

Unit 8 Closed Captions

8.1 Presidential and Radical Reconstruction

Section 1

- 00:00:00 Well, now let's take a look at our lesson question. How did Presidential Reconstruction and Radical Reconstruction differ? And remember, Reconstruction is this process, this era, that occurs after the war by which southern states are readmitted to the Union and are gradually given back their rights as citizens in the United States of America. Well, what we see happen are two phases of Reconstruction.
- 00:00:24 First, we have Presidential Reconstruction and then later we have Radical Reconstruction. And we're going to start with Presidential Reconstruction. And remember, at the end of the war Lincoln is still president. But he's going to be brought down by the bullet from an assassin putting President Johnson in charge. So let's take a look and see what Presidential
- 00:00:43 Reconstruction was all about.

Section 2

- 00:00:00 Now remember, after his re-election at the end of 1864, the victory was well in sight for the Union. Sherman's March to the Sea had occurred, Southern morale was destroyed. And by the time Lincoln is inaugurated again, he understands that the war's coming to a close, and he has to have a plan for what will happen afterwards. And in his inaugural address he discusses that, he says
- 00:00:24 "With malice towards none, with charity for all." Remember, we're not going to lash out in anger against the South, they are our brothers. We're going to welcome them back into the country with charity-- so with favor, or with mercy. He says "Let us strive to finish the work we are in and to bind up the nation's wounds." So Lincoln's idea
- 00:00:46 about reconstruction is that we had to be generous to the South, that we had to welcome them back into our nation. And we had to work on compromises in order for everyone to move forward and into the future. So Lincoln's plan for reconstruction is called the Ten Percent Plan. That is because it readmitted any state in which 10% of the population swore a loyalty oath to the Union.
- 00:01:12 So basically, you would sign an agreement saying that you promised to swear loyalty to the United States of America and you would never rebel again. On top of that, it required States to abolish slavery and

pardoned all the Confederates who had sworn loyalty to the Union. So there were no consequences for Confederate officers, or anyone else, for rebelling against the United States.

00:01:38 And it was very, very moderate, and it was designed to reunite the nation very, very quickly. Well, many in Congress are very unhappy with Lincoln's plan. He thinks they're letting them off the hook way too easy. That the South had started this rebellion, it cost hundreds of thousands of lives, and they needed to be at least held a little bit accountable.

00:01:57 So the Wade-Davis Bill is passed in Congress in response to Lincoln's plan. It was proposed by Senator Benjamin Wade and Representative Henry Winter Davis, and said it required 50% of each state's white males to swear loyalty instead of just 10%. It also prohibited Confederate officers from ever voting or serving in public office again.

00:02:22 If we take a look here, we can see some of the provisions. It says "No person who has held any office, civil or military," so anyone who's worked for the Confederate government or served in the military as an officer "shall vote for or be a member of the legislature or the governor." It says "Involuntary servitude or slavery is forever prohibited, and that no debt shall be recognized or paid for by the state."

00:02:45 So what this means is that those states that rebelled, like Virginia and Mississippi and so forth, were responsible for paying off their own war debt, that the Union wasn't going to pay those debts off. Now this bill was passed by Congress, but vetoed by President Lincoln. That means that he said no, I refuse to make this law. And it goes back to Congress and Congress has to override

00:03:08 that veto, and they were unable to do so.

Section 4

00:00:00 Well, when the war comes to an end, Republicans are firmly in control in Congress. They control the House. They control the Senate. And of course, President Lincoln is also a Republican. But despite this, the Republican Party was deeply divided over how to approach reconstruction in the South. So we have two sides.

00:00:19 We have the moderate side. And this group is siding with Lincoln. They want to be merciful. They want reconciliation. They want to admit those states back as quickly as possible. So reconciliation means to renew a friendship. That's what they're trying to do.

00:00:36 They're trying to bring everyone together. They want the war over. They don't want any more conflict. They just want it to be done with. And they're willing to show mercy for that to occur. Now on the other side, however, we have the radical Republicans. The radical Republicans believe that people in the

00:00:54 South should be punished for starting the war, for causing the deaths of 650,000 Americans. You cannot just let them off scot-free and pretend it didn't happen. So radical Republicans were deeply opposed to Lincoln's plan. They were concerned that if they showed leniency or if they showed mercy to the South, slavery

00:01:17 would then just continue. They also basically threatened to deny congressional representation for southern states, so refuse to let them have people in the US House of Representatives representing them or in the US Senate. Now everything, however, is going to get much more difficult in April because that's when President Lincoln is shot by John Wilkes Booth, like you see

00:01:40 in the picture here. He is going to die the next morning. And now we have a new president, Vice President Andrew Johnson. Now remember, President Johnson's got two problems. Number one, he's a Democrat. And at the time, the Republicans are in control. Number two, he's from Tennessee.

00:01:58 He's from a slave holding state that rebelled. So of course, this is going to also cause huge problems. So let's take a quick look at Johnson. He was actually from North Carolina and was born into poverty there. And as a result, he resented that wealthy landed elite that controlled Southern politics. And that's going to spill over into his political

00:02:19 beliefs as an adult. However, eventually he's going to move to Tennessee with his family. He becomes a tailor. And he enters politics and becomes a very popular politician. Now, he is the only member of the Confederacy that was a member of Congress to refuse to support secession.

00:02:38 He did not give up his seat. He stayed in the US Senate as a voting member and became a very, very popular war Democrat. He was a hero to people in the North, and, of course, a traitor to those in the South. And of course, because Lincoln was concerned about his re-election because he wanted to show the South that he was merciful, he decides to choose President Johnson as his vice

00:03:03 presidential running mate in 1864. So of course when Lincoln dies, Johnson assumes the presidency. Now remember, Lincoln's plan had been rejected by Congress. But Johnson's going to put forth his own

plan. And he's trying to make it a little bit stricter than what Lincoln had proposed. But it kept most of the big ideas for Lincoln's plan.

00:03:23 But one thing that it did do was disenfranchise military officers. So this meant that anyone who had served as an officer in the Confederate military did not have the right to vote. That's what disenfranchised means. It also disenfranchised those who owned property worth more than \$20,000. So again that landed elite that he so resented, he's

00:03:45 going to not allow them to vote. They are not going to be back into the union as voting members. And now the one thing that he did say though is that people could petition for individual pardons. And he's going to grant 13,000 pardons. This is going to greatly anger Congress. And he calls on state governments to establish new

00:04:07 constitutional conventions and create new governments. So let's take a look at readmittance of the states under Johnson's plan. In order to qualify for readmittance under Johnson, states had to ratify the 13th Amendment. Now this amendment to the Constitution abolished slavery. They also had to repudiate war debts.

00:04:27 So what does that mean? Well, what that means-- in order to raise money for the war, both the Union and the Confederacy sold bonds to citizens. And in the South, very wealthy families put tens of thousands of dollars into Confederate war bonds with the expectation that they would be paid back when the war was over. But as part of Johnson's plan for readmittance, those debts

00:04:49 were cancelled. And as a result, all those Southern planters who had invested in the Confederacy lost all their money. So it was one way to punish the really wealthy people in the South. They also had to renounce all their acts of secession saying that, no, we were wrong. We shouldn't have seceded from the union.

00:05:05 And that was not allowed. As a result, by December of 1865 Johnson says, wow, reconstruction's over. All of these states have been readmitted to the union. Hooray, we're all done. And of course, you can imagine this is not going to go over well in Congress.

Section 6

00:00:00 Well let's take another look at our lesson question. How did Presidential Reconstruction and Radical Reconstruction differ? Well, we've just learned about Presidential Reconstruction. This was the plan under Lincoln and Johnson, and it was very merciful to the South. But we know many in Congress were opposed to these plans, and they're going to take over the reconstruction process.

00:00:23 Sometimes this is called Congressional Reconstruction, but it's also called Radical Reconstruction. So let's take a look at what Radical Reconstruction is.

Section 7

00:00:00 So why did Congress feel the need to step in and completely reject Johnson's plan for Reconstruction? Well let's take a look and see what happened. So after Reconstruction goes through, and all these states are being readmitted to the Union. There's something going on in Washington. And that is Congress is not in session. So what that means is, unlike today, when Congress is in

00:00:22 session year-round. And Congressmen pretty much make their home in Washington DC. Back in the 1860s Congress would be in session for a few weeks, and then people would go home. So most of the year, in fact, most Congressmen are not living in Washington. They're back in their home states.

00:00:37 So all this is happening while Congress is out of town. And the first thing that happens is that in the South they start holding elections to reestablish their governments. And many of the people who get elected to state office, or were those that were supposed to be disenfranchised, including Confederate military officers. These wealthy planters, who owned more than \$20,000 worth

00:00:59 of property. And what basically happens is everything returned to the way it had been before the war. All the power is in the hands of this wealthy planter aristocracy. And no power given to the newly freed enslaved people- the poor people in society. And Johnson doesn't call for new elections, despite the

00:01:20 fact that the South is breaking all the rules that were set up during Reconstruction. On top of that, the state legislatures in the South start enacting something called Black Codes. And these were laws that were designed to restrict the rights and freedoms of African Americans. So remember, everyone was required to pass the 13th Amendment.

00:01:42 Slavery was supposed to be done. But what happens is that these new laws are passed. And the rights that African Americans have in the South, were no different than the rights they had under slavery. For example, they were not allowed to own property. African Americans couldn't do any type of job they wanted to do. They could only work in certain fields, like working

00:02:04 in an actual field. They could work in unskilled labor. They could work in homes. But they couldn't do any type of job. They also established

strict vagrancy laws. And vagrancy laws are, basically, laws designed to restrict people from just living on the street. So basically, African Americans had to prove that

00:02:26 they had a job, and a home, and they had a way to make a living. Or they could put you in jail or force you to work for someone for little or no wages. So basically, enslaving people all over again. Just in a new legal way. They required African Americans to sign labor contracts.

00:02:43 So you would have to agree to work for a planter for a period of five years, and you wouldn't have the right to quit that job. And they set punishment for failing to follow laws. And laws included social things like stepping off of the sidewalk to let a white person walk through. Or standing last in line at the counter- if a white person came in, you had to let them go first.

00:03:04 Things like that. And typically, these laws were enforced by state and state militia, and local police.

Section 9

00:00:00 So, when Congress gets back into session, a group of Southern congressmen come up to take their seats in the Senate and in the House of Representatives. Many of them are former members of the Confederate government. Others are members of the Confederate military and served as officers. Some of them are members of the Planter Aristocracy.

00:00:19 And as a result, Congress refuses to seat these members. So basically what Congress is doing by refusing to accept these people into their body, is that they're saying sorry, President Johnson, we reject your reconstruction plan. Reconstruction is not over, and Congress proceeds to take over reconstruction. And this has two names, it's called congressional reconstruction and radical reconstruction.

00:00:44 So let's take a look at some of the things that Congress does, and we're going to be talking about each of these as we go on throughout the lesson. 10 They include passing the Civil Rights Act of 1866, establishing martial law or military rule-- military government in the South-- passing the Fourteenth Amendment, which grants citizenship status to African-Americans, and passing

00:01:08 a law called the Tenure of Office Act. So let's take a look first at the Civil Rights Act of 1866, and let's see what this says. It says "All persons born in the United States are citizens of the United States. And as such, citizens of every race and color, without regard to any

previous condition of slavery or involuntary servitude, shall have the same rights."

