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BRIEF / 7E
VOL. 2

ERIC FONER
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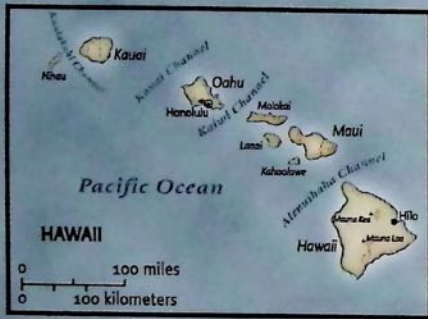
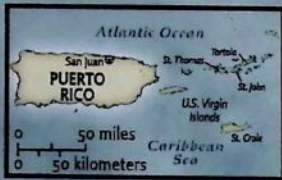
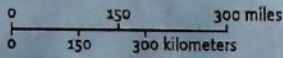
GIVE ME LIBERTY!

AN AMERICAN HISTORY

Brief Seventh Edition



**PHYSICAL/POLITICAL MAP
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AN AMERICAN HISTORY



Brief Seventh Edition

VOLUME 2: FROM 1865

ERIC FONER

KATHLEEN DuVAL

LISA McGIRR



W. W. NORTON & COMPANY

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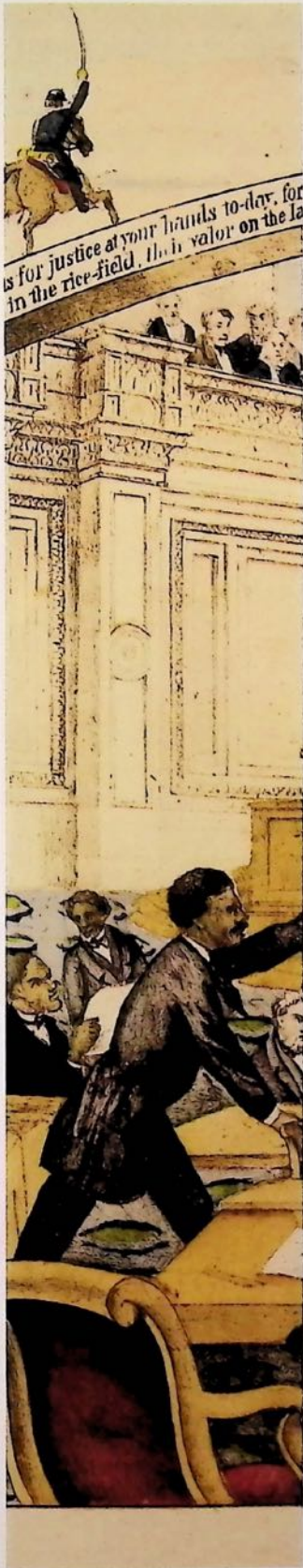
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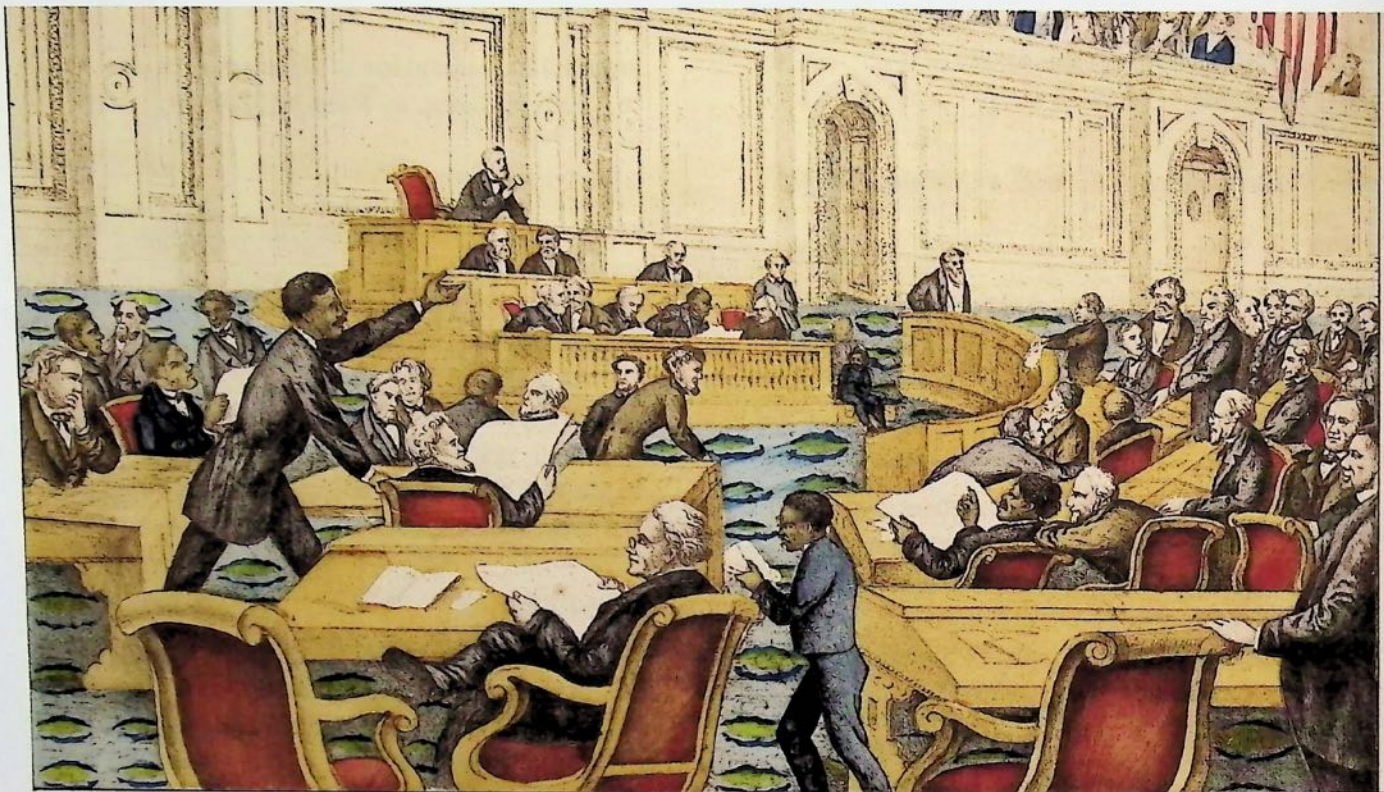
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PREFACE

