

Richmond Streetcar Boycott, Newspaper Articles, 1904

SEPARATE THE RACES

Passenger and Power Company
Will Put New Law Into Operation Wednesday.

VERY BROAD POWERS GIVEN

Conductors and Motormen May
Make Arrests and Move Passengers at Will.

On Wednesday of this week the Virginia Passenger and Power Company will institute a series of new regulations, made possible by recent legislative enactment, conferring police powers upon conductors and vesting in them the right of designating the seats to be occupied by passengers.

The very liveliest interest attends the change, which is in effect a separation of the races on the cars of Richmond. That this separation will be followed by effects beneficial to both whites and blacks is not doubted by those who have carefully studied the situation, and a cordial co-operation on the part of the citizens generally will result in the smooth and successful operation of a law that bade fair at first to cause trouble of no mean proportions. In the different churches to-day the colored pastors will advise the congregations not only to submit calmly to the new rules, but to endeavor in every way to assist the company in administering the law. A discordant element among the negroes is beginning to appear, but it is earnestly hoped that the more conservative judgment of the pastors will prevail.

The company believes there is no reason why, with the sympathetic co-operation of all its patrons, of what color soever, the revolutionary new laws may not be quietly put into being in a fashion that will ultimately prove the change to be of utmost benefit to all. No discrimination will be shown, such being, in fact, forbidden by the very law itself.

Explicit Instructions.

The appended explicit instructions, in themselves an exceedingly interesting notice to the public, have been issued by the company to its conductors:

This company has determined to avail itself of the authority given by a recent state law to separate white and colored passengers, and to set apart and designate in each car certain portions of the car or certain seats for white passengers and certain other portions or certain seats for colored passengers.

The same law makes each conductor and motorman a special policeman while on the cars of the company, or on its right of way, and gives to each conductor and motorman the full power of a policeman, to enforce this separation of the races, and to preserve order on the cars.

The conductors have the right to require passengers to change their seats as often as may be necessary for the comfort and convenience of the passengers and for the complete and satisfactory separation of the races.

All With the Conductor.

The successful carrying out of this law depends largely upon the judgment and readiness of the conductors, whose duty it is to enforce it. The law requires there shall be no difference or discrimination in the quality and convenience of the accommodations provided for the two races, and good policy requires that all passengers, white and colored alike, shall be treated courteously and considerately.

Conductors and motormen are clothed by the law with large powers, which they must use wisely, discreetly and with as little unnecessary inconvenience to passengers as possible, but they must also be positive and firm.

If passengers refuse to move their seats or their positions in the car in accordance with the reasonable, proper and courteous demand of the conductor, or are guilty of any other serious disorder, they should be arrested by the conductor or ejected from the car.

In the event of any resistance by the passenger to the authority of the conductor, he should first call upon the motorman for assistance, as the motorman as also in such matters the authority of a policeman.

Citation: "Separate the Races," Richmond Times-Dispatch, April 17, 1904, Library of Virginia

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Call Upon Passengers.

If the resistance is of such a violent nature that the motorman and conductor are unable to overcome it, they have the right to call upon passengers or bystanders for assistance, and under the law such passengers or bystanders are obliged to render the assistance demanded.

In the event of an arrest by the conductor, the passenger so arrested must be kept on the car in custody until a policeman can be met or found, and should then be turned over to the policeman, to be carried to the station house. Conductors will hand to the policeman taking such prisoner from them a card, with the conductor's name and badge number, the offense for which passenger was arrested (as, for instance, disorder on car; expectorating on car; refusing to move when required so to do, etc., as the case may be), the names and addresses of witnesses, and, if possible, the name of the passenger, though this is not necessary.

Conductors making such arrests will report the facts to the division office at the end of that trip, with the names of such witnesses as have been obtained, and must invariably be present at the Police Court the following morning.

How to Seat Passengers.

The following plan must be carried out in the seating of passengers:

White passengers will be seated in forward portion of car and colored passengers in rear, and in this manner filling the car, always reserving the vacant seats, if any, in the center, which seats can be used for either race. The number of seats that will be occupied by white or colored passengers will be gov-

erned entirely by the number of white or colored passengers aboard.

If necessary, a majority or all seats can be used for either white or colored. No part of the car is to be reserved exclusively for either.

White and colored passengers will not be allowed to occupy the same seats in open or closed car with cross seats (excepting the two rear seats reserved for smokers in open cars), unless all seats except one is occupied, and in that case both white and colored can occupy same seat, but may be separated as soon as another seat is vacated.

Must Give a Seat.

Not under any circumstances will you force any passenger to vacate a seat unless to take another vacant seat.

A colored servant in charge of white children will be allowed a seat with whites if request is made. Conductors are requested to treat both white and colored passengers with consideration and politeness in performance of these duties, and will be held to strict account for failure to do so.

Smoking must not be allowed in semi-convertible cars or any other car excepting open car, and then on the two rear seats.

A limited number of passengers may be allowed to stand on the rear platform of all cars and smoke, but must not be allowed to interfere with the ingress and egress to cars or block passageway.

