



Resistance and Political Control During Reconstruction in Georgia: A Document-Analysis Exercise, PART 2

A Three-Lesson-Plan Sequence for 8th Graders

by

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Note to Teachers: This is PART 2 of a three-lesson sequence dealing generally with Reconstruction in Georgia following the Civil War. The sequence follows the pattern established in the Suggested Lesson format in PART 1. Please download that PDF for more information about lesson goals and connections to Georgia Social Studies Standards and Advanced Placement-type document analyses addressed by the lessons.

Lesson 2

Document #4

Excerpt from: **Report of the Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States.** This is a 13-volume collection of reports and testimonies from a Congressional committee that investigated the Ku Klux Klan and other insurrectionary movements in the former Confederacy after the close of the Civil War. The committee made their report in 1872. See p. 610.

“To THOMAS ALLEN, (*Freedman* :)

“Tom, you are in great danger ; you are going heedless with the radicals, against the interest of the conservative white population, and I tell you if you do not change your course before the election for the ratification of the infernal constitution, your days are numbered, and they will be but few. Just **vote** or use your influence for the radicals or for the constitution, and you go up certain. My advice to you, Tom, is to stay at home if you value your life, and not **vote** at all, and advise all of your race to do the same thing. You are marked and closely watched by K. K. K., (or in plain words Ku-Klux.)

“Take heed ; a word to the wise is sufficient.

“By order of Grand Cyclops.”

Background Question

Who is Thomas Allen? (click on the two links below to address the question)

<http://www.atlantaintownpaper.com/features/INCaseWondering.php>

<https://atlantamonumentsfreshmancompblog.wordpress.com/2012/11/27/expelled-because-of-color-monument-at-the-georgia-state-capitol/>

Document Analysis Questions

Who is the message from? _____

What is the message telling Thomas Allen to do? _____

What is the objective of this message? _____

Do you think the objective will be met? Explain why or why not. _____

Document #5

Thomas Allen was then asked to testify before the committee. This below is his Congressional testimony (from p. 607). The Chairman of the Committee begins and then continues to question Mr. Allen, followed by Mr. Allen's response.

By the CHAIRMAN :

Question. What is the feeling of your people in regard to their personal safety ?

Answer. They do not consider that they have any safety at all, only in the cities ; that is the truth. In a great many places the colored people call the white people mas-

ter and mistress, just as they ever did ; if they do not do it they are whipped. They have no safety at all except in a large place like this. If I could have staid at home I would not have been here. I left all my crops and never got anything for them. My wife had no education, and when I came away everything went wrong. There are thousands in my condition.

Question. Is that the reason so many of your people come to the large cities ?

Answer. Yes, sir, that is the reason. Mr. Abram Turner, a member of the legislature, from Putnam County, the county adjoining mine, was shot down in the street in open day. He was a colored man. They have elected another in his place, a democrat.

Question. When was he elected ?

Answer. Last fall.

Question. He has been killed since ?

Answer. Yes, sir, shot down in broad open day. I see his name published in the New Era of this State among the list of members ; but another man has been elected in his place. The young man who murdered him got on his horse and rode off. Over in Jasper County two young men went to a man's house and shot him down, and he died instantly. They arrested them and held them for a little while, but soon turned them loose.

Question. Was the man who was killed a colored man ?

Answer. Yes, sir.

Question. What was the politics of the young men who killed him ?

Answer. They were democrats.

Question. Was he a republican ?

Answer. Yes, sir. I knew him very well ; he was a good man, a harmless man ; I married him to his wife.

Question. Do the people of your race feel that they have the protection of the laws ?

Answer. By no means.

Question. What is their hope and expectation for the future ?

Answer. They expect to get protection from the Federal Government at Washington ;

Document Analysis Questions

Why are African-Americans going to the city? _____

What happened to Abram Turner? Who replaced him? _____

What is African-Americans "hope and expectation for the future?" _____

Do you think this is a reliable source for explaining what was happening for Freedmen and women? Explain. _____

Document #6

Effects of the KKK on African-American Legislators

Excerpt taken from Grant, Donald L., and Jonathan Grant. *The Way It Was in the South: The Black Experience in Georgia*. (Secaucus, NJ: Carol Pub. Group, 1993), p. 122.

In 1870, Georgia Democrats won 86 percent of the Senate and 81 percent of the House. Despite the overwhelming election of white Democrats, five blacks were elected to the Senate, two more than in 1868, and eighteen to House, as compared to twenty-nine in 1868. One, **Abram Turner** of **Putnam** County, was soon murdered, and the Klan initiated a race riot at the special election that was called to replace him, ensuring a Democratic victory. Even before the Democrat-controlled legislature assembled a year later, in November 1871, eleven of the remaining black members came under fire. Their elections were disputed by Democrats, and the Klan sent them notes saying they would die if they did not resign. Governor Bullock did resign and fled the state to

Document-Analysis Questions

Using the above passage, list three ways the KKK were successful in affecting African-American legislators in Georgia.

Why did Democrats want control of the Senate and the House? _____

If they lost control, what did they fear would happen? _____

Note to Teachers: As a concluding exercise, the whole class might engage in a preliminary discussion of (a) the anti-Reconstruction strategies of the KKK in Georgia, and (b) the overall influence of the KKK on Reconstruction in Georgia. Then, using these documents as evidence, students would consider why white southerners were so opposed to Reconstruction, to Radical Republicans, and to allowing freedmen to hold public office.

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

