



Southern Democrats
Jim Crow

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DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- At the beginning of the video, Professor Guelzo contends that, “The American Civil War ended in 1865. And a new conflict immediately began. The North won the first war. The South won the second. To truly understand American history, one needs to understand how this happened and why.” What does it mean to truly understand American history? Explain. Why does one need to understand how and why the South won the peace in order to understand the Reconstruction period? Explain.
- After Professor Guelzo points out that after blacks were given new rights, especially to vote, and President Grant was elected on a platform of carrying out the Republican’s plan to help blacks during Reconstruction, that, “...a new problem arose: disgruntled Southern whites organized themselves into ad hoc militias to terrorize Southern blacks and their white Republican supporters into silence. The largest and most famous of those militias went by a still-familiar name: the Ku Klux Klan.” Why do you think that Southern whites were ‘disgruntled’ to the point of terrorizing and committing violence against blacks and their Republican supporters? Explain.
- Professor Guelzo notes that, “Grant left office in 1877. Soon after, the last Republican state governments in the South were overthrown. Black voters were disenfranchised, “Jim Crow” racial segregation became the order, and the South returned to social and economic backwardness.” Why do you think that when the Republican-led state governments in the south were voted out that conditions for blacks regressed back to such a deplorable, oppressive, and un-American state? Explain. What do you think Professor Guelzo means by ‘social and economic backwardness?’ Explain.
- Later in the video, Professor Guelzo asks, “What could we have done better [to avoid the shameful conditions and lasting consequences of what actually happened during the reconstruction period]? First, we should have imposed a real occupation on the defeated Confederacy until a new political generation grew up in the South which learned a newer lesson about race and rights than white supremacy.” Who do you think that Professor Guelzo is referring to when stating ‘we’ in this passage? What do you think Professor Guelzo means by ‘real occupation?’ Explain. Why do you think it would have been better to wait for a new generation to arise before relaxing the occupation? What lesson about race and rights could a new generation have learned instead of the wrong lesson of white supremacy? Explain.
- Professor Guelzo goes on to conclude that, “...we should have gotten landownership into the hands of the freed slaves, and brought the South into the same world of free markets, economic mobility, small-scale manufacturing and industry that Lincoln’s Republicans advocated.” Who do you think should have been responsible for making sure that freed slaves had access and opportunity for land ownership? Explain. How, specifically, might bringing the South into the ‘world of free markets, economic mobility, small-scale manufacturing and industry’ have helped to avoid the awful treatment that blacks received during the reconstruction period instead? Explain. Do you agree with Professor Guelzo’s conclusion? Why or why not?

EXTEND THE LEARNING:

CASE STUDY: The Ku Klux Klan

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “Grant, Reconstruction and the KKK,” then answer the questions that follow.

- During the time that President Grant was elected, what did Southern Democrats do ‘in outright defiance of the Republican-led federal government?’ What did the Klan evolve into, and what was it responsible for? Who did the white mob attack in New Orleans? Who was the first Grand Wizard of the KKK? What did Klansmen do ‘in the name of preserving law and order in a white-dominated society?’ How did the Klan do away with Republican influence in the South? How many murders of Republicans and blacks were committed by white terrorists like the KKK in connection with the presidential election in Kansas? How many black were killed in Louisiana? Which party won decisive victories in those states? What right did the 15th Amendment give, and to whom? What were the Enforcement Acts? What was the Ku Klux Klan act, and what happened to it?
- Why do you think that President Grant did not enforce the new laws that protected blacks enough? Why do you think that Northerners were so different, culturally, from Southerners in terms of racism- i.e. why do you think that so many Northerners were disgusted with the racism of the South? Explain. Why do you think that racism was so prevalent in the South for so long? Considering the history, Republicans consistently supporting the freedom and rights of blacks, and Democrats actually organizing groups to oppress and commit violence against blacks, why do you think that a significant majority of the black community has so strongly supported and voted for Democrats and has so fiercely opposed and voted against Republicans for the last 70 years? Explain.
- What do you think that Professor Guelzo means when he asserts the South won ‘the peace’ after the American Civil War? Do you agree with his assertion? Why or why not? Why do you think that racism still exists, and what do you think can and should be done about it? Explain.



QUIZ

RECONSTRUCTION: THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY

1. The American Civil War ended in _____.
 - a. 1863
 - b. 1864
 - c. 1865
 - d. 1866

2. Why did President Lincoln add Andrew Johnson to his reelection ticket in 1864?
 - a. To anger the Southern Democrats.
 - b. As a gesture of wartime bi-partisanship.
 - c. To greatly speed up reconstruction.
 - d. None of the above.