00:01:32 So what does this mean? Well, it means that everyone-- well, every male-- born in the United States is a citizen, and that everyone has the same rights. No matter if they've been a slave or not, no matter if they've ever been an indentured servant or not, no matter if they are black or white or any other race. Now, this law outlined the rights that were granted to

00:01:55 all the male citizens of the United States. Of course women don't have the right to vote, for example, for some time. They do not have the same rights that men do. And this law was vetoed by President Johnson. However, Congress is able to overturn this veto with a two-thirds majority. Now remember, this is when the line gets drawn in the sand.

00:02:16 On one side you have the Republicans-- and remember, before the Republican had been kind of split between the radical Republicans and the more moderate ones. Well, no longer, the Republicans are going to band together against the president, and many Democrats are going to start to side with the president. Because the issue is that the president does not want to

00:02:34 give any more rights to freed slaves, and Congress does. So the next thing that Congress does is pass the Reconstruction Act of 1867. Now, 1867 is significant because in the 1866 election the Republicans win big. Of course, no one in the South is voting yet, and as a result they have a huge majority in Congress. And so it doesn't matter if the president vetoes laws

00:03:00 because they can overturn his veto. Now what this act does is divides the South into all of these military districts. So military generals are placed in charge of the government of these military districts. Marshall law is established, and Southern states were required to accept this if they wanted to get back into the Union.

00:03:19 And some of them initially do not comply, but Congress just simply passes new laws whereby military personnel oversee elections, and they also register voters. Now why is this important? Well, once the military's overseeing elections they're making sure that African-Americans are given their right to vote. They're the ones registering African-Americans to vote,

00:03:42 they're overseeing those elections so they are fair. And as a result, they're taking power out of the hands of this very wealthy class in the South, and African-Americans are going to have a say in their

government for the first time ever. Now, what we see happen again is we have Johnson and the Democrats on one side, and then the radical Republicans on the other.

00:04:02 And more and more Republicans are going to the radical side. So the Republicans are pushing for greater rights to be granted to African-Americans, including the right to vote, and of course Johnson is opposed to this. He vetoes 20 reconstruction bills, and many of these vetoes are overturned by the Congress. Because again, they do have a more than two-thirds majority in both houses at that time.

00:04:29 And the end story to all this is that eventually they are tired of Johnson being obstructionist, or getting in the way of congressional plans. And so they're going to try to remove him from office. This is called impeachment, and we'll be learning about that in just a moment.

Section 11

00:00:00 Now Congress tried to curb the President's powers in one more way, by passing the Tenure of Office Act in 1867. Now this law prevented the President from removing presidential appointees without Senate approval. Now the purpose of this was to keep in office everyone appointed by Lincoln. Remember, Lincoln was a Republican. And people in Congress, the majority were

00:00:24 Republicans as well. And so Congress was concerned that Johnson would start firing Republicans and replacing them with Democrats, the members of his own party. So immediately Johnson gets about testing this law. He suspends and then later fires Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, pictured here, who opposed Johnson's Reconstruction policies.

00:00:45 Of course, this greatly angers Congress and they decide to impeach the President. Now when the president is impeached, this means that charges of wrongdoing are brought against him. And the House of Representatives brings the charges against the President. And in 1868, the House of Representatives said that the President violated the Tenure of Office Act, so he broke the

00:01:09 law, he criticized Congress and abused his presidential powers. So of course, they're doing this for political reasons. They don't like the President. They don't like that he belongs to a different party. And they don't like the fact that he's vetoing all their laws. But you have to have a legal reason for doing it.

00:01:25 And these are the legal reason that they stated. Now once the House brought the charges of impeachment against the President, the vote then goes to the Senate. And in a final vote of 35 to 19, Johnson kept

his position. So there was one vote that kept Johnson in office. And following this near miss, Johnson, however, really changes the way he interacts with Congress. He stops interfering with them and does his best to kind of

00:01:55 stay out of their way until he leaves office.

Section 14

00:00:00 Well let's take another at our lesson question. How did Presidential Reconstruction and Radical Reconstruction differ? And we now know that there were two plans for reconstruction. The plan put forth by President Lincoln, and then later President Johnson, and now the plan put forth by congressional republicans.

00:00:18 This is sometimes called Radical Reconstruction. Well now let's take a look at some of the changes enacted by Congress in order to change the way reconstruction was occurring in the South.

Section 15

00:00:00 Well now we're going to take a look at an important achievement of reconstruction, and that is the passage of the Reconstruction Amendments. Now these are the three amendments passed after the Civil War that deal specifically with ending the institution of slavery and prohibiting discrimination against African Americans. So let's take a look.

00:00:20 There are three. The 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments. And we're going to start with the 13th Amendment. The 13th Amendment declared that slavery would not exist anywhere within the United States or within its jurisdiction. However, involuntary servitude could still exist as punishment for crime.

00:00:39 This is basically when people are convicted, they're thrown into prison, and then they serve on work crews. That is not slavery. But of course, the slavery that existed in the south at the time of the war was specifically prohibited. Now this amendment was ratified in 1865. However, there was a fight to get this amendment through. Now Republicans, of course, wanted a complete end to the

00:01:02 institution of slavery. Remember, Lincoln had declared that that was going to be the price of the Civil War for the South, that slavery would come to an end forever. They also wanted to include more comprehensive legislation that would prohibit discrimination against African Americans and ensure them more rights. Now Democrats, however, many of them pushed for the

00:01:24 reinstatement of states' rights. Therefore allowing states to individually choose whether or not to include anti-slavery provisions. But those Democrats were defeated, and the 13th Amendment was ratified.

Section 17

00:00:00 Well next, let's take a look at the 14th and 15th Amendments. And these were much more difficult to get passed than the 13th Amendment. Even President Johnson supported the 13th Amendment. But he opposed both of these amendments, as did many Democrats in Congress. So let's take a look at the 14th Amendment first.

00:00:18 It says that, "All persons born or naturalized in the United States are citizens of the United States." And "No State shall deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law, nor deny any person within its jurisdiction equal protection of the law." So there's three important parts to this amendment. The first part is that everyone born in the United States is a citizen of the United States.

00:00:46 Now the second part is this section here. Now everyone has certain rights under the Bill of Rights. And you're familiar with those. They're the first 10 amendments to the Constitution. So you have the right to a fair trial and all sorts of things.

00:01:04 And the first 10 amendments of the Constitution says the Federal government cannot take away those rights. Well, this amendment was strictly designed to say that states also cannot take away your rights. So this portion of the amendment says that states are prohibited from denying your inherent right to life, liberty, or property without due process of the law. Now what this means is that, before the state can take away

00:01:29 your life or your liberty, put you in jail, for example, you're entitled to due process. That includes a trial. It includes a hearing before a judge. It includes an appeal. Things like that go into this idea of due process. Now the last part of this amendment is the third part. And it says that everyone is entitled to equal protection

00:01:51 under the law. That means the same laws apply to everyone, no matter who you are. And this amendment was ratified on July 9, 1868, despite objections from Southerners and despite objections from Democrats. Now the last amendment is the 15th Amendment. And let's read what it says.

00:02:10 It says, the "Right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." So the first thing you need to

- understand about this is that citizens at this time are defined as men. So this does not include women. It doesn't include certain other groups.
- 00:02:30 But it does include white men. And at this point, it includes African American men. Now this guarantees suffrage. And suffrage, remember, means voting rights for all male citizens in the United States. And this amendment is ratified on February 3, 1870. Now the next thing you need to understand about this amendment is that the Southern states found ways to get
- 00:02:55 around this amendment because it says you cannot abridge the right to vote on the account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. But it doesn't say about finding ways to abridge the vote in other ways. So for example, Southern states started requiring literacy tests, you had to prove you were able to read to vote, or a poll tax.
- 00:03:13 You had to pay a tax in order to vote. And if you were living in poverty, that would be very, very difficult to come up with. And as a result, it's not truly enforced until 1965. That's when these practices, poll taxes and literacy tests, are outlawed through the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

8.2 Impact of Reconstruction

Section 1

- 00:00:00 How did opposing politics affect the course of Reconstruction? In this lesson, we'll look at how different politics and the conflicting beliefs and policies of Republicans and Democrats shaped Reconstruction. In the [? war ?] [INAUDIBLE] we saw how the South was poised for change.
- 00:00:17 But not everyone was ready to accept that change, and they also could not agree on the best way to change the South. In this lesson, we'll look at how the opposing politics lead to the end of Reconstruction. First we are going to look at the gains African-Americans made under Republican policies.

Section 2

- 00:00:00 TEACHER: When looking at the progress made by African Americans during Reconstruction, we see that Congress played a big role in assisting African Americans. But ultimately, African Americans used congressional support as a hand up, not as a hand out. One of the first things Congress did

00:00:17 was to create the Freedmen's Bureau, which was an agency of the US Department of War to assist free slaves in obtaining relief, land, jobs, fair treatment, and education. Then they passed several legislative measures to provide civil rights for African Americans. This allowed more African Americans to participate in government, both as a voter

00:00:38 and as a politician. We will talk about each one of these in turn as we explore the progress made by African Americans during Reconstruction. To assist in the transition from enslaved to free person, Congress created the Freedmen's Bureau to help newly freed blacks adjust to the freedom. They registered marriages.

00:00:59 Before, marriages between enslaved persons had no legal standing. They negotiated labor contracts between black Southerners and white Southerners, built more than 3,000 schools. Newly freed persons were hungry for education. Some classrooms held more than 50 students. They trained teachers. And other private and charitable organizations

00:01:23 also worked to bring education to the South. Between 1865 and 1870, Congress enacted a new legislation guaranteeing civil liberties for African Americans. In 1865, the 13th Amendment was ratified. This abolished slavery in the United States. In 1866, the Civil Rights Act. This declared that all persons born in the United States were now citizens without regard to race, color,

00:01:52 or previous condition. In 1867, the Reconstruction Act. This placed the South under military rule. It also extended the right to vote for black men. Then in 1868, the 14th Amendment was ratified. This provided former slaves with national citizenship and declared that all persons born or naturalized in the United States were now citizens.

00:02:18 Lastly, in 1870, the 15th Amendment was ratified. This granted African American men the right to vote. We mentioned three amendments on this timeline. Let's take a closer look at them. First, the 13th Amendment. This outlawed slavery and involuntary servitude. The 14th Amendment established that all persons born in the US

00:02:44 are now citizens. Lastly, the 15th Amendment was passed to support the Reconstruction Act, which had given suffrage, or the right to vote, to African American males. This also prohibited the states from denying the right to vote based on race or previous condition of servitude.

00:03:04 In order to be readmitted to the Union, the states who seceded had to draft new state constitutions. The delegates were made up of three groups. First, carpetbaggers-- Northerners in the South during Reconstruction making personal gains. They got their names because

they came down with all their belongings in a carpetbag. Next, scalawags-- white Southerners

00:03:28 who supported Radical Reconstruction. Many of the Southern Democrats resented these as they considered them as traitors. Lastly, was a group made up of African Americans, some of whom were free before the war. Some served as delegates in the Constitutional Convention. 265 black men served in this capacity. In Virginia, 20% of the delegates were black men.

00:03:56 African Americans had, for the first time in US history, entered in the political realm in the South.

Section 4

00:00:00 TEACHER: African Americans extensively participated in Reconstruction government. They were elected to local, state, and national positions in government. Almost 700 African American served in Southern state legislatures. 16 African Americans served as US congressman from the South

00:00:19 during Reconstruction. And we can see the first eight elected are shown here, in this lithograph. Hiram Revels. He was the first black man to serve in Congress and one of the only six African Americans to serve in the Senate in US history.

