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Changing Rights in a Time of Turmoil:

A Comparison of the Changing Rights and Racial Tension at the Beginning of Reconstruction with Other Civil Rights Struggles

**Social Studies – 8-12 (U.S. History, Arkansas History, World History, Civics, etc.);
English Language Arts; Economics; Geography; Visual Art**

This unit explores the lives of various people in Arkansas and their changing rights at the beginning of the Reconstruction Era. The lesson plan provides images of documents, transcriptions, and online links to primary and secondary resources focus on the changing rights, racial tensions, and the elections in 1868. Two articles about racial riots in Conway County, Arkansas, in 1868, offer students the opportunity contrast varying interpretations of an event, examine how several days with additional information can change a story, and compare it to other race riots in Arkansas and around the world. Students will also examine the 1868 Constitution and laws surrounding the elections to gain a better understanding of the changing rights of citizens. A list of various activities related to original primary and secondary resources allows teacher the flexibility to choose parts of this lesson plan to use and adapt to various types of students. Students will gain a deeper understanding of how Reconstruction affected the mood, economy and politics of Arkansans and Southern people, as well as individuals in Arkansas.

Essential Question:

What were the changing civil rights of various types of Arkansans in 1868 and how did that effect the political and social environment?

Common Core State Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1-6; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1-6; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RST.11-12.1-6

C3 Frameworks: D2.Civ.3.6-8.; D2.Civ.3.9-12.; D2.Civ.13.6-8.; D2.Civ.13.9-12.; D2.Civ.14.6-8.; D2.Civ.14.9-12; D2.His.14.6-8; D2.His.14.9-12; D2.His.13.6-8; D2.His.14.6-8; D2.His.14.9-12

Possible literature resources related to lesson plan: *Up from Slavery: An Autobiography of Booker T. Washington*; “We Wear the Mask” by Paul Laurence Dunbar; “Lift Every Voice and Sing” and James Weldon Johnson; *Tiger Lilies* by Sidney Clopton Lanier; *Stella Stands Alone* by A. LaFaye; *Janie's Freedom: African Americans in the Aftermath of Civil War* by Callie Smith Grant; *Forty Acres and Maybe a Mule* by Harriette Gillem Robinet; *My Home Is over Jordan: Sequel to "Sound the Jubilee"* by Sandra Forrester; *I Thought My Soul Would Rise and Fly: The Diary of Patsy, a Freed Girl, Mars Bluff, South Carolina, 1865 (Dear America)* by Joyce Hansen.

Background

To prepare students for understanding Reconstruction in Arkansas, have students read textbook sections on the Reconstruction Era, attached newspaper articles and documents, and *Encyclopedia of Arkansas (EOA)* articles on *Civil War through Reconstruction, 1861 through 1874*: www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=388 and the *Arkansas Constitutions*, www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=2246. Teachers can choose from the activities listed that are related to the primary and secondary resources associated with this lesson plan.

Background and Introduction for Articles on Riot in Conway County in 1868

One of the positive aspects of Reconstruction was that, for the first time, African Americans were not only free, but they had new opportunities for education and to have a say in the policies of the nation. African Americans men could vote and hold public offices. Arkansans who supported the Confederate Army during the Civil War were often not allowed to vote or hold office during Reconstruction. This created great resentment for many white Arkansans. Lingering beliefs widely held in Antebellum America about the freed slaves as intellectually inferior and prone to savagery continued. Because of such beliefs, many whites were fearful of African Americans.

At times, this resentment would erupt in violence as whites attempted to prevent African Americans from using their rights to vote. A widely held belief among white Arkansans was that African Americans were often being “controlled” by white Carpetbaggers from the North. One such incident occurred in the town of Lewisburg in Conway County in the summer of 1868.

One interesting aspect of this incident is that press coverage often differed wildly in their accounts of politically related violence. In the nineteenth century, newspapers were often closely allied with political parties. In Little Rock, the *Arkansas Gazette* was tied to the Democratic Party, while the *Morning Republican* was allied to the Republican Party. It is important for the reader of newspaper reports to think critically about the point of view in the article. While newspapers often claim to have no bias, critical reading will often reveal a bias. This bias can be used to shape attitudes or beliefs about an event. In this exercise, we will examine an event that occurred in Conway County in 1868. Examine the attached articles concerning an incident in Conway County in the summer of 1868, paying close attention to spot the author’s point of view.

Activities:

Activity 1: Compare the two articles about the riots in Conway County in 1868

1. Read the ***Background and Introduction for Articles on Riot in Conway County in 1868*** and the two articles on the riots in Conway County in 1868: **“Riot in Conway County,”** *Arkansas Gazette*, August 28, 1868 and **“An Account of Affairs in Conway County,”** *Morning Republican*, September 2, 1868.

