

GUIDE TO NEGRO HISTORY

This outline for the Negro History section of the Freedom Schools curriculum has three major parts. The units are made on a basis of content, not of what we think is a day's or a week's class work. Also included is an introductory study on the Amistad Mutiny, as a sample of what can be done. The Amistad unit is divided into individual lessons.

Introduction: The Amistad Case

Proposed as a sample introductory unit.

I. Brief Synopsis of the Amistad Incident: The AMISTAD is the name of a slave ship on which the slaves revolted in 1839. (Ironically, "Amistad" means "friendship" in Spanish.) Joseph Cinques (pronounced French, i.e. "sank"), the son of a Sierra Leone chief, was one of 53 Africans captured and taken to Havana, Cuba, where the ship picked up additional cargo and two Cuban planters. On the passage between Cuba and New York, Cinques exhorted his fellow slaves to break their chains and gain their freedom. The slaves were able to take over the ship and kill the pilot and captain, but they realized they must save someone to sail the ship back to Africa. With sugar cane knives at their backs, the two Cuban planters were directed to sail the Africans home.

By day the planters sailed the ship toward Africa, but by night they sailed toward New York. With this zig-zag course, they managed to land at a New York harbor, whereupon the duped slaves were again taken captive. A New York judge heard the case of the slaves and decreed that they be returned to their homes, but the President of the United States, Martin Van Buren, disturbed that this decision might encourage additional slave revolts, requested the Attorney General of the United States to appeal the case to the Supreme Court.

While awaiting the trial, many New England abolitionists organized the American Missionary Society, in order to raise funds for the slaves' eventual return to Africa.

Also, an ex-President of the United States, John Quincy Adams, then 73 years old, and with a full career behind him, came forth to argue the case before the Supreme Court in behalf of the slaves. Adams argued eloquently for nearly five hours, and gained freedom for the slaves. He states in his diary that this was the most important act of his life.

In the meantime, the American Missionary Society was able to procure a vast amount of money, part of which enabled the slaves to return home. Prior to leaving the United States, Cinques and several of the slaves toured the country for the anti-slavery cause. When Cinques arrived home, he found his entire family and tribe had been enslaved, but after a few years he was made an African chief of another tribe.

The American Missionary Society used the remainder of its funds to found several Negro colleges, such as Hampton Institute,

Berea College, and, after the Civil War, Tougaloo College.

II. Purpose of the Unit: The Amistad Society feels that this story, so lost in the mainstream of history (along with most important aspects of the history of the Negro), would most adequately set the tone for the Freedom School curriculum. Within this story can be found most of the major issues to be included in the subsequent curriculum. Our experience with teaching Negro history to high school students shows an immediate interest and delight in the Amistad incident. The students not only remember the story, but are able to recall many of its aspects when they are reflected in a further study of Negro history. We therefore, submit that the Amistad outline could serve the following purposes:

1. to elicit immediate interest on the part of Negro youth to a summer of study,
2. to set a tone of pride in their heritage,
3. to offer an introductory or orientation study with several themes which will allow for obvious relationships and parallels to be made in subsequent studies.

This study is flexible, so that it will be suitable for both day and residential schools. It can be used as a three-session day school study, or a three-day to one-week study in the residential schools. We have provided a bibliography both for teachers and students, so that reading skills are included.

III. Outline: First recount the incident informally

- A. African background: The study of African culture and politics before the coming of the white man, to place Cinques and the slaves in their home setting from which they were removed and placed into slavery. Example: Cinques was the son of an African chief and expressed the pride of a "son of Africa."

During this first session, depending on the time allowed, one can discuss with the students some of the Great African empires such as Ghana, Mali and Songhay, the African universities, the politics of these African states and the important African inventions, such as the smelting of iron; or they can simply discuss the organization of African life before its complete destruction by the slave trade.

Suggested books: for teachers

Immanuel Wallerstein, Africa, the Politics of Independence (paperback), chapter 1.

Basil Davidson, Black Mother.

Lerone Bennett, Before the Mayflower, chapter 1.

for students: Emma G. Sterne, The Long Black Schooner
John A. Williams, Africa: Her History, Lands and People
(Cooper Square, paperback)

- B. Slave Trade: Description of the slave ships and the manner in which the slaves were packed into the hold of the ship. The route of the slave ships would illustrate the economic basis of slavery, as well as the various nations involved in the

trade. Example: the Amistad slave ship and the Cuban planters.

Suggested books: for teachers

Bennet, Before the Mayflower, chapter on the slave trade.
John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, chapter on slave trade.

