

North or South: Who Killed Reconstruction?

EV

"Is This A Republican
Form of Government?
Is This Protecting Life,
Liberty, or Property?"



Harper's Weekly,
September 2, 1876

Overview: The twelve years after the Civil War proved to be a difficult time for America. Called *Reconstruction* by historians, this era saw an increase of freedom for former slaves. However, there was also great resistance to change. In 1877 attempts to reconstruct the South officially ended, leaving white-only governments in power. This Mini-Q asks you to decide who, North or South, was most responsible for the end of Reconstruction.

The Documents:

- Document A: Terrorizing "Carpetbaggers" and "Scalawags"
- Document B: Targeting African-American Voters and Government Officials
- Document C: Problems and Scandals in the North
- Document D: Popular Opinion and Racism in the North

A Mini Document Based Question (Mini-Q)

Hook Exercise: Reconstruction

Directions: Below are several groups that played a key role in the Reconstruction period. With a partner, read the descriptions of each group, and then read the headlines at the bottom of the page. Under each headline note how happy or sad each group would be about the news. Use a scale of 1-10 with 1 being least happy and 10 being the happiest. Be prepared to defend your answers.

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Radical Republicans (RR):
Northern Republican Congressmen who supported African-American citizenship and punishment for former Confederates

Ku Klux Klan (KKK):
A white supremacist group that opposed Reconstruction and rights for Freedmen

Carpetbaggers (CB):
Northerners who went south after the Civil War to help Freedmen and Reconstruction

Freedmen (F):
African-Americans who were freed from slavery during and after the Civil War

Scalwags (S):
Southern whites who supported Carpetbaggers and Freedmen

Headline A: "Congress Passes Enforcement Acts — Troops Sent South to Put Down the KKK"

F: _____
CB: _____
S: _____
RR: _____
KKK: _____

Headline B: "Financial Panic of 1873 to Cause Severe Depression and Loss of 3 Million Jobs"

F: _____
CB: _____
S: _____
RR: _____
KKK: _____

Headline C: "Hiram Revels Elected Senator From Mississippi in 1870 — First Black Man to Enter Congress"

F: _____
CB: _____
S: _____
RR: _____
KKK: _____

Headline D: "Rutherford B. Hayes Elected President in 1876 — Agrees to Move Federal Soldiers out of Louisiana and South Carolina"

F: _____
CB: _____
S: _____
RR: _____
KKK: _____

Understanding the Question and Pre-Bucketing

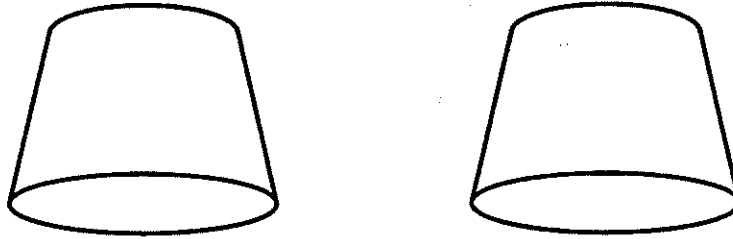
1. What is the analytical question asked by this Mini-Q?

2. What terms in the question need to be defined?

3. Rewrite the question in your own words.

Pre-Bucketing

Directions: After reading the Background Essay and looking at the document titles on the cover page, can you predict how you might organize a paper answering the above Mini-Q question? In other words, what are the possible buckets?



Document A

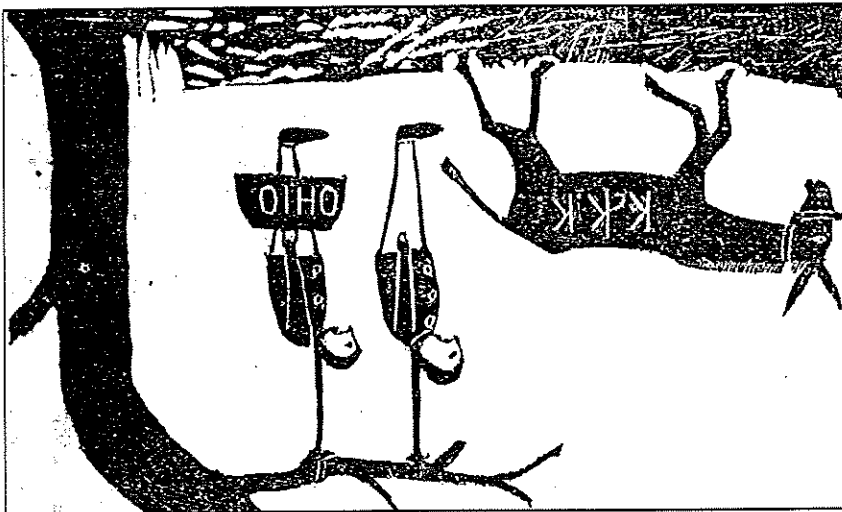
Source: Albion Tourgee, Letter on Ku Klux Klan Activities. *New York Tribune*, May 1870.