2. Ask students to analyze the articles using the Document Analysis Worksheets produced by the National Archives available at www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/
3. Ask students to think about the following questions when comparing the articles on the race riots in Conway County in 1868:
 - a. Every reporter has sources for his or her story. Who might be the sources for these stories?
 - b. There is a six day difference in the dates of the two accounts. How might the passage of time help shape a story? Which of the accounts would you most likely accept as the truth based solely on how much time has passed?
 - c. How might stereotypes play into how these stories are reported?
 - d. Why were the white citizens so adamant about disarming the African-Americans?
 - e. Notice the descriptive adjectives being used to describe people in the story (“very best citizens”, “leading citizens”, “noisy and turbulent party of whites”, “prominent and unscrupulous radical”). How might these adjectives color the story to reflect a point of view?
 - f. According to both accounts, the incident began with a mundane lawsuit regarding a killing of a dog. What does it say about tensions in the community that the incident escalated so quickly?
 - g. In its account, the *Arkansas Gazette* accuses the African-Americans of being controlled by “white scoundrels” who were using the incident for political purposes. How might have politics fueled the escalation?
 - h. How might the press coverage change or shape opinions about this event?
4. Discuss how stories may become exaggerated, especially when all the facts are not known. Have students give examples from their own lives about situations that have been exaggerated or misconstrued.
5. Ask the students to analyze in detail a series of events described in articles; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.
6. Compare the point of view of two authors for how they treat the same or similar topic, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.
7. Ask students to report on the riots in Conway County in 1868 in a format of their choosing: a newspaper article, a diary entry, a letter to someone, an oral report, a video, a PowerPoint Presentation, a drawing of what was happening, Twitter, etc.
8. Have students to create a mock jury and hear the case of what happened in Conway County in 1868.

Activity 2: Compare the riots in Conway County in 1868 with other race riots in the United States and/or other countries.

1. Read the **Background and Introduction for Articles on Riot in Conway County in 1868** and the two articles on the riots in Conway County in 1868: **“Riot in Conway County,”** *Arkansas Gazette*, August 28, 1868 and **“An Account of Affairs in Conway County,”** *Morning Republican*, September 2, 1868
2. Compare the riots in Conway County in 1868 with other race/ethnic riots, such as:
 - a. Chicot County, Arkansas, Race War of 1871
www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=7615
 - b. Elaine Massacre/Elaine Race Riot of 1919 in Elaine, Arkansas
www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=1102
 - c. Race Riots in Arkansas www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=5170
 - d. Central High Crisis in Little Rock in 1957
www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=718
www.nps.gov/chsc/
 - e. New York Race Riots of 1964 crdl.usg.edu/events/ny_race_riots/?Welcome
 - f. Los Angeles Riots in 1992
 - g. Ferguson Riots in 2014
 - h. List of ethnic riots around the world en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ethnic_riots
3. Have students compare the riots in Conway County in 1868 with other race/ethnic riots in a format of their choosing: a paper, an oral report, a video, a PowerPoint Presentation, a piece of artwork about of what was happening, a public debate, Twitter, etc.
4. Ask students to think about the following questions when comparing race riots:
 - a. What was the situation that started the rioting?
 - b. How did the local/state/national government and local residents handle the situations differently? How did this impact how the rioting was resolved? How did various parties feel about the outcome of the rioting?
 - c. How did the political situation at the time influence the riots?
 - d. How did the interpretation of the coverage of the rioting change due to time or the viewpoint of the reporter?

Activity 3: Compare elections in 1868 with other time periods and/or other places

1. Read the **Synopsis of Duties and Powers of Registrars issued by Governor Powell Clayton in about 1868** and discuss who could vote in 1868. Review the Bill of Rights in the Arkansas Constitutions of 1868 during Reconstruction and Arkansas Constitutions of 1861 under a Confederate government.
2. Other time periods/places that could be comparisons to the elections in 1868 are: prior to the Civil War, during the Civil War, after Reconstruction with Jim Crow Laws, after 1919 when women could vote in the U.S., before and after the Voting Rights Act of

1965, before and after the Arkansas voter ID law was passed in 2013, or during and after apartheid in South Africa.

3. Questions to discuss about election laws for different time periods and/or places:
 - a. Who has the right to vote?
 - b. What are the procedures for registering to vote?
 - c. Are there any restrictions that make it hard for someone to vote?
 - d. How are precincts divided and how does that affect elections?
 - e. How are ballots printed?
 - f. How are ballots cast?
 - g. What is done to insure accuracy and accountability?
 - h. How do the election laws affect other aspects of society?
 - i. How did elections and recent changes in laws impact tension in communities?
4. Have students fill in a chart of what rights specific groups had at various times in history.
5. Have students make signs informing the public who could vote during their assigned time period.
6. Have a mock election in the classroom with debates about the issues of a certain time period.
7. Have students produce campaign material (brochures, flyers, commercials, posters, etc.) about the issues of a certain time period.

Activity 4: Have students do a “Table Top Twitter” related to an event during of Reconstruction

1. Have the students break down into groups and do a Table Top Twitter exercise. Take one of the attached documents or an excerpt from a document on Reconstruction and attach it a large piece of bulletin board paper. Set a timer and let students read the passage then Tweet about it on the large piece of paper. Students can read each others Tweets and add comments on them. See an explanation of the game at conversationsinliteracy.blogspot.com/2011/12/tabletop-twitter.html.

