

CHAPTER  
**17**

# RECONSTRUCTION AND THE NEW SOUTH

1865–1877

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

In what ways did Reconstruction both succeed and fail?

AMERICAN  
STORIES

## Freedom Readers

### SECTION 1 Rebuilding the Union

#### KEY VOCABULARY

black codes	Presidential Reconstruction
Civil Rights Act of 1866	Radical Reconstruction
Freedmen's Bureau	Reconstruction Acts of 1867
impeachment	

### SECTION 2 Reconstruction Changes Daily Life

#### KEY VOCABULARY

arson	literacy	social justice
black peonage	lynch	wage economy
Ku Klux Klan	sharecropping	

### SECTION 3 The End of Reconstruction

#### KEY VOCABULARY

15th Amendment	corruption	Panic of 1873
bribery	defect	poll tax
Compromise of 1877	Liberal Republican	
Copperhead	literacy test	

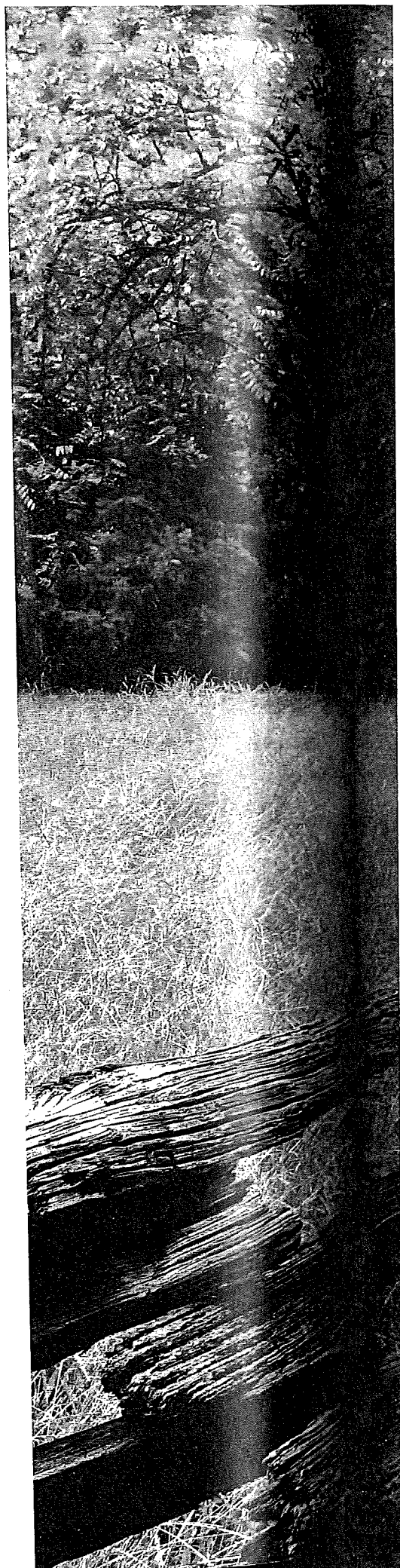
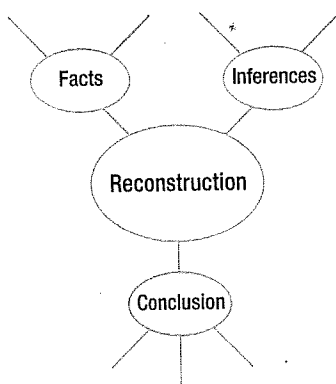
AMERICAN GALLERY  
ONLINE

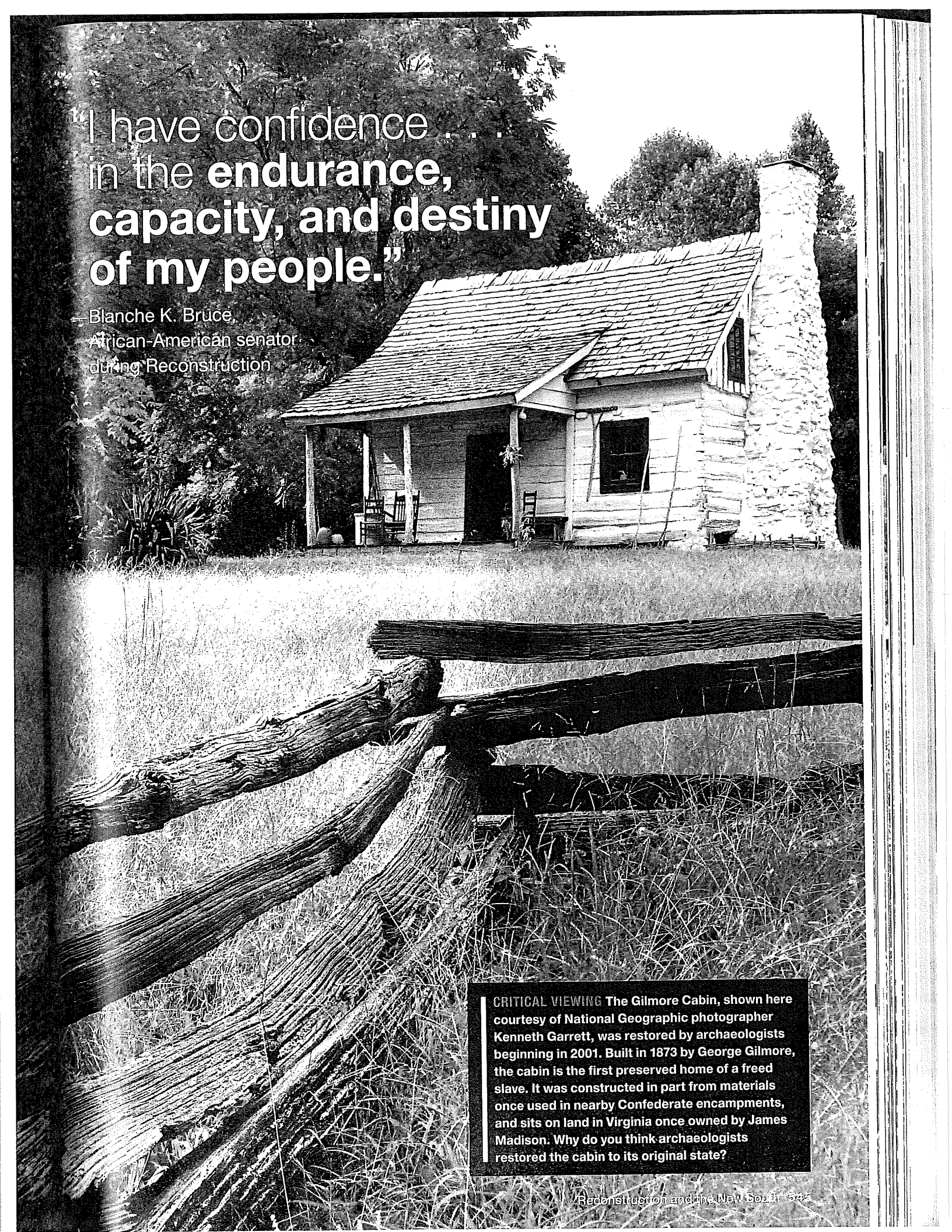
## The Freed Slaves of the Civil War

## READING STRATEGY

### DRAW CONCLUSIONS

When you draw conclusions, you make a judgment based on what you have read. You analyze the facts, make inferences, and use your own experiences to form your judgment. As you read the chapter, use a diagram like this one to draw conclusions about the impact of Reconstruction on American society.

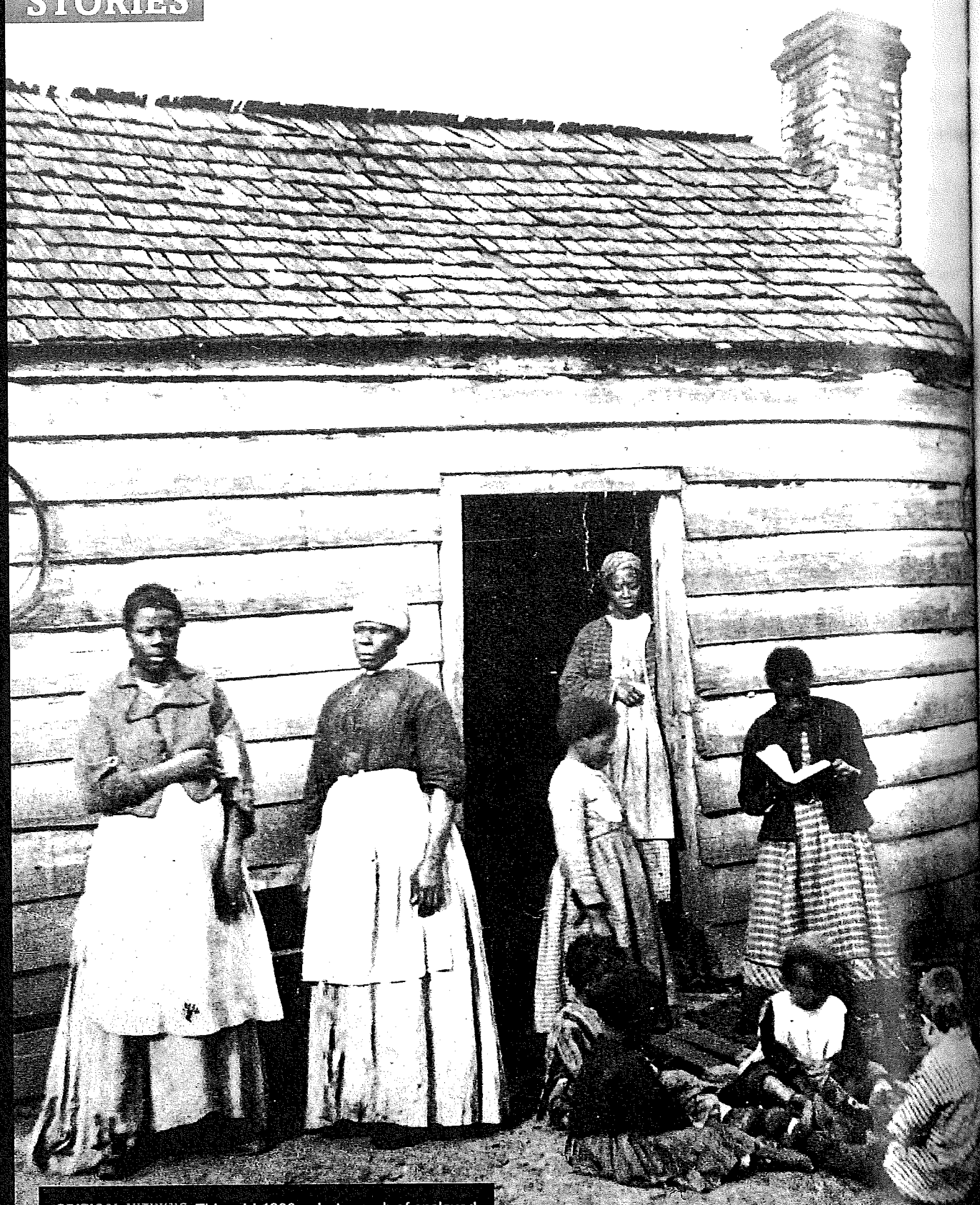




**"I have confidence . . .  
in the **endurance,**  
**capacity, and destiny**  
**of my people."****

—Blanche K. Bruce,  
African-American senator  
during Reconstruction

**CRITICAL VIEWING** The Gilmore Cabin, shown here courtesy of National Geographic photographer Kenneth Garrett, was restored by archaeologists beginning in 2001. Built in 1873 by George Gilmore, the cabin is the first preserved home of a freed slave. It was constructed in part from materials once used in nearby Confederate encampments, and sits on land in Virginia once owned by James Madison. Why do you think archaeologists restored the cabin to its original state?



