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Audrey Robinson-Nkongola

Western Kentucky University, audrey.robinson-nkongola@wku.edu

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Wandering the Web — Laws that Affect the Life of Americans from Slavery to the 21st Century

by **Audrey Robinson-Nkongola** (Assistant Professor/Campus Librarian, Western Kentucky University)
<audrey.robinson-nkongola@wku.edu>

Column Editor: **Jack G. Montgomery** (Professor, Coordinator, Collection Services, Western Kentucky University Libraries)
<jack.montgomery@wku.edu>

Author's Note: *Part One of the bibliography is a list of Websites where information concerns laws and cases that greatly impacted African American lives in the nineteenth century. These laws are listed chronologically beginning at slave codes to **Plessy v. Ferguson**. The slave codes and fugitive slave laws were meant to control the possibility of slave rebellion. As the History Channel stated, black codes and the **Jim Crow** laws were meant to maintain white supremacy and Southern agricultural society. The **Dred Scott** decision declared African Americans were not citizens. **Plessy** made segregation the law of the land. Laws, such as the **Civil Rights Acts** and **Voting Rights Act**, demanded that the United States government honor the Constitution, particularly the Fourteenth Amendment — “all persons born or naturalized in the United States” are citizens and “... forbids states from denying any person life, liberty or property without due process of law” or “deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”¹*

Part Two lists Websites of laws that attempted to reserve the centuries of oppression. These laws illustrate the small gains African Americans made to obtain de facto freedom. — ARN

Slave Codes

The **U.S. History.org** — <http://www.ushistory.org/us/6f.asp> — owned by **Independence Hall Association** of Philadelphia, provides the definition and rationale for slave codes. Slave codes were not implemented in the South in the 1800s, but it existed in the colonies in the 1700s. **U.S. History.org** states slave codes were employed to control the movement of slaves in order to avoid rebellion.

At the top of the page is a drop-down menu, which provides various aspects of United States history. The subtitle of the page is “African Americans in the British New World.” The section for slave codes is labeled as “6F. African Americans.” The subsection “f” is where slave codes are located. The left side of the page includes further information on slave codes on other sites.

The American Treasures of the Library of Congress: Memory — <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/trm009.html> — maintained by the **Library of Congress (LOC)**, is a Website about slave codes in the District of Columbia (DC). To the left of the page is an image of the actual slave code passed in D.C.

The “Law Library” link will take the researcher to the online catalog of **LOC** Law Library. Items such as “Extracts from the American slave code” can be found.

The site states slave codes were in existence from 1660s to 1860s, 200 years of codes that were designed to control the daily lives of African Americans. Maryland and the District of Columbia’s slave codes were published on March 17, 1862, one month after **President Abraham Lincoln** signed a law to compensate slave owners for their loss of “property.”

PBS (Public Broadcasting Service) — <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/experience/legal/history.html> — broadcasted a series called “Slavery and Making of America.” The Website entitled, “The Slave Experience: Legal Rights and Government,” is a part of the series. The page is divided vertically into two columns. The first column on the left, “Legal Rights and Government,” provides a historical overview. The second column discusses the implementation and rationale for slave codes. According to the author, **Kimberly Sabol-Tosco**, one of the first slave codes was enacted in South Carolina in 1696. It was called the “Act for the Better Ordering and Governing of Negroes and Slaves.” This act originated from Barbados and became the foundation for what other states used for their slave codes.

Fugitive Slave Laws

Encyclopedia.com — http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/fugitive_slave_laws.aspx — operated by **Cengage Learning**, republished **Arthur G. LeFrancois’s** article entitled “Fugitive Slave Acts.” The Website includes Fugitive Slave laws of 1793 and 1850. The Website is divided into five parts, “the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793,” “the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850,” “an Unsuccessful Accommodation,” “Slave Reparations,” and the bibliography. The bibliography provides citations of **LeFrancois’s** resources.

