

HST 202: History of the United States W14 (Escobar Meta 31101 31100)

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Forum 3

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Legacy of Reconstruction

by Joe Escobar - Saturday, February 22, 2014, 12:52 PM

This forum thread is for Legacy of Reconstruction posts and replies.

After studying the required materials, address the questions in your posts.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post.

To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Legacy of Reconstruction

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Progress and freedom in U.S. History does not move forward in a positive and upward trajectory.

by Joseph Foley - Thursday, February 27, 2014, 8:32 AM

Progress and freedom in U.S. History does not move forward in a positive and upward trajectory. Foner touches on this in his podcast and I completely agree. It also made me look back at the progress and freedom for African American's throughout American History.

We learned in the first term that there were a number of slaves and indentured servants brought to colonial America, but that many of them had the opportunity to work for freedom. Many of the slaves brought in were well travelled and savvy, they were not afraid to push for their freedom in a legal sense. We then witnessed slavery transform from something that was not necessarily based on skin color, to being reserved for Africans Americans in

America. Despite America winning its freedom and great talk of all men being created equal, African Americans were forced into a much worse position. Although the slave trade was banned internationally in 1808, its use was only heightened in America. New types of slavery including the "task system," began to develop. During our 201 survey Professor Escobar pointed out that some systems of slavery were worse than others. Although the concept is reprehensible, life in the "task system," included many more freedoms than most options. As cotton became king, we witnessed slavery grow in the south. More slaves were needed to keep making money, hence slavery became a necessity. During this process Americans began to cement their view of African American's to be of an entirely different species. If you use a group as if they are sub-human, the propaganda becomes essential.

As we entered the Civil War several generations after the revolution, the rights of African American's were by no means dramatically improved. Abolitionists were an extreme minority in the United States. We learned in class that the Emancipation Proclamation only freed slaves in southern states that Lincoln had no control over. African American troops were eventually utilized by the Union, but they started out with less pay, and were segregated. As the war came to a close we witnessed Abraham's view of African American's evolve in a positive sense. His concept of Reconstruction would probably have played out differently, but Andrew Johnson took over after his assassination.

Lincoln used Johnson as a running mate because of Johnson's strong ties to the south. Unfortunately Johnson viewed reconstruction very differently and by no means were newly freed African American's given the necessary support to succeed in our society. Racism ran rampant in the South, lynching's increased, and southern politics began to regain power in Washington. Southerners openly defied Union military liaisons posted in the south that were suppose to aid the transition. Despite African American's gaining citizenship and the right to vote with the 14th Amendment, it was fiercely protested by the south.

Reconstruction produced some very positive and progressive measures for African American's, but the idea died out and their new rights were not supported or enforced. The "Blue" and the "Grey" had made up, but they did not mutually support a positive direction for our new black citizens with action. Foner compares the revolution in South Africa to the Civil Rights movement in the U.S during the 50's and 60's. In South Africa, they needed to develop a completely new constitution to protect themselves from the countless potential hazards they learned the hard way. African American's during the Civil Rights movement did not need to change our constitution, they were only asking for their rights which were included in the constitution. Without our government supporting and enforcing the rights that had become available to African American's after the Civil War, things actually got worse in many areas. Literacy rates dropped, blacks were completely segregated, violence against black's increased in the south, voting rights were not always offered, and the hope brought about by reconstruction was extinguished.

When reviewing African American's progress and freedom in America, it is

obvious that it did not go in a positive and upward trajectory, in fact, it went the opposite during many points of our history. Even granting rights and declaring black's citizens did not end the injustices. These rights were not protected and supported, thus African Americans fought for another 70-80 years into the 1950's and 60's, just to claim the rights they had already been offered.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: Progress and freedom in U.S. History does not move forward in a positive and upward trajectory.

by Erik Long - Monday, February 24, 2014, 9:41 PM

I believe that the history of progress and freedom for African Americans has overall move forward in a positive way and upward trajectory. I think that the history of the rights of African American has gone up and down and kind of gone different directions obviously from going free men to being slaves and not having rights, but I think overall that it has became positive.

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Re: Progress and freedom in U.S. History does not move forward in a positive and upward trajectory.

by Matthew Rice - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 5:12 AM

i think that is should also be mentioned the when they were sold into slavery, the poeple so mostly sold them here there own country men in africa, coming over here mad it hard for them, then came the civil war, and they fought as died in the war as well, hope for hope that they might not have to be a slave anymore, with the ending of the war and the freeing of them i think put them at a advange and a disadvantage, it but them into the same point as the new immagrants but the disadvantage is that they had already grown up in the sense of what america is, and they wanted that and they wanted that now. as my Criminal Law Teacher said, the implamentation of the law, is a slow proccess. and it is even slower when the laws are new. they also wanted the life style of the american white, which they wouldnt be able to get even if the american goverment had given them what they wanted. they felt like they were intitled. sadly this way of think is way more prevalent now, from everyone.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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#4 A Northern perspective...

