

The Reconstruction Period: the Unifying Period, Which Resulted in Great Conflict and a
Difficult Adjustment In Our Country

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“The period of Reconstruction, which would last from 1865-1877, was a time of violence, confusion, and hope. An old order had died. What would take its place?”

-Reconstruction Following the Civil War by Marsha Ziff

Following the Civil War, the South was left in destruction. Buildings in ruins, economic struggles, and extreme tension between North and South, and black and white. The Civil War had torn our country apart. In order to rebuild and re-admit the Southern states, reconstruction was needed. During the Reconstruction Period (1865-1877), the United States did not only readmit the southern states, it also was the first time in American history that our government stood up for its African American citizens. This time period gave birth to the first African American rights established in our country. These rights are still active today which shows what a revolutionary time this was. However, the positives experienced during Reconstruction (1865-1877), such as the rights granted to former slaves and the prevention of another Civil War, were set back in the years that followed which was why the Civil Rights Movement (1954-1968) was needed to once again spark the idea of change into our country. To finally grant equal lives to blacks and whites.

Slavery dates back to ancient times. It was never viewed as wrong, just a condition of life. Prisoners of war, criminals and those who could not pay their debt were commonly used as slaves. It was not a specific race like it became in America. Slavery was started in the American colonies in 1619 when the first slaves were brought over to help farm. They were originally indentured servants, but the struggling colonists needed their labor in order to prosper. It quickly spread throughout the colonies, and became an easier way to grow and sell cash crops such as

tobacco and cotton. Following the Revolutionary War many northerners started to question slavery. If our country claimed that every man should be created equal why did we enslave blacks? These ideas were mainly in the North where slavery had less of an impact on the economy. As these ideas developed the North and South became much different. Fearing the end of slavery, the South seceded from the North which was the main cause of the Civil War.

The new country America had been divided over slavery. Much of the north disagreed with the enslavement of a human, especially after their country had just created a country that claimed everyone was equal. Almost the entire southern economy was based off of the free labor of slaves. These differing opinions lead to the divide of our country and the Civil War that followed.

Reconstruction took place after the Civil War, also known as the war against slavery. The Civil War was a terrible war between the northern Yankees and southern Confederates. It lasted from 1861 to 1865 and ended with General Robert E. Lee's surrender to future president Ulysses S. Grant. Although the Civil War was not the end of the different views of the North and South, it was the last large conflict, and the end of an extremely imperfect time in our country's history. But the years that followed were far from perfect, and faced their own problem of repairing the destruction of the war.

The years that followed are known as the Reconstruction Period. The time of Reconstruction was filled with hope, confusion and violence¹. Before the war was over President Abraham Lincoln already had a plan for Reconstruction, but due to his assassination he was not

¹ Ziff, Marsha. Reconstruction Following the Civil War in American History. Enslow Publishers, 1999.

able to carry that plan out after the war. His plan was the 10% Plan. This was an easy and quick way for the southern states to be readmitted into the Union. His vice president who would later take over his role as president came up with a similar, easy entry plan for Reconstruction. Lincoln's plan required 10% of the male population of every southern state to pledge loyalty to the Union. Each state also had to acknowledge the fact that African Americans were now free and independent. This was an easy way to get the southern states back into our country, but similar to Johnson's plan it lacked the 4 million now freed slave role in Reconstruction.

After Lincoln's assassination his vice president Andrew Johnson took over his duties as president². When Andrew Johnson became president Congress was in recess. This allowed him to start on Reconstruction alone. Andrew Johnson's plan was to quickly readmit the southern states by requiring southern government leaders to take an oath agreeing to the 14th Amendment. His plan also did not offer very much help to the now freed slaves. His plan offered southern governments a lot of freedom which they then used to establish Black Codes. These Black Codes were designed to keep blacks at the bottom and ensure a cheap working class for plantation owners. This was not the correct way to rebuild our country and would later be abolished when Congress returned..