The site succinctly states the North and South’s views on slavery and the recapture of slaves. The varying views caused division between the two regions. According to **LeFrancois**, the “Fugitive Slave Act of 1793” was an effort to provide a means to enforce the constitutional clause concerning escaped slaves. “The act allowed a slave owner to seize an escaped slave and present him/her before a federal or local judge, and, upon ownership, receive a certificate authorizing the slave to be retaken.”

LeFrancois maintains that the “Fugitive Slave Act of 1850” “was an important part of the Compromise of 1850.” The Compromise

was an attempt to avoid the divide between the North and the South that was to occur. **LeFrancois** summarized the aspects under the 1850 act that made the recapture of slaves easier and the successful escape nearly impossible. He points out “federal marshals were financially liable for not trying to execute the warrants and for allowing fugitives to escape. Penalties were increased for obstructing slave owners or helping fugitives, and included imprisonment.” **LeFrancois** states under “an Unsuccessful Accommodation” section the Compromise merely “illustrated the North’s and South’s opposing views on the issue of slavery.” The last section is a debate about whether reparations should be paid to African Americans as the result of slavery. Although an interesting debate, it seems out of place in the discussion of the Compromises.

The **History Channel** Website — <http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/fugitive-slave-acts> — entitled “Fugitive Slave Acts” begins with a dramatic banner “The Slave-hunter is among us. Be on Your Guard. An arrest is planned for to-night (sic).” It summarizes the Fugitive Slave acts and circumstances they were enacted. In addition, the Website notes that statutes regarding runaway slaves were in the thirteen colonies as early as 1643.

Fugitive Slave Law of 1793

U.S. History.org — <http://www.ushistory.org/presidentshouse/history/slaveact1793.htm> — created a Website for the fugitive slave acts. The title of the Website is “The President’s House in Philadelphia: Fugitive Slave Act of 1793.” The Website consists of the entire document of the Fugitive Slave act. In the “Fugitive Slave Act of 1793,” in order to force a person back into slavery, the burden of proof was on the person making the charge. Section Two states “if any person takes a slave or aids in the escaping of the slave shall be fined five hundred dollars and up to a year in prison.” A slave owner’s word or a document before the judge was sufficient to provide the proof that a person should be returned to slavery.

WGBH New England PBS channel — <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part2/2h62.html> — aired a series called “Africans in America.” The Website, “Africans in America: Revolution, Fugitive Slave Act of 1793.” This Website is a continuation of the program. The site quotes Article IV, Section 2 of the Constitution: “any person held to service or labor” can be returned to the owner. **PBS** points out the Constitution does not say a slave. Additionally,

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the slave law allowed any official the power to seize a slave and return him/her to bondage.

Fugitive Slave Law of 1850

The part four PBS series — <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2951.html> — entitled “Africans in America: Judgment Day, 1831-1865,” included the Compromise of 1850 and Fugitive Slave Act. This Website discusses the events that led up to the passage of the “Fugitive of Slave Act of 1850.” The passage of the law was connected to the Compromise. According to PBS.org, several issues could have split the Union quicker than it did. For example, questions such as whether Mexico and California enter the Union as free or slave states and was Santa Fe a part of the Texas territory as Texan officials claimed? Additionally, Washington, D.C., the Union’s capital, allowed slavery and the selling of slaves, which “was the largest slave market in North America.” In order to forgo the inevitability of the division of the Union, a compromise was made. As a part of the Compromise of 1850, the “Fugitive Slave Act of 1850” was introduced, which was one of the agreements to keep the Union intact.

