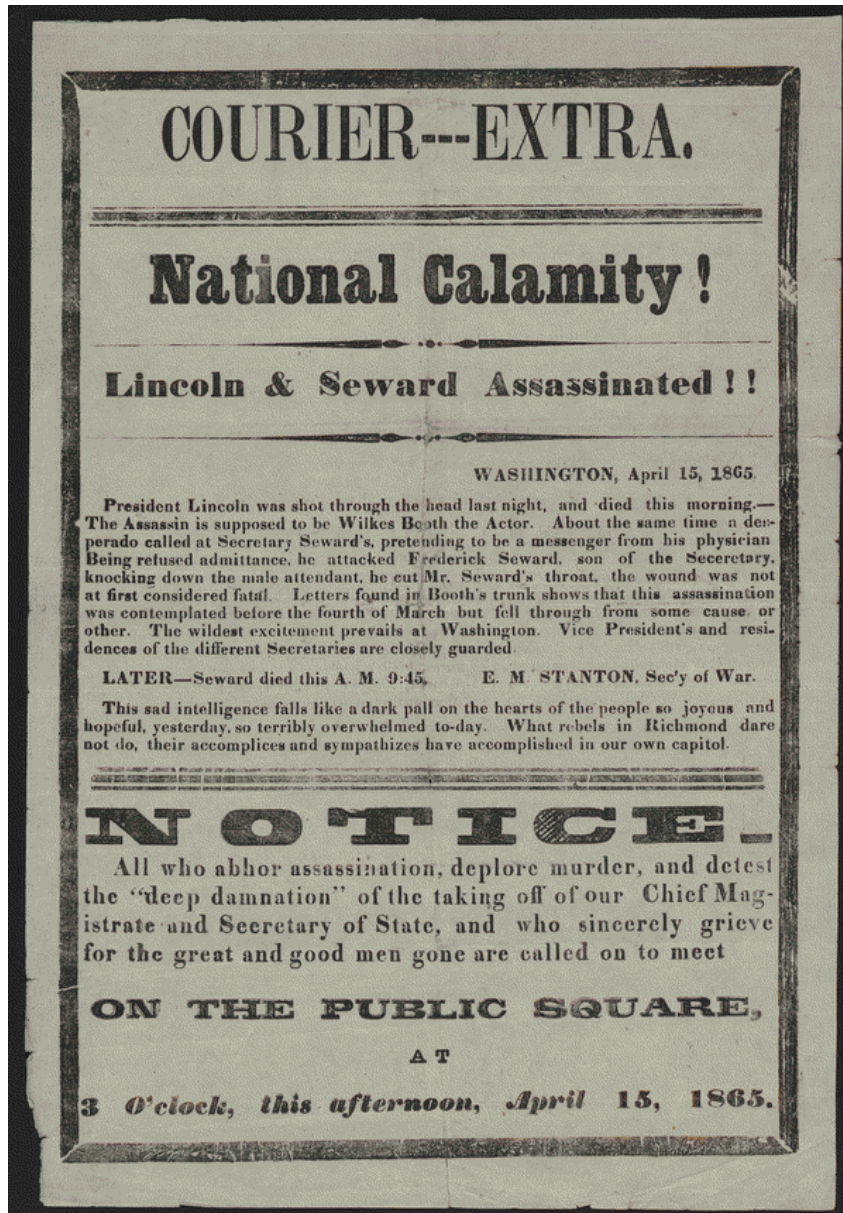


“A Brief Moment in the Sun”:
Reconstruction
1865–1877

Year 2
History Unit 2
Sourcebook

Lesson 1: The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

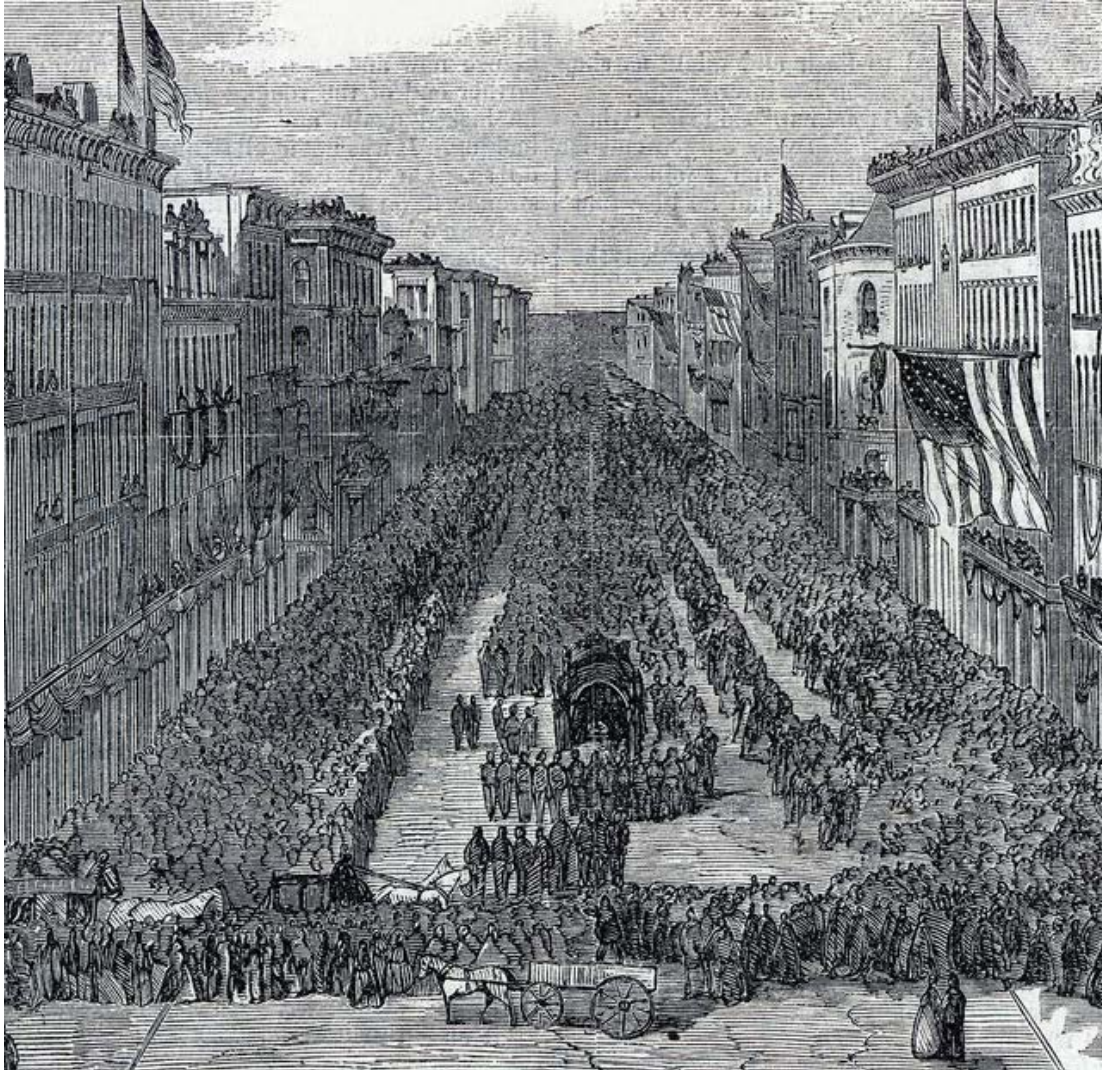


"National Calamity! Lincoln & Steward Assassinated!!" published in Courier — Extra, April 15, 1865 (Library of Congress)

Why did American responses to the assassination of President Lincoln differ?

Homework
Abraham Lincoln's Assassination

Read the article "Abraham Lincoln's Assassination" on the History Channel website.



Lincoln's funeral procession in Chicago, 1865 (Library of Congress)

Station 1: “The Murder of Abraham Lincoln”
“The Murder of Abraham Lincoln,” *The New York Times*

“The Murder of Abraham Lincoln” was published in The New York Times on April 16, 1865, two days following his assassination.

The heart of this nation was **stirred** [*strong feelings were provoked*] yesterday as it has never been stirred before. The news of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln carried with it a sensation of horror and of agony which no other event in our history has ever excited. In this city the demonstrations of grief were without a parallel. Business was suspended. ...

Perhaps the **paramount** [*most important*] element in this public feeling was evoked by personal regard for Abraham Lincoln. That a man so gentle, so kind, so free from every particle of **malice** [*ill will*] or unkindness, every act of whose life has been so marked by **benevolence** [*kindness*] and goodwill, should become the victim of a cold-blooded assassination, shocked the public heart beyond expression. ...

But a powerful element of the general feeling which the news aroused was a profound concern for the public welfare. The whole nation had come to lean on Abraham Lincoln in this dread crisis of its fate with a degree of confidence never accorded to any President since George Washington.

The Murder of Abraham Lincoln. April 16, 1865. Courtesy of The New York Times

Station 2: Frederick Douglass on Lincoln
Frederick Douglass: “Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln”

Frederick Douglass, one of the most prominent abolitionists of his time, met often with President Lincoln to discuss abolition. He gave the following “Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln” on April 14, 1876, 11 years following Lincoln’s assassination.

Abraham Lincoln ... was the white man’s President, entirely devoted to the welfare of white men. ...

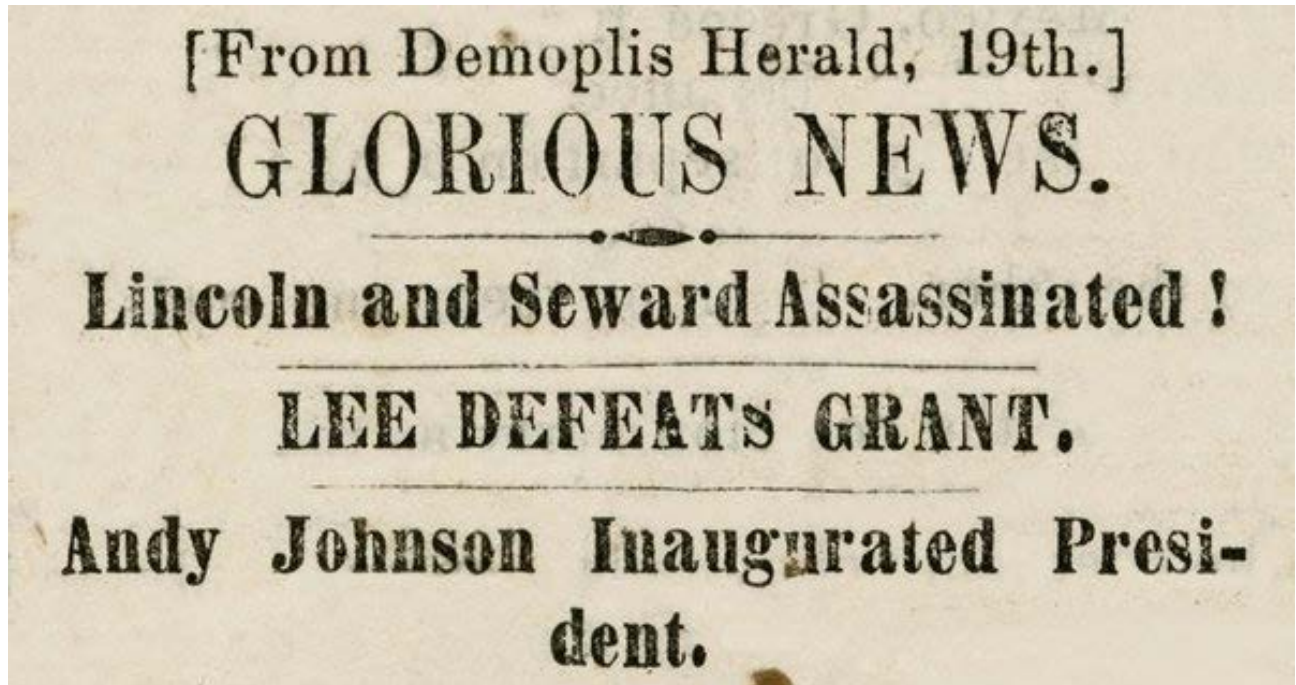
Viewed from the genuine abolition ground, Mr. Lincoln seemed tardy, cold, dull, and indifferent; but measuring him by the sentiment of his country, a sentiment he was bound as a statesman to consult, he was swift, zealous, radical, and determined. Though Mr. Lincoln shared the prejudices of his white fellow-countrymen against the Negro, it is hardly necessary to say that in his heart of hearts he loathed and hated slavery. ...

