



▲ Freedmen line up to vote.
◀ Portrait of Senator Hiram Revels

Reconstruction in the South

Why It Matters Before the Civil War, a limited number of powerful men had controlled the South. In the wake of the war, a very basic question needed to be resolved. Who would gain power and how would they use it? How this question was answered at the time would have both immediate and lasting consequences. **Section Focus Question: What were the immediate effects of Reconstruction?**

Republican Governments Bring Change

By 1870, all of the former Confederate states had met the requirements under Radical Reconstruction and rejoined the Union. Republicans dominated their newly established state governments.

African Americans Use Political Power Almost 1,500 black men—some born free, some recently released from slavery—helped usher the Republican Party into the South. These new black citizens served the South as school superintendents, sheriffs, mayors, coroners, police chiefs, and representatives in state legislatures. Six served as lieutenant governors. Two state legislatures—in Mississippi and South Carolina—had black Speakers of the House. Between 1870 and 1877, two African American senators and fourteen African American congressmen served in the United States Congress.

Most importantly, millions of southern African American men were now voters. Since the Radical Republicans required a loyalty oath, many white southerners were not eligible to vote, or chose to stay

WITNESS HISTORY

An African American in the Senate

In 1861, Jefferson Davis left his seat in the U.S. Senate and became President of the Confederacy. In 1870, his unfinished term was resumed by Hiram Revels—an African American. A few months later, Senator Revels stood up to make his first speech. He answered those who charged that African Americans in the South were using their new political power to seek revenge on white southerners:

“As the recognized representative of my downtrodden people, I deny the charge. . . . They bear toward their former masters no vengeful thoughts, no hatreds, no animosities. They aim not to elevate themselves by sacrificing one single interest of their white fellow-citizens. They ask but the rights which are theirs by God’s universal law. . . . [to] enjoy the liberties of citizenship on the same footing with their white neighbors and friends.”

—Hiram Revels, speech in the U.S. Senate, March 16, 1870

away from the constitutional conventions and from the elections that followed. Black men, however, quickly signed up to use their new right of suffrage. Thus, by 1868, many southern states had both African American elected officials and a strong Republican Party. Ironically, South Carolina—the state that had ignited the Civil War—became the one state where a black majority ruled the legislature, although only for a short time.

Scalawags and Carpetbaggers Take Part in Southern Politics

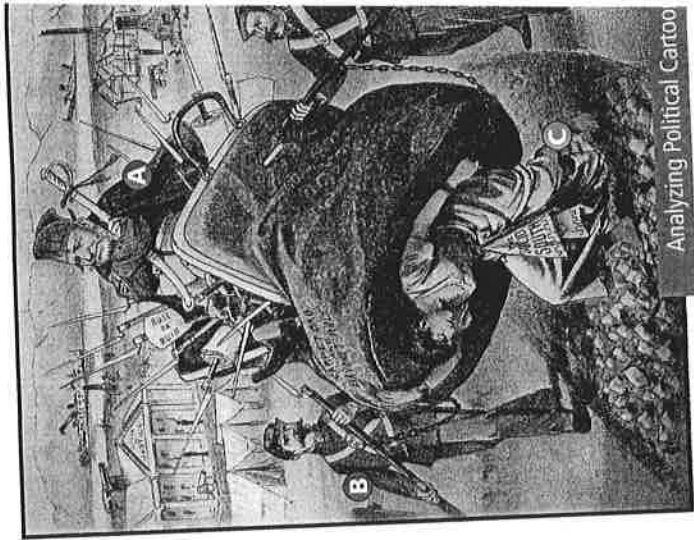
The Republican Party attracted not only black southerners but also others who sought change and challenge. **Scalawags**, as southern white critics called them, were white men who had been locked out of pre-Civil War politics by their wealthier neighbors. The new Republican Party invited them in.

Scalawags found allies in northern white or black men who relocated to the South. These northerners came seeking to improve their economic or political situations, or to help make a better life for freedmen. Many southern white people resented what they felt was the invasion of opportunists, come to make their fortunes from the South’s misfortune. Southerners labeled the newcomers “**carpetbaggers**,” after the inexpensive carpet-cloth suitcases often carried by northerners.