Note: Tourgee was a white, Northern soldier who settled in North Carolina after the War. He served as a judge during Reconstruction and wrote this letter to the North Carolina Republican Senator, Joseph Carter Abbott.

It is my mournful 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 Court House 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....

... I have very little doubt that I shall be one of the next victims. My steps have been dogged 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.

Source: *Independent Monitor*, September 1, 1868. Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama.



Document Analysis

1. In the image above, what group or groups is the KKK threatening?

2. According to Tourgee, what types of people are being attacked by the KKK? Why would the KKK attack these people?

3. How does the way that John Stephens was killed support the idea the Ku Klux Klan was a terrorist organization?

4. How does this document help answer the DBQ question?

Document B

Source: Abram Colby, testimony to a joint House and Senate Committee in 1872.

Note: Colby was a former slave who was elected to the Georgia State Legislature during Reconstruction.

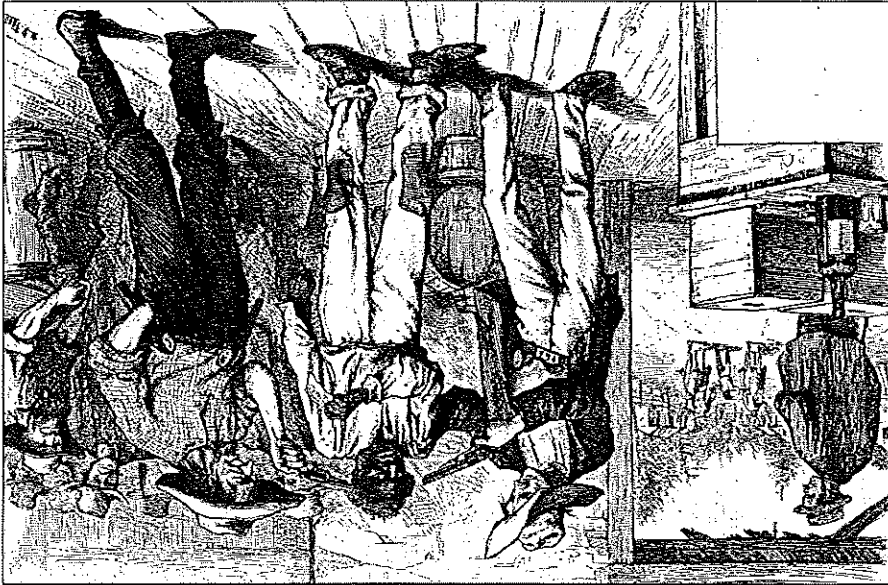
Colby: On the 29th of October 1869, [the Klansmen] broke my door open, took me out of bed, took me to the woods and whipped me three hours or more and left me for dead. They said to me, "Do you think you will ever vote another damned Radical ticket?" I said, "If there was an election tomorrow, I would 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 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... No man can make a free speech in my county. I do not believe it can be done anywhere in Georgia.

Source: Harper's Weekly, October 21, 1876.

Caption: "Of Course he wants to vote the Democratic ticket"



Document Analysis

1. Why did the KKK attack Abram Colby?

2. According to Colby, what types of people make up the KKK?

3. What seems to be the ultimate goal of the KKK?

4. What is the main idea of the cartoon?

Document C

Source: Gerald Danzer et al., *The Americans*, McDougal Littell, 1998.

“...in the 1870s, Northern voters grew indifferent to events in the South. Weary of the ‘Negro Question’ and ‘sick of carpet-bag’ government, many Northern voters shifted their attention to such national concerns as the Panic of 1873 and corruption in Grant’s administration.... Although political violence continued in the South ... the tide of public opinion in the North began to turn against Reconstruction policies.”