Give Me Liberty! *An American History* is a survey of American history from the earliest interactions of Indigenous peoples, Europeans, and Africans to the first decades of the twenty-first century. It offers students a clear, concise narrative whose central theme is the changing contours of American freedom.

We are extremely gratified by the response to the first six editions of *Give Me Liberty!*, which have been used in survey courses at many hundreds of two- and four-year colleges and universities throughout the country. The comments we have received from instructors and students encourage us to think that *Give Me Liberty!* has worked well in their classrooms. Their comments have also included many valuable suggestions for revisions, which we greatly appreciate. These have ranged from corrections of typographical and factual errors to thoughts about subjects that needed more extensive treatment. In making revisions for this Seventh Edition, we have tried to take these suggestions into account. We have also incorporated the findings and insights of new scholarship that have appeared since the original edition was written.

The most significant change in this edition, immediately visible on the book's cover and title page, is the addition of two new co-authors, Professor Kathleen DuVal of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and

Professor Lisa McGirr of Harvard University. Both are accomplished scholars with national and international reputations. For further details about their careers, see About the Authors above.

For the initial edition of *Give Me Liberty!*, which appeared in 2005, and the five subsequent revised editions, Eric Foner was solely responsible for all the writing as well as the choice of images and document excerpts in each chapter. This required, among other tasks, keeping up with the enormous outpouring of significant books covering every aspect of American history. As time went on, this became increasingly difficult for one individual. Professors DuVal and McGirr have now joined the process of revision. For this Seventh Edition, the former is responsible for changes to Chapters 1 to 10, the latter Chapters 18 to 28. Foner took charge of Chapters 11 to 17.

The most important changes in this Seventh Edition involve heightened attention to Native American history and, in keeping with the overall theme of the book, Native Americans' ideas about freedom. This reflects both the recent burgeoning of this long-neglected field, which has produced outstanding works that change our understanding of key moments and processes in American history, and the expertise of our new co-authors.