by Agina Hale - Saturday, February 22, 2014, 9:33 PM

What is progress? I think this question is hard to define because thats a perspective term. The Civil War started and ended because there was a

small population that eventually rallied those around themselves in a unifying front against the common enemy to their way of life. This is an aspect of humanity that will never dissipate. There will always be conflict. It is in our DNA to want to be in a social community, and be wary of those who are outsiders. The “distance” that formed between the two sides had its base in economics, but then that transcended well into the very character of each community. Each side had righteousness on it’s side. The physicality of the war might have ceased, but the contention will never lapse. In the beginning, each side had it’s own economy and way of life. But, as things went forward, these two sides polarized themselves into a standstill. Because the South lost the war, and the war (eventually) became a line drawn in the sand over the freedom of African-Americans, they have been forever branded. I know that might sound dramatic, but i’m speaking as a native Oregonian who married a southerner. I had to admit that I had a certain pretentiousness derived from not being from the South. They will always have to contend with the stigma that is the Civil War and all of the ubiquitous animosity that sets the tone for generations to come. Now, I find myself in the defensive stance when blanket statements are made about the South being filled with uneducated and myopic individuals.

The pursuit of progress became a way to level the playing field in an abrupt and punishing action. The Civil War was destined to happen, as the historian had said early, slavery had to end, it couldn’t fit as we evolved. Ironically, the South might very well be able to admit that it hasn’t quite recovered from reconstruction.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: #4 A Northern perspective...



by Scarlett White - Tuesday, February 25, 2014, 8:41 AM

I agree with you, the history of the South is still deeply engrained in people's minds to this day. Coming from almost as far North as possible before the snow becoming a significant part of life, the majority of us have grown up with knowledge of a stereotypical southern lifestyle which is fueled directly from the civil war. Most Canadians will not spend much (if any) time in these states, and therefore will continue to hold on to the stereotype. In saying that, I do not believe that the stereotypes have prevented reconstruction of the South but have slowed the process significantly.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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#1 Born into citizenship

by Connor McCabe - Monday, February 24, 2014, 11:09 AM

It is interesting that Prof. Eric Foner brings up and compares the modern issue of illegal immigrant citizenship and African American citizenship of the 19th century. At minute 2:45 of his presentation he brings up the issue of illegal immigrants in America. It is true that the birthright citizenship established in the reconstruction period helped the African American pop. to slowly grow into citizenship. This however allows modern day illegal immigrants to gain citizenship as well. Birthright citizenship was established to aid in the gradual assimilation of the African American population; a population that was here and had been here for generations already. It is, in present times, being abused to grant the children of illegal immigrants legal citizenship.

He is correct in saying that birthright citizenship applies both then and now. I believe we should consider the circumstances and the differences between then and now. The gradual assimilation was necessary for the population of the post civil war but now we live in a different world. This law is being abused and we should consider alterations in order to reinforce the idea of becoming a citizen then trying to start a family in America. Not the other way around.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Reply to your post "#1 Born into citizenship"

by Zachary Ogborn - Monday, February 24, 2014, 11:32 PM

You provide a very valid argument here. I do agree that the current immigration issues have a slight bias towards abusing the Birthright Citizen right. Although I do have sympathy towards immigrant families fleeing a 3rd world nation or a tyrannical government for ours only in order to provide a better life for their unborn children, I very much agree that it is being abused.

I don't think that the original 14th Amendment had this abuse in mind as a possible molestation of its meaning. But again, you mention that we live in a completely different time. A lot of legislature (and even this Civil-War era legislature) is being abused because we interpret and apply it in a different way as compared to when it was drafted and passed. Eric Foner makes a wonderful assertion that the post Civil-War Reconstruction era legislature directly (and minimally indirectly) affects our current social state. I find myself completely agreeing with him on this issue in particular.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Reply to your post "#1 Born into citizenship"

by Robert Johnson - Friday, February 28, 2014, 12:36 PM

Birthright citizenship is part of what makes this country America. Over all in my opinion, its more correct in a policy of equality than racial citizenship. In the 19th century it became law, thus granting citizenship to generations of deserving black

people who were in fact born here, fought and died here in America. It is the 13th Amendment (A-15 in our book) that grants birthright citizenship.

I do totally agree on your point, the (13th Amendment) is, and has been widely abused, there is a lot of evidence that would back that up.

