United States Law and African Americans

A Timeline

**1619**

First Slaves brought to Colonies (some were indenture servants)

**Mid 1600’s**

British Colonies legalize slavery/A slave is a slave for life/Children born into slavery are slaves (for life)

**1787**

Constitution of the United States of America legalizes slavery

The words “slave” and “slavery” are not in the document, but

Section 2 Article 1 of the Constitution

 States that “apart from free persons,” all other persons are to be counted as 3/5 of a white person in

determining constitutional representation based on population

Section 1 Article 9 of the Constitution

States that *importation* *of such persons as any existing states see fit* is permitted until 1808

**1791**

5th Amendment to the Constitution

No person shall be deprived life, liberty or property w/o due process of law (Slaves were considered property)

**1820**

Missouri Compromise – (Senate Bill)

Allows Missouri to write own constitution; Missouri Constitution abolishes slavery

**1857**

Dred Scot v United States (Supreme Court Case)

Overturned Missouri Compromise; Ruled that blacks are not citizens and thus cannot sue in courts

**1865**

13th Amendment to Constitution

Abolishes slavery

**1868**

14th Amendment to Constitution

Defines citizenship as those born or naturalized in US ; All citizens are entitled to equal protection under law

**1870**

15th Amendment to the Constitution

Voting rights cannot be denied on the basis of race or previous servitude

**1896**

Plessy v Ferguson (Supreme Court Case) 7 to 1 vote

Rules that segregation is legal

**1954**

Brown v Board of Education (Supreme Court Case) unanimous decision

Overturns Plessy - segregation is not legal

 Begins unraveling of de jure (legalized) segregation