

“Reconstruction in Florida” 1860’s-1870’s

An educational module based on primary sources available at the Florida Historical Society’s
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“Reconstruction in Florida” Module Introduction

Southern states that seceded from the Union during the Civil War experienced trying times in the years following the war’s conclusion. This era was known as “Reconstruction,” which lasted roughly from 1865 to 1877. The term “Reconstruction” refers to the period during which the United States was attempting to piece itself back together after the war. The Confederates had lost, which meant that life in the South was going to change. During this time, Northerners began moving into former Confederate states in order to make profits and enact political change in the vulnerable, war-ravaged South. These Northerners, known as “carpetbaggers” to Southerners for the style of luggage they frequently brought with them, were an unwelcomed presence in the South and became greatly resented. Many of these “carpetbaggers” were Republican politicians who sought to control local governments in the South. Some of these Republicans were “Radical Republicans” who endorsed harsh policies against former Confederates and their states and wanted to ensure full rights for former slaves. Unfortunately, during Reconstruction the South was greatly susceptible to political instability and violence. The Democratic Party desperately sought an end to Reconstruction and the presence of Northerners in the South. They strongly favored the subjugation of African Americans and felt that the entire process of Reconstruction was a personal humiliation. This put them in direct opposition to the Republican Party, who suffered their own problems due to in-party fracturing between “Radicals” and “Moderates.”

Despite the wishes of white southerners, the end of the war meant that millions of slaves in the United States finally received their freedom. During the period of Reconstruction new amendments were added to the U.S. Constitution to affirm these new rights for African Americans. These amendments included the Thirteenth Amendment, which officially abolished slavery, the Fourteenth Amendment, which affirmed that anyone born or naturalized in the United States is an American citizen, including African Americans, and finally the Fifteenth Amendment, which prohibited denying any citizen the right to vote based on that citizen's race, color, or previous condition of servitude. However, despite the presence of Republicans who endorsed actions to improve the lives of African Americans, things remained slow to change. African Americans still experienced difficult circumstances during this period in the South due to rampant racial prejudices.

At the start of Reconstruction, Florida was a very unstable place. Following the end of the Civil War, Florida was placed under military law along with other former Confederate states. The Reconstruction Acts of 1867 passed by Congress meant that five military districts were created in the South, each placed under the control of a U.S. general, and required Southern states to accept the 13th and 14th amendments.¹ The first source in this module will come from this period when Florida was trying to remove itself from military control. Governor Walker was a Democrat who came to be Governor of Florida in 1866, and remained in office until 1868. Walker spent much of his administration trying to restore the state government while under military occupation. However, he was not a supporter of the new changes being imposed the South. Walker defended slavery as an institution under which African Americans were content and happy. He also adamantly opposed African Americans getting the right to vote. These sentiments were shared by many whites in the South who resented the northern Republicans’ agenda of granting equality to African Americans. Interestingly, the source that recorded Governor Walker’s message is a book written by a former slave from North Carolina named John Wallace called *Carpetbag Rule in Florida*. John Wallace was held as a slave until 1862 when he escaped once General Burnside and the Union Army came to fight the Confederates in his home state. In 1863 Wallace entered the war in the Second United States Colored Troops and went on to self-educate himself through relentless study.² John Wallace provides perspective to Governor Walker’s commentary, and gives valuable insight into the thoughts of the average freedman.

The next source in this module will come from a different Florida governor named Harrison Reed. Governor Reed was a Republican from Massachusetts who became governor of Florida after the adoption of the new Florida Constitution of 1868. Reed’s inaugural speech, recorded in the *Senate Journal* of 1868, reveals his

¹ Richard Wormser “Reconstruction (1865-77),” *PBS*, accessed July 9, 2015, http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories_events_reconstruct.html.

² John Wallace, *Carpetbag Rule in Florida: The Inside Workings of the Reconstruction of Civil Government in Florida After the Close of the Civil War* (Jacksonville: Da Costa Printing and Publishing House, 1888), 3.

vision for a Florida being fully reincorporated into the Union. Seen as a carpetbagger by Southerners, Reed supported wide spread changes to Florida, such as equality for all citizens. He was a supporter of African Americans' suffrage and even appointed an African American man named Jonathan Clarkson Gibbs as Florida's first African-American Secretary of State. Reed's condemnation of slavery was typical of his party. However, Reed's time in office did not go smoothly. There were two separate movements to impeach Governor Reed that came from within his own party, the Republicans, due to political fracturing.³

Despite the efforts by men like Governor Reed, and gaining significant rights through the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments, African Americans still had a lot to fear in the south. Organizations like the Ku Klux Klan wrecked havoc by using physical violence and acts of terror to instill fear into local communities in Florida. During the election of 1876, southern white Democrats were known to abduct African Americans and use threats and violence to intimidate Republicans and African Americans to vote for their party. Two of the documents used in this module deal with this corrupt election between presidential candidates, Republican Rutherford B. Hayes and Democrat Samuel J. Tilden. Florida, South Carolina, and Louisiana were the three Southern states that were accused of using bribery and violence to discourage Republicans and African Americans from showing up to the polls. One of these accounts will come from an African American man named Joseph King who describes the instance in which he and his companions were abducted by a group of white Democrats and terrorized into changing their political beliefs. Another account comes from a chief deputy marshal who witnessed the corruption firsthand at the polls with white Democrats crowding poll locations and carrying pistols in their pant pockets to intimidate African American voters.

Reconstruction officially came to an end in 1877 when President Rutherford B. Hayes negotiated with Southern Democrats to end harsh Reconstruction policies in the South in exchange for Democratic support.⁴ While this meant big changes in Florida, it didn't mean that the problems of Reconstruction magically vanished from the South. The Democrats in Florida eventually gained control of enough state offices to end the years of Republican rule and succeed in getting the removal of federal troops.⁵ However, with Democrats regaining their foothold, there were diminishing opportunities for African Americans to express themselves in the subsequent years. Unfortunately, while Florida and the rest of the Confederate states all eventually be admitted back into the Union, the same racial issues that divided the nation were far from being eradicated from Florida or the rest of the South when Reconstruction finally came to an end.

³ "Harrison Reed," Florida Department of State, accessed July 9, 2015, <http://dos.myflorida.com/florida-facts/florida-history/florida-governors/harrison-reed/>.

⁴ "The Disputed Election of 1876," PBS, accessed July 9, 2015, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/grant-election/>.

⁵ "Civil War and Reconstruction," Florida Department of State, accessed July 9, 2015, <http://dos.myflorida.com/florida-facts/florida-history/a-brief-history/civil-war-and-reconstruction/>.

Primary Source Guide Page

Q: What is a Primary Source?

A: According to the Library of Congress, “Primary sources are the raw materials of history — original documents and objects which were created at the time under study.” The key to remember is that primary sources were created during the time period being studied.

Q: Are primary sources exclusively written documents?

A: No! It’s true that many primary sources take the form of written accounts, like newspapers, letters, and journals. However, primary sources can take many forms. Remember the key to a primary source is that it was created in the time period being studied. Therefore, photographs, film footage, paintings, maps, clothing, architecture, everyday objects, and many other items can also be seen as primary sources.

Q: Is my textbook a primary source?