Sum of ratings: (1)

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Re: Reply to your post "#1 Born into citizenship"



by Agina Hale - Friday, February 28, 2014, 11:18 PM

Immigration reform is a hard topic. What Foner said does bring up a lot of points to think about, but I think the concept of "born into citizenship" doesn't work as well for us now. We aren't the only country that now have immigration issues. The sad fact is there are a lot of horrible places that people are from, there are those who choose to stay and make it better, or those who choose to leave. I can understand both of those choices. There are definitely are some important outcomes to demanding naturalization into a country. Knowing the background of people who enter, and whether they have a criminal past. Also, jobs "on the table" are taxable income. We spend an enormous amount of money paying for services that are from the un-naturalized. Undocumented workers are also more vulnerable and are more likely to be taken advantage of by employers in a number of ways.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Reply to your post "#1 Born into citizenship"



by Connor McCabe - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 8:29 PM

I agree and would like to bring to light that the 14th amendment is not the only law that is abused on a regular basis due to a false interpretation. Freedom of speech, however not born from the reconstruction period, is another law abused in our modern society. It is now used to defend things such as racist displays from the modern KKK to the hate spewed from the mouths of the Westboro Baptist Church. We need to look back to the context of the words written down by our forefathers in order to truly understand why they were written and what was truly meant by the words they chose. Historical events need to be referenced to put the words into context as well as the very definitions of the words due to definitions changing over time.

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#3 Makes an Important Point



by Robert Johnson - Monday, February 24, 2014, 6:18 PM

It states on page 587 in our history book, sections 1 through 5 of The 14th Amendment. Section 1 defines all native-born as American citizens, and prohibited states from abridging

privileges and immunities of citizens, or depriving them of life, liberty or property with out due process of law, it also grants citizens equal protection of the law. So this became law of the land, although as mentioned in class by Escobar and by Foner in his podcast, The 14th Amendment wasn't enforced for black citizens for quite some time afterwards. Foner stated that it took decades for this to begin to happen. This seems to support Foner's point, that rights are not self enforcing. If need be then, it would seem to me sometimes citizens have to enforce their own rights in some way. I think that even after The 14th Amendment passed, black Americans and their advocates realized they had do exactly that. Unfortunately it took decades before black citizens even began to be treated like equal citizens. This to me is a shining example of Foner's point about rights not being self enforced.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: #3 Makes an Important Point

by Dylan Ornas - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 11:03 PM

I concur with you wholeheartedly save for a few points. I find "rights" as described as inalienable rights given to citizens of a country, cannot ever be self enforcing. It is the governments responsibility to enforce the rights put forth by its own constitution. This leads, almost poetically, to another of the points by Foner. The point that freedom in the US is a bumpy if not downright unpredictable affair. That basic mechanic however (as we have seen in the past few chapters) have been catalysts for changes in the way the federal government functions as well as the opening of the debate on state rights.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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3. Passing law is not the same as enforcing the law

by Zachary Embree - Monday, February 24, 2014, 6:21 PM

This is a subject that has always made me very confused when others seem to not grasp it. In many of the discussion I have had about the civil war no one seems to think about what happened after the slaves had been freed. During the reconstruction period the rampant racism did not suddenly disappear, much like Foner explained it was a long drawn out process to make the new laws stick. In many ways the country went in the opposite direction of equality with Andrew Johnson's presidency and suppression of black voters despite the letter of the law. And he was also right in my opinion that the US failed in many cases realize to enforce the new laws was just as important as passing them in the first place. Many of the southerners made things like the "Black Codes" and used violence to suppress the black vote for years after the laws went into affect. Congress had to get to the point of impeaching a president to enforce the new amendments. I think ultimately the failure to keep up the pressure on the south really came from two things, people not wanting a continued, dividing conflict and long standing racism across the country.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: 3. Passing law is not the same as enforcing the law

by Sophia Swanson - Wednesday, February 26, 2014, 5:09 PM

Zachary,

I couldn't have said it better. I completely agree that a lot of the focus tends to drift away from the question of what happened after the slaves had been freed. There's always more to the, and in this case today, a lot of people are uninformed about what happened after the civil war and how the people of the north and south reacted to the idea of having to adapt to the new laws. It's unfortunate what people are willing to do and the lengths they're willing to go in order for them to not have to change what's comfortable to them. In this case their comfort zone was not excepting blacks as equals etc. Your last sentence sums it all up quite nicely.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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Re: Legacy of Reconstruction #1 BORN INTO CITIZENSHIP

by Sophia Swanson - Monday, February 24, 2014, 8:00 PM

Back in the 19th century if people were not born in the US then they were not citizens. This law still remains in the US even after all of these years as well as several other effects from the period after the Civil War. This period is also known as the Reconstructive period. It was a time of confusion and the implementation of new laws, including freedom of slaves and the preservation of the Union. While both whites and blacks adapt and react, this time period was one of the biggest events in US history. This time era has impacted the US and even today we have the same issues they struggled with back then. Today if you are not born in the US you are not a citizen. Thus, you can get your citizenship through a certain process but until then, unless you are born on US soil you are considered an illegal alien. From my understanding the Reconstruction period seems to be the implement of the outcome of the Civil War and the reaction the people had from it. There are still unfortunate remains of the effect that the Reconstruction period had on the US and his point of view helped me to understand what really happened and how history isn't something that effected us once in the past, but continues to effect our nation today.