- C. Slave Revolts: Illustrates the many revolts occurring even before the slaves arrived on American shores. Further could include a description of the utter despair on the part of the slaves, as witnessed by cases where Africans jumped overboard in order to escape a life of servitude. Slave revolts on board the ships can be recalled during a study of insurrections in America, e.g., Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey, etc. The underground railroad and Harriet Tubman, even John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry might be included in a discussion of revolts. One could include here a general discussion of slavery, if time allows, and use Frederick Douglass as a guide. All of these things can be mentioned and discussed so that when the same issues come up later, they can be recalled. It is most important that the students understand that protest is nothing new for Negroes and this study clearly illustrates that point.

Suggested books: for teachers

Herbert Aptheker, Documentary History of the Negro in America (several documents written by Negro insurrectionists).
Aptheker, Slave Revolts
Chapters in both Bennett and Franklin books listed above.
Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, autobiography.

for students: Ann Petry, Harriet Tubman, etc.

Katherine Scherman, The Slave who Freed Haiti

Dorothy Sterling, Freedom Train: The Story of Harriet Tubman
Arna W. Bontemps, The Story of George Washington Carver

- D. Abolitionism: The founding of the American Missionary Society lends itself to a discussion of the many persons both white and Negro, who devoted their lives to abolishing slavery. This might include a discussion of Men such as Wendell Phillips and Lloyd Garrison, as well as Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth. One should also include Elijah Lovejoy of Illinois, who was killed because of his abolitionist newspaper.

Suggested books: for teachers

Chapters from both Bennett and Franklin.
Documents from Aptheker's Documentary History.

for students: Anna Bontemps, Frederick Douglass, Slave-Fighter-Freeman.

Excellent film available on Frederick Douglass: House on Cedar Hill.

- E. The Case in the Courts: One should introduce this discussion with a contrast of the United States Presidents involved and their attitudes toward humanity, i.e., Martin Van Buren, who

opposed freedom for the slaves, and John Quincy Adams, who secured their freedom. This, of course, allows for much reflection later in the curriculum on the present freedom struggle and the President's role.

The case was first heard in a lower court of New York, and was appealed by the Attorney General of the United States to the highest court of the land. One can discuss here the manner in which cases are brought through our court system.

Suggested books: for teachers

Aptheker's Documentary History of the Negro in America includes documents which span most of the aspects of this case and excerpts of these documents can be duplicated for distribution to the students.

for students: Russell Adams, Great Negroes Past and Present (Chicago: Afro-American Publishing Co., 1963) offers a brief summary of the incident and a picture of Cinques.

Part I: Origins of Prejudice (1600-1800)

What is the origin of prejudice? (Why do so many white men hate me? How did it all begin?)

Many things are unclear about the origins of slavery, but one thing is clear: slavery came before prejudice, not prejudice before slavery. Prejudice came into being as a rationalization and justification for the institution of slavery. The origin of slavery was profit, not prejudice. Illustration: Shakespeare wrote Othello about the time Jamestown, Virginia, was settled. Although Othello contains some derogatory remarks about blackness, its plot--the marriage of a black man and a white woman--would have been inconceivable in a fundamentally prejudiced society.

Why was the Negro enslaved? Why not the Indian and the European? Briefly, the answer is that the Indians were exterminated, and Europeans had to be treated with moderation so that more Europeans would decide to come. Negro slavery in the New World centered in those areas where Indians were few and soon wiped out: North America and the West Indies. More than half of the white population of the Middle and Southern colonies came to America in some form of bondage (as convicts; as indentured servants, persons who served a term of years in return for their passage; or as the victims of kidnapping). But it was expedient for American employers to treat these white servants with moderation, so that their letters home would induce more Europeans to come.

Africans were first brought to the New World by the Spanish and Portuguese. This was about 100 years before the first Africans came to Jamestown, Virginia in 1619. By the time the English started colonies in the New World, there were already about 1,000,000 Negro slaves in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies of Central and South America.

It is true that there was a form of "slavery" in Africa before the coming of the European, but it was far different from

the chattel slavery (in which a human being is treated as property) that came into being in the New World. The African "slave" was a captive in war. He was not the basis of the African labor system as he was the basis of production in the New World south of the Potomac River. The African "slave" could gain his freedom without great difficulty, and socially was treated as a member of the household of the "master".

On the other hand, it is true that many African chieftains cooperated with the Europeans in enslaving their countrymen. This was the first "black bourgeoisie."

During the four centuries of the slave trade perhaps 100,000,000 Africans were brought to the New World. Probably something like one-third of those seized in African villages perished before reaching the Americas.

The legal status of slavery did not exist in America until the 1660's and 1670's. Before then Afro-Americans are described as "servants" in the legal records of Maryland and Virginia. Yet even in this early period, Negro servants were often punished more severely than white servants: if a white servant ran away he might be required to serve a few more years, but if a Negro servant ran away he might be required to serve the rest of his life. As in so many periods of Southern history, law and custom were two different things, so it is difficult to know just when Negroes began to be treated as servants for life, i.e., slaves. It was the low price of tobacco after 1660, forcing planters to seek out the most economical method of production, which led to the spread of slavery in the South. At the same time the Royal African Company was formed in England to supply slaves to the New World. The King of England was a stockholder.