A: No. Resources like textbooks, biographies, research papers, histories, and encyclopedias are not primary sources. This is because they were created after the time period being studied. Therefore, sources about certain periods in history, but not created during that period of history, are not primary sources.

Q: If textbooks and similar sources created after the period of history being studied are not primary sources, what are they? Are they reliable?

A: These types of sources are known as secondary sources. However, that does not mean they do not contain good information. Textbooks, histories, biographies, and other sources about historical periods are constructed from the information found in primary sources. Therefore, the information contained in primary sources give people in later time periods the necessary information to create summaries and draw conclusions about the past. Furthermore, many secondary sources include primary sources like photographs or excerpts of personal accounts to support their interpretations of the past.

Q: What should I look for when I am studying a primary source?

A: There are many things to look for when viewing a primary source. Of course, it depends on the nature of the source you are looking at. For example, if you are reading a letter from someone you should look for things like the type of language used, author biases, dates mentioned, the purpose of the letter, and to whom it was being addressed. Naturally, if you are viewing something like a painting as a primary source you will be looking for different things, such as what the painting depicts, what type of materials were used in its creation, and an artist’s signature.

Q: Why study primary sources?

A: Primary sources are the most important link we have to the past. They reveal the important events, thoughts, opinions, styles, attitudes, and customs of the past. Primary sources are the most dependable way to get information about the past because they were created by those who lived it.

Source #1

Carpet Bag Rule in Florida: The Inside Workings of the Reconstruction of Civil Government in Florida After the Close of the Civil War

[Extracts from Governor Walker's speech (1865) with author John Wallace's commentary (Published 1888)]

The Governor next turned his attention to that problem which had perplexed the statesman, the philanthropist, and the philosopher for more than half a century: —“What shall we do with the Negro?” He said:

“I think we are bound by every consideration of duty, gratitude and interest, to make these people as enlightened, prosperous and happy as their new situation will admit. For generations past they have been our faithful, contented and happy slaves. They have been attached to our persons and our fortunes, sharing with us all our feelings, rejoicing with us in our prosperity, mourning with us in our adversity. If there were exceptions to this general rule, they were only individual exceptions. Every Southern man who hears me knows that what I say is literally true in regard to the vast mass of our colored population. The world has never before seen such a body of slaves. For not only in peace, but in war, they have been faithful to us. During much of the time of the late unhappy difficulties, Florida had a greater number of men in the army beyond her limits than constituted her entire voting population. This of course stripped many districts of their entire arms-bearing inhabitants, and left our females and infant children almost exclusively to the protection of our slaves. They proved true to their trust. Not one instance of insult, outrage or indignity has ever come to my knowledge. They remained at home and made provisions for our army. Many of them went with our sons to the army, and there too, proved their fidelity—attending them when well, nursing and caring for them when sick and wounded. We all know that many of them were willing, and some of them anxious to take up arms in our cause. Although for several years within sound of the guns of the vessels of the United States, for six hundred miles along our seaboard, yet scarcely one in a thousand voluntarily left our agricultural service to take shelter and freedom under the flag of the Union. It is not their fault that they are free—they had nothing to do with it; that was brought about by the results and operations of the war. But they are free. They are no longer our contented and happy slaves, with an abundant supply of food and clothing for themselves and families, and the intelligence of a superior race to look ahead and make all necessary arrangements for their comfort. They are now a discontented and unhappy people, many of them houseless and homeless, roaming about in gangs over the land, not knowing one day where the supplies for the next are to come from; exposed to the ravages of disease and famine; exposed to the temptations of theft and robbery, by which they are often overcome; without the intelligence to provide for themselves when well, or to care for themselves when sick, and doomed to untold sufferings and ultimate extinction unless we intervene for their protection and preservation. Will we do it? I repeat, we are bound to do it, by every consideration of gratitude and interest.”

The whites being to some extent exasperated about the freedom of the slaves, and not knowing what their conduct might be as free laborers, talk of the importation of white labor from Germany, Ireland, Italy and other countries, was quite prevalent. As to this subject the Governor said:

“But let us always remember that we have a laboring class of our own which is entitled to the preference. It is not sufficient to say that white labor is cheaper. I trust we are not so far degraded as to consult interest alone. But interest alone would dictate that it is better to give these people employment and enable them to support themselves, than have them remain upon our hands as a pauper race; for here they are, and here, for weal or woe, they are obliged to stay. We must remember that these black people are natives of this country and have a pre-emption right to be recipients of whatever favors we may have to bestow. We must protect them, if not against the competition, at any rate against the exactions of white immigrants. They will expect our black laborers to do as much work in this climate as they have been accustomed to see white ones perform in more northern latitudes. We know that they cannot do it. They never did it for us as slaves, and the experience of the last six months shows that they will do no better as freedmen. Our fathers of 1783 knew that it takes five black men to do the work of three white ones, and consequently, in adjusting the apportionment of taxes upon the basis of labor and industry of the country, eleven of the thirteen States of the old confederation recommended that every five blacks be counted as only three. And if we can offer sufficient inducements, I am inclined to

think that the black man, as a field laborer in our climate, will prove more efficient than [than] the imported white.”

Referring to the question of negro suffrage, the Governor said:

“We have been able to give an honest and conscientious assent to all that has been done, but each one of us knows that we could not give either an honest or conscientious assent to negro suffrage. There is not one of us that would not feel that he was doing wrong, and bartering his self-respect, his conscience and his duty to his country and to the Union itself, for the benefits he might hope to obtain by getting back into the Union. Much as I worshipped the Union, and much as I would rejoice to see my State once more recognized as a member thereof, yet it is better, a thousand times better, that she should remain out of the Union, even as one of her subjugated provinces, than go back ‘eviscerated of her manhood,’ despoiled of her honor, recreant to her duty, without her self-respect, and of course without the respect of the balance of mankind—a miserable thing, with seeds of moral and political death in herself, soon to be communicated to all her associates.”

With the feelings that existed at that period among a goodly number of the whites with reference to the freedom of the negro, I must confess that it took a great deal of courage for the Governor to assert that negro’s faithfulness to his master for generations past and during the war. Although the assertion was true, I have no doubt that a majority of the whites desired to see the negro prosperous, at least as a laborer, and to be fully protected in his person and property, if gratitude was to be measured to him as his faithfulness had been measured to his formal master. As to his contentment, happiness, and being supplied with food and clothing, the Governor and others may have fed and clothed their slaves abundantly, but not enough so as to make them desirous of remaining slaves or to make them contented. If such was the case it would not have been necessary for the Legislature, anterior to the war, to pass a law punishing white persons for cruelty to slaves. In fact, it is absolutely necessary in order to govern a slave to punish him more severely than it would be necessary for the law to punish a freeman. I think “The Life and Times of the Hon. Frederick Douglass” is conclusive on this point. I am confident if all these slaves the Governor spoke of had been called up at that time they would have said to him that they felt quite happy, even while there were many who were destitute and had no home to go to. Yet most of these people were looked after by their former masters, as they had never left their premises. It was only those left the premises of, or those who had been driven away from, the places of their former masters, who were in danger of suffering. So the Governor was right in the abstract, but not in the concrete. The following poem fully expresses the feelings of the freedman before and after their liberation. It was written and delivered by John Wallace at the celebration of the seventeenth anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation at Tallahassee, Florida:

Freedom, thou welcome spirit of Love,
Whence and from where didst thou begin?
Thou from God’s bosom as a dove
Didst seek the earth to vanquish sin.
Before the land and skies were made
Thy spirit hovered o’er the deep,
And when God earth’s foundation laid,
Did enter man when yet asleep.
As he arose from dust to flesh,
Near him wast thou where e’er he went;
Though cast from Eden’s garden fresh,
Thou wast with him in sorrow bent.
And still wast thou all through
Despotic ages past and gone,
And as a brother e’er proved true—
Thy light ‘mid darkness ever shone.
When Pharaoh Israel’s children held
Four hundred years abject, enslaved,
To free them Egypt was impelled,
Though then was gained the land they craved.