When Congress reentered office they were extremely angry with Johnson and were completely against his idea of Reconstructing the south. The almost completely Republican Congress believed in granting rights to freed slaves and watching over Southern governments. They completely took over Reconstruction by 1866 and due to the support of the North they

² Ash, Stephen V. "Reconstruction." World Book Student, World Book, 2017, www.worldbookonline.com/student/article?id=ar461540. Accessed 13 Nov. 2017.

were able to reject Johnson's policies and begin Reconstruction as they saw fit. The first thing Congress did was establish the Reconstruction Acts. The major impact of these acts was the fact that it abolished Southern government and split the south into 5 military districts. The Southern states also had to write a new state constitution pending the Congress's approval. The Southern states were also required to agree to the 14th Amendment which protected former slaves and their rights. The military government in the South was to ensure former slaves safety, and also to protect their newly gained rights. Although these Reconstruction Acts had initially been vetoed by President Andrew Johnson. Johnson's veto was due to the fact that he viewed that these acts went against the rights of the states. He was against the fact of putting the Southern states in "absolute domination of military rulers"³. But Congress was able to overrule him, and apply their form of Reconstruction through the Reconstruction Acts.

. These Acts were despised in the South and they showed their anger through violence killing many people especially blacks and their supporters. Whites killed around 5,000 African Americans from 1865-1866. Although this was a time of positive change that does not mean that it did not have its negatives. Innocent civilian deaths is one of the major negatives of Reconstruction. These killings were due to white supremacy groups such as the KKK (Ku Klux Klan). These groups viewed whites as better than blacks, and did not support the change that the Republicans were trying to start. In order to prevent blacks from becoming active in society they threatened and killed them. This would scare African Americans which would decrease the

³ Veto of First Reconstruction Act.

web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=bac9cb36-da68-4976-aaab-ebbf5420e216%40sessionmgr4010&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBIPWNvb2tpZSxpcCxjcGlkJmN1c3RpZD1zNjI0Nzk2MyZzaXRIPWVob3N0LWxpdmUmc2NvcGU9c2l0ZQ%3d%3d#AN=21213027&db=f5h.

chance that they would vote. Although the military in the south helped this, it did not completely prevent it. Due to the violence many blacks did not vote in order to prevent trouble⁴.

There were also other people during this time that attempted to reap benefits from the struggling south. These people were called Carpetbaggers. They were Northerners that came South for personal gain. Another term developed during this time was a Scallywag. These people did not negatively affect our country. Scallywags actually played a large role in the South. The word Scallywag is used to describe a Southerner that was in favor of the changes that were taking place. They supported the way that Republicans were rebuilding the south. This term was often used by Southerners to display that person in a negative way. Both names were used to describe people during the time of Reconstruction.

Around this time the first Southern state was also re-admitted to the Union. Tennessee became the first state to rejoin on July 24, 1866. This was a sign that Reconstruction was successful in uniting our country even after we had just fought a war against each other. In the upcoming years, the other southern states were all re-admitted ending with Georgia in 1870. Also in 1870 the Congress passed the 15th Amendment which prohibited anyone to deny someone the right to vote due to race. Following the 15th Amendment, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act in 1875. This outlawed segregation in public places such as schools, parks and bathrooms. Although this did not solve the problem of segregation it was a step taken, and an idea started during this time that is of great importance today. As Reconstruction continued many northerners lost interest, and focused more on strengthening their economy. Democrats regained control of Congress, and much of the fight for former slaves was gone. Reconstruction was said to have

⁴ Randall, J. G. *The Civil War and Reconstruction*. Kessinger Pub., 2009.

officially ended with the Compromise of 1877 which was an agreement between the Republican and Democratic parties. This compromise resulted in a Republican president, but the Republicans had to pull the military enforced government out of the south. Although black lives became much worse in the years that followed, the ideas established during this time would be seen as useful during the Civil Rights Movement (1954-1968).

The years that came after Reconstruction were not good for African Americans. It was not for about another 90 years that blacks would get the lives they had expected after the Emancipation Proclamation had ended slavery. Segregation became very obvious after the Civil Rights Act was deemed unconstitutional in 1883. They believed the government did not have the right to interfere with personal businesses a who they decided to serve. Blacks lives became almost completely separate from whites due to new laws called the Jim Crow Laws. These laws enforced segregation. The government could legally punish you for interacting with people of the other race⁵. It was almost like another form of the Black Codes developed by Southern states early in Reconstruction. Blacks were treated like second class citizens with neither the police nor government on their side. It was a difficult time to live as a black citizen in our society. These wrongs in our society were not addressed until the peaceful protests of Martin Luther King Jr and other black activists during the Civil Rights Movement. The Civil Rights Movement brought back the ideas first started in Reconstruction, except this time these changes would last until today.

