



Resistance and Political Control During Reconstruction in Georgia: A Document-Analysis Exercise, PART 1

A Three-Lesson-Plan Sequence for 8th Graders

by

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Background: In this document analysis, students begin investigating Reconstruction efforts in Athens, Georgia after the Civil War. Students address questions about how this effort worked, how southerners felt about Reconstruction, and what the challenges were that Union officials faced in the process of supporting freedmen in the south after the Civil War. In particular, lesson PART 1 focuses on reactions to Reconstruction by the Ku Klux Klan, with a cluster of rare primary source accounts.

Note to Teachers: In addition to addressing Georgia Social Studies Standards, this exercise can serve as good initial preparation for a typical Document-Based Question (DBQ) found in Advanced Placement history courses taught in high school.

Lesson Goal: Students will investigate southern attitudes toward Reconstruction and Freedmen following the Civil War.

Georgia Social Studies Standard

SS8H6: The student will analyze the impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on Georgia. (c). Analyze the impact of Reconstruction on Georgia and other southern states, emphasizing the Freedman's Bureau; sharecropping and tenant farming; Reconstruction plans; 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the constitution; Henry McNeal Turner and black legislators; and the Ku Klux Klan.

Materials: See the series of documents included below, and in Part 2 and Part 3 of this three-lesson sequence on the T.R.R. Cobb House website.

Suggested Lesson Sequence

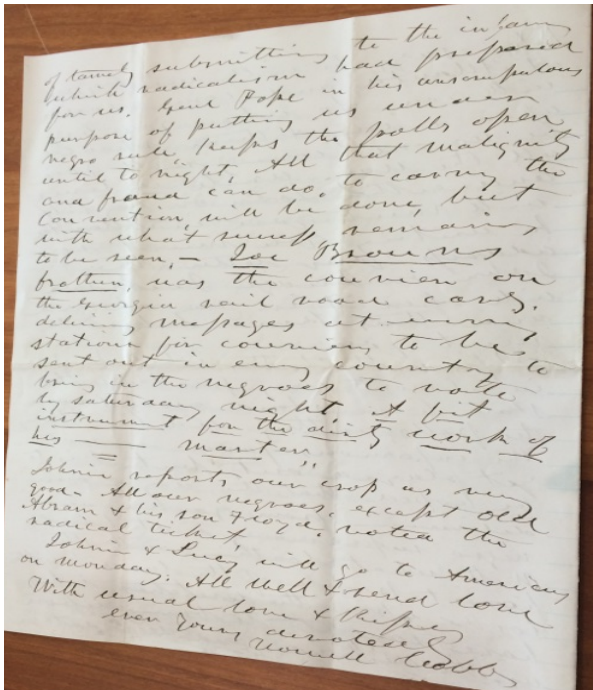
Over a period of three classes, students will read and analyze documents and respond to the question prompts following each one. Students will work independently and then reconvene in small groups to discuss what they found. The small groups will then convene in a whole-class discussion format to clarify any remaining questions. Students will repeat this process for each document.

Final Class Discussion/Review – Review the Lesson Goal with students as a check on their understanding and as a method of gauging their reactions to the readings and its implications for the course of Reconstruction in the southern United States.

PART 1

Document #1

Letter excerpt from Howell Cobb, former Secretary of the U.S. Treasury and born and raised in Georgia, to his wife (Original is from the Hargrett Special Collections Library, University of Georgia, Papers of Howell Cobb Collection)



Transcript:

November 2, 1867

"I find that the white people in almost every part of the state have stayed away from the polls, as they did in Athens. The infamous farce is not yet played out, but it is to be hoped, that the way of our deliverance from Yankee and negro supremacy is at hand. With what loathing will the honest people of the land hereafter look upon the wretched who have sought to bring upon us the dishonor and degradation of tamely submitting to the infamy which radicalization has prepared of us.

"General Pope in his unscrupulous purpose of putting us under negro rule keeps the polls open until tonight. All that malignity and fraud can do to carry the constitution will be done, but with what surely remains to be seen."

Background Questions

Who is Howell Cobb? _____

Who are Radical Republicans? _____

Document Analysis Questions

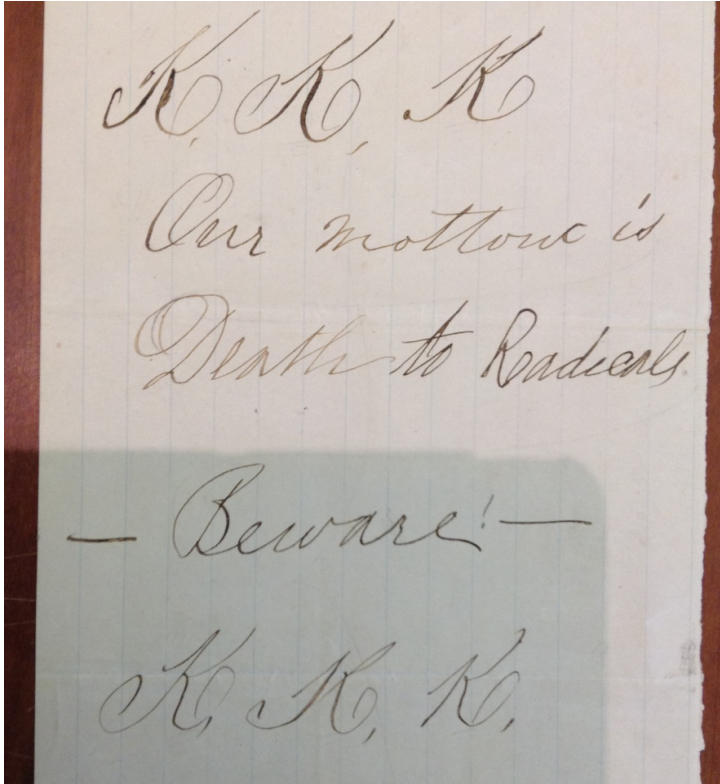
What is Cobb mean by the term “radicalization?” _____