Activity 5: Do a “Word Splash” with the Reconstruction words provided on page 7 and found in the attached documents

1. Do a “Word Splash” as a pre-lesson activity where the students are given words related to the lesson and asked to discuss how the words might be related to the topic. After the lesson is finished, then the students are asked to pull words out of a text that might be significant to the lesson. The students will then explain why they chose the words they chose. For more information visit <http://www.teachhub.com/classroom-games-how-use-word-splash> or www.education.nh.gov/spotlight/ccss/documents/wordsplash.pdf

Vocabulary for Early Reconstruction in Arkansas

13th Amendment	Carpetbagger	Ratification
14th Amendment	Disenfranchise	Reconstruction
Amnesty	Emancipation	Scalawag
Bigotry	Freedmen's Bureau	Segregation
Black Codes	Militia	Stereotype

13th Amendment – a change to the U.S. Constitution in 1865 which Abolishes Slavery throughout U.S.

14th Amendment – a change to the U.S. Constitution, ratified in 1868, which defines citizenship and grants equal protection under the law for all citizens

Amnesty - a general pardon for an offense against a government

Bigotry - Intolerance toward those who hold different opinions from oneself

Black Codes - laws designed to control freedmen and to help plantation owners take advantage of the former slaves

Carpetbagger - Northerners who went to the South during Reconstruction. They carried their belongings in carpetbags, and most intended to settle in the South and make money there.

Disenfranchise - to deprive of a franchise, of a legal right, or of some privilege or immunity; especially: to deprive of the right to vote

Emancipation - the fact or process of being set free from legal, social, or political restrictions, such as slavery

Freedmen's Bureau (Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands) - a U.S. federal government agency that aided distressed freedmen (freed slaves) during the Reconstruction era of the United States

Militia - a group of people who are not part of the armed forces of a country but are trained like soldiers

Ratification - the act of signing or giving formal consent to (a treaty, contract, or agreement), making it officially valid

Reconstruction - the reorganization and reestablishment of the seceded states in the Union after the American Civil War

Scalawag- a nickname for a white southerner who supported Radical Republicans and Reconstruction

Segregation - the practice or policy of keeping people of different races, religions, etc., separate from each other

Stereotype - to believe unfairly that all people or things with a particular characteristic are the same

Additional Resources

Feistman, Eugene G. "Radical Disfranchisement in Arkansas, 1867–1868." *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 12 (Summer 1953): 126–168.

Finley, Randy. *From Slavery to Uncertain Freedom: The Freedmen's Bureau in Arkansas, 1865–1869*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1996.

Graves, John William. *Town and Country: Race Relations in an Urban-Rural Context, Arkansas, 1865–1905*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1990.

Harrell, John M. *The Brooks and Baxter War: A History of the Reconstruction Period in Arkansas*. St. Louis: Slawson Printing Company, 1893.

Huff, Leo H. "Guerrillas, Jayhawkers, and Bushwhackers in Northern Arkansas during the Civil War." *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 24 (Summer 1965): 127–148.

Hume, Richard L. "The Arkansas Constitutional Convention of 1868: A Case Study in the Politics of Reconstruction." *Journal of Southern History* 39 (May 1973): 183–206.

Matkin-Rawn, Story. "'The Great Negro State of the Country': Arkansas's Reconstruction and the Other Great Migration." *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 72 (Spring 2013): 1–41.

Moneyhon, Carl. *The Impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on Arkansas: Persistence in the Midst of Ruin*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994.

Patterson, Ruth Polk. *The Seed of Sally Goodin: A Black Family of Arkansas, 1833–1953*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1985.

Richter, William L. "["A Dear Little Job:' Second Lieutenant Hiram F. Willis, Freedman's Bureau Agent in Southwestern Arkansas, 1866-1868,"](#) *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 50 (Summer 1994): 158-200.

Pearce, Larry Wesley Pearce. "["The American Missionary Association and the Freedmen's Bureau in Arkansas, 1866-1868"](#) *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 30 (Spring-Winter 1971): 242-259.

St. Hilaire, Joseph M. "The Negro Delegates in the Arkansas Constitutional Convention of 1868: A Group Profile." *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 33 (Spring 1974): 38–69.

Stockley, Grif. *Ruled By Race: Black/White Relations in Arkansas from Slavery to the Present*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2009.

Thompson, George H. *Arkansas and Reconstruction: The Influence of Geography, Economics, and Personality*. Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1976.

May 19, 1866, *Harper's Weekly*, *African American Soldiers in Little Rock*,
<http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/media-detail.aspx?mediaID=5897>

The Freedmen's Bureau Online <http://freedmensbureau.com/arkansas/index.htm>

Reconstruction: A Statistical Look at Southern Recovery 1860-1880

<http://civclients.com/nehint/recon/>

On the Stump: Arkansas Politics, 1819-1919. 5: Reconstruction in Arkansas 1868-1874, Old State House Museum <http://www.oldstatehouse.com/exhibits/arkansas-politics/menu5.asp>

Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writer's Project, 1936-1938

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>

The Battle Over Reconstruction: The Aftermath of War, NEH Edsitement

<http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/battle-over-reconstruction-aftermath-war>

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