The Civil Rights Movement took place from 1954-1968. This was a time of extreme change that was largely based off of Reconstruction. The Civil Rights Act which was established

⁵ *Examples of Jim Crow Laws*, academic.udayton.edu/race/02rights/jcrow02.htm.

during Reconstruction was what Martin Luther King Jr and other activists were fighting for. They were trying to get rid of the segregated and unfair life blacks had to live in the south. They wanted equal lives for everyone. Him and his followers did this with peaceful protests. It was not easy for them, but they continuously got their point across and made a change in the world they were living in. If it were not for Reconstruction's groundbreaking ideas of equal rights, the Civil Rights Movement that took place many years later may not have eliminated public segregation. The Movement during the mid 1900s would have been impossible if Reconstruction had not initially began the idea of change in the way to treat African American citizens.

Another impact Reconstruction is having on us today is the development of welfare agencies. This was another idea developed during Reconstruction. The Freedmen's Bureau was an agency designed to help former slaves start their lives. For example, they would build schools, hospitals, and serve meals to former slaves⁶. Although the Freedmen's Bureau did not last long, it lead way for other welfare agencies in the future. Many of these agencies today would not be the same if it were not for the Freedmen's Bureau during Reconstruction.

Reconstruction is affecting us in many more ways than we realize. The ideas that were first preached during Reconstruction are still active in our present day society. During Reconstruction the first black citizens were seen in politics. This was a time of hope for African Americans. The importance of those ideas will never be forgotten. They will be continually referred upon and used to fight for blacks rights today. If it was not for this time in history we would have not had the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's to spark the idea of change again

⁶ Hornsby, Alton, Jr. "Freedmen's Bureau." World Book Student, World Book, 2017, www.worldbookonline.com/student/article?id=ar210200. Accessed 15 Nov. 2017.

into our country. Reconstruction was also important for another reason. It unified a country that had just been fighting a brutal civil war against each other⁷. It was Reconstruction that prevented another civil war from tearing our country apart. If it were not for what Reconstruction had done, who says we could not have had another brutal war against ourselves. We may not even be the one country that we are today. The future of our country would be completely different if it were not for Reconstruction. The many laws that were established during this time are still being used today. These laws are needed in our everyday life. The 15th amendment not only grants African Americans the right to vote, but it grants any race the right to. The effects of Reconstruction can be seen all throughout our country. Without it our country would be a completely different place.

Following the Civil War our country was in desolation. Southern buildings and economy had been destroyed after the war. Our country needed to rebuild which is exactly what happened during the Reconstruction era. We were able to unify a broken country and start a movement that would be finished during the Civil Rights Movement (1954-1968). But although Reconstruction (1865-1877) successfully granted rights to blacks and unified our country preventing another Civil War; it's revolutionary changes were set back in the years that followed which was why the Civil Rights Movement (1954-1968) was needed to once again spark the idea of change into our country.

⁷ Professor Mark Summers, University of Kentucky

Appendix A



“Emancipation / Th. Nast ; King & Baird, Printers, 607 Sansom Street, Philadelphia.” The Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/resource/pgs.03898/.

This is a wood engraving from 1865 which is supposed to represent what the Emancipation Proclamation would do for African Americans. According to this picture it would eliminate the bad things in their lives. This looks very promising, but as we would see in the years that followed it would take much more than just one proclamation to establish equal lives between blacks and whites.