America thought thee to evade,
And to the South her slaves she sold;
But through power she was made
To yield to thee this great stronghold.
Though here was called unto thy aid
Grim war, the court of last appeal—
And North and South each other braved,
Yet now they both thy blessings feel.
There were four millions souls and more
Of Africans in slavery bound,
They sought they crown 'mid trials sore,
Two hundred years, and then 'twas found.
Mankind has ne'er contended been
Where slaver's cruel sway was held.
'Twas giant Freedom fought the sin
Till all its darkness was dispelled.
Go sound the trumpet, ring the bell!
Just seventeen years ago to-day
Sweet Freedom wrestled us from hell
And put an end to slavery's sway.

Key terms:

- **Pre-emption**: When state law and federal law conflict, federal law displaces, or preempts, state law, due to the Supremacy Clause of the Constitution. U.S. Const.
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The Governor next turned his attention to that problem which had perplexed the statesman, the philanthropist and the philosopher for more than half a century :—"What shall we do with the Negro?" He said :

"I think we are bound by every consideration of duty, gratitude and interest, to make these people as enlightened, prosperous and happy as their new situation will admit. For generations past they have been our faithful, contented and happy slaves. They have been attached to our persons and our fortunes, sharing with us all our feelings, rejoicing with us in our prosperity, mourning with us in our adversity. If there were exceptions to this general rule, they were only individual exceptions. Every Southern man who hears me knows that what I say is literally true in regard to the vast mass of our colored

population. The world has never before seen such a body of slaves. For not only in peace, but in war, they have been faithful to us. During much of the time of the late unhappy difficulties, Florida had a greater number of men in the army beyond her limits than constituted her entire voting population. This of course stripped many districts of their entire arms-bearing inhabitants, and left our females and infant children almost exclusively to the protection of our slaves. They proved true to their trust. Not one instance of insult, outrage or indignity has ever come to my knowledge. They remained at home and made provisions for our army. Many of them went with our sons to the army, and there, too, proved their fidelity—attending them when well, nursing and caring for them when sick and wounded. We all know that many of them were willing, and some of them anxious, to take up arms in our cause. Although for several years within sound of the guns of the vessels of the United States, for six hundred miles along our seaboard, yet scarcely one in a thousand voluntarily left our agricultural service to take shelter and freedom under the flag of the Union. It is not their fault that they are free—they had nothing to do with it; that was brought about by the results and operations of the war. But they are free. They are no longer our contented and happy slaves, with an abundant supply of food and clothing for themselves and families, and the intelligence of a superior race to look ahead and make all necessary arrangements for their comfort. They are now a discontented and unhappy people, many of them houseless and homeless, roaming about in gangs over the land, not knowing one day where the supplies for the next are to come from; exposed to the ravages of disease and famine; exposed to the temptations of theft and robbery, by which they are often overcome; without the intelligence to provide for themselves when well, or to care for themselves when sick, and doomed to untold sufferings and ultimate extinction unless we intervene for their protection and preservation. Will we do it? I repeat, we are bound to do it, by every consideration of gratitude and interest."

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Germany, Ireland, Italy and other countries, was quite prevalent. As to this subject the Governor said:

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of the Union, even as one of her subjugated provinces, than go back 'eviscerated of her manhood,' despoiled of her honor, recreant to her duty, without her self-respect, and of course without the respect of the balance of mankind—a miserable thing, with seeds of moral and political death in herself, soon to be communicated to all her associates."

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teenth anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, at Tallahassee, Florida :

Freedom, thou welcome spirit of Love,
 Whence and from where didst thou begin ?
 Thou from God's bosom as a dove
 Didst seek the earth to vanquish sin.
 Before the land and skies were made
 Thy spirit hovered o'er the deep,
 And when God earth's foundation laid,
 Did enter man when yet asleep.
 As he arose from dust to flesh,
 Near him wast thou where e'er he went ;
 Though cast from Eden's garden fresh,
 Thou wast with him in sorrow bent.
 And still wast thou all through
 Despotic ages past and gone,
 And as a brother e'er proved true—
 Thy light 'mid darkness ever shone.
 When Pharaoh Israel's children held
 Four hundred years abject, enslaved,
 To free them Egypt was impelled,
 Though then was gained the land they craved.

America thought thee to evade,
 And to the South her slaves she sold ;
 But through power she was made
 To yield to thee this great stronghold.
 Though here was called unto thy aid
 Grim war, the court of last appeal—
 And North and South each other braved,
 Yet now they both thy blessings feel.
 There were four million souls and more
 Of Africans in slavery bound,
 They sought thy crown 'mid trials sore,
 Two hundred years, and then 'twas found.
 Mankind has ne'er contented been
 Where slavery's cruel sway was held.

'Twas giant Freedom fought the sin
 Till all its darkness was dispelled.
 Go sound the trumpet, ring the bell !
 Just seventeen years ago to-day
 Sweet Freedom wrested us from hell
 And put an end to slavery's sway.

Source #1 Questions:

Directions: Answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Use the document to support your answers whenever possible.

1. In his speech, Governor Walker asserts that African Americans were content being slaves. What reasons does he give to support his opinion? What does he believe will happen to free African Americans without a master? Use quotes from the document to support your answer.
2. When discussing African American labor Governor Walker states, “But interest alone would dictate that it is better to give these people employment and enable them to support themselves, then have them remain upon our hands as a pauper race; for here they are, and here, for weal or woe, they are obliged to stay.” What issue from this period prompted Walker to feel this way? From his discussion, how does Walker seem to feel on the issue of African Americans in the labor force?
3. How does Governor Walker feel in regards to the prospect of African Americans getting the right to vote? What does his reasoning reveal about the way many white Southerners viewed African Americans?
4. The author of *Carpetbag Rule in Florida* was a former slave, John Wallace. What does his response to Governor Walker’s speech reveal about how African Americans felt about their enslavement and their new freedom? Use quotes to support your answer.
5. Describe the tone of John Wallace’s poem. For what purpose was this poem written and what message is it trying to convey to its audience?

Source #2

Governor Harrison Reed's inaugural address delivered at the Capitol in the City of Tallahassee, Florida on Monday, June 8, 1868 at 3 o'clock. –Recorded in the Journal of the Senate of the State of Florida at the First Session of the Fifteenth Legislature.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

Fellow Citizens of Florida: In entering upon the high trust which your partiality has conferred, in deference to time honored custom it becomes my duty to briefly indicate the policy of my administration as Chief Magistrate of the State.

