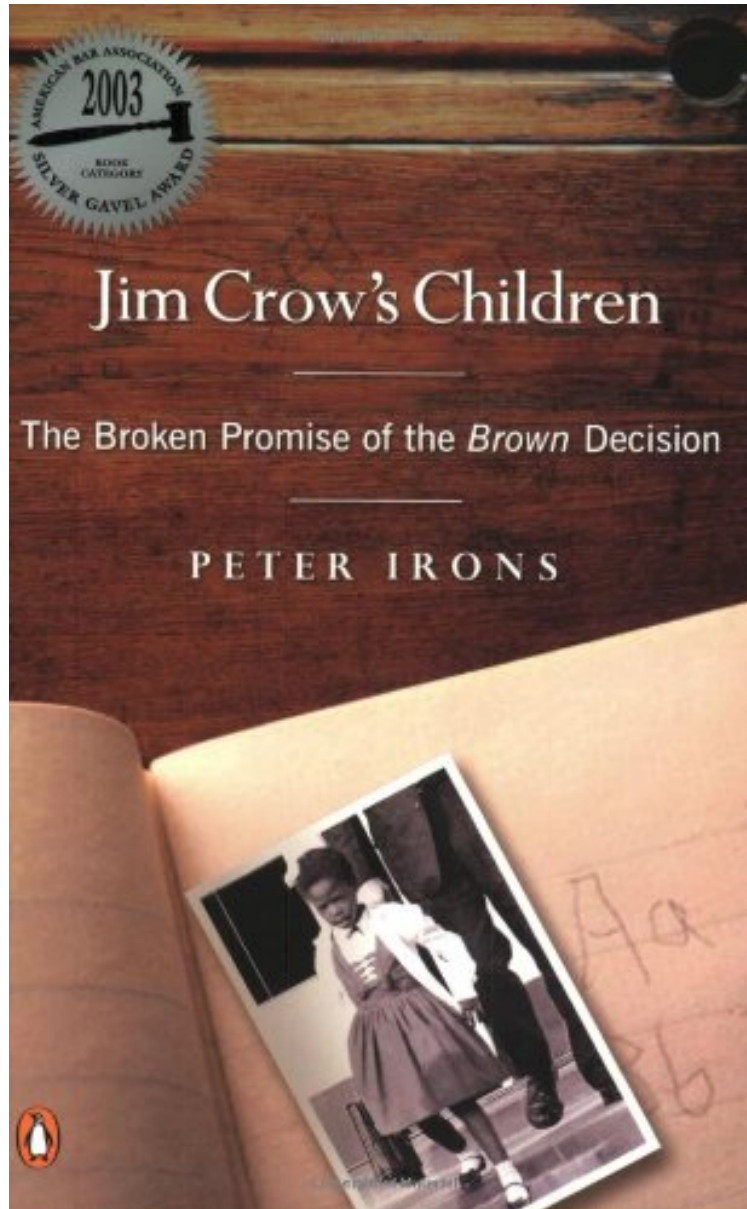


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Jim Crow's Children: The Broken Promise of the Brown Decision

Peter Irons

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#1064485 in Books Peter H Irons 2004-01-27 2004-01-27 Original language: English PDF # 1 7.96 x .80 x 5.03l, .61 #File Name: 0142003751400 pages Jim Crow s Children | File size: 74.Mb

Peter Irons : Jim Crow's Children: The Broken Promise of the Brown Decision before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jim Crow's Children: The Broken Promise of the Brown Decision:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An important review of an often misunderstood period By Boyd

Bosma Peter Irons is an outstanding scholar and constitutional attorney, and gives in this book a well-documented and complete review of the legal issues and developments in the years following the epochal Supreme Court decision in *Brown v Board of Education*. The Supreme Court's 1954 decision was a revolutionary event in American constitutional law and our politics, but few today realize why and how very little actually happened for another ten years after 1954. Irons' analysis is essential to understanding the shortcomings of our system and the things that are needed to overcome the continuing problems that were not solved by *Brown*. The book would be an important asset for anyone trying to understand the legal issues and the goals of the desegregation movement. 7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Very well done though I had two qualms. By P. Meltzer This book is clearly the result of a great deal of thought and effort and I recommend it to anyone interested in the subject. It really causes one to question the commonly held assumption (at least perhaps among whites) that all of the issues involving forced segregation and the negative consequences that flowed therefrom more or less evaporated in 1954 or shortly thereafter. Quite to the contrary, the book shows how, in many ways (though obviously not in all), there are almost more similarities between the state of American education and race relations between, say, 1953 and today than there are dissimilarities. In that sense, the *Brown* case may have accomplished a whole lot less than is commonly imagined. For this reason alone, the book is valuable. I did have two qualms with the book however. The more trivial one is that I thought that the numerous statistics were confusingly presented, perhaps because the author tried to summarize them in prose rather than in charts. There were repeated times that I had to re-read those portions of the book and I feel that that was mostly because the author did not do a good job of clearly summarizing the statistical information for his readers. I feel that the use of charts would have been more helpful (and perhaps more dramatic as well in terms of proving the author's points). My other complaint goes to the issue of the remedy to the problem. It seems to me (and I think that the author concedes as much) that a good portion of the reason for the problems that exist today relate to changes in demographics, culture and societal forces which are beyond the power of the courts or the legislature to change--just as some judges and commentators have stated. To be sure, these changes include white flight to the suburbs, but nevertheless people live where they live and little can be done about that. Thus, in that sense, to the extent that most children attend schools in which their own race predominates (as in the pre-*Brown* days), I'm not sure that I would call that a "failure" or a "broken promise" of the *Brown* decision. The author seems to take this point as a given, but then proceeds to say that we should not give up; that we should keep trying to fulfill the promises of the *Brown* case notwithstanding that; that we should search for the harder solution. One possibility for that solution is of course a modified "separate but equal" solution in which separation still exists (though for societal reasons and not due to legally sanctioned segregation) but this time with true equality in terms of funding, teachers, facilities, etc. In other words, make the black schools just as good as the white schools. Irons seems to disapprove of this solution on a number of grounds, and I tend to agree with him. As Thurgood Marshall stated, the idea and the ideal is true integration between the races and NOT separate but equal, even if there were true "equality" in the senses I have stated. But, if we rule out this possibility, doesn't this leave only one other possibility, that being busing? Irons never comes right out and advocates a return to the days of busing (perhaps because it remains a political hot button issue), but it seems to me that there is no other alternative which he leaves open to us. With that in mind, I would have preferred him to come out more directly and specifically with his own solution to the problem which he lays out so well. I believe that the only solution he leaves us with is busing, but he seems reluctant to come out and say that in so many words. If that his solution however, I think that the book would have benefitted from a discussion as to how busing might work today and how it might overcome the problems it faced in the 1970's. On the other hand, if he has in mind some other solution, I would have liked him to say what that is. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful. By stephanie Great read. I have found this text useful in my work and it is a great supplemental resource for schools and other types of organizations