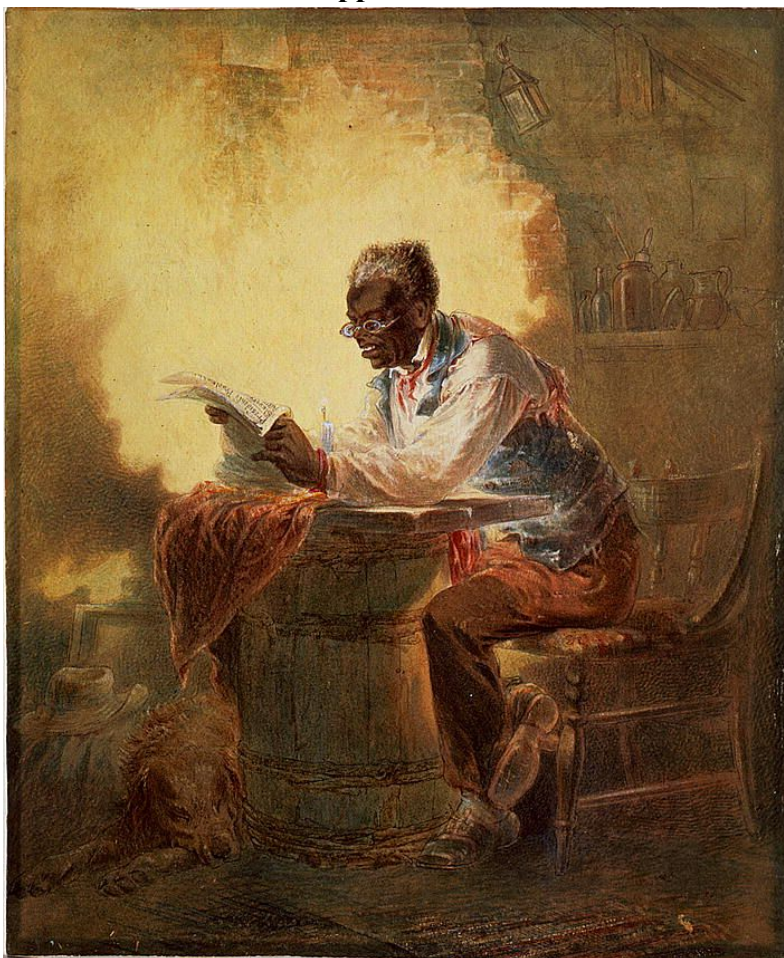
Appendix B



*"Martin Luther King, Jr." Kids' Games, Animals, Photos, Stories, and More, 7 May 2014,
kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/history/martin-luther-king-jr/.*

Martin Luther King Jr was one of the most famous activists during the Civil Rights Movement. The words he preached to others were largely influenced by Reconstruction. Many of his ideas had already been used during Reconstruction which shows the role it played in the future.

Appendix C



Nast, Thomas, et al. "The African American Odyssey: A Quest for Full Citizenship Reconstruction and Its Aftermath." Reconstruction and Its Aftermath - The African American Odyssey: A Quest for Full Citizenship | Exhibitions (Library of Congress), 9 Feb. 1998, www.loc.gov/exhibits/african-american-odyssey/reconstruction.html.

Although Reconstruction may not have gave blacks equal lives to whites it did offer them the chance at education. Many former slaves took this opportunity to learn how to read and write.

Appendix D



"African-American Civil Rights Movement (1954–1968)." Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 9 Jan. 2018, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African-American_civil_rights_movement_\(1954%E2%80%931968\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African-American_civil_rights_movement_(1954%E2%80%931968)).

African Americans during the Civil Rights Movement were fighting for the same rights that were started during Reconstruction. They wanted to end segregation and create equal lives for everyone.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES:

Johnson on Restoration of Southern States.

web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=4fc07f39-c67d-4e3f-a2cb-1c7c2000274b%40sessionmgr4008&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBIPWNvb2tpZSxpcCxjcGlkJmN1c3RpZD1zNjI0Nzk2MyZzaXRIPWVob3N0LWxpdmUmc2NvcGU9c2l0ZQ%3d%3d#AN=21212441&db=f5h.

This is a primary source because it was written by Andrew Johnson who was the president at the time. This source helped me to further understand Andrew Johnson and his views of reconstruction. In my research I will be able to correctly talk about Andrew Johnson's plan of reconstruction the Southern States.

Veto of First Reconstruction Act.

web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=bac9cb36-da68-4976-aaab-ebbf5420e216%40sessionmgr4010&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBIPWNvb2tpZSxpcCxjcGlkJmN1c3RpZD1zNjI0Nzk2MyZzaXRIPWVob3N0LWxpdmUmc2NvcGU9c2l0ZQ%3d%3d#AN=21213027&db=f5h.

This is a primary source because it was the speech Andrew Johnson gave to the House of Representatives to further explain his reasoning for vetoing the first Reconstruction Act; criticizing the fact of establishing a military government in the South. This source will be used in my project while reflecting on Andrew Johnson and the Reconstruction Act. It is

more convincing when trying to prove your point when you use the president's own words.

Veto of Freedmen's Bureau Bill.

web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=2447d703-959a-4f10-b182-332d3161fac6%40sessionmgr120&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBIPWNvb2tpZSxpcCxcGlkNmN1c3RpZD1zNjI0Nzk2MyZzaXRlPWVob3N0LWxpdmUmc2NvcGU9c2l0ZQ%3d%3d#AN=21213370&db=f5h.

