RECONSTRUCTION AND BEYOND

Freedmen’s Bureau, Black Codes, Andrew Johnson, Radical Republicans,

Reconstruction Acts, 13th, 14th, & 15th Amendments, impeachment, carpetbagger,

Ku Klux Klan, sharecropping, segregation, Booker T. Washington

Although the Civil War began to “save the Union,” it led to changes so vast that it is sometimes called “The Second American Revolution.” Four million slaves were now ________, and had to find a new place in a changed South. Millions of former Confederates had to be brought back into the once again United States. The dozen years after the war in which these changes occurred is called the Reconstruction era.

Lincoln wanted the South brought back with as little pain as possible. Even before the war ended, Lincoln set up a new federal government agency called the Freedmen’s Bureau to help the former slaves get on their feet. Thousands of ________ were set up to teach basic skills and give other help.

The surrender brought many reactions. Some whites adapted, and even offered to help freed slaves get a new start. Many others swore slavery would return. Some blacks stayed where they had worked before the war, while others could not wait to leave an oppressive master. But the South’s economy was totally ________ by the war. Many farms and cities were in ruins. Slavery was ended by the 13th Amendment, but the freed slaves owned no ________ or tools. Southern whites feared what might happen with wandering groups of unemployed blacks, and passed laws called Black Codes. These generally put curfews and travel restrictions on blacks, and prevented them from enjoying full rights as citizens. (In fact, few Northern states at this time gave blacks equal rights as citizens either.)

Lincoln’s successor in 1865 was President Andrew Johnson. He issued a pardon covering most of the former rebels, but showed little interest in the plight of the freed slaves. Members of Congress called the Radical Republicans, however, wanted to shatter forever the old social and economic patterns of life in the South. Many wanted the land of the big plantations broken up and ________ among the former slaves. This land reform plan didn’t go forward, but other important proposals did.

By 1867 the Radical Republicans in the Congress had enough votes to call the shots on Reconstruction. They passed several laws called the Reconstruction Acts. These set up a military occupation of the Southern states. Whites who had fought for the South were now told they could ______ vote, but freed slaves could. Southern states were also told that they would not
be allowed back in the Union until they approved the 14th Amendment, guaranteeing full citizenship to blacks. (The 15th Amendment established voting rights for black men as a national law several years later.)

President Johnson opposed many measures favored by the Radicals, and in 1868 they attempted to remove him. He was charged with misconduct, or impeached, for firing a government official. In reality the Radicals just wanted any excuse to get rid of him. After his trial before the Senate, the Radicals fell _______ vote short of the total they needed to convict him. Johnson remained, although his political career was badly damaged. Ulysses S. Grant, a famous Union general in the Civil War, won the 1868 election.

Southern whites, already angry about losing the war, felt they were being made “punching bags” by Northerners. Conditions were _______ enough without more disruptions caused by the new Reconstruction laws, they felt. They especially resented the Northerners known as carpetbaggers who came South to make a fast buck. In some cases these Northerners used black voters to get themselves elected to public offices in the South, and worked up crooked schemes of various kinds. White Southerners also resented the fact that blacks were being ____________ to various offices, when many whites were still denied the right to vote and hold office because they had fought for the Confederacy.

In reaction, some whites formed secret societies like the Ku Klux Klan to regain their political and social dominance. These groups used threats, beatings, and even murder to frighten blacks away from voting. In 1872 the Amnesty Act restored voting rights to most former Confederate soldiers. Over the next few decades blacks were ____________ out of the political process altogether.

Economically, the South’s plantation system was destroyed by the war and the end of slavery. Very quickly, however, a new pattern of farm labor called sharecropping grew up in many areas. But it often left the sharecropper, white or black, with little or no profit after paying the landowner his share of the crop. (Typically one-half the harvest.) More hopefully, the war helped end the dependence of the South on a few cash crops, and led to the ____________ of industry in some areas. Even so, the region lagged behind the rest of the nation economically for almost a century.

The Reconstruction era ended in 1877, when the last federal troops were withdrawn from the South. But the challenges raised by the Civil War were not entirely worked out. Blacks were increasingly segregated (separated) from whites, and rarely given equal opportunities. This separation would become more rigid with “_______ Crow” laws as the decades went by. It would be many generations before the bitterness of the Civil War faded, and the Civil Rights movement brought Southern whites and blacks together again as equals.

Use these terms to fill in the blanks: bad, destroyed, divided, elected, free, growth, Jim, land, not, one, pushed, schools