

# Unity in Community Study Guide |Part II |

## Covering Post-Civil War to Civil Rights Movement

### Introduction

Much of the theorizing on American race relations is expressed in binary terms of black and white. Historically, the study of American race relations typically problematizes the "othered" status, that is, the non-white status in America's racial hierarchy. However, the sociology of race relations has historically failed to take into account both sides of the black/white binary paradigm when addressing racial inequality. In other words, in the case of race, it becomes difficult to see the forest for the trees. Generally, we find less scholarship about the role "whiteness as the norm" plays in sustaining social privilege beyond that which is accorded marginalized others.

Segregation is the product of notions of black inferiority and white superiority, manifested geographically through the exclusion of blacks from more privileged white neighborhoods and the concentration of blacks into subordinated neighborhoods stigmatized by both race and poverty. Racial violence is/was the tool used to maintain segregation. The acceptance and participation in racial violence, whether active or passive, allowed the system to survive for over 90 years.

To understand race and race theory, we must go back to the period in US history, post Reconstruction, where modern racial definitions and hierarchies became institutionalized in American institutions. Following the end of slavery, the former propertied class in the South and the industrialists in the North, chose the path of maintaining control over the use and terms of exchange of black labor in the US. Controlling blacks, their rights, and their labor was the essence of Jim Crow.

## Reconstruction in the US

This part of our quest to understand racism in the United States covers the most dynamic decades in African American history, from the end of slavery, to Reconstruction and through the Civil Rights era, which ended in the late 1960s. The overarching goal still focuses on preparing UIC members to become more effective and competent advocates and activists for racial equity.

In the study, we will develop a better understanding of the immediate aftermath of the Civil War and what happened to the slaves and poor whites. What happened to the former slave owners, and how did white Southerners react to newly freed slaves equal under the law? What were the deficiencies in the slave amendments, the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> amendments to the Constitution, and how did those deficiencies contribute to conditions facing African Americans from the 1880s through the 1960s? Why were union troops critical to the tenuous democracy following reconstruction?

Some of the major takeaways we want to share are exciting and will force us to go back and reevaluate much of what we have learned in our lives about US history and the failure of Reconstruction. Below are questions that we hope will challenge you to dig deeper into understanding the relationship between controlling black labor and the benefits that whites, from the rich industrialist down to workers in factories, received by participating in and condoning the American caste system, otherwise known as racism.

How do we think about the Great Migration? African Americans in Northern communities did not come as immigrants looking for economic opportunities. They came as refugees, exiles from lands in the South where they were being terrorized. And those refugee communities have particular needs that America never addressed. How does this relate to

generational poverty in these cities and marginalization within black communities? We cannot understand these present-day challenges without understanding the Great Migration, and the terror and violence that sent the African Americans to these cities where they've never been provided the care and assistance they needed to recover from the terror and trauma of facing racism and the prospect of racial violence.

There is a big difference between the migration America witnessed from Europe and Asia, or in Europe today, and that of African Americans in the past century. But injustice is illuminated in the comparison: Unlike in the European Union (where people come from parts of Europe, Asia and Africa), African Americans were refugees in their own country. White Americans in the North and the South disowned their own people.

Black families who stayed behind in the South could have been identified as internally displaced peoples. The prompt resolution of the Civil War that Union government officials hoped would happen during Reconstruction collapsed under the terrorism enacted by white Southern police, government officials, vigilante mobs, and the Ku Klux Klan—all often [the same](#).

Northern cities were of little sanctuary because they often perpetuated the systems and attitudes that kept African Americans classified as inferior citizens. Northern whites, which typically and often migrated in an earlier wave to the north believed that African-American migrants were criminal by nature, or less than everyone else, including recent immigrants from Europe, which was a justification for why these cities did not offer the assistance the new migrants need.

Below are questions for us to ponder as we start this journey.

- What would America look like had the burgeoning Democratic process and alliances between poor whites and former slaves,

during Reconstruction, continued to evolve without violent interruption? What were fusion politics and its accomplishments?

- What were the concrete and lasting benefits of Reconstruction we continue to receive today?
- How did the South go from a decade of democracy to six decades of apartheid? Why did the southern ruling class focus on preventing former slaves from owning land or building wealth? How did America get to where 90% of African Americans were trapped in sharecropping and apartheid from the 1880s into the 1960s?
- What were some factors that broke down sharecropping as an institution?
- How did primarily southern white migration contribute to geographic, social, and economic segregation in the North? What were some differences between the Great Migration of African Americans and the migration of whites on the South to the northern cities?
- Why did racial violence, primarily whites attacking Blacks, take the form of lynchings in the South and large-scale brutal attacks in the North?
- For those in the faith community, for many denominational strands of white American Christianity, sins are individualized and forgiven on an individual basis. As a result, some Christians continue to say, "I had nothing to do with slavery," even though generations of their family benefited from slave labor or from relegating former slaves or their descendants to the lowest caste in American society. This means many white American Christians do little to acknowledge and repair harm done, no matter how severe. It's one

of the reasons American Christianity refuses to correct mass injustices like slavery, genocide and poverty. Is salvation possible without acknowledging the full measure of the sin? Is sin embedded in the structures and systems in the world that hold and carry out laws, policies, and practices that disenfranchise and oppress people?