NBC News.com — http://www.nbcnews.com/id/24714472/ns/us_news-gut_check/t/s-s-expansion-slavery-us/#.VcfyrstRHug — created a series called “Gut Check. America.” Gut Check America was created to “ask...readers... what matters most to [them]. Then use the responses to help inform [the] coverage of the topic.” The Website entitled “1800-1850s: Expansion of Slavery in the U.S.” is a part of this series. The site includes the rationale of the Compromise of 1820 and 1850. These compromises were created to settle a dispute between the Northern and Southern states as to whether a state would enter the Union as a free or a slave state. The American Anthropological Association (AAA), the providers of information on the Website, state the Compromise of 1850 created the “Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.” According to AAA, the act was the most devastating legislation to slaves and abolitionists. The act required anyone could capture a slave and return him/her to slavery. The slave did not have due process; therefore, they could be returned without a trial. As a result, free blacks could be forced into slavery. This act caused 20,000 African Americans to flee from the United States to Canada.

Lillian Goldman Law Library of Yale Law School — http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/fugitive.asp — created the “Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy.” Avalon’s purpose is to provide digital documents, which covers the topics of law, history diplomacy, politics, and diplomacy.

The Avalon Project provided the entire ten sections of the Fugitive Slave act. To summarize two parts of the law that different from the “Fugitive Slave Act of 1793” and to illustrate how this act significantly inhibited slaves’ attempts towards freedom, Sections Five and Six will be mentioned. Section Five “...

should any marshal or deputy marshal refuse to receive such warrant or other process when tendered or to use all proper means diligently to execute he shall on conviction thereof, be fined in the sum of one thousand dollars.” In the “Fugitive Slave Act of 1793,” the fine was five hundred dollars. In addition, if a fugitive escape under an officer’s control, that officer will be prosecuted “for the full value of the service or labor of said fugitive.” In this act, unlike the previous one, the slave catcher is responsible for the successful return of the slave. Section Five allows “posse committatus” or “all good citizens” to return slaves to their owners.

Section Six states that the owner can pursue the slave by obtaining a warrant “to seize the fugitive without process,” and the owner could proclaim by deposition, orally or in writing, to certify the slave belongs to him.

Black Codes

PBS — <http://www.pbs.org/tpt/slavery-by-another-name/themes/black-codes/> — created a Website about black codes and pig laws. The Website includes videos on both codes. A pig law was a penalty, a misdemeanor, and a felony solely levied against African Americans when a farm/agricultural crime occurred. These pig laws stayed on the books well into the Jim Crow era.

According to the History Channel — <http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-codes> — black codes were implemented to control the former slaves and their labor. The Website provides a brief chronology of black codes, which begin in 1865, with Mississippi and South Carolina being the first states to enact them. The purpose of black codes was “to show a steadfast commitment to ensuring the [white] supremacy and the survival of plantation agriculture in the postwar years.”

The page is divided into sections, for example “States’ rights in the Former Confederacy,” “Passage of the Black Codes,” and “Enforcement and Impact of the Black Codes.” To the right of the page are illustrations and links of related topics.

Jim Crow Laws

The National Park Service (NPS) — http://www.nps.gov/malu/learn/education/jim_crow_laws.htm — which is a government entity under the United States Department of the Interior, created a Website about Jim Crow Laws. The title of the Website, “Martin Luther King, Jr: National Historic Site-Georgia, is misleading. However, the topic is about Jim Crow laws. This page discusses the Jim Crow laws in different states. Jim Crow laws are like the slave and black codes. These laws were designed to limit the African American’s everyday life after he achieved freedom from slavery. For example, Mississippi had a law against the promotion of equality, i.e., “any person... in favor of social equality or of intermarriage between whites and negroes, shall be subject to fines not exceeding five hundred (500.00) dollars or imprisonment not exceeding six (6) months or both.”

The Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Michigan — <http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/what.htm> — created the Jim Crow Museum

of Memorabilia. The Webpage features a slide show of some of the museum’s artifacts, which are very disturbing. However, the menu tab, “About us” and under the section “About the Museum,” the goal of the museum is “to get people to think deeply” and show the alarming artifacts of history of racism in the U.S.” By clicking on the “video” tab, various YouTube videos on racism are available for viewing.

