enraged by the legislation that they soon turned to violence.

The backlash against Black voting rights and freedom from slavery gave rise to the creation of many "hate" organizations that seemed, on the outside, to be civic-minded groups

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concerned with the The Black Struggle for Equality in America welfare of the town's people. During this time, six (6) Confederate officers formed a secret organization called the Invisible Empire of the South. The goal of this organization was to protect the South from "Niggers" and "Nigger lovers". The formation of this organization established the ground rules for what would become the South's most notable hate group, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). Even though there was a great many Southerners who disagreed with the Klan and its deeds, most were silent about the KKK's activities because they feared reprisal.

In the year 1872, an Amnesty Bill pardoned all Southerners of treasonous acts against the United States by their attempt to secede from the union, and by 1875 all the Southern states had been re-admitted to Congress. In fact, after the election of 1876, all 35 confederate states were once again represented in Congress. This electoral milestone combined with the desires of the The Black Struggle for Equality in America younger Republican leaders in Congress to compromise, allowed the positive gains in Black American rights to erode. Furthermore, the Compromise of 1877 began the decline and stripping away of the newly established rights that Blacks had attained thus far.

The The Black Struggle for Equality in America compromise provided for "States Rights", which permitted Southern states to have free rein over their politics. Indeed, this congressional compromise allowed the states that were against Black Americans having rights to devise ways to prevent Blacks from voting. These states enacted legislation that required literacy tests, proof of ownership of real property, and authorized the collection of poll taxes as a means to preventing poor minorities (Blacks) from voting.

The Compromise of 1877 was considered the "Great Betrayal of 1877" to the more than four (4) million former slaves living in the South. The newly elected Republicans worked hard to ensure that civil-rights for Black Americans were completely forsaken. In fact, President Rutherford B. Hays (Republican: 1877 to 1881) made it clear to the country that the business of the Federal Government was to perpetuate the United States, and had no desire to invest additional efforts in Civil-rights legislation. Hays echoed the sentiments of the masses, as the non-Black population of America was more interested in the business of making money, than securing the rights of its minority citizens. Sadly, because of The Black Struggle for Equality in America the events of 1877, the issue of Black civil-rights would not be entertained again on a serious level The Black Struggle for Equality in America until 87-years later, during the 1950s.

The election of 1876 made Rutherford B. Hays President of the United States, and made Blacks wishing to exercise their right to vote, a hazardous business. In the Southern states, Black voters were forced to vote in the The Black Struggle for Equality in America open,

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and were not allowed to vote using private voting booths. In many of these instances, a member of the KKK would over-see the voting, and “wrong votes” were quickly changed or the ballot(s) were lost. Moreover, in some areas, Blacks were beaten, discouraged from voting, or forced away from the polling places. However, in areas where Blacks managed to cast their votes, entire ballot boxes were destroyed. The Black Struggle for Equality in America This prevented Black American votes from being counted, thereby effectively silencing Black American voices.

In a measure to afford poor, illiterate Whites the ability to vote, a number of Southern states passed grandfather clauses, which stated that no person who had voted before 1867, or who had relatives who had voted before 1867 were required to take the literacy test. Indeed, the White power structure fully expected that an overwhelming majority of Blacks would fail the literacy tests. Of course, few if any Southern Blacks had voted before 1867, so the White power structure was sure that the enacted voter-suppression law would work.

President Hayes and the new Congress turned a blind eye to what was transpiring around them, The Black Struggle for Equality in America as new segregation laws were systematically passed in many of the Southern states. As the condition worsened, grievances put on record with the federal government were ignored, and Black leaders were told to seek assistance at the state level. It appeared The Black Struggle for Equality in America as though the federal government was no longer interested in assisting to secure the civil-rights of Black Americans, and as a result, more and more states began enacting legislation The Black Struggle for Equality in America aimed at disenfranchising Blacks.

As life became more restrictive in the South, Blacks migrated to the Northern and Western parts of the United States. In fact, Black The Black Struggle for Equality in America Americans played a pivotal role in helping to tame the great Western wilderness, and shape its future. It quickly became apparent, in the great-untamed wilderness that was the American South-West, both White and Black families worked side by side and endured the same hardships and pains in order to realize their common dreams. Indeed, it was here in the West that Black Americans flourished, and for a time, believed they had found true freedom. So, with the mass migration of people to the South-West, racism and prejudice soon found its way to the Western states. In fact, history would show that the West eventually became home to some of the worst racism documented in the United States.

## **The Black Struggle For Equality In America**

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