Wednesday (January, 11th) - Southern Distinctiveness
Carl Degler, "The Beginnings of Southern Distinctiveness."

Important Questions:

1. How many of you consider yourself a Southerner?

2. What makes you consider yourself a Southerner?
   - Being born in the South?
   - Having lived in the South?
   - Having a Southern Accent?

3. How many of you associated slavery, violence, and economic backwardness with the South? Why do you think this is the case?

4. According to Degler, what made the South particularly different from the North?

5. And how did the factors he discusses distinguish the South from rest of nation?
   - Why was important that slavery continue?
   - How did slavery united Southerners and Northerners whenever contradictions emerged that questioned the constitutionality of slavery?
   - How did slavery change the geographic population of the South and North?
   - How did slavery affected religious beliefs used to defend this institution?

6. According to Degler, there are at least three significant differentiating characteristics of the South grounded in slavery that also suggests the essential “Americanness” of the South?
   - What are they and how do they operate both to separate the South from America and unify it with America?
1. What economic or social factors allowed Calloway County to prosper?

2. What makes Calloway County different from the South? What makes it similar?

3. Why do you think large plantations were not prevalent in Calloway County like they were in the South? (Think about the small/democratic farming and the plantation farming).

   What allowed for this type of farming to emerge?
   (Perhaps, they did not have the means to meet the market's demand)

4. What were Robert Newsom's intentions after purchasing Celia?

   What are the gender and race issues at play here?

   Why not find a White female that he could marry?

5. Do you think that George's ultimatum was the only factor that led to the murder?

   If not why Celia did not retaliate earlier?

6. What do you think about everyone, at least in the Newsom's family, knowing about the continued rape of Celia by Robert, but not saying anything?

   What are the gender, race, and power issues at play here?
Important Questions:

1. Upon being questioned by Powell, why did George choose not to protect Celia?

2. How did newspapers impact different people’s opinions on Celia and her trial?

3. In Calloway County, what was the Southern community’s view on the rape of female black slaves? Also, what reasoning did the prosecution have for objecting to testimonies stating that Celia struck Newsom “to keep him from having sexual intercourse with her?”

4. After Robert Newsom’s disappearance, relatives and friends are keen in speaking with George. McLaurin seems to suggest that they knew he was Celia’s lover. If they knew, it is safe to imply that Robert knew as well.

   What does this say about the nature of the relationships between Slaves and Masters?

   What does this say about the differences between what people say in public and do in the privacy of their home?

5. Think about the dispute over slavery in Missouri and Kansas. Was this important in how Celia’s trial was conducted?

6. In your opinion, were there any questionable procedures that took place in Celia’s confession, pre-trial hearing, and trial? (i.e. confession, witnesses, objectivity of the court, signing of documents, appointment of the defense, etc…) Please explain.

7. Think about the witnesses (i.e. Colonel Jones, William Powell, relatives of Robert Newsom). What is their significance? For example, relationships, similarities, biases, social status, etc.

8. We talked about the justification of slavery in the South in the face of “American” values of freedom for everyone. What were the religious, political, and social discrepancies?

9. What were the main differences in the way the media covered Celia’s case?

10. When thinking about Celia’s case, why were White Southerners so interested making sure there were punitive consequences? Slave rebellion? Are there any others?
Friday (January, 20th) - Slavery
Discussion: *Celia, a Slave, Part III*
*Chapters 6, 7 & 8*

**Quiz Question:**

1. **What was the defense’s key claim about why Celia did what she did?**
   The defense argued that Celia had protected herself from imminent danger of forced sexual intercourse. This threatened the very foundations of slavery. The defense argued that even though Celia was a slave, she was entitled by law to protect her honor. Missouri law stated that it was a crime “to take any woman unlawfully against her will and by force, menace, or duress, compel her to be defiled.” The term any woman should also apply to slaves.

**Important Questions:**

2. **What do you think about the notion that the “tension between black men and women was an inevitable product of slavery”?**

3. **Assuming that Celia was acquitted of the murder charges filed against her, how could have this single case changed the "peculiar institution" of the antebellum South?** Please list three major changes (i.e. economic, political, legal, religious, etc…) and briefly explain how these changes could have impacted the Union.

4. **Why did Judge Hall appoint a well-qualified, visible defense attorney for Celia?** What was the racial and gender composition of the jury? Did this matter?