3. After the Civil War the Southern states were able to count 100% of the freed slaves for the purpose of determining representation in Congress.
 - a. True
 - b. False

4. In 1869, with the help of _____ votes from newly-enfranchised blacks, a new Republican president, Ulysses S. Grant, took office.
 - a. 500
 - b. 5,000
 - c. 50,000
 - d. 500,000

5. What could America have done better in the South after the war to avoid 'Jim Crow' laws, to avoid racial segregation, and to avoid social and economic backwardness?
 - a. Imposed a real occupation on the defeated Confederacy until a new political generation grew up in the South.
 - b. Gotten landownership into the hands of the freed slaves.
 - c. brought the South into the same world of free markets, economic mobility, small-scale manufacturing, and industry that Lincoln's Republicans advocated
 - d. All of the above.



QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/grant-kkk/>

Grant, Reconstruction and the KKK

From the Collection: [The Presidents](#)

At the time of Ulysses S. Grant's election to the presidency, white supremacists were conducting a reign of terror throughout the South. In outright defiance of the Republican-led federal government, Southern Democrats formed organizations that violently intimidated blacks and Republicans who tried to win political power.

The most prominent of these, the Ku Klux Klan, was formed in Pulaski, Tennessee, in 1865. Originally founded as a social club for former Confederate soldiers, the Klan evolved into a terrorist organization. It would be responsible for thousands of deaths, and would help to weaken the political power of Southern blacks and Republicans.

Racist activity in the South often took the form of riots that targeted blacks and Republicans. In 1866, a quarrel between whites and black ex-soldiers erupted into a full-fledged riot in Memphis, Tennessee. White policemen assisted the mobs in their violent rampage through the black sections of town. By the time the violence ended, 46 people were dead, 70 more were wounded, and numerous churches and schools had been burned. Just two months later, on July 30, a similar outbreak of violence erupted in New Orleans. This time, a white mob attacked the attendees of a black suffrage convention, killing 37 blacks and three whites who allied with them.

In this violent atmosphere, the Ku Klux Klan grew in size and strength. By 1868, the Klan had evolved into a hooded terrorist organization that its members called "The Invisible Empire of the South." The reorganized Klan's first leader, or "Grand Wizard," was Nathan Bedford Forrest, who had been a Confederate general during the Civil War.

White Southerners from all classes of society joined the Klan's ranks. In the name of preserving law and order in a white-dominated society, Klansmen punished newly freed blacks for a variety of reasons, including behaving in an "impudent" manner toward whites. They whipped the teachers of freedmen's schools and burnt their schoolhouses. But first and foremost, the Klan sought to do away with Republican influence in the South by terrorizing and murdering its party leaders and all those who voted for it.

In the time leading up to the 1868 presidential election, the Klan's activities picked up in speed and brutality. The election, which pitted Republican Ulysses S. Grant against Democrat Horatio Seymour, was crucial. Republicans would continue programs that prevented Southern whites from gaining political control in their states. Klan members knew that given the chance, the blacks in their communities would vote Republican.

Across the South, the Klan and other terrorist groups used brutal violence to intimidate Republican voters. In Kansas, over 2,000 murders were committed in connection with the election. In Georgia, the number of threats and beatings was even higher. And in Louisiana, 1000 blacks were killed as the election neared. In those three states, Democrats won decisive victories at the polls.

Nevertheless, the Klan's violent actions proved to many Northerners that the South had not learned its lesson in the recent war. In this way, the Klan's activities actually backfired. People realized that harsher laws would have to be passed in order to stop the violence and protect Southern blacks. And those laws were soon in coming.

In the 1868 presidential election, Republican Ulysses S. Grant won the office with the slogan, "Let Us Have Peace." Republicans also won a majority in Congress. Many Northerners, disgusted by Klan violence, lent their support to the Fifteenth Amendment, which gave the vote to black men in every state, and the First Reconstruction Act of 1867, which placed harsher restrictions on the South and closely regulated the formation of their new governments.

Other legislation attacked the Klan more directly. Between 1870 and 1871, Congress passed the Enforcement Acts, which made it a crime to interfere with registration, voting, officeholding, or jury service of blacks. More than 5,000 people were indicted under these laws; a little more than 1,000 were convicted.

In 1871 Congress also passed the Ku Klux Klan Act, which allowed the government to act against terrorist organizations. Grant did not rigorously enforce these laws, although he did order the arrest of hundreds of Klan members. But with the overwhelming support of the Klan in the South, convictions proved difficult to obtain, and the financial panic of 1873 would distract the North from the problems of Southern racism. In 1882 the United States Supreme Court declared Ku Klux Klan Act unconstitutional.