His assassination was a new crime, a pure act of **malice** [*evil, ill will*]. ... But it has done good after all. It has filled the country with a deeper **abhorrence** [*hatred*] of slavery and a deeper love for the great liberator. ... But dying as he did die, by the red hand of violence, killed, assassinated, taken off without warning, not because of personal hate — for no man who knew Abraham Lincoln could hate him — but because of his **fidelity** [*loyalty*] to union and liberty, he is doubly dear to us, and his memory will be precious forever.

Douglass, Frederick. Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln. April 14, 1876. Courtesy of TeachingAmericanHistory.org

Station 3: Southern Reaction 1
Emma Leconte: Southern Reaction, 1

Not everyone reacted with sadness and grief to the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. In her diary, Emma Leconte, a 17-year-old from South Carolina, recounts the day she learned about the assassination of President Lincoln.



Reprint of the headline in Alabama's Demopolis Herald the day after Lincoln's assassination (SmithsonianMag.com)

Hurrah! Old Abe Lincoln has been assassinated! ... After all the heaviness and gloom of yesterday this blow to our enemies comes like a gleam of light. We have suffered till we feel savage. There seems no reason to exult, for this will make no change in our position — will only infuriate them against us. Never mind, our hated **totalitarian** [*like a dictator, assuming all power and control*] enemy has not the just reward of his life ... "*Sic semper tyrannis.*" Could there have been a fitter death for such a man?

Leconte, Emma. Courtesy of Documenting the American South, DocSouth.UNC.edu.

Station 4: Southern Reaction 2
Eliza Andrews: Southern Reaction, 2

The following excerpt from Georgian Eliza Andrews's diary from April 21, 1865, exemplifies the complexity of Southern grief.

No! I am more of a rebel today than ever I was when things looked brightest for the Confederacy. ...

[A]s we drew up at the platform, somebody thrust his head in at the window and shouted: "Lincoln's been assassinated!" We had heard so many absurd rumors that at first we were all inclined to regard this as a **jest** [*joke*]. Somebody laughed and asked if the people of Camack didn't know that April Fools' Day was past. ... But soon the truth of the report was confirmed. Some fools laughed and applauded, but wise people looked grave and held their peace. It is a terrible blow to the South, for it places that **vulgar renegade** [*awful traitor*], Andy Johnson, in power, and will give the Yankees an excuse for charging us with a crime which was in reality only the deed of an irresponsible madman.

Andrews, Eliza. April 21, 1865. Courtesy of Documenting the American South, DocSouth.UNC.edu.

Lesson 2: A Lincoln Memorial



The Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C., 1910 (Library of Congress)

**How should Americans remember
President Lincoln?**

Homework
Lincoln's Contested Legacy

Read the article "Lincoln's Contested Legacy" on the Smithsonian Magazine website.

Document A
The Lincoln Memorial

The Lincoln Memorial was built in 1920 in Washington, D.C., and dedicated to President Lincoln in 1922. It has become a major civil rights site; most notably, it was where Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech. The memorial is a giant building modeled on Ancient Greco-Roman temples. Inside is an enormous marble statue of President Lincoln. Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address” and “Second Inaugural Address” are inscribed on the memorial walls.



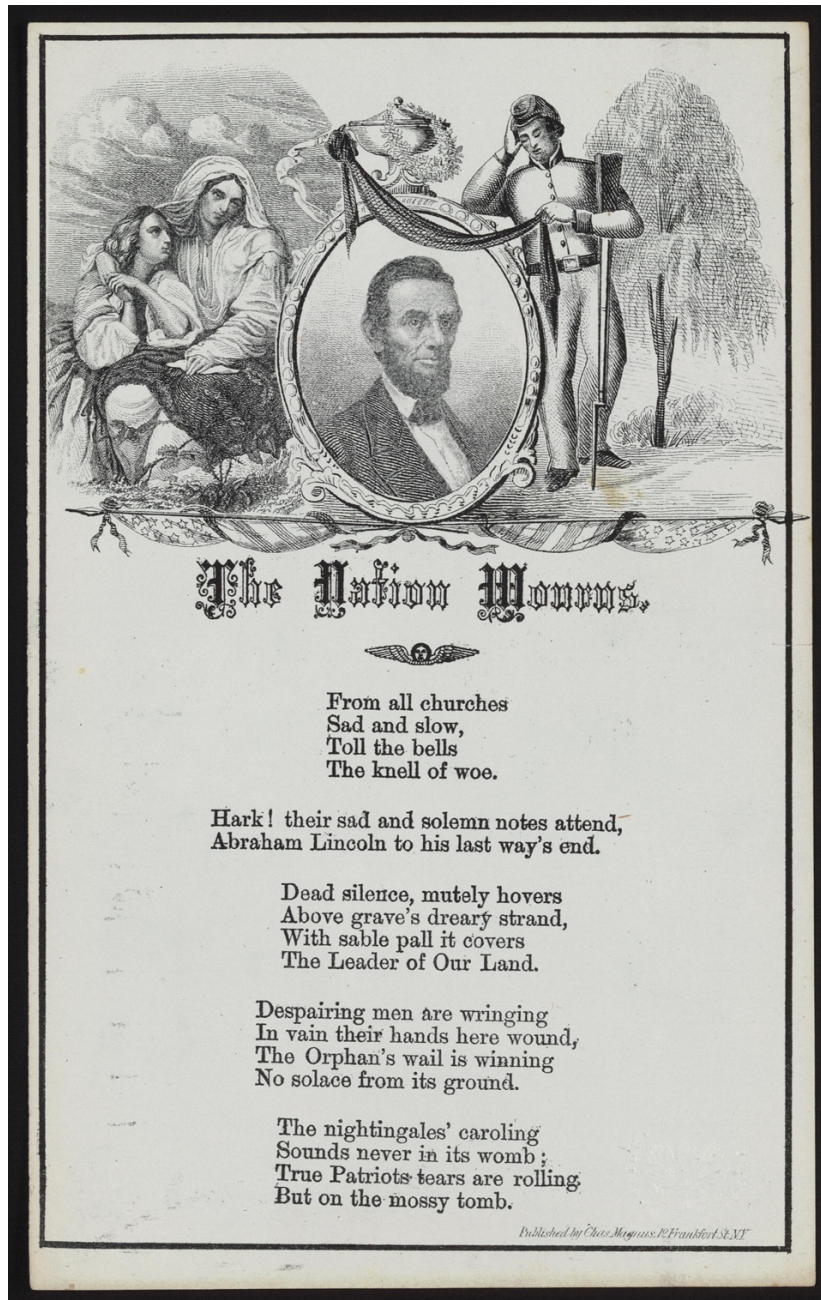
The Lincoln Memorial (Wikipedia)



*The statue of President Lincoln inside the Lincoln Memorial
(Published by Jeff Kumba @ Wikimedia under the CC BY-SA 2.0 license)*

Document B
“The Nation Mourns”

After the assassination of President Lincoln, the predominant feeling in the North was despair. Poems and many other public art forms expressed this sentiment. This poem, entitled “The Nation Mourns,” shared those feelings of loss and despair following the president’s assassination.



(Library of Congress)

Document C
Monumental Tablet

The memorial below is a monumental tablet in memory of President Abraham Lincoln.



(Library of Congress)

Document D
Emancipation Proclamation

This engraving, entitled "Emancipation Proclamation," dates from 1919 and was made by E.G. Renesch.



Abraham Lincoln holds a document reading "All men are created equal" from the Declaration of Independence. The date just below Lincoln, September 22, 1862, refers to the day on which he issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. Alongside Lincoln are portraits of two African American officers who served in World War I. At the bottom left, black soldiers fight in World War I. In the top left is a portrait of poet Paul Dunbar and on the right is abolitionist Frederick Douglass. On Lincoln's right stands Booker T. Washington, a black leader during the late-19th and early-20th centuries. (Wikimedia)

Lesson 3: Impact of the Civil War



A photograph from Photographic History of the Civil War by Francis Miller, published in 1911 (Wikimedia)

How did the impact of the Civil War differ in the North and the South?

Homework**Reflecting on the War's Impact**

Read the article "Reflecting on the War's Impact" from Lesson 4: The Devastation of War on the Facing History and Ourselves website.

Document A**The Economy of the North**

The following text was adapted from historian Eric Foner's essay "The Civil War and Reconstruction," published by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

It is easy to forget how decentralized the United States was in 1861, and how limited were the powers of the federal government. There was no national banking system, no national railroad, no national tax system, not even reliable maps of the areas where the war would take place. ... The Civil War created the modern national state in America. It also profoundly altered the federal government's relationship to the American economy. To mobilize the North's economic resources, the Lincoln administration instituted the first national banking system and national currency, the first national taxes on income, and the first highly protective tariffs, and laid the foundation for the first transcontinental railroad. ... The economic policies of the Union forged a long-lasting alliance between the Republican Party, the national state, and the emerging class of [Northern] industrial capitalists. The transfer of political power in Washington from Southern planters to allies of northern industrialists and merchants created the political conditions under which the United States emerged by century's end as the greatest economic power on earth.

Foner, Eric. *The Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861-1877*. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History)

Document B**The Railroad, 1860–1869**

*During the war, the American railroad system in the North continued to expand. In 1862, Congress passed the Pacific Railway Act, sparking the construction of a transcontinental railroad across the northern United States. Examine the interactive map *Westward Expansion, 1860–1890* on the PBS Learning Media website.*

Document C

Southern Devastation

While the North was left untouched by the war (the northernmost battle was in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania), the South — its cities, villages, and plantations — was destroyed. This, in turn, devastated the Southern economy, which relied on plantations to produce goods.



Civil War ruins in Richmond, Virginia (Library of Congress)

Document D

Sharecropping in the South

Before the Civil War, the Southern economy had been dependent on slavery. The South became wealthy by using slave labor on large plantations and farms. Following the war, the Southern economy struggled — the abolition of slavery, coupled with the destruction caused by battles, left plantations and towns devastated. Despite early promises for land by Union General William Sherman at the end of the war (he had promised “40 acres and a mule” to all freemen), in reality, many freedmen and women had no access to land. As a result, a system called sharecropping developed in the South: African American families would rent land from plantation owners and give a portion of their proceeds to the landowners. The demands of landowners were so high, however, that many African American families fell into deep debt, unable to leave the land and find true economic independence.

Below is an excerpt from a sharecropping contract from 1867.

The said Cooper Hughs Freedman with his wife and one other woman, and the said Charles Roberts with his wife Hannah and one boy are to work on said farm and to cultivate forty acres in corn and twenty acres in cotton, to assist in putting the fences on said farm in good order and to keep them so and to do all other work on said farm necessary to be done to keep the same in good order and to raise a good crop and to be under the control and directions of said IG Bailey and to receive for their said services one half of the cotton and one third of the corn and fodder raised by them on said farm in said year 1867 and the said Charles Roberts Freedman with his wife Hannah further agrees and binds themselves to do the washing and ironing, and all other necessary house work for said IG Bailey and his family during said year 1867 and to receive for their said services fifty dollars in money at the expiration of said year 1867 and the said Cooper Hughs Freedman further agrees and binds himself to give the necessary attention of feeding the Stock of cattle and milking the cows twice daily belong to said IG Bailey, and do the churning whenever necessary during the said year.