In November, 1860, the constitutional rights of the people of Florida were subverted and its civil government was overthrown. Since then the State has been without a constitutional government and subject to military law.

In March 1867, the Congress of the United States, in obedience to its obligation to “guarantee to every State a Republican form of government,” prepared a plan by which the State could regain its forfeited rights and its people be restored to the benefits of constitutional government.

Under this plan, you have framed a government which we are here to-day to inaugurate and prepare to make effective. You have formed and adopted a Constitution based upon the great theory of American government, that *all men are by nature free and endowed with equal rights*. You have laid deep and broad the foundations of the State upon the principle of universal freedom.

Bred to freedom and under Republican institutions; believing slavery an unmitigated curse, as well as a violation of human rights—a moral, political, and physical evil, wherever tolerated, I most cordially congratulate you that it no longer exists to blight the fair heritage which God has given us here, and that the Constitution which you have adopted contains no germ of despotism to generate future discord.

I congratulate you also that no spirit of malevolence or bitterness, growing out of the wrongs and conflicts of the past, has been suffered to mar your organic law, but that in a spirit of magnanimity and forbearance worthy of the highest commendation, those who have fortified their citizenship are welcomed back to the benefits and privileges of the government upon the sole condition of fealty and adherence to the Constitution and laws.

Amid the ruins of a government embodying antagonistic principles, you have laid the foundations of a government insuring harmony, stability, security, and peace. The conflicting elements and interests of the past may now all unite in a homogenous system, all yielding obedience to a common law, which respects alike the interest of all. Time alone can heal the social disorders and dissensions created by the disruption of society and the radical change in the system of government consequent upon the war. We will patiently await its mollifying influences, interposing no obstacles to a speedy restoration.

All classes of society, and all the interests of the State demand peace and good government and if the spirit of our Constitution is appreciated and reciprocated, every citizen may realize these advantages, and the State may arise from its prostrate condition to a measure of prosperity unknown in the past, and becomes one of the brightest luminaries in the galaxy of our glorious Union.

Fellow Citizens! I accept the high responsibility of the Chief Magistracy under your new Constitution, believing firmly in its principles, and unqualifiedly endorsing its policy and that of the Congress under whose clemency we are permitted to inaugurate anew a civil government for the State. I enter upon this high trust with the firm purpose of executing the laws in the spirit of liberality in which they are conceived, and in view of the highest interest of the State and the people. Relying upon your loyalty and patriotism, and the favor and guidance of that Divine Power which sways the destinies of all, I shall do what within me lies to render effective the Government, and to command for the respect and obedience of all classes of our citizens.

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Under this plan, you have framed a government which we are here to-day to inaugurate and prepare to make effective. You have formed and adopted a Constitution based upon the great theory of American government, that *all men are by nature free and endowed with equal rights*. You have laid deep and broad the foundations of the State upon the principle of universal freedom.

Bred to freedom and under Republican institutions; believing slavery an unmitigated curse, as well as a violation of human rights—a moral, political, and physical evil, wherever tolerated, I most cordially congratulate you that it no longer exists to blight the fair heritage which God has given us here, and that the Constitution which you have adopted contains no germ of despotism to generate future discord.

I congratulate you also that no spirit of malevolence or bitterness, growing out of the wrongs and conflicts of the past, has been suffered to mar your organic law, but that in a spirit of magnanimity and forbearance worthy of the highest commendation, those who have forfeited their citizenship are welcomed back to the benefits and privileges of the government upon the sole condition of fealty and adherence to the Constitution and laws.

Amid the ruins of a government embodying antagonistic principles, you have laid the foundations of a government insuring harmony, stability, security, and peace. The conflicting elements and interests of the past may now all unite in a homogeneous system, all yielding obedience to a common law, which respects alike the interests of all. Time alone can heal the social disorders and dissensions created by the disruption of society and the radical change in the system of government conse-

quent upon the war. We will patiently await its mollifying influences, interposing no obstacles to a speedy restoration.

All classes of society and all the interests of the State demand peace and good government, and if the spirit of our Constitution is appreciated and reciprocated, every citizen may realize these advantages, and the State may arise from its prostrate condition to a measure of prosperity unknown in the past, and become one of the brightest luminaries in the galaxy of our glorious Union.

Fellow Citizens! I accept the high responsibility of the Chief Magistracy under your new Constitution, believing firmly in its principles, and unqualifiedly endorsing its policy and that of the Congress under whose clemency we are permitted to inaugurate anew a civil government for the State. I enter upon this high trust with the firm purpose of executing the laws in the spirit of liberality in which they are conceived, and in view of the highest interests of the State and the people. Relying upon your loyalty and patriotism, and the favor and guidance of that Divine Power which sways the destinies of all, I shall do what within me lies to render effective the Government, and to command for it the respect and obedience of all classes of our citizens.

Source #2 Questions:

Directions: Answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Use the document to support your answers whenever possible.

1. Based on Governor Reed's speech, what can you conclude about his feelings concerning equality and the issue of slavery? How do these feelings compare to Governor Walker's feelings from source #1? Use quotes to support your answer.
2. What does this speech indicate about the government that preceded Governor Reed's election under the new Florida Constitution of 1868? What type of government does Reed support and envision for Florida under his leadership?
3. What is the purpose of this document and who was its intended audience?
4. What type of promises does Governor Reed make to his audience in this speech?

Source #3

Florida election, 1876. Report Of The Senate Committee On Privileges And Elections, With The Testimony And Documentary Evidence, On The Election In The State Of Florida In 1876
[Columbia County Testimony of Joseph King]

Jacksonville, December 27, 1867

The Columbia County Ku-Klux.

Joseph King sworn and examined.

By the CHAIRMAN:

Question. What county do you live in?—Answer. Columbia County.

Q. Were you with Mr. MacNish in October last, when he and some more colored men met a party of white men?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. Just state who was with you.—A. It was on the 17th of October.

Q. Who was with you?—A. William MacNish, Joseph Simmons, Thomas Boyd, and Stephen Thomas.

Q. Where had you been?—A. I had been to Lake City and was coming from Lake City, coming back home.

Q. Where did you live?—A. I live 25 miles from Lake City—Tuscanoooga settlement, they ca.l[s] [calls] it.

Q. What time of day was it?—A. I think, as nigh as I can come to it, the sun was about an hour high.

Q. Who did you meet?—A. We met Joel Niblack, Elias O. Steen, Johns McKinney, and Zach McKinney.

Q. State under what circumstances you met them and what happened—A. Before we got to them Mr. MacNish said to us, “Yonder! Look at them men coming yonder, All of them have got double-barreled shot-guns, and when you get to them don’t let us say anything to them unless they say something to us.” Before we got up to them when we got about fifteen or twenty steps, I reckon, Niblack he motioned his hand to us and told us to halt and we stopped, and he asked us, “Was we prepared to die?” We told him no, and he told us to march across the woods, and we started and they says, “Stop;” and he said to the other three men he had with them, “Hold on, boys, until I give you your orders. If any one of them breaks and runs shoot him down, it makes no difference who he is;” and he told us to march right on now, and we started on, and they marched us on right until dark, and they fetched their horses and one of them asked him if they could make a fire, and he said no; if we made up fires it would be very dark, and it would be very late, and some of us would get away from him. We was begging him to save our lives, and he says, “It’s no use to beg; it’s too late now. If we let you go you will tell on us;” and we promised him we wouldn’t, and he told us, did we know what happened up there at that old place one time, and we told him no, sir; and he told us that, “Jim Green was taken off from there and put in some old pond or other, and that’s the place you’re going to be put in to-night.”