The American Revolution

Why didn't the American Revolution put an end to slavery? How is it that the men who wrote "all men are created equal" in the Declaration of Independence could continue to be slaveholders? (Examples: Jefferson, Washington)

It is worth emphasizing that the Revolution made some progress toward ending slavery. All the Northern states began the process of abolition by state legislation. From 1774 to 1776 the Continental Congress forbade the importation of slaves. In 1779 the Congress voted to arm slaves in South Carolina and Georgia to fight the British, but the legislatures of those states refused. In 1784, a motion by Jefferson to ban slavery west of the Appalachian mountains failed in Congress by one vote.

Nevertheless, the leaders of the Revolution never seriously attempted to end slavery. Three reasons seem most important: 1) Slaves were property, and as merchants, lawyers, and plantation owners, the Founding Fathers hesitated to attack any form of private property; 2) Not one of the Fathers was able to imagine an America in which white and black would live together as brothers and citizens (Jefferson, like Lincoln, thought that Negroes had the right to be free, but that they would have to be colonized); 3) South Carolina and Georgia were inflexibly determined to retain

slavery as the basis of rice (not yet cotton) production, and to have abolished slavery would have meant to start the Union without these two states.

The United States Constitution

The Constitution compromised with slavery. Although the word "slave" does not appear in the Constitution, the following clauses were written into the Constitution to protect slavery:

Article I, Section 2. Representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the several states according to the whole number of free persons plus three-fifths of all other persons. ("All other persons" meant Negro slaves. This clause gave Southern whites added strength in Congress.)

Article I, Section 9. The importation of such persons as the states think proper to admit shall not be prohibited by Congress for twenty years. (This clause enabled South Carolina and Georgia to import large numbers of slaves.)

Article IV, Section 2. No person held in service in one state who escapes into another shall be freed, but shall rather be delivered up to the party to whom such service is due. (This was the fugitive slave clause, which required the Northern states to assist in returning escaped slaves.)

Article IV, Section 4. The United States shall protect each of the states against domestic violence. (This was to keep down slave uprisings.)

This patchwork performance of America's Founding Fathers on the issue of slavery stands in sharp contrast with the record of the Latin American liberators, such as L'Ouverture, Bolivar and San Martin. All abolished slavery in their respective regions and looked forward eagerly to the day when black, white and brown would be mingled together in a united American people.

Part II: Negro Resistance to Oppression

How were the slaves freed? (Was freedom a gift from the white man? Or did Negroes help to win their own freedom?)

The first slave revolt in the Americas took place shortly after the Spanish brought the first slaves to this hemisphere (first slaves imported directly from West Africa: 1518; first slave revolt: Haiti, 1522).

The Haitian Revolution

The greatest slave revolt in the history of the Western hemisphere was in Haiti (1791-1804).

In the French colony of Haiti, there were in 1789, 39,000 whites and 452,000 slaves. When the island had first been discovered by Europeans there were from one to three million Indians on it. Forty-three years later there were 500, Hence, Negro labor was imported from Africa.

The island was the gem of France's colonial empire. Two-thirds of all French foreign trade was with Haiti. 1000 vessels and 80,000 sailors were required to handle the annual trade

between the mother country and the island.

In 1789, two-thirds of the slaves in Haiti were African-born. They kept alive the African religion and language. They themselves had a hard time staying alive. One slave in nine died every year. The French practiced such punishments as filling a rebellious slave's anus with gunpowder and igniting it.

Among the slaves was Toussaint L'Ouverture. He was a baptized Catholic. His father had received an education from the Jesuits, and Toussaint could read French. As a house slave he had a far easier lot than the field slaves. He was small in stature, five feet two inches. One of his favorite sayings was "doucement alle loin" which might be freely translated as "take it easy, but take it." His achievement is suggested by the fact that whereas Frederick Douglass was about 30 when he escaped to freedom, and Booker Washington was about 17 when emancipation came, Toussaint was 47 when the Haitian Revolution began.

The Haitian Revolution was inspired by the French Revolution of 1789. In August 1791, the slaves of Haiti rose. In two months they burned 1020 sugar, coffee, cotton and indigo plantations: the island was covered by a pall of smoke. In 1793, the government of France, then in its most radical (Jacobin) phase, abolished slavery throughout the French empire. Ten thousand refugees fled from Haiti to the United States.

England then invaded Haiti. From 1793 to 1798, England tried to defeat Toussaint, and failed.

Then Napoleon came to power in France, reinstated slavery, and sent his brother-in-law Leclerc to defeat Toussaint. All the "civilized" world assisted: England and Spain sent supplies, Spain and Holland provided ships. On one occasion when the French soldiers besieged the Haitian army in a fortress, they heard the Negro revolutionaries singing. It was the "Marseillaise."