The Library of Congress (LOC) — <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/civil-rights> — created a teachers’ guide of primary sources and images of Jim Crow laws and segregation. The content can be filtered based upon Common Core Standards, state content, grade level, and subject. For example, an educator can select “Common Core Standards in grade level twelve for the subject of social studies. Once the selection has been made, a list appears with the standards the content fulfills.

Dred Scott v. Sanford (1857)

Dred Scott, a slave, argued for his freedom before the United States Supreme Court in 1857. According to the majority opinion of the court, slaves and Blacks were not citizens, therefore, could not bring their cases before a federal court.

WGBH New England PBS — www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2932.html — aired a series “Africans in American.” The title of part four of the series is “Judgment Day: Part 4: 1831-1865.” The title of the Website is called “People and Events: Dred Scott’s fight for freedom: 1846-1857.” The Website is exclusively about the Scott case. At the bottom of the page are links called “Related Entries,” which related to Scott’s case. One link entitled “David Blight on the Dred Scott decision.” David Blight, Professor of History and Black Studies of Amherst College, explains the significance of the Dred Scott decision.

Missouri Office of the Secretary of State et al — <https://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/africanamerican/scott/scott.asp> — created an online library of historical documents called “Missouri Digital Heritage.” The title of the Website is “Missouri State Archives, Missouri’s Dred Scott Case: 1846-1857.” The Dred Scott case began in St. Louis Circuit Court. Therefore, many of the detail regarding the case and the personal lives of Scott’s family and owners may be discussed in greater detail than elsewhere. According to the Website, Scott case began from “an 1846 action when Dred Scott innocently made his mark with an ‘X’ signing his petition in a pro forma freedom suit, initiated under Missouri to sue for freedom in St. Louis Circuit Court.”

The Library of Congress (LOC) — <http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/DredScott.html> — created an online reference guide called “Web Guides: Virtual Services Digital Reference Section.” The title of the page is “Primary Documents in American History: Dred Scott v. Sanford. LOC briefly is divided by six sections, for example “Digital Collections,” “Chronicling,” and “Younger Readers,” etc. This page is a great resource

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to find other types of information on the **Dred Scott** decision.

Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)

History Channel — <http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/plessy-v-ferguson> — summarized the details regarding *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). In this landmark case, **Homer Plessy** refused to sit in a separate railway car in Louisiana. He argued that his civil rights were violated. The seven majority panel believed that **Plessy's** civil rights were not violated if the accommodations were “separate, but equal.” As a result, *Plessy v. Ferguson* set the precedent of segregation in every aspect of African Americans’ lives.

WNET Indianapolis, Indiana PBS channel — http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories_events_plessy.html — televised a series in 2002 titled the “Rise and Fall of Jim Crow.” Under “About the Series” link described “Rise and Fall of Jim Crow” as a “landmark four-part series [that] explores segregation from the end of Civil War to the dawn of the modern Civil Rights movement.” A Website was created to summarize the various aspects of the series. The *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), a United States Supreme Court case that created de jure of segregation, in spite of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Legal Information Institute — <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/163/537> — which is housed at **Cornell University Law School**, provided the entire *Plessy v. Ferguson* case, including the opinion of the court and lone dissenter, **Justice John Harlan**. The opinion of the Court made by **Justice Brown** stated that “all railway companies carrying passengers in their coaches in this State shall provide equal but separate accommodations for the white and colored races by providing two or more passenger coaches for each passenger train.” **Justice John Harlan**, as the sole dissenter, rebuked the ruling due to “such legislation as that here in question is inconsistent not only with that equality of rights which pertains to citizenship, National and State, but with the personal liberty enjoyed by everyone within the United States.”

Part 2 of Laws

The following laws illustrate a shift towards de facto freedom for African Americans. Some scholars believe the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision was the beginning of the Civil Rights movement.⁵ However, while others contend that 1619, when the first Africans who were sold as slaves to colonists, began the Civil Rights era.⁶ No matter the date, the succeeding laws demonstrate African Americans’ collective push towards obtaining their rights under the Constitution.