**CRITICAL VIEWING** This mid-1800s photograph of enslaved women and children outside their southern cabin is unique in a significant way: it shows a young woman reading aloud to the group. How might the ability to read and write have affected the life of a slave before and after the Civil War?

# FREEDOM READERS

BY FRAN DOWNEY

Vice President and Publisher,  
National Geographic *Explorer* Magazine

African rebellion leaders Nat Turner, Gabriel Prosser, Touissant L'Ouverture, and Denmark Vesey shared one important power: literacy. Enslaved people realized the value of reading, and many risked everything—including their lives—to learn. They were America's freedom readers.

**When slavery first began** in the colonies, slave owners often encouraged their slaves to read. In fact, literacy became a way for slave owners to assert control over them. Slave owners wanted to convert enslaved Africans to Christianity in order to “civilize” them, and believed that all Christians needed to be able to read the Bible. Helping his or her slaves learn to read was a critical part of a slave owner’s “civilization” plan. Some slave owners also used scripture to justify the concept of slavery, believing the Bible implied it was acceptable to enslave people.

Many enslaved people had a very different goal in mind as they learned to read and write. They saw it as a way to resist bondage. Like breaking tools, working slowly, and pretending to be ill, learning to read and write was a passive way for the enslaved to revolt against the enslaver. Literate

African Americans could learn about the larger world. They could read newspapers, plan escapes and rebellions, and send messages. A few, whose voices you have heard throughout this book, even wrote slave narratives, which exposed the evils of slavery. Instead of a lock that kept them shackled, enslaved people saw literacy as a way to unlock the chains of slavery.

Over time, slave owners began to fear the potential power of literate free and enslaved African Americans. States like North Carolina passed laws that severely punished African-American students and those who helped them. These laws forced African Americans to get inventive. Some slaves tricked their owners into teaching them. Others watched and listened as white children were taught to read, and practiced in secret.

8.7.2 Trace the origins and development of slavery; its effects on black Americans and on the region's political, social, religious, economic, and cultural development; and identify the strategies that were tried to both overturn and preserve it (e.g., through the writings and historical documents on Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey).



Nat Turner's Rebellion in 1831, as represented by this illustration, panicked the South and prompted legislation that prevented the education, movement, and assembly of enslaved people.

## EARLY LAWS AND LITERACY

Southern lawmakers began to outlaw African-American literacy as early as 1740.

This date is no coincidence. A year earlier, 20 slaves in South Carolina tried to escape to Florida. This unsuccessful uprising, known as the Stono Rebellion, resulted in the deaths of 60 people. Believing that those who planned the rebellion had used reading and writing to communicate, lawmakers outlawed teaching slaves to write. This law did not impose a penalty on enslaved African Americans, who were considered property. Rather, it punished free people who taught slaves with a fine of 100 pounds.

In the New England Colonies, where slavery was less common, literacy rates among enslaved African Americans were higher. In the 1770s, literate slaves read that many colonists wanted to break from Britain. Believing these revolutionary leaders would be sympathetic to their cause, literate slaves in Massachusetts wrote to the legislature to request their freedom. Enslaved African Americans in Connecticut did the same about five years later. While neither legislature granted the slaves' request, one by one, northern states slowly began to end slavery in the 1780s.

After the American Revolution, African Americans continued to occupy the same social, economic,

and political positions in the Northeast. But they began to create institutions to advance their rights and develop communities without racial discrimination. For example, Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and others founded the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1816. Additionally, some northern states passed laws to educate their newly emancipated fellow citizens. The state of New York did not abolish slavery until 1827. As a result, the New York African Free School, founded in 1787, became a haven for free African-American students and enslaved people whose owners allowed them to attend.

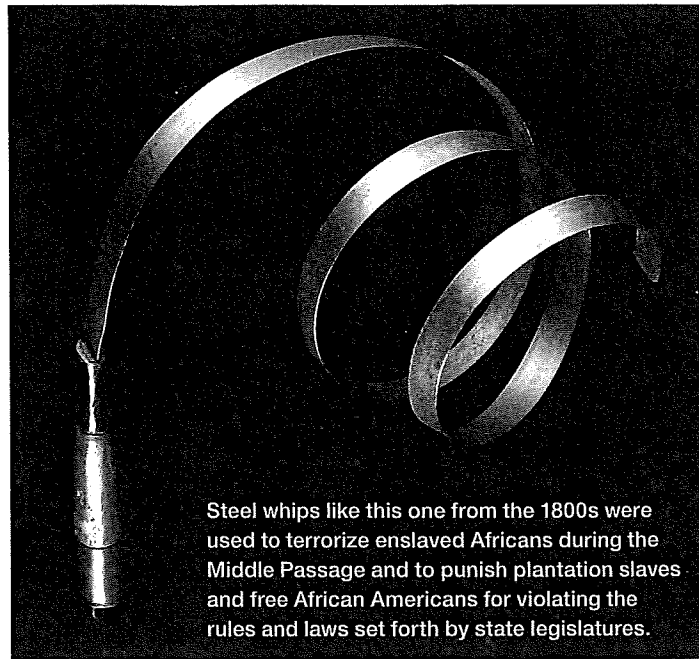
## UNIVERSAL LITERACY?

One of the premises of the new republican government was that the nation's very existence depended on universal literacy—literacy for all. Even Thomas Jefferson, a slave owner himself, argued, "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be."

Reinforcing the importance of education in the new nation, George Washington declared in his will that the enslaved children he owned who

did not have parents should be taught a vocation, or trade, and educated. However, Washington's desire to teach enslaved children to read and write was not shared by most slave owners. In 1800, southern lawmakers passed a new law that restricted all "mental instruction" of both free and enslaved people of African descent, including teaching or simply talking about reading, writing, or mathematics.

The law also prohibited free and enslaved African Americans from gathering between sunset and sunrise. This restriction made it more difficult for African Americans to set up informal schools and gave authorities the right to barge in on anyone who they suspected of holding these "unlawful" meetings. This law punished both free and enslaved lawbreakers with a whipping, stating law officers, or justices of the peace, could "inflict corporal punishment on the offender or offenders . . . not exceeding twenty lashes."

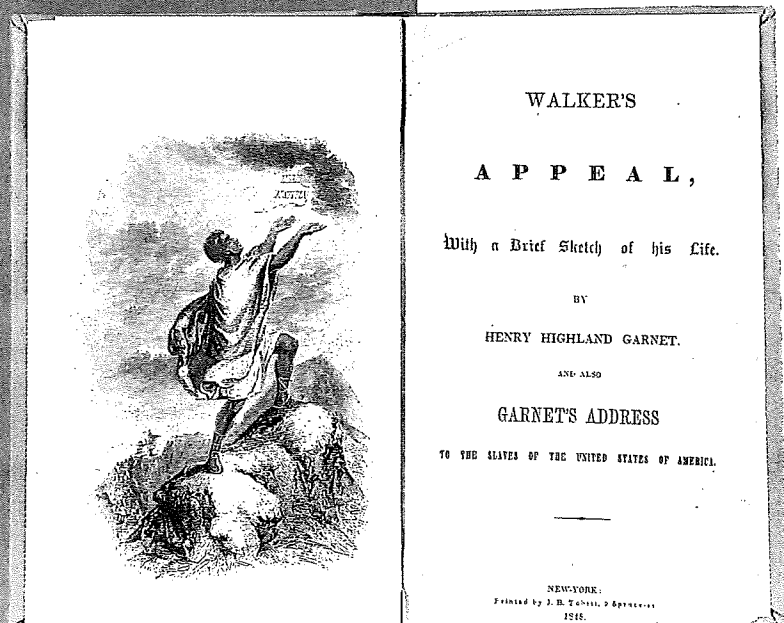


Steel whips like this one from the 1800s were used to terrorize enslaved Africans during the Middle Passage and to punish plantation slaves and free African Americans for violating the rules and laws set forth by state legislatures.

## HEARING THE LITERATE

Slave owners' worst fears about literate African Americans were realized in 1829, when David Walker, a free African-American abolitionist, published his *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World*. He wanted African Americans, especially slaves, to read his *Appeal*, in which he urged them to resist oppression violently, if necessary. He also argued for racial equality.

Born in North Carolina, Walker was considered free because his mother was free, but he had seen the impact of slavery. Walker became a radical voice against slavery. When authorities in the South discovered the first copies of the *Appeal*, they worried slaves had already been preparing a violent attack. African Americans in Charleston and New Orleans were promptly arrested for distributing Walker's *Appeal*, and a reward was offered for Walker: \$10,000 alive; \$1,000 dead.



8.6.4 Study the lives of black Americans who gained freedom in the North and founded schools and churches to advance their rights and communities; 8.7.4 Compare the lives of and opportunities for free blacks in the North with those of free blacks in the South; 8.9.2 Discuss the abolition of slavery in early state constitutions; 8.9.6 Describe the lives of free blacks and the laws that limited their freedom and economic opportunities.



*Sunday Morning in Virginia*, an oil painting by Winslow Homer, depicts children learning to read in their slave cabin.

## LITERACY LAWS CONTINUE

By 1830, southern authorities had taken further steps to curb literacy among African Americans. They prohibited free African Americans, especially those from the North, from meeting with the enslaved, in an attempt to prevent slaves from gaining access to information.