00:00:38 He was born free in North Carolina and attended college in Illinois. He served as a chaplain to an all-African American regiment during the war and was chosen by the Mississippi legislature to serve in the Senate in 1870. Blanche Bruce. Now, Bruce was born into slavery. He was the son of a wealthy Virginia

00:01:01 planter and enslaved mother. He was educated alongside his father's legitimate son, which was very unusual for the time. Freed by his father in 1850, and moved to Kansas, and established the first school for black children. He became a wealthy landowner in Mississippi and was elected to the Senate by the state legislature in 1874.

Section 6

00:00:00 TEACHER: Violence against newly freed enslaved persons began almost immediately following Reconstruction. Many of those who tried to leave plantations were either beaten or killed. The same awaited those who refused to defer to white people-- for example, a black person who refused

00:00:18 to set aside on a sidewalk or allow a white person to go ahead of him or her in a line. In even more serious violence, white mobs sometimes attacked black communities. A mob in Memphis in 1866 targeted black churches and schools. This is known as the Memphis Massacre. 46 were killed, and 70 were wounded.

00:00:42 Most were Union veterans, and the mob was aided by the local police. Hundreds of buildings were destroyed. The Ku Klux Klan was formed by six former Confederate officers, to deprive African Americans of their civil rights. It was established in 1866, in Tennessee.

00:01:04 They wore disguises to hide their identities. They used violence, fear, intimidation, terrorizing, even murdering African Americans and their white supporters. The movement soon spread across the South, generally in rural areas, as a way for those who opposed reconstructionist policies to take action.

Section 8

00:00:00 TEACHER: In 1868, African American voters made their voices heard with their vote. Republican and Union war hero Ulysses S. Grant won the election over Democrat Horatio Seymour. He easily won the electoral vote and nearly won popular vote. African Americans' votes made the difference. Ulysses S. Grant is best known as the famed Union

00:00:25 general credited with winning the Civil War. He was elected to the presidency in 1868 and served two terms and led the Republicans in a campaign for continuing Reconstruction. During Grant's first term, Congress worked to protect the freedom of African Americans, and progress was made. The 15th Amendment, which guaranteed suffrage

00:00:50 for all male citizens, was passed. And the Civil Rights Act of 1871, also known as the Anti Ku Klux Klan Act, gave Grant the right to suspend habeas corpus and dismantle the KKK. Grant was reelected to second term.

Section 10

00:00:00 TEACHER: How did opposing politics affect the course of Reconstruction? You now know how African Americans made political gains in the South and the steps Republicans took to protect their civil rights. In this segment, we'll look at how the opposing politics led to the end of Reconstruction.

00:00:19 First, we will learn how the Democrats returned to power.

Section 11

- 00:00:00 TEACHER: During Grant's second term, support for Reconstruction and the Republicans weakened. Members of Grant's staff were accused of taking bribes and being unqualified for their offices. Many believed the South should solve its own problems. The Republican Party split, and a new Liberal Republican Party was formed.
- 00:00:19 Let's take a look at this political cartoon, right here, called "A 'Liberal' Surrender-- Anything to Beat Grant." Liberal Republicans stand on and behind a Civil War-era fortification. And we can see that right here. Some take aim at President Grant and his troops-- also behind the fortification.
- 00:00:38 Those standing on the battlement signal their surrender-- and we can see them right here-- to the approaching Ku Klux Klanners. And they are right here. In addition, the country was facing severe economic problems. The panic of 1873.
- 00:00:58 It began when several banks ran out of money. The stock market crashed, and this led to an economic depression. 18,000 businesses failed, in just two years. By 1876, unemployment was at 14%

Section 13

- 00:00:00 TEACHER: The 1876 election pitted Republican candidate Rutherford B. Hayes, governor of Ohio, against Democrat candidate Samuel J. Tilden, governor of New York. When the results were in, there was a problem. Tilden had won the popular vote, but he was one vote short
- 00:00:20 of a majority in the electoral vote. Electoral votes were disputed in Florida, Oregon, South Carolina, and Louisiana-- a total of 20 electoral votes. These states sent two sets of returns-- one Republican, and one Democrat. It was up to the federal government to interpret the results and decide who won.
- 00:00:40 Congress established a committee to determine these results. Many Democrats, angry at the new victory, were ready to fight. This political cartoon, right here, shows that feeling. Instead, Republicans and Democrats in Congress forged a compromise, called the Compromise of 1877. Just one month before inauguration day, they decided that Republican Rutherford B. Hayes would assume the presidency, all the disputed electoral votes
- 00:01:10 would go to him, Hayes would appoint Democrats to his cabinet, federal troops would be removed from the South, and Reconstruction would come to an end. No other election in history would undergo the

drama and dispute that surrounded the election of 1876, until the election of 2000. Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore

00:01:35 narrowly won the popular vote, by less than half of 1% of the vote. He is the first candidate since Hayes to win the popular vote but lose the election. Republican candidate George W. Bush won the electoral vote. The electoral vote in Florida was disputed. This time, instead of Congress, the Supreme Court stepped in and gave those votes, and the election,

00:01:59 to George W. Bush.

8.3 Failures of Reconstruction

Section 1

00:00:00 TEACHER: This lesson is asking the question, how did the backlash against Reconstruction affect the status of African-Americans in the South? In the warm-up, you learned about the goals of Reconstruction. You also learned of some successes, including the passage of Reconstruction amendments.

00:00:21 In this lesson, we're going to take a look at how conservative, white southerners continually sought to undermine African-American progress during Reconstruction and how these efforts accelerated when Reconstruction ended. Conservative, white southerners' reaction to Reconstruction had three key on African-Americans. These include the establishment of the sharecropping system,

00:00:47 the passage of Jim Crow laws, and violence against African-Americans that went unchecked across the South. But let's get started by taking a look at the sharecropping system. What exactly is it, and how did it impact the lives of African-Americans?

Section 2

00:00:00 TEACHER: After the Civil War, the Southern economy was severely weakened. How? Crops were destroyed. Battles were waged in many places, including farms. Union troops often burned and destroyed fields to cripple the South, such as a famous march

00:00:18 of General William Sherman who marched Union troops through Georgia to the sea burning everything in their path. Land--land was left unattended and uncared for because many of the men were fighting in the army. The Union Army often liberated enslaved people as well.

The war also affected infrastructure, such as bridges, roads, and railroads.

- 00:00:42 You can see the damage in this image right here that was caused during Sherman's March to the Sea. This all weakened the economy. Furthermore, with emancipation, the South would now have to change its labor system and culture. It can no longer rely on labor by enslaved people, and the elimination of slavery meant a change
- 00:01:04 to the established culture. The South was rural, and land was important to Southern society because it demonstrated wealth and status. Freed African Americans regarded land in the same way as whites. It was their American dream. After emancipation, many African Americans
- 00:01:26 established farms on land that had been abandoned during the Civil War and turned over to the Union Army. These were subsistence farms, where formerly enslaved people grew only enough to support their families. They were encouraged to do so by the establishment of the Freedmen's Bureau, which was authorized to distribute tracts of abandoned farmland to newly
- 00:01:48 freed slaves. That's where the expression 40 acres and a mule comes from. But the stream of land ownership was never realized. President Johnson--whose priority was to reunite the Union and who was a former slave owner himself-- returned that land to the original land owners. So now there was a situation in which
- 00:02:13 formerly enslaved people had no land and land owners had no laborers. Many farmers had no money left, particularly smaller farms. From this problem arose a solution-- sharecropping. This was a system of tenant farming. A tenant is someone who rents something--in this case, a plot of land--
- 00:02:37 from an owner. And usually you think of rent as being a flat fee. And there were tenant farmers who had this type of agreement. But the far more common alternative for African American farmers was sharecropping. In this type of labor arrangement, the farmer lived on the land and gave a portion of the crop as rent to the land owner.
- 00:03:00 In many cases, freedmen went back to work on the same plantations where they had once been enslaved. Land owners and laborers signed contracts that outlined the conditions under which the laborers would work and how much of the crop was owed to the landowner. These contracts were designed to benefit the land owner.

Section 4

00:00:00 TEACHER: With emancipation, African Americans enjoyed new freedoms. They can legally marry, and they can worship where and how they chose. However, during and after Reconstruction, most southerners-- African and white-- had no choice

00:00:17 but to turn to sharecropping. Let's take a closer look at this labor arrangement. In some cases, sharecroppers managed to get a fair terms from the landowner. But in the majority of cases, sharecroppers were trapped in a cycle of debt. Why? As we just learned, the contract says

00:00:38 sharecroppers sign were designed to benefit the land owner. And southern states passed laws that tightened control over sharecropper lives. Let's take a closer look at how sharecropping worked for most African American farm laborers. If you were a sharecropper, a whole set of laws sharply restricted your ability to buy or sell cotton. That means the landlord would determine

00:01:04 the price you received for your share of cotton. Like many farmers, you would rely on credit to survive until harvest time. When you were paid for your share of the harvest, you first had to repay the landlord for any loans. These loans often carried extremely high interest rates. You also had to repay merchants for supplies,

00:01:30 and these merchants might charge inflated prices. So more often than not, you would start the next planting season already in debt. Making matters worse, the overproduction of cotton in the late 20th century caused the price to collapse. This price collapse hit sharecroppers hard.

00:01:54 So why wouldn't you just leave? Well, eventually in the early 20th century, millions of sharecroppers did leave, heading to northern factories. But during and after Reconstruction, the law made it dangerous to leave the farm. If you left a farm owing money to the landlord, you could be hunted down, brought back in chains,

00:02:17 and forced to work until the debt was paid. This type of labor arrangement-- called debt peonage-- was legal under the federal law, but it was common in the South. In addition, vagrancy laws made it illegal to be unemployed. If you cannot prove you worked, you can be in prison and leased out to a private employer. For these reasons, many scholars now call sharecropping slavery by another name.

Section 6

00:00:00 TEACHER: Let's take another look at our lesson question. How did backlash against Reconstruction affect the status of African Americans in the South? We have seen how the sharecropping system kept

00:00:21 African Americans down economically. We learned about the vagrancy laws that required African Americans to prove that they were employed at all times, trapping them in a sharecropping arrangement. Now let's take a look at what Jim Crow laws were and how they impacted African Americans. What led to the rise of Jim Crow laws?

Section 7

00:00:00 TEACHER: In 1875, the Republican Congress passed the Civil Rights Act. Remember, the Republicans were the party of Lincoln and supported emancipation. They had also wanted stricter punishments for the South and southern slavers. The act was designed to ensure equal access

00:00:18 to public facility, regardless of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. This included things like restrooms, drinking fountains, centers of amusement, trains, inns, and accommodations, et cetera. The act also made it illegal to deny access to anyone based on race, color, or previous conditions of servitude.

00:00:40 The rights guaranteed by this act fell under federal jurisdiction and the Supreme Court, but the act was rarely enforced. The act itself created an illusion of equality and freedom that simply wasn't the reality for most African Americans in the South. Many African Americans face continued discrimination despite the Civil Rights Act of 1875.

00:01:04 Some turned to the Civil Rights Act to protect their rights. In 1883, African Americans brought their case to the federal government when white establishments denied them entry to their facilities. These cases included being denied better theater seats, access to a hotel dining room, and seats on a train, as some of their suits were from northern states, too-- not just southern

00:01:29 The Supreme Court declared the Civil Rights Act of 1875 unconstitutional. Based on the 14th Amendment, the federal government can only stop states from discriminating against people, but they couldn't regulate private actions.

