

African Americans in the United States Congress During Reconstruction

Power Point Accompaniment

Overview

Through their participation in class discussion and the review of primary sources, students will explore the political climate and changes that took place during Reconstruction. Students will focus on the legislation that restricted and advanced the rights of African Americans throughout this period, examining how African American men were able to gain representation in Congress. Through creation of and participation in a group teaching activity, students will focus on the important roles these African American legislators filled.



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Engraved according to act of Congress in the year 1857 by Thomas A. Stone in the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington.

ROBERT C. DE LARGE, M.C. of S. Carolina.

JEFFERSON H. LONG, M.C. of Georgia.

U.S. SENATOR, H. REVELS of Mississippi.

BENJ. S. TURNER, M.C. of Alabama.

JOSEPH T. WALLS, M.C. of Florida.

JOSEPH H. RAINY, M.C. of S. Carolina.

H. BROWN ELLIOT, M.C. of S. Carolina.

THE FIRST COLORED SENATOR AND REPRESENTATIVES.

In the 41st and 42nd Congress of the United States.

RECONSTRUCTION ?

Black Codes

- Black codes were established in the South during the summer of 1865 and into the fall of 1866, and allowed under Andrew Johnson's administration.
- The codes, while they varied from state to state, were typically laws passed to control and restrict the lives of freed people, essentially rendering them back to the status of slaves again.
- Sample Black Codes made the following illegal for African Americans to:
 - own property
 - be educated
 - move about freely
- The purpose of many black codes was to secure a steady supply of cheap labor, and all codes assumed the inferiority of the freed slaves.



Black Codes

- The Black Codes had their roots in the **Slave Codes** that had formerly been in effect.
- Under Slave Codes, those enslaved had limited or no legal rights. The slave codes were seen as effective tools against slave unrest, particularly as a deterrent against uprisings and runaways.
- Enforcement of slave codes varied from state to state, but cruel punishments as severe as death were often administered.
- After the abolition of slavery with the **Thirteenth Amendment**, every southern state passed Black Codes that restricted the freedmen, who while emancipated, were not yet full citizens.
- While they pursued re-admission to the Union, the southern states provided freedmen with limited second-class civil rights and no voting rights.

Civil Rights Act of 1866

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That all persons born in the United States and not subject to any foreign power, excluding Indians not taxed, are hereby declared to be citizens of the United States; and such citizens, of every race and color, without regard to any previous condition of slavery or involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall have the same right, in every State and Territory in the United States, to make and enforce contracts, to sue, be parties, and give evidence, to inherit, purchase, lease, sell, hold, and convey real and personal property, and to full and equal benefit of all laws and proceedings for the security of person and property, as is enjoyed by white citizens, and shall be subject to like punishment, pains, and penalties, and to none other, any law, statute, ordinance, regulation, or custom, to the contrary notwithstanding.

Fourteenth Amendment

- Building upon the Civil Rights Act of 1866, Congress adopted the **Fourteenth Amendment** on July 9, 1868.
- The Amendment granted citizenship to “all persons born or naturalized in the United States,” which included former slaves recently freed.
- In addition, it forbids states from denying any person “life, liberty or property, without due process of law” or to “deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.”
- The broad definition of citizenship in the Amendment overruled the decision in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857), which had excluded slaves, and their descendants, from possessing Constitutional rights.

Fifteenth Amendment

- Finally, the **Fifteenth Amendment**, ratified in 1870, restricted states from denying someone the right to vote based on “race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”



"TIME WORKS WONDERS."

TAGGART SAID: "FOR THAT I DO SUSPECT THE SIXTY MODE
MAY LEAP INTO MY SEAT-THE THOUGHT WHICH
BOTH LIKE A RIVERINE MINERAL LEAD MY OWNERSHIP.—WILLIS.

Create the following chart on notebook paper.
You will use this to take notes on during your
peer-to-peer teaching activity.