Overarching Study Goal: to prepare UiC members to become more effective and confident advocates and activists for racial equity

Goals for Part II:

- Develop a shared understanding of concepts, i.e. race and racism, to give UiC members a common language and vocabulary as we learn more about racism and its many manifestations.
- Increase awareness of Reconstruction, Redemption and U.S. Migration as the foundation for understanding the history of race relations and Black struggle in the U.S. from 1863-present day

Readings: *Everyone is encouraged to read all the material, however if that is not possible, please read the STRONGLY RECOMMENDED articles*

- DRWORKSBOOK What Is Racism? (Strongly Recommended - terms/definitions). (Best if read and viewed online)  
<http://www.dismantlingracism.org/racism-defined.html>
- Ten Things Everyone Should Know about Race, from Race: The Power of an Illusion  
<http://newsreel.org/guides/race/10things.htm>
- Stony the Road: Reconstruction, White Supremacy and the Rise of Jim Crow, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Chapter 1, Antislavery/Antislave (Strongly Recommended)
- Reconstruction Updated Edition: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1893-1877, Eric Foner. Preface, pp. xvii-xxv.

Videos: *Everyone is encouraged to watch all the videos. However, if that is not possible, please watch the STRONGLY RECOMMENDED video*

### **What Is Systemic Racism? - Wealth Gap**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPVXdjJCKCA>

### **What is Systemic Racism? - Employment**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fM07um4L\\_-Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fM07um4L_-Y)

### **What is Systemic Racism? - Incarceration**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-OB2LUGByb8>

### **The Unequal Opportunity Race**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vX\\_Vzl-r8NY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vX_Vzl-r8NY)

### **10 Ways to Practice Institutional Racism at Your Non-Profit Organization**

<https://search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?hspart=sz&hsimp=yhs-001&type=type7036981-sv7-dGFnWDEwNDI1MDctbWFwcv-9856163adac7dd16a855f4697193e0ce&param1=dGFnWDEwNDI1MDctbWFwcvxYXBzLGVTYWlzcVo1VXVNTlZJMEcsVVMsbmMsY29uY29yZA&p=10%20ways%20to%20Practice%20Institutional%20Racism&param2=eyJzZXJwR2VvUmVkJjoibm8iLCJleHRUYWdzIjpbIknXU19NYXBzXzEiLCJ0aGVtZV9tYXBzMjJlcjIcm93c2VyTmFtZSI6IkZpcmVmb3giLCJicm93c2VyVmVyc2lvbiI6IjYwIiwzXh0VmVyc2lvbiI6Imhvc3RlZCI6ImV4dE5hbWUiOiJNYXBzIE5vdyIsImNsaWNrU3JjIjoieWhzX3N5biIsImNo cm9tZVN0b3JlSWQiOiJNYXBzX05vd18xYTQ3ZmJmODU0NmE0M2Q5NDlmMjI5ZWZjYTIhMmYzNEB3d3cubWFwcv25vdy5jbyIsInNlbFRoZW1lIjoieGhlcWVfbWFwcvIiLCJkb21haW4iOiJ3d3cubWFwcv25vdy5jbyIsImF1dG9TdWdnZXN0Q2xrIjoib3JnYW5pYyIsIm9yU3JjIjoib21uaWJveCI6ImIjZyI6IjAiLCJ0ZmV3IjoieWV2X3NyYyI6IjEifQ>

**RECONSTRUCTION: AMERICA AFTER THE CIVIL WAR - PBS  
Documentary (Strongly Recommended). Parts 1-4**

**Part1**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TiXxQpBLMuk>

**Part2**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYcooEuHnvE>

**Part3**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8yXJZfIHYGg>

**Part4**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qquctNYLaxg&t=2132s>

**Reconstruction Amendments-13<sup>th</sup> Amendment**

<http://images.huffingtonpost.com/2014-06-21-13thAmendment.jpg>

**1<sup>st</sup> order of business & to build the lives that black people dreamed about while enslaved was to reconnect with lost family members- through newspaper ads.**

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/retropolis/wp/2017/09/07/my-mother-was-sold-from-me-after-slavery-the-desperate-search-for-loved-ones-in-last-seen-ads/?noredirect=on>

<https://blogs.voanews.com/all-about-america/2016/04/04/newspaper-ads-show-freed-slaves-desperate-search-for-lost-relatives/>

