

Handout C: State and Federal Law

Virginia Criminal Code, 1847

Any white person who shall assemble with slaves, [or] free Negroes ... for the purpose of instructing them to read or write ... shall be punished by confinement in the jail ... and by fine...

1. **What does this law reveal about African Americans' access to education in mid-nineteenth century Virginia?**

Section of the Fourteenth Amendment, 1868

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

1. **What was the historical context of the passage of this amendment?**
2. **What level of government does this amendment limit?**
3. **What prohibitions did it create?**