In 1802, the French generals tricked Toussaint to come on board a French ship, treacherously seized him, and sped him to France. There he died in a dungeon in the Alps in 1803. Meantime, however, the French army gave up its attempt to conquer Haiti. The Haitian revolution had defeated the two most powerful armies in the world. In 1804, the Republic of Haiti was declared.

Slave revolts were fewer and less serious in the United States than in many other parts of the New World. There were two reasons for this: 1) in the United States, it was possible to flee to the North, and men like Frederick Douglass did so who undoubtedly would have led insurrections had they stayed South; 2) in Haiti or Jamaica where slaves outnumbered whites eight or nine to one, insurrection was practical, but in the United States, it was not.

Nevertheless there were three major slave revolts in the United States in the period between the end of the American Revolution and the close of the revolutionary period elsewhere in the hemisphere. These were the Virginia revolts of Gabriel (1800) and Nat Turner (1831), and the insurrection planned by Denmark Vesey

of Charleston, South Carolina (1822). And when one considers also that the slaves who fled North--perhaps 1,000 a year--took their lives in their hands, it is apparent that the picture of the plantation slave as a contented and childlike "Sambo" is far from the truth.

What Slavery Was Like

Perhaps the simplest way to understand what slavery was like is to read the accounts of slaves who survived to tell about it: Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Booker T. Washington. All three lived in the Upper South (Maryland and Virginia). In the Deep South conditions were worse.

They were always hungry. On the plantation where Douglass grew up, the children were often fed scraps in a trough. Frederick recalled fighting with the dog for food. Booker Washington never remembered his family sitting down to dinner together before emancipation. Harriet Tubman was once nearly killed for stealing a lump of sugar.

Clothing was scanty. Children wore a one piece garment, a long shirt. It was made of so rough a material, Washington recalled, that it was torture to "break in" a new shirt.

Booker Washington never slept in a bed until emancipation. Douglass often slept with his head in a sack to keep out the cold, his feet sometimes splitting from frost. Harriet Tubman sometimes slept with her feet in the ashes of the fire.

Douglass saw his Aunt Esther get forty lashes. He saw a cousin walk onto his plantation from a plantation twelve miles distant, covered with blood from a beating; she was ordered to go back home. Harriet Tubman was hit in the head by a piece of iron thrown by an overseer, and suffered from dizzy spells for the rest of her life.

It is easy to understand why these leaders, in their different ways, struck out for freedom.

Negroes and whites worked together in the abolitionist movement, Negroes and whites joined in John Brown's raid, Negro and white soldiers fought for freedom in the Civil War. The Negroes were usually more militant. David Walker in 1829, Henry High Garnett in 1843, Frederick Douglass in 1849 called for slave insurrection. President Abraham Lincoln said that without the help of 150,000 Negro soldiers, the North could not have won the Civil War.

Here are some important dates for this period:

- 1817 Birth of Frederick Douglass
- 1820 Birth of Harriet Tubman
- 1822 Vesey plot
- 1829 David Walker's Appeal calls for slave insurrection
- 1831 William Lloyd Garrison founds The Liberator
Nat Turner's revolt
- 1838 Douglass escapes from slavery
- 1841 Douglass' first public speech

- 1846 War with Mexico begins
Thoreau refuses to pay Massachusetts poll tax
- 1847 Douglass founds North Star and meets John Brown
- 1849 Harriet Tubman escapes
- 1850 Fugitive Slave Law passed
- 1859 John Brown's Raid

Part III: Reconstruction (1865-1877) and the Beginning of Segregation

Why did Reconstruction fail? If we had the vote once, why don't we have it now? Why do we have to start all over again?

Reconstruction was the period just after the Civil War (1865-1877) when Northern troops were sent into the South to compel the Southern states to give real freedom to the freed slaves. During this period about 75 per cent of the Negroes of voting age in the Southern states were registered to vote. Today only about 30 per cent of the Negroes of voting age in the Southern states are registered (1,500,000 registered Negroes out of 5,000,000 eligible). The highest percentage of registered Negroes to Negroes of voting age in any Southern State today is 45.7% (Tennessee), the lowest percentage in any state is 5.3% (Mississippi). Thus in no Southern state today is the percentage of registered Negro voters as high as it was in the South during Reconstruction.

In the Southern state legislatures during the Reconstruction period, freed slaves (who were called 'freedmen' then), cooperated with Southern poor whites (who were called 'scalawags') and sympathizers from the North (who were called "carpetbaggers"). The history books have caricatured the achievement of the Reconstruction legislatures. They started public school systems for Negroes and whites throughout the South; in the city of New Orleans the schools were fully integrated. They abolished imprisonment for debt, and attempted (but failed) to divide up the plantations of high-ranking Confederates among the poor.