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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Post Civil War

by Erik Long - Monday, February 24, 2014, 10:21 PM

Reconstruction after the Civil war was to bring Southern united states back to the Union and upgrade the rights of African American people.

Reconstruction addressed how the seceding 11 states were going to come back to the Union and be under the Republican form of Government. This enfranchised the freedman or freed slaves. There were several laws put in place and changes to the civil rights of blacks.

The reconstruction period changed the immigration issues that we have today. Today there are illegal immigrants who move to the United states, who have no rights and are here

illegally but when they have children, their kids become citizens automatically because of the birthright which means someone who is born in the USA is a citizen automatically. This was not the case before the civil war. Before the civil war blacks could not be citizens. Eric Foner says "abolitionists, who were a despised minority, fought for an American citizenship severed from the concept of race". This is tied to the reconstruction era.

Before the civil war, the United States politics were so far from the constitution, they did not enforce the laws and the rights that were written of the constitution nearly 100 years before. The 14th amendment before the civil war was not followed or enforced like it was meant to be.

Foner says that Civil rights legislation remained in the statute book but was ignored, just like today we have plenty of rights that are not upheld by the federal government. This did not happen for another half century after these changes were made from the reconstruction era.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Post Civil War



by Dylan Ornas - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 11:14 PM

I cannot agree with you on some of this, mainly the last two paragraphs. The 14th amendment was not adopted until 1868, 3 years following the American Civil War. Even during the civil war or the years prior it would have been near impossible for a growingly "northern" U.S. government to enforce such a law in the exceedingly confederate south.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Post Civil War



by Anthony Consolo - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 11:43 PM

I like the points that you have made about the government not enforcing or maybe even ignoring certain laws. The fact that the government did this during the Civil War era and has not stopped since raises concern. How can we expect to be able to show the nations outside of the United States that it coming here without becoming a citizen is unacceptable? The fact that we have over 10 million illegal immigrants from Mexico certainly doesn't help. Yes, we have border patrols and fences, but that is not enough. I believe that there should be a punishment greater than deportation when aliens come and take money that belongs to hardworking, tax-paying americans. There is a time to be warm, welcoming, and helpful. But there is also a time to enforce laws that uphold our country and its integrity.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Laws and rights, from the books to the real world



by Melissa Moser - Tuesday, February 25, 2014, 9:30 AM



I thought that Eric Foner made a really great point in the video about rights "on the books" not being self-enforcing, just as laws are often made but not actually enforced. His example is the 14th Amendment, which was written into the constitution but was not actually made "real" to much of the population until the Civil Rights Movement of the mid-twentieth century, nearly 100 years after it was written.

In a much simpler example, the state of Oregon outlaws such things as eating ice cream on Sunday and says that dishes must drip-dry (Dumblaws.com), but I can promise you that I will not be arrested or even given a warning for engaging in either of these criminal acts. Come to think of it, I think that my favorite ice cream parlor is even open on Sundays. This is just an example of the difference between a law being passed and "on the books" and it actually being enforced. The concept is similar in the states of Washington and Colorado with their current legislation regarding marijuana, although there's a bit more red tape involved than in my ice cream scenario.

As to rights, as citizens we have a right to vote. This is a right that people have fought and died over, spent countless years toiling to achieve, and yet is sadly disregarded by many citizens today. I know young women who don't vote in their local or national elections, and suffrage was only granted less than 100 years ago, after a struggle that began in 1848. The right to vote is one of the few ways in which we, as citizens, can try to make a difference in our nation. While this right is available to all of us as citizens, it is neglected by many. Even in the microcosm of our History class, when polls have been presented to us, many students have chosen to skip the vote, each one presumably thinking that their one missing vote wouldn't make a difference. When the day comes to review our poll information, however, we see that it is not one person, but a fair-sized group that has not given their input, and as such, our data is skewed and misrepresentative of the class as a whole. The same thing happens with voting data when the days for elections and the pass-or-veto of bills and ballot measures come to fruition. By not exercising these rights, a great disservice could be being done, from the community to the national level.