1867. Courtesy of The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

Document E

Southern Black Codes

Immediately following the Civil War, many Southern states and cities passed Black Codes. These laws laid out what freed blacks were allowed and not allowed to do. The codes below are from a Black Code from Opelousas, Louisiana, passed July 3, 1865.

SECTION 1. No negro shall be allowed to come within the limits of the town of Opelousas without special permission from his employers.

SECTION 3. No negro shall be permitted to rent or keep a house within the limits of the town under any circumstances.

SECTION 4. No negro shall reside within the limits of the town of Opelousas who is not in the regular service of some white person or former owner.

SECTION 5. No public meetings of negroes shall be allowed within the limits of the town of Opelousas under any circumstances without the permission of the mayor or president of the board of police. This, however, does not prevent the freedmen from attending the usual church services.

SECTION 7. No freedman who is not in the military service shall be allowed to carry firearms, or any kind of weapons, within the limits of the town of Opelousas without the special permission of his employer, in writing, and approved by the mayor or president of the board of police.

SECTION 11. All the foregoing provisions apply to freedmen and freedwomen.

July 3, 1865. Courtesy of Stanford History Education Group.

Lesson 4: Reconstruction



"The Freedmen's Bureau," by A.R. Waud, 1868 (Library of Congress)

What was the purpose of Reconstruction?

Homework

An Introduction to Reconstruction

Read the introduction to “America’s Reconstruction: People and Politics After the Civil War” on the University of Houston Digital History website and the article “Reconstruction” on the History Channel website.

Key Players of Reconstruction

Abraham Lincoln: Famous for his lenient, forgiving approach toward dealing with the Confederacy, Lincoln hoped that he could “bind up the nation’s wounds” without “malice,” but instead, with “charity for all.” He believed in compromise, while still promoting the will of the former slaves.

Andrew Johnson: The new president did not follow in Lincoln’s footsteps. He believed in amnesty and pardon for Southern leaders, while letting them decide for themselves the course of Reconstruction. He did not support the rights of the freed slaves.

Radical Republicans: Believed the Confederate leaders should be punished harshly, and that blacks deserved *all* of the same political, economic, and social privileges as whites.

“Scalawags”: Southern whites who supported the Republican Party and were viewed as traitors by Confederates. They were interested in economic development for their states and peace between the sections.

“Carpetbaggers”: Northerners who went South after the war for various reasons. Some were investors interested in setting up new businesses and purchasing plantation land, while others were missionaries and teachers with humanitarian goals. In an age of greed, however, no doubt some also went to plunder and steal.

Freed Slaves: On their own, blacks had to first find a means of economic survival. Then they had to establish free communities and seek out education. Politically, they wanted to assert their right to vote and run for office.

Poor Whites: After the horrors of the war and the punishment of Southern leaders, they saw Reconstruction as an opportunity to gain political, economic, and social power.

White Southern Politicians: They sought to maintain control of the South’s future development but feared black and Northern influence in their region.

Document A

President Andrew Johnson: Amnesty Proclamation

*Andrew Johnson delivered his Reconstruction plan on May 29, 1865, in Washington, D.C. It was based on a plan Lincoln had announced shortly before his assassination that allowed Southerners to receive **amnesty** [official pardon or forgiveness for crimes], as long as they agreed to the following proclamation.*

In order that the authority of the Government of the United States may be restored, and that peace, order, and freedom may be established, I, ANDREW JOHNSON, President of the United States, do proclaim and declare that I grant to all persons who have directly or indirectly participated in the existing rebellion [Civil War] ... pardon, with restoration of all rights of property, except as to slaves ... but on the condition, nevertheless, that every such person shall take and subscribe the following oath, and keep and maintain said oath inviolate. ...

"I, _____, do solemnly swear or affirm, in presence of Almighty God, that I will faithfully support and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Union of the States thereunder. And that I will, in like manner, abide by and faithfully support all laws and proclamations which have been made during the existing rebellion with reference to the emancipation of slaves, so help me God."

May 29, 1865. Courtesy of The New York Times.

Document B **The Civil Rights Act, 1866**

In answer to President Johnson's weak response to Reconstruction, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act, despite Johnson's disapproval. It sparked the beginning of Congressional Reconstruction. The Civil Rights Act of 1866, excerpted below, illustrates Congress's vision of the purpose of Reconstruction.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That all persons born in the United States ... are hereby declared to be citizens of the United States; and such citizens, of every race and color, without regard to any previous condition of slavery ... shall have the same right, in every State and Territory in the United States, to make and enforce contracts, to sue, be parties, and give evidence, to inherit, purchase, lease, sell, hold, and convey real and personal property, and to full and equal benefit of all laws and proceedings for the security of person and property, as is enjoyed by white citizens, and shall be subject to like punishment, pains, and penalties, and to none other.

The Civil Rights Act of 1866. Courtesy of TeachingAmericanHistory.org

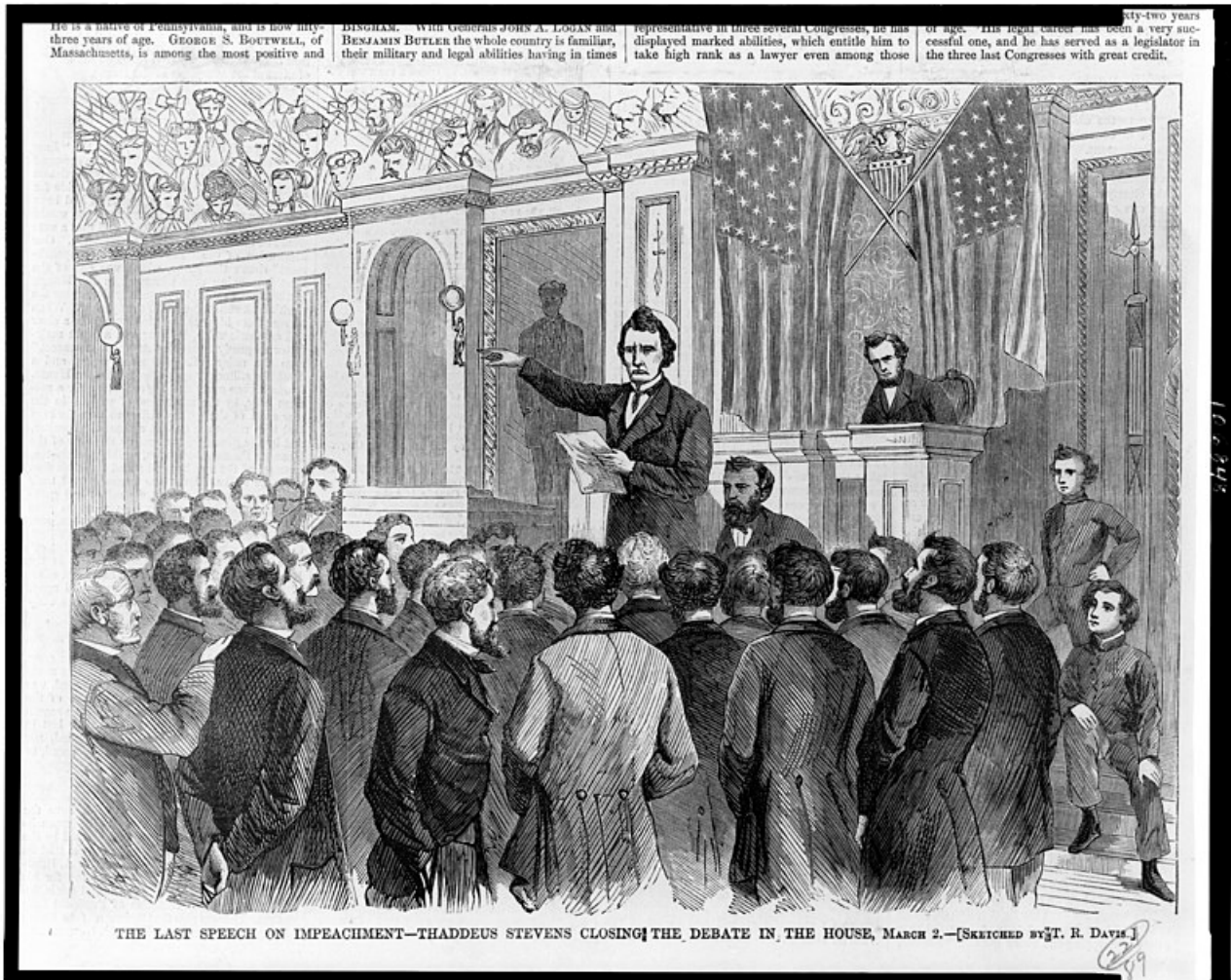
Document C **Frederick Douglass: The Purpose of Reconstruction**

The following excerpt was adapted from an essay written in 1866 by abolitionist Frederick Douglass on the purpose of Reconstruction.

[The political challenge of Reconstruction was] whether the tremendous war so heroically fought ... shall pass into history a miserable failure, [or whether the North would gain the] rightful reward of victory over treason ... a solid nation, entirely delivered from all contradictions ... based upon loyalty, liberty, and equality. ... [Reconstruction is] the great work of national **regeneration** [starting over] and entire **purification** [making spiritually or morally clean].

Courtesy of Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory, by David Blight, Harvard University Press, 2003, pg. 43.

Lessons 5–7: Radical Reconstruction



“The last speech on impeachment — Thaddeus Stevens closing the debate in the House, March 2,” is the caption on this political drawing by T.R. Davis, 1868. (Library of Congress)

Why was the Republican Congressional Reconstruction plan considered “radical”?

Homework

Congressional Reconstruction

Read the article “Congressional Reconstruction” on the University of Houston Digital History website.

Document A

Thaddeus Stevens’s “Goals of Radical Reconstruction”

Below is an excerpt from a speech delivered by representative Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania in 1865 on the congressional program for Reconstruction.

We hold it to be the duty of the government to inflict **condign** [*deserving*] punishment on the rebels, and so weaken their hands that they can never again endanger the Union; and so reform their institutions as to make them republican in spirit as well as in name. ...

We propose to **confiscate** [*take*] all the **estate** [*property*] of every rebel whose estate was worth \$10,000 or whose land exceeded 200 acres. ... By **forfeiting** [*seizing or taking*] the estates of the leading rebels, the Government would have 394,000,000 acres. Give 40 acres to each adult male freedman. Suppose there are one million of them... That would require only 40,000,000 acres.

The whole **fabric** [*structure*] of Southern society must be changed. How can republican institutions, free schools, free churches, free social interaction exist in a mingled community of **nabobs** [*very wealthy people*] and serfs; of the owners of 20,000-acre manors with lordly palaces and the occupants of narrow huts inhabited by “low white trash”?

The property of the rebels shall pay our national debt, and **indemnify** [*fairly compensate*] freedmen and loyal sufferers.

Stevens, Thaddeus. 1865. Courtesy of The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

Document B

President Andrew Johnson’s Veto of the Reconstruction Act

When Andrew Johnson became president, he pardoned many rich Southern planters and vetoed Congress’s reform bills. One such bill, the First Reconstruction Act in 1867, divided the South into five military districts controlled by the Union and limited the power of former slave owners. Below is Johnson’s veto of the act, which Congress overrode and passed anyway.

I am unable to give it [the First Reconstruction Act] my approval for reasons so **grave** [*serious*] that I hope they may have some influence on the minds of the patriotic and enlightened men [congressmen] with whom the decision must ultimately rest. ...