Because of their great voting strength, Southern Negroes during Reconstruction elected many Negroes to office and obtained many public appointments. This was especially the case in South Carolina, Louisiana, and Mississippi, where at the time Negroes constituted a majority of the population.

Between 1869 and 1880, 16 Negroes were elected to the House of Representatives from Southern states. Six were from South Carolina, three from Alabama. During the same period two Negro Senators were elected, both from the state of Mississippi: Hiram Revels and Blanche Bruce.

In five states during Reconstruction there was a Negro superintendent of education: Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida, South Carolina.

In South Carolina, there was a decided Negro majority in the state legislature: for instance, in 1873 there were 94 Negro members of the lower house and only 30 whites. In the same state, there were at various times during Reconstruction two Negro speakers of the lower house of the state legislature, two Negro lieutenant governors, a Negro secretary of state, a Negro state

treasurer, and a Negro member of the State Supreme Court.

In Mississippi, the counties of Bolivar, Warren, Hinds, Washington, Monroe and seven others had Negro sheriffs. There was a Negro mayor of Natchez, and a Negro member of the city council in Jackson. In 1873, the Lieutenant governor, the secretary of state, and the superintendent of education in the state of Mississippi were all Negroes. In 1873 there were fifty-three Negro members of the lower house of the Mississippi legislature.

Reconstruction failed because: (1) the freed Negro could not obtain ownership of land; (2) the Federal government lost interest--Federal troops were withdrawn from the South, and the Supreme Court refused to enforce the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.

From 1865 (when the Civil War ended) to 1877 (when the last Northern troops were withdrawn from the defeated South), three amendments were added to the United States Constitution designed to free the Negro slave and to protect him in his freedom. These were:

Amendment XIII. Abolished slavery. (The Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, freed only slaves within the Confederacy.)

Amendment XIV. Stated that all persons born in the United States were citizens of the United States. (The Supreme Court in the Dred Scott decision of 1857 had said that no Negro could be a citizen.) Further asserted that no state could deprive a United States citizen of his rights by passing or enforcing a state law contrary to those rights; "nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

Amendment XV. Created universal manhood suffrage.

Until 1877, these new amendments were supported by a number of Federal laws, notably the Reconstruction Act, which required Southern states to include universal manhood suffrage in their state constitutions; the Force Act, which made it a crime punishable by fine (not less than \$500) or imprisonment (not less than six months) to obstruct the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments; and the Civil Rights Act, which made it a crime to deny any person full enjoyment of all public facilities.

From 1877 to 1954, the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments were not supported by the Supreme Court and so not enforced. The key Court decisions were the Civil Rights Cases (1883), in which the Court held that the Federal Government was bound only to protect civil (not social) rights; Plessy vs. Ferguson (1896), in which the court upheld the segregation of transportation and announced the "separate but equal" doctrine; and Williams vs. Mississippi (1898) in which the court upheld state laws restricting the right to vote.

Myths about Reconstruction:

Reconstruction is the most distorted period in the writing of American history. Some of the myths about Reconstruction

concern Representative Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania and Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, the two men in Congress primarily responsible for its Reconstruction policy.

These men are generally portrayed as vengeful fanatics. But they were reacting to the policy of President Andrew Johnson, Lincoln's successor, which sought to leave the South in the hands of the same upper class that started the Civil War. Under the so-called "Presidential Reconstruction" of 1865, former Confederate states elected representatives to Congress which included the vice-president of the Confederacy, six members of the Confederate cabinet, and four Confederate generals. No wonder Stevens and Sumner protested the seating of these men in Congress!

Moreover, the state governments erected in the South during 1865 passed laws known as "Black Codes" which (generally speaking) forbade Negroes to carry weapons, to meet with whites or intermarry with them, to own land, and to leave their employers. One observer reported: "Wherever I go--the street, the shop, the house, the hotel, or the steamboat--I hear the people talk in such a way as to indicate that they are yet unable to conceive of the Negro as possessing any rights at all. To kill a Negro they do not deem murder; to debauch a Negro woman they do not deem fornication; to take property from a Negro they do not consider robbery. The people boast that when they get freedmen's affairs in their own hands, to use their own expression, 'the niggers will catch hell'." Carl Schurz concluded his report by stating: "Although the freedman is no longer considered the property of the individual master, he is considered the slave of society." No wonder Stevens and Sumner concluded that they should keep Federal troops in the South!

The Reconstruction plan developed by Stevens and Sumner in 1866-1867 had four aspects: 1) Passage of Congressional legislation to protect the freedman's civil rights; 2) Requirement that Southern states draw up new constitutions including manhood suffrage; 3) Stationing troops in the South to protect the Negro in voting and exercising his rights; 4) Dividing the plantations to give the freedman economic as well as political independence. Today we are still struggling to fulfill this program. During Reconstruction all of it was achieved except point four. This bitterly disappointed Stevens, who said: "The whole fabric of Southern society must be changed. The Southern States have been despotisms, not governments of the people. It is impossible that any practical equality of rights can exist where a few thousand men monopolize the whole landed property."