Why is Cobb frustrated? What’s the problem? _____

What does Cobb mean when he states, “The infamous farce is not yet played out, but it is to be hoped, that the way of our deliverance from Yankee and negro supremacy is at hand.” What is he referring to here? _____

Document #2

A Message from the Ku Klux Klan (Original from the Hargrett Special Collections Library, University of Georgia)



Transcript: "K.K.K. Our mottow [or motto] is Death to Radicals. Beware! K.K.K."

Background Question

What is the K.K.K. (Ku Klux Klan)? _____

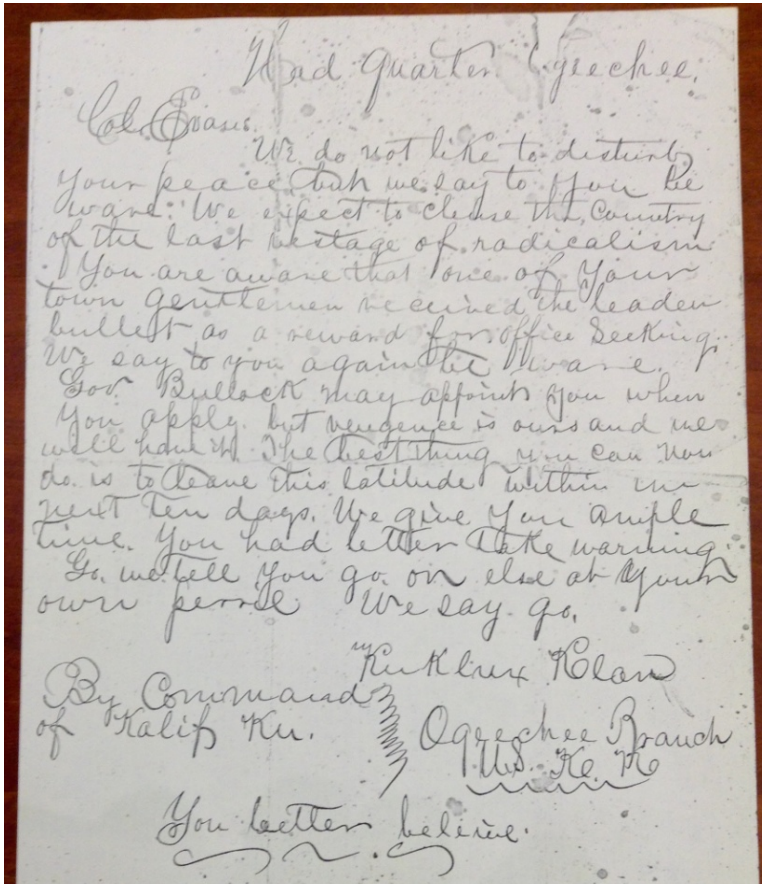
Document Analysis Questions

Who do you think wrote this message? _____
Who do you think it is addressed to? _____
Who or what is a "Radical?" _____

What do you think is the purpose of the message? _____

Document #3

Another message to Colonel Charles Evans, a Doctor, Republican, and former officer in the Union army from the Ku Klux Klan (Original from the Hargrett Special Collections Library, University of Georgia)



Transcript: Col Evans,

"We do not like to disturb your peace but we say to you, beware. We expect to cleanse the country of the last vestige of radicalism. You are aware that one of your own gentlemen received the leaden bullet as a reward for office seeking. We say to you again, beware. Your Bulloch may appoint you when you apply, but vengeance is ours and we will have it. The best we think you can do is to leave this latitude within the next ten days. We will give you ample time. You had better take warning. Go. We tell you go or else your own peril. We say go.

By Command of the Kalif Ku

Ku Klux Klan
Ogeechee Branch

You better believe."

Background Question

Who is "Bulloch"? _____

Who or what do you think "Kalif Ku" is? _____

Document Analysis Questions

What does the message say is the goal of the KKK? _____

What does the following mean: "...one of your own gentlemen received the leaden bullet as a reward for office seeking." _____

What would you do if you were Col. Evans and you received this message? Explain why. _____

Note to Teachers: For a continuation of this lesson, see the Part 2 and Part 3 PDFs on the T.R.R. Cobb House website.

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Note: This work was produced through an educational collaboration between Clarke County (GA) School District and the T.R.R. Cobb House Museum.