Source: *Harper's Weekly*, 1876

Caption: "U.S. 'In For It,' I hope I shall get to the bottom soon."

Note: U.S. are initials of President Ulysses S. Grant.

Document Analysis

1. Explain the phrases "weary of the 'Negro Question'" and "'sick of carpet-bag' government."

2. What is President Grant trying to find in the barrel?

3. If President Grant was busy with scandals, what is likely to happen to his focus on Reconstruction efforts in the South?

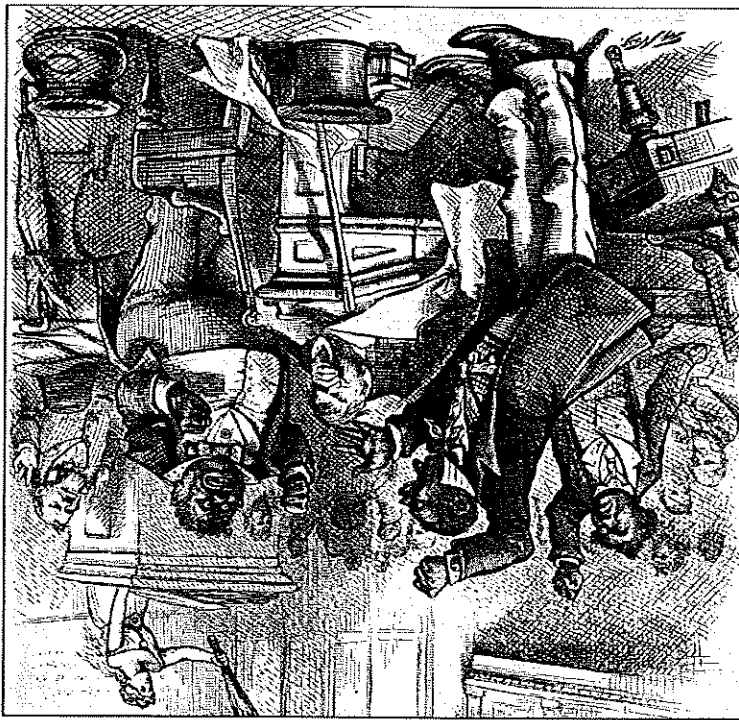
4. Why might increased anger about corruption in government lead to less interest in government attempts to reconstruct the South?

Document D

Source: Heather Cox Richardson, *The Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor and Politics in the Post-Civil War North, 1865-1901*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2001.

In the fall of 1873, even the staunchly (firmly) pro-Grant and pro-freedman *Boston Evening Transcript* ran a letter ... arguing that "the blacks, as a people, are unfitted for the proper exercise of political duties.... The rising generation of ... blacks needed a period of probation and instruction; a period ... long enough for the black to have forgotten something of his condition as a slave and learned much of the true method of gaining honorable subsistence and of performing the duties of any position to which he might aspire."

Northern artists' portrayal of the South Carolina State Legislature during Reconstruction.



Source: The cover of Harper's Weekly, March 14, 1874

Document Analysis

1. According to the letter from the *Boston Evening Transcript*, why did some people believe blacks were unfit to be government officials?

2. How does the letter from the *Boston Evening Transcript* show that racism existed in the North?

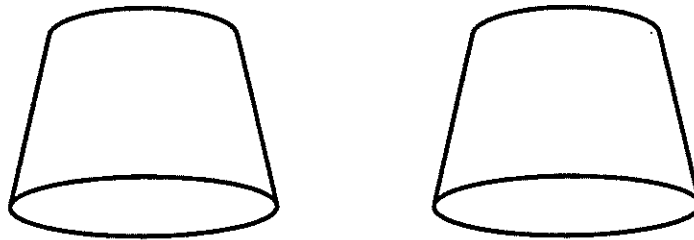
3. How do this cartoon and letter help explain why Northerners lost interest in Reconstruction?

4. How does the image above depict black politicians in the South?

Bucketting – Getting Ready to Write

Bucketting

Look over all the documents and organize them into your final buckets. Write final bucket labels under each bucket and place the letters of the documents in the buckets where they belong. It is okay to put a document in more than one bucket. Remember, your buckets are going to become your body paragraphs.



Thesis Development and Roadmap

On the chickenfoot below, write your thesis and your roadmap. Your thesis is always an opinion and answers the Mini-Q question. The roadmap is created from your bucket labels and lists the topic areas you will examine in order to prove your thesis.