For carpetbaggers, the opportunities in the new South were as abundant as those in the western frontier: new land to be bought, new careers to be shaped. The progress of Blanche K. Bruce presents an example. Born a slave in Virginia, Bruce learned to read from his owner’s son. When the war began, Bruce left the plantation and moved to Missouri, where he ran a school for black children for a short time before moving on to Oberlin College in Ohio. In 1866, Bruce—now 25 years old—went south to Mississippi, where he became a prosperous landowner and was elected to several local political positions. In 1874, in his mid-thirties, Bruce was elected to the United States Senate.

Bruce’s story highlights several characteristics of the carpetbaggers. First, they were often young. Second, since only the wealthy minority of white southerners were literate, a northerner with even a basic education had a real advantage. Finally, for African Americans, the South was the only place to pursue a political career. Even though the Fifteenth Amendment established suffrage nationally, no black congressman was elected from the North until the twentieth century.

Successes and Failures Result On the other hand, the Republican Party did not support women’s suffrage, arguing that they could not rally national support behind the essential goal of black suffrage if they tried to include women too. Even so, the Reconstruction South offered northern women—white and black—opportunities that they could not pursue at home. In medical facilities, orphanages, and other relief agencies, single women carved out new roles and envisioned new horizons. They also participated in



Analyzing Political Cartoon

The Burden of Reconstruction cartoon appeared in a northern newspaper in the 1870s.

- A** President Grant
 - B** Union soldiers
 - C** the South
1. What do the weapons and soldiers the cartoon represent?
 2. What is the woman doing? Is it easy or difficult?
 3. What is this cartoonist’s view of Reconstruction?

Changes in the South

Social	Economic
•	•

9 Identify Main Ideas Use a graphic organizer to record details about changes in the South during Reconstruction.

- People
- share-tenancy
- tenant farming
- Ku Klux Klan
- Enforcement Acts

- Republicans gained control of state governments.
- freedmen adjusted to freedom and a new economic system.
- efforts to limit African Americans’ political power.
- the federal government’s response.

what was the most enduring development of the new South—the shaping of a public school system.

Mandated by Reconstruction state constitutions, public schools grew slowly, drawing in only about half of southern children by the end of the 1870s. Establishing a new school system was expensive. This was especially so since southerners opted for **segregation**, or separation of the races. Operating two school systems—one white, one black—severely strained the southern economy. A few of the most radical white Republicans suggested **integration**—combining the schools—but the idea was unpopular with most Republicans. Nevertheless, the beginning of a tax-supported public school system was a major Reconstruction success.

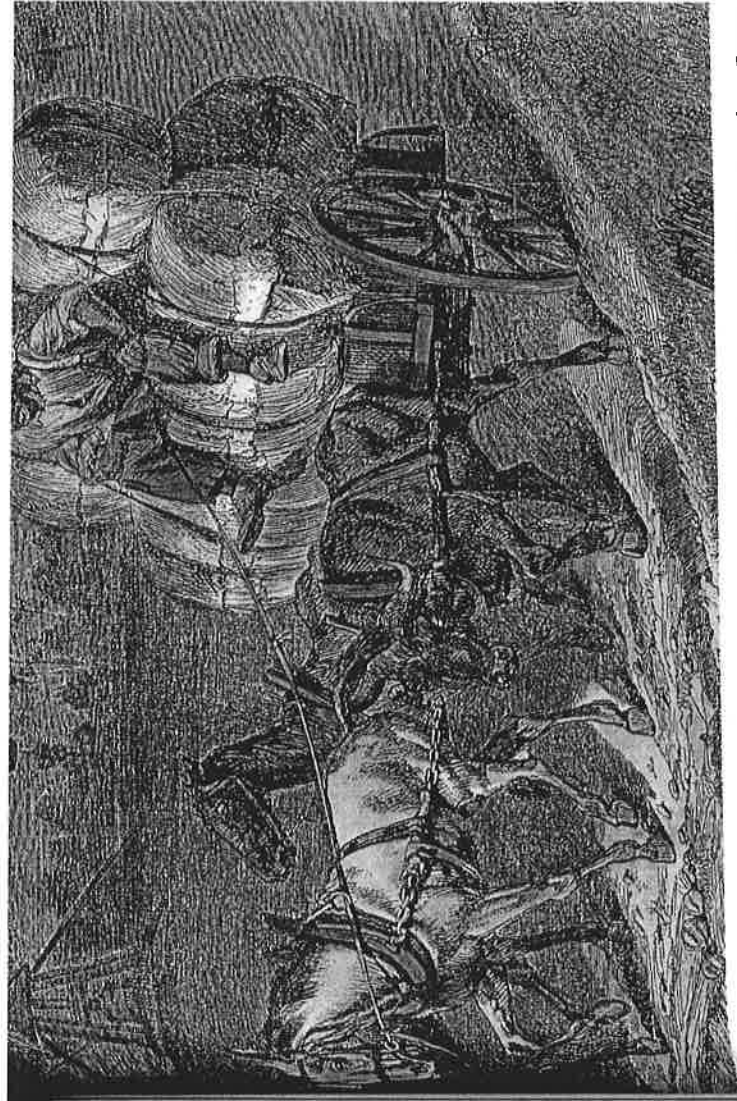
Despite these successes, the South still faced many challenges. Many southerners remained illiterate. The quality of medical care, housing, and economic production lagged far behind the North and, in some cases, behind the newly settled West. Legal protection for African Americans was limited, and racial violence remained a problem until well into the twentieth century.