Mendez v. Westminster (1945)

Mendez v. Westminster is not a U.S. Supreme Court case. However, *Mendez v. Westminster* had an impact on the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court ruling.

It set the precedent for desegregated schools. **Sylvia Mendez** was denied access to a school in California, because she was Latina. **Mendez** et al argued successfully that denying **Mendez** entry into the Westminster Elementary School was unconstitutional.*

Smithsonian National Museum of American History: Behring Center — *<http://americanhistory.si.edu/brown/history/2-battleground/pursuit-equality-2.html> — devoted a Webpage to *Brown* case entitled “Separate is not equal: *Brown v. Board of Education*.” The subtitle is “In Pursuit of Equality: *Mendez v. Westminster*.” As stated in the introduction to this section, **Sylvia Mendez** et al Westminster Elementary School, because she was not admitted due to her race. Among the arguments made in this case, one of them declared that “separate schools violated the Fourteenth Amendment.” As a result, other courts upheld the decision and Californian **Governor Earl Warren** fought to desegregate schools for Asian and Native Americans. This Webpage does not explicitly make the connection with *Brown v. Board of Education*.

The Constitutional Rights Foundation's (CRF) — <http://www.crf-usa.org/bill-of-rights-in-action/bria-23-2-c-mendez-v-westminster-paving-the-way-to-school-desegregation> — mission is to educate young people to be more civic-minded. As a result, the Foundation devoted Website to the **Mendez** case titled, “*Mendez v. Westminster: Paving the Way to School Desegregation*.” The Website’s audience is school children, parents, and teachers. Teachers can find free lesson plans on Black history, the Bill of Rights and the Common Core. The CRF provides background information on the **Mendez** decision and segregation. In addition, it makes a clear connection between the **Mendez** and **Brown** cases. According to CRF, **Mendez** was “the first time...evidence [presented] in a court that school segregation harmed minority children.”

National Park Service (NPS) — http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/american_latino_heritage/Los_Angeles_US_Court_House_and_Post_Office.html — produced a Webpage to the **Mendez** case titled “American Latino Heritage: U.S. Court House and Post Office, Los Angeles, California.” NPS included illustrations of the U.S. District Court, Westminster School of Orange County, and **Sylvia Mendez** receiving her Presidential Medal of Freedom. NPS notes the discriminatory practices of school administrators in regard to Latino Americans, for example, the less “Mexican” a child looked and sound, he/she could attend the white school.

Brown v. Board of Education (1954)

According to Kansas state law, cities having more than 15,000 citizens were required to establish a separate school for African American children. In 1950, the Kansas State Supreme court heard eleven court cases that challenged segregated schools. Later in 1950, the NAACP created a class action lawsuit, which represented thirteen families. In February 1951, a federal three-judge panel ruled that segregation

“may be detrimental, but not illegal.” In 1954, **Thurgood Marshall** et al successfully argued the unconstitutionality of segregated schools.

Legal Information Institute (LII) — <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/347/483> — has the full text of the *Brown v Board of Education*. Whereas *Plessy v. Ferguson* made segregation the law of the land, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) made segregation unconstitutional. The syllabus of *Brown* states “segregation of White and Negro (sic) children in the public schools of a state solely on the basis of race, pursuant to state laws permitting or requiring such segregation, denies to Negro children the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment — even though the physical facilities and other ‘tangible’ factors of white and Negro schools may be equal.”

The Leadership Conference — <http://www.civilrights.org/education/brown/> — created a Website about the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court ruling. The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and The Leadership Education Fund “is a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 200 national organizations to promote and protect civil and human rights of all persons in the United States.” The Leadership Conference was created by **A. Phillip Randolph**, head of the Sleeping Car Porters, **Roy Wilkins** of the NAACP, and **Arnold Aronson**, a leader of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council. The organization was founded in 1950.