Stevens died in 1868. He asked to be buried in the Negro graveyard in Lancaster, Pennsylvania because "finding other cemeteries limited by charter rules as to race, I have chosen this that I might illustrate in death the principles which I have advocated through a long life, Equality of man before his Creator."

Five years later Sumner, too, was dead. He died as he strove to push through Congress a bill making it a crime to discriminate in hotels, railroads, theaters, restaurants, and other public accommodations. His last words were: "The civil rights bill, the civil rights bill."

Other myths about Reconstruction concern what happened in the South. Among these are:

1. For ten years the South was overrun by Federal troops. (There were never more than 20,000. Richmond and New Orleans had the largest garrisons, about 1,000 soldiers each.)

2. Everywhere the old plantation owners were robbed, ruined and driven from their land. (The typical plantation was divided into tenant farms without change of ownership. Only on the Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia did freedmen acquire considerable land. In 1910, three-fifths of Negro farms were operated by tenants, not owners, and their average size was one-half that of those operated by whites.)

3. Unfairly to the whites, illiterate Negroes were given the vote. (In 1880, more than one-fourth of the whites of Georgia, North Carolina and Alabama were illiterate. Between 1864 and 1870, the Freedmen's Bureau enrolled 250,000 Negroes in school in an attempt to overcome educational deficiencies.)

4. Untrained for anything but farming, the freedmen became vagrants in the towns. (At the end of the Civil War there were 100,000 skilled Negro craftsmen in the South, compared to 20,000 whites.)

5. Northern carpetbaggers and their Negro allies dominated state governments and Congress. (In Congress, there were never more than eight Negroes among 100 Southern Senators and Representatives. States in which Negroes were heavily represented were those with large Negro populations: South Carolina, Mississippi, Louisiana.)

6. Naturally enough, the freedmen used their new powers to punish the white man. (On the contrary, only about 150,000 Southern whites in a total electorate of 780,000 were disfranchised. Those states which disfranchised most were West Virginia, Tennessee and Missouri, before Negroes were given the vote.)

Reconstruction in Mississippi

Mississippi politics from 1865 to the end of the nineteenth century can conveniently be visualized in four periods. To each there corresponded a Mississippi "plan". The four plans were: 1) To give the Negro such elementary civil rights as the capacity to marry and inherit property, but to deny him the vote and keep him a docile sharecropper for the white employer (1865-1867); 2) to give the Negro the vote, but not to give him property of his own (1867-1874); 3) to disfranchise the Negro by violence and intimidation, but not by law (1874-1890); 4) to disfranchise the Negro legally, but in a way that would not violate the Fifteenth Amendment (1890 to the present). Mississippi led the South in phases 3 and 4. The scheme begun in 1874, and that instituted in 1890 have each been called "the Mississippi Plan."

Plan 1 (1865-1867). President Johnson appointed a former slaveholder and Chief Justice of the Mississippi Supreme Court, William Sharkey, as Provisional Governor in June, 1865. Sharkey at once: asked the President to withdraw Federal troops; authorized the formation of an all-white state militia; reappointed

Confederate local officials; called a Constitutional Convention to be elected by white voters. Negro conventions meeting at Vicksburg in June and October, 1865, warned that Mississippi Negroes, confronted by disfranchisement, economic peonage and police brutality, were being forced to choose between flight from the state and "virtual reenslavement." As if to confirm this prophecy the state legislature passed the infamous "Black Code." One clause of the Mississippi Black Code punished intermarriage between the races with life imprisonment. Also in the winter of 1865-1866, planters formed organizations pledged to employing Negroes only as sharecroppers.

The legislature elected under the Constitution of 1865 refused to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment which Congress passed in the spring of 1866. Governor Humphrey said: "This amendment is such an insulting outrage and denial of the equal rights of so many of our worthiest citizens, such a gross usurpation of the rights of the State, that I presume a mere reading of it will cause its rejection." There was not one vote for the Fourteenth Amendment in either house of the Mississippi legislature.

Plan 2 (1867-1874). Under the policy of Congressional Reconstruction sponsored by Stevens and Sumner, 75,000 to 80,000 Mississippi Negroes (four times the number registered today) were registered to vote in 1867. This new electorate chose a new constitutional convention. The president of the convention was a propertyless white man from Warren County, who said: "This hour brings to a final end that system that enriches the few at the expense of the many." This convention provided for: manhood suffrage; a public school system; property rights for women; the end of imprisonment for debt; and the outlawing of discrimination in public accommodations, whether by government units or private corporations.