A new reality was sweeping the country. Political offices, which were once an honor bestowed upon a community's successful business people, were becoming a route to wealth and power rather than a result of these attributes. However, conditions in the South were not unlike the rest of the country in that respect. Ambitious people everywhere were willing to bribe politicians in order to gain access to attractive loans or contracts.

Some of the most attractive arenas for corruption involved the developing railroads. Republicans were the party of African American freedom, but they were also the party of aggressive economic development. Building railroads had two big advantages. First, the construction of tracks and rail cars created jobs. Second, the rail lines would provide the means to carry produce and industrial goods to expanded markets. Hence, in many states across the nation, legislatures gave public land or lent taxpayers' money to railroad speculators.

In some cases, the speculators delivered on their promises and repaid the loans. But southern leaders, who had fewer resources and less financial expertise than their northern peers, found that a good number of their loans were stolen or mismanaged. Though northern white speculators defaulted, too, many Americans used these examples to argue that southern black politicians were dishonest or incompetent.

Checkpoint What new groups were active in politics under Republican governments?



African American Farmers
Although some African Americans moved to southern cities after the Civil War, many remained in rural areas. How do you think the lives of freed African Americans compared to their lives during slavery?

Freed People Build New Communities

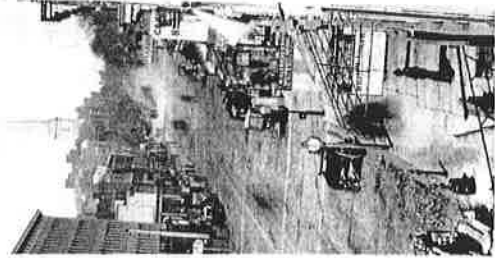
For newly freed African Americans, the importance of such issues as public corruption was matched by the importance of trying to work out new social institutions and economic relationships. Some freedmen deliberately moved away from the plantation, even if the owner had been a generous person. As one minister put it, "As long as the shadow of the great house falls across you, you ain't going to feel like no free man and no free woman."

Work and Family For the first time, many African American men and women could legalize and celebrate their marriages, create homes for their families, and make choices about where they would reside (though these choices were restricted by black codes limiting what work they might do). Life presented new problems and opportunities.

Primary Source "I stayed on [the plantation] 'cause I didn't have no place to go. . . . Den I starts to feeling like I ain't treated right. So one night I just put that new dress in a bundle and set foot right down the big road, a-walking west!"

—Mary Lindsey, age 19

Many African Americans headed for southern cities, where they could develop churches, schools, and other social institutions. They also hoped to find work. Skilled men might find work as carpenters, blacksmiths, cooks, or house servants; women took in laundry, or did child care or domestic work. However, most often, black workers had to settle for what they had had under slavery: substandard housing and poor food, in return for hard labor.



INFOGRAPHIC

THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU

At the end of the Civil War, the federal government took on the responsibility of providing aid to nearly 4 million emancipated slaves, as they made the transition to freedom. In 1865, the federal government established the U.S. Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, which became known as the Freedmen's Bureau. Although the Bureau was poorly funded, it was tasked with numerous responsibilities, which included providing former slaves with education and medical care, overseeing labor contracts, and reuniting separated families. The success of the Bureau was mixed, but its greatest achievement was education. By the time the Bureau disbanded in 1872, it had helped establish thousands of African American schools.