Section 9

00:00:00 TEACHER: The Supreme Court's 1883 decision established that the 14th Amendment applied only to states and not private businesses. Railroads, inns, and theaters were considered private. This opened the door for legal racial segregation in the South and led to the rise of Jim Crow laws, which were laws that separated the races.

- 00:00:26 Jim Crow was a name commonly used to refer to laws that restrict the rights of African Americans. During the 1800s, there was a popular minstrel, or variety show, character that these laws took their name from. And keep in mind that minstrel characters, like Jim Crow, were typically played by white actors wearing blackface, intentionally mocking African Americans.
- 00:00:50 These laws segregated African Americans and whites limited their interaction with one another in every detail of life. As you can see in this photo right here, African Americans and whites cannot even drink from the same water fountain, much less attend the same schools. In fact, we'll see segregation gains even more momentum after an 1896 Supreme Court ruling called
- 00:01:15 Plessy vs. Ferguson. In 1896, an important challenge to Jim Crow came before the Supreme Court. This involved the case of Homer Plessy, who had been arrested for attempting to sit in a Louisiana railcar reserved for white passengers only. He argued that the state's Separate Cars Act violated the 13th Amendment--
- 00:01:41 that's the amendment banning slavery-- and his 14th Amendment right to equal protection under the law. The court upheld the constitutionality of segregation based on the notion of separate but equal. This ruling would have far reaching impacts, opening the floodgates for evermore extreme Jim Crow laws. In reality, segregated facilities were seldom, if ever, equal.
- 00:02:06 And African Americans, particularly in the South, faced degrading content conditions on a daily basis. Segregation laws existed in many states nationwide. But the Jim Crow laws passed by Democrats who held power at the state and local levels throughout the South were all-encompassing, impacting every area of society.
- 00:02:30 These laws limited the freedom of African Americans. The laws restricted interaction between the races by reserving certain facilities for whites only. Facilities for African Americans were often very inferior. The laws also nullified the gains of Reconstruction. African Americans were no longer enslaved, but Jim Crow laws made sure they weren't quite free either.

Section 11

- 00:00:00 TEACHER: Southern states also controlled African Americans by restricting their voting rights. Voting laws in the South effectively denied African Americans the right to vote and thus denied their voice

for representation. By 1900, every Southern state had enacted these prohibited laws.

00:00:21 Poll taxes required citizens to pay a tax in order to vote. Literacy tests required citizens to pass a reading test. Grandfather clauses exempted those who were voters before 1867 and their descendants. Since no African Americans could vote prior to this date, the poll taxes and literacy tests only applied to African Americans. These laws ensure that only white men could vote.

00:00:51 For African Americans and other minorities, the struggle for civil rights continued into the 20th century. The 1960s gave rise to the civil rights movement. Sit ins, boycotts, and demonstrations were some strategies used by protesters who sought to achieve civil rights for all

00:01:12 and end discrimination. Legal segregation and Jim Crow remained a part of American society until Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 89 years after the first Civil Rights Act which was declared unconstitutional and was passed in 1875. In 1965, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act prohibiting racial discrimination in voting.

00:01:41 Both of these acts are still part of our law today.

Section 12

00:00:00 TEACHER: Let's take another look at our lesson question. How did backlash against Reconstruction affect the status of African-Americans in the South? We have seen how sharecropping and Jim Crow's laws kept African-Americans down economically and limited their social and political freedoms. Now, we're going to focus on the growing violence against African-Americans during and immediately after Reconstruction.

00:00:22

Section 13

00:00:00 TEACHER: Now emancipation and Reconstruction threatened white supremacy and southern society. The economic system based on slavery had been overthrown and established social order was also in jeopardy. In southern society, prior to emancipation, white plantation owners were at the top of the social structure.

00:00:22 In the middle, there were less wealthy white people who had owned-- who had never owned slaves. And enslaved African Americans were at the bottom of the social structure. With the end of slavery, the federal government would try to bring equality to African Americans through Reconstruction. And many of southern whites felt their supremacy

00:00:44 was being threatened. They would no longer be firmly at the top of the social order. They were angered by these changes, and they began to take action, often resorting to violence.

Section 15

00:00:00 TEACHER: In response to Reconstruction, white supremacy groups began to form in the South. These are groups that believe that the white race is superior to or better than people of other races. And they believe that they are justified in using violence to ensure that whites continue to rule over people of other races.

00:00:20 These groups include the Ku Klux Klan-- or KKK--as well as group called the White Brotherhood. Take a look at this political cartoon right here. It's commenting on what was happening in the southern society. Here we see an African American family right here. They are cowering under a sign that says worse than slavery.

00:00:48 You see the skull and crossbones here symbolizing death. And we see a member of the KKK and a member of the White League right here, which is another which is another of these white supremacy groups. These groups grew more and more popular during Reconstruction. President Grant successfully managed to restrict their actions for a while. But once Reconstruction was over,

00:01:17 there was a rise in the groups again. When the US Army pulled out of the South in 1877, this signaled the official end of Reconstruction, leaving at leaving African Americans as well as white Republicans who were sympathetic to their push for equality unprotected from violence. At the same time, Jim Crow laws were

00:01:41 being used to oppress African Americans, and white supremacist groups were committing acts of violence against African American citizens. With the end of Reconstruction, any protection for African Americans or sympathetic whites disappeared. So these groups felt empowered to terrorize African Americans and destroy their ability to gain economic or political

00:02:03 power or independence. They beat and murdered African Americans, . And nothing was ever done to curb that violence because it was common for local police forces to be sympathetic to these groups. White supremacist groups terrorized citizens. Murders, beatings, lynching, robberies, and destruction of property were common.

00:02:28 Lynch mobs are large groups of people who attend to kill a person by lynching, typically hanging. Let's take a look at this table right here. It shows the number of African American victims of white lynch mobs

by state from 1882 to 1930 for states in the deep south. These are incredibly high numbers representing the death of people, typically by hanging but also being burned or shot.

00:02:56 And these figures are just for African Americans. Remember, white Republicans or whites that were thought to be sympathetic to reform are not part of this table. Violence against African Americans by white supremacist groups and lynch mobs continued well into the 1960s. The KKK had a major resurgence in the '20s. And when the Civil Rights Movement

00:03:20 got going in the 1940s and '50s, we started to see another big rise in the KKK and other white supremacist activity. Violence and Jim Crow laws further divided the races and promoted racism.

8.4 Supremacy Movements

Section 1

00:00:01 TEACHER: All right, before we get started let's take a look at the lesson question which is right above me. It says, how did white supremacy groups affect the South during Reconstruction? Now this lesson is going to be broken up into three different parts. The first is going to look at supremacy groups in the South. The second segment's going to look at terrorism and violence

00:00:18 used by those supremacy groups. And the third section is going to look at the government's response to those terrorist groups and the tactics that they used. But first, let's take a look at supremacy groups in the South, and look at the question of why did white supremacy groups form to begin with? Let's go ahead and get started.

Section 2

00:00:01 TEACHER: Now a number of these white supremacist groups formed after the Civil War. And some of those examples are on the board here, where you can see The White League, The Red Shirts, and the most famous, the Ku Klux Klan. These were all terrorist, white supremacist groups that got their start in the post Civil War period. Let's begin by looking at the last one, the Ku Klux Klan,

00:00:22 which is the most powerful and possibly the most infamous of the white supremacist groups. Now it was founded by Confederate soldiers, probably no surprise there. And it was actually started as a social club which opposed Radical Reconstruction. So it was just an

opportunity for former Confederate soldiers to get together and basically fume and talk about

00:00:42 how bad Reconstruction was for the new South. But it began to terrorize African Americans in its latter part, where they attacked and they killed African Americans, as well as those people, a lot of those carpetbaggers or scalawags that were trying to promote and help African Americans and the South as well. The founder or the first leader of the Ku Klux Klan was this man right here of Nathan Bedford Forrest.

00:01:06 And he was the first leader of the Ku Klux Klan. He was actually a Confederate general. Remember, the Ku Klux Klan was formed by former Confederates. And he improved the fighting tactics of the Confederacy's cavalry during the war. So he was very well known as being an excellent cavalry officer. In addition, he sort of had a history of anti-African

00:01:28 American sentiments and feelings because at Fort Pillow in Tennessee he massacre African American Union soldiers there. So you can see, this was the first leader of the Ku Klux Klan. And this Klan, it was shrouded in secrecy. And you can see that by the picture here. Now they wore hoods over their faces.

00:01:47 And they draped sheets over their horses. And that was really to protect the identity of the Klan members. They also disguised themselves for a number of other reasons, because they committed criminal acts. So they didn't want the law or the police to be able to track them back. And all the police would know is, oh someone came into my

00:02:06 house, and he had a white garment over his head or something like that. And so they wouldn't be able to figure out who the Klan members are. And also, they could have been punished by the US government if they were identified. So they wanted to be shrouded in secrecy, as you can see on the picture here.

Section 4

00:00:01 TEACHER: As Reconstruction continued to go on, it became more and more unpopular among Southern whites. And the Klan grew more and more powerful as these Southern whites, they begin to blame the North for a number of reasons. For example, the Southern whites, they blamed the North for destroying Southern farms and cities in the Civil War, also for Indian slavery, and also meddling in Southern

00:00:24 governments. Remember the Radical Republicans put together a military district in the South. And they would have military members

and generals, union generals running these governments in the South. And you've also got to remember that in the South they were forced to accept Republican control of the government.

00:00:44 So you can see all of these reasons really caused Southern whites to almost flock in droves to the Klan. And the Klan, as a consequence, became more and more powerful.

Section 6

00:00:01 TEACHER: Hey, great job, scholars. We've finished our first segment, now we're moving on to the second one. Don't fall asleep on me. Let's take a look at the lesson question, which is right above me. It says how did white supremacy groups affect the South during Reconstruction?

00:00:13 That first segment, we were looking at how they were created, and why they were created. And we also took a look at the Ku Klux Klan as sort of the predominant white supremacy group in the South. Now let's take a look at terrorism and violence, and try to answer the question of what tactics did these groups use to deny African Americans their rights? Let's go ahead and begin with the second segment.

Section 7

00:00:01 TEACHER: We're going to look at three different targets of the KKK. The first was the Freedmen's Bureau School, which, as we just said, was targeted by the KKK for a number of reasons. The first is that these supremacy groups, they did not believe that African Americans should ever be educated. They should be kept ignorant. The second thing that they did is they burned down the

00:00:21 schools where these African Americans could gain an education. So they would torch them to the ground and take out the actual school. In addition, the Klan would also go after the white teachers as well as the black students. So you can see they terrorized the Freedmen's Bureau from almost every angle.

00:00:38 The second group that the Klan terrorized were the people who were carpetbaggers. Now these were the Northerners who came to the South seeking financial or political gain. And they really wanted to help formerly enslaved people. And finally, they supported equality for African Americans by volunteering as doctors or as teachers. And you can see this pretty disturbing picture here of two

00:01:00 carpetbaggers. You can tell they're Northerners by the carpetbag, if you will, right here. It says Ohio, a Northern states. And the KKK is labeled as the donkey here. And so it's sort of showing how the terror

tactics were used and how the carpetbaggers were terrorized as well. The third group were the scalawags.

00:01:22 Now the scalawags, they were white Southerners accused of working with the Republican party. So they were almost seen as a traitor to the South. And so Southerners who opposed secession and the Civil War were the scalawags. And like we said, they supported the Radical Republican agenda in the South and a lot of poor white farmers who wanted more power.

00:01:43 So those are the people who made up the scalawags. So you can kind of see in this picture here of members of the Klan or members of a white supremacist group, all aiming guns at a supporter, a scalawag, a Southerner who supported Radical Reconstruction.