This new state government, while better than those which preceded and followed it, did not end the Negro's economic subordination. The Federal military commander, General Gillem, notified Negroes in December, 1867, that they were expected to "go to work upon the best terms that can be procured" or be jailed as vagrants. In 1868, Mississippi planters agreed that Negro laborers attending "club meetings" without permission would be dismissed and their wages forfeited, and further pledged not to hire again laborers so dismissed. The Governor of Mississippi under the new dispensation, James Alcorn, had owned 100 slaves and been a Confederate brigadier-general.

Plan 3 (1874-1890). In 1874 and 1875 the white reactionaries of Mississippi overthrew the legally-constituted government by force and violence. The terror began several years earlier. The books of the state auditor showed 54 killed in 1869 and 83 killed in 1870. In 1871 every Negro schoolhouse, or church used as a schoolhouse, in Winston County was burned. Thirty Negroes were killed in Meridian in March 1871. Between forty and eighty Negroes were killed in Vicksburg in November and December, 1874. Between thirty-five and fifty Negro and radical white leaders were killed in Clinton in September, 1875. Altogether 150 Negroes were killed during the years 1874-1876.

The violence in Clinton led the then-Governor, a Massachusetts

man named Ames, to appeal for Federal aid. He was supported by the Negro Senator from Mississippi, Blanche K. Bruce. The other Senator, ex-Governor Alcorn, condemned the idea of Federal aid. President Grant sided with Alcorn. He said: "The whole public are tired out with these annual autumnal outbreaks in the South." Federal troops did not come.

Governor Ames thereupon organized a state militia composed of Negroes and whites. In October, 1875, however, he changed his mind and disbanded it. That same month six Negroes and two whites were killed at Friar's Point. Senator Alcorn assured the Attorney General of the United States: "there need be no alarm for the peace of this country. . . . A community of planters may be relied upon for kind treatment of laborers."

The day before the election of 1875, a Negro wrote Governor Ames from Yazoo City: "I beg you most fulley to send the United soldiers here; they have hung six more men. Now they are going to have war here tomorrow. Help, help, help, help, help." On election day in Hinds County the Republican registrar was bribed to stay away. In Monroe County a bridge was destroyed and pickets posted to prevent the appearance of Negro voters. Still they came. Cavalry imported from Alabama then surrounded them; an artillery piece was trained upon them; and an armed squad moved among the Negroes beating them. In the North, The Nation magazine reported that "the election passed off quietly."

On Christmas Day, 1875, one of the most militant Mississippi Negro leaders, Charles Caldwell, was shot down in the main street of Clinton. Before he died, Caldwell told his assassins: "Remember when you kill me you kill a gentleman and a brave man. Never say you killed a coward. I want you to remember it when I am gone."

Plan 4 (1890 to the present). From 1875 to 1890, according to Judge Chrisman, "there has not been a full and fair count" in any Mississippi election. But in 1890, Congress threatened to pass a bill for Congressional supervision of elections. Thereupon a convention was called to disfranchise the Negro without violating the Fifteenth Amendment. This was the last "Mississippi Plan," which became a model for all the other Southern states.

The Mississippi constitution of 1890 required (1) payment of a \$2 poll tax, (2) ability to read the state constitution, in order to vote. In order to permit poor whites to qualify a clause was included which empowered a registrar to accept a candidate who could not read but who, in the registrar's judgement, could "understand" the constitution.

Once this constitution was adopted, the Negro vote in Mississippi rapidly dwindled. By 1910 every Southern state had adopted similar suffrage requirements. At the same time they passed Jim Crow laws regulating every sphere of social life. Booker T. Washington indirectly accepted this trend in his Atlanta Compromise speech of 1895. The Supreme Court upheld Jim Crow laws in *Plessy vs. Ferguson* (1896), and sanctioned the new voting regulations in *Williams vs. Mississippi* (1898).

Dates

1865-1866, Lincoln-Johnson Plan: the Southern states should not be punished by the North for their insurrection, but allowed back into the Union without qualifications. As a result, the Southern States enacted a program which was designed to re-enslave the Negro, with Black Codes restricting the economic and political activity of the freedmen, and also violence and force. Charles Sumner and Thaddeus Stevens, two powerful abolitionists, protested the lack of economic and political provisions for the freedmen.