Some northerners also grew concerned about educating free African Americans. You have read about the boarding school Prudence Crandall opened in Connecticut in 1832 for African-American girls. In 1833, the state passed a law requiring all African-American students be residents of the state. Authorities quickly arrested

Crandall for violating this law. African Americans from Connecticut were still allowed to attend school, but those from out of state could not. Lawmakers feared migrating students would increase the state's African-American population, resulting in the "injury of the people." This way of thinking contributed to the characterization of free and educated African Americans as a separate and dangerous community.

## AFTER THE CIVIL WAR

The Civil War was a watershed event that marked an important shift in American history and the end of slavery. Emancipation brought about many social changes, including the transformation of the



The Freedman's Village School in Arlington, Virginia, shown here around 1864, was established to educate enslaved people who escaped from the South during the Civil War.

## RUNAWAY READING

As antiliteracy laws were passed and enforced, enslaved African Americans continued to disregard them. They learned to read and write, and then used these skills to escape slavery. Let's look at some of their remarkable stories.

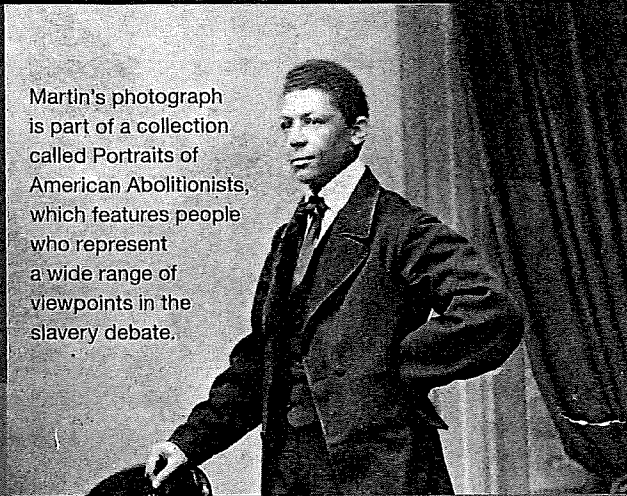
### WILLIS

As valuable as reading was to slaves, writing was equally useful. An enslaved man called Willis used writing to escape slavery. What we know about him comes from a newspaper ad in which he is described as being 30 years old, stooped and downcast, and walking with a limp. On November 25, 1862, Willis ran away from his owner, W.H. Medlin, in South Carolina and headed north. Medlin placed the ad so people would look for Willis, but Willis had a special skill that helped him. To avoid capture, he wrote and signed a note that declared him free. He used his literacy skills to gain his freedom.

### MATTIE JACKSON

Slavery crippled bodies and separated families, but it didn't stop people's quest for freedom. When Mattie Jackson was five years old, she and her mother tried to escape from Missouri to Chicago, but they were caught and sold back into slavery. Mattie decided to learn to read and demonstrated her literacy and resistance to slavery openly at times to her owner. When she finally managed to escape to Indiana, Mattie dictated, or spoke the story of her life so someone could record it, and sold the story. She used the money to pay for her education.

Martin's photograph is part of a collection called Portraits of American Abolitionists, which features people who represent a wide range of viewpoints in the slavery debate.



### JOHN SELLA MARTIN

Runaway slave and abolitionist John Sella Martin (shown above) learned to read by listening. Working in a hotel in Georgia, he secretly listened to white co-workers as they played games and spelled words. By memorizing the sounds and spellings, Martin learned to spell even before he saw the shapes of the letters in the alphabet. He then applied this knowledge by trying to decode signs on the stores he walked by.

Other enslaved people saw Martin spelling words and assumed he could read. One day, three illiterate men gave him a newspaper and dared him to read it to them. Martin thought he might have to pretend he could read it. Instead he found he could read the headline and much of the article, which was about an abolitionist. Amazed and proud, Martin then knew there were abolitionists fighting slavery. And, perhaps even more important, he knew he could read.

Enslaved friends brought Martin newspapers and books they had stolen from their masters so he could practice reading, risking punishment for helping him. For Martin and other slaves, learning to read was one step on the road to freedom.

education system and a significant increase in the literacy rate among African Americans.

During the postwar Reconstruction era, the number of schools for African Americans rose substantially. Newly emancipated African Americans, or freedmen, recognized the value of literacy and education and set out to establish new schools and colleges. In 1865, Congress established an organization called the Freedmen's Bureau to provide support to the newly freed. The bureau aided the spread of African-American

schools in the South, renting buildings for schools, providing books for teachers, and offering protection for students and teachers threatened by the opponents of black literacy. In the face of segregation, violence, and opposition, African Americans would continue to be challenged by the pursuit of equal education for many years.

### THINK ABOUT IT

Why might access to public education have been one of the most important outcomes of the Civil War for African Americans?

8.11.3 Understand the effects of the Freedmen's Bureau and the restrictions placed on the rights and opportunities of freedmen, including racial segregation and "Jim Crow" laws; HI 2 Students understand and distinguish cause, effect, sequence, and correlation in historical events, including the long- and short-term causal relationships.

# 1.1 Reconstruction Under Andrew Johnson

Imagine you've been fighting with your friend. You both said and did terrible things, but you know it's time to forgive. How do you become friends again? That was the dilemma President Andrew Johnson faced after the Civil War.

**MAIN IDEA** President Johnson and Congress clashed over different goals for Reconstruction.

## LEADING THE WAY

1865 was a rough year. The war had torn the nation in two, and the war's end did not repair this division. Lincoln was dead, and citizens mourned the loss of his thoughtful guidance and strong leadership. The new president, Andrew Johnson, faced the monumental challenge of rebuilding the United States politically, socially, and economically. Many decisions had to be made. How should the Confederate states be readmitted to the Union? Should Confederate leaders be punished? What role should free African Americans play in the country?

Johnson had been an unusual choice as Lincoln's vice president. He was a southerner from Tennessee who had served in Congress as a Democrat. But he was definitely pro-Union, a stance fueled by his dislike for wealthy southern planters. When Tennessee seceded, he remained in the U.S. Senate. Lincoln later appointed Johnson as military governor of Tennessee. During the Civil War, military governors worked to re-establish the governments of southern states conquered by the Union Army.

When the 1864 election rolled around, the Republicans chose Johnson to run as Lincoln's vice president based on his loyalty to the Union. But Johnson didn't support equal rights for African Americans. Like most southern whites, he was deeply prejudiced, which offended many Republicans.

Among the first decisions Johnson made as president was to oversee Reconstruction himself, an approach called **Presidential Reconstruction**. Johnson's plan required Confederate states to ratify the 13th Amendment—which, as you may recall, abolished slavery—and create new governments with new constitutions before they could rejoin the Union.

Although he had repeatedly stated, "Treason is a crime, and crime must be punished," Johnson quickly pardoned, or legally forgave, most Confederates who took an oath of loyalty to the Union. The pardons restored their civil rights and protected their property from being seized. Only wealthy planters and high-ranking Confederate leaders had to apply individually for presidential pardons. Many in Congress felt Johnson's plans were too lenient, or forgiving. Congress wanted Confederates to pay for their actions.

## THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU

Johnson's perceived leniency toward the former rebels was not the only problem Republicans had with his plan. They were equally alarmed that Presidential Reconstruction did not provide a way for African-American men to vote, a right African Americans deeply desired. African Americans also wanted the right to own property. Without the protection of full citizenship and property rights, African Americans worried that white southerners would take away their newly won freedoms and economic opportunities.

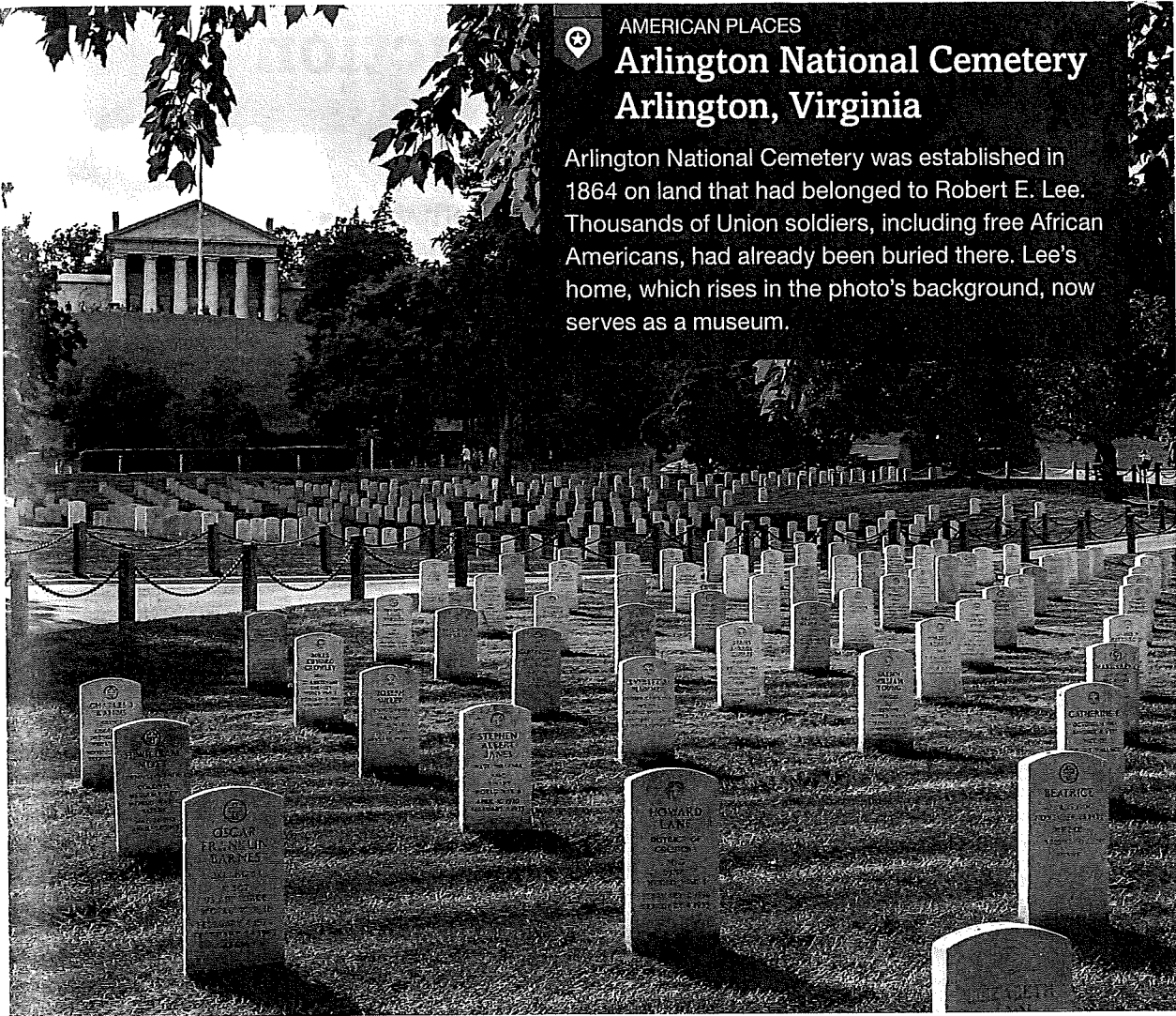




#### AMERICAN PLACES

## Arlington National Cemetery Arlington, Virginia

Arlington National Cemetery was established in 1864 on land that had belonged to Robert E. Lee. Thousands of Union soldiers, including free African Americans, had already been buried there. Lee's home, which rises in the photo's background, now serves as a museum.