The bill suggests that the establishment of peace and good order is not its real goals. The military rule which it establishes is plainly to be used, not for any purpose of order or for the prevention of crime, but solely as a means of forcing the Southern people to adopt principles and measures to which it is known that they are opposed. The power given to the commanding officer over all the people of each of the five military districts is that of an absolute monarch. No master ever had a control so absolute over the slaves as this bill gives to the military officers over both white and colored persons. ...

The negroes have not asked for the privilege of voting; the majority of them have no idea what it means. This bill not only thrusts it into their hands, but forces them to use voting rights in a particular

way. ... To force the right of **suffrage** [voting] out of the hands of the white people and into the hands of the negroes is a violation of principle.

The First Reconstruction Act. 1867. Courtesy of American History: From Revolution to Reconstruction and Beyond, let.rug.nl/usa.

Document C

The Impeachment of Andrew Johnson

Charles Sumner, a Massachusetts senator and Radical Republican, voted to remove President Johnson from office and gave the following speech to the Senate committee during the impeachment trial.

Andrew Johnson is the **personification** [symbol, example] of the tyrannical Slave Power. ... Original **partisans** [supporters] of slavery North and South; compromisers of great principles; [attackers] of the Declaration of Independence, politicians without heart who at every stage of the battle have set their faces against Equal Rights; — these are his allies. ... Not to **dislodge** [remove] them [former rebels and slave owners] is to leave this country prey to one of the most hateful tyrannies of history. ... The safety of the Republic requires action at once. The lives of innocent men must be rescued from sacrifice.

Below is an excerpt of a speech by Senator James Grimes, also a Republican, defending his vote against the removal of President Johnson.

It is apparent to my mind that the President thoroughly believed the tenure-of-office act to be unconstitutional. ... This was a **punitive** [intended to punish] law. It was directed against the President alone. ... It took from him powers which, according to the legislative and judicial construction of 80 years, had been **bestowed** [given] upon him by the Constitution itself. ... This Government can only be preserved and the liberty of the people maintained by preserving the checks and balances among the branches of it — legislative, executive, judicial — alike. ... I cannot agree to destroy the harmonious work of the Constitution for the sake of getting rid of an Unacceptable President.

Sumner, Charles. 1868. Courtesy of TeachingAmericanHistory.org.

Document D

The Reconstruction Amendments

Between 1867 and 1870, Congress passed and the nation ratified the 14th and 15th amendments, guaranteeing rights to freed African Americans. Below are excerpts from both amendments.

The 14th Amendment (1868)

Section 1

All persons born or **naturalized** [made citizens] in the United States ... are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall [limit] the privileges ... of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law. ...

Section 3

No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any state, who, having previously taken an oath ... to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against [the United States], or given aid or comfort to the enemies.

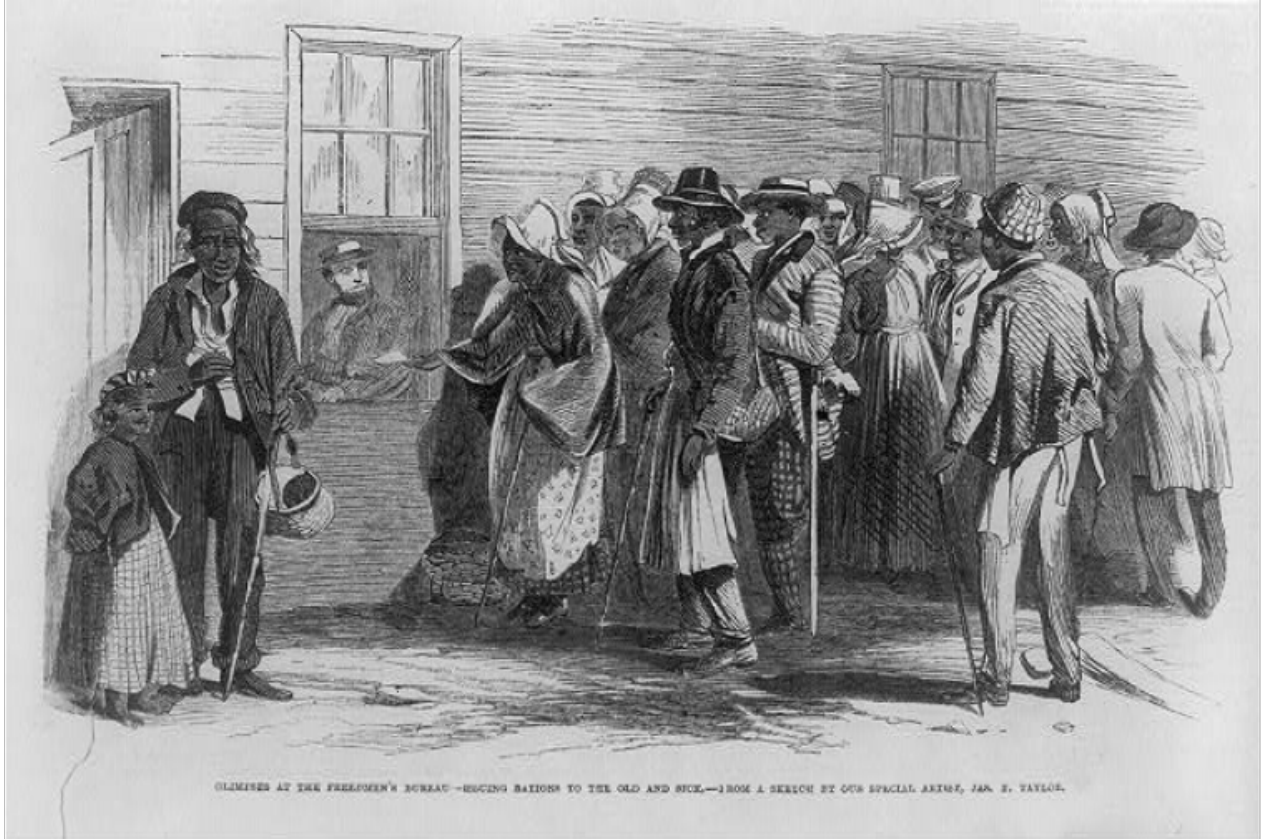
15th Amendment (1870)

Section 1

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or **abridged** [*restricted*] by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

14th and 15th Amendment. Courtesy of Legal Information Institute, Cornell Law School Law.Cornell.edu.

Lesson 8: Black Reconstruction



"Glimpses at the Freedmen's Bureau — issuing rations to the old and sick," by James Taylor, 1866 (Library of Congress)

How did Radical Reconstruction empower African Americans in the South?

Homework

Black Reconstruction

Read the article “Black Reconstruction” on *Encyclopedia.com*.

Document A

Frederick Douglass: Freedmen and the Vote

During the Reconstruction era, Frederick Douglass demanded government action to secure land, voting rights, and civil equality for black Americans. In 1870, the 15th Amendment was passed. As a result, freed African American men voted with passion and enthusiasm. The following passage is excerpted from a speech given by Douglass to the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in April 1865, five years before the 15th Amendment, explaining why the right to vote was so important to freed African Americans.

We may be asked, I say, why we want it [the right to vote]. I will tell you why we want it. We want it because it is our right, first of all. No class of men can ... be content with any deprivation of their rights. We want it again, for educating our race. ... If nothing is expected of a people, that people will find it difficult to **contradict** [*prove wrong*] that expectation. By depriving us of suffrage, you **affirm** [*declare*] our **incapacity** [*inability*] to form an intelligent judgment respecting public men and public measures; you declare before the world that we are unfit to exercise the elective franchise, and by this means lead us to undervalue ourselves, to put a low estimate upon ourselves, and to feel that we have no possibilities like other men. ...

Douglass, Frederick. April 1865. Courtesy of FacingHistory.org.

Document B
Samuel J. Lee: Report on Education

Among its many other responsibilities, the Freedmen's Bureau helped create many schools in the South during Reconstruction. Freedman Samuel J. Lee was elected to the South Carolina House of Representatives in the elections of 1868, the first elections in which African Americans voted in the state. He became Speaker of the House in 1872. The excerpt below, written in 1874, is adapted from his report on the improvements to the state education system made by the Republican legislature.

Permit me, now to refer to our increased educational advantages. It is very pleasing, gentlemen, to witness how rapidly the schools are springing up in every portion of our State, and how the number of competent, well trained teachers are increasing. ...



The illustration above was published in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper in 1866 and depicts a Freedmen's Bureau school in the South during Reconstruction. (Library of Congress)

Our State University has been renovated and made progressive. New Professors, men of unquestionable ability, now fill the chairs once filled by men who were too **aristocratic** [*snooby*] to instruct colored youths. A system of scholarships has been established that will, as soon as it is practically in operation, bring into the University a very large number of students. ... The State Normal School is also situated here, and will have a fair attendance of scholars. ... The effects of education can also be perceived; the people are becoming daily more enlightened; their minds are expanding, and they have awakened, in a great degree, from the mental darkness that once surrounded them.

Lee, Samuel J., 1874. Courtesy of FacingHistory.org.

Document C Howard University

The following excerpt was adapted from "The Occasion, 1860–1866," the first chapter of The Founding of Howard University, by Walter Dyson, published in 1921.

Slavery in the United States was gone forever by November 19, 1866. ... There were then in the United States about 4,000,000 of these newly enfranchised fellow-citizens. Of these, the great majority were so poor and so ignorant as not to be able to enjoy fully the privileges or exercise properly the duties of their high position. They enjoyed their freedom as best they could, however, moving about from farm to town and from city to city. ...

It was becoming more and more evident day by day... that land and learning and leadership for the freedmen were the only things which would eventually relieve the situation and bring order out of chaos. And, furthermore, colored leadership was being demanded by both the Blacks and the Whites. ...

In response to this demand for Negro teachers, preachers, and leaders for the freedmen, several higher schools of learning were founded: Berea College, in 1855; Wilberforce University, 1856; Lincoln Institute, 1866; Fisk University, 1866; and Hampton Normal and Industrial Institute, 1866. The founding of Howard University in 1867, in a section of the Country [Washington, D.C.] rapidly filling with freedmen, was, therefore, a natural and logical development.

Dyson, Walter. The Founding of Harvard University. 1921. Courtesy of Howard University Studies in History, dh.Howard.edu.

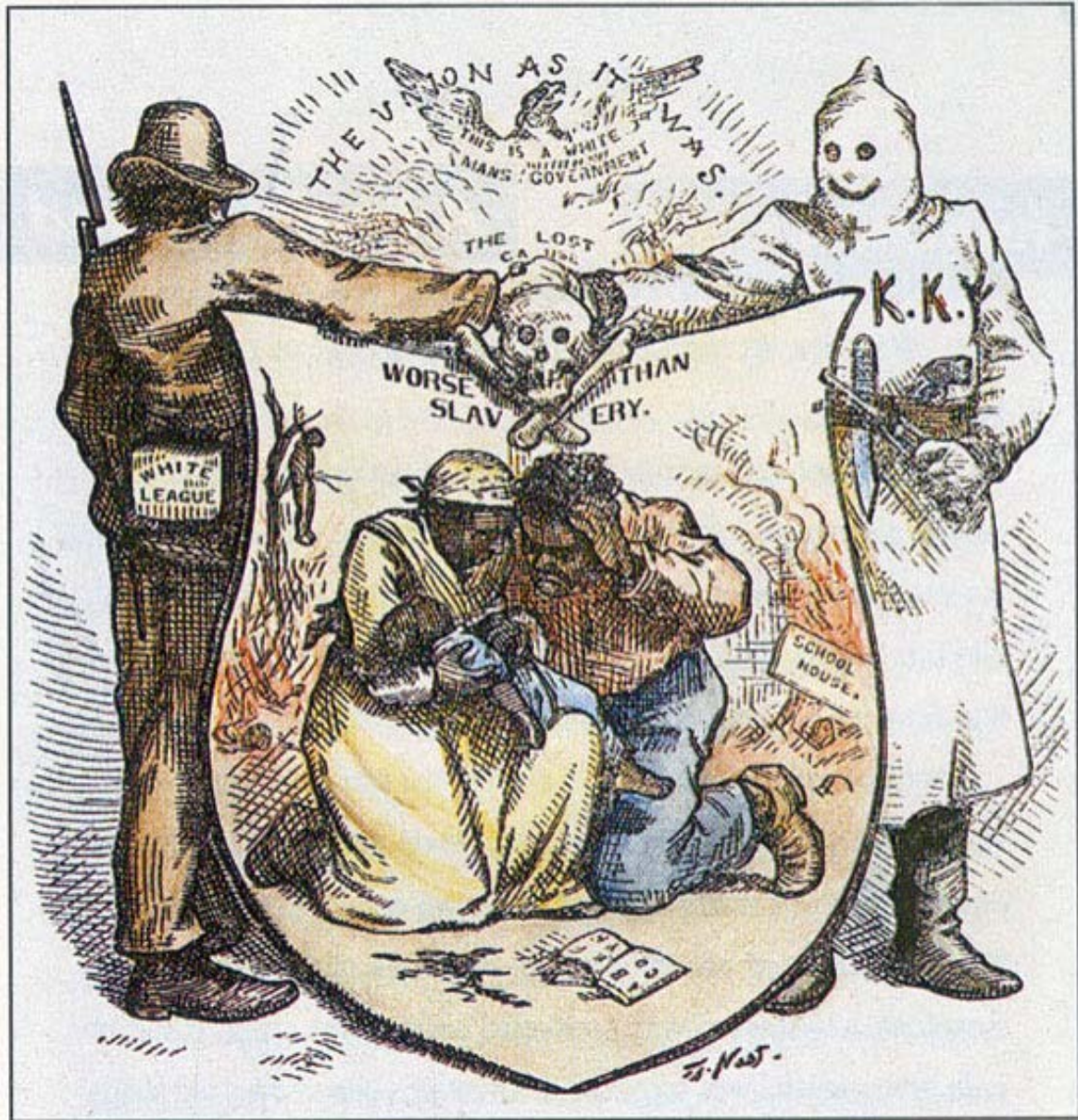
Document D
Black Politicians

During Reconstruction, voters in the South elected more than 600 African American state legislators and 16 members of Congress. Hundreds more held local offices like sheriff or justice of the peace. In all, historians estimate that more than 1,500 African Americans held elected positions. Pennsylvania congressman James G. Blaine said, "The colored men who took their seats in both the Senate and House did not appear ignorant or helpless. They were as a rule studious, earnest, ambitious men, whose public conduct ... would be honorable to any race."



The first African American senators and congressmen during Reconstruction (left to right): Senator Hiram Revels of Mississippi, Representatives Benjamin Turner of Alabama, Robert DeLarge of South Carolina, Josiah Walls of Florida, Jefferson Long of Georgia, and Joseph Rainey and Robert B. Elliott of South Carolina. This print was produced by Currier and Ives in 1872. (Smithsonian National Museum of American History, AmericanHistory.SI.edu)

Lesson 9: Southern Redemption



"Worse Than Slavery," by Thomas Nast, 1874 (Wikimedia)

How did white Southerners use violence against African Americans to “redeem” the South?

Homework

Southern Response to Reconstruction

The following text was adapted from historian Edward Ayers's essay "Reconstruction," published by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. Additionally, read the article "Redemption" on the University of Houston Digital History website.

From the beginning of Reconstruction under President Johnson, white Southerners held onto all they could of their old society. They passed "Black Codes" that narrowly defined the possibilities of life for freedpeople, preventing them from renting land or owning firearms and placing their children in forced **apprenticeships** [*training jobs, usually unpaid*] to their former owners. Former Confederates violently attacked black people in New Orleans, in Memphis, and in the countryside across the region. The Ku Klux Klan, a violent organization formed by white Southerners, terrorized those who challenged white supremacy in any way.

In this period of chaos immediately after the war, former slaves and former slaveholders had to define new ways of living. White landowners wanted black workers to labor in gangs under close supervision; African Americans wanted to work on their own. However, because freed African Americans had no way to gain property, many became forced to return to their old masters' plantations to work for them. Within a few years, a system evolved in which landowners and these landless workers shared some of the profits from the crops they produced. This bargain became a system known as sharecropping and would dominate the Southern economy for generations to come.

Sharecropping often led the families doing the work in the fields deeper into debt over the course of the year, for they had no cash until the crop came in. They borrowed from the plantation owners and had to pay **interest** [*extra money owed after borrowing money*] back. When the crop — almost always cotton — was harvested and they received their share of the cotton, the laboring families often owed more than they had earned for all their work. This system encouraged both landowners and sharecroppers to grow more and more cotton, driving down the price as a result and creating an endless cycle. This system of sharecropping re-created slave-like working conditions for many African Americans — and poor whites — in the South that lasted long after the end of Reconstruction.

Even as long-term changes in labor evolved in the South after the Civil War, political conflict and change emerged in the nation. A second era of Reconstruction began in March 1867, when a new Republican majority in Congress pursued its "radical" Reconstruction plan in response to the rise of Black Codes, sharecropping, and general resistance from the South to presidential Reconstruction.

White Southerners ridiculed, attacked, and weakened the attempts of Congressional Reconstruction. Although most Republican officeholders, especially at the higher levels, were white men, every instance of failure was held up as an example of the unfitness of African Americans to hold public positions.

Any white man who joined with black voters and allies in the Republican Party was mocked as a traitor to his race, as either a "scalawag," a native white Southern Republican, or a "carpetbagger," a white Northern Republican. The scalawags were portrayed by the Democrats as men of poor character, willing to sell their heritage as white men for political power. The carpetbaggers, who received positions as governors, congressmen, or senators from their Republican allies, were portrayed as homeless people who carried all they owned in a cheap bag made of carpet, taking advantage of the ignorance of black voters for their own greed. In reality, these Northern-born white Republicans tended to be well-educated men, often U.S. veterans, who had come to the South without any interest in holding office.

Republicans in the South — black, white, Northern, or Southern — found themselves under endless attack from white Democrats, who tried to remove their opponents from power quickly and permanently. The Democrats favored as little government as possible, especially when it was under the control of black and white Republicans.

Ayers, Edward, Reconstruction. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History)

Document A **KKK Account**

The following is excerpted from the 1872 testimony of Abram Colby, an African American legislator from Georgia, given before a congressional committee formed to investigate violence against freedpeople in the South.

Colby: On the 29th of October 1869, [the Klansmen] broke my door open, took me out of bed, took me to the woods, and whipped me three hours or more and left me for dead. They said to me, “Do you think you will ever vote another damned Radical ticket?” I said, “If there was an election tomorrow, I would vote the Radical ticket.” They set in and whipped me a thousand licks more, with sticks and straps that had buckles on the ends of them.

Question: What is the character of those men who were engaged in whipping you?

Colby: Some are first-class men in our town. One is a lawyer, one a doctor, and some are farmers. They had their pistols and they took me in my night-clothes and carried me from home. They hit me five thousand blows. I told President Grant the same that I tell you now. They told me to take off my shirt. I said, “I never do that for any man.” My drawers fell down about my feet and they took hold of them and tripped me up. Then they pulled my shirt up over my head. They said I had voted for Grant and had carried the Negroes against them. About two days before they whipped me, they offered me \$5,000 to go with them and said they would pay me \$2,500 in cash if I would let another man go to the legislature in my place. I told them that I would not do it if they would give me all the county was worth.

The worst thing was my mother, wife, and daughter were in the room when they came. My little daughter begged them not to carry me away. They drew up a gun and actually frightened her to death. She never got over it until she died. That was the part that grieves me the most.

Question: How long before you recovered from the effects of this treatment?

Colby: I have never got over it yet. They broke something inside of me. I cannot do any work now, though I always made my living before in the barbershop, hauling wood, etc.

Question: You spoke about being elected to the next legislature?

Colby: Yes, sir, but they run me off during the election. They swore they would kill me if I stayed. The Saturday night before the election I went to church. When I got home they just peppered the house with shot and bullets.

Colby, Abram. 1872. Courtesy of Web.MIT.edu.

Document B
Petition to Congress

The following petition against the KKK was made to the U.S. Congress on March 25, 1871.

We the colored citizens of Frankfurt and vicinity do this day memorialize. ... upon the condition of affairs now existing in this state of Kentucky. We would respectfully state that life, liberty, and property are unprotected among the colored race of this state. Organized bands of desperate and lawless men, mainly composed of soldiers of the late Rebel armies, armed, disciplined, and disguised, and bound by oath and secret obligations, have by force, terror, and violence subverted all civil society among the colored people. ... We believe you are not familiar with the Ku Klux Klan's riding nightly over the country, going from county to county, and in the county towns spreading terror wherever they go by robbing, whipping, ravishing, and killing our people without provocation, compelling colored people to break the ice and bathe in the chilly waters of the Kentucky River. ... Our people are driven from their homes in great numbers. ... We would state that we have been law-abiding citizens, pay our tax, and, in many parts of the state, our people have been driven from the polls — refused the right to vote. Many have been slaughtered while attempting to vote; we ask how long is this state of things to last. We appeal to you to enact some laws that will protect us and that will enable us to exercise the rights of citizens. The senator from this state denies there being organized bands of desperadoes in this state [but] we lay before you a number of violent acts occurring during his administration.

March 25, 1871. Courtesy of Colored Conventions, ColoredConventions.org.

Document C
The KKK and the White League (political cartoon)

Most Ku Klux Klan action was designed to intimidate black voters and white supporters of the Republican Party. Founded in Tennessee in 1866, the Klan was particularly active in Georgia from 1868 to the early 1870s.

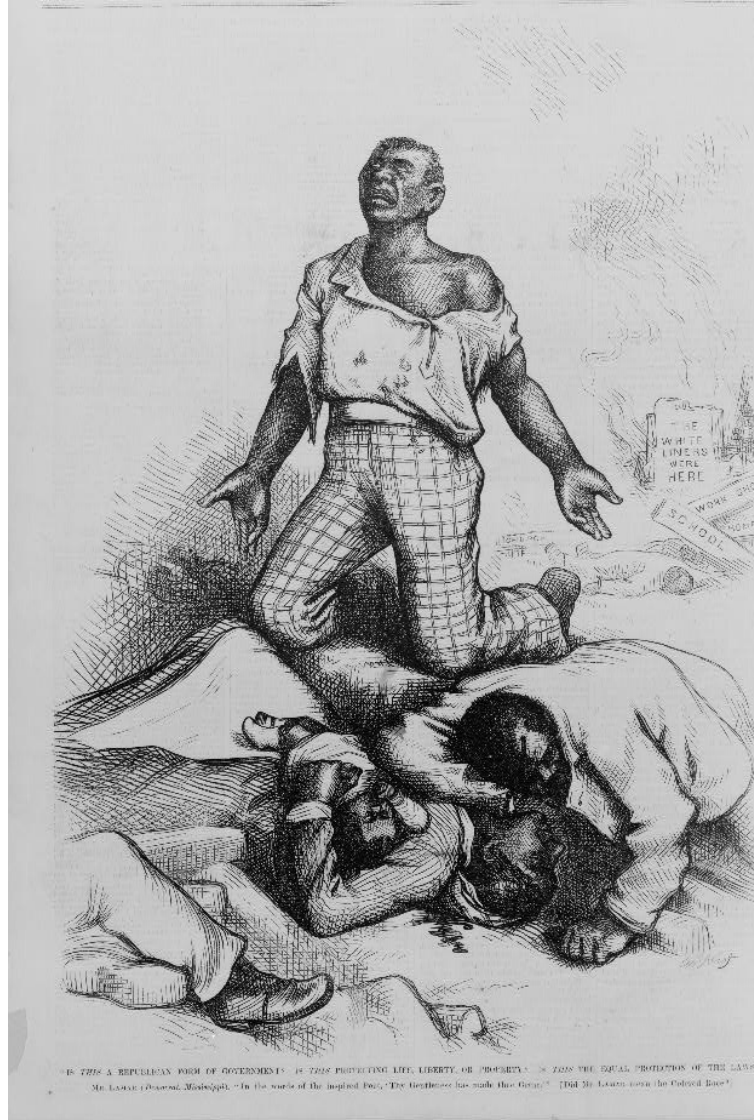


"Worse Than Slavery," by Thomas Nast, illustrating the violence of the White League and the KKK, was published in Harper's Weekly in 1874. (New Georgia Encyclopedia, GeorgiaEncyclopedia.org)

Document D
Eric Foner: On Democrats in the South

Read the excerpt “Collaborators and Bystanders” by Eric Foner on the Facing History and Ourselves website.

Lessons 10–12: The End of Reconstruction



"Is this a republican form of government? Is this protecting life, liberty, or property? Is this the equal protection of the laws?" reads the caption on this cartoon by Thomas Nast, 1876 (Library of Congress.)

Was the North or the South more responsible for “killing” Reconstruction?

Homework

The End of Reconstruction

Read the article “The End of Reconstruction” on the University of Houston Digital History website.

Document A

Albion Tourgee’s Letter

Albion Tourgee was a white Northern soldier who settled in North Carolina after the war. He served during Reconstruction and wrote this letter on the Ku Klux Klan’s activities to the North Carolina Republican senator Joseph Carter Abbott. The letter appeared in the New York Tribune in May 1870.

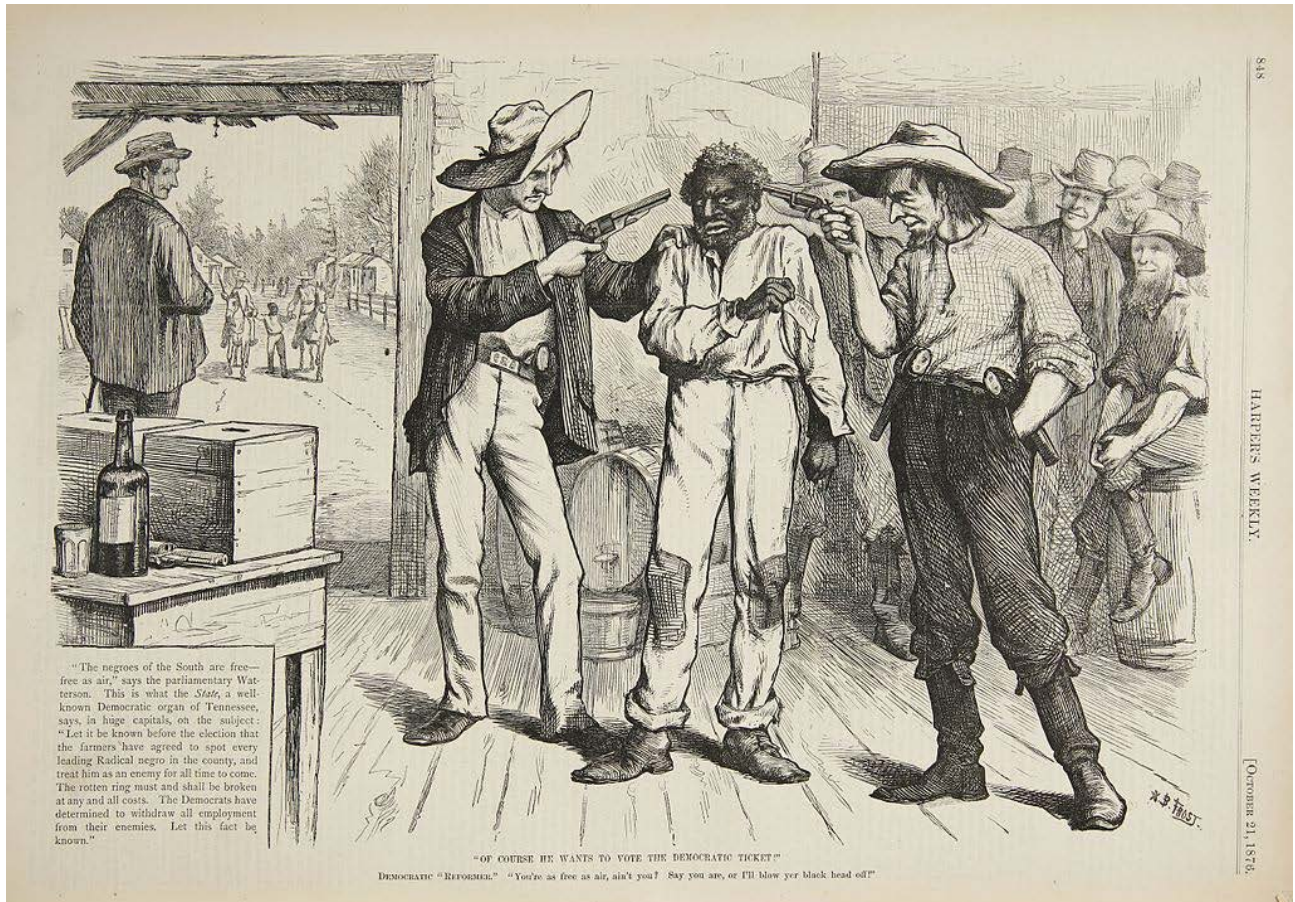
It is my **mournful** [*sad*] duty to inform you that our friend John W. Stephens, State Senator from Caswell, is dead. He was foully murdered by the Ku-Klux in the Grand Jury room of the Courthouse on Saturday. ... He was stabbed five or six times, and then hanged on a hook in the Grand Jury room. ... Another brave, honest Republican citizen has met his fate at the hands of these **fiends** [*villains*]. ...

I have very little doubt that I shall be one of the next victims. My steps have been **dogged** [*followed*] for months, and only a good opportunity has been wanting to secure to me the fate which Stephens has just met. ... I say to you plainly that any member of Congress who, especially from the South, does not support, advocate, and urge immediate active and thorough measures to put an end to these outrages ... is a coward, a traitor, or a fool.

Tourgee, Albion. May 1870. Courtesy of Civil War Era NC, CWNC.omeka.chass.edu.

Document B
“Of Course He Votes Democratic, 1876”

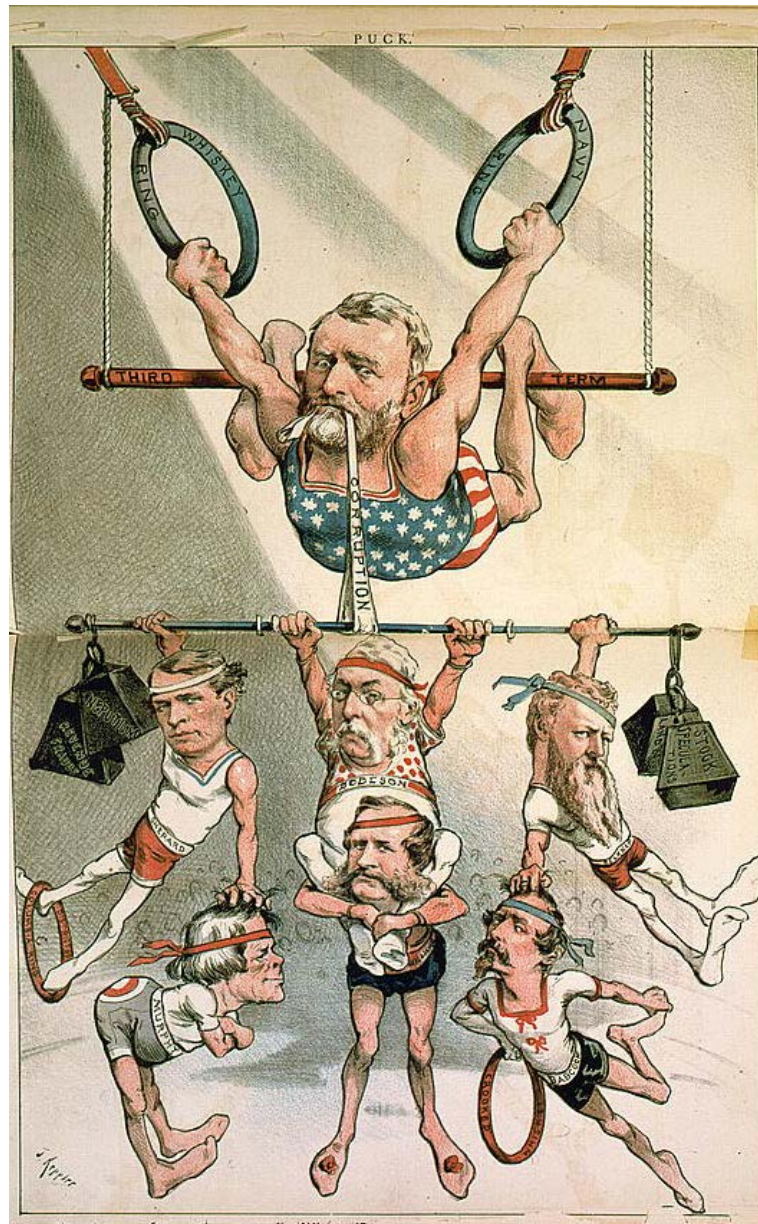
This cartoon appeared in Harper’s Weekly on October 21, 1876, with the caption: “Of course he wants to vote the Democratic ticket.”



*The text in the bottom left reads: “The negroes of the South are free — free as air,” says the **parliamentary** [congressman] Waterson. This is what the **Slate**, a well-known Democratic **organ** [group] of Tennessee, says, in huge capitals, on the subject: “Let it be known before the election that the farmers have agreed to spot every leading Radical negro in the country, and treat him as an enemy for all time to come. The rotten ring must and shall be broken at any and all costs. The Democrats have determined to withdraw all employment from their enemies. Let this fact be known.” (Wikimedia)*

Document C
The Americans and Harper's Weekly

President Grant's administration was full of scandals and economic hardship that distracted Northern voters from the needs of Reconstruction in the South. The political cartoon below was drawn by Joseph Keppler and published in Puck magazine in 1880.



The cartoon shows President Ulysses S. Grant as an acrobat, on the “third term” trapeze, holding onto the “whiskey ring” and “Navy ring” with a strap — “corruption” — in his mouth holding up other acrobats. (Library of Congress)

Document D
Colored Rule in a Reconstructed State

Thomas Nast, initially a supporter of Congressional Reconstruction, created the cartoon "Colored Rule in a Reconstructed State" in 1874.



The caption reads: (The members call each other thieves, liars, rascals, and cowards.) Columbia. "You are Aping the lowest Whites. If you disgrace your Race this way you had better take Back Seats." (Library of Congress)

Lesson 13: The Compromise of 1877



"A truce — not a compromise, but a chance for high-toned gentlemen to retire gracefully from their very civil declarations of war," reads the caption on this cartoon by Thomas Nast, 1877 (Library of Congress).

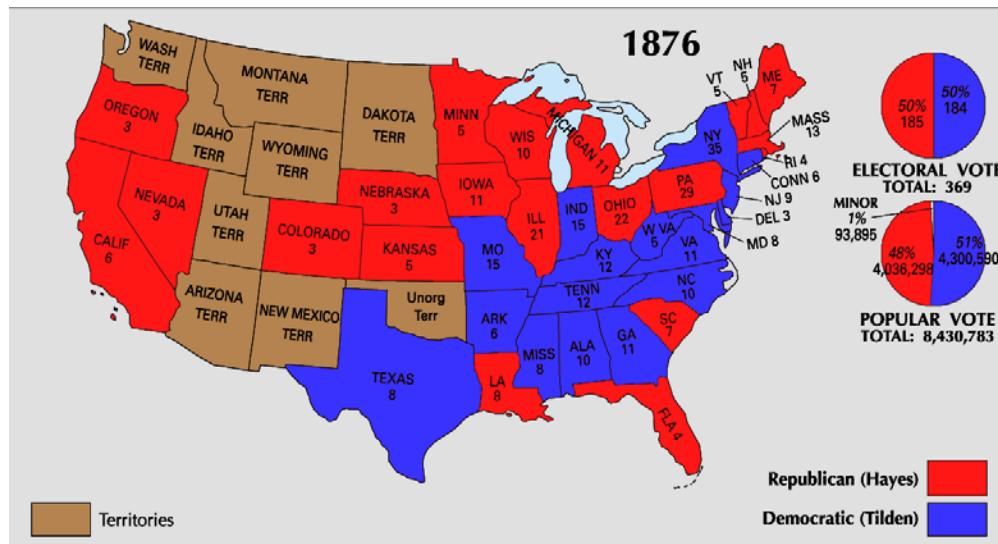
Who were the “winners” and “losers” of the Compromise of 1877?

Homework

The Election of 1876

The following text was adapted from the book *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* by historian David Blight. Additionally, read the article “Hayes-Tilden Election (1876)” on the Channel Thirteen The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow website.

The 1876 presidential election gave the country a chance to express its opinion on national reunion. The Republican and Democratic parties faced each other for the first time since before the war as relative equals, represented in both sections of Congress. The Grant administration had been full of scandals and financial struggles. As a result, the Republicans needed a reformer and an uncontroversial figure at the top of their ticket. They found him by going to the Midwest, and nominated Rutherford B. Hayes, a Civil War veteran, conservative, and three-term governor of Ohio. Hayes was the first choice of few Republicans, but he was acceptable to all. Importantly, he was a reconciliationist. He favored making peace with the South over protecting African American rights, signaling a Republican abandonment of the last traces of Reconstruction.



The electoral map of the 1876 election (Courtesy of United States Geological Survey, NationalMap.gov)

The Democrats nominated one of the richest men in America, the New York corporate lawyer Samuel J. Tilden. In addition to serving as a lawyer to railroad kings and bankers, Tilden had helped prosecute the corrupt government in New York; he therefore was also a “reformer.” In the North in 1876, the Democrats ran against the depression and corruption of the Grant administration. In the South, Democrats faced determined campaigns by Republicans to survive in the three “unredeemed” states. Democrats responded with their tactics of violence and intimidation. During 1876, a widespread reign of terror swept over South Carolina, and black voters and Republican politicians in Louisiana, Mississippi, and other states endured economic and physical pressures — and were sometimes murdered. So effective was Democratic intimidation of Republicans in Mississippi that a federal official there called the white population “one vast mob.” In many Republican — and thus majority black — districts, few votes were cast.

Blight, David. *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*, Harvard University Press, 2003, pgs. 135–136.

Image retrieved from (Courtesy of United States Geological Survey, NationalMap.gov)

Document A

President Hayes: Ending Reconstruction

Rutherford B. Hayes was inaugurated on March 5, 1877. Among his first acts was to end Northern occupation of the states still under military control. He also appointed Frederick Douglass as marshal in the District of Columbia and a Southerner, D. M. Key of Tennessee, as postmaster general. On April 22, Hayes wrote the following in his diary.

We have got through with the South Carolina and Louisiana problems. At any rate, the troops are ordered away, and I now hope for peace, and what is equally important, security and prosperity for the colored people. The result of my plans to get from those states and by their governors, legislatures, press, and people pledges that the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments shall be faithfully observed; that the colored people shall have equal rights to labor, education, and the privileges of citizenship. I am confident this is a good work. Time will tell.

Hayes, Rutherford B. March 5, 1877. Courtesy of FacingHistory.org.

Document B

Daniel Chamberlain: Address to the Republicans of South Carolina

The following is excerpted from Republican Governor Daniel Chamberlain's address to the Republicans of South Carolina after President Hayes removed federal troops from the state, allowing Democrats to take over the state government.

Today — April 10, 1877 — by order of the President whom your votes alone rescued from overwhelming defeat, the government of [the] United States abandons you, and by the withdrawal of troops now protecting the state from domestic violence abandons the lawful government of the state to a struggle with **insurrectionary** [*revolutionary*] forces too powerful to be resisted.

Chamberlain, Daniel. April 10, 1877. Courtesy of FacingHistory.org.

Document C

David Blight: The Compromise of 1877

The following text was adapted from the book Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory by historian David Blight.

The Compromise of 1877 was about *interests*, the desires and needs of Southerners and Northerners as they bargained a divided election result into a plan for political reunion and economic development. Southerners wanted “home rule” and all federal troops removed from their states. ... Indeed in February 1877 Congress eliminated the [law] that would have kept soldiers stationed in the South. Many Southern politicians also wanted major **subsidies** [*financial support*] for internal improvements — new **levees** [*flood prevention*], harbors, and at least one transcontinental railroad with a Southern end. Manufacturing companies, railroads, and financial firms all wanted a sectional settlement. ... A reunion and an end to agitation over black rights and reconstruction would be good for business, and many companies flooded congressmen with petitions urging peace. ... At the heart of the Compromise of 1877 was the understanding that Hayes would institute a “new Southern policy,” one that would leave the South alone to deal with all questions of governance and race relations. As for black voting rights, even Grant himself had told his cabinet that he had come to see the 15th Amendment as a mistake, a law that “had done the Negro no good.” By April, the newspaper the *Nation* had rejoiced in

the compromise and announced that the “negro will disappear from the field of national politics. **Henceforth** [*from now on*], the nation as a nation, will have nothing more to do with him.”

Blight, David. Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory, Harvard University Press, 2003, pgs. 137–138

Document D
White Democrats Regain Control of Southern Legislatures

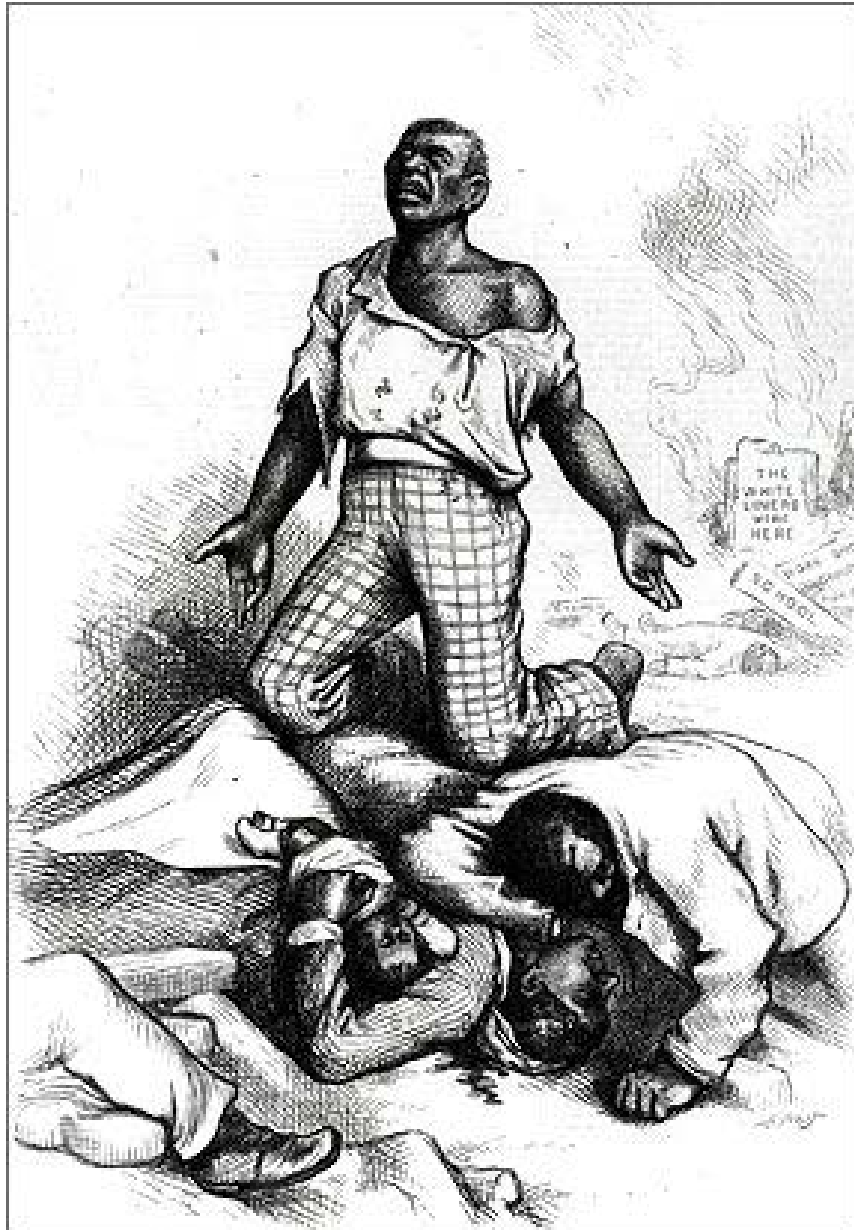
The chart below shows the year when Southern white Democrats regained a majority in the legislature of each respective state.

1869	Virginia
1870	North Carolina
1871	Georgia
1873	Texas
1874	Alabama Arkansas
1875	Mississippi
1877	Florida Louisiana South Carolina

Torin, Study Aid: Reconstruction Amendments. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History)

Document E
The End of Reconstruction

This engraving was published by Thomas Nast in Harper's Weekly on September 2, 1876.



COURTESY OF HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY

The caption reads "Is This a Republican Form of Government? Is This Protecting Life, Liberty, or Property? Is This the Equal Protection of the Laws?" (Library of Congress)

Lesson 14: Reunion and Reconciliation



"Compromise with the South," by Thomas Nast, 1864 (Wikicommons)

How effectively did Reconstruction reunite the North and the South?

Homework
The Path to Reunion

Read pages 3–4 and 31–32 in Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory by historian David Blight (Harvard University Press, 2001).

**Station 1: Southern View of Northerners
Hanging the Carpetbagger**

Throughout Reconstruction, Southerners saw Northerners — especially those who came to the South during Reconstruction, called the “carpetbaggers” — as their enemies. The cartoon below illustrates the relationship between Northern carpetbaggers and the KKK in the South during Reconstruction.



The Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor's political cartoon "Hanging the Carpetbagger" from 1868 (*Encyclopedia of Alabama, EncyclopediaofAlabama.org*)

Station 2: Northern View of Southerners
Robert G. Ingersoll: Waving the Bloody Flag

Robert G. Ingersoll served in the Union Army and was a member of the Republican Party. Below is an excerpt describing his perception of the role the Democratic Southern states played in the Civil War and Reconstruction from 1876.

Every state that seceded from the United States was a Democratic State. ... Every man that shot Union soldiers was a Democrat. Every man that loved slavery better than liberty was a Democrat. The man that assassinated Abraham Lincoln was a Democrat. ... Every man that raised bloodhounds to pursue human beings was a Democrat. Every man that clutched from shrieking, shuddering, crouching mothers, babes from their breasts, and sold them into slavery, was a Democrat.

Ingersoll, Robert G. 1876. Courtesy of The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

Station 3: National Reunion David Blight: Reconciliation

The following text was adapted from the book Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory by historian David Blight.

In 1874 and 1875, Union and Confederate veterans began to participate in Memorial Day celebrations together in both North and South. Following Memorial Day in 1875, in North Carolina, a black citizen in Raleigh ... anxiously observed in a letter to a newspaper “a noticeable spirit of reconciliation **pervading** [*filling*] the political atmosphere of both the Republican and Democratic parties of this state.” ...

Up North, Memorial Day orators increasingly spoke about reconciliation, especially around the theme of shared soldiers’ **valor** [*bravery*]. ... On Memorial Day, May 30, 1877, New York City experienced many parades and ceremonies. ... Virtually every orator and editorial writer declared the day one of forgetting, forgiveness, and equality of the Blue and the Gray veterans. ... The *Herald* declared that “all the issues on which the war of the rebellion was fought seem dead.” ... In this atmosphere of national reunion, massive parades filled New York’s streets, and tens of thousands of citizens visited every cemetery in the region to lay flowers at the graves of the Union and Confederate dead. ...

The American reunion ultimately grew in many fertile soils, based on pure sentiment, genuine **fervor** [*enthusiasm*] for healing, white racial solidarity, the soldiers’ valor, and business interests. ... [Horace] Greeley declared his confidence that “the masses of our countrymen, North and South, are eager to clasp hands across the bloody **chasm** [*divide*] which has too long divided them.”

Blight, David. Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory, Harvard University Press, 2001, pgs. 86–87; 94;126

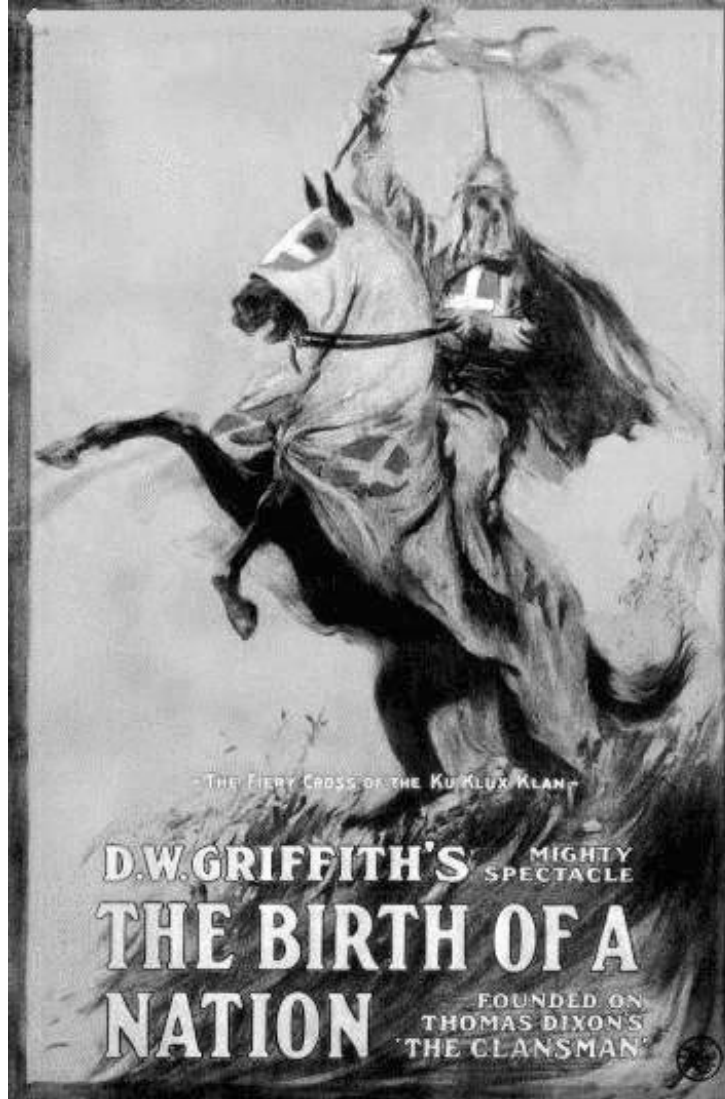
Station 4: On Civil Rights Southern Response to the Civil Rights Bill

Throughout Reconstruction, Southern whites felt threatened by legislation to provide rights for former slaves. The Civil Rights Bill of 1875 was the last rights bill passed by Congress during Reconstruction. It protected the access of all Americans to public accommodations, such as trains. This article was published in the Atlanta News on September 10, 1874.

Let there be White Leagues formed in every town and village of the South, and let us organize for the great struggle which seems inevitable. If the October elections which are to be held at the North are favorable to radicals, the time will have arrived for us to prepare for the very worst. The radicalism of the Republican Party must be met by the radicalism of white men. We have no war to make against the United States Government, but against the Republican Party our hate must be **unquenchable** [*unable to be satisfied*], our war **interminable** [*endless*] and merciless. By brute force they are endeavoring to force us into **acquiescence** [*agreement*] to their hideous program. We have submitted long enough, and it is time to meet brute-force with brute-force. ... Let Northern radicals understand that military supervision of Southern elections and the civil-rights bill mean war; that war means bloodshed.

September 10, 1874 Courtesy of American Battlefield Trust, BattleFields.org.

Lesson 15: The Legacy of Reconstruction



Poster for D.W. Griffith's film Birth of a Nation, 1915 (Wikimedia)

How has the legacy of Reconstruction evolved over time?

Homework

Why Reconstruction Matters

Read the article “Why Reconstruction Matters” by historian Eric Foner on The New York Times website.

Document A

Frederick Douglass: On Reconstruction and Memory

The following speech was given by Frederick Douglass on Memorial Day, 1871.

We are sometimes asked in the name of patriotism to ... remember with equal admiration those who struck at the nation’s life, and those who struck to save it — those who fought for slavery, and those who fought for liberty and justice. I am no minister of malice ..., I would not repel the **repentant** [*those asking for forgiveness*], but ... may my tongue split to the roof of my mouth if I forget the difference between the parties to that ... bloody conflict. ... I may say if this war is to be forgotten, I ask in the name of all things sacred what shall men remember?

Courtesy of Library of Congress.

Document B

Historian John W. Burgess Perspective

John W. Burgess was a prominent political scientist of the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Burgess was a well-known and respected professor at Columbia at the time. He laid the groundwork for what would become the Dunning School of Reconstruction in the 1910s–1930s, the belief that Reconstruction was a failure because blacks were inferior. Below is an excerpt from an essay by Burgess in 1902.

It was the most soul-sickening spectacle that America had ever been called upon to behold. Every principle of the old American **polity** [*political society*] was here reversed. In place of government by the most intelligent and virtuous part of the people for the benefit of the governed, here was government by the most ignorant and vicious part of the population for the benefit, the vulgar, materialistic, brutal benefit of the governing set.

Burgess, John W. 1902. Courtesy of The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

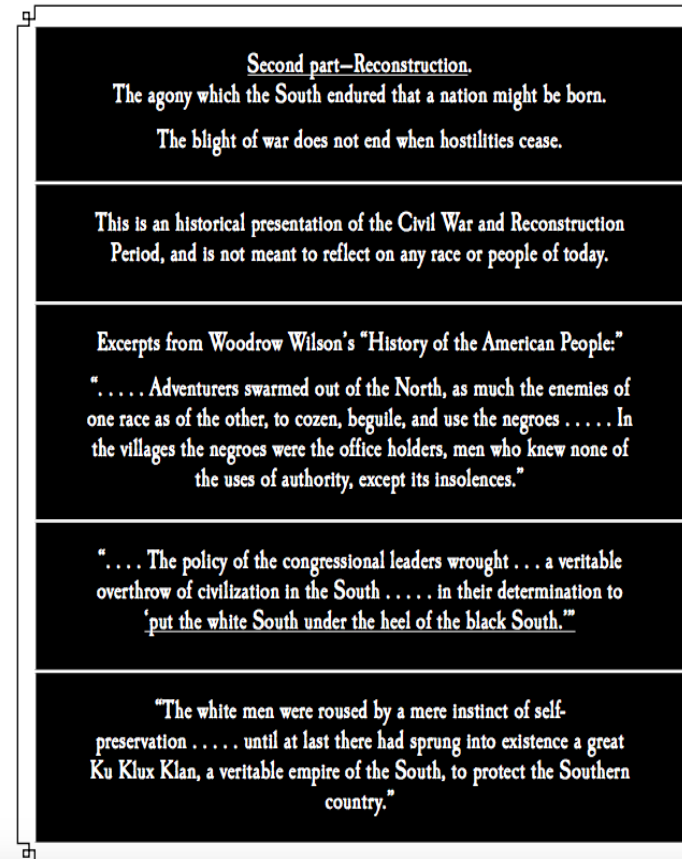
Document C
Birth of a Nation, 1915

The following summary of Reconstruction, which quotes heavily from a history textbook written by President Woodrow Wilson, appears screen by screen to introduce part two of the silent film *The Birth of a Nation*. President Wilson's textbook and the film *Birth of a Nation* both were a part of the Dunning School of Reconstruction.

The agony which the South **endured** [suffered] that a nation might be born. The **blight** [hardship] of war does end when hostilities **cease** [end]. This is an historical presentation of the Civil War and Reconstruction Period, and is not meant to reflect on any race or people of today. Excerpts from Woodrow Wilson's "History of the American People:"

"... Adventurers swarmed out of the North, as much the enemies of one race as of the other, to **cozen** [trick], **beguile** [charm to take advantage of], and use the negroes. ... In the villages the negroes were the office holders, men who knew none of the uses of authority, except its **insolences** [rude behaviors]."

"... The policy of the congressional leaders **wrought** [caused]... a **veritable** [real] overthrow of civilization in the South. ... In their determination to 'put the white South under the heel of the black South.'" "The white men were **roused** [inspired] by a mere instinct of self preservation ... until at last there had sprung into existence a great Ku Klux Klan, a veritable empire of the South, to protect the Southern country."



As the text appeared in the film *Birth of a Nation* (National Archives)

Birth of a Nation. 1915. Courtesy of FacingHistory.org.

Document D

W.E.B. DuBois: Black Reconstruction, 1935

W.E.B. DuBois was an African American historian, sociologist, and civil rights activist in the early 20th century. His book Black Reconstruction, written in 1935, challenged the Dunning School of Reconstruction and promoted a new legacy for Reconstruction. Below is an excerpt from Black Reconstruction.

How the facts of American history have in the last half century been falsified because the nation was ashamed. The South was ashamed because it fought to **perpetuate** [*continue*] human slavery. The North was ashamed because it had to call in the black men to save the Union, abolish slavery, and establish democracy. What are American children taught today about Reconstruction? ... [A]n American youth attending college today would learn from current textbooks ... that the chance of getting rid of slavery by peaceful methods was ruined by the Abolitionists. ... That Reconstruction was a disgraceful attempt to subject white people to ignorant Negro rule. ... In other words, he would in all probability complete his education without any idea of the part which the black race has played in America; of the tremendous moral problem of abolition; of the cause and meaning of the Civil War. ...

In South Carolina, Mississippi and Louisiana, the proportion of Negroes was so large, their leaders of sufficient power, and the Federal control so effective, that for the years 1868–1874 the will of black labor was powerful; and so far as it was intelligently led, and had definite goals, it took **perceptible** [*noticeable*] steps toward public education, confiscation of large incomes, betterment of labor conditions, universal suffrage, and in some cases, distribution of land to the peasant.

Ignorant and vicious leadership, white and black, stopped this progress. ... This succeeded first in Louisiana, then in Mississippi, and finally in South Carolina. In each case, labor control passed into the hands of white Southerners.

DuBois, W.E.B. 1935. Courtesy of National Archives.