As the original inhabitants of the lands that would become the United States, Native Americans have had a unique relationship to other Americans and with the federal government. The Constitution recognizes them as inhabitants of their own tribal sovereignties, not members of the national body politic. And sovereignty—control over ancestral lands and the ability to govern their own affairs—has been central to Native definitions of freedom. Over the centuries of American history, Indian sovereignty has eroded considerably, but it has not disappeared. Over time, it was severely challenged by European colonialism and American nationhood. Wars and forced agreements dispossessed Native Americans of much of their land but although treaties were frequently violated, they recognized Native control over the remainder. The quest to exercise authority over their own lives and to maintain traditional languages and forms of governance and social organization has been a central theme of Native American history, as has the effort of outsiders to impose their own ideas about freedom, political power, and cultural life on the Indigenous population. Throughout U.S. history, Native understanding of freedom via sovereignty has clashed with settlers' ambitions for their own freedom.

Since 1924, all Native Americans have been citizens of the United States. Even today, however, many continue to identify as citizens of Native nations as well (or instead of) as American citizens. And many tribes are recognized by U.S. courts as entities distinct from the federal and state governments, even though tribal self-government is constrained by the power of Congress and the Department of the Interior. The changing nature of Native sovereignty and its relationship to concepts of freedom within both Native American tribes and the larger society is a central theme of this Seventh Edition. Building upon past editions' inclusion of Native history and Native voices, this edition narrates the history of American Indians in three stages: a long period in which diverse

Indian nations ruled most of the continent; the decline of Native power and self-government from the mid-nineteenth through early twentieth centuries, and the Native revival in the late twentieth century continuing to today.

The major revisions that illuminate the history of these themes are as follows:

Chapters 1 to 4 have been reorganized to give greater emphasis to Native American history. Chapter 1 contains more coverage of the nature of Native American societies before contact with Europeans and, in addition, an expanded discussion of West Africa on the eve of the Atlantic slave trade. Chapter 2 contains enhanced coverage of armed conflict between British settlers in Virginia and New England and the Native inhabitants, as well as new material on the early Atlantic slave trade, including the role of the Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch, and the origins of slavery in the British colonies. Chapters 3 and 4 contain an expanded discussion of Native-colonial relations in the eighteenth century and the growth of pan-Indian coalitions that sought to halt settler intrusions.

In Chapter 5, there is greater emphasis on how the American Revolution was also a Native struggle for independence and how Native Americans fought on both sides of the conflict in pursuit of that goal. Chapter 7 contains a new section on Native nations in the West and their relations with the early American republic, which most did not wish to join. Chapters 9 and 10 deal in more detail with Indian removal in the 1830s, including how this policy was linked to the expansion of cotton production and slavery in the South, and how Native nations responded to being forced from their ancestral lands.

Chapter 14 expands the discussion of the Civil War in Indian Territory and contains a new subsection on the Dakota War, which led to the largest mass execution in American history. Chapters 15 and 16 contain new subsections on Reconstruction in Indian Territory and President Grant's attempted peace policy. In Chapter 18, there is an expanded discussion of Native American Progressivism set against the background of the continuing dispossession of Indian lands and efforts to forcibly assimilate Indian children via federally controlled boarding schools. Native American participation in World War I and debates over whether military service would lead to greater citizenship rights are discussed in Chapter 19. The subject of the Indian New Deal and its impact on Native Americans receives an expanded discussion in Chapter 21 in the context of Indigenous understandings of freedom and sovereignty, as does the role of Native Americans in World War II in Chapter 22. Chapter 23 discusses the intensified campaign, known as "termination," to abolish tribal sovereignty during the Cold War, and Chapter 24 includes a discussion of the Indian Bureau's program to move Native Americans from reservations to cities.

Chapter 25 considers "Red Power" and the American Indian Movement alongside other examples of youth-led activism in the 1960s. Chapter 26 shows how this intensified activism led to tribal revitalization, including a renaissance of Native American identity and cultural expression. In Chapter 27, readers will see how Native peoples have continued to press for self-determination

in the new millennium, seeking financial restitution for past wrongs and leading grassroots movements, such as the NoDAPL movement for environmental justice.