Q. Had a man by the name of Jim Green disappeared?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. Was he a colored man?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. How long before had he disappeared?—A. Some four or five years before, I reckon

FOUND IN A POND WITH HIS THROAT CUT

Q. And never appeared afterward?—A. No, sir; he was found in the pond with his throat cut, and he told us that was the very way we was going to be done that night; that he was going to put us in the Suwannee River. We was begging him to save our lives, and he says, “I may let you all loose, but I can’t let Joe King loose; and if I had you loose, will you hang him?” And the boys told him yes; and he says “I can’t trust you;” and he wouldn’t trust them. And he told me if I wanted to say anything or wanted to bid all the others good-bye, I had better do it now; and he let us say good-bye to one another, and he made us all pray; and after he had made us all pray he had a small cotton rope around his horse’s head, about ten or fifteen feet long, and he gave it to William MacNish and made him tie it around my neck. Then he carried me off from the rest of them about a quarter of a mile; and he questioned me, and asked me about the election, and who I was going to vote for, and one thing or other and I told him I didn’t know. And he told me would I vote for any of the carpetbaggers if he would leave

me loose; and I told him no, I would not vote for any of them. And I asked him to carry me back to the other boys where they was, and not to kill me. And he carried me back to the other boys; and after he carried me back all of us was begging him not to kill us, and then he asked us how many of us would vote the democratic ticket if he would let us loose, and we all five of us told him we would vote it; and he asked us would we kill Gib Woods if he would let us loose, and we told him yes.

Q. Who was Gib Woods? –A. A colored man who lives fifteen or sixteen miles from Lake City, I think; and we told him yes, we would kill Gib Woods if he would let us loose; and he said no, we would not; and we told him we would, and he told us if he gives us his gun to shoot Gib Woods with, we would shoot him with it; and we told him no, we would not; and he said he would not trust us; and he said, “I will wait till some other time and come back here and kill him;” and he said, “You and the other boys can go back;” and he said they intended to put everybody out at Steel’s out of the way. Then they voted to see whether they would kill us or not. They all voted to save MacNish by getting up; and they all got up and voted for Joe Simmons, and all voted for Tom Boyd, and all voted for Steve Thomas. Then they voted on me, and there was but two got up and the other two sat down; and they voted again for me, for I begged one of them to vote for me, and they voted again and he did vote for me; and one of them still sat down, and he said he would vote for me, but he was afraid I would slip to his house some night when he was asleep and kills him. I told him, no, I would not, and I begged him to save my life, After a while he asked me did I remember one time calling his brother-in-law a liar, and I told him yes; and he told me if I would go down on my knees and beg him to forgive me for it he would save my life, and made me go down to my knees and beg him to save my life. Then he made me swear I would never do it again, and after I swore that Niblack called for a vote and they voted again on me, and he said if they was all to vote for me he would save my life; if the boys voted to save our lives he would do it; but that if they did not vote that way, as he was the captain and had put them to the trouble of losing the whole day, they were going to kill me. After that they all got up and voted for me, and the boys was trying to move away, when Niblack says, “You needn’t think you are loose yet.” And he told William five men apiece over to vote that ticket, and says, “If they don’t vote that ticket we must take them out and hang them, or else beat them and make them leave the country if they don’t vote the democratic ticket.” And this very man Joe Simmons and them had to go down to a place they call Keno and join the democratic club called Drew and Hull Club, on the next meeting Thursday evening.

Q. Did you vote the democratic ticket? –A. No, sir; I would have voted it, but the man who used to own me told me I was too young to vote, and he would rather I would not vote than have me in trouble afterward.

THE DEMOCRATIC CLUB INCREASES IN MEMBERSHIP.

Q. Had you been acting as a republican before that? –A. Yes, sir; I belonged to the club. They had a club down there, and all of us belonged to the republican club until they caught us on the way that night and swore to kill us; and Niblack told them that if they reported him he intended to kill us; and if he did not kill us he would make up seventy-five men, a heap worse than he was, who would do it.

Q. Did you all join the democratic club? –A. These other men joined it. I didn’t join the club at all.

THE REPUBLICAN CLUB BURSTED ALL UP.

Q. What became of the republican club? –A. They got scattered and bursted all up, and nobody ever attended to at all.

Q. After this? –A. Yes, sir; after that.

Q. Had it been meeting regularly and taking in members before that? –A. Yes, sir; there was a meeting there once or twice every week. There would be speaking and there would be people going on the list.

Q. And then there was no meeting after that? –A. No, sir; never had no meeting after that. Niblack told us he was going to get his uncle down after that to speak and that we had to go out to the speaking but he didn’t fetch him out; and old Colonel Cloud came to town and they had to have a meeting there.

Q. Did Colonel Cloud speak? –A. Yes, sir; he came down to speak.

Q. Did he make a democratic speech?—A. Yes, sir; it was a democratic show.

Q. Did he tell the colored men what they had to do? –A.No, sir; he didn’t tell them what they had to do, but he told them what he wanted them to do.

Q. He made no threats in that speech? –A. No, sir. Mr. Niblack, he told us right down we had to vote for Drew and Hull, or Drew and Tilden, whatever his name is, and if we didn’t do it he was going to kill us, and if we ever reported him he would kill us anyhow.

Q. Do you know whether the republicans had been accustomed to carry that county in former elections? –A. The republicans always been carrying it, ever since I can remember.

Q. Who carried it at the last election?—A. I don't know. Some of them says the democrats got it this time.

WHY HE DIDN'T KNOW.

Q. You do not know yourself?—A. No, sir; I have not been there since the election. The election was on the 7th of November and I left home on the 9th—night.

Q. On the night of the 9th? –A. Yes, sir.

By Mr. COOPER:

Q. Did these men tell you at the time they had you out, away from the others, what they were particularly mad at you about? –A. No; they said this thing was intended to kill all of us.

Q. Did they say what they were particularly mad at you about, and that they were going to kill you first? –A. No, sir.

Q. Did they tell you about anything you had been doing that they were mad at you about? –A. No, sir; he never told me anything about that.

Q. Did not they say that the reason why they had selected you was because of your taking a prisoner to Lake City, or something of that sort? –A. He told William MacNish about that.

Q. And he did not tell you of it at all?—A.No, sir.

Q. He did not tell you why he was doing that to you? –A. No, sir.

Q. Did you tell anybody about this afterward? –A. About what they done to us?

Q. Yes, sir. –A.No, sir; he swore us that night never to tell it, and he swore if it was found out he would kill us.

Q. And you never told it? –A. No, sir; only to the boys that was with me.

Q. And you never told it to anybody else? –A. No, sir; never told it to anybody else until I cam down here.

Q. Did these men live in that county? –A. Yes, sir.

Q. How old are they; are they grown men?—A. There are three of them grown men.

Q. Which three?—A. Joel Niblack, Johns McKinney, and Zack McKinney. They are grown men, all three voters, and the other is only a young boy like.