Section 9

00:00:01 TEACHER: We just took a look at who were the people that the Klan was targeting. Now let's take a look at some of the tactics that the Klan used in these violent acts they used against those people. They usually would have night time raids when they're-- remember, they were already disguised, and the night time would make it even easier for them to get out and not be

00:00:20 identified. They would use whippings. They would use murder, usually by lynching, which were executions by hanging. You saw an example of that by that carpet baggers who were hanging from the tree, they were being lynched. And they were carried out by the Ku Klux Klan to terrorize its enemies.

00:00:36 And you can see an example of that here on the screen, where you see a Klan member who has just kicked open a door of an African American family, and he's pointing a gun at the African American family as they're trying to cook, or stay warm around the fire. So you can see these are some of the acts of terrorism that the Klan used.

Section 11

00:00:00 TEACHER: Hey, great job, scholars. We've gotten done with two segments, only one more left. Before we move on to the third and final, let's take a look at the lesson question, which is right above me. It says how did white supremacy groups affect the South during Reconstruction? Now, we look at the founding of the supremacy groups in the first segment.

00:00:17 Then with the second segment, we looked at the tactics and the people who were targets of those acts of terrorism. The final segment's going to look at the government's response of how did the government respond to these terrorist acts by groups like the Klan?

Section 12

00:00:00 TEACHER: Well this Klan violence in the South had really proved, the first, is that many in the South had not learned their lesson. They were not sorry for all the crimes they had done against African Americans. So in response, the Radical Republicans in Congress, they were determined to stop this violence against African Americans.

00:00:21 And so what the Radical Republicans did, and they believed in stricter laws should be passed. And they wanted more rights and protections for African Americans to counteract the violence that was taking place. Let's take a look at some of the laws that they were able to pass. The first was the Reconstruction Act of 1867.

00:00:39 And this established military control in the South, where instead of those Confederate, former Confederate leaders being in the state legislatures, the military would control the governments in the South. The second was the passage of the 14th Amendment, which gave citizenship to African Americans. It allowed them the right to vote, which was extremely important.

00:00:58 And the final was the 15th Amendment, which gave the right to vote to African American men. So you can see, all of these acts were passed by the Radical Republicans to counteract the acts of terrorism and violence that groups like the Ku Klux Klan were perpetrating against African Americans in the South.

Section 14

00:00:00 TEACHER: In addition to the legislation that they passed, the Radical Republicans also pushed through various Enforcement Act between 1870 and 1875. And these acts, they allow the US government to use force to protect African American rights in the South. It also allowed United States government to declare a martial law or military rule in areas where Klan violence was especially bad.

00:00:24 And this led directly to a weakening of the KKK. Now what happened is that it sent hundred of Klan members to jail, the ones that were caught. And it also led to thousands more paying fines or fleeing the general area. So you can see how the Enforcement Acts led directly to the weakening of the KKK.

Section 16

- 00:00:01 TEACHER: Well by the 1880s, the Klan had pretty much disappeared for a number of reasons. The first was that the Enforcement Acts had been partly successful in arresting Klan members and pushing them out. But more importantly, is that white Southern Democrats had retaken control. And with these white Southern Democrats in control, they
- 00:00:19 were able to pass legislation of segregation and things like that, which were supported by the Klan. But with the white Southern Democrats in control, there really was no need for the Klan's presence anymore. However, if we look ahead, there was a future for the Ku Klux Klan. Now it had nearly disappeared after Reconstruction ended. However, it will return even more powerful in the 1920s.
- 00:00:44 If you take a look at this picture right here, you'll see in the background, there's the United States Capitol. And here is a Klan group that is obviously marching along in the Capitol in the 1920s. So you can see there was a resurgence of the Klan about 50 years later.

8.5 The Transcontinental Railroad

Section 1

- 00:00:00 You know that Americans wanted to be able to travel between the eastern and western parts of the country easily, but that transportation between those two regions was difficult. Well, in this lesson, we are going to focus on answering the question, how did Americans rise to the challenge of building a transcontinental railroad? To do this, we're going to examine some of the reasons
- 00:00:21 for building the railroad. We're going to talk about the challenges of building the railroad, what people faced, and the effects of building that railroad on the American society. But first, we're going to take a look at some of the reasons why it was so important to build this transcontinental railroad.

Section 2

- 00:00:00 The idea of building a transcontinental railroad existed long before the first nugget of gold was found in California. People, for a long time, wanted to be able to connect the East to the West. Asa Whitney, a New York business leader and merchant, created a proposal in 1845 that he submitted to the US Congress.

00:00:20 He requested a charter, or the right to be able to build a transcontinental railroad. And he also asked Congress for public land going across the West that he could build that railroad on. Whitney and other leaders proposed their ideas to Congress. But Congress could not agree on a route or how they wanted to go about making this, despite many discussions.

00:00:44 They were locked up in a deadlock. There was disagreement on whether the railroad should begin in the East. And politicians fought with their states, and they couldn't come to a decision.

Section 4

00:00:00 Despite some of these problems, the transcontinental railroad remained a dream for many. And one individual who was particularly influential in promoting that idea of a transcontinental railroad was Theodore Judah. He was a civil engineer, a railroader, and a surveyor who lobbied Congress to support building a railroad across the country.

00:00:21 And between 1854 and 1860, he lobbied the US House and the Senate to support building a railroad. He also looked for financial backers to help build the railroad. But he died before his dream could be realized. But he did drum up support for this idea of a transcontinental railroad. Well things were going to change with the Pacific

00:00:43 Railroad Act of 1862 when the government officially provided support for the railroad. Now this act was actually signed by Abraham Lincoln. He thought that a transcontinental railroad would give the Union an advantage during the Civil War and that they would be able to transport troops and supplies via railroad. The Railroad Act of 1862 established that the Union

00:01:08 Pacific Railroad would build from the east and head towards the west. And that the Central Pacific Railroad would be built from the west. Now think back to that image we saw earlier of the point in Promontory, Utah where those two met. So that would be right around here where those met. And we saw that handshake and the two locomotives.

00:01:31 The Railroad Act also provided 6,400 acres of land per mile of track that was laid. Now this was later doubled. And the railroads could do what they wished with that land. They could sell it to farmers and homesteaders, or they could use it to secure loans. Providing \$48,000 in loans of mile of track laid was another

00:01:56 part of the Railroad Act of 1862.

Section 6

00:00:00 Now that you understand the reasons people wanted to get this railroad built, we need to talk about some of the challenges people faced in actually building the railroad. And that will bring us one step closer to answering our lesson question, how did Americans rise to the challenge of building a transcontinental railroad? So let's get started at talking about the challenges

00:00:19 people faced in building it.

Section 7

00:00:00 OK. So after the Pacific Railroad Act of 1862 established that there would be a transcontinental railroad, the two companies, the Central Pacific Railroad and the Union Pacific Railroad, took about building that railroad. So let's first take a look at the Central Pacific Railroad. It was going to head east from the Pacific coast. It began in Sacramento, California, and headed east

00:00:25 through the Sierra Nevada. No eastern point had been chosen. The charter just said that it would continue east until it met up with the Union Pacific Railroad. Now Leland Stanford was a president of the Central Pacific Railroad. He had an unwavering mission to build a railroad and to make money.

00:00:44 He served as a governor of California. And because of that, he was able to allocate state funds towards the railroad. So the railroad actually benefited from his time as governor. He was also a skilled politician and a diplomat. So he knew he had to serve several parties in trying to make this railroad a reality.

00:01:08 Now the Union Pacific Railroad headed west from the Midwest. It began in Omaha, Nebraska, and went across the Plains and through the Rocky Mountains. No western endpoint had been chosen. So its charter said that it would continue westward until it ran into the Central Pacific Railroad. Now, just as Stanford was important to the Central Pacific, Thomas Durant was important to the

00:01:38 Union Pacific Railroad. He was the Vice President of the Union Pacific and he was educated as a medical doctor. Now, during his time he was known to manipulate stocks for profit. This activity was not illegal during his time, although some people did get hurt as he set about making some money and making a profit in order to make this railroad a reality.

00:02:01 President of the Union Pacific, Sydney Dillon was quoted as saying, "He, meaning Thomas Durant, was a man who, when he undertook to build a railroad, didn't stop at trifles in accomplishing the end." Basically this means that nothing was going to get in his way of making this transcontinental railroad a reality.

Section 9

00:00:00 Despite all the excitement around building a transcontinental railroad, it was actually pretty hard to find workers to build the railroad itself. Well, who were the workers that they found to build the Central Pacific Railroad? They were predominantly immigrants from Ireland and China. Irish immigrants played a pretty big role, but soon they

00:00:19 were replaced in large numbers by Chinese immigrants. And they were even recruited specifically to build the railroad. Thousands of Chinese, up to 12,000 immigrants, helped to complete the Central Pacific Railroad. Now, on the Plains for the Union Pacific, there were also some challenges in finding people to build the railroad. But after the Civil War, they found a bit of a break.

00:00:46 Many veterans were eager to find work and ultimately joined on to build the railroad. When new workers were needed, more and more Irish immigrants signed on, who started coming to the US in increasing numbers. There were some challenges though that faced people out west. Now, building of the Central Pacific Railroad began when

00:01:06 Governor Leland Stanford dug the first shovel into the dirt in a groundbreaking ceremony on January 8th of 1863. But it wasn't until October of that year that the first track was actually laid. It got off to a pretty slow start, but then continued building for 6 years. So what were some of these challenges? What made it so difficult, and why was it such a slow start?

00:01:29 Well, they had to work through deep snow and frigid temperatures in the Sierra Nevada, the mountain range out there. They also had to blast and hand drill through tunnels of solid rock. A lot of the supplies that they used actually had to be brought by ship. And in those days, you had to go from the East Coast all the

00:01:48 way around the bottom of South America, up to the Pacific in order to reach them. Now, on the East there are also some challenges on the Union Pacific Railroad. They built the railroad across remote areas where there weren't a lot of supply towns for hundreds of miles. So this would mean, if you needed supplies for the railroad, or just basic supplies for yourself, it was

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Section 12

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Section 14

00:00:00 TEACHER: Well, the impact of the transcontinental railroad was great. It was enormous. The coasts were finally connected, and it radically

changed transportation across the United States. It shortened travel time, so trips from San Francisco to New York City now just took a week instead of a month or two.

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00:04:54 So you see that the Plains Indians, the American Indians' way of life is significantly being altered due to the settling of the West by Americans, changing the way they live due to the railroads, the disruption of the herds, and disruption of their lifestyle.

8.6 Homesteaders

Section 1

00:00:00 You know that Americans wanted to be able to travel between the eastern and western parts of the country easily, but that transportation between those two regions was difficult. Well, in this lesson, we are going to focus on answering the question, how did Americans rise to the challenge of building a transcontinental railroad? To do this, we're going to examine some of the reasons

00:00:21 for building the railroad. We're going to talk about the challenges of building the railroad, what people faced, and the effects of building that railroad on the American society. But first, we're going to take a look at some of the reasons why it was so important to build this transcontinental railroad.

Section 2

00:00:00 The idea of building a transcontinental railroad existed long before the first nugget of gold was found in California. People, for a long time, wanted to be able to connect the East to the West. Asa Whitney, a New York business leader and merchant, created a proposal in 1845 that he submitted to the US Congress.

