

THE PEOPLE OF RECONSTRUCTION

FREEDMEN: You have just been set free from a lifetime of slavery. You were the property of a white southerner. You were told what to do. You might have been sold away from your family. You were not allowed to learn to read or write. You have gained your freedom because the North won the war and the South has to comply with the 13th amendment (To End Slavery.) You are extremely happy and relieved, but you are worried about how the white people will treat you. How will they be able to accept you as free people in their community? Some of them used to own you and now they have to hire someone to do your work or do the work themselves, they have to pass you in the streets, and see you free! You are now in control of your life. But, you have no money, no job, and no place to live. Is your life going to be great now? Are all your troubles really over?

Write one problem you are facing –

RADICAL REPUBLICANS: You are a member of congress from a northern state. You have always been opposed to slavery and were fighting to abolish it for years before the civil war even started. You want to help the freedmen to start new lives. You want to establish schools and help them get jobs so they can live equally among the white people. You want the nation to be united as one again. You are angry at the Confederates for breaking away from the Union and you feel they should be punished for their actions. You are even worried about them working against the reconstruction of the Union. You don't agree with the lenient way that President Johnson is dealing with the former Confederate leaders and not helping the freedmen. You are ready to take action against the president and take a more severe approach in dealing with the South.

Write one problem you are facing -

SCALAWAGS/CARPETBAGGERS:

Scalawags – You are a Southerner who supports the republican views and wants to reunite the Union. You want to help the freedmen establish new lives. Some of you have always been against slavery and some of you didn't care one way or the other about slavery. Your main concern is to make life better for the country and that means to make life work in the South now that the war is over. Other Southerners are angry at you because they feel you are betraying the South and siding with the North. Even though the war is over the two sides have different points of view.

Write one problem you are facing –

Carpetbaggers – You are a Northerner who has come down to the South to help and benefit from Reconstruction. You see the opportunity to make money and at the same time you want to reunite the Union. You will help the Freedmen in their new lives, but try to make a profit for yourself while doing

that. Southerners don't like you coming to their state and profiting from their problems.

Write one problem you are facing -

SOUTHERN PLANTATION OWNER: You have owned slaves all of your life and now they have been set free because the North won the war. Your life, as you know it, has changed forever. You have to figure out how to run your plantation or farm without slaves, if you can even get it back to a working business after the destruction caused by the war. You have lost family and friends in this war. You have to walk among the newly freed slaves and see them, in your mind, enjoying a free life. You don't realize how difficult it is for them, but you are probably causing their difficulties. You won't hire them or help them start a new life; in fact you will do anything to stop them from being treated equally.

Write one problem you are facing -

FORMER CONFEDERATE OFFICERS: You wanted the South to be a separate country so you could make your own laws and not follow the laws of the Union. You fought for the South and there were many times you thought you were going to beat the North. You led your troops into battle and lost many men along the way. You were loyal to the South but some of you may not have been supporters of slavery and did not own slaves. Some of you had plantations that are now destroyed or have no crops left to harvest and are seeing your families and fellow southerners suffering. You are very angry at the North and resent them for telling you and your southern states what they must do now that they are back in the Union. Some of you wish you could start the fighting again!

Write one problem you are facing -

SOUTHERN WHITE CITIZENS: You may be a small white farmer who owned 2-10 slaves or a poor white southerner with no property and you work the land by yourself. You may be for or against slavery or not care either way, but you are not a rich plantation owner. Your life has been completely upset by this war and many of your family and friends have either died or been permanently injured. Some of you are competing with freedmen for jobs. You are more likely to get the job because you are white, but you still feel the competition and resent it. It is hard to make any money in the South now because so many businesses have been destroyed or have gone bankrupt.

Write one problem you are facing -