Other revisions, not directly tied to the theme of Native American freedom but based on significant recent scholarship, include a new subsection in Chapter 12 highlighting the role of Black women in the abolitionist movement and the struggle for women's rights and in Chapter 13 an expanded discussion of John Brown's raid of 1859 with attention to the influence of Black radicals on Brown's thinking. Chapter 19 now contains material on the 1918 influenza epidemic and in Chapter 20 there is a new discussion of the Lost Generation—the writers and artists, disillusioned with American culture of the 1920s—who found a home in Europe. Chapter 25 includes new material on Black urban uprisings in the 1960s and after, especially in relation to grievances against police behavior in minority neighborhoods. The final chapter has been substantially updated to cover the administration of Donald Trump and the election of 2020. Throughout the book there are also new selections for the Voices of Freedom and Who Is an American? document features. And this edition contains many new images—paintings, photographs, broadsides, and so on—all selected by the authors.

A Note on Naming

Readers will have noticed that in the discussion above, we have used more than one group name when discussing the people descended from the continent's original inhabitants. The proper way to identify them, as well as other groups of Americans, can be controversial. Offensive terms have recently been removed from sports arenas and geographical place names, although not without resistance. Generally speaking, we believe, people have the right to choose the words that identify them. But such preferences change over time in response to changing social and political imperatives. Often, disagreement exists within groups about their proper designation. In this edition, we have updated our terminology, recognizing that some names once widely familiar are now viewed as inappropriate or even insulting by the people to whom they are applied, while bearing in mind that changed language can seem unfamiliar and confusing to those used to an older vocabulary.

To navigate this complex question we have consulted prominent scholars who write about various groups of Americans. Most advised us to cast a wide net, using interchangeably terms that are in widespread circulation today while being wary of overusing new language that has not gained a significant foothold either among the groups themselves or in society at large. Thus, readers will find Indian, Native American, Native, and Indigenous all used to identify the people once universally called Indians. (The name Indian, as is well known, derives from Christopher Columbus's mistaken belief that his voyage to the Americas in 1492 had brought him to the East Indies rather than to a hemisphere previously unknown to Europeans.) For a time, Native peoples rejected Indian as conjuring up images of savagery. More recently it has come

into wider use again, partly because of its very familiarity and partly to suggest a sense of shared identity that transcends individual tribes. Because the word Indian, despite its limitations, is so widely understood, a major organization demanding change in the 1960s intentionally chose to make the word part of its title: the American Indian Movement. This is not the only example of people turning a term considered insulting into an expression of pride.

A related question concerns the names of individual Native nations. Some groups, but by no means all, have abandoned designations that originated among white persons in favor of older Indigenous ones. While we believe, as noted above, that the group itself should decide what it wishes to be called, we realize that some changes may be confusing for many readers. In such cases we have added the previous name in parentheses, for example, Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) and Muscogee (Creek).

The heightened sensitivity to racial inequality in the aftermath of the 2020 murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer sparked a similar discussion of the proper way to designate Americans of African descent. This debate has a long history. In the revolutionary era, Black institutions often included the word African in their titles (for example, the African Methodist Episcopal Church) as a sign of a unique identity. But in response to the rise of the American Colonization Society, which claimed that Blacks, free and slave, were not truly American and should return to Africa, a wholesale reevaluation of such names took place. Meetings of Black people demanding recognition as equal members of the body politic called themselves Conventions of Colored Citizens. One of the earliest Black newspapers was titled the *Colored American*. After the end of slavery, when persons of African descent were recognized as American citizens entitled to equality of political and civil rights, Negro, from the Spanish word for the color black and for dark-skinned people, was widely used. So was Afro-American and African-American. There was debate over whether to use hyphens, and whether Negro should begin with a capital or lowercase letter. In the 1920s, when the *New York Times*, one of the nation's leading newspapers, decided to capitalize the first letter of Negro, this was hailed as an important sign of respect. More recently, the Associated Press, which informally sets journalistic standards, recommended that Black, a label that has gained wide currency since the 1960s (Black Power was one of the era's familiar slogans) should be capitalized, as an indication of the shared history and culture of persons of African descent rooted in the unique historical experience of dislocation, slavery, racial inequality, and resistance. Today, Negro and Colored are rarely used except when discussing historical situations. African American and Black are now the most common designations. The widespread elimination of the hyphen in African American has influenced how other groups are described, such as, for example, Irish Americans and Asian Americans. Again, no unanimity exists on these questions of usage. In this edition, we have used Black and African American interchangeably, while retaining Negro and Colored when quoting historical documents or using historical titles, such as the U. S. Colored Troops in the Civil War.