00:00:20 He requested a charter, or the right to be able to build a transcontinental railroad. And he also asked Congress for public land going across the West that he could build that railroad on. Whitney and other leaders proposed their ideas to Congress. But Congress could not agree on a route or how they wanted to go about making this, despite many discussions.

00:00:44 They were locked up in a deadlock. There was disagreement on whether the railroad should begin in the East. And politicians fought with their states, and they couldn't come to a decision.

Section 4

00:00:00 Despite some of these problems, the transcontinental railroad remained a dream for many. And one individual who was particularly influential in promoting that idea of a transcontinental railroad was Theodore Judah. He was a civil engineer, a railroader, and a surveyor who lobbied Congress to support building a railroad across the country.

00:00:21 And between 1854 and 1860, he lobbied the US House and the Senate to support building a railroad. He also looked for financial backers to help build the railroad. But he died before his dream could be realized. But he did drum up support for this idea of a transcontinental railroad. Well things were going to change with the Pacific

00:00:43 Railroad Act of 1862 when the government officially provided support for the railroad. Now this act was actually signed by Abraham Lincoln. He thought that a transcontinental railroad would give the Union an advantage during the Civil War and that they would be able to transport troops and supplies via railroad. The Railroad Act of 1862 established that the Union

00:01:08 Pacific Railroad would build from the east and head towards the west. And that the Central Pacific Railroad would be built from the west. Now think back to that image we saw earlier of the point in Promontory, Utah where those two met. So that would be right around here where those met. And we saw that handshake and the two locomotives.

00:01:31 The Railroad Act also provided 6,400 acres of land per mile of track that was laid. Now this was later doubled. And the railroads could do what they wished with that land. They could sell it to farmers and homesteaders, or they could use it to secure loans. Providing \$48,000 in loans of mile of track laid was another

00:01:56 part of the Railroad Act of 1862.

Section 6

00:00:00 Now that you understand the reasons people wanted to get this railroad built, we need to talk about some of the challenges people faced in actually building the railroad. And that will bring us one step closer to answering our lesson question, how did Americans rise to the challenge of building a transcontinental railroad? So let's get started at talking about the challenges

00:00:19 people faced in building it.

Section 7

00:00:00 OK. So after the Pacific Railroad Act of 1862 established that there would be a transcontinental railroad, the two companies, the Central Pacific Railroad and the Union Pacific Railroad, took about building that railroad. So let's first take a look at the Central Pacific Railroad. It was going to head east from the Pacific coast. It began in Sacramento, California, and headed east

00:00:25 through the Sierra Nevada. No eastern point had been chosen. The charter just said that it would continue east until it met up with the Union Pacific Railroad. Now Leland Stanford was a president of the Central Pacific Railroad. He had an unwavering mission to build a railroad and to make money.

00:00:44 He served as a governor of California. And because of that, he was able to allocate state funds towards the railroad. So the railroad actually benefited from his time as governor. He was also a skilled politician and a diplomat. So he knew he had to serve several parties in trying to make this railroad a reality.

- 00:01:08 Now the Union Pacific Railroad headed west from the Midwest. It began in Omaha, Nebraska, and went across the Plains and through the Rocky Mountains. No western endpoint had been chosen. So its charter said that it would continue westward until it ran into the Central Pacific Railroad. Now, just as Stanford was important to the Central Pacific, Thomas Durant was important to the
- 00:01:38 Union Pacific Railroad. He was the Vice President of the Union Pacific and he was educated as a medical doctor. Now, during his time he was known to manipulate stocks for profit. This activity was not illegal during his time, although some people did get hurt as he set about making some money and making a profit in order to make this railroad a reality.
- 00:02:01 President of the Union Pacific, Sydney Dillon was quoted as saying, "He, meaning Thomas Durant, was a man who, when he undertook to build a railroad, didn't stop at trifles in accomplishing the end." Basically this means that nothing was going to get in his way of making this transcontinental railroad a reality.

Section 9

- 00:00:00 Despite all the excitement around building a transcontinental railroad, it was actually pretty hard to find workers to build the railroad itself. Well, who were the workers that they found to build the Central Pacific Railroad? They were predominantly immigrants from Ireland and China. Irish immigrants played a pretty big role, but soon they
- 00:00:19 were replaced in large numbers by Chinese immigrants. And they were even recruited specifically to build the railroad. Thousands of Chinese, up to 12,000 immigrants, helped to complete the Central Pacific Railroad. Now, on the Plains for the Union Pacific, there were also some challenges in finding people to build the railroad. But after the Civil War, they found a bit of a break.
- 00:00:46 Many veterans were eager to find work and ultimately joined on to build the railroad. When new workers were needed, more and more Irish immigrants signed on, who started coming to the US in increasing numbers. There were some challenges though that faced people out west. Now, building of the Central Pacific Railroad began when
- 00:01:06 Governor Leland Stanford dug the first shovel into the dirt in a groundbreaking ceremony on January 8th of 1863. But it wasn't until October of that year that the first track was actually laid. It got off to a pretty slow start, but then continued building for 6 years. So what were

some of these challenges? What made it so difficult, and why was it such a slow start?

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8.7 American Indians on a Closing Frontier

Section 1

00:00:00 TEACHER: In the warm-up, we saw how the American government and white settlers wanted to push American Indians further west so that they could settle lands east of the Mississippi River. Now we're going to be answering the question-- how did US American Indian policy change with westward expansion? So what changed as the government and white settlers

00:00:18 wanted to move westward and expand into those Western lands? We're going to talk about reservations and assimilations first, and then we're going to look at the growing conflict. So let's get started looking at the policies of establishing reservations and the assimilation policy.

Section 2

00:00:00 TEACHER: In between 1830 and 1880, vast numbers of settlers moved west. So these early settlers traveled by wagon train. And they moved across the plains. This is where a number of American Indian tribes were living, some that were native to the plains and others that had been forced onto the plains because they were pushed off of their eastern lands that they had been

00:00:23 living in prior to settlement of the American east. The transcontinental railroad and the Homestead Act are going to increase the speed of settlement after the Civil War. So the building of the railroad is going to mean that more and more people can access these western lands. And they're going to want to live there. And the Homestead Act is going to set it up so that the

00:00:44 government is encouraging people to establish homes and homesteads, small farms, in certain western areas. So this is going to mean more and more settlers moving into the west. This is dramatically going to impact the American Indians and their way of life. And that's what we're going to be looking at in this lesson.

Section 4

00:00:00 TEACHER: As white settlement increased, Congress began to move American Indians out of the way. They did this by establishing a reservation system. They wanted to move American Indian tribes into certain areas. They passed the first Indian Appropriations Act in 1851. This created reservations or lands set aside for specific groups.

00:00:21 And this map here is really showing you about where the different reservations were for the different tribes. It also required tribes to confine themselves to lands with defined borders, which is very different from the way of life of many of these tribes. Many of these tribes practiced more nomadic lifestyle where they would move from location to location, seasonally, or following herds if they were a hunting tribe.

00:00:51 There are problems with the reservation policy. And they are going to become apparent very early on. Government officials often misunderstood American Indian culture. And they made the reservations weak because they really thought that American Indian culture must be similar to white culture, and that one person, one chief, for example, made all of the decisions for the people.

00:01:16 But the tribes didn't always agree with their leaders' or representatives' choices. And in fact, "tribe" is really just this loose term that is used to describe American Indian groups. But in fact, many of them actually lived in smaller bands. And these bands may come together once in a while to make very large, important decisions.

00:01:40 But they didn't always have one actual chief who was the leader. They had several elders or several leaders who might make decisions communally. So it wasn't the same as white society, where you had these elected officials who were the ones who could sign contracts and treaties. It was a little bit different.

00:02:01 And the government didn't really understand that differences. So the authority of chief wasn't always recognized. And those who signed the treaties, many people didn't give any value to those treaties. Many American Indians didn't give any values to the treaties that their so-called chiefs had signed. And tribes were not used to living in defined areas with

00:02:20 strict borders, again because they were nomadic. And they would follow the herds. Or they would move seasonally depending upon the weather. So this is going to create several challenges when the government is trying to force these American Indians onto reservations.

Section 6

- 00:00:00 TEACHER: Despite the struggles with the reservation system, the government is going to look at another way to deal with what they consider this American Indian problem. And they're going to now try something called assimilation. Now, assimilation is when you give up your own culture to blend in with the culture of another group. So the first step in this process, if you will, is to give up your old culture.
- 00:00:23 And then you search for a new culture. And then you blend in with that culture. So you sort of make it so that you lose pieces of your old culture, you blend in with that new culture, and pretty soon, you're part of that culture. So the government thought this would be a good way to stop any fighting between American Indians and white settlers, because pretty soon, they'd all be the same Americans.
- 00:00:49 Well, that's of course not going to happen. But that's what many had hoped for. In 1871, there was a new government policy. Congress began to pursue assimilation with a new Indian Appropriations Act. Now, according to that law, tribes were no longer considered to be independent nations. So the government wasn't going to deal with the tribes as a
- 00:01:11 nation they could sign a treaty with. They were simply all going to be considered individual Americans, and they would be treated like all other Americans. Well, of course, we know that they're not going to be treated like all other Americans. But they also said that American Indians were designated as wards of the federal government.
- 00:01:31 The federal government would take care of them, because they needed the federal government to take care of them. You can see that, in many ways, this assimilation policy is a little bit paternalistic. It's assuming that the American Indians, first of all, want this kind of help, and second of all, need this kind of help.
- 00:01:50 It's really not taking into account the uniqueness of American Indian culture. It's trying to force white culture onto these people. The United States would no longer sign treaties with tribes, because they weren't nations anymore. Now, in suppressing American Indian culture, there were some other key steps. In that was to educate American Indian children in
- 00:02:10 New schools, teach them the same education that white students were getting, stop American Indians from participating in cultural activities. And that meant that they should not wear traditional dress anymore.

00:02:29 They should not have traditional beliefs or values or, in many cases, traditional foods. They needed to dress, like you see in this picture, like white Americans. They needed to become part of white American society. And they also believed that if they were taught Christianity and new religious practices, that they would leave behind their traditional religions. This would make them more and more like white Americans. And they wanted to promote individualism. Now, American Indian culture is very rooted

00:02:49 in a communal ideology. They wanted American Indians to have their own individual homes, their own individual farms, take care of their own individual families, and not raise crops in a communal setting, share in the bounty of a hunt with other members of the group. They wanted to promote that individualistic spirit that was part of white American culture.

00:03:15 So you can see here the steps that the government is trying to take and people are trying to take in order to suppress that American Indian culture, the different American Indian cultures that people had at this time. They really wanted American Indians to leave behind their culture and take on white American culture to create one American culture.

Section 8

00:00:00 TEACHER: Now, the Dawes Act was passed in 1887, and it called for the continuation of the assimilation policy. And it divided American Indian lands into small family farms called allotments. So that's why it's also referred to as the General Allotment Act. And it was promoted and named after senator Henry L. Dawes. And the key thing to this is go back to that idea of

00:00:24 individualism. They really wanted American Indians to have individual family farms, and to really concern themselves with their own family and this individualistic idea that was so central to white American society. Supporters claimed that the Dawes Act would help American Indians become property owners and farmers. And once they got into doing this, they would really leave

00:00:45 behind some of their traditional ways. There were two other Indian Appropriations Acts that are going to come out of Congress. The Indian Appropriations Act of 1885 allowed American Indians to sell unoccupied lands. So any lands that they had that were not occupied at that time, they could sell them for a profit. The purpose of this is to help raise money.