The idea of laws being passed and rights being granted to emancipated slaves has more impact than my examples of ice cream or how to dry one's dishes, but I do feel that I my idea of the flippancy with which we view our rights to vote is fairly applicable. When it comes down to it, the right of freedmen to vote was a big piece of the Reconstruction Era. These men fought Union battles for Union beliefs, and as such, helped bring the nation back together. They risked no less than anyone else out there, and did so under more difficult conditions. They were not only facing hostiles on the battlefield, but often among their own commanding officers. These men proved a loyalty to the ideology of a nation that still questioned if they even counted as "men" at all -- they had earned every damned vote they could have been given. And yet, we still weren't even willing to stand up in support of an amendment to the Constitution and call them citizens throughout the country. Rights that are now inconsistently exercised, laws that took far too long to enforce.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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more trouble than it should be



by Anthony Consolo - Tuesday, February 25, 2014, 10:24 PM

While I would have to agree with most of the methods by which the United States grants citizenship are beneficial, I would have to disagree with the portion concerning birth place. I think that the fact that anyone born in the U.S., no matter what country the parents are citizens of, is a citizen of the United States needs to be changed. This may have been a good way to do things when the law was put in place, but not now. Not with the millions of immigrants coming illegally from various different countries. There are over ten million illegal aliens from Mexico in the United States today, all giving birth to millions more Mexican children that are automatically American citizens. More often than not, this causes problems.

For example, I have a friend who is full blooded Mexican. His mother came to the states from Mexico, illegally, and she never went through the legal process to become a legal citizen. However, he was born here in Eugene. Because of this, him and his sibling have had a rough time trying to correct their mothers mistakes. They have to jump through hoops to go through certain legal process' in the U.S. This law, as far as things I've seen from people around me, seems to cause a lot more trouble than it should be.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: more trouble than it should be



by Jonathon Shimmon - Wednesday, February 26, 2014, 3:30 PM

I agree with you when you said they should change the fact that if you are born here by an illegal alien parent you are automatically a citizen. I feel like the country spends a lot of money and time protecting who comes into our country, yet they must know that people still do illegally. If we don't want the mother of a kid who is born to be considered a citizen, and don't give her the same US rights as her son gets, how is she suppose to properly parent a child? It seems like that would just cause trouble and rifts amongst families, like you mentioned about your friend. To me that is good evidence of support for number 4 on the list about progress and freedom in the US not moving upward in a positive trajectory.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: more trouble than it should be



by Zachary Embree - Wednesday, February 26, 2014, 9:02 PM

I can definitely see your point about the problems we are having with citizenship and illegal immigration. The laws guiding citizenship must change to adapt to this growing problem, and personally I think they should approach it from several angles. To avoid many future problems and possible families being separated make citizenship easier to get, encourage people to go through the process, and come down on illegal hiring practices. As it is now cases like your friend seem to be slipping through the cracks of the current laws, really to the detriment if all involved.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Passing Laws and Enforcing Laws



by Brian Davis - Wednesday, February 26, 2014, 7:42 PM

There is a huge difference between simply passing a law and enforcing it. Same goes for having rights and exercising those rights. When the states that seceded came back into the Union they had to draft up new constitutions franchising all men regardless of race, disenfranchise some of the confederate leaders, and ratify the 14th amendment. The states complied with all of congresses demands and were readmitted into the Union. The interesting thing about this process is that these racist southerners enfranchised all men before most of the northern states.

Now the black population has the right to vote without restrictions and yet men and organizations (such as the Ku Klux Klan) kept them from doing so freely. Sometimes they would make them afraid to come forward and vote and sometimes they would be coerced to vote a certain way. That isn't exercising your freedom to vote, they had the right, but couldn't exercise that right.

Section 1 of the 14th amendment states that all native born people are citizens and prohibited the states from abridging upon their rights, which included their right to life, liberty and to property. Yet these black people had their confiscated confederate land taken from them when the plantation owners were pardoned. This is an example of the states and congress not enforcing the law.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Precieved vs Enforced Rights



by Alexander Pierpoint - Thursday, February 27, 2014, 9:32 AM

I've found the discussion and information about life for freed slaves very fascinating. The strange dinamic that occured when the institution of slavery was no longer in place, yet people still had a racist mind set. In my writing class we've been discussing the instituon of slavery and the extent to which its legacy is present in our society today.

Even before Jim Crowe laws that came about later on, legislature was passed that although may not have expicitly infringed on the rights of Blacks, it certainly made things easier to do. Some even suggest that these laws in a sense reinstituted slavery in a different way. Sure techincally the slaves were now free, but that didn't do them much good when they had no land, money, or power. Often they would be arrested for things that seemed very trivial. Granted, these laws very likely applied to whites as well, they just weren't enforced in those instances. Upon being convicted, slaves would often be sentenced to work at a labor camp or something of that sort which was pretty much reenslaving them. While they may have had new Precieved Rights after the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the new Amendmant, when it came to their rights being enforced, they definitely got the short end of the deal.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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#3 Sets The Course For #4

by Robert Johnson - Thursday, February 27, 2014, 11:47 AM

Considering that having rights and laws isn't the same as, those laws being enforced, or exercising those rights, it makes sense that Foner's claim #4 is accurate. If the opposite of #3 were true, and those laws and rights enforced themselves, then progress and freedom in U.S. History may have moved forward in a much more positive and upward trajectory. But obviously, that's not the way it works.