<https://www.hnoc.org/database/lost-friends/index.html>



## **Reconstruction Amendment-14<sup>th</sup> Amendment**

<https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=pQStfw7B&iid=8CF4E103589E131B036096D0AEA46FCAFA6D835D&thid=OIP.pQStfw7B9-ig6b7ePinYDAHaEJ&mediaurl=https%3a%2f%2fmylegalhelpusa.files.wordpress.com%2f2018%2f08%2f14-th-amendment.jpg&exph=473&expw=843&q=14th+amendment&simid=60802955563171355&selectedIndex=14&ajaxhist=0>

## **The Lost Cause and Redemption**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dOkFXPbLLpU>

## **Slavery by Another Name**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSOwAJAn6as>

<https://www.pbs.org/video/slavery-another-name-slavery-video/>

## **The New Negro**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DD6KOWIBdEM>

## **Field trip to Reconstruction Era National Monument in Buford SC**

<https://www.nps.gov/reer/index.htm>

## Discussion Questions for What Is Racism?

(This set of questions is based on the DRWORKSBOOK reading)

1. Based on the brief introduction to the DRWORKSBOOK, "What is Racism?" what do you think about Critical Race Theory? How does it affirm or challenge your own beliefs/understanding?
2. Discuss the definitions offered for prejudice, oppression, social and political power, system, and advantage. Do you agree or disagree with these definitions? Give an example from your own personal experience (doesn't have to be race-based)
3. How does your understanding of white supremacy, race and racism differ from or align with the definitions in the reading? Do these definitions challenge or affirm your understanding? What readings or experiences have influenced or informed your thinking about these concepts?
4. What strikes you about the description of how oppression operates? What, if anything, in your life experiences relate to the cycle of oppression or the examples of how oppression (racism) flourishes?
5. Of the three expressions of racism (cultural, institutional, personal), which is most dangerous? Which do you see as the most difficult to dismantle or "un-do"? Give examples.

# Reconstruction: America After the Civil War

## Questions - Episode 1

### Episode 1 Background

A tumultuous yet significant chapter in American history, the Reconstruction era brought with it radical changes in how our country governed its people--all of its people. During the period from 1863 to 1877, our nation witnessed the death of a president, the birth of the American civil rights movement, and the efforts of many to reunite a country divided.

The aftermath of the Civil War was bewildering, exhilarating...and terrifying. African Americans had played a crucial role in saving the Union and now, as the country grappled with the terms and implications of Reconstruction, they struggled to breathe life into their hard-won freedom. The result was a second American Revolution.

### Questions

1. Approximately how long did slavery last?
2. What was Reconstruction?
3. Did Lee, the General of the Southern army, believe he had truly lost the war? Why is this important in Reconstruction?
4. The 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment abolished slavery. What legal and moral dilemmas did it lead to?
5. What was the purpose of the Freedmen's Bureau?
6. What did Johnson's plan for Reconstruction include? How did he pardon wealthy, powerful Southern planters? By doing this, how did the previously enslaved people remain enslaved?
7. What is the deepest legacy of slavery?

8. Which state was the first to pass Black Codes? What was their purpose? When was the KKK established?
9. How did the planter class continue to steal labor from Black Americans?
10. Why is it such a problem that the southern representatives and senators were reinstated into the Congress?
11. What was the purpose of The Civil Rights Act of 1866?

# Reconstruction: America After the Civil War

## Questions - Episode 2

### Episode 2 Background

Post-Civil War America was a new world. For African Americans living in the former Confederacy, Reconstruction was what historian W. E. B. Du Bois once described as their "brief moment in the sun." But support for the social, economic, and political gains that African Americans achieved didn't last long. A controversial presidential election in 1876 dealt Reconstruction, a grievous blow, as Southern states are "redeemed," and the forces of white supremacy are ascendant.

### Questions

1. How many Black people were enslaved before the Civil War?
2. How many Black men moved into political positions post-Civil War?
3. Black men held positions of leadership in the government after the enactment of the 15<sup>th</sup> amendment. Black men once enslaved now held positions of power. What social and political effects did this opportunity have?
4. Why would Robert Smalls desire education for all Americans? Why is education most important?
5. In 1870 Black and White families were not segregated. However, there were differences in community treatment. Explain some of the differences.
6. What was the first change that was made by the Black Congress?
7. Besides starting businesses and going to school, free black families tried to become financially independent by doing what?

8. The more that black Americans achieved, the more dangerous it became for them to live in the South. The Ku Klux Klan was a threatening force and used violence to spread fear. What was the closest the KKK ever came to being destroyed legally?
9. How many pages of testimony were given by American citizens citing the KKK's violence during hearings?
10. During Reconstruction, how does white supremacy spread against black Americans?
11. Who made it difficult for Reconstruction policies to be enforced? The Republican Party supported Reconstruction. When Democrats took over Congress in the next election, how was this a turning point of Reconstruction?
12. What bill passed in 1875 to promote social equality between black Americans and whites?

