

Reconstruction continued

# Southern Republican Governments

While the southern states are occupied by the army and

Congress successfully passes Reconstruction laws,

Republican governments were established in the South.

# Who is Influencing Southern Politics during Congressional Reconstruction?

Reconstruction brought new forces into Southern politics:

1. **More blacks** determined to make their freedom mean something;
2. More whites,
  - Freedman's Bureau officials,
  - teachers , or
  - carpetbaggers with various mixtures of humanitarianism and personal ambition,
3. Political motive: Republican party needed the southern black votes to keep their control over the national government.

# Reconstruction Laws

For a brief period in which southern blacks voted, elected blacks to state legislatures and to Congress, introduced public education in the South.

A legal framework was constructed:

13<sup>th</sup> Amendment

14<sup>th</sup> Amendment

15<sup>th</sup> Amendment

Congress passed a number of laws making it a crime to deprive blacks of their rights, requiring government officials to enforce those rights, giving blacks the right to enter contracts and buy property without discrimination.

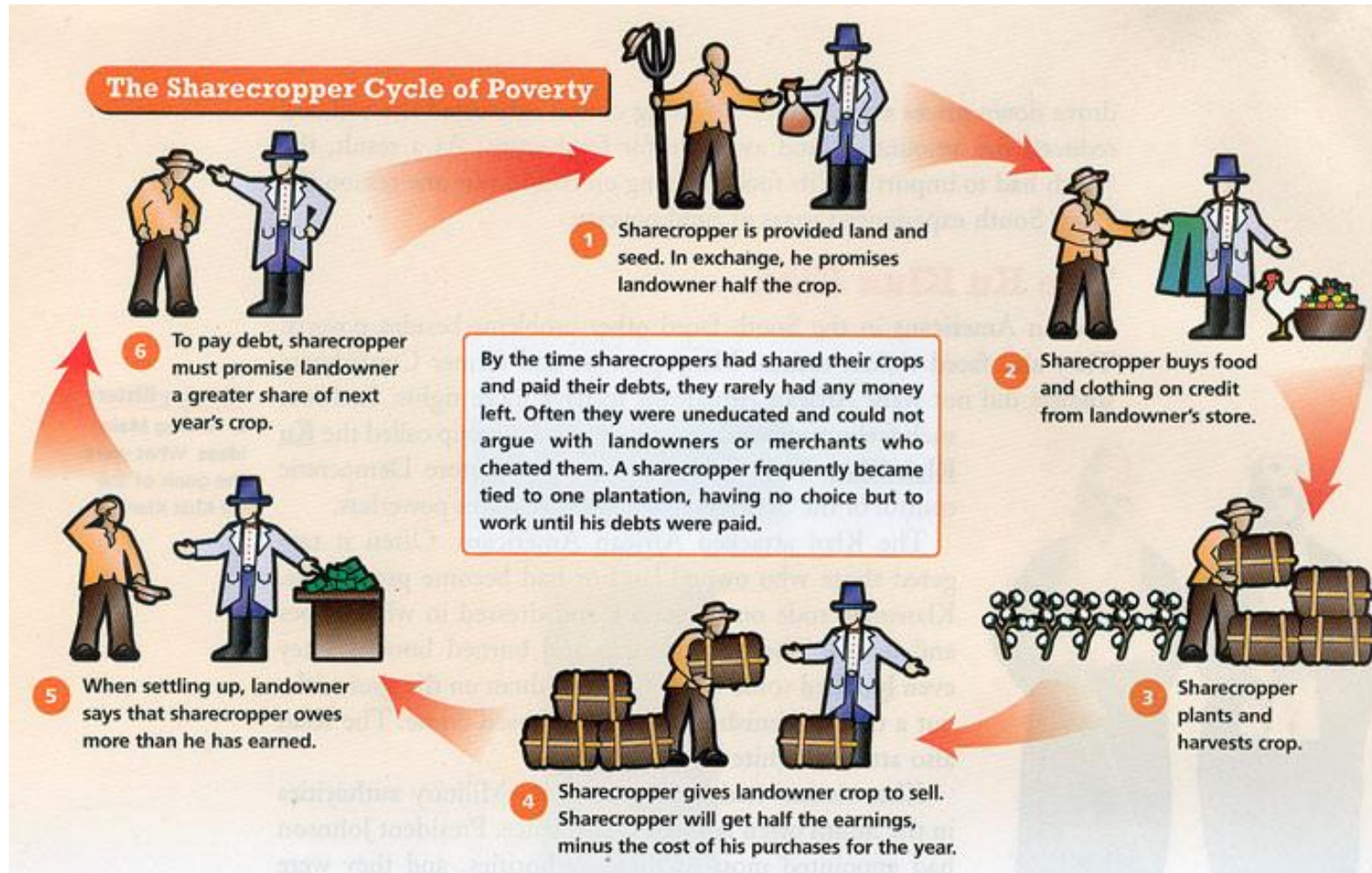
In 1875, a Civil Rights Act outlawed the exclusion of Negroes(blacks) from hotels, theaters, railroads and other public accommodations.

# Hope for Blacks

With these laws,  
with the Union army in the South as protection,  
and the Freedmen's Bureau to help them,  
southern Negroes came forward, voted, formed  
political organizations, and expressed themselves  
forcefully on issues important to them.

Southern blacks were determined to make the most  
of their freedom, in spite of their lack of land and  
resources.

# Sharecropper's Cycle of Poverty



# Cycle of Poverty: Sharecropping

- Blacks cannot own their own land. They become tenant farmers.
  - tools and seed from white owner on credit;
  - In return, half the harvest is taken by the landowner.
  - But this is not enough to cover the credit;
  - Next time owner takes more of the crop.
- Black sharecroppers barely survive.

# Racism and a Lack of Economic Independence

So long as the Negro remained dependent on privileged whites for work, for the necessities of life, his vote could be taken away by threat of force.

**Big Question: Without economic independence and the ability to support oneself, are laws calling for equality meaningless?**



# Violence and Terror

Began almost immediately with the end of the war;

Early Examples:

- Tennessee, 1866, whites killed 46 Negroes, most of them Union veterans a35 Negroes and 3 whites killed; long with two white sympathizers; 5 Negro women raped, 90 homes, twelve schools and four churches burned.
- New Orleans, 1866 35 Negroes and 3 whites;
- 1868 - Negro blacksmith, born a slave, later elected to Mississippi senate, shot and killed;

# KKK

Many southern whites used violence and intimidation to undermine the Reconstruction governments.

Secret societies like the Ku Klux Klan used terrorism to frighten blacks from voting or exercising their citizenship.

KKK – formed and led by former Confederate general Nathan Bedford Forrest;

devised rituals, costumes and secret rituals;

“midnight rides” violence, burnings...