Quick Study

The Freedmen's Bureau spent about \$5 million to set up schools for former slaves. About 250,000 students attend 4,300 Freedmen's schools toward University, Hampton Institute, and Fisk University were founded and financed with the help of the Freedmen's Bureau.

"Few were too young, and none too old, to make the attempt to learn."

—Booker T. Washington



Freedmen's schools taught freed people reading skills as well as new occupational skills (above).



Thinking Critically

- Identify Central Issues**
Why do you think it was necessary for the federal government to provide aid to freedmen?
- Determine Relevance**
How would access to an education benefit newly emancipated slaves?

The Bureau provided temporary housing such as the Freedmen's Village in Arlington, Virginia (top) where freed people (above) could live until they found work and permanent housing.

The Bureau provided certificates that legalized existing marriages and legitimized the couple's children (above right). Labor contracts (right) between an employer and freedman were drawn up by the Bureau to guarantee fair treatment and wages.

The majority of African American families labored in such occupations as lumbering, railroad building, or farming for landowners—white or black—who themselves were often poor.

Schools and Churches Freed people immediately realized the intrinsic value of learning to read and perform basic arithmetic. Only in this way could they vote wisely and protect themselves from being cheated. So the Freedmen's Bureau schools filled quickly. By 1866, there were as many as 150,000 African American students—adults and children—acquiring basic literacy. Three years later, that number had doubled. Tuition amounted to 10 percent of a laborer's wage, but attendance at Freedmen's schools represented a firm commitment to education. In addition to establishing its own schools, the Freedmen's Bureau aided black colleges. It also encouraged the many northern churches and charitable organizations that sent teachers, books, and supplies to support independent schools. Mostly these schools taught the basics of reading, writing, and math, but they also taught life skills such as health and nutrition, or how to look for a job.

The black church was an important component of Reconstruction education. Under slavery, slave owners sometimes allowed their slaves to hold their own religious services. Now, with freedom, black churches were established throughout the South and often served as school sites, community centers, employment agencies, and political rallying points. By providing an arena for organizing, public speaking, and group planning, churches helped develop African American leaders. A considerable number of African American politicians began their careers as ministers.

Checkpoint Why were schools and churches important to freed people?

Remaking the Southern Economy

Many of the South's problems resulted from the uneven distribution of land. As an agricultural region, the South's wealth was defined by landownership. Yet, in 1860, the wealthiest 5 percent of white southerners owned almost half the region's land. Relatively few people held the rest of the land. In fact, more than 90 percent of southern land was owned by only 50 percent of the people. This meant that even before the war, the South had a large number of white citizens with little or no land. After the war, the millions of landless southern white people were competing with millions of landless black people for work as farm laborers on the land of others.

The plan developed by General Sherman and the Radical Republicans to give or sell land to freed people did not provide a solution. Congress had no interest in Thaddeus Stevens's radical suggestion that large plantations be confiscated from once-wealthy planters and redistributed to freedmen. A few African American men, however, were able to gather together the means to buy land. By 1880, about 7 percent of the South's land was owned by African Americans.

Systems For Sharing the Land Even large land owners had no money to purchase supplies or pay workers. As a result, many southerners adopted one of three arrangements: sharecropping, share-tenancy, or tenant-farming.

The first two of these systems could be carried out without cash. Under the sharecropping system, which embraced most of the South's black and white poor, a landowner dictated the crop and provided the sharecropper with a place to live, as well as seeds and tools, in return for a "share" of the harvested crop. The landowner often bought these supplies on credit, at very high interest, from a supplier. The landlord passed on these costs to the sharecropper. Hence, sharecroppers

Vocabulary Bu
intrinsic—(in) t
basic; essential

were perpetually in debt to the landowner, and the landowner was always in debt to the supplier.

One problem with this system was that most landlords, remembering the huge profits from prewar cotton, chose to invest in this crop again. Dishonest landowners could lie about the cost of supplies, devaluing the sharecropper's harvest that now amounted to less than the season's expenses. Thus the sharecropper could never move, because he always owed the owner the labor for next year's crop.

Share-tenancy was much like sharecropping, except that the farmworker chose what crop he would plant and bought his own supplies. Then, he gave a share of the crop to the landowner. In this system, the farmworker had a bit more control over the cost of supplies. Therefore, he might be able to grow a variety of crops or use some of the land to grow food for his family. With these choices, it became more possible to save money.

