

Teaching Guide

SEGMENT 3, WEBISODE 7

Please note: Each segment in this Webisode has its own Teaching Guide



November 16, 1867
Library of Congress



Segment Overview

In 1867, Congress, frustrated with the progress of Reconstruction under the recalcitrant President Johnson, passed a series of Reconstruction acts to ensure African Americans equality under the law. These acts required that Southern states wishing to rejoin the Union ratify the Fourteenth Amendment granting all citizens—including formerly enslaved African Americans—the right to due process of law. Congress divided the South into five military districts, posting an army general and federal troops in each district. Southern states were required to hold conventions with both black and white delegates to rewrite their state constitutions and bring them into compliance with the Constitution. Congress passed the Fifteenth Amendment granting African American men the right to vote. Additional acts sought to counteract effects of white supremacy groups such as the Ku Klux Klan.

During this period, the first African American men were elected to the House of Representatives and Senate, and more than six hundred African Americans served in state legislatures.

Teacher Directions

1. Students, in small teams, discuss the following questions.
 - Why did Congress divide the South into military districts in 1867?
 - How did many Southerners feel about Northerners who went South during Reconstruction?
 - What was the Reconstruction Act?
 - How did African Americans feel about the right to vote?
2. Make sure students understand the following points in discussing the questions.

Congress divided the South into military districts to restore order, create new state governments, and guarantee freedom to African Americans. Many Southerners resented the presence of Northerners, calling them “carpetbaggers.” While some went South to teach, help with aid programs, or assist governments, others were motivated only by personal gain. African American men over twenty-one treasured the right to vote. Many black men were elected to office. Blanche Bruce and Hiram Revels became United States senators.



Let's Discuss



Teacher Directions

1. Explain that *Harper's Weekly* was the *Time* or *Newsweek* of its day, featuring news from around the country. Artists from *Harper's Weekly* illustrated the issues, personalities, and battles of the Civil War and Reconstruction.
2. Distribute the Student Sheets: "*The First Vote*" and "*The Union as it was.*" Working with teammates, students analyze the illustrations to discuss and answer the questions on the student sheets.
3. After students analyze the illustrations, make sure they understand the following points.

"The First Vote" appeared on the cover of *Harper's Weekly* on November 16, 1867. It shows a proud, dignified African American exercising his right to vote. He is protected by a black soldier, who is present to maintain order at the polling place. He is followed by another African American voter, whose clothes suggest that he is more prosperous than the first man. The first man carries a hammer and chisel in his pocket, which suggest that he is a carpenter. The white man supervising the election seems to be indifferent at best. The illustration suggests that Reconstruction had succeeded in extending the right to vote to black men, both prosperous and poor, in the South.

"The Union as it was" appeared in *Harper's Weekly* on October 21, 1876. This political cartoon depicts an African American couple crouching under the threat of violence from white supremacy groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. Symbols include the skull and crossbones (death), a pistol and knife in the belt of the Ku Klux Klanman (violence to maintain power), a figure of a lynched black man (more violence), and a broken schoolhouse sign, smoke, and a book on the ground (destruction of a black schoolhouse). The couple's young child could be hurt or dead; their position suggests they may be mourning him or trying to protect him. The heading "worse than slavery" indicates that in spite of emancipation, African Americans endure more hardship than in the days of slavery because of the trampling of their rights and the threat of white-led violence. The cartoon illustrates the failure of Reconstruction to protect the rights of African Americans, and the triumph of violent white supremacy groups such as the KKK.

4. Discuss with the class the following question.
 - How do these illustrations reveal the success and failure of Reconstruction?
5. Make sure students understand that Reconstruction did succeed in extending the right to vote to African American men. The presence of armed troops throughout the South offered a measure of protection to African Americans. However, although Congress passed numerous laws to protect the rights of Southern African Americans, black citizens ultimately lost ground when Congressional Reconstruction ended in 1877. The

History Sleuth, Cont.



What do you
Think?



Moving Toward
Freedom

passage of local black codes and the rise of white supremacy groups impeded the civil rights of African Americans.