00:01:11 But it's also going to provide more and more lands for white settlers. The Indian Appropriations Act of 1889 allowed white settlers to claim tribal lands through homesteads. So basically what it's saying is that if you're on land that had originally been set aside for tribal lands, and you establish a homestead there, then it actually becomes your property if you're a white American.

00:01:38 So you can see these acts are basically chipping away more and more at the lands of many of the American Indian tribes. This is all culminating in that pressure to get rid of the tribal mentality, to get rid of the American Indian tribes, and to just have those people assimilate into white society.

Section 10

00:00:00 TEACHER: Now remember, we're trying to answer the question-- how did US American Indian policy change with westward expansion? You've just learned about the reservation system and the policy of assimilation. You can probably guess that there were many American Indians who rejected these policies and these ideas. This is going to lead to a growing conflict, and that's

00:00:19 what we're going to look at in this next section.

Section 11

00:00:00 TEACHER: In the 1850s, the US government negotiated a treaty with the Dakota Sioux of Minnesota. And the terms of that treaty were like other treaties at the time. The Dakota would move onto a reservation. And the government would provide money, supplies, and protection to the tribe. Instead, the governments and the nation went to war, the

00:00:20 Civil War, which caused a delay in payments. They were unable to pay some of the money that was due to the Dakota Sioux. They also ended up withholding food supplies, partially because of the Civil War was already taxing much of the government's resources. This led to the feeling of the tribe that the government was going back on their word.

00:00:46 They felt betrayed by the government. They also were facing starvation. Some of the animals and the game animals were dwindling in numbers. And this reduced their food supply. And if they weren't getting their rations from the government, it meant that people were on the brink of starvation.

00:01:04 In 1862, the Dakota leaders started an uprising. Dakota attacked and killed more than 400 settlers, partially because much of the army was busy fighting the Civil War. In response, the US military moved in to

stop the uprising. And in many cases, they had to use state militia in order to do so. They defeated the Dakota warriors in battle.

00:01:29 And they captured and hanged about 38 of the tribe members. Despite this, conflicts continued as some Dakota were still pushing further west. Conflicts continued for about two years.

Section 13

00:00:00 TEACHER: Well, let's talk about Red Cloud's War. In the 1860s, the government built a trail through Sioux hunting grounds in Wyoming. And Red Cloud, who was a Sioux leader, protested the trail. But his protests were ignored. In response, Sioux and Cheyenne warriors attacked soldiers who were guarding the trail. And American Indians killed 80 federal troops in 1866.

00:00:21 Raids continued along the trail. So the government started to recognize that there was an issue here and that they may need to get involved. So the government signed the Treaty of Fort Laramie with Plains tribes in 1868. Now, the tribes were given certain guarantees. That was recognition of American Indians' rights to their lands, promises of future protections.

00:00:43 But these promises were soon broken. Now, why is that? Well, you can probably guess at this point that it has something to do with white settlement and something that white settlers want. And that's going to be the gold rush in the Black Hills. Now, in 1874, gold was discovered in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

00:01:04 This starts another land rush. Thousands of miners and settlers arrive into the area. This area, remember, is supposed to belong to American Indians. The government attempted to buy the Black Hills, but Sioux leaders rejected the offer. They didn't want the money. They wanted their sacred land.

00:01:22 And this led to a series of conflicts, which was known as the Great Sioux War. Now, the Battle of Little Bighorn started because in 1876, Lieutenant Colonel George Custer led a unit into the Dakota Territory. Now, he was commanding the Seventh US Cavalry Regiment. And this led to the Battle of Little Bighorn. He led about 200 men toward an American Indian camp.

00:01:48 He heard about a small Indian village located along the Little Bighorn River. So he thought he would just go in and make something of a name for himself. Well, he was surprised to find that at the camp were, in fact, 2,000 warriors led by Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull. Custer and all 200 of his men were killed that day at the Battle of Little Bighorn.

00:02:09 And because of this, it's famously become known as Custer's Last Stand.

Section 15

00:00:00 TEACHER: Conflict on the northern plains was not the only conflict that the US government was waging with Indians at the time. They fought several other Indian groups, the US government did, in the 1870s and 1880s, but each war had a similar outcome. The southern plains tribes were defeated in the Red River war that took place from 1874 to '75.

00:00:23 And that took place along that the Red River between Texas and Oklahoma. And Nez Perce surrendered in 1877. That's over here in present day Idaho. Their leader Chief Joseph, upon surrender at Bear Paw Mountain, said, "I will fight no more, forever." Meaning that he is a surrendering indefinitely. He's going to surrender forever.

00:00:53 And Sitting Bull also surrenders in 1881. You can see that noted up here. And then finally Apache leader Geronimo, who had been able to frustrate army officers who had been pursuing him for years finally gave up in 1886. Now the Ghost Dance movement is something that gained momentum in the 1800s. It was a religious movement started by plains tribes.

00:01:21 Followers believed that the meditation and ritual dances would bring the dead back to life and make settlers disappear from tribal lands. It was a very important movement. It became extremely popular and it spread across the West. Now this is a quote of a woman who actually witnessed the ghost dance, a white woman, And she's saying, "They raised their eyes to heaven, their hands clasped high above their

00:01:47 heads, and stood straight and perfectly still invoking the power of the Great Spirit to allow them to see and talk with their people who have died. They would go as fast as they could, their hands moving from side to side." So this is an extremely important event and the Ghost Dance movement was really one way that many American Indians were holding on, hoping that they would be able to defeat the US government.

00:02:12 Defeat the white settlers who were encroaching on their lands and stripping away their culture really.

Section 17

00:00:00 TEACHER: The Ghost Dance movement ended up resulting in a massacre that occurred at Wounded Knee. Big Foot, who had since

- become the leader of the Sioux after the death of Sitting Bull, sought protection for his people at the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. And on route there, the Seventh US Cavalry intercepted Big Foot's group. The army officials told Big Foot to set up camp along
- 00:00:28 Wounded Knee Creek. And army officers tried to disarm Big Foot's group at camp. Now, this resulted in a discharge of a gun from an unknown source. And soldiers opened fire, killing more than 200 people, including women, children, and elderly. Now, the violence at Wounded Knee really dispersed the
- 00:00:50 Ghost Dance movement. And it's widely recognized as the final battle in the Indian wars. Well, this isn't the last time we're going to hear about Wounded Knee, though. Taking a look at a real world connection, in 1973, American Indians staged a protest at Wounded Knee, about 200 people.
- 00:01:09 They took Wounded Knee by force, and they refused to leave until the US government addressed their demands. They wanted the US government to change tribal leaders, to review treaties, and to review the treatment of American Indians. Now, federal marshals surrounded the protest. And the protest really alternated between peaceful negotiations and gunfights.
- 00:01:31 And ultimately, two American Indians ended up dying, and one federal marshal was wounded. The protesters gave up their guns and left the area when it was promised that their concerns would be addressed.

8.8 Farmers on a Closing Frontier

Section 1

- 00:00:00 In this lesson, our goal is to answer the question, "How did America's farmers respond to the economic problems they faced after the Civil War?" To do this, we're going to first talk about the difficulties that farmers faced. Then, we'll look at how they banded together. And then we're going to talk about how they turned to politics to help solve their problems. First, let's get started by talking about some of the
- 00:00:21 difficulties that farmers faced.

Section 2

- 00:00:00 What were some of the challenges that farmers faced? Well, in the late 1800s rising costs was a major challenge. It became more expensive to own land, to plant crops, and to transport goods and crops using the

railroad. Small farmers were especially hit hard, as many railroads favored larger farms and corporate farms, and actually charged them less than they charged some of the small farmers to ship things.

00:00:25 Now one problem that emerged after the Civil War was that freed slaves needed work because they were no longer engaged in forced labor on plantations in the South. And landowners needed labor, because many landowners actually lost their labor pool when slaves were freed. So one of the solutions that emerged in the South in particular at this time was sharecropping, which you can see here.

00:00:53 With the system of sharecropping, farmers rented land from landowners in return for a share of the crops, and that's where you get the term sharecropping from. So the way it would work was someone who had previously been a slave, they were now freed, said they wanted to establish their own farm. And a landowner would give them a parcel of land to farm. But in return, as sort of a payment, that sharecropper,

00:01:24 that small farmer, had to provide the landowner with a share of the crops. And this system was very difficult to get out of, as we'll see in a minute. Now, another problem that existed was landowners and farmers often lacked money to even start up some of the farms and actually turn some of the land they owned into a productive farm.

00:01:45 So one solution that came was the crop-lien system. Farmers and landowners promised to pay for goods with future earnings from crops. So they would really put a lot of stock into the fact that they expected to have a crop. And then they expected that crop to be able to be sold for a certain price. And they would use that money that they expected to have to

00:02:07 purchase things. To purchase different types of equipment to actually work the farm. Now with these solutions though came more problems. With sharecropping, one of the problems was that sharecroppers actually would fall into debt. Because some of the contracts were unfair, they favored the landowners.

00:02:26 And it was very difficult for the sharecropper to actually make any money because they were constantly giving a part of their crop to the landowner. With the crop-lien system, landowners and farmers often fell into a cycle of debt. Because if there was a problem with the crop, if there had been a drought for a period of time and they weren't able to harvest that crop, then that money that they expected to

00:02:51 have never come to fruition. This created a cycle of debt. Farmers needed money to plant crops. Farmers had to borrow money to do that.

When the crops failed to make money, those farmers fell further into debt. Now this was a terrible trap that affected millions of farmers in the late 1800s.

00:03:11 Because after falling into debt again, in order to get out of debt they had to borrow more money so that they could plant more crops. And if those crops didn't succeed, then they would have to continue to borrow money. So it became a vicious cycle that plagued millions of American farmers at this time.

Section 4

00:00:00 For farmers in the West, railroads were both a blessing and a curse. They relied on the new railroads to help them ship crops, to create larger markets so that they could get their crops sold to cities on the East Coast, new cities developing on the West. They didn't just have to sell their goods locally. And to open up new lands and encourage
00:00:23 settlement of new areas. But railroads also hurt farmers. And you see in the image in front of you a political cartoon that shows an octopus with its tentacles sort of strangling various American industries and individuals. Here you see it clutching onto a farmer, here you see the shipping industry. This cartoon is depicting the railroad monopoly and how it's
00:00:48 taken over in a lot of ways, dictating American economy and society. Railroads hurt farmers because unfair business practices kept prices high. And high prices from shipping and storing crops actually cut into farm profits. Small farms were especially vulnerable to this. And they were charged higher rates than large farmers.

Section 6

00:00:00 In the mid to late 1800s, farmers in the United States faced some significant problems, especially those in the South and the West. And in this lesson, we are trying to answer the question, how did America's farmers respond to the economic problems they faced after the Civil War? Now we're going to learn about how they worked together to address their problems.

00:00:19 We're going to begin with a discussion of a man named Oliver H. Kelly and an organization he created called the Grange.

Section 7

00:00:00 One individual who was particularly influential in trying to help farmers combat the railroad monopoly was Oliver H Kelley. He led the effort to organize and unite farmers in the late 1800s. He had worked for the US Department of Agriculture. And in 1866, he toured the South and saw that farmers needed help.

00:00:20 He realized that many farmers were uneducated about good farming practices. So he founded the National Grange in 1867 to help farm families. His organization was nicknamed the Grange. And farmers joined local Granges to meet other families to share stories, to share things that were successful for them, and just to interact and meet others.