Tenant Farmers The most independent arrangement for both farmer and landowner was a system known as **tenant farming**. In this case, the tenant paid cash rent to a landowner and then was free to choose and manage his own crop—and free to choose where he would live. This system was only viable for a farmer who had good money-management skills—and some good luck.

✓ **Checkpoint** What arrangements allowed landless people to farm?

Violence Undermines Reform Efforts

The struggle to make a living in a region devastated by war led to fierce economic competition. Economic uncertainty in turn fueled the fire of white southerners' outrage. Already resentful of the Republican takeover of local politics and of occupation by federal troops, white southerners from all economic classes were united in their insistence that African Americans not have full citizenship.

The Sharecropping System

In theory, sharecropping provided an opportunity for poor, landless freedmen and white southerners to save money to purchase their own land. However, as the chart at right illustrates, sharecropping proved to be an endless cycle of debt and poverty that southern farmers could rarely escape. As agriculture was key to the southern economy, the sharecropping system remained a major source of labor until the 1940s when mechanized farming reduced the need for human laborers.

Why was the sharecropping system considered an endless cycle for southern farmers?

◀ Cotton was the primary crop of sharecroppers.

Sharecropping Cycle of Poverty

- 1 Landowner provides land, seed, and tools to sharecropper in exchange for a large share of the harvested crop.
- 2 Sharecropper purchases supplies from landowner's store on credit, often at high interest rates.
- 3 Sharecropper plants and harvests the crop.
- 4 Landowner sells the crop and takes the predetermined share. The sharecropper's portion of the crop is worth less than the amount owed to the landowner.
- 5 Sharecropper must promise the landowner a larger share of the next year's crop and becomes trapped in a cycle of debt.

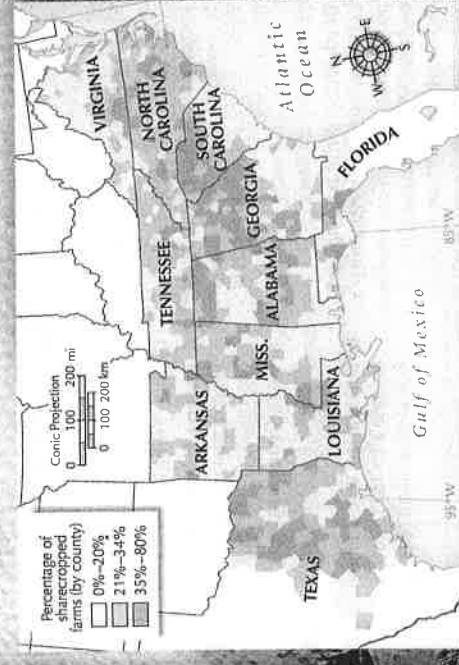
The Ku Klux Klan Strikes Back The more progress African Americans made, the more hostile white southerners became as they tried to keep freedmen in a subservient role. During Reconstruction, dozens of loosely organized groups of white southerners emerged to terrorize African Americans. The best known of these was the **Ku Klux Klan**, formed in Tennessee in 1866. Klan members roamed the countryside, especially at night, burning homes, schools, and churches, and beating, maiming, or killing African Americans and their white allies. Dressed in white robes and hoods, mounted on horses with hooves thundering through the woods, these gangs aimed to scare freed people away from voting.

The Klan took special aim at the symbols of black freedom: African American teachers and schools, churches and ministers, politicians, and anyone—white or black—who encouraged black people to vote. Unfortunately, often their tactics succeeded. In many rural counties, African American voters were too intimidated to go out to the polls.

The Federal Government Responds Racial violence grew even more widespread, in the North as well as in the South, after the Fifteenth Amendment guaranteed all American men the right to vote. In Arkansas, Republican legislators were murdered. In New Orleans, riots broke out. One freed woman from South Carolina reported that the Klan killed her husband, a sharecropper on the land of one Mr. Jones. The widow explained that Klan members were incensed because Mr. Jones had had “poor white folks on the land, and he [evicted them], and put all these blacks on the premises.”

