Reform Under Jim Crow

Weighing opportunity against the limits of reform in Alabama

SS24.AS.15 "Evaluate the extent to which civil rights reformers in Alabama at the turn of the twentieth century successfully challenged the emergence of the Jim Crow South. 15a Describe the role of women reformers in promoting reform..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three ways reformers expanded opportunity, and circle two barriers that remained. Number each underlined example to show how many different kinds of reform you find.

Building Opportunity in Alabama

1 At the turn of the twentieth century, Alabama's Jim Crow laws separated Black and white people in schools and public places. The 1901 state constitution also used voting rules to push many Black men off voter rolls. Reformers faced a hard question: how could they widen opportunity when lawmakers controlled schools and elections? At Tuskegee Institute, founded in 1881, Black students studied academic subjects alongside farming and trades. Local Black families gave money, supplies, and labor to support the school. Their investment built paths toward paid work, but it did not remove segregated schools or restore voting rights.

2 Margaret Murray Washington taught and led work at Tuskegee Institute. She helped organize Black women's clubs that supported education and improved health in their communities. Through the Alabama Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, women pooled their efforts to serve families that received little public support. Julia Tutwiler, a white Alabama educator, pressed the state to improve schooling for girls and for Black children. Her calls for better public education challenged unequal access, even as Alabama kept separate schools. These women's work mattered because teaching and organizing reached people whom state policies left behind, though neither woman ended Jim Crow.

3 In the early 1900s, Tuskegee professor George Washington Carver shared farming methods with rural families, including ways to improve worn soil. Farmers could grow crops to sell as well as feed their households. Around Tuskegee, Black residents also opened businesses that served neighbors and offered owners income and a measure of independence. These efforts relied on community knowledge, customers, and cooperation, not just famous leaders. Yet owning a business or learning a useful skill could not protect someone from discrimination at the polls or in public spaces. Reformers expanded practical opportunities while Jim Crow still shaped daily life.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did local Black families help Tuskegee Institute challenge unequal opportunity, and what barrier remained?

2. How did Margaret Murray Washington and the women's clubs respond to needs that public institutions did not meet?

3. In what way did Julia Tutwiler challenge unequal access, and what does the passage say she did not change?

4. How did Carver and Black business owners expand economic opportunity without ending discrimination?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a brief verdict for a museum label: How far did Alabama reformers succeed in challenging Jim Crow? Support your judgment with at least three specific examples from the passage, including both women and one community action, and explain one limit.

ANSWER KEY

Reform Under Jim Crow

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.AS.15

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three ways reformers expanded opportunity, and circle two barriers that remained. Number each underlined example to show how many different kinds of reform you find. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did local Black families help Tuskegee Institute challenge unequal opportunity, and what barrier remained?	**They gave money, supplies, and labor to a school that prepared Black students for paid work. Schools remained segregated.**
2	How did Margaret Murray Washington and the women's clubs respond to needs that public institutions did not meet?	**They organized support for education and health in Black communities that received little public support.**
3	In what way did Julia Tutwiler challenge unequal access, and what does the passage say she did not change?	**She urged better schooling for girls and Black children, but Alabama's schools remained separate.**
4	How did Carver and Black business owners expand economic opportunity without ending discrimination?	**Carver shared farming methods that could help families grow crops to sell. Black business owners earned income serving neighbors, but discrimination at the polls and in public spaces continued.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Alabama reformers expanded opportunity, but they did not end Jim Crow. Margaret Murray Washington helped organize women's clubs that supported education and health in Black communities. Julia Tutwiler pressed for better schooling for Black children, even though the state kept schools separate. Local Black families gave money, supplies, and labor to Tuskegee Institute, where students prepared for paid work. These efforts helped people learn and earn income despite unequal public support. Their success was limited because segregation continued and voting rules pushed many Black men off voter rolls.

Accept supported judgments that distinguish expanded educational or economic opportunity from the persistence of segregation and voting barriers. Students may use Black-owned businesses as their community action instead of families' support for Tuskegee.