The *Brown v Board of Education* Website is divided into two sections with eight sections. Under the “Online Resources,” some of the resources include “About the *Brown* decision,” “Exhibits,” and a student activity booklet for children, and “Resources and Articles.” The majority of the resources and articles are found elsewhere on the Web.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Legal Defense and Educational Fund — <http://www.naacpldf.org/case/brown-v-board-education> — was created by **Thurgood Marshall**, the first African American to serve on the Supreme Court, in 1940. The Legal Defense and Educational Fund (LDF) “is the country’s first and foremost civil and human rights law firm... [Its] victories established the foundations for the civil rights that all Americans enjoy today”.

The LDF created a Website to explain the *Brown v. Board of Education* case. The title of the Website is “Case: Landmark: *Brown v. Board of Education*.” On the left side of the page are “Related Files” or cases that are related to the *Brown* case. Below the related files is “Recent News.” LDF provides information on civil and human rights cases.

The National Parks Service (NPS) — <http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights/ka1.htm> — a governmental agency, produced a Website called “We Shall Overcome: Historic Places of the Civil Rights Movement.” The historical places featured were the center of the *Brown v. Board of Education* case — Monroe

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Elementary School and Sumner Elementary School in Topeka, Kansas.

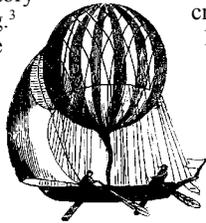
“Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site is the subject of an online lesson plan produced by Teaching with Historic Places, a National Register program that offers classroom-ready lesson plans on properties listed in the National Register.”

Civil Rights Laws

The United States has various Civil Rights laws. The most recognized laws are Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968. Civil Rights Act of 1964 forbade discriminatory practices in aspects of employment.² The Civil Rights Act of 1968, also known as the Fair Housing Act of 1968, prohibited discriminatory practices in regards to housing.³ The following Websites are places on the Internet where these laws can be found.

FindLaw — <http://civilrights.findlaw.com/enforcing-your-civil-rights/civil-rights-laws.html> — which is a **Thomson Reuters** product, “provides legal information online.” **FindLaw** provides a list of the Civil Rights laws. The laws can be viewed alphabetically or by subject. The database provides a link to each law. When clicking on the link, such as Civil Rights Act of 1964: Title VII (Equal Employment Opportunities), the code and various subsections Title VII appears.

HG.org — <http://www.hg.org/civilrht.html> — is an “online law and government.” HG.org provides background information on the Civil Rights laws. The Website is divided into informative sections such as “Excessive and Police Misconduct” to “Information Civil Rights Lawyer.” Further on the page is information about Civil Rights law. The Civil Rights section is not only civil rights laws in the United States, but international laws as well. At the top menu bar is the “Articles” tab. Once this tab is selected, the articles are



listed alphabetically by subject. **HG.org** has 535 articles about Civil Rights.

The Legal Information Institute (LII) — https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/civil_rights — is small research engineering and editorial group housed at the **Cornel Law School** in Ithaca, NY. **LII’s** collaborators “include publishers, legal scholars, computer scientists, government agencies, and other groups and individuals that promote open access to law worldwide.” **LII** created WEX, which is a free legal dictionary and encyclopedia.

The encyclopedia defines a civil right as “an enforceable right or privilege which if interfered with by another gives rise to an action for injury.” The Website provides information on civil rights laws.

United States Commission on Civil Rights (CCR) — <http://www.usccr.gov/> — is a federal government agency. The **CCR** was created as a result of the “Civil Rights Act of 1957.” The Civil Rights Act of 1957 fortified the federal government’s commitment to civil rights.⁴ **CCR** was “established as an independent, bipartisan fact-finding federal agency.” Its mission is to “inform the development of national civil rights policy and enhance enforcement of federal civil rights laws.” The Website is sectioned by highlights, recent reports, recent correspondence, recent congressional reports, and testimony. At the bottom right of the page are recent meeting transcripts.