I think in some situations, by different opposing groups of people exercising their legal rights can cause conflict in the land. But because this is America, land of the free, every citizen of this country has equal rights to exercise, people from all sides. How could the progress of anything go steadily or smoothly in any direction, if enough oppose ? Good or bad that's how it is, and I doubt it's going to change. If it did, this would not be America, land of the free.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: #3 Sets The Course For #4

by Melissa Moser - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 8:39 PM

From what I have seen, an immense portion of the American public doesn't seem to understand that a right, as granted by any of our amendments are two way streets. The idea of freedom of speech, for example, can both help and hinder the idea of positive progress. On one hand, it protects people speaking against tyrannical government and corrupt corporations, which is a something we generally like. On the other, it protects the free-speech rights of groups like the KKK and other white supremacy organizations, which we generally don't like. However, as much as we may believe in a law or a right, we must accept that it can only be enforced while there are proper officers around to do so. This is why the South wound up divided in to 5 military districts for the better part of a decade after the Civil War. Based on the agreements the former Confederate states had to make to be readmitted, as well as the newest amendments to the constitution, someone had to make sure these concepts were being obeyed. As such, we both moved forwards and backwards. Enforcing rights for a wider variety of people, forwards (yay!). Creating a hostile police state on your own soil? Um, less... forwards.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Back and forth like tug-a-war

by Cameron Holliday - Friday, February 28, 2014, 2:04 PM

The topic of birthright citizenship has me torn. It makes sense because well if you're born in a country should you have to go through a process from birth to become a citizen? I personally do not think so. But what about your parents. If they are illegal aliens and decide

to have a child here should the child be considered a citizen since it technically was not done entirely legal. The small coast town that I come from is populated by mostly whites and Hispanics. I have many friends who are Hispanic. My favorite restaurant in town is a Mexican restaurant. I can honestly say that I know illegal immigrants and I am friends with some. I have plenty of friends whose parents had them in Mexico and brought them over the boarder and have lived here for 20 plus years now. Even if the Government finds illegal immigrants are they really going to take them away from their, by law, legal children and families? I believe that everyone should have to follow the laws but at what point should we realize that maybe this law is not working and it is time to find a better way to control the population of our nation. Is it fair that people can come across the boarder and find work for less than legal pay and start families and then when caught not have to leave and do things the legal way because of their birthright citizen children? With this law it is such a tangled web that we weave. It may time to try and stop untangling and do an entire tear down and rebuild.

Lady Liberty stands for those who are lost and looking for a breath of freedom. At some point we have to draw the line and not let things like this tear down the nation.

Sum of ratings:2 (1)

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Re: Back and forth like tug-a-war

by Anthony Consolo - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 10:57 PM

I like the points you are making. After reading this, I would have to say that I feel the same way. I just wouldn't quite know how to fix it without deliberately splitting up happy families. Obviously, something has to be done about the current system because if someone grows up in a completely Mexican household, the Mexican culture is all they are going to know despite living in the United States. There are many small towns just north of the Mexican border that might as well be in Mexico because they are predominantly populated by Mexicans and the culture is exactly the same. While it is immoral to break families apart, I do think something should be done if the family members born on american soil are under a certain age. If the children born in america are not old enough to be in school or have a job, I think it would be best to take them and their families back across the border. However, if that is not the case, the whole system may need an overhaul because illegal aliens are continuing to make a negative impact on honest, hardworking tax payers.

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Re: Back and forth like tug-a-war

by Scarlett White - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 11:32 PM

I agree with you in a sense that something needs to change, it seems like the United States is going in circles when it comes to the prevention of illegal immigrants. Every single time the United States increases border security, the people of Mexico counteract it. All of this money as been put into preventing the initial crossing of the border and finding these people but there are still approximately 12 million undocumented "aliens" living in the U.S. as stated in the video of Eric Foner. This

situation is similar to the Reconstruction period because there is now the question of what rights do these "aliens" have and what should they have. Maybe not to the same degree because there were actually no laws previously created for freedmen because they didn't exist, but it took a more than couple different approaches and changes of laws for the blacks to get to where they are now.

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Back and forth like tug-a-war

by Cameron Holliday - Friday, February 28, 2014, 2:05 PM

The topic of birthright citizenship has me torn. It makes sense because well if you're born in a country should you have to go through a process from birth to become a citizen? I personally do not think so. But what about your parents. If they are illegal aliens and decide to have a child here should the child be considered a citizen since it technically was not done entirely legal. The small coast town that I come from is populated by mostly whites and Hispanics. I have many friends who are Hispanic. My favorite restaurant in town is a Mexican restaurant. I can honestly say that I know illegal immigrants and I am friends with some. I have plenty of friends whose parents had them in Mexico and brought them over the boarder and have lived here for 20 plus years now. Even if the Government finds illegal immigrants are they really going to take them away from their, by law, legal children and families? I believe that everyone should have to follow the laws but at what point should we realize that maybe this law is not working and it is time to find a better way to control the population of our nation. Is it fair that people can come across the boarder and find work for less than legal pay and start families and then when caught not have to leave and do things the legal way because of their birthright citizen children? With this law it is such a tangled web that we weave. It may time to try and stop untangling and do an entire tear down and rebuild.