5. **Would it have altered the outcome of the case if Celia’s lawyers had been more experienced, or was the outcome inevitable from the start?**

6. **What do you think about the defense’s strategy of addressing reproductive ownership?**

7. **What was the significance of Celia's escape from jail on the changing views of slavery in Missouri?**

8. **Even though the defense team was invested in Celia’s case, why did they ultimately decide to return Celia to jail as opposed to setting her free?**

9. **How does McLaurin’s interpret why the jury arrived at the verdict it did?**

10. **Is there a moral or legal obligation to continue to grant slaves trials and legal counsel?**

11. **According to a statute in Missouri, slaves who lifted their hands against whites, except in self-defense, were to be punished…Even though Missouri protects slaves who act in self-defense.**

   Please develop arguments in favor or against regarding the argument of self-defense.

12. **According to Missouri "Slave Code" of 1804, slaves are no different than any other personal property. According to this, the state of Missouri considers the sexual assault of a slave woman by a white male as trespass. On the other hand, Missouri makes it a crime to rape “any woman.”**

   Please develop arguments in favor or against the fact that the court chose to give priority to the property argument as opposed to the rape argument.

13. **Was this trial fair?**
   ~ Slaves are not allowed to be witnesses and jurors.
   ~ Personal decisions of Judge Hall.
   ~ The appeal process.
1. According to Stamp’s reading, please describe at least three main claims of revisionist writings? Also, please provide a critique to their claims.

2. The Irrepressible Conflict implicitly suggests that the overriding moral quagmire over slavery rested more on the morality of whites rather than the humanity of blacks. Do you agree with this sentiment? (Consider the role abolitionists and defense lawyers played in Celia's escape and return; given the political climate of the day, were blacks merely pawns in a larger, intraracial--albeit interregional--struggle?)

3. Neoconservative and revisionist defenses of the antebellum south recycles roughly every generation, while critiques of northern influence and complicity in the viability of slavery remains obscured (or ignored). Why do you think that's so?

4. Describe some of the tenets of revisionist thought. What components of this perspective have been refuted, and which ones have survived? Why is the concept of revisionism so vital to healing the north-south divide?

5. Why was the idea of compromise favored over war? How come those compromises inevitably failed?

6. Revisionists claim that slavery would inevitably have exhausted its limits, reached a point of economic saturation, and slowly come to an end. Assume this was the case: What function of social and economic order would have replaced it? What would have been the likely fate of black slaves still in the South? Who was going to pay for it?

7. Consider the events leading, directly or indirectly, to the Civil War. Was slavery the main issue for the war’s beginning? What were other contributing factors?

8. If slavery began in this country in 1619, why did it take 200 years for it to become such a divisive issue? What specific events helped to make slavery an issue of public debate? Why did white people in the South believe that their liberty required the continuation of slavery?

9. Thinking in terms of Revisionist beliefs, is it actually plausible that slavery could have been phased out without the Civil War due to the rising influence of technology and its potential for increased profitability?

10. Do your students agree or disagree with Lincoln’s idea that in a constitutional democracy no section of the nation is free to break away--that to attempt to leave is rebellion.

11. Why did the spirit of compromise which had helped the nation avoid civil war in earlier crises totally break down by 1860?

12. Why, in particular, was the white South so unwilling to make some concessions about slavery?

13. According to the reading, does the meaning of the Civil War seem to change every generation or so? If so, why?

14. Why might historical textbooks focus only on the slavery-cultural perspective rather than incorporate the possibilities of other motivating factors such as political agenda.
15. List and discuss the factors that are believed to have caused the Civil War.

- First, list each cause.
- Second, provide arguments that illustrate their importance in leading the North and South into Civil War.
- Finally, discuss whether or not the Civil War was inevitable?

16. Is the revisionist argument important to heal the north-south divide?

17. In what context do you think the racial-cultural divide still exists? In what ways has the line has blurred?

18. As we think about the upcoming election, do you see any resemblances in the way politicians were perceived in the 1850s and today (i.e. agitators seeking office)? Can you think of any examples?
1) Quiz

2) Group Led Discussion (The Strange Career of Jim Crow, 1974, pp. v-65.)

1. Woodward goes out of his way to bring awareness to show the Jim Crow Laws were originated in the North, even though the region based their logic for abolishing slavery on "racial equality". Why do you think this happened?

Did you find it strange that Woodward proposes that the Jim Crow system was born in the North?

It mentions that lower class Whites were thought to be more antagonistic towards Blacks than were upper class Whites. How does this impact the relations between poor Whites and Blacks? Is this still true today?

2. Please describe three main factors that enabled the redeemers to implement a harsher laws to solidify White supremacy? (i.e. political, legal, economic, etc…)

3. Knowing that the era of “Jim Crow” and rigid laws supporting racial segregation were approaching, does the accounts of T. McCants Stewart, Vernon Wharton, and Charles Dudley Warner on the nature of race relations in the late 1800’s surprise you?

All three men present an image of a South that had less obvious racial conflict and even early signs of integration. In your opinion, were their perspectives flawed or somehow biased, or were these positive accounts on relations of Blacks and Whites an accurate portrayal of the South, post-Reconstruction?

