VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTH

Student’s Name

Course

Date

**Introduction**

Cultural views and practices have always been a significant source of identity andserve as identifiers that distinguish one culture from the other. One practice may be associated with a particular community and not the other and would end up being a significant point of reference whenever society wishes to discuss the community in question. The definition of the American South has often received association with cases of violence and slavery, and different scholars contend that these factors may have affected its history. The region’s association with slavery and the position taken during the civil war form some of the critical factors for its association with violence, more sothat which was metedout against the African American minority population therein. Notably, African Americans underwent immense slavery occurrences and happenings that had adverse effects on their current, short-term, and long-term lives. The Southern States, however, seemed to have no guilt regarding what they made their salves to go through, most of the States passing Bills and Laws that suppressed the voices of African American who seemed to speak out as far as different slavery was concerned.

**Body**

The Southern States were not for the idea of putting an end to slavery and made efforts to maintain the status quo using fear and perceptions of violence by former slaves. In particular, there were extensive stereotypes against black men, most of which were meant to induce fear among the white community in the South. The moves ultimately reduced the chances of extensive integration between the freed slaves and the white population[[1]](#footnote-2)With fear as a critical tool, it was possible to ensure that people did not interact as much as they would have, with those that may have even sympathized with the former slaves now growing weary of the potential implication of the relationships with the emancipated slaves. Ultimately, fear of violence by the African Americans among the white population ended up playing a criticalrole in the maintenance of the status quo in the south. The Southern States as a matter of fact, which were White-dominated, became directly related and defined by Slaves and African Americans; oppression and suppression of their duly earned rights and freedoms.

While violence against the African Americans began as a form of emotional torment in the reconstruction period, the white population began settling away from the violent culture that had previously been synonymous with the region. In particular, men through the antebellum period had sought synonymythrough involvement in fights, but the culture died down towards the end of the eighteenth century[[2]](#footnote-3)A population that had previously viewed and practiced violence as a sport ended up using the same concept to instill fear end drive a wedge between races several decades later. African Americans could no longer get involved in any sport related to violence as they did over the antebellum period since their white counterparts would perceive it as a cultural deed that aimed at racial conflicts. Moreover, the whites in the Southern states would see the action as an effort to the abolition of slavery in the Southern States, reacting to the sport-related effort. To this extent, one can observe a distinct variation in the role of violence in the south, depending on the individuals practicing and receiving the ferocity. Ultimately, their cultural differences playedanimportantrole in informing the impacts of violence on the populations involved.

More importantly, the nature of violence varied to a great extent. In particular, a reference to the violence intended to create fear included the association of violence with practices such as ritual practice among the African American freed slaves[[3]](#footnote-4)On the other hand, violence among the white people was a form of sport, in which case people would even gather around the men involved in a brawl and cheer on their favorite party in the fight[[4]](#footnote-5), In essence, the parties involved in a particular form of violence would determine whether it was some form of sport or a way to keep the populations segregated. Consequently, one could term violence in the region as having depended significantly on the cultural differences among members of the Southern community. For that reason, African American in the Southern States seemed to have their freedom and free will at stake since their white counterparts had already identified violence as a way to curb their physical and psychological repression to all the issues at hand.

Without a doubt, the cultural foundations of violence in the post-reconstruction, thesouth werebased on the fear of the potential implications of black empowerment. One of the most notable factors would be the white supremacy campaign at the end of the 19thcentury, which under the guise of controlling the perceived lawless freed slaves sought to implement restrictions that would significantly inhibit the chances of the social and economic success of the former slaves.[[5]](#footnote-6)In particular, although the country had recovered from slavery, with the emancipation announcement at the culmination of the civil war, whites in the South were significantly discontent with the newly acquired status of the former slaves. Consequently, they used the available institutions at the time to continue violence against the blacks, culminating in sentiments and quest for different avenues to implement stringent laws against the population irrespective of the absence of grounds for such activity. For instance, the African Americans were denied of their rightfully earned rights of which earlier on before the violence-related conflict emerged were being granted. Whites in the Southern States took no risk by granting their black counterparts much freedom out of their outgrown fear of the African Americans overpowering them and winning back their freedoms through violence.

Notably, these views against the African American population in the South and the larger United States managed to survive more than a century, to the extent that they were still observed in the 20th south. However, one of the most striking aspects of the twentieth-century violence along racial lines in the south was the extent to which the minority African Americans made extensive efforts to assert and reclaim their position in society[[6]](#footnote-7). In particular, the African American population of the twentieth century was not as timid in taking abuse as the emancipated slaves of the nineteenth century. On the contrary, they opened challenged and fought for inclusivity in various environments, which led to cases of lynchingand open violence in the South based on the efforts by the different groups to maintain and challenge the existing status quo. African Americans were lynched in open grounds and to cover up the truth from the so-called authorities, and they were accused of breaking the public codes of conduct and indiscipline such as stealing and raping white women. Above and over, African American were discriminated by their white counterparts as an effect of violence in the southern States of America.

Although the race had always been the primary factor resulting in discrimination and oppression of a population, the oppressed in the twentieth century attempted and successfully fought for their population in society. Efforts to overcome the existingbarriers in the twentieth century ended up with the civil rights movements, which took on a peaceful approach in the search for equality in the south. However, there were still cases of violence against black people with lynchingand cases such as that of Emmett Till reviving the memories of the not so pleasant South of the reconstruction era. There may have been a significant struggle by the African American population in the twentieth century, particularly based on the open critic of the different institutions and systems that promoted racial discrimination, but the said struggle was instrumental to achieving ultimate success in addressing violence.

In essence, violence in the south has been intrinsic and practiced by the population therein throughout Southern history. Before the civil war, violence in the region was non-physical and physical, in the form of oppression against the slaves in the region. However, this took a different turn with the emancipation debate and success, as the white population in the region sought to maintain the status quo against the advancing calls for change from the North. Ultimately, the reconstruction period led to non-physical violence, in which case whitepeople largely ostracized and falsely accused the freed slaves in the region based on stereotypes against them. Ultimately, the boldness of the oppressed minority groups in the twentieth century resulted in violent confrontations, but which culminated in civil rights and an improvement in the level of equality in the country.

**Conclusion**

In essence, the race has always been an integral factor in the cases of violence in the South, with the African Americans being a primary recipient of violent activities. Under different circumstances, the population would have experienced much ease settling and working with others if only there was some level of tolerance and effort to look beyond skin color. In particular, this would have prevented cases such as the stereotypes of the reconstruction era and issues such as the Jim Crow laws, which significantly derailed integration and ease of settlement for the minority black population. Under different circumstances, black people faced significant strife and were the primary recipients of violence in the south, both physical and non-physical. Consequently, the association between violence and slavery cannot be further explained, considering the relationship between slavery, the south, and cases of violence as herein outlined.

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3. . Helg,Black Men, Racial Stereotyping, and Violence in the U.S. South and Cuba at the Turn of the Century, 578. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. . Gorn, ‘Gouge and Bite, Pull Hair and Scratch’: The Social Significance of Fighting in the Southern Backcountry, 20 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, “Gender and Jim Crow: Sarah Dudley Pettey's Vision of the New,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 68, no. 3 (1991): 268. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. . Pete Daniel, “Going among Strangers: Southern Reactions to World War II,” *The Journal of American History* 77, no. 3(1990):898. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)