- 1866: Civil Rights Bill passed over the President's veto.
Race riots continue in the Deep South (81 Negroes killed during May and June riots)
- 1867: Frederick Douglass leads a delegation to the President urging the ballot for ex-slaves.
Acts passed by Congress in March dividing the Confederate States into military districts. The freedmen were given the right to vote.
Ku Klux Klan held their first national meeting.
Knights of the White Camelia (a white supremacist organization) were formed.
- 1868: The South Carolina Constitutional Convention met in Charleston in January. It was the first assembly of its kind in the West with a majority of Negro delegates (76 out of 124).
Oscar Dunn, an ex-slave, was installed as Lt. Governor of Louisiana. It was the highest elective office held by an American Negro. Negroes were later elected Lt. Governor in Mississippi and South Carolina.
Fourteenth Amendment became a part of the Constitution.
Race riots continue in Louisiana.
- 1869: Ebenezer don Carlos Bassett became minister to Haiti and, as such, was the first Negro in the diplomatic service.
- 1870: Wright, a Negro, was made Associate Justice of the South Carolina Supreme Court.
Hiram Revels succeeded Jefferson Davis as U. S. Senator from Mississippi.
Joseph Rainey became the first Negro in the House of Representatives sworn in as Congressman from South Carolina.
Robert Wood, a Negro, was elected Mayor of Natchez, Miss.
- 1871: Race riots in Meridian, Mississippi
- 1872: P. Pinchback became acting governor of Louisiana and then U. S. Senator in 1873.
- 1873: 60 Negroes were killed in Louisiana
- 1874: White League, a racist organization, was founded in Louisiana.
More violence in Tennessee and Louisiana. Several Negroes and Republican office holders were slain.
Race riot in Vicksburg--35 Negroes killed.
President issues a proclamation on violence in Mississippi.

- 1875: Civil Rights Bill was enacted by Congress. The Bill gave Negroes the right to equal treatment in inns, public conveyances, theaters, and other public places.
Blanche Keso Bruce, a Negro, entered the U. S. Senate from Mississippi.
Racial conflict in Yazoo City, Mississippi.
Racial conflict in Clinton, Mississippi. Negro leaders and Republicans killed.
The Governor of Mississippi requests federal troops to protect the rights of Negro voters. Request refused.
Conservatives won in Mississippi election and initiated the Mississippi Plan, staged riots, political assassinations and massacres and social and economic intimidation used later to overthrow Reconstruction governments in South Carolina and Louisiana.
- 1876: Racial conflict in South Carolina.
- 1877: Hayes agreed to withdraw federal troops from the South. President Hays appointed Frederick Douglass as Marshall of Washington, D. C.
Federal troops were withdrawn from the South.
- 1878: Tennessee initiated the modern segregation movement with Jim Crow railroad car law.
- 1883: The Supreme Court declared the Civil Rights Act of 1875 unconstitutional.
- 1884: John Roy Lynch, former Congressman from Mississippi, was elected temporary chairman of the Republican Convention, becoming the first Negro to preside over the deliberations of a national political party. Massacre of Negroes in Carrollton, Mississippi.
- 1890: The Mississippi Constitutional Convention began the systematic exclusion of Negroes from political life of the South (Aug. 12 - November 1).
Other Southern states followed Mississippi's lead.
- 1895: Booker T. Washington delivered his "Atlanta Compromise" speech.

RESOURCES FOR TEACHING NEGRO HISTORY

Record

"Ventures in Negro History" is available free (we hope) from Harvey C. Russell, vice president, Pepsi-Cola Company, 500 Park Ave., New York City.

Books

An excellent mimeographed brochure on "The Negro in American History" designed especially for high-schools can be obtained from John M. Riecks, Supt. of Schools, Washington, DC.

Howard Fast's "Freedom Road" describes Reconstruction in South Carolina by telling the story of Gideon Jackson, an uneducated freedman who was elected to the South Carolina legislature and ultimately to Congress. This novel is essentially accurate historically. It is published by Penguin Books, 53 W. 43 St., New York City (tel MU 7-8570). Costs 35¢.

"The Pictorial History of the Negro," edited by Langston Hughes and published by Crown Publishers, 419 Park Ave. South, New York City (tel MU 5-8550) is a magnificent resource and worth every bit of the \$5.95 it costs. Order the latest edition which includes narrative and pictures of the recent civil rights struggle.

The following can be ordered from Liberator Book Service, 244 East 46 St., New York City 10017:

1. Guide for Teachers on Contributions of Afro-Americans to the American Culture. \$1.00. Somewhat elementary.
2. Langston Hughes, "Famous American Negroes." \$3.00.
3. Langston Hughes, "First Book of Negroes." \$2.50.
4. Dick Gregory, "From the Back of the Bus." 60¢.
5. Lorraine Hansberry, "Raisin in the Sun." 50¢.
6. William Kelley, "A Different Drummer." 60¢.
7. Haywood Patterson, "Scottsboro Boy." 60¢.
8. "An African Treasury," ed. Langston Hughes. 50¢.
9. "Life and Times of Frederick Douglass." \$1.50.
10. "Lay My Burden Down," ed. B.A. Botkin. \$1.65. Personal recollections of slavery, emancipation and Reconstruction collected by the Federal Writers Project during the New Deal.

Pictures

Pictures of great Negroes togetherwith background information on their lives can be ordered from Mrs Willie ~~Wille~~ Niles, Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1538 Ninth St. NW, Washington DC, 20001.