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The “New South”

Henry Grady, in a speech to the Bay State Club of Boston and New England Club of New York, 1889

Henry Grady, editor of the Atlanta Constitution, was the leading proponent of a “New South” based on industrial development. He gave speeches promoting this New South and promoting investment in the South.

Now [the South] has improved. We have got the biggest marble-cutting establishment on earth within a hundred yards of that grave. We have got a half-dozen woolen mills right around it, and iron mines, and iron furnaces, and iron factories. We are coming to meet you. We are going to take a noble revenge, as my friend, Mr. Carnegie, said last night, by invading every inch of your territory with iron, as you invaded ours twenty-nine years ago.

We have established thrift in city and country. We have fallen in love with work. We have restored comfort to homes from which culture and elegance never departed. We have let economy take root and spread among us....Never was nobler duty confided to human hands than the uplifting and upbuilding of the prostrate and bleeding South—misguided, perhaps, but beautiful in her suffering, and honest, brave and generous always.

But what of the negro? Have we solved the problem he presents or progressed in honor and equity toward solution? ...No section shows a more prosperous laboring population than the negroes of the South, none in fuller sympathy with the employing and land-owning class. He shares our school fund, has the fullest protection of our laws and the friendship of our people. Self-interest, as well as honor, demand that he should have this. Our future, our very existence depend upon our working out this problem in full and exact justice....

...The relations of the southern people with the negro are close and cordial. We remember with what fidelity for four years he guarded our defenseless women and children, whose husbands and fathers were fighting against his freedom. To his eternal credit be it said that whenever he struck a blow for his own liberty he fought in open battle, and when at last he raised his black and humble hands that the shackles might be struck off, those hands were innocent of wrong...Ruffians have maltreated him, rascals have misled him, philanthropists established a bank for him, but the South, with the North, protests against injustice to this simple and sincere people. To liberty and enfranchisement is as far as law can carry the negro. The rest must be left to conscience and common sense...

When Lee surrendered...the South became, and since has been, loyal to this Union...Under the old regime the negroes were slaves to the South; the South was a slave to the system. The old plantation, with its simple police regulations and feudal habit, was the only type possible under slavery. Thus was gathered in the hands of a splendid and chivalric oligarchy the substance that should have been diffused among the people, as the rich blood, under certain artificial conditions, is gathered at the heart, filling that with affluent rapture but leaving the body chill and colorless.

The old South rested everything on slavery and agriculture, unconscious that these could neither give nor maintain healthy growth. The new South presents a perfect democracy...and a diversified industry that meets the complex need of this complex age. The new South is enamored of her new work. Her soul is stirred with the breath of a new life. The light of a grander day is falling fair on her face. She is thrilling with the consciousness of growing power and prosperity...

1. What does Grady argue has changed in the South's economy?
2. How does Grady describe race relations in the South?
3. According to Grady, what is different between the “old South” and the “new South”?

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Booker T. Washington, The Problem of the South, Speech before the National Education Association, 1900

Washington was a leader for black social and economic advancement. In this speech in Charleston, before a mostly white audience, Washington advocates African American uplift.

When we disarm ourselves of prejudices and passions, we must acknowledge that the white South owes much to the Negro, and that the Negro owes much to the white South....There is only one way to solve it — by treating the Negro with humanity and justice, just as I find the people of Charleston treating the black man today...

Gradually we are changing the moral condition of the colored people thruout the South...The black man is gradually buying land and teaching schools in every part of the South. The Negro is not only getting an education, but is fast converting the white man to believe in the education of the black man thruout this country. And in proportion as we can convince the white men in every part of the South that the education makes black men more useful citizens, in the same proportion will our problem as a race be solved. And I want you to remember that when you hear of crime being committed in the South, this crime is not being committed by the educated black men of the race. It is very seldom, if ever, that anyone has heard of a black man who has been thoroughly educated in industrial schools or in colleges committing any of these heinous crimes so often charged up against our race. In a larger degree you must learn to judge the Negro race as you do other races, by the best that the race can produce, and not by the worst. You must judge us by those in the schoolroom, and not by those in the penitentiary; by those who are in the field and in the shop, not by those on the streets in idleness; by those who have bought homes and are taxpayers, not by those in dens of misery and crime; by those who have learned the laws of health and are living, not by those who are breaking the laws of health and are dying out.

We are making progress in another direction, and the Negro is not unappreciative of the opportunity the South gives him in this respect. Go out here about a mile from the center of this city, and I will show you a spectacle that perhaps no other city, in the North or West, can present — the spectacle of the white South giving to the black boy and the black girl an opportunity to work in a cotton factory. In proportion as we get these business opportunities, in the same proportion shall we go forward as a race...Whether we live in the North or the South, we have got to enter into the industries and enterprises of the community in which we live. And in proportion as we do that the whites will respect us more, no matter where we live...

In conclusion, my friends of the white race, this problem concerns nearly ten millions of my people and sixty millions of yours. We rise as you rise, fall as you fall. Where we are strong you are strong...education of the white people and of the black people will be a failure unless...the final aim of all education, whether industrial or academic, must be...that influence which makes us seek the elevation of all men, regardless of race or color.

1. What does Washington assert about how and why to uplift African Americans?
2. Compare Washington's speech with Grady's. Do they make any similar arguments?
3. How might Washington's audience affect what he says in his speech? Do you think some African Americans might disagree with parts of the speech?

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To what extent did a New South emerge in the decades after Reconstruction? What were the realities of the “New South,” and do these realities support Grady’s and Washington’s claims?

Documents

	Realities: What were the economic, political and social conditions?	What evidence supports and/or refutes Grady's or Washington's claims?
Economic		Support: Refute:
Political		Support: Refute:
Social		Support: Refute:

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Conclusion: So what? Why does any of this matter? What connections can you make either to previous moments in history or to future/present moments in history? What has or has not changed (continuity vs change over time) and why (causation)?

How does this period relate to past events we have studied?

How does this period connect to future events or developments, including the present?