Peter Irons, acclaimed historian and author of *A People History of the Supreme Court*, explores one of the supreme court's most important decisions and its disappointing aftermath. In 1954 the U.S. Supreme Court sounded the death knell for school segregation with its decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. So goes the conventional wisdom. Weaving together vivid portraits of lawyers and such judges as Thurgood Marshall and Earl Warren, sketches of numerous black children throughout history whose parents joined lawsuits against Jim Crow schools, and gripping courtroom drama scenes, Irons shows how the erosion of the *Brown* decision—especially by the Court's rulings over the past three decades—has led to the “resegregation” of public education in America.

From Publishers Weekly *Brown v. Board of Education*, the 1954 Supreme Court decision that mandated the desegregation of U.S. schools, is popularly seen as a hallmark of American justice. But Irons, author of *May It Please the Court: Courts, Kids, and the Constitution* and professor of political science at the University of California, San Diego, surveys recent U.S. history to reveal a quite different picture: many states have found ways to delay implementation of, or totally evade, the ruling. Further, in response to the often violent battles around school busing and a clear rise of conservatism in the country, Irons argues that in 1991 the court began “judicial burial” of *Brown* by

setting precedents that continued to allow segregated schools. Irons supplies fascinating and vital contexts for his narrative, beginning with examples of how slave literacy was clearly connected to slave revolts and other demands for freedom. He looks in detail at how the politics of nominating Supreme Court justices have affected the ongoing battle for desegregation; he also provides a detailed analysis of how, in 1948, Thurgood Marshall worked to secure legal access for African-Americans to graduate schools in states that bordered the South, then built upon those decisions toward *Brown*. Gripping stories of internecine Supreme Court battles as well as the "war against the constitution" waged by Southern politicians who defied *Brown* punctuate this account, which ends with a cogent overview of recent studies indicating the win-win benefits of integration. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal For this work, yet another excellent study by Irons (political science, Univ. of California, San Diego; *A People's History of the Supreme Court*), the moral is the message in the title. Irons does celebrate the nearly revolutionary work of the Warren Court in the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* school desegregation ruling of May 17, 1954. However, he also convincingly cautions us that if *Brown* wrought a revolution, it produced a partial one at best, for now we find ourselves in what he sees as the throes of resegregation. Other recent works have explored the legacy of *Brown* and its progeny. But Irons, a sage veteran of Supreme Court analysis, including its disappointing rulings concerning Japanese internment during World War II, vividly illustrates the promise of the past and the perils of the present in his cogent commentary concerning a revolution unfulfilled. This engaging, insightful work covers the 150-year struggle to realize the ideal of equality in public education and demonstrates that the struggle continues. Highly recommended. Stephen K. Shaw, Northwest Nazarene Univ., Nampa, ID Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist The famous 1954 *Brown v. the Board of Education* decision, outlawing segregation in public schools, was thought to be the turning point in the modern civil rights era. Irons, a political science professor and award-winning author of *A People's History of the Supreme Court* (1999), takes the reader on an enlightening journey through the preconditions of segregation from slavery through the Civil War on into the so-called Jim Crow era, when the South sought to re-impose its cultural dominance on racial issues. Irons examines the Supreme Court ruling and its cultural context--including jurist personalities and interests leading up to and subsequent to the *Brown* decision. But he is particularly acute at analyzing the consequences of the decision, including the broken promises of equality of opportunity through education. Since the early 1990s, the Court's ruling has clearly sanctioned re-segregation, allowing for schools where segregation stems from causes beyond legal remedy, such as white flight. In later chapters, Irons notes the interconnection of poverty and race, indicating not only the unfulfilled promises of the Court now but also into the future. Irons brilliantly exposes the gaping divide between our ideals, laws, and social realities. Vernon Ford Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved