

The Reconstruction Era

Lesson 3 The South During Reconstruction

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do new ideas change the way people live?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. *How were African Americans discouraged from participating in civic life in the South?*
2. *What were some improvements and some limitations for African Americans?*

Terms to Know

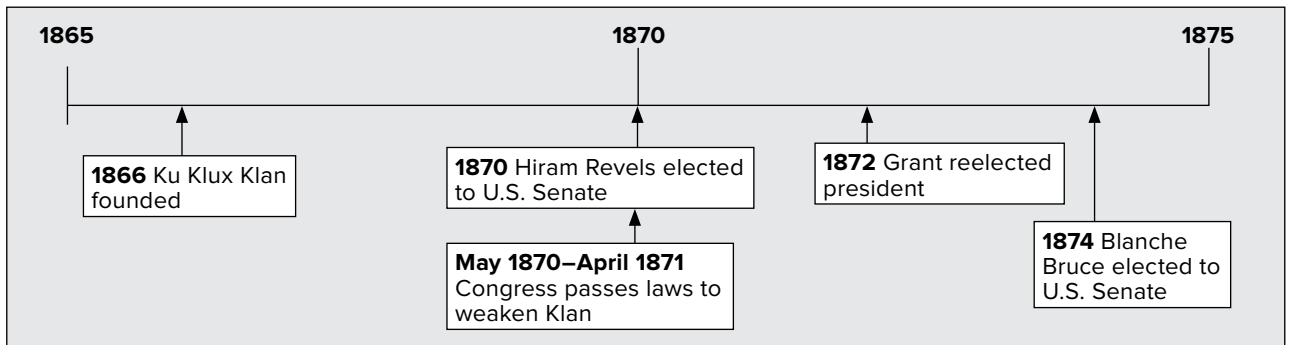
scalawag name given by former Confederates to Southern whites who supported Republican Reconstruction of the South

corruption dishonest or illegal actions

integrate to unite, or blend into a united whole

sharecropping system of farming in which a farmer works land for an owner who provides equipment and seeds and receives a share of the crop

When did it happen?



What do you know?

In the first column, answer the questions based on what you know before you study. After this lesson, complete the last column.

Now...		Later...
	How did African Americans affect Southern politics and government during Reconstruction?	
	Who were “scalawags” and “carpetbaggers”?	
	What was life like for African Americans in the South during this period?	
	How many white and African American children attended school?	
	How does sharecropping work?	

The Reconstruction Era

Lesson 3 The South During Reconstruction, *Continued*

Republicans in Charge

The Republicans were more powerful than the Democrats during Reconstruction. The groups in charge of state governments in the South supported Republicans. These included African Americans and some white Southerners. They also included whites from the North who moved to the South.

African Americans had fewer rights than white Southerners. But they supported the Republican Party and had a great effect on Southern politics. The Republican Party helped African Americans participate in government. Reconstruction marked the first time African Americans participated in government, both as voters and as elected officials.

African Americans voted for Republican candidates. Some of the candidates were African Americans themselves. A small number of African Americans held top positions in Southern states during Reconstruction. They did not control any state government. For a short time, African Americans held a majority of elected positions in the lower house of the South Carolina legislature.

African Americans served at the national level, too. In 1870, Hiram Revels became the first African American elected to the United States Senate. Blanche Bruce was elected to the Senate in 1874. He was the first African American senator to serve a full term. Eighteen African Americans served in the Senate and House of Representatives between 1869 and 1880.

Most Southern whites opposed the Republican Party, but some supported it. They were usually business people who had never owned slaves. These people were called **scalawags** by other whites. The word means “scoundrel” or “worthless rascal.”

Some who supported the Republican Party were Northerners who moved South during Reconstruction. Many white Southerners did not trust their reasons for moving South. They suspected that the Northerners wanted to take advantage of the troubles in the South. Some of the Northerners were dishonest. Others were looking for opportunities. Many sincerely wanted to help rebuild the South. White Southerners called the Northerners “carpetbaggers.”



Marking the Text

- Underline the sentences that tell how many African Americans served in the national government.



Defining

- What word for a white Southerner means “scoundrel” or “rascal”?



Reading Check

- Why did many Southerners resent scalawags and carpetbaggers?

The Reconstruction Era

Lesson 3 The South During Reconstruction, *Continued*

Critical Thinking

4. How did the Klan's use of violence against African Americans help resist Republican rule?

Describing

5. Who taught in African American schools in the South?

Defining

6. *Integrate* is the opposite of *segregate*. *Segregate* means "to separate." What does *integrate* mean?

Why Were They Called Carpetbaggers?

Northerners who moved South were called carpetbaggers because they sometimes arrived with their belongings in cheap suitcases made of carpet fabric.

White Southerners said that Reconstruction governments suffered from **corruption**, or dishonest or illegal activities. Some officials did make money illegally. But there is no proof that corruption in the South was worse than in the North.

Life during reconstruction was hard for African Americans. Most Southern whites did not want African Americans to have more rights. White landowners often refused to rent land to them. Store owners refused to give them credit. Many employers would not hire them. Many of the jobs available were often jobs whites would not do.

Even worse, African Americans were victims of violence. Secret societies like the Ku Klux Klan used fear and violence to control them. Klan members disguised themselves in white sheets and hoods. They threatened, beat, and killed thousands of African Americans and their white friends. They burned African American homes, schools, and churches. Many Democrats, planters, and other white Southerners supported the Klan. They saw violence as a way to oppose Republican rule.

Education and Farming

African Americans started their own schools during Reconstruction. Many whites and African Americans from the North came to teach in these schools. In the 1870s, Reconstruction governments set up public schools for both races. Soon about 50 percent of white children and 40 percent of African American children in the South were attending school.

African American and white students usually went to different schools. A few states had laws requiring schools to be **integrated**. Schools that are integrated have both white and African American students. In most cases, integration laws were not enforced.

In addition to education, freed people wanted land. Having their own land to farm would allow them to feed and support their families. Some African Americans were able to buy land with the help of the Freedmen's Bank. But most failed in their efforts to

The Reconstruction Era

Lesson 3 The South During Reconstruction, *Continued*

get their own land. Many freed people had no other choice but to farm on land owned by whites.

In a system called **sharecropping** a landowner let a farmer farm some of the land. In return, the farmer gave a part, or share, of his crops to the landowner. The part demanded by landowners was often very large. This made the system unfair. After giving landowners their share, sharecroppers often had little left to sell. Sometimes there was not even enough to feed their families. For many, sharecropping was little better than slavery.

////////// Glue Foldable here ///////////////

Check for Understanding

Name three ways that former enslaved people were discouraged from fully participating in Southern society.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What improvements did Reconstruction bring for African Americans?



Explaining

7. What “rent” did the farmer pay the landowner under the sharecropping system?



Reading Check

8. How would you describe the relationship between sharecroppers and landowners?



9. Place a two-tab Foldable along the dotted line to cover Check for Understanding. Write the title *During Reconstruction* on the anchor tab. Label the tabs *Improvements* and *Limitations*. Write words or phrases that you remember about life for African Americans during Reconstruction in the South. Use the Foldable to help answer Check for Understanding.