Republicans shared their concerns. In 1865, Congress created the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands—more popularly known as the **Freedmen's Bureau**—to help the formerly enslaved, as well as impoverished white southerners. Congress appointed General Oliver Otis Howard to run the bureau. Army officers acting as bureau agents provided medicine, food, and clothing to newly freed African Americans and others displaced by the war. The officers also tried to settle former slaves on southern land that had been abandoned or seized during the war. Agents drew up labor contracts between landowners and African-American workers and created courts to settle conflicts between African Americans and whites.

Howard also saw education as a way to improve living conditions and economic opportunities for African Americans. The Freedmen's

Bureau worked with northern aid groups to establish schools for the newly freed. By 1869, approximately 3,000 schools serving more than 150,000 students reported to the bureau. Yet in spite of this progress, neither President Johnson nor most whites were ready to grant full rights to African Americans. As a result, the Republicans in Congress decided to take control of Reconstruction.

### HISTORICAL THINKING

1. **READING CHECK** What were the original aims of Reconstruction?
2. **MAKE INFERENCES** Why might Johnson have chosen to be lenient toward many Confederates?
3. **SUMMARIZE** How did the Freedmen's Bureau affect newly freed African Americans?

 8.11.3 Understand the effects of the Freedmen's Bureau and the restrictions placed on the rights and opportunities of freedmen, including racial segregation and "Jim Crow" laws; 8.11.5 Understand the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution and analyze their connection to Reconstruction.

## 1.2 Radical Reconstruction

In a debate, you're pitted against a team that wants to make its case as badly as you do. In 1866, the president and Congress both wanted to win control of the South. The struggle deteriorated into name-calling and power grabs.

**MAIN IDEA** Unhappy with Johnson's Reconstruction plans, the Republican Congress took the responsibility away from him.

### JOHNSON VERSUS CONGRESS

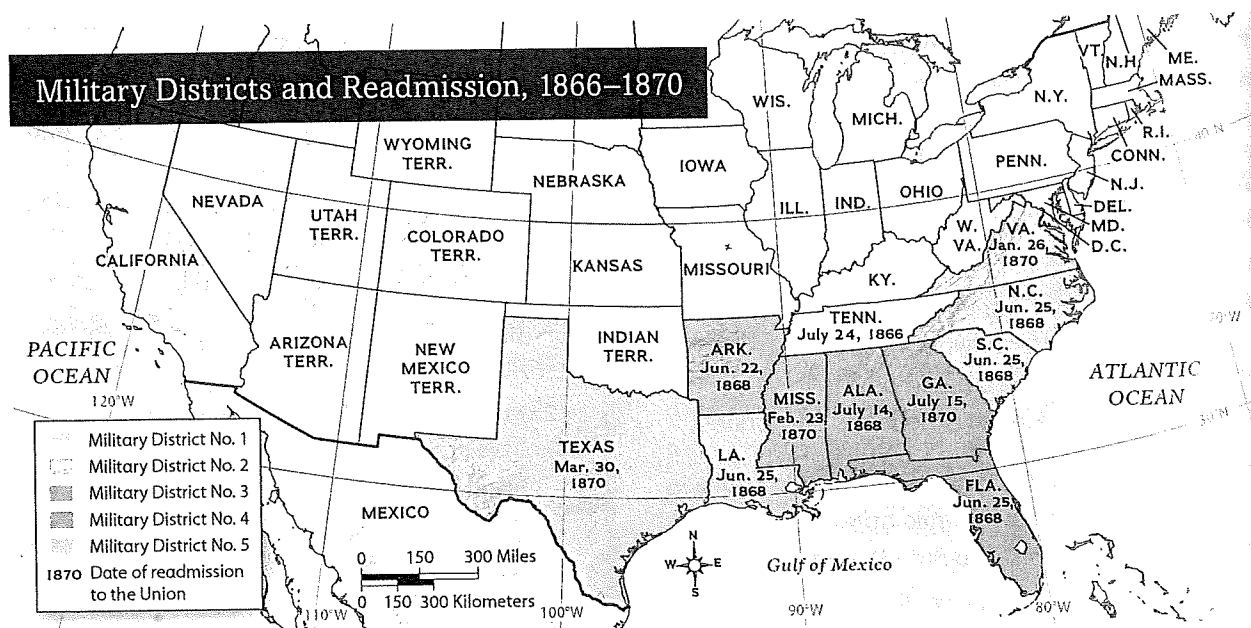
Made bold by the lenient terms of Presidential Reconstruction, some southern states refused to ratify the 13th Amendment. They even refused to admit that secession had been illegal. Southern states also passed **black codes**—laws for controlling African Americans and limiting their rights. The codes granted African Americans a few rights, such as the right to marry and pursue a lawsuit in court, but most of the codes dealt with what African Americans could not do. For example, they could not own land, work in certain industries, or serve on a jury.

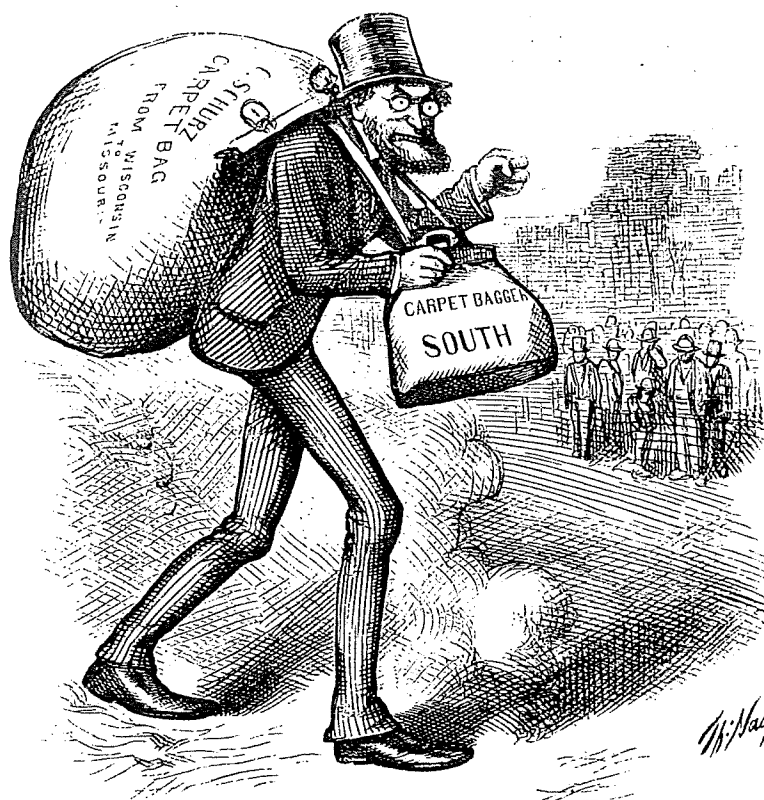
Congress was furious over the black codes and the leniency of Johnson's Reconstruction plans. As a result, Republicans proposed the **Civil Rights Act of 1866**. The bill granted full equality and citizenship to "every race and color." Johnson vetoed the bill, but Republicans in Congress

overrode the veto, and the bill became law. To solidify these rights, Radical Republicans also proposed the 14th Amendment. As you've read, this amendment guarantees citizenship and equal protection under the law to all American-born people. On President Johnson's urging, many southern states refused to ratify the new amendment. It took two years for two-thirds of the states to ratify it.

### THE RECONSTRUCTION ACTS OF 1867

Shocked northerners watched as delegates at southern state conventions refused to accept the 14th Amendment. When Republicans won control of Congress in the 1866 elections, they decided it was time to take Reconstruction out of the president's hands. They put themselves in charge of the process by passing the **Reconstruction Acts of 1867**. Their plan of action came to be called **Radical Reconstruction**.





**CRITICAL VIEWING** Carl Schurz moved from Wisconsin to Missouri, where he was elected U.S. senator in 1868. In this political cartoon from 1872, he is shown as a carpetbagger. What details in the cartoon suggest what southerners thought of Schurz and other carpetbaggers?

The Reconstruction Acts placed all of the former Confederate states except Tennessee, which had already officially been readmitted to the Union, into five districts under military rule. Once military leaders decided that order had been established, the states could draw up new constitutions. Each constitution had to accept the 14th Amendment. Then the majority of a state's citizens and the U.S. Congress had to approve the new constitution. Republican delegates were given the task of writing the new state constitutions. Many of the delegates were southern white Republicans who had opposed secession. Those in the South who hated Radical Reconstruction called the southern white Republicans "scalawags," or dishonorable people.

Northern white Republicans also made up a sizeable number of the delegates. Many southerners believed the northern white

Republicans had come to the South to get rich and called them "carpetbaggers," implying they had thrown everything they owned into a cheap suitcase, or carpetbag, and headed south. In reality, most of the Republicans from the North were Union veterans, preachers, teachers, or social workers. Free African Americans made up the rest of the delegates. Most were ministers or teachers.

To prevent Johnson from interfering with Radical Reconstruction, Congress passed the Tenure of Office Act, which prevented the president from removing government officials without Senate approval. The act clearly violated and ignored a Constitutional provision that granted the president the right to hire and fire Cabinet members. Johnson defied the act in August 1867, when he replaced his Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton, with Civil War

hero Ulysses S. Grant. Stanton had been the only member of Johnson's Cabinet to support Radical Reconstruction. Congress responded by beginning the **impeachment** process, officially charging Johnson with "high crimes and misdemeanors," or extreme misconduct, while in office. They hoped to remove him from the presidency, and this was the first step. But the Senate tried Johnson and acquitted him, or found him not guilty, by one vote.