This is a primary source because it was the message written by Andrew Johnson to the Senate discussing his veto of the Freedmen's Bureau. This source was able to aid in my understanding of Andrew Johnson and what he did during this time. This source will be reflected on in my project while discussing Andrew Johnson and/or the Freedmen's Bureau.

SECONDARY SOURCES:

American." World Book Student,

World, 2017, www.worldbookonline.com/student/article?id=ar117060. Accessed 13 Nov. 2017.

This was one of my encyclopedias used. This allowed me to further understand my topic, and know what happened to lead up to my topic. I will use this article when discussing the background information and the time period leading up to my topic.

"Andrew Johnson." Biography.com, A&E Networks Television, 28 Apr. 2017, www.biography.com/people/andrew-johnson-9355722

This biography on Andrew Johnson helped me to learn more about the president from this time. This source will be helpful in my research when talking about the president and his background. This will also help me to determine what kind of person he was, and what were the reasons for some of his actions.

Ash, Stephen V. "Reconstruction." World Book Student, World Book, 2017,

www.worldbookonline.com/student/article?id=ar461540. Accessed 13 Nov. 2017.

This encyclopedia article was the start of researching my narrow topic. This lead me to many other sources and started the foundation of my research. I will use this when I am relating to the basics of my topic.

Credo Reference, www.credoreference.com/content/topic/reconstruction.embed.

This source gave me the basics of the Reconstruction era. It also offered primary pictures which I will use in my writing. This source also touched on the end of the Reconstruction which started to connect the pieces of my research.

Davis, David Brion. "Slavery." World Book Student, World Book, 2017,

www.worldbookonline.com/student/article?id=ar514020. Accessed 13 Nov. 2017.

This source helped me to deepen my background knowledge of slavery. This will help talk about the time period, and what happened between white and black. I will use this in my project when I discuss slavery and where it came from.

Discovery Education,

app.discoveryeducation.com/core:glossary/reference?guidCourseId=3f0d2374-ce9e-49b5-ac43-6c1eab676f46&guid=1f5a443f-1d89-4528-962a-2d00e63977b8&templateId=term#/templateId=term&guid=1f5a443f-1d89-4528-962a-2d00e63977b8. Guelzo, Allen C.

"Civil War,

My topic was a result of the Civil War and it is crucial that I know what caused the Reconstruction period. This source helped me to develop a background on my topic. This will be used when informing my reader about the time period that lead up to my topic.

Discovery Education,

app.discoveryeducation.com/core:glossary/reference?guidCourseId=390bd892-5f72-4710-888c-f151556a41e9&guid=535a6055-6729-4306-b6ec-33612ec08469&templateId=term#/templateId=term&guid=535a6055-6729-4306-b6ec-33612ec08469.

This source was a great summary of the time period which helped me to get to know more about my topic. This source will be used in my paper when discussing the timeline of the entire period. You will also see this information when discussing the basics of the reconstruction period.

Examples of Jim Crow Laws, academic.udayton.edu/race/02rights/jcrow02.htm.

This source helped me to understand the Jim Crow Laws better. It allowed me to learn examples of the laws. This helped me easier explain these in my writing.

Fables of the Reconstruction.

web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=1&sid=aeb2c1ff-8b20-49eb-a687-4aafefe13529%40sessionmgr103&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBIPWNvb2tpZSxpcCxjcGlkImN1c3RpZD1zNjI0Nzk2MyZzaXRIPWVob3N0LWxpdmUmc2NvcGU9c2l0ZQ%3d%3d#AN=123497463&db=aph.

This source goes in depth on bringing the Reconstruction period to the present. I will use this in my project when talking about the importance of this point in time. This

information will also be useful when finding and elaborating on the impact of the Reconstruction era.

“Freedmen's Bureau”*BritannicaSchool*,school.eb.com/levels/high/article/Freedmens-Bureau/35296.

This source supplied facts about the Freedmen’s Bureau. This information I learned from this source will be used in my project when talking about the accomplishments of the Bureau and what they all did. I will also use this information when talking about the start an the end of the Bureau.

History.com Staff. “Black Codes.” *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 2010, www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-codes.

This website specifically talked about the Black Codes established in the Southern States. This information will be seen in my project when I talk specifically about the southern states government. I will also use this when referring to the Reconstruction Act and the causes of it.

History.com Staff. “Civil Rights Movement.” *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 2009, www.history.com/topics/black-history/civil-rights-movement.

