**The Jim Crow Era**

The term Jim Crow originated in an 1830s song performed by a white minstrel show actor, “Daddy Rice”. In a racist portrayal of African Americans, Rice covered his face with charcoal paste or burnt cork to resemble a black man, and then sang and danced a routine in stereotypical caricature of a black person. By the 1900s, the name Jim Crow was used to identify racist laws and actions in southern America that deprived African Americans of their civil rights.

Between 1877 and the mid 1960s, the Jim Crow laws were in effect and represented a series of rigid and anti-Black laws. Jim Crow also referred to a way of life. Under Jim Crow etiquette expectations, African Americans were viewed and treated as second class citizens and experienced common discrimination. In the Jim Crow South, there was a common misconception that Blacks were intellectually and culturally inferior to Whites. The Jim Crow Laws and Etiquette only reinforced their unfair beliefs in the legal system, where Blacks were ordered to use separate pools, libraries, hospitals, bus seats, and even cemeteries.

**Examples of Jim Crow “Etiquette,” 1870s-1960s**

1. A Black male could not offer his hand (to shake hands) with a White male because it implied being socially equal. A Black male could not offer his hand to a White woman because he risked being accused of rape.
2. Blacks and Whites were not supposed to eat together. If they did eat together, Whites were to be served first, and some sort of partition was to be placed between them.
3. Under no circumstance was a Black male to offer to light the cigarette of a White female- that gesture implied intimacy.
4. Blacks were not allowed to show public affection toward one another in public, especially kissing, because it offended Whites.
5. Jim Crow etiquette prescribed that Blacks were introduced to Whites, never Whites to Blacks. For example: “Mr. Peters (the White person), this is Charlie (the Black person), that I spoke to you about.”
6. Whites did not use courtesy titles of respect when referring to Blacks, for example, Mr., Mrs., Miss, Sir, or Ma’am. Instead, Blacks were called by their first names. Blacks had to use courtesy titles when referring to Whites and were not allowed to call them by their first names.
7. If a Black person rode in a car driven by a white person, the Black person had to sit in the back seat or the back of a truck.
8. White motorists had the right-of-way at all intersections.

**Other Jim Crow Rules**

*Stetson Kennedy, the author of the Jim Crow Guide, offered these simple rules that Blacks were supposed to observe in conversing with Whites:*

1. Never assert that a White person is lying.
2. Never impute dishonorable intentions to a White person.
3. Never suggest that a White person is from an inferior class.
4. Never lay claim to, or overly demonstrate, superior knowledge or intelligence.
5. Never curse a White person.
6. Never laugh derisively at a White person.
7. Never comment upon the appearance of a White female.

*Source: Ferris State University;* [*www.ferris.edu/jimcrow*](http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow)

[*www.civics.org*](http://www.civics.org)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Think about it….**

*Answer the following in THOROUGH, complete sentences.*

1. How were you feeling as you read through these rules of etiquette of the Jim Crow era? Why?
2. Which etiquette/rule do you find most disturbing? Why?
3. How do you think the above behaviors became the social “norm”? In other words, why do you think they were created?
4. Why do you think many white people in the south were in favor of these rules?
5. Even though the rules were obviously racist and unfair, why do you think most black people in the south would have abided by these rules?
6. If the year were 1900, how would your life be different based on the above rules and expectations?
7. Why do you think it is important to learn about uncomfortable topics such as Jim Crow?

**In this space, write at least 3 actual Jim Crow Laws that were in effect in some Southern states.**