

The beginnings of the Civil Rights era in the 1960s led to a revival of the term to describe a South which would no longer be held back by Jim Crow Laws and other aspects of compulsory legal segregation. Again, the initially slow pace of civil rights reforms, notably in the areas of school desegregation and voting rights, at first made the "New South" more of a slogan than a description of the South as it actually was; the Civil Rights Act of 1964^[5] and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 brought an era of far more rapid change.

For many years, this "New South" was more of a slogan of civic boosters than a reality in many areas. Racist conflicts during the Civil Rights Movement gave the American South a backward image in popular culture. However, in the 1960s the black population began being enfranchised and represented in many political offices. In the post-World War II era, American textiles makers and other light industry moved en masse to the South, so as to capitalize on low wages, social conservatism, and anti-union sentiments.^[6] With the industrialization of the South came economic change, migration, immigration and population growth. Light industry moved offshore but has been replaced to a degree by auto manufacturing, tourism and energy production. In light of the many changes that have occurred since the Civil War, many now use the term in a celebratory sense.

For over 100 years, from before the Civil War until the mid-1960s, the Democratic Party exercised a virtual monopoly on Southern politics (see also Solid South). Thus elections were actually decided between Democratic factions in primary elections (often all-white); the Democratic nomination was considered to be tantamount to election.^[7]

Political party affiliation

The "New South" period is double-edged. After the passage of civil rights legislation, African Americans began to vote in number for the Democratic Party. Many had supported Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal and Harry S. Truman, John F. Kennedy, and Lyndon B. Johnson had supported their cause. At the same time, in 1964 several Southern politicians, and states, supported Republican Barry Goldwater for President over the Democratic incumbent Lyndon B. Johnson. In what later became a trend, some switched party affiliations, notably Strom Thurmond of South Carolina. Richard Nixon's Southern strategy in the 1968 campaign is thought by many to have vastly accelerated this process. From Nixon's time to the present, the South has generally voted Republican at the presidential level.

The term "New South" has also been used to refer to political leaders in the American South who embraced progressive ideas on education and economic growth and minimized racist rhetoric, even if not promoting integration. This term was most commonly associated with the wave of Southern governors elected in the late 1960s and 1970s, including Terry Sanford in North Carolina, Carl Sanders and Jimmy Carter in Georgia, and Albert Brewer in Alabama.^{[8][9]}

Similarly, the term "New South" was also used to refer to areas of the South that have become more diverse and cosmopolitan over the last several decades.

Economics

The "New South" is also meant to describe economic growth in the American South, compared to the economic decline and loss of jobs in other regions of the United States. The largest company in the world by revenue is Walmart which is located in Bentonville, Arkansas. For example, two of the largest U.S. banks, Bank of America and Wells Fargo, have a major presence in Charlotte, North Carolina. Bank of America is headquartered there, and Wells Fargo has maintained much of the operation of Wachovia after acquiring it in 2008. Charlotte is also home to many other major corporations including Lowe's, Duke Energy, Family Dollar, Lendingtree and Honeywell.



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