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Re: Back and forth like tug-a-war

by Brian Davis - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 1:05 PM

I agree, we are in desperate need of immigration reform because this just isn't working anymore. It seems as though Mexican's have found a loophole in the system. They can come here, have an anchor baby, and not be allowed to be deported because of their child being a citizen. This is not the reasoning for the amendment in the first place. It seems quite unfair that people from other nations around the world must go through the proper channels in order to come and stay here like getting some kind of a visa and then applying for citizenship. The way around that is if they fly into Mexico and just come across the border that way. So yeah, it's time for this outdated part of the amendment to be changed.

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Re: Back and forth like tug-a-war

by Melissa Moser - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 8:05 PM

Our nation's birthright citizenship is a loophole for far more than just Mexicans, as your post would suggest. The idea of having a child in America has been a draw for a wide variety of nationalities -- Russian, Czech, Ukrainian, Ugandan, Egyptian, etc. Any nation that may have cause to believe that our grass is a little greener has potentially lost a few citizens to the allure of the American Dream. While I agree that there should be something done about the easily exploitable amendment, I don't believe it is inherently bad. Maybe if we altered it to make the process of citizenship more affordable or perhaps expedited for "illegal" parents of US-born children? Becoming an American citizen is an incredibly lengthy and expensive process, making it easy to see why someone would look for an easier option.

When the amendment was made, wording needed to be found to include all of the former slaves. There was an immense number of people who needed inclusion, as opposed to nowadays, when people are seeking wording to allow only the children of individuals who are already citizens to gain citizenship from birth. Somewhere, there must be a compromise to be made.

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Re: Back and forth like tug-a-war

by Brian Davis - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 9:02 PM

I agree, I feel the law is mainly exploited by Mexican families and I probably feel that way mainly because I just moved here from San Diego and see it all the time. I was also referring to how people from all the other countries you explained don't have the ease of access to America like people from Mexico do. They will still have to get a passport and a visa for extended stays, people who come across the border don't need a visa.

The system is flawed no doubt and not just because of the anchor baby situation. I served with several undocumented's in the military and they weren't immediately granted citizenship for serving, even though you would think it's an automatic qualifier. They would go through the proper channels and have to wait years before being granted citizenship. It just doesn't seem right that a person who is fighting for this country isn't automatically given citizenship, their doing more for the country than a lot of the people who are citizens and aren't grateful for the benefits that allows them.

There's a lot of Americans who I don't think are worthy of it, but that's another topic entirely.

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About #2 : Racial or Civic Nationalism?

by Robert Johnson - Friday, February 28, 2014, 8:21 PM

How about citizenship of a country being based on a persons race, rather than where a person is born? I think Foner makes an important point in relation to the legacy of reconstruction, in regard to racial and civic nationalism, and the differences between the two.

Racial nationalism would logically be in a country where citizens and their rights, depend on race, regardless of whether they, or their parent's or even generations of grandparents were born there or not. But only one race allowed to have rights as a citizen. Civic nationalism by contrast, is in a country that honor's birthright as citizenship equally, and equal are their rights, to all born there without regard to race. Like our great country America for example, and civil rights for her citizens.

So on one hand, no equal rights, no fairness or freedom and no liberty for all, vs , the other hand, the complete opposite, equality, liberty, freedom for all.

Before reconstruction, America was racial about citizenship, then through the reconstruction of the south during the 19th century, by the power of the people, America became a country of Civic Nationalism, and for good reason I believe. Its been both ways here in the U.S., and the majority of people in this country back then not only chose, but fought and died for equal citizenship and rights regardless of race.

I would agree with all those back then who did not believe citizenship should be about race.

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Re: About #2 : Racial or Civic Nationalism?

by Matthew Rice - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 5:22 AM

i agree and disagree with you, i think with all honest most of the men in the civil war, didnt care about fight for the black to have there freedom, once the draft was put up it didnt matter what you though if you couldnt pay you have to join, also added to that is the fact that the civil war was not all about slavery, slavery was only a small part to the war, what the war was about was who had the power to do what, the south felt like they had no say in anything, they were unhappy about the way the federal goverment was going and how it was treating the states that were the south,

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'Revolutions may go backward'... American Freedoms and their trajectory.  



by Zachary Ogborn - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 11:23 AM

As our instructor has mentioned throughout the term, "*welcome to the Bizarro-o period of American History ladies and gentlemen. Where what you think of our modern National policies and practices go completely backwards.*"

I bring this up for a very important reason. Consider how heinous some of the acts were against African Americans (and other racial majorities/minorities) immediately following, and during, the Civil War era Reconstruction period. Occurrences such as the "Black Codes" throughout the South, the "Mississippi Plan" - *Chapter: 17, p.602 Text*, and other repressive acts rampant of that time and on towards the 1960s. Acknowledge how blatantly unconstitutional they were. How volatile they were towards citizens rights and constitutional freedoms. Now how could that ever happen again? Our understanding of personal freedoms today would never allow such monstrosities to occur unchallenged; right?

