

Jim crow and black migration



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What did President Roosevelt's dinner with Booker T. Washington signify to Southern whites and African Americans? In 1901, Booker T. Washington was invited by President Theodore Roosevelt to dinner at the White House for discussing issues faced by blacks in the South. He was the first African-American ever invited to visit the White House. However, this move evoked considerable outrage from the Southern whites. They regarded President's invitation to a black as a serious breach of racial etiquettes. A member of the United States Senate, Benjamin Tillman, even threatened open violence by saying that, " Now that Roosevelt has eaten with that nigger Washington, we shall have to kill a thousand niggers to get them back to their places." On the other hand, Northern newspapers applauded and anticipated the invitation by the President. The uproar, mostly in south, was a clear indication of racial inequality for African-Americans. The invitation laid a foundation stone for the complete acceptance and integration of blacks in American life. Washington eating dinner with Roosevelt and his family at one table conveyed a clear message of social equality both to southerners and African-Americans. At the time when America was not ready to confront such issues, Roosevelt's decision helped to further the cause of African-American communities. Washington was struggling for racial harmony and the President strongly encouraged him through dinner invitation at the White House. Despite racist personal attacks from several politicians in response to the invitation, President's effective governance enabled him to further the cause of black equality in America. Washington was already enjoying wide financial support in the black community and Northern whites. However, he required support among high political figures to the resistance in the South. President Roosevelt's dinner with Washington helped remarkably to improve

the working relationship between the races. References Foundations of America. 158 Roosevelt and Booker T. Washington. Accessed: 14 July 2011. Retrieved from http://foundationsofamerica.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=227:158-roosevelt-and-booker-t-washington&catid=34:ragtime-articles-of-interest&Itemid=62 The Vernon Johns Society. American Sociologists Cooperation with Booker T. Washington: Liberal Racism. Accessed 4 July 2011. Retrieved from: <http://www.vernonjohns.org/vernjohns/bookert.html>