Teacher Directions

Students respond to one of the following writing prompts. They may use the graphic organizer on Student Sheet: *5Ws and H* to organize information for their news articles

- You are a Northern journalist (African American or white) who has traveled south to observe an election. You want to write an article about African Americans exercising the right to vote. Write the article you will send back to your magazine or newspaper.
- You are a Southern journalist observing one of the first elections in which African Americans exercise their newly granted right to vote. Write the article you will submit to your newspaper.

Teacher Directions

1. Share the following information with students.

During Reconstruction, many African Americans left the South. Some went west to establish new communities where they hoped to find political and economic freedom. In the largest organized exodus to Kansas, more than 60,000 African Americans gathered in Nashville, Tennessee in 1880 to begin a new life in the West. Newspapers compared this migration to the biblical exodus from slavery, and called the group “Exodusters.”

One group of these Exodusters established the community of Nicodemus, Kansas, in 1877. Nicodemus was the first of approximately twenty towns founded for blacks in the West. However, because of crop failures, opposition from white settlers, and the absence of a railroad line, many homesteaders eventually abandoned the town. While the town had over five hundred inhabitants in 1880, less than two hundred citizens remained by 1910. Nicodemus still exists and was recently designated a National Historic Site by the National Park Service.

3. Distribute the Student Sheet: *Kansas Exodus*. Students read the first person account and examine the photographs.
4. Working with teammates, students create a skit, pamphlet, or poster which tells the story of Nicodemus.

Note to the Teacher: Since Nicodemus was recently designated a National Historic Site by the National Park Service, students may write the park superintendent to send copies of their work or comment on the

Moving Toward Freedom,
Continued.



Connections

importance of the park. The address is Superintendent, Nicodemus National Historic Site, In Care Of: Fort Larned NHS, Route 3, Larned, KS 67550-9321 or email @ NICO_Superintendent@nps.gov.

Note to the Teacher: additional information and an activity about the Exodusters and Benjamin Singleton, the “father of the Exodusters,” can be found in Webisode 7, Segment 1.

Teacher Directions

Use the following activities with your students.

Writing — Students write a letter nominating Blanche Bruce or Hiram Revels to the History Hall of Fame. In their letters, students explain why he is important and should be honored.

Library — Students read biographies or research the lives of prominent persons during the Reconstruction era. To share this information with others, the students perform short first-person vignettes.

"The First Vote" by A.R. Wand



November 16, 1867
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- When was this illustration published? Where? In what part of the magazine?
- Describe the African American man in the center of the illustration.
- What is he doing? How does he feel about this?
- What does he do for a living? What suggests this?
- Describe the man second in line. How does he differ from the first man? How is he the same?
- Describe the soldier. Why is he present?
- Describe other men in the illustration. How do they seem to feel about what is happening?
- How do you think the artist felt about African Americans voting?
- How does this cartoon illustrate the success of Reconstruction?

"The Union as it was" by Thomas Nast



Harper's Weekly

October 21, 1876

Library of Congress

- When was this cartoon published? Where?
- What is happening to the African American couple in the cartoon?
- Who is responsible for this?
- What does the phrase "worse than slavery" mean?
- What is "the lost cause"?
- Describe some of the symbols in the cartoon.
- How does this cartoon illustrate the failure of Reconstruction?

Kansas Exodus

Willina Hickman arrived in the "Promised Land" of Nicodemus, Kansas, in 1878. Like many early African American settlers, she expected to find a small town with homes, buildings, and cultivated fields. She was terribly disappointed.

When we got in sight of Nicodemus the men shouted, "There is Nicodemus!" Being very sick, I hailed this news with gladness. I looked with all the eyes I had. I said, "Where is Nicodemus? I don't see it yet." My husband pointed out the various smokes coming out of the ground and said, "That is Nicodemus." The families lived in dugouts...The scenery was not at all inviting, and I began to cry."

The three hundred residents of Nicodemus lived in dugouts, holes in the grassy plains near the thin, tree-lined Solomon River. Many settlers chose to return to Kentucky or continue further west. But Willina, her husband, and others stayed.

By the mid-1880s, Willina Hickman and others had built Nicodemus into a prosperous town with two newspapers, three general stores, several churches and hotels, a school, bank, literary society, and ice cream parlor. However, when the railroad bypassed Nicodemus and was laid on the other side of the Solomon River, many residents and businesses left town. Nicodemus began to decline.



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5Ws and H

Who?

Where?

What?

When?

How?

Why?