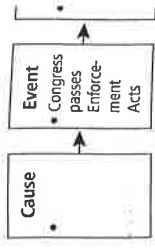
The United States Congress took action, passing **Enforcement Acts** (also known as **Ku Klux Klan Acts**) in 1870 and 1871. The acts made it a federal offense to interfere with a citizen's right to vote. Congress also held hearings inviting black politicians and other observers to describe the situation in the South. George Ruby of Texas told how he had been dragged into the woods and beaten

▶ To ensure a large harvest, sharecroppers used every inch of land to farm.



NoteTaking

Reading Skill: Identify Cause and Effect Use a chart like below to summarize the cause and effect of the Enforcement Acts.



because he had opened a school in Louisiana. Emanuel Fortune, one of Florida's political organizers, reported that his "life was in danger at all times" because he was "a leading man in politics."

Racial violence at the polls was not limited to the South. In the 1870 election in Philadelphia, a company of marines was sent in to protect African American voters. When no such protection was supplied for the 1871 elections, an African American teacher, Octavius Catto, was killed in antiblack political riots. At a protest meeting that followed, one African American Philadelphian spoke out:

Primary Source "The Ku Klux of the South are not by any means the lower classes of society. The same may be said of the Ku Klux of the North. . . . Let no man think that we ask for people's pity or commiseration. What we do ask is fairness and equal opportunities in the battle of life."³⁵

—Isaiah Wears, 1871

Congress used the Ku Klux Klan Acts to indict hundreds of Klansmen throughout the South. After 1872, on account of the federal government's readiness to use legal action, there was a decline in violence against Republicans and African Americans. The hatred may have been contained, but it was far from extinguished. Smoldering beneath the surface, it would flare up in the coming decades.

✓ **Checkpoint** How did the federal government react to racial violence?

Assessment

Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-test with vocabulary practice
www.pearsonschool.com/ushist

2. NoteTaking Reading Skill: Identify Main Ideas Use your chart to answer the Section Focus Question: What were the immediate effects of Reconstruction?

Writing About History

3. Quick Write: Write a Complaint Letter Write to your supplier after a poor harvest as if you were a southern landowner during Reconstruction. Explain why you will have a problem paying for the supplies you bought at the beginning of the season.

Critical Thinking

- Analyze Information** How did Republican governments provide new opportunities in the South?
- Make Generalizations** How did social and economic life change for freed people?
- Summarize** Why did racial violence increase after 1870? How did the federal government respond?



▲ Wade Hampton

WITNESS HISTORY

A Stormy Election

Wade Hampton was an old southern aristocrat from a long line of cotton planters and had been a Confederate general during the Civil War. In short, he was exactly the sort of man that Radical Republicans did not want to see in power.

In 1876, Hampton ran for governor of South Carolina. Across the state, huge crowds cheered fiery speeches denouncing the carpetbaggers scalawags who controlled the state government. Hampton won the election by a wide margin. Radical Republicans charged fraud and refused to leave office. For four months, while federal troops barred Hampton from the statehouse, South Carolina had two separate governments. Not until the war withdrew did Hampton take full possession of his office. The stormy election proved to be one of the last stands for Radical Republicans in the

The End of Reconstruction

Why It Matters In the end, most northerners came to realize that northerners already knew. The rebuilding of the politics, economics, and society of the South would not be easy, nor would it be quick. As reformers lost their resolve, old prejudices took shape. It would take generations of striving before some issues resolved. **Section Focus Question:** How and why did Reconstruction

The Nation Considers Other Matters

By 1872, the nation had been focusing its energies on Reconstruction for almost two decades. Meanwhile, other social, political, and economic issues cried out for attention. European immigration swelled the population in the North and West. Corruption and industry had become part of city politics. As new technologies spurred growth of industry and provided new opportunities for huge profits, they also provided opportunities for major corruption.

Corruption Plagues Grant's Administration Ulysses Grant was a popular war hero but a disappointing President with the Radical Republicans, he promised to take a strong stand against southern resistance to Reconstruction. But Grant's leadership was marred by scandal. He gave high-level advisory positions to untrustworthy friends and acquaintances who used their power

Objectives

- Explain why Reconstruction ended.
- Evaluate the successes and failures of Reconstruction.

Terms and People

Redeemer
Rutherford B. Hayes
Compromise of 1877

Note Taking

Reading Skill: Identify Main Ideas Use a chart like the one below to record main ideas about the factors that led to the end of Reconstruction.

End of Reconstruction