Voting Rights Act 1965

The Leadership Conference Website — <http://www.civilrights.org/voting-rights/vra/history.html> — included the history and sections as well as the Supreme Court’s relationship to the “Voting Rights Act of 1965” (VRA). According the Website, Section 2 prohibits discriminatory practices of minority voters. Section 5 “requires federal ‘preclearance’ before covered jurisdictions.” The covered jurisdictions have historically discriminated against minority voters. However, in June 2013 in *Shelby County v. Holder* the “preclearance” was deemed unconstitutional. This act not only benefitted African Americans, but Asian and Latino Americans were also barred from

voting in various places of the United States before the law was enacted.

The United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division — http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/intro/intro_b.php — has a voting section on its Website. This section includes links of the “History of Federal Voting Rights Laws.” In addition to the history, the Department of Justice provides the “1965 Enactment” of the VRA. According to the site, two events occurred that impacted the passage of VRA, the murders of civil right activists and the attack by state troopers on peaceful marchers on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama. These acts “persuaded...**President [Johnson]** and Congress to overcome Southern legislators’ resistance to effective voting rights legislation.”

The National Initiative on American History, Civics, and Service — <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=100> — sponsored a Website entitled “Our Documents: 100 Milestone Documents from the National Archives.” The Website is comprised of 100 primary, digitized documents that had an impact on American history. As a result, the actual VRA of 1965 is included as one of the one hundred documents. The date stamp of August 6, 1965 can be seen. The Website noted the purpose of the VRA was to enforce the Fifteenth Amendment, which was to allow everyone the right to vote. 🌍

Endnotes

1. <https://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/14thamendment.html>
2. <https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/civil-rights-act/>
3. <http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/fair-housing-act>
4. <http://civilrights.findlaw.com/enforcing-your-civil-rights/civil-rights-laws.html>
5. <http://www.cnn.com/EVENTS/1997/mlk/links.html>
6. <http://www.civilrights.org/resources/civilrights101/chronology.html>

firm order *and* are lucky, your chances of getting the washable edition are very high.)

I draw two lessons from this epic saga. First, the “who knew?” lesson that the physical manufacture of the books we buy nowadays is a far more complicated process than I realized. How many mass market paperbacks sold through **Amazon** are printed by them in this way? Sure, many readers today get a book in their hands and if they take a moment will sniff at it and grumble about how books aren’t made the way they used to be, but **Henry Adams** was right, “The world grew cheap, as worlds must.” It’s just bad luck when one of those books

falls into the hands of a pig-headed university librarian with time on his hands.

But second, I draw the conclusion that more transparency is needed. If I go back to the **CUP** Website, I find that the U.S. pricing for this title is \$89.95 hardcover, \$29.95 paperback. All evidence indicates that those prices are the same whether you receive a well-made artifact from the oldest university press in the world or a junky substitute manufactured by a vendor. I harrumphed about *that* to a non-**Cambridge** publisher I know, suggesting I should get a discount for the tacky version, and she was kind enough to explain to me patiently that I *am* getting that discount, because if the publisher can’t count on switching to POD at a certain point in the print run, the paperback copy would probably

have to cost \$39.95. That might very well be true, but as our presidential candidates repeatedly teach us, just because something is true doesn’t mean I have to believe it.

Now, I do have a six year old **Cambridge Press** Print-on-Demand title on my private shelves that is a perfectly serviceable book, good paper, vividly clear printing, soundly bound. Quality is possible. The problem is not new technology but cheap people — publishers, vendors, and readers who all think that second and third quality objects are quite good enough for “mere” reading. The old Roman senators, when their turn came in debate and they wanted to express dissent, sometimes confined themselves to a two word speech: *ceterum censeo*. “I think otherwise.” I do. 🌍