Q. But the other three are men? –A. Yes, sir.

Q. Have they lived all the time in that county? –A. Ever since I have been knowing them they have.

Q. Lived in the same neighborhood with you all? –A. Yes, sir; one of them, Niblack, and his folks, did not live perhaps more than a mile and a half from us, and McKinneys lived about two miles.

Q. Where did you say they met you?—A.They met us about seven or eight miles from home.

Q. One your return from Lake City? –A. Yes, sir; coming back home.

JACKSONVILLE, December 27, 1876.

THE COLUMBIA COUNTY KU-KLUX.

JOSEPH KING sworn and examined.

By the CHAIRMAN :

Question. What county do you live in?—Answer. Columbia County.

Q. Were you with Mr. MacNish, in October last, when he and some more colored men met a party of white men?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. Just state who was with you.—A. It was on the 17th of October.

Q. Who was with you?—A. William MacNish, Joseph Simmons, Thomas Boyd, and Stephen Thomas.

Q. Where had you been?—A. I had been to Lake City and was coming from Lake City, coming back home.

Q. Where did you live?—A. I live 25 miles from Lake City—Tuscanooga settlement, they call it.

Q. What time of the day was it?—A. I think, as nigh as I can come to it, the sun was about an hour high.

Q. Who did you meet?—A. We met Joel Niblack, Elias O. Steen, Johns McKinney, and Zach McKinney.

Q. State under what circumstances you met them and what happened.—A. Before we got to them Mr. MacNish said to us, "Yonder! Look at them men coming yonder. All of them have got double-barreled shot-guns, and when you get to them don't let us say anything to them unless they say something to us." Before we got up to them, when we got about fifteen or twenty steps, I reckon, Niblack he motioned his hand to us and told us to halt, and we stopped, and he asked us, "Was we prepared to die?" We told him no, and he told us to march across the woods, and we started, and they says, "Stop;" and he said to the other three men he had with them, "Hold on, boys, until I give you your orders. If any one of them breaks and runs shoot him down, it makes no difference who he is;" and he told us to march right on now, and we started on, and they marched us on right until dark, and they fetched their horses; and one of them asked him if they could make a fire, and he said no; if we made up fires it would be very dark, and it would be very late, and some of us would get away from him. We was begging him to save our lives, and he says, "It's no use to beg; it's too late now. If we let you go you will tell on us;" and we promised him we wouldn't, and he told us, did we know what happened up there at that old place one time, and we told him no, sir; and he told us that "Jim Green was taken off from there and put in some old pond or other, and that's the place you're going to be put in to-night."

Q. Had a man by the name of Jim Green disappeared?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. Was he a colored man?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. How long before had he disappeared?—A. Some four or five years before, I reckon

FOUND IN A POND WITH HIS THROAT CUT.

Q. And never appeared afterward?—A. No, sir; he was found in the pond with his throat cut, and he told us that was the very way we was going to be done that night; that he was going to put us in the Suwanee River. We was begging him to save our lives, and he says, "I may let you all loose, but I can't let Joe King loose; and if I let you loose, will you hang him?" And the boys told him yes; and he says, "I can't trust you;" and he wouldn't trust them. And he told me if I wanted to say anything, or wanted to bid all the others good-bye, I had better do it now; and he let us say good-bye to one another, and he made us all pray; and after he had made us all pray he had a small cotton rope around his horse's head, about ten or fifteen feet long, and he gave it to William MacNish and made him tie it around my neck. Then he carried me off from the rest of them about a quarter of a mile; and he questioned me, and

asked me about the election, and who was I going to vote for, and one thing or other, and I told him I didn't know. And he told me would I vote for any of the carpet-baggers if he would leave me loose; and I told him no, I would not vote for any of them. And I asked him to carry me back to the other boys where they was, and not to kill me. And he carried me back to the other boys; and after he carried me back all of us was begging him not to kill us, and then he asked us how many of us would vote the democratic ticket if he would let us loose, and we all five of us told him we would vote it; and he asked us would we kill Gib Woods if he would let us loose, and we told him yes.

Q. Who was Gib Woods?—A. A colored man who lives fifteen or sixteen miles from Lake City, I think; and we told him yes, we would kill Gib Woods if he would let us loose; and he said no, we would not; and we told him we would, and he told us if he gives us his gun to shoot Gib Woods with, we would shoot him with it; and we told him no, we would not; and he said he would not trust us; and he said, "I will wait till some other time and come back here and kill him;" and he said, "You and the other boys can go back;" and he said they intended to put everybody out at Steel's out of the way. Then they voted to see whether they would kill us or not. They all voted to save MacNish by getting up; and they all got up and voted for Joe Simmons, and all voted for Tom Boyd, and all voted for Steve Thomas. Then they voted on me, and there was but two got up and the other two sat down; and they voted again for me, for I begged one of them to vote for me, and they voted again and he did vote for me; and one of them still sat down, and he said he would vote for me, but he was afraid I would slip to his house some night when he was asleep and kill him. I told him, no, I would not, and I begged him to save my life. After a while he asked me did I remember one time calling his brother-in-law a liar, and I told him yes; and he told me if I would go down on my knees and beg him to forgive me for it he would save my life, and made me go down to my knees and beg him to save my life. Then he made me swear I would never do it again, and after I swore that Niblack called for a vote and they voted again on me, and he said if they was all to vote for me he would save my life; if the boys voted to save our lives he would do it; but that if they did not vote that way, as he was the captain and had put them to the trouble of losing the whole day, they were going to kill me. After that they all got up and voted for me, and the boys was trying to move away, when Niblack says, "You needn't think you are loose yet." And he told William MacNish that they all had to vote the democratic ticket now, and had to carry at least five men apiece over to vote that ticket, and says, "If they don't vote that ticket we must take them out and hang them, or else beat them and make them leave the country if they don't vote the democratic ticket." And this very man Joe Simmons and them had to go down to a place they call Keno and join the democratic club called Drew and Hull Club, on the next meeting Thursday evening.

Q. Did you vote the democratic ticket?—A. No, sir; I would have voted it, but the man who used to own me told me I was too young to vote, and he would rather I would not vote than have me in trouble afterward.

THE DEMOCRATIC CLUB INCREASES ITS MEMBERSHIP.

Q. Had you been acting as a republican before that?—A. Yes, sir; I belonged to the club. They had a club down there, and all of us belonged to the republican club until they caught us on the way that night and swore to kill us; and Niblack told them that if they reported him he intended to kill us; and if he did not kill us he would make up seventy-five men, a heap worse than he was, who would do it.

Q. Did you all join the democratic club?—A. These other men joined it. I didn't join the club at all.

THE REPUBLICAN CLUB BURSTED ALL UP.

Q. What became of the republican club?—A. They got scattered and bursted all up, and nobody ever attended to it at all.

Q. After this?—A. Yes, sir; after that.

Q. Had it been meeting regularly and taking in members before that?—A. Yes, sir; there was a meeting there once or twice every week. There would be speaking and there would be people going on the list.