# Reconstruction: America After the Civil War

## Questions - Episode 3

### Episode 3 Background

Hour three of the series examines the years 1877-1896, a transitional period that saw visions of a "New South" set the stage for the rise of Jim Crow and the undermining of Reconstruction's legal and political legacy. While some African Americans attempted to migrate, the vast majority remained in the South, where sharecropping, convict leasing, disfranchisement, and lynchings drew a "color line" that limited opportunities and destroyed lives. Although their "brief moment in the sun" had been cast in shadow, African Americans refused to retreat and used their voices and pens to continue to fight for those rights afforded to white Americans.

### Questions

1. Why was the 1880s a difficult time?
2. Why were poor white and Black farmers motivated to unite? How would poor whites and black farmers become stronger?
3. How was the National Farmers Alliance a great threat to the status quo?
4. The National Farmers' Alliance was the most successful and largest third political party to date. How did the Democrats attempt to get rid of it?
5. How did Southern whites stop Black Americans from voting without using the word "race"? Who else was disenfranchised?
6. The documentary states that whites were the "judge, jury, and executioner." What does this mean?

7. Whites posed with Black bodies that were hung because of white brutality. Why did they hang the bodies high when they could have just buried the people?
8. Teachers, religious figures, law enforcement officers, and alike all comprise the mobs who attacked black Americans. What is unsettling to you about these commoners acting the most violent toward Black individuals?
9. How would you describe Ida B Wells? What did she do to battle the stereotypes of black American and negative press? What intensely fearless thing did Wells do next, and what did she find?
10. What major group of people was excluded from being celebrated at The World's Fair? In Douglas's speech at The World's Fair, he speaks that Americans need to live up to what?
11. Why is Booker T. Washington a friend and a foe of Reconstruction?
12. What greater consequence than just separate but equal did Plessy vs. Ferguson lead to?



# Reconstruction: America After the Civil War

## Questions - Episode 4

### Episode 4 Background

The turn of the century is known as the 'nadir' of race relations when white supremacy was ascendant, and African Americans faced both physical and psychological oppression. Racist imagery saturated popular culture, and Southern propaganda manipulated the story of the Civil War and Reconstruction. But African Americans fought back, using artistic expression to put forward a "New Negro" for a new century.

### Questions

1. What state had the largest number of successful black businesses and had black middle-class towns?
2. Violent southern and white supremacists got actively involved in North Carolina to get rid of black politicians. How and why did this happen? Describe how this was justified? What were the long-term implications? What is most horribly shocking about the conflict between black Americans and whites when Blacks were trying to flee?
3. George Henry White would step down from Congress in 1901. How many years until there was another Black member of Congress?
4. The Lost Cause became the justification for White Supremacy. The 1890s, fueled by this book, rewrote history and Reconstruction. How was history rewritten?
5. The 30,000 members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy's objective was to create memorial/monuments for those Southerners who died in the Civil War. Why did they feel compelled to do so?
6. Lobbyists would convince textbook editing companies to rewrite the Civil War, to show the South in a more positive light. Give

examples of rewritten history. Rewritten history created a generation of schoolchildren who would grow up to grossly misunderstand the Civil War. Is this still a dilemma? How are textbooks written with bias today?

7. How did technology further racist images of Black Americans?
8. This period is called the Jim Crow Era. What else does Jim Crow encompass besides laws? Minstrel shows were the most common entertainment, which included blackface with the purpose to mark Black people as unintelligent, greedy, and full of lust. Jim Crow was only one of the many Minstrel characters. Who was Jim Crow?
9. In 1839 photography comes to the US. Who recognized that photographs could reinvent and appropriately depict Black Americans? He also was the first Black man to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard. What transpired from the New Negro Generation to help rewrite the Black experience and show the greatness of black Americans?
10. What is a Coon song? Bert Williams and George Walker identified themselves as "two real Coons." They performed in Blackface. How is this reflected in current times?
11. What were some of the different approaches to uniting Black people to gain equality up to the 1970s?
12. Springfield, Illinois, had a moment in time that was shocking. A riot ensued regarding the rape propaganda. White civilians were enraged and murdered two Black men, injured dozens of Black people, and burned over 40 homes. This racially violent event made national news in 1908. Why was this so shocking?
13. As a major piece of propaganda from the Ku Klux Klan, *The Birth of the Nation* was shown at The White House under President Wilson. It included a scene where an actor, in Blackface, pursues a white woman. In another scene Black men held political positions in which they were depicted as ruining the

prestige of those positions. The film was also shown and popularized in the North. What was the major effect of *The Birth of a Nation*?