**Structured Controversy: Reconstruction**

**Step 1: Analyzing the Documents**

Document A: 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments

1. When were the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments passed?

2. Why do you think they were passed?

3. What rights did they guarantee for American citizens?

Document B: Black Codes

1. When were these Black Codes written? Who do you think wrote these laws?

2. List three things that freed men and women were NOT allowed to do according to the Black Codes.

3. Think. Why would white Southerners pass laws that controlled the movement of African Americans? What would happen if African Americans left the South in huge numbers?

4. How do these laws help you to understand what life was like in Louisiana and other Southern states after the Civil War?

Document C: Henry Adams’s Statement

1. Who wrote this document, when, and why?

2. According to Adams, what was life like for freed men and women after the Civil War?

3. Do you trust the account in this document? Why or why not?

**Document E: Education**

1. Why do you think education was important to former slaves during Reconstruction?

2. How does this description of life for freedmen compare to Henry Adams’ statement?

**Document D: African American Political Representation**

1. What does this information about African American politicians tell you about what life was like for African Americans during Reconstruction?

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**Document A: The Reconstruction Amendments**

**13th Amendment (1865)**

Section 1.  
Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Section 2.  
Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

**14th Amendment (1868)**

Section 1.  
All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; 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.

Section 2.  
Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each State, excluding Indians not taxed. But when the right to vote at any election for the choice of electors for President and Vice-President of the United States, Representatives in Congress, the Executive and Judicial officers of a State, or the members of the Legislature thereof, is denied to any of the male inhabitants of such State, being twenty-one years of age, and citizens of the United States, or in any way abridged, except for participation in rebellion, or other crime, the basis of representation therein shall be reduced in the proportion which the number of such male citizens shall bear to the whole number of male citizens twenty-one years of age in such State.

Section 3.  
No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice-President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.

Section 4.  
The validity of the public debt of the United States, authorized by law, including debts incurred for payment of pensions and bounties for services in suppressing insurrection or rebellion, shall not be questioned. But neither the United States nor any State shall assume or pay any debt or obligation incurred in aid of insurrection or rebellion against the United States, or any claim for the loss or emancipation of any slave; but all such debts, obligations and claims shall be held illegal and void.

Section 5.  
The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

**15th Amendment (1870)**

Section 1.   
The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Section 2.   
The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

**Document B: Black Code**

ORDINANCE relative to the police of recently emancipated negroes or freedmen within the corporate limits of the town of Opelousas.

Whereas the relations formerly subsisting between master and slave have become changed by the action of the controlling authorities; and whereas it is necessary to provide for the proper police and government of the recently emancipated negroes or freedmen in their new relations to the municipal authorities:

SECTION 1. *Be it therefore ordained by the board of police o the town of Opelousas*, That no negro or freedman shall be allowed to come within the limits of the town of Opelousas without special permission from his employers, specifying the object of his visit and the time necessary for the accomplishment of the same. Whoever shall violate this provision shall suffer imprisonment and two days’ work on the public streets, or shall pay a fine of two dollars and fifty cents.

SECTION 2. *Be it further ordained*, That every negro freedman who shall be found on the streets of Opelousas after 10 o’clock at night without a written pass or permit from his employer shall be imprisoned and compelled to work five days on the public streets, or pay a fine of five dollars.

SECTION 3. No negro or freedman shall be permitted to rent or keep a house within the limits of the town under any circumstances, and any one thus offending shall be ejected and compelled to find an employer or leave the town within twenty-four hours. The lessor or furnisher of the house leased or kept as above shall pay a fine of ten dollars for each offence.

SECTION 4. No negro or freedman shall reside within the limits of the town of Opelousas who is not in the regular service of some white person or former owner, who shall be held responsible for the conduct of said freedman; but said employer or former owner may permit said freedman to hire his time by special permission in writing, which permission shall not extend over twenty-four hours at any one time. Any one violating the provisions of this section shall be imprisoned and forced to work for two days on the public streets.

SECTION 5. No public meetings or congregations of negroes or freedmen shall be allowed within the limits of the town of Opelousas under any circumstances or for any purpose without the permission of the mayor or president of the board. This prohibition is not intended, however, to prevent the freedmen from attending the usual church services conducted by established ministers of religion. Every freedman violating this law shall be imprisoned and made to work five days on the public streets.

SECTION 6. No negro or freedman shall be permitted to preach, exhort, or otherwise declaim to congregations of colored people without a special permission from the mayor or president of the board of police under the penalty of a fine of ten dollars or twenty days’ work on the public streets.