Then there are the Americans variously labeled Hispanic or Latino. Both designations are widely used, although neither has much historical clarity. The dictionary defines Latino as a person with roots in Latin America, a category that covers persons of every religion and race, with origins in more than a dozen countries. Hispanic refers primarily to language, meaning persons who speak Spanish (thereby excluding those Americans whose origins lie in Portuguese-speaking Brazil). It is only recently that these terms for what is now the country's largest minority group came into widespread use. The census did not include a Hispanic category until 1980. For many decades people descended from the Mexican inhabitants of lands in the Southwest acquired during the Mexican-American War viewed "Mexican" as a term of abuse and avoided it by using state-specific terms such as Tejano and Californio. The first organization of Mexican American activists purposely did not use Mexican in its title, calling itself the League of United Latin American Citizens. Later, younger radicals in California adopted Chicano, an old term of abuse, as a positive statement of identity.

There is also the problem of gendered language. In English, nouns do not have a gender as they do in Spanish. But because Latino is a masculine word, where does this leave people who do not identify as masculine? Some writers, scholars, and activists have begun using Latino/a or the gender-neutral neologism Latinx. This last term is still unfamiliar, including among most of the people it is describing. Depending on the historical context, we have decided to use Mexican American, Hispanic, Chicano, and Latino, or Chicana and Latina when specifically referencing women.

One thing is certain: language has changed over time and will continue to do so in the future. It will not be surprising if future editions of *Give Me Liberty!* employ wording that is unfamiliar or even unknown today. All this terminology is the product of our nation's ever evolving history. There is nothing unusual or pernicious in this, simply the recognition that as American society changes, the vocabulary we use to describe it changes as well.

The Freedom Theme

Americans have always had a divided attitude toward history. On the one hand, they tend to be remarkably future-oriented, dismissing events of even the recent past as "ancient history" and sometimes seeing history as a burden to be overcome, a prison from which to escape. On the other hand, like many other peoples, Americans have always looked to history for a sense of personal or group identity and of national cohesiveness. This is why so many Americans devote time and energy to tracing their family trees and why they visit historical museums and National Park Service historical sites in ever-increasing numbers. Our hope is that this book will convince readers with all degrees of interest that history does matter to them.

The novelist and essayist James Baldwin once observed that history "does not refer merely, or even principally, to the past. On the contrary, the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, . . . [that] history is

literally present in all that we do." As Baldwin recognized, the force of history is evident in our own world. Especially in a political democracy like the United States, whose government is designed to rest on the consent of informed citizens, knowledge of the past is essential—not only for those of us whose profession is the teaching and writing of history, but for everyone. History, to be sure, does not offer simple lessons or immediate answers to current questions. Knowing the history of immigration to the United States, and all of the tensions, turmoil, and aspirations associated with it, for example, does not tell us what current immigration policy ought to be. But without that knowledge, we have no way of understanding which approaches have worked and which have not—essential information for the formulation of future public policy.

History, it has been said, is what the present chooses to remember about the past. Rather than a fixed collection of facts, or a group of interpretations that cannot be challenged, our understanding of history is constantly changing. There is nothing unusual in the fact that each generation rewrites history to meet its own needs, or that scholars disagree among themselves on basic questions like the causes of the Civil War or the reasons for the Great Depression. Precisely because each generation asks different questions of the past, each generation formulates different answers. The past thirty years have witnessed a remarkable expansion of the scope of historical study. The experiences of groups neglected by earlier scholars, including women, African Americans