

Colored Seated In The Rear: A History of Racial Segregation on Public Transportation



Racial segregation has been a pervasive feature of American society for centuries. From the institution of slavery to the Jim Crow era, laws and social customs have enforced the separation of black and white people in all aspects of life, including transportation.



Colored Seated in the Rear: a perspective of two li'l children, black and white, growing up in the 60's

by Nancy Lee McCaskill

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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One of the most visible and humiliating forms of segregation was the practice of requiring black passengers to sit in the back of public transportation vehicles. This practice, known as "Colored Seated In The Rear," was widespread throughout the United States from the late 19th century until the mid-20th century.

The Origins of Segregation on Public Transportation

The origins of racial segregation on public transportation can be traced back to the post-Reconstruction era. Following the Civil War, black Americans gained citizenship and the right to vote, but they continued to face discrimination and violence. In response to this, black leaders began to organize and advocate for their rights.

One of the key demands of the black community was the right to ride public transportation on an equal basis with white people. However, white supremacists resisted this demand, and they began to pass laws requiring black passengers to sit in separate sections of public transportation vehicles.

The Spread of Segregation

The practice of "Colored Seated In The Rear" quickly spread throughout the United States. By the turn of the 20th century, it was common practice in most southern states and many northern cities.

The enforcement of segregation on public transportation was often brutal. Black passengers who refused to sit in the back of the bus or train were often arrested, beaten, or even killed.

The Challenge to Segregation

The practice of "Colored Seated In The Rear" was not without its challengers. Throughout the 20th century, black activists and their white allies fought to end segregation on public transportation.

One of the most famous challenges to segregation was the Montgomery Bus Boycott. In 1955, Rosa Parks, a black woman, refused to give up her seat to a white passenger on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Her arrest sparked a year-long boycott of the city's buses by black residents. The boycott was successful, and it led to the desegregation of public transportation in Montgomery.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott was a turning point in the civil rights movement. It showed that black people were no longer willing to tolerate segregation, and it inspired other cities to follow Montgomery's lead.

The End of Segregation

In 1964, the Civil Rights Act was passed, which outlawed segregation in all public accommodations, including public transportation. This law finally ended the practice of "Colored Seated In The Rear."

However, the legacy of segregation continues to this day. Black people are still more likely to experience discrimination and violence on public transportation than white people.

The practice of "Colored Seated In The Rear" was a shameful chapter in American history. It was a system of legalized discrimination that denied black people their basic rights.

The end of segregation was a major victory for the civil rights movement. However, the legacy of segregation continues to this day, and we must all work to create a more just and equitable society for all.



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