Q. And then there was no meeting after that?—A. No, sir; never had no meeting after that. Niblack told us he was going to get his uncle down after that to speak, and that we had to go out to the speaking; but he didn't fetch him out; and old Colonel Cloud come to town and they had to have a meeting there.

Q. Did Colonel Cloud speak?—A. Yes, sir; he came down to speak.

Q. Did he make a democratic speech?—A. Yes, sir; it was a democratic show.

Q. Did he tell the colored men what they had to do?—A. No, sir; he didn't tell them what they had to do, but he told them what he wanted them to do.

Q. He made no threats in that speech?—A. No, sir. Mr. Niblack, he told us right down we had to vote for Drew and Hull, or Drew and Tilden, whatever his name is,

and if we didn't do it he was going to kill us, and if we ever reported him he would kill us anyhow.

Q. Do you know whether the republicans had been accustomed to carry that county in former elections?—A. The republicans always been carrying it, ever since I can remember.

Q. Who carried it at the last election?—A. I don't know. Some of them says the democrats got it this time.

WHY HE DIDN'T KNOW.

Q. You do not know yourself?—A. No, sir; I have not been there since the election. The election was on the 7th of November and I left home on the 9th—night.

Q. On the night of the 9th?—A. Yes, sir.

By Mr. COOPER:

Q. Did these men tell you at the time they had you out, away from the others, what they were particularly mad at you about?—A. No; they said this thing was intended to kill all of us.

Q. Did they say what they were particularly mad at you about, and that they were going to kill you first?—A. No, sir.

Q. Did they tell you about anything you had been doing that they were mad at you about?—A. No, sir; he never told me anything about that.

Q. Did not they say that the reason why they had selected you was because of your taking a prisoner to Lake City, or something of that sort?—A. He told William MacNish about that.

Q. And he did not tell you of it at all?—A. No, sir.

Q. He did not tell you why he was doing that to you?—A. No, sir.

Q. Did you tell anybody about this afterward?—A. About what they done to us?

Q. Yes, sir.—A. No, sir; he swore us that night never to tell it, and he swore if it was found out he would kill us.

Q. And you never told it?—A. No, sir; only to the boys that was with me.

Q. And you never told it to anybody else?—A. No, sir; never told it to anybody else until I came down here.

Q. Did these men live in that county?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. How old are they; are they grown men?—A. There are three of them grown men.

Q. Which three?—A. Joel Niblack, Johns McKinney, and Zack McKinney. They are grown men, all three voters, and the other is only a young boy like.

Q. But the other three are men?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. Have they lived all the time in that county?—A. Ever since I have been knowing them they have.

Q. Lived in the same neighborhood with you all?—A. Yes, sir; one of them, Niblack, and his folks, did not live perhaps more than a mile and a half from us, and McKinneys lived about two miles.

Q. Where did you say they met you?—A. They met us about seven or eight miles from home.

Q. On your return from Lake City?—A. Yes, sir; coming back home.

Source #3 Questions:

Directions: Answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Use the document to support your answers whenever possible.

1. This account by Joseph King from 1867 is one of numerous testimonies made by African Americans who were threatened into voting a certain way at the polls. Based on this document, what did the white men want from the African American group they threatened? Be specific.
2. Based on the format of this document and its content, what type of document is this, and what purpose did this it serve?
3. How does this document support the fact that the Reconstruction era in the South was a dangerous and unstable time for African Americans? What specific details from this document support this?

Source #4

Florida election, 1876. Report of the Senate Committee on privileges and elections, with the testimony and documentary evidence, on the election in the State of Florida in 1876
[Columbia County Testimony of George P. Fowler]

JACKSONVILLE, *December 28, 1876*

GETTING RID OF A CROWD

George P. Fowler sworn and examined.

By the CHAIRMAN:

Question. Were you in Lake City on the day of the election? –Answer. I was.

Q. What office did you fill there? –A. I held the position of chief deputy marshal. I was a regular deputy, but I was chief there that day.

Q. State what you observed, then, with reference to the refusal to allow persons to vote on that day. –A. There were four voting places in Lake City, about half a mile apart, and one of them was farther than that; about a mile I should judge. I found that I couldn't get around to all of them unless I went on horseback. At what was called the Colored Academy precinct, the precinct No. 2, where the colored people vote mostly, Charles R. King was the United States supervisor of election and also inspector of election at that precinct. When the polls opened in the morning at eight o' clock, I rode up to the polls as soon as they were declared open, and found the room filled with white men, in which they were voting. I called upon the officers of election and told them there were too many white men in there, and that they must clear that room out. The officers of the election told me those men were all democratic challengers. There were some twenty-five or thirty or thirty-five men in there, and I insisted that the room should be cleared, and they were very insolent about it and said they wouldn't go out, and I found I could not get them out without using force, which I did not want to do. But I finally worked a little stratagem, and thinned the room out. I placed two deputy marshals, one at the window and one at the door—not the window where they were voting, but the other window which they had up, for it was quite warm—with instructions to let any person come out, but allow none to re-enter after they were out, and positively told them they must allow nobody to go in there. There were thirty white men, democrats, around the polls inside, that were giving the colored people no chance to vote, and I worked a little plan and got a little crowd outside. It didn't amount to much—just a little assembly there. But we attracted attention of these folks inside, and a great many of them rushed out to see what was going on, and, when they got out, they couldn't get back again, and I succeeded in clearing the room without any force. Then complaints were made to me shortly after they commenced voting. The colored people said they had gone up to vote, and that Mr. King wouldn't allow them to vote. I asked them, “Are you registered?” and they said, “Yes.” I questioned them as to their residence and the length of time they resided there, and they told me. I then said, “Are you willing to swear your vote in?” “Certainly; O, yes.” They said they could swear their votes in. Said I, “Come and go with me;” and there was three or four of them at that time. That was the first time. And I took them to the window—the voting place—and rode up on horseback, these men walking right beside me; and I said to Mr. King, said I, “Captain, why are these men refused the right to vote here to-day?” “Well,” says he, “I don't think they are entitled to vote. They have been challenged by these gentlemen”—pointing to those democrats in the house. And I said to him then, said I, “Captain, you are a lawyer, and I want to ask you that, if under the laws these men have not the right to come here and swear their votes in, and whether you are not bound to take them?” Says I, “Isn't that the law?” He says, “Yes; you are correct; that's the law;” and I went on further to state that, “If any of those men swear falsely, you can have them all convicted. You are to receive their votes if they offer to swear them in, and you can them proceed against them and prosecute them for illegal voting.” Said I, “Why don't you do that?” Said he, “They can't vote here at all.” Said I, “They must vote here, if they take the oath.” The crowd rushed up there then to a considerable way, and I got a considerable ways off from the window, my horse being restive,

but I heard him remark—he turned around to somebody else in the house or at the window and said, “I don’t care a cent what Marshal Fowler says or Jones, either; the men can’t vote.” I then went back to the window, and I told him, “Mr. King, these men shall vote, if I have to arrest the whole party here.” Says he, “I don’t want no difficulty here.” Says I, “Nor I either, but I am going to see that these men vote; it is my duty; and he saw that I was determined and he said, “Very well;” and he had them come forward, and swore them in and took their votes.