SECTION 7. No freedman who is not in the military service shall be allowed to carry firearms, or any kind of weapons, within the limits of the town of Opelousas without the special permission of his employer, in writing, and approved by the mayor or president of the board of police. Any one thus offending shall forfeit his weapons and shall be imprisoned and made to work for five days on the public streets or pay a fine of five dollars in lieu of said work.

SECTION 8. No freedman shall sell, barter, or exchange any article of merchandise or traffic within the limits of Opelousas without permission in writing from his employer or the mayor or president of the board, under the penalty of the forfeiture of said articles and imprisonment and one day’s labor, or a fine of one dollar in lieu of said work.

SECTION 9. Any freedman found drunk within the limits of the town shall be imprisoned and made to labor five days on the public streets, or pay five dollars in lieu of said labor.

SECTION 10. Any freedman not residing in Opelousas who shall be found within the corporate limits after the hour of 3p.m. on Sunday without a special permission from his employer or the mayor shall be arrested and imprisoned and made to work two days on the public streets, or pay two dollars in lieu of said work.

SECTION 11. All the foregoing provisions apply to freedmen and freedwomen, or both sexes.

SECTION 12. It shall be the special duty of the mayor or president of the board to see that all the provisions of this ordinance are faithfully executed.

SECTION 13. *Be it further ordained*, That this ordinance to take effect from and after its first publication.

Ordained the 3d day of July, 1865.

***Source:*** *Black Code from Opelousas, Louisiana, July 3, 1865.*

**Document C: Henry Adams Statement**

In September I asked the boss to let me go to Shreveport. He said, "All right, when will you come back?" I told him "next week." He said, "You had better carry a pass." I said, "I will see whether I am free by going without a pass."

I met four white men about six miles south of Keachie, De Soto Parish. One of them asked me who I belonged to. I told him no one. So him and two others struck me with a stick and told me they were going to kill me and every other Negro who told them that they did not belong to anyone. One of them who knew me told the others, "Let Henry alone for he is a hard-working nigger and a good nigger." They left me and I then went on to Shreveport. I seen over twelve colored men and women, beat, shot and hung between there and Shreveport.

Sunday I went back home. The boss was not at home. I asked the madame, "where was the boss?" She says, "Now, the boss; now, the boss! You should say 'master' and 'mistress' -- and shall or leave. We will not have no nigger here on our place who cannot say 'mistress' and 'master.' You all are not free yet and will not be until Congress sits, and you shall call every white lady 'missus' and every white man 'master.'"

During the same week the madame takin' a stick and beat one of the young colored girls, who was about fifteen years of age and who is my sister, and split her back. The boss came next day and take this same girl (my sister) and whipped her nearly to death, but in the contracts he was to hit no one any more. After the whipping a large number of young colored people taken a notion to leave. On the 18th of September I and eleven men and boys left that place and started for Shreveport. I had my horse along. My brother was riding him, and all of our things was packed on him. Out come about forty armed men (white) and shot at us and takin' my horse. Said they were going to kill ever' nigger they found leaving their masters; and taking all of our clothes and bed-clothing and money. I had to work away to get a white man to get my horse.

***Source:*** *Former slave Henry Adams made this statement before the U.S. Senate in 1880 about the early days of his freedom after the Civil War.*

**Document D: Education**

Question. What are the principal objects of desire on the part of the negroes in regard to their own future?

Answer. I found them quite generally anxious to become the owners of land. They did not seem to want much, only a “a little patch,” as they said, where they could be by themselves. Their next want was pretty generally a mule and cart. They want to become householders themselves. They seem to think the ownership of land and a horse or mule made men of them at once.

Question. What views do they have in regard to education for themselves and children?

Answer. Their views were a good deal more advanced, in that respect, than those of the lower class of white people I met there. Many of the negroes in some localities, common plantation negroes, and day laborers in the towns and villages, were supporting little schools themselves. Everywhere, I found among them a disposition to get their children into schools, if possible. I had occasion very frequently to notice that porters in stores and laboring men about cotton warehouses, and cart-drivers on the streets, had spelling-books with them, and were studying them during the time they were not occupied with their work. Go into the outskirts of any large town, and walk among the negro habitations, and you will see the children, and in many instances grown negroes, sitting in the sun alongside their cabins studying. I was quite surprised as well as gratified to notice such a decided interest in that respect.

***Source:*** *Sidney Andrews quoted in the* Joint Report on Reconstruction*, 1866. The document above is an excerpt from a report by a Northern white man to the United States government in 1866.*

**Document E: Elected Black Officials during Reconstruction**

*During Reconstruction, thousands of African-Americans were elected to local and state governments throughout the Southern states. In addition, 17 African-Americans were elected to the United States Congress from Southern states between 1870 and 1877. Here are photographs of 6 of these 17 elected officials.*