Playing off of Professor Eric Foner's audio file, *aprox. 8:22-9:48*, he roughly concludes that our liberties and rights are an ever evolving system of 'ups and downs'. This is proven if you look at the recent increase in unique State Voter ID laws, which some have been ruled unconstitutional, and even contradict The Voting Rights Act of 1965 (*wikipedia search - 'voter ID laws in the United States'*) not to mention the early U.S.A. P.A.T.R.I.O.T Act and the extension of that act under current President Obama, which also has had portions ruled as unconstitutional. Even the VERY recent passing of Senate Bill 1062 in the Arizona State Senate that permits the exclusion of **'anyone, including Gays, Lesbians, etc.'** from businesses as long as the owners assert their religious beliefs. (Lets hope their governor Veto's the hell out of it)

I bring up these modern comparisons only to support and reaffirm Foners claim. Our Nations Legislative history, Social history, even Economic history is rife with 'ups and downs'..... a current roller-coaster of freedoms and liberties.

Sum of ratings:3 (1)

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Re: 'Revolutions may go backward'... American Freedoms and their trajectory.

by Agina Hale - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 1:58 PM

I have been watching our freedom being chipped away piece by piece as soon as I was able to understand what it all meant. It's not just one presidency, it's a continued idea of paternalism. About a week ago, there was an idea that the administration was thinking of implementing monitors in newsrooms. This is absolutely disgusting. We already have the major news corporations biased in opposite directions, the last thing we need is the government suggesting things that should or should not be covered for our best interest. It makes complete sense why our instructor wants us to understand the concept of loose/strict constructionism.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Immigration

by Blake Allen - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 10:29 PM

The natural born citizen law that was enacted during the reconstruction era is the same law

that is enforced today when it comes to illegal immigrants having babies in the United States. However, this seems like such a small thing today, but during the reconstruction, this is one of the laws that provided violence in the south.

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Laws, Rights, and an arguably neutral trajectory forward



by Dylan Ornas - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 10:36 PM

In his podcast, Eric Foner makes a point dealing with the trajectory of freedom in the United States. Without a doubt I must agree when he talks of the regression of liberties, however I care to argue that the progression of freedom in this country shows a sort of yin and yang effect through the short life of this nation. This shown most drastically, as Foner points out, during the reconstruction years and the turn of the 20th century. Inevitably in a nation with such a melting pot of cultures, religions and political ideas, could not sustain an upward and unending progression of freedom and liberty. For every political idea you almost always have an opposing idea. Seldom in history do you see a ruler or politician come to power, a government take military action, or the minority gain rights without stiff opposition. This shows clearly today with Republicans voting against Democratic bills, or vice versa, just because their side is opposed to its nature.

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The results of Birthright citizenship



by Scarlett White - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 11:54 PM

Today, there is a constant battle between the U.S. Government and the citizen's of Mexico that have crossed the borders illegally. Countless measures have been taking to prevent this process but according to Eric Foner there are still 12 million illegal aliens in the United States. Although Eric Foner states that the Civil War was fought for the preservation of the American Union and the destruction of slavery, there were multiple effects that were a result of the Civil War. One of them being birthright citizenship. Prior to the Civil War, a citizen was determined by race and culture, parts of which are similar to other countries today. After the Civil War there were 4 million emancipated slaves and the government had to decided what their rights were, in addition to what were the rights of every American. The government implemented Birthright citizenship which was probably one of the smartest ideas in my opinion. Birthright makes it much harder to become a citizen if you have not been born in the U.S. This is a good thing because the United States is populated and there are so many different opinions on what is best that if immigrants from different countries all had citizenship it would be even harder for the government to make decisions on that is best for the country. Think of the riots, the mass murders, the Civil War, etc. The violent acts initially stem from strong beliefs and opinions that are contradicted by the other. Whereas in Canada, these issues are less aggressive simply because the lack of people. Where I live, more people reside in the lower mainland that they do in the rest of the province. Immigration is encouraged in order to populate. So the dynamics are completely different. Although I do believe that Birthright citizenship is still the best option for the U.S. I don't think that the way of dealing with the illegal aliens in productive. This is similar to what the freedmen went through, they because citizens, they were no longer

slaves but they still worked on the farms and barely made any more. Throughout time things changed and these problems slowly were solved. Eventually this one will be solved too, but the demographics in the end will probably be a deciding factor of where to go next.

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