Woodward’s arguments contradict some of the preconceived notions that we have about the post-Civil War period. How does he questions your current perceptions of this period in US history?

4. In page 21, the author cites Abraham Lincoln’s quote from 1858, saying that the difference between the black and white races will “forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality.”

Do you think this statement still applies in today’s society given that there are a lot of issues and inequality happening despite social changes over time?

5. The book discusses the lack of segregation between whites and blacks in the antebellum period, particularly when it comes to housing. How do you think this affected the attitudes going into the reconstruction period as slaves became free?

Do you think today's neighborhoods rural, suburban, and urban are fully integrated?

6. African-Americans living in the South during the period of Jim Crow laws were ostracized and separated almost completely from white society. What long-lasting impact did segregation have on the views and ideals of African-Americans? What kinds of effects did segregation have on whites living in the South once it was renounced?
3) **Additional Questions**

1. In what sense does Woodward say that race relations in the South during and immediately after Reconstruction were “fluid” as supposed to having been “crystallized” or “stabilized?” Did they consist of “interracial experiments?”

   What is the significance of these observations?

2. **Who were the “Redeemers,” and what was “Redemption?”**

   What was the stance of the Redeemers toward white supremacy? Toward racial segregation?

3. **In what sense did class conflict among whites get “displaced” onto African Americans?**

   What does this issue have to do the alternatives confronting the South during and after Reconstruction?

4. What are your thoughts about Woodward’s argument, which suggests that the south has no continuity of institutions and social arrangements when compared to other regions historically?

5. Woodward mentioned how in the West, during the 1860s, many white men were involved with black women, often resulting in mixed children.

   Why do you think the country turned from this to a period of racism and segregation?

6. As written in the Atlantic Monthly around 1879, why do you think blacks were admitted to theaters and bars, but not accepted in hotels and other such places?

7. **On pg 13, Woodward comments on how the deprived rights of free blacks was the first semblance of any form of segregation in slave states. Do you think segregation was inevitable after the Civil War and was it a necessary step in the overall progression towards equality?**

8. **Were any of the other "alternatives” (those philosophies proposed by the conservatives, the southern radicals, and the liberals) mentioned by Woodward even feasible to be accepted in the South of the Reconstruction?**

9. Considering the fact that the south relied upon slavery for its agriculturally centered economy, could the north be viewed as having treated the blacks worse, as they instilled segregation for the sole purpose of instating a hierarchy in the absence of slavery?
Discussion Questions:

1. During the Civil War, differences in ideologies led thousands of men to die in battle as they defended racial, economic, legal, and political interests. How can you rationalize the North pressing to emancipate slaves only to subjugate them in new ways through the enforcement of segregation in the North and the birth of Jim Crow in the South?

2. On pg 102-3, Woodward quotes William Graham Sumner saying that “legislation cannot make mores” and “stateways cannot change folkways.”

   Do you think this is true for Jim Crow?

   Which seems to have come first: the attitudes that led to extreme racial segregation or the laws imposing extreme racial segregation?

   How does this explain the earlier stories in the book about whites seeming to be indifferent towards blacks sharing many public places before Jim Crow?

3. The author discusses Mississippi leading the way for other states to take measures in disfranchising the Black vote. The reading includes methods such as poll taxes, owning property, literacy tests and even the white primary.

   Do any of these methods shock you? Consider the fact that they were even trying to deny underprivileged White men as well.

4. With the birth of American imperialism, the United States soon found itself with an increase in colored population and the way that these people were treated by the United States overseas was brought into question. The editor of the Atlantic Monthly said "If the stronger, and cleverer race is free to impose its will upon new caught, sullen peoples on the other side of the globe why not in South Carolina and Mississippi?"

   Do you think the advancement of American Imperialism played a major role in the creation and justification of Jim Crow Laws in the South?

5. How did the Conservative’s political previous alliance hurt their ability to moderate white racism? How did their pro-corporate stance and general insensitivity of the economic sufferings of poorer Whites reduce their legitimacy and thus weaken their ability of restrain white racism?

6. What tactics did the Conservatives use to defeat the Populists and other agrarian radicals?

7. How was the reconciliation of the white men harmful to the freedman? And more importantly, do you think that this reconciliation could have been achieved without the growing disdain for the black individual?

   What were the mechanisms used by southern whites to disfranchise African Americans? Were they legal?

8. Based on Woodward's descriptions of conditions in the North during and after Reconstruction and his statement that post-Reconstruction racial politics in the North and South were on very close footing (pg 70), do you think Jim Crow was “inevitable”? Do you think it would have been possible for the South to make a smoother transition from 1880 to 1965? What stances do you think either the North or South could have taken to change the outcome?