## HISTORICAL THINKING

1. **READING CHECK** What had to be done before a state could be readmitted to the Union?
2. **DRAW CONCLUSIONS** Why did many in Congress want to remove Johnson from the presidency?
3. **INTERPRET MAPS** Which southern state was the last to be readmitted to the Union?

8.11.5 Understand the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution and analyze their connection to Reconstruction; CST 3 Students use a variety of maps and documents to identify physical and cultural features of neighborhoods, cities, states, and countries and to explain the historical migration of people, expansion and disintegration of empires, and the growth of economic systems.

## 2.1 Free African Americans Gain a Voice

Think of a time when you've stepped up to be a leader or you've done something hard and unfamiliar. You probably felt both nervous and proud. That may well have been how many African Americans felt as they took part in the political process for the first time.

**MAIN IDEA** During Radical Reconstruction, African Americans participated in government, established churches of their own, and tried to reestablish kinship structures.

### TAKING PUBLIC OFFICE

After Congress passed the Reconstruction Acts, African Americans attained political freedom and wanted to exercise their new political power. As a result, many African-American citizens from the North, newly organized as Republicans, moved to the South hoping to fill appointed or elected government positions. African Americans from the South, some of whom had been free before the war, also sought leadership roles. These men became the backbone of the Republican Party in southern districts with large African-American populations.

African Americans everywhere wanted the ability to make their own choices. Many wanted to be involved in their states' readmission into the Union. Throughout the South, local African-American leaders, ministers, and Republicans encouraged newly freed men to register and vote. Their efforts helped Republican delegates dominate state constitutional conventions in every state except Georgia. African Americans also participated as delegates in all state conventions. Across the South, in fact, African Americans accounted for some 265 delegates out of a total of slightly more than 1,000. Between 1865 and 1877, African Americans influenced the direction of southern politics and elected 22 members of Congress. Republican-dominated legislatures established the first publicly financed education systems in the South, provided debt relief to the poor, and expanded women's rights.

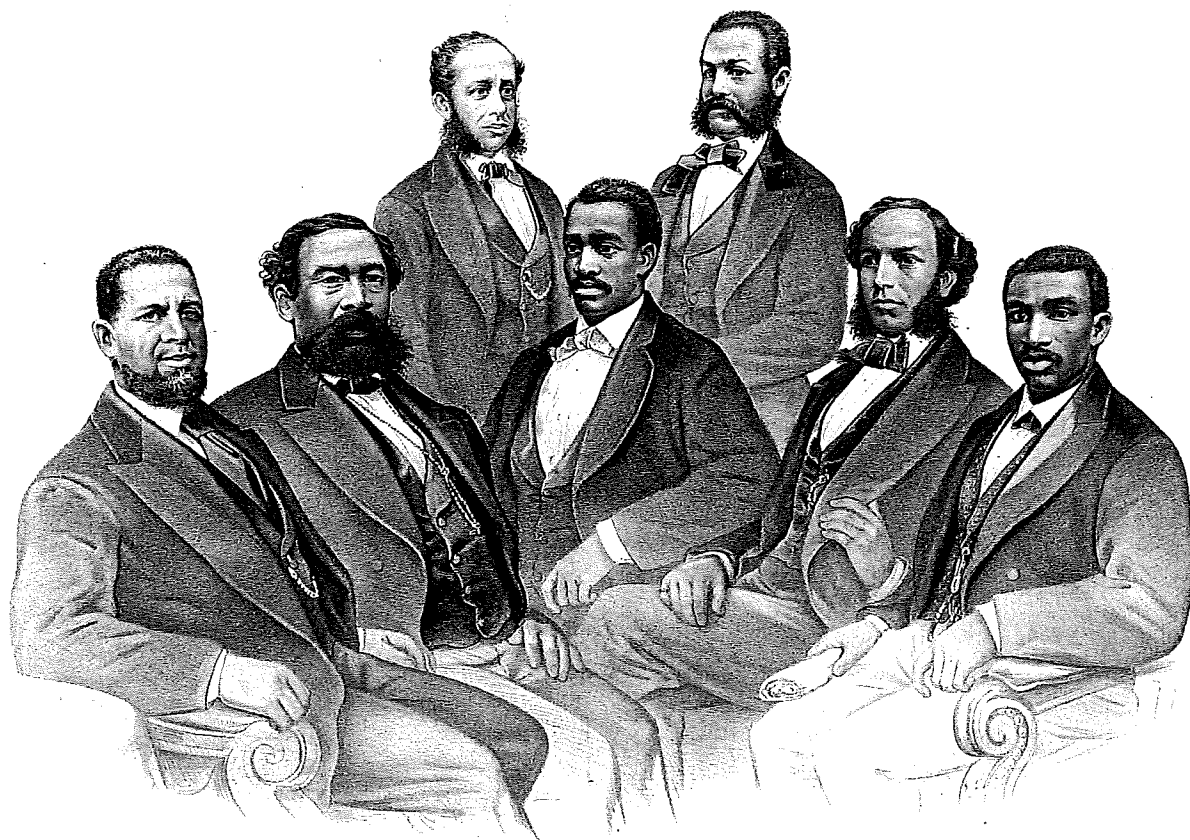
About 600 African Americans also participated directly in the new state legislatures. Although no African Americans were elected governor, several served as lieutenant governors, secretaries of state, judges, or treasurers. Pinckney Pinchback, the lieutenant governor of Louisiana, became the acting governor when the state charged his boss with corruption.

African Americans became leaders at the national level when Hiram Rhodes Revels and Blanche K. Bruce served in the U.S. Senate. Revels, who was born a free man, served in Mississippi's state senate. He went on to fill a U.S. Senate seat left vacant when Mississippi seceded from the Union. He was the first African American to serve in the U.S. Senate. Bruce, who had been born into slavery, also represented Mississippi. He was the second African American to serve in the U.S. Senate and the first to be elected to a full term. In addition, 14 African Americans served in the U.S. House of Representatives during the Reconstruction era.

### CHURCH AND FAMILY

Hiram Revels was already familiar in the African-American community in Mississippi through his work as a minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Churches had long been at the center of African-American life. Because ministers were often the most educated members of the community, they became natural leaders—not only in religious matters but also in politics.





Following the Civil War, African Americans quickly established their own churches. The new churches were often Baptist because that denomination allowed each congregation to start a church independently and organize the services the way it wanted. By 1890, about 1.3 million African Americans were members of Baptist churches, mostly in the South. Churches were central to the African-American quest for **social justice**, or fair distribution of opportunities and privileges, including racial equality and rights. In addition to providing a place of worship, African-American churches often served as gathering places for social and political events and housed schools.

Like churches, family life had always been important to African Americans. But as you know, slavery had often split up families when members were sold to different owners. During Reconstruction, many African Americans tried to locate and reunite with their families. They were helped in this effort by the Freedmen's Bureau. In some cases, the bureau succeeded, particularly when the separated members of a family had gone to nearby plantations. Unfortunately, in other cases, family members had been sent far away. Some African Americans traveled hundreds of miles searching for their loved ones—often in vain.

### First African Americans in U.S. Congress

The seven men in this print from 1872 are the first African Americans to serve in the U.S. Congress. Together, the seven represented five southern states. From left to right, the men are Senator Hiram Rhodes Revels of Mississippi (who filled the Senate seat that Jefferson Davis had held), Congressman Benjamin S. Turner of Alabama, Congressman Robert C. De Large of South Carolina, Congressman Josiah T. Walls of Florida, Congressman Jefferson F. Long of Georgia, Congressman Joseph Rainey of South Carolina, and Congressman Robert B. Elliot of South Carolina.

### HISTORICAL THINKING

1. **READING CHECK** How did African-American political participation help strengthen the Republican Party in the South?
2. **MAKE INFERENCES** Why do you think it was important for African Americans to establish their own churches?
3. **DRAW CONCLUSIONS** Why were African Americans strongly motivated to influence and become leaders in government?

## 2.2 Education and Land

Like most Americans, you probably consider the education you receive as your right, rather than a privilege. But to African Americans during Reconstruction, school was an important sign of their new freedom.

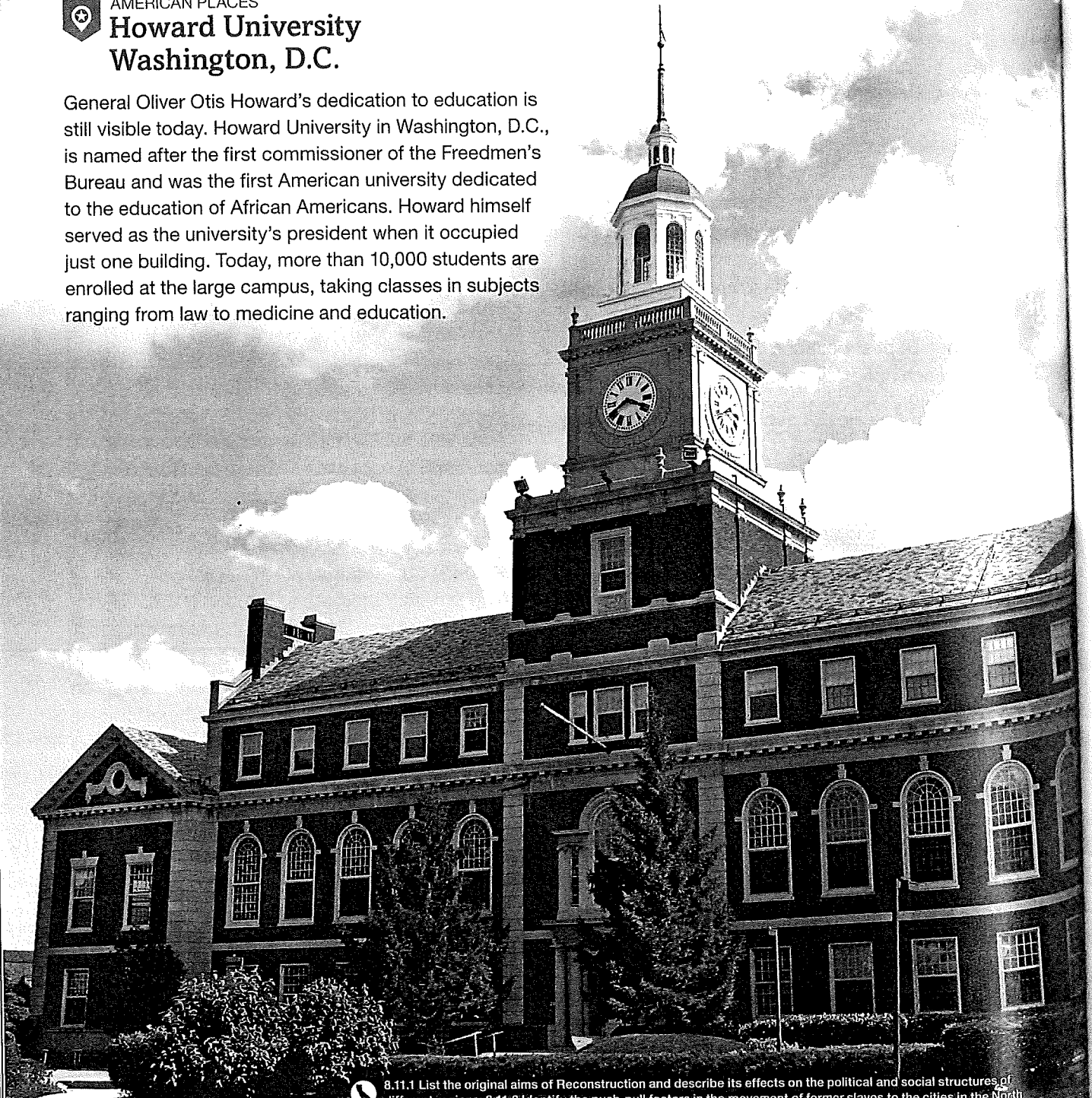
**MAIN IDEA** The Freedmen's Bureau made education available to African Americans in the South, but other aspects of their lives changed very little.