Q. How many did he swear in at that time?—A. I think there were three or four; I don’t know the number.

Q. Do you know who those were?—A. I don’t; but I think one was named Young. I am not certain, but I told a man standing by the box—I stationed him here and his name was Corse Robinson—and I told him to take the names of all those that were refused to votes, and had offered to swear their votes in, and be sure and keep a list of the names. I kept him there for that purpose.

Q. You stationed him there, thereafter, did you?—A. No; he was stationed there. I stationed him there the first time after I found there was a disposition to refuse them, and he took the names. He knew them and I didn’t.

[...]

ARMED MEN AT THE POLLS

Q. Were there any armed men around the polls?—I saw a great many men, I do not know the number, with pistols sticking out of their pockets, and there was a good deal of braggadocio and talk among the democrats.

A. Was there any actual fighting at the polls?—A. No, sir; I saw none during the day. There was several altercations, but I stopped it, and I succeeded in stopping all the fusses that occurred that day without any actual arrest. I will state further, that in the morning, when the election opened, John Tompkins, the sheriff of that county, I saw him have quite a bundle of papers moving around. He seemed to be looking around among the crowd of colored me. I had an eye on him. I didn’t know what he was after, but, in a few minutes, some colored an came to me and told me he had Red Nathan arrested, and was taking him right off to jail and wouldn’t let him vote. I went to the sheriff and demanded to see his authority. He showed me a regular warrant, and said I, “This man has had no trial; he has never been convicted; let him go and vote. He is an old resident here, and let him vote, and if he has been guilty of any violation of law under this warrant take him and give him a fair trial; but you cannot deprive him of his vote in this way,” and he hustled him off and refused, and I followed him and tried my best to get him to do it. He was around there and arrested one or two more, but I succeeded in getting them to vote before he got them off.

Q. What was the charge against them?—A. Some little petty misdemeanor.

Q. Did you leave before the result of the matter was known in their cases?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. And you do not know what it was?—A. No, sir.

Q. Where those all colored men that were taken?—A. Yes, sir; they were all colored men that were taken. I told him, said I, “I am satisfied you have got a plan up here among you boys to keep every colored man away from the polls you can, and I want them to vote, and if they are guilty of any violation of law—your warrants, I see, are all regular—take them off, and let them suffer the consequence, but let them vote.” He then allowed one to vote, but the first man he didn’t.

Q. Was the first man a colored man?—A. Yes, sir; they called him Red Nathan. It is a nickname they gave him. He has been quite a prominent politician among the colored men, a great worker at elections; a very resolute man. I have had him to assist me when I was deputy marshal in making arrests in bad sections of the country.

Q. Is there any other statement you wish to make with reference to what happened that day?—A. No, sir; I don’t know as there is else about that day that I can state to you. In regard to Columbia, I was only there one day. I went back afterwards to take testimony, and I took considerable testimony there since the election, but it was forwarded to Tallahassee.

[...]

Key Terms:

Braggadocio: overblown, empty boasting.

JACKSONVILLE, December 28, 1876.

GETTING RID OF A CROWD.

GEORGE P. FOWLER sworn and examined.

By the CHAIRMAN:

Question. Were you in Lake City on the day of the election?—Answer. I was.

Q. What office did you fill there?—A. I held the position of chief deputy marshal. I was a regular deputy, but I was chief there that day.

Q. State what you observed, then, with reference to the refusal to allow persons to vote on that day.—A. There were four voting-places in Lake City, about half a mile apart, and one of them was farther than that; about a mile I should judge. I found that I couldn't get around to all of them unless I went on horseback. At what was called the Colored Academy precinct, the precinct No. 2, where the colored people vote mostly, Charles R. King was United States supervisor of election and also inspector of election at that precinct. When the polls opened in the morning at eight o'clock, I rode up to the polls as soon as they were declared open, and found the room filled with white men, in which they were voting. I called upon the officers of election and told them there were too many white men in there, and that they must clear that room out. The officers of election told me those men were all democratic challengers. There were some twenty-five or thirty or thirty-five men in there, and I insisted that the room should be cleared, and they were very insolent about it and said they wouldn't go out, and I found I could not get them out without using force, which I did not want to do. But I finally worked a little stratagem, and thinned the room out. I placed two deputy marshals, one at the window and one at the door—not the window where they were voting, but the other window which they had up, for it was quite warm—with instructions to let any person come out, but allow none to re-enter after they were out, and positively told them they must allow nobody to go in there. There were thirty white men, democrats, around the polls inside, that were giving the colored people no chance to vote, and I worked a little plan and got a little crowd outside. It didn't amount to much—just a little assembly together. But we attracted attention of these folks inside, and a great many of them rushed out to see what was going on, and, when they got out, they couldn't get back again, and I succeeded in clearing the room without any force. Then complaints were made to me shortly after they commenced voting. The colored people said they had gone up to vote, and that Mr. King wouldn't allow them to vote. I asked them, "Are you registered?" and they said, "Yes." I questioned them as to their residence and the length of time they resided there, and they told me. I then said, "Are you willing to swear your vote in?" "Certainly; O, yes." They said they could swear their votes in. Said I, "Come and go with me;" and there was three or four of them at that time. That was the first time. And I took them to the window—the voting-place—and rode up on horseback, these men walking right beside me; and I said to Mr. King, said I, "Captain, why are these men refused the right to vote here to-day?" "Well," says he, "I don't think they are entitled to vote. They have been challenged by these gentlemen"—pointing to those democrats in the house. And I said to him then, said I, "Captain, you are a lawyer, and I want to ask you that, if under the law these men have not the right to come here and swear their votes in, and whether you are not bound to take them?" Says I, "Isn't that the law?" He says, "Yes; you are correct; that's the law;" and I went on further to state that, "If any of those men swear falsely, you can have all of them convicted. You are to receive their votes if they offer to swear them in, and you can then proceed against them and prosecute them for illegal voting." Said I, "Why don't you do that?" Said he, "They can't vote here at all." Said I, "They must vote here, if they take the oath." The crowd rushed up there then to a considerable way, and I got a considerable ways off from the window, my horse being restive, but I heard him remark—he turned around to somebody else in the house or at the window and said, "I don't care a cent what Marshal Fowler says or Jones, either; the men can't vote." I then went back to the window, and I told him, "Mr. King, these men shall vote, if I have to arrest the whole party here." Says he, "I don't want no difficulty here." Says I, "Nor I either, but I am going to see that these men vote; it is my duty;" and he saw that I was determined, and he said, "Very well;" and he had them come forward, and swore them in and took their votes.

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TESTIMONY OF GEORGE P. FOWLER.

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Source #4 Questions:

Directions: Answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Use the document to support your answers whenever possible.

1. The Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibited denying a citizen the right to vote based on that citizen's race, color, or previous condition of servitude. Based on the incident described in this document, was this idea openly accepted in the South? What efforts are described as being made to keep African Americans from voting?
2. How does George P. Fowler feel about this situation of African Americans being prevented from voting in Columbia County? What manner does he approach the situation with, and what actions does he take to confront the issue?
3. What does the arrest of Red Nathan and the fact that the offending men are consistently described as Democrats in this testimony indicate about the incident beyond racial tensions?

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