The information on this site will be used when talking about the Civil Rights Movement. I compared this time period and the Reconstruction Period to see the ideas they had in common. This information will also be used when talking about Martin Luther King Jr.

History.com Staff. “Slavery in America.” *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 2009, www.history.com/topics/black-history/slavery.

This source helped me in my research by providing information about slavery in

America. I will use this information when discussing the start of slavery in America. It will show how slavery came about and what it was like in America.

History.com Staff. "Reconstruction." History.com, A&E Television Networks, 2009, www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/reconstruction.

This article had a summary of Reconstruction in periodical order which helped me to connect information and the cause and effect of this time. This information will be used when talking about the order of the Reconstruction. This information will also be used to talk about the basic facts of Reconstruction.

Hornsby, Alton, Jr. "Freedmen's Bureau." World Book Student, World Book, 2017, www.worldbookonline.com/student/article?id=ar210200. Accessed 15 Nov. 2017.

This source specifically talked about the Freedmen's Bureau. I can use the information found in this source when talking about freed slaves and their struggles. This information will also be used when talking about the Freedmen's Bureau and what it did.

"Lincoln Attempts Reconstruction with the Ten Percent Plan." *World History Project*, worldhistoryproject.org/1863/12/8/lincoln-attempts-reconstruction-with-the-ten-percent-plan.

This source taught me about Abraham Lincoln's plan for Reconstruction. This was crucial information to know when talking about this time period. It was nice to be able to compare all the plans for Reconstruction.

Pratt, Robert A. "African Americans." World Book Student, World Book, 2017, www.worldbookonline.com/student/article?id=ar006745. Accessed 13 Nov. 2017.

I will use the information from this article when talking about African Americans being enslaved in America. This source provided information on where they came from and the journey they took. The information will also be used when referring to African background.

“Reconstruction and Its Aftermath.” Reconstruction and Its Aftermath, a Part of the African American Odyssey Exhibition, Is about the Difficulty Free Blacks Faced during the Reconstruction Period., memory.loc.gov/ammem/aahtml/exhibit/aopart5.html.

This source specifically talked about the beginning of the Reconstruction. Information found in this source will be seen in my project when talking about the time right after the Civil War. This information will also be used when talking when blacks enjoyed the rights they deserved.

Randall, J. G. *The Civil War and Reconstruction*. Kessinger Pub., 2009.

This source allowed me to further understand what led to Reconstruction. It allowed me to know what the reason behind the actions during Reconstruction. It also helped me to understand more about my topic and what caused the end of it.

The Colfax Massacre (1873) | The Black Past: Remembered and Reclaimed,
www.blackpast.org/aah/colfax-massacre-1873.

The Colfax Massacre was a specific conflict between Blacks and Whites. This information will be used when talking about conflicts between Blacks and Whites, specifically this one. It will also be used when talking about white supremacy and the attempt to regain control with violence.

“The End of Reconstruction - AP U.S. History Topic Outlines - Study Notes.” Go to the Front

Page of StudyNotes, www.apstudynotes.org/us-history/topics/the-end-of-reconstruction/.

The information that I found here focused on the end of Reconstruction. When I am discussing the end of Reconstruction. It will also be seen when talking about the reasons why Reconstruction ended.

“United States History.” End of Reconstruction, www.u-s-history.com/pages/h421.html.

This source gave a brief summary of the end of Reconstruction. This information will be used in my paper when discussing the basics of the end of Reconstruction. This source will also be used to talk about the cases for Reconstruction to end.

“United States History.” Compromise of 1877, www.u-s-history.com/pages/h396.html.

The Compromise of 1877 is the point in time that marks the end of the Reconstruction period. The information found on this source will be used when talking about the Compromise of 1877, and also what lead up to the end of Reconstruction. This sources information will also be used when talking about the freed slaves and what effect this had on them.

“White and Black Americans Split on Race.” BBC News, BBC, 27 June 2016, www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-36646917.

This source was a survey taken to determine who believes their needs to be a change in the country. This information will be used to argue that Reconstruction is still a work in progress, and that it was not successful the first time. It will also be used when talking about the impact that Reconstruction had.

Ziff, Marsha. Reconstruction Following the Civil War in American History. Enslow Publishers, 1999.

This resource will be used when talking about the overall Reconstruction process.

Another time this information will be used is when you look at the details of the process.

This source will also be used when talking about white supremacy and the effect

Reconstruction had on whites and blacks.