AMERICAN PLACES

### Howard University Washington, D.C.

General Oliver Otis Howard's dedication to education is still visible today. Howard University in Washington, D.C., is named after the first commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau and was the first American university dedicated to the education of African Americans. Howard himself served as the university's president when it occupied just one building. Today, more than 10,000 students are enrolled at the large campus, taking classes in subjects ranging from law to medicine and education.



## AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN

African Americans appreciated the value of education. Slavery had denied many of them the opportunity to learn, so they saw education as a path to empowerment. **Literacy**, or the ability to read and write, and a solid working knowledge of mathematics gave African Americans the tools they needed to understand labor contracts. Education helped them advance in a **wage economy**, or an economy in which people are paid for their work. With a good education, they could fully participate in the political process and understand their civil rights.

The Freedmen's Bureau helped provide educational opportunities. The bureau and aid groups worked with individual communities to fund, build, and staff hundreds of Freedmen's Schools for African-American children and adults. These schools were often built on land owned by African Americans or housed in their churches. The schools were free, but since most African-American families counted on the labor or income their older children could provide, parents sacrificed a lot to send their children to school.

A shortage of teachers and space meant that schools often had to rotate students in three-hour groups. Typically, teachers worked all day teaching children and then held classes for adults at night. In some schools, however, young people worked and learned alongside adults in the classroom. In return, teachers experienced the satisfaction of teaching enthusiastic and motivated students. By the time the Freedmen's Bureau closed, about 150,000 students had attended classes.

## BACK TO WORKING THE LAND

A good education was important to African Americans in the South because it offered their only chance for advancement. For the most part, uneducated African Americans worked the land of white landowners, but they faced discrimination in a southern economy on the edge of collapse. As a result, many former slaves wanted to obtain their own land to farm. Some freed African Americans had this wish fulfilled—at least for a short time.

In January 1865, General William T. Sherman issued Special Field Order No. 15, which set aside the Sea Islands for newly freed African

Americans. The Sea Islands were located south of Charleston, South Carolina, and encompassed an area of approximately 400,000 acres. Each family would receive 40 acres to farm and a mule. News of the offer spread quickly, and about 40,000 African Americans rushed to settle on the land. But by the fall of 1865, President Andrew Johnson had overturned Sherman's order. The land was returned to the southern planters who had owned it before the Civil War.

With no land of their own, many African Americans went back to working for white landowners. At first, landowners insisted that the newly freed African Americans work in gangs, as they had under slavery. Over time, however, an agricultural system called **sharecropping** developed. In sharecropping, a farmer raised crops for a landowner in return for part of the money made from selling the crops. Some poor white families, devastated by the war, also took up sharecropping. But they did not face the discrimination that African Americans endured.

Sharecropping often left African-American families in debt to landowners. The sharecroppers needed supplies, such as tools and seeds, to work the land. Landowners would sell or rent the supplies to the sharecroppers on credit and at a high rate of interest. By the time the crops were harvested, sharecroppers had usually run up a large bill and, as a result, would receive very little of the profits from selling the crops. Sharecropping tied African Americans to a landowner's land and resulted in **black peonage**, a sort of economic slavery.

Unable to earn a living as sharecroppers or find other work, many African Americans began moving north or west. Some also fled to escape the terror generated by groups of white southerners.

## HISTORICAL THINKING

1. **READING CHECK** How did the Freedmen's Bureau help educate former slaves?
2. **ANALYZE CAUSE AND EFFECT** What factors led to the development of sharecropping in the South?
3. **DRAW CONCLUSIONS** In what way did sharecropping replace slavery?

## 2.3 Resistance in the South

Terror is a powerful weapon. When combined with racism, its damage can last for generations. A reign of terror in the South set back African-American political gains and broke the Republican Party's hold in the region.

**MAIN IDEA** Afraid of losing political and economic power, some white southerners used terror tactics against African Americans and Republicans.

### THE KU KLUX KLAN

Radical Reconstruction angered many white southerners and created a resistance movement based on racism and discrimination. Few white southerners accepted African Americans as their equals. Sometimes whites turned to violence in an attempt to keep African Americans from voting and exercising other rights. In 1866, white mobs attacked unarmed African-American men, women, and children and rioted in Memphis, Tennessee, and New Orleans, Louisiana. The mobs killed or injured many African Americans. In Memphis, the rioters, who included police officers, committed **arson** by purposefully burning homes, churches, and schools in African-American communities.

That same year, a group of young men in Tennessee founded the **Ku Klux Klan**. Originally intended as a social club, the group's purpose changed dramatically in 1867 when African Americans gained voting rights in the state under the Reconstruction Acts and began holding public office. Thereafter, the Ku Klux Klan, under the leadership of former Confederate officer Nathan Bedford Forrest, dedicated itself to maintaining the social and political power of white people.

To achieve its goals, members of the Klan terrorized and killed African Americans. They also attacked white people who associated with Republicans or supported African-American rights. To conceal their identities and maximize the terror, Klan members rode out at night dressed in hooded costumes. They whipped, tar-and-feathered, and even **lynched**, or hanged, their victims. They also committed arson. The Klan became the face of violent discrimination, carrying out punishments against people whom they felt had overstepped racial boundaries. Boosted by popular sentiment and federal acceptance, the Klan's popularity quickly spread across the South and even beyond.



**CRITICAL VIEWING** In 1874, this political cartoon by Thomas Nast appeared in *Harper's Weekly*. Why do you think the cartoonist included the words "worse than slavery" over the heads of the African-American family?



## The Klan Through the Years

The Ku Klux Klan members in this photo traveled from New Jersey to take part in a Klan parade held in Washington, D.C., in 1926. The legal action brought against the Klan in 1871 drove its members into hiding, but it did not destroy the organization. Further actions by the government never succeeded in dissolving the group either. The Klan resurfaced in the 1920s, fueled by the arrival of immigrants whom they accused of taking jobs away from "real" Americans.

The Klan began to grab newspaper headlines once again as the civil rights movement gathered momentum in the 1950s and 1960s. After three civil rights volunteers were killed in Mississippi in 1964, FBI agents discovered the murderers were Klan members and police officers. Seven men were arrested for the murders. The Klan still exists today, although it is widely despised and wields very little political power. As of April 2014, official Klan groups were registered in 41 states with a total of as many as 8,000 members.

## A POWER SHIFT

In response, the Republican-dominated Congress passed the Enforcement Acts in 1870 and 1871. The acts made it a crime to use violence or threats to interfere with a citizen's right to vote, hold office, or serve on a jury. The acts authorized the federal government to supervise congressional elections and gave the president the power to enforce the acts. The intent of the acts was to stop Klan activities and protect African-American rights.

Armed with the Enforcement Acts, the federal government took legal action against the Klan in 1871. In state after state, the government charged Klan leaders with crimes. The Klan became less visible, but their scare tactics had already damaged the Republican Party by preventing African Americans from voting. As a result, the Democratic Party began to gain back control in the South, and the number of African-American officeholders fell dramatically.

Meanwhile, many white voters in the North also thought the Radical Republicans had gone too far in promoting African-American rights. Even though the country would elect a Republican president in 1868, Reconstruction was starting to lose steam.



Members of the Ku Klux Klan often wore metal membership badges like these. The 1921 Klan badge on the right is shaped like the hood Klan members wore to scare and intimidate their victims.

## HISTORICAL THINKING

1. **READING CHECK** What tactics did the Ku Klux Klan use to terrorize African Americans and white Republicans?
2. **MAKE INFERENCES** Why do you think the Klan's activities were allowed to continue in the South until 1870?
3. **SUMMARIZE** How did Klan activities change the balance of political power in the South?

## 3.1 Grant's Presidency

Think about how much has been at stake in recent presidential elections. The election of 1868 was similar, especially for Republicans and African Americans. A Democratic victory could deliver the end of Reconstruction.

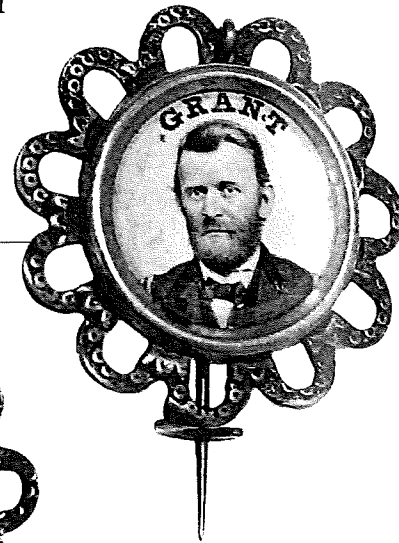
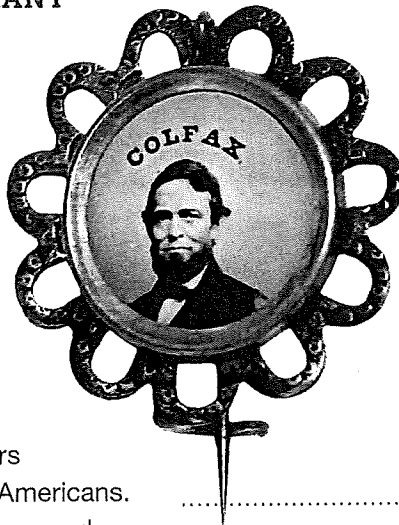
**MAIN IDEA** After their party's victory in the 1868 presidential election, Republicans helped pass the 15th Amendment.