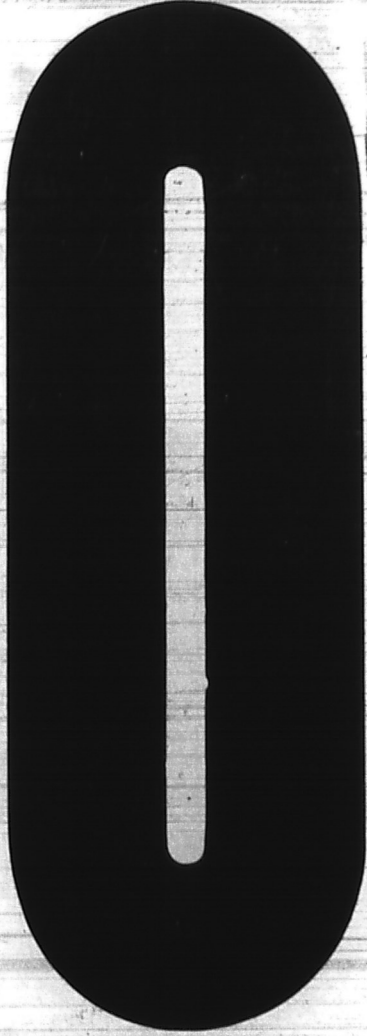
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"Jim Crow" Street-Car Law Set to Catch Negroes. ONLY WHITE FOLKS IN THE TRAP.

**Thanks to the Advice of the Citizens Mass-Meeting--Colored
Folks Are Staying off the Cars.**

THEY ARE WALKING AND AVOIDING TROUBLE--BIG FEET A GREAT BLESSING.

WHITE FOLKS ARRESTED.	COLORED FOLKS ARRESTED.
The only arrest on the first day of the enforcement of the new street-car law was that of John B. Meyers, white, a carpenter and builder, of 500 Lewis street, who was tried and convicted in police court this morning on the charge of refusing to change his seat in an Oakwood car when so requested by the conductor. There was no disorder in this act of law violation. Mr. Meyers was in a car where there was but one Negro passenger. The testimony was that Mr. Meyers took the third seat from the rear. The conductor, following the company's construction of the law, as set forth in the rules provided the men, asked him to go to the front. Judge Crutchfield declared the law ironclad and the case of Mr. Meyers a clear violation. He fined him \$5.00, but remitted the fine as he believed the violation was merely a case of misunderstanding the law. "The conductor has absolute power to make you change," said the judge. "I had an idea that I was the czar of this town, but you'll see me moving when the conductor says move." * * * Captain Eckles, (white) conductor of the Cannon Ball train on the N. & W. road, one of the most widely known men in this end of the State, was the second victim of the new "Jim Crow" street-car law and was under arrest in the police court to-day for its violation. Capt. Eckles is recovering from a severe injury in a wreck received a short time ago and is feeble and weak in both arms and dropped into the first seat he reached and declined to move. He declared that he knew nothing of the new law. Counsel for the street-car company asked for his discharge and he was dismissed without argument. [RICHMOND, VA., TIMES-DISPATCH, APRIL 24, 1904.] Another disagreement arose on a street car last night, which resulted in the arrest of George Stringer, a white passenger, who was bailed at the First Station, and the threatened arrest of F. Williams, a conductor. The conductor claims he asked the passenger to move forward, and on that simple request hung all the trouble, which started in the city and wound up in the county near Thirty-second and Q Streets. The two men bore marks of strife upon their countenances. Mr. Stringer was arrested, and he declared that he would swear out a warrant against Mr. Williams in the county.	

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that he was 'prepared for the weather."

THE COOK OBJECTED.

A white gentleman met Editor Mitchell and informed him that he had trouble with his cook on his account. His eyes twinkled and he laughed as he told the editor that he would have a fuss with both him and his cook "Why I told her to bring my dinner to me on the car." She said, "Yes, sir, I'll bring it, but I'll walk, sir, and bring it."

"No, you won't," said he "your time belongs to me. You bring it on the car."

"She said nothing more, but looked worried. She brought the dinner, and when she was going back, she saw you and some friends ahead of her. She got off the car at Sixth street and walked the remainder of the way."

The white gentleman laughed heartily and went on his way.

OUR WHITE COLORED FOLKS.

Several white colored folks have been forced to ride with the white folks, the conductors having ordered them to ride there. Mr. Peter Chandler is one of these and Mr. Henry Austin is another and there are numerous other instances. It is suggested that all of our white colored folks wear tags duly certified to by officers of the street-car company in order to prevent the further consummation of such an outrage.

In these cases, the conductors evi-

dently did not believe them when they told them that they belonged in the rear seats according to the rules of the company.

From Mt. Vernon, N. Y.

Mt. Vernon, N. Y., April 23rd, 1904.—
Editor John Mitchell, Jr.,

My Dear Sir:

In view of the recent action of the Virginia Passenger and Power Company now operating a system of cars in Richmond, some people here have been to me and stated that they would, at any time called upon, aid any movement that the PLANET deemed worthy towards conveying the people whom the said Virginia Passenger and Power Co., have so unjustly-discriminated against. The people about here that came from Richmond are more than surprised to hear of such actions as the Virginia Passenger and Power Company has taken in yours and other cities of Virginia.

I am yours truly,
T. H. BRIDGES,

Walking Everywhere.

[FORT SMITH, ARK., APPRECIATOR.]

Texas and Virginia, have been added to the list of "Jim Crow" street carism. Well boys, swallow the pill manfully. Don't begin crying, but walk. Negroes every where are walking.

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