00:00:42 It established somewhat of a farm community. The Grange educated farmers about good and appropriate farming methods. And farmers were able to pool their resources. Now, at its height, the Grange had about 800,000 members. The Grange also provided economic support for farmers. They could work together to share costs. Some of the programs included cooperative stores which

00:01:08 allowed the profits to go directly to the farmers and to serve the members of the Grange. Grange storage facilities were also bought by the Granges where farmers could pool together and store their grain in grain elevators for reduced costs. Before this, the grain elevators were actually owned by the railroad companies and many farmers found this exploitive.

00:01:32 There were also insurance programs offered to farmers to provide insurance for the lowest cost. Many of these programs struggled to stay open, however. Many Grangers turned to politics to create change. They asked state governments to regulate these railroads who they felt were taking unfair advantage of them. This led to the 1877 Supreme case of Munn v. Illinois which

00:01:56 allowed states to regulate certain businesses, including railroads, within their borders. So the Supreme Court decided that the state and federal government could actually regulate railroads, because railroads served public interest. Now, this was copied by several other states who also begin to regulate railroads.

Section 9

00:00:00 Now one step closer to answering our lesson question, how did America's farmers respond to the economic problems they faced after the civil war? We're now going to look at how they turned to politics to address some of the issues that they had. Let's get started.

Section 10

- 00:00:00 As the Grange weakened, it was replaced by new groups called Farmers' Alliances. Now, Farmers' Alliances included many former Grangers. They provided economic support through cooperatives in similar ways that the Grange had, and they formed large regional organizations. The Farmers' Alliances also were increasingly focused on political action.
- 00:00:20 And they did this by forming a set of demands for the government, attacking monopolies who they felt hurt small businesses, particularly small farmers, and they had hoped to be more effective than the Grange. So let's compare the two so you have an understanding of what some of the similarities and differences were. The Grange was formed to create ways for farm families to support one another.
- 00:00:44 Now remember, many of those who were involved in Farmers' Alliances actually came out of that Grange system. So, some of those same ideas were there, but the Alliance was also formed by farmers who wanted to take more political action and hold the government responsible for some of the ills that were facing farmers. The Grange was focused on cultural and social issues as a way for farmers to interact, meet one another, and
- 00:01:12 establish a sense of a farm community. Alliances were really focused on creating large regional alliances that could take political action when necessary. The Grange organized cooperative businesses, and Alliances did the same. The Grange, at its peak had 800,000 members, and the Alliances had more than 1,000,000 members.
- 00:01:38 The Grange became focused on politics and called for industry regulation, and Alliances also favored industry regulation. So you can see that there are several similarities and differences between the two. But Alliances, remember, are more focused on taking that political action and bringing their demands to Washington.

Section 12

- 00:00:00 Farmers' Alliances were well known for inviting women to participate and even take on leadership roles. And one such woman was Mary E. Lease, who was an early reformer in Kansas and was a persuasive speaker. So much so that she was able to rouse farmers to revolt against unfair financial practices when she got them to rise up against Wall Street and the banks. She led farmers in an 1890 revolt against high mortgages

- 00:00:24 and railroad rates. But despite these efforts, many in the Farmer's Alliance called on Washington, called for greater change. So the Populist Party was born. It's also known as the People's Party. They really failed to influence a national policy. So they created a new political party, because the Democratic Party and the Republican Party really
- 00:00:47 weren't paying enough attention to the needs of the farmers. In 1891, the Alliance leaders formed the Populist or People's Party, and in 1892, a Populist Party candidate ran in the presidential election. James Weaver actually ended up carrying four states. Now take a look here. You can see the four States that he carried in green.
- 00:01:11 What's interesting to note is that in two of these states by 1890, women actually had the right to vote. And that was in Colorado and Idaho. So we just got done saying how within the Farmers' Alliance they were accepting of women participating and taking on leadership roles. So you can see how even that turned into a way for women to voice their support for a candidate in two of those
- 00:01:38 states, where the candidate ended up actually carrying two of those states. Of course, he didn't win the election. But you'll see in the coming years that the Populist Party is going to gain some steam, especially among the farming community when it comes to politics.

8.9 The Populist Party

Section 1

- 00:00:00 In this lesson, we're trying to answer the question, how did the Populist Party influence American politics? To do this, we're going to first talk about why the Populist Party formed. Now you know that farmers were discontent. They had economic struggles. We also need to look at what Populist stood for and what effects Populism had on American
- 00:00:19 government and society. Keeping in mind what the challenges farmers were facing, we're going to talk about why the Populist Party was created as a way to deal with some of the issues and concerns and challenges facing farmers. So let's get started.

Section 2

- 00:00:00 What is Populism? Well, you can see that it's very similar to the word popular. And by popular, it doesn't mean necessarily well-liked, it means covering the largest base, the most people. And really, the

Populism came to represent the common people. It's a political movement that claims to represent these

00:00:23 common people, those with limited economic and political power. Now some of the common concerns of Populism included the economic struggles. Whether it be from rising unemployment, or farm debt, and the abuse of power by the elites. These would be the upper-class, those with a great deal of social, economic and political power, and the

00:00:45 inaccessibility of political power for the weak. So what did that mean? Well, Populism was really rooted in farmer discontent. Now when farmers were struggling, they started these Farmers' Alliances, or Granges. These unified farmers in the South and the West. And they were organized locally, sometimes regionally, but they weren't able to organize on a large scale.

00:01:08 Now Farmers' Alliances took it one step further than the Granges. And Farmers' Alliances really tried to get into the political realm, but still they were lacking. So what was needed? Well, they needed a voice in state and national politics, and a clear, defined platform. So out of this problem comes a solution.

00:01:29 Farmers knew they needed more influence in government at the state and local levels. The Democratic and Republican parties at that time controlled all the state legislature and the national government. But many of the common people, many of these farmers, felt that those two parties didn't represent them. Instead, those parties represented the businessmen,

00:01:48 the bankers, and the land-owning elite. The people who didn't support reforms for farmers, the people who were responsible for foreclosing on farms. For lending out money and increasing the cycle of debt, or contributing to that cycle of debt that many of these farmers were locked into with sharecropping and crop-lien systems. So from this arose the need for a new political party.

00:02:15 And that new political party was going to be the Populist Party.

Section 4

00:00:00 And so the Populist Party was born in 1891. It was also known as the People's Party. Now factors leading to its formation included deflation, which is the dropping of prices across an entire economy. Also the growing support of labor unions, such as the Knights of Labor. And finally people's distrust of the two main political

00:00:20 parties, the Democratic party and the Republican party, who many of the common people felt really represented that wealthy elite.

Section 6

00:00:00 Remember, our goal in this lesson is to answer the question, how did the Populist party influence American Politics? Well we know that the Populist Party was formed to meet the needs of farmers. Now we're going to talk about what the Populist stood for. And that's going to be answered by examining the Omaha Platform.

00:00:17 So let's take a look at what the Omaha Platform was.

Section 7

00:00:00 In 1892, the Populist Party, or the People's Party, held a convention in Omaha, Nebraska. There they identified several issues and then proposed solutions to those issues. The first issue was to fight deflation, or falling prices. Their solution was to put more currency into circulation, and this currency would come from less expensive silver. By putting that into circulation, it might create a

00:00:25 situation of inflation, which would help drive prices up, for example, of crops. They also wanted to break up railroad monopolies. They came up with a plan for a network of government-owned railroads and banks. They wanted to provide tax relief. And their idea was to establish a graduated income tax whereby the more money you made, the more money

00:00:46 you'd pay in taxes. And the less money you made, the less money you'd pay in taxes. They also wanted to give more political power to the people. Their idea was to allow for the direct election of senators, who at that time were actually chosen by state legislatures. They wanted to improve working conditions, for example,

00:01:07 establish an eight-hour work day. And so here we see cooperation between labor unions and the Populist Party. These goals and reforms became known as the Omaha Platform.

Section 9

00:00:00 With the Omaha Platform, Populists identified deflation as a major concern. They wanted to fight deflation by putting more money into circulation. Now at the time, the United States had a gold standard. This was a system that gives money a fixed value and allows it to be traded for a specific amount of gold for the treasury.

- 00:00:19 So for every paper dollar that was in circulation, there was an amount of gold tied to that, sort of supporting the strength of that dollar. Now, many Western and Southern farmers thought that it actually drove their incomes down and the cost of borrowing up. Free silver was a rallying cry by those who wanted the government to mint an unlimited
- 00:00:42 number of silver coins. In addition to farmers and Populists, free silver was also supported by owners of silver mines in the West. Now, there was also an idea or support growing among some for bimetallism. Now this was a system of money based on both gold and silver which could be minted in any amount that the government wanted.
- 00:01:04 Opponents of this plan thought that since each nation set its own exchange rate, it would make trade more difficult and less fair. So it would make it more difficult to actually trade with other countries. Manufacturers really favored the gold standard, because it had a fixed value and it was tied to a specific amount of gold.
- 00:01:26 But many believed that it kept wages and other costs low, and crop prices were falling. Populists opposed the gold standard because of the decreasing crop prices. But also because the costs of other goods and services were actually going up, and especially borrowing, these things weren't falling. They believed that increasing the currency would lead to
- 00:01:51 inflation and cause crop prices to rise as a result. Increasing the currency would increase their income, and it would make it easier for many of these farmers to repay their debts.

Section 11

- 00:00:00 We're one step closer to answering our lesson question. How did the Populist Party influence American politics? Now you know why it was formed, to meet the needs of farmers. And you know the goals of the Populist Party, as outlined in the Omaha Platform. Now you're going to talk about what effects Populism had. And to do that, we're going to look at the evolution of the
- 00:00:19 Populist Party, and see the emergence of one of its most famous leaders, William Jennings Bryan. So let's get started learning more about him.

Section 12

- 00:00:00 In 1892, the first People's Party candidates ran in a national election. James B. Weaver lost the presidential run to Democratic candidate Grover Cleveland. Weaver won four states and received more than a

million votes, however. But by 1896, the Populists realized that they had to align themselves with candidates from one of the two major parties. They chose Democrat William Jennings Bryan as their candidate. Now, Bryan was a charismatic and fiery public speaker from Nebraska, and he was a supporter of free silver and bimetallism. He was elected to Congress very early at the age of 30 and he was a presidential candidate three times, in 1896, 1900, and 1908. He also served as the Secretary of State during World War I, and he was a lawyer and speaker active in public life. He gave a famous speech known as "A Cross of Gold" speech. He delivered it at the 1896 Democratic National Convention. Now this was interesting because the president at that time was Grover Cleveland, and Cleveland was a supporter of the gold standard. Many in his party, many Democrats, were actually supporters of free silver or bimetallism. Bryan blamed the wealthy for supporting the gold standard at the expense of ordinary workers. He used historical and religious imagery to get his ideas across. Historians today consider this one of the most influential speeches in American history. Bryan said that "you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold." Meaning that it was almost suicide to just stay with that gold standard and not explore other options. And that we were being detrimental to the American people by only sticking to the gold standard. And this is why he had garnered so much support from the Populist Party which endorsed him, and farmers and miners across the country.

Section 14

Well after the election of 1896, we're going to see a decline of the People's Party. Populist and William Jennings Bryan lost the election of 1896. Republican William McKinley's campaign actually outspent Bryan's 5 to 1. McKinley spent \$3.5 million. And even with the support of silver supporting Republicans and Democrats, and farmers and an endorsement by the Populace Party, William Jennings Bryan still couldn't win the election. The two major parties went on to adopt much of the Populist Platform. And this would really cut out a need for having a third party alternative. But it does lead to the Progressive Movement.

00:00:41 And Progressives are going to pick up on many of these Populist ideas, including graduated income tax, business reforms, and improved working conditions for laborers.