### THE ELECTION OF GENERAL GRANT

In the 1868 presidential race, the Republicans nominated Ulysses S. Grant, the great Union hero of the Civil War. Although Grant had no experience in government, Republicans believed their candidate would be able to please members of both parties. When Grant accepted the nomination, he said, "Let us have peace." That phrase became a theme for the campaign. Republicans were aware that white voters had become less willing to help African Americans. As a result, the party did not promise to expand Reconstruction or to further promote the rights of African Americans.

The Democrats nominated **Horatio Seymour**, the former governor of New York, as their candidate. Seymour was part of a group of Democrats called the **Copperheads**. As you probably know, a copperhead is a poisonous snake. During the Civil War, this group, who called themselves "Peace Democrats," opposed emancipation and the draft. Republicans called the group "Copperheads" because they believed its members were Confederate sympathizers.

Seymour and the Copperheads relied on fear and racism to attract voters. Seymour criticized the Republicans for their aggressive handling of Reconstruction. He felt the government placed too much importance on African-American rights. His ideals appealed to many midwestern farmers who felt the Republicans did not understand their way of



1868 Campaign Buttons  
Grant's running mate was Schuyler (SKY-ler) Colfax, a prominent Radical Republican. The candidates' campaign buttons feature ferrotypes, or photos printed on tin.

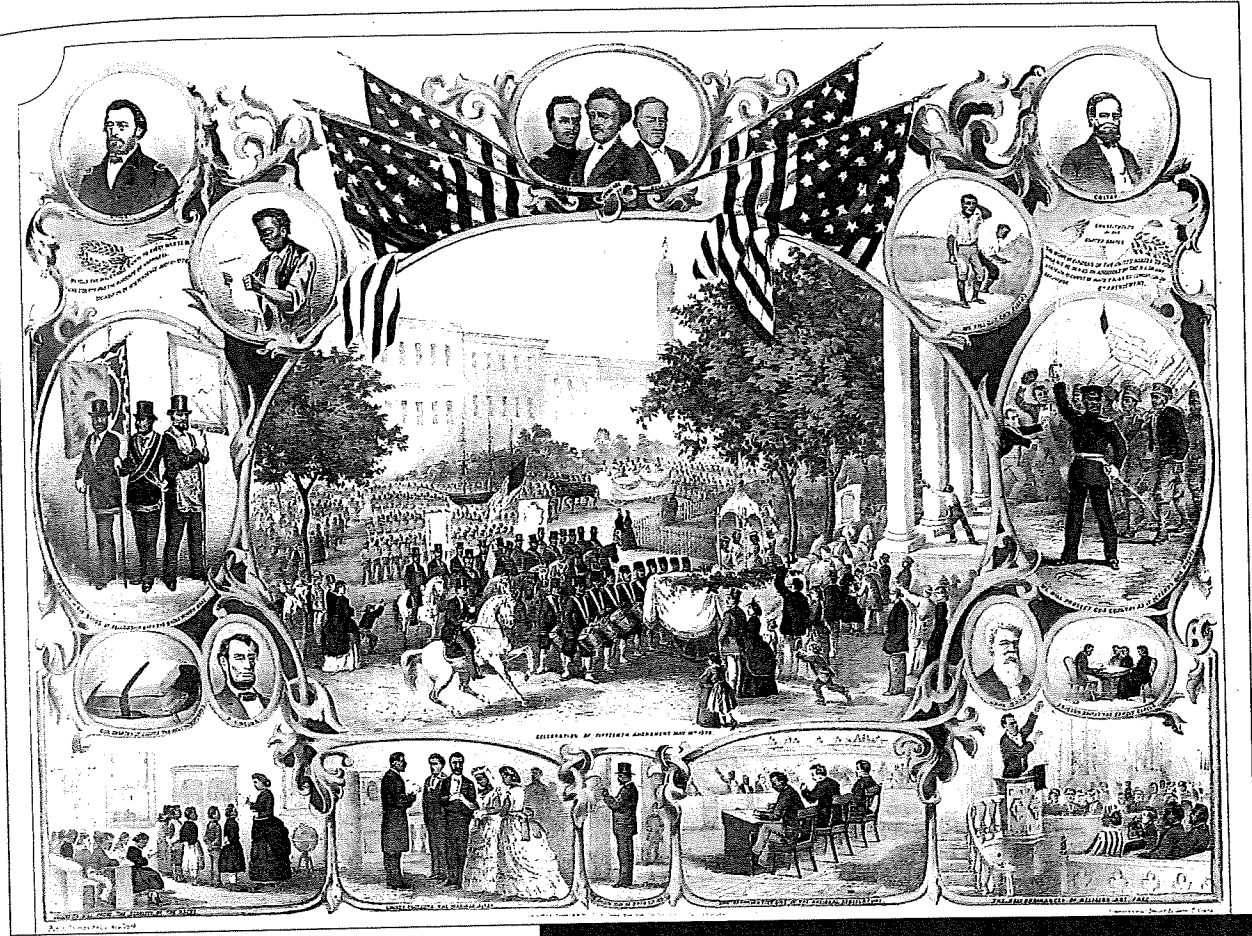
life. He also appealed to urban whites who believed free African Americans would move to the North and take their jobs.

Despite Seymour's rhetoric, or use of persuasive language, Grant led the Republicans to victory in the 1868 election. About 500,000 African Americans voted for Grant, helping him receive 53 percent of the ballots. In his inaugural speech, Grant declared, "I shall on all subjects have a policy to recommend, but none to enforce against the will of the people." He promised, unlike Andrew Johnson, to carry out the laws that Congress passed.

### THE 15TH AMENDMENT

After the 1868 election, Republicans pushed for the adoption of the **15th Amendment** to the Constitution. Under the amendment's terms, the federal and state governments could not restrict the right to vote because of race, color, or





**CRITICAL VIEWING** Called *The 15th Amendment*, this 1870 print illustrates a parade celebrating the amendment's passage. The large image is surrounded by portraits of those who helped pass the amendment, including Abraham Lincoln, and scenes depicting African-American life. What do some of the scenes illustrate?

previous condition of servitude—in other words, slavery. The amendment would complete the political reforms sought by Reconstruction. Congress approved the amendment in February 1869 despite Democratic opposition, and it became part of the Constitution in 1870.

The intent of the amendment was to limit the southern states' ability to prevent African Americans from participating in the political process. But the new law did little for African Americans outside the former Confederacy. It also did not restrict or change any of the laws that states had placed on the rights of males to vote, such as charging **poll taxes**. A poll tax is a fee charged when people register to vote. Meanwhile, the Amnesty Act of 1872 removed voting restrictions on most of those who had belonged to the Confederacy.

The adoption of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments fundamentally changed the nation by establishing citizenship rights and full equality for anyone born in the United States. However, over the next couple of decades, courts and political interests would undermine the intent of the amendments.

Still, rights and equality were not on the minds of most people in the 1870s. They wanted their elected leaders to pay more attention to problems closer to home, including a severe economic depression. As an Illinois newspaper observed, "the negro is now a voter and a citizen. Let him hereafter take his chances in the battle of life."

## HISTORICAL THINKING

1. **READING CHECK** What was the theme of Grant's presidential campaign?
2. **COMPARE AND CONTRAST** What differing views characterized the Republican and Democratic presidential candidates in the election of 1868?
3. **DRAW CONCLUSIONS** Why would a poll tax prevent African Americans from voting?

## 3.2 The Election of 1876

With our 24/7 online news feed, it can be hard to focus on one important problem when other issues arise. But this also happened in the 1870s, when scandals and economic woes distracted Americans from Reconstruction.

**MAIN IDEA** As scandals and a depression arose, a compromise reached over a contested election brought Reconstruction to an end.

### SCANDAL AND PANIC

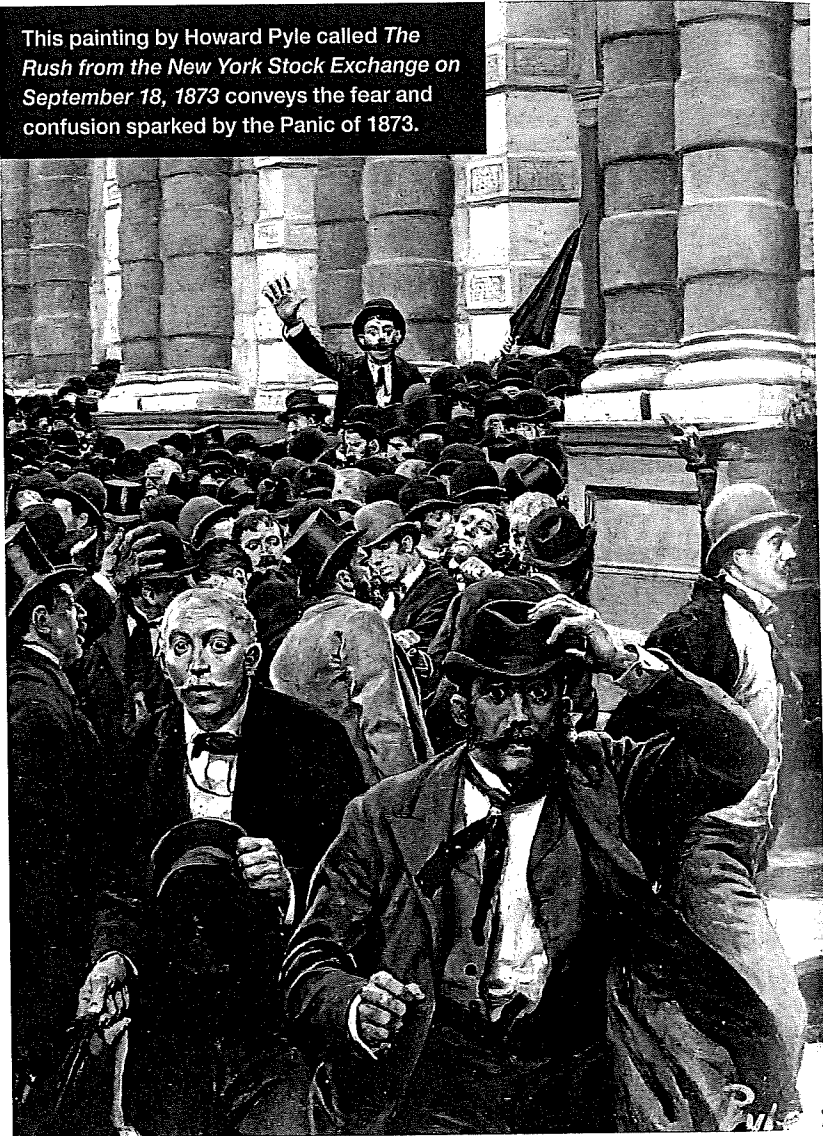
Ulysses S. Grant had been an effective general, but he proved to be a poor administrator. He often relied on Congress to make the types of decisions he should have made as the country's leader. He also was unable to keep his party from splintering into different factions, or groups, each promoting a different political viewpoint. The **Liberal Republicans** were among these factions. They believed the government had become too large and too powerful. They favored free trade and an end to Reconstruction. In American politics of the 1870s, the word *liberal* referred to someone who embraced these ideas.