Representative Name	State	Years served	Interesting facts/Accomplishments

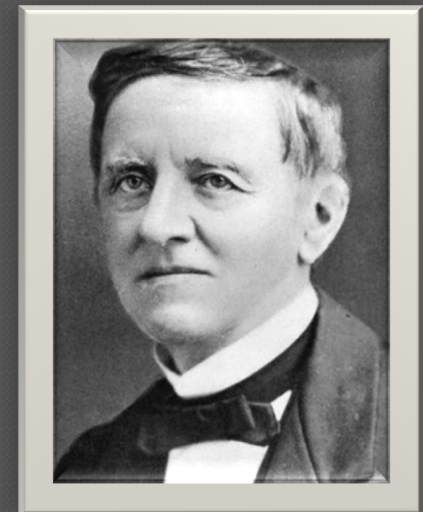
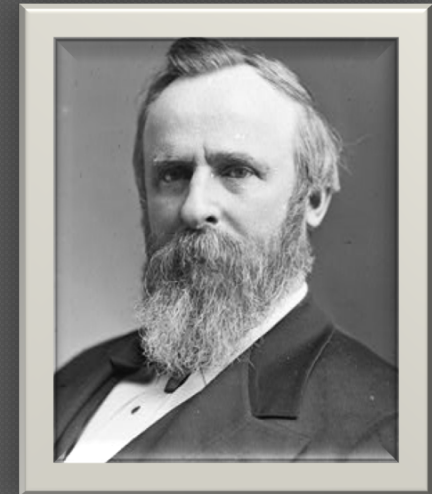
Civil Rights Act of 1875

- The Act protected all Americans, regardless of race, in their access to public accommodations and facilities such as restaurants, theaters, trains and other public transportation, and protected the right to serve on juries.
- In 1874, the Democrats regained control of Congress and without a Republican majority, civil rights legislation halted. The Civil Rights Act of 1875 was not enforced, and the Supreme Court declared it unconstitutional in 1883.



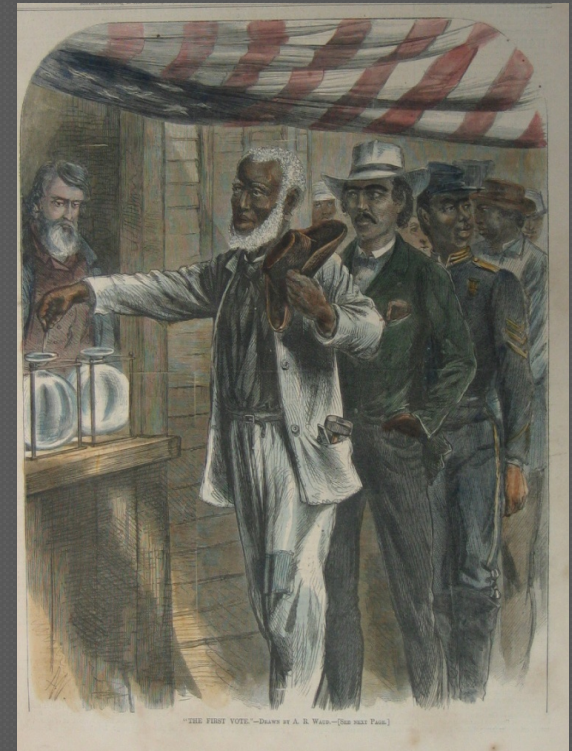
The Presidential Election of 1876

- The **United States presidential election of 1876** was one of the most disputed and controversial presidential elections in American history.
- Samuel J. Tilden of New York outpolled Ohio's Rutherford B. Hayes in the popular vote, and had 184 electoral votes to Hayes's 165, with 20 votes uncounted.
- These 20 electoral votes were in dispute in three states: Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina; each party reported its candidate had won the state, while in Oregon one elector was declared illegal (as an "elected or appointed official") and replaced.
- The 20 disputed electoral votes were ultimately awarded to Hayes after a bitter legal and political battle, giving him the victory.



The Compromise of 1867

- An informal deal was struck to resolve the election dispute: the **Compromise of 1877**.
- In return for the Democrats' acquiescence in Hayes's election, the Republicans agreed to withdraw federal troops from the South, ending Reconstruction. Republicans said they would no longer intervene in southern affairs.
- As Democrats began to regain control of the Southern legislatures, and without Republican intervention, they again restricted the rights of African Americans, such as by not allowing them to vote.
- By 1890, southern states began to disenfranchise black voters with **literacy tests**, **poll taxes**, **grandfather clauses**, and **white primaries**.



The Compromise of 1867

- Southern states and local governments gradually adopted laws that segregated blacks.
- Racial violence in the form of lynching and race riots increased in frequency.
- The last black Congressman elected from the South was **George Henry White of North Carolina**, elected in 1897. His term expired in 1901.
- No blacks served in the Congress for the next 28 years.
- It was not until the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, often called the **Second Reconstruction**, that African American people truly begin to win their civil rights.