Leading up to the election of 1872, the Liberal Republicans **defected**, or broke away, from the Republican Party and formed an alliance with Democrats. They nominated Horace Greeley, a newspaper editor from New York City, as the Democratic presidential candidate. Greeley's main goal was to end Reconstruction, but that was not enough to appeal to voters. Grant easily won re-election.

But accounts of dishonest behavior plagued Grant's second term. These scandals involved **bribery**, or offers of money or privileges in exchange for political favors. Financial

wrongdoing among legislators and Cabinet members surfaced. For instance, Congress investigated Secretary of War William Belknap for **corruption**, another word for dishonesty. Congress accused Belknap of accepting cash gifts from army suppliers, which led to his resignation.

This painting by Howard Pyle called *The Rush from the New York Stock Exchange on September 18, 1873* conveys the fear and confusion sparked by the Panic of 1873.



## The Election of 1876

### Hayes (Republican)

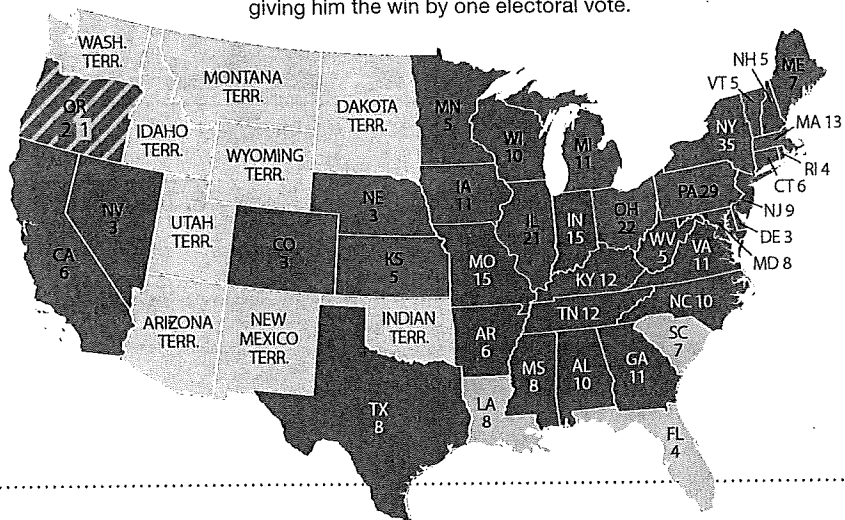
Uncontested Electoral: 165 votes  
Electoral Vote: 185 votes, 50.1%  
Popular Vote: 4,034,311 votes, 48.5%

### Tilden (Democrat)

Uncontested Electoral: 184 votes  
Electoral Vote: 184 votes, 49.9%  
Popular Vote: 4,288,546 votes, 51.5%

### Territories, No Returns

### Contested Electoral Votes



Twenty electoral votes from Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina were contested, or disputed, following charges of voter fraud. The controversial election was finally settled by the Compromise of 1877. All 20 votes went to Hayes, giving him the win by one electoral vote.

To make matters worse, economic disaster struck in 1873 when bank and railroad failures triggered an economic crisis called the **Panic of 1873**. Many people lost their money when banks closed and lost their jobs when businesses collapsed. As unemployment rose, the country slid into a depression that lasted six years.

## END OF RECONSTRUCTION

As the depression wore on, economic concerns overshadowed the nation's interest in Reconstruction. In 1876, two court cases dealt a further blow to the cause of African Americans' civil rights. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *U.S. v. Cruikshank* that the civil rights amendments only allowed the federal government to prevent states from abusing African Americans' civil rights. The job of punishing individuals fell to the states. In *U.S. v. Reese*, the Court ruled that the 15th Amendment only made it illegal to deny a person the right to vote based on race. States could use other criteria, such as **literacy tests**, or tests of one's ability to read and write, to exclude voters.

By the 1876 presidential election, Democrats had regained control of several southern states and the U.S. House of Representatives. Democrats nominated Samuel J. Tilden as their candidate. The Republican nominee was Rutherford B. Hayes. The race was extremely close, with election results in several states disputed. Congress created an electoral commission to decide the election, but while it

met, Democrats and Republicans got together to negotiate a deal. In what came to be called the **Compromise of 1877**, Democrats agreed to award the victory to Hayes if Republicans agreed to end Reconstruction and pull federal troops out of the South. The deal was struck.

In the end, Reconstruction fell short of its goals. It had raised and then dashed hopes that African Americans would achieve equality. To some degree, African Americans made advances. But to help African Americans overcome the effects of hundreds of years of slavery and racism entirely would have required a great expansion of federal power. Still, although the promise of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments remained unfulfilled during Reconstruction, these amendments became the legal basis for the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

## HISTORICAL THINKING

- 1. READING CHECK** What views did Liberal Republicans promote?
- 2. ANALYZE CAUSE AND EFFECT** What impact did the 1872 Amnesty Act, the 1876 election, and the withdrawal of federal troops from the South have on civil rights for African Americans?
- 3. INTERPRET MAPS** How many contested electoral votes did Tilden need to win the election?

## 17

## REVIEW

## VOCABULARY

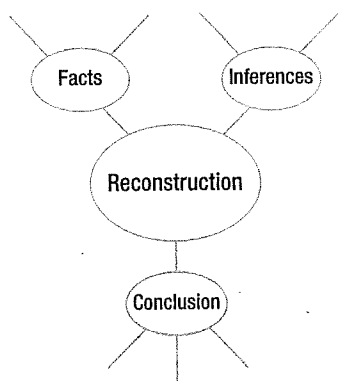
Use each of the following vocabulary words in a sentence that shows an understanding of the term's meaning.

1. black codes HSS.8.11.3  
*Southern states used black codes to restrict the rights of African Americans.*
2. corruption HSS.8.11.1
3. Freedmen's Bureau HSS.8.11.3
4. impeachment HSS.8.11.1
5. Radical Reconstruction HSS.8.11.1
6. sharecropping HSS.8.11.3
7. 15th Amendment HSS.8.11.5
8. Panic of 1873 HSS.8.11.3

## READING STRATEGY

## DRAW CONCLUSIONS

If you haven't done so already, complete your diagram to draw conclusions about the impact of Reconstruction on American society. Then answer the question.



9. How did Reconstruction redefine what it meant to be an American? HSS.H.12

## MAIN IDEAS

Answer the following questions. Support your answers with evidence from the chapter.

10. Why was President Johnson at odds with many Republicans? LESSON 1.1 HSS.8.11.4
11. What did Presidential Reconstruction fail to do for African Americans? LESSON 1.1 HSS.8.11.5
12. What legislation did Congress propose to counteract Johnson's Reconstruction plans? LESSON 1.2 HSS.8.11.1
13. Why did African Americans often establish Baptist churches? LESSON 2.1 HSS.8.11.1
14. Why was education a symbol of their new freedom to African Americans in the South? LESSON 2.2 HSS.8.11.3
15. What was the goal of the Ku Klux Klan? LESSON 2.3 HSS.8.11.4
16. How did the 15th Amendment fail African Americans? LESSON 3.1 HSS.8.11.5
17. What was the Compromise of 1877? LESSON 3.2 HSS.8.11.1

## HISTORICAL THINKING

Answer the following questions. Support your answers with evidence from the chapter.

18. **DRAW CONCLUSIONS** What did the outcome of Johnson's impeachment trial indicate about the power of Radical Republicans in the Senate? HSS.8.11.1
19. **EVALUATE** What did the election of Blanche K. Bruce to the U.S. Senate probably mean to African Americans? HSS.8.11.3

20. **ANALYZE CAUSE AND EFFECT** What impact did Reconstruction have on the political and social structures of the North and the South? **HSS.8.11.1**

21. **MAKE INFERENCES** Why do you think some states charged poll taxes and made voters take literacy tests? **HSS.8.11.3**

22. **MAKE CONNECTIONS** How were the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments connected to Reconstruction? **HSS.8.11.5**

### INTERPRET PHOTOGRAPHS

The lives and work of sharecroppers remained largely unchanged for decades after the end of the Civil War. Look closely at the photograph of a sharecropper in Mississippi taken in the 1930s. Then answer the questions that follow.



23. How would you describe the work the woman is doing? **HSS.HP.4**

24. In what way is this work similar to that performed by enslaved persons? **HSS.HP.4**

### ANALYZE SOURCES

In his second inaugural address delivered on March 4, 1873, Ulysses S. Grant discussed the problems African Americans still faced in the South. Read the following excerpt from the speech and answer the question.

The effects of the late civil strife have been to free the slave and make him a citizen. Yet he is not possessed of the civil rights which citizenship should carry with it. This is wrong, and should be corrected. To this correction I stand committed, so far as Executive influence can avail [be of service or help].

Social equality is not a subject to be legislated upon, nor shall I ask that anything be done to advance the social status of [an African American], except to give him a fair chance to develop what there is good in him, give him access to the schools, and when he travels let him feel assured that his conduct will regulate the treatment and fare [prices charged, food, material] he will receive.

25. Based on the excerpt, what is Grant's position on African-American civil rights? **HEP.5**

### CONNECT TO YOUR LIFE

26. **EXPOSITORY** Review the reasons many African Americans saw the opportunity for education as a way to improve their lives. Think about an activity you enjoy doing, for instance, reading comic books or playing basketball. Write a paragraph explaining how your education helps you better enjoy that activity. **HSS.CIP.2**

### TIPS

- Pick an activity you enjoy doing. Use an idea web to brainstorm what school subjects are involved in doing that activity.
- Conclude your paragraph with a comment about how your education has enabled you to enjoy the activity.
- Have you addressed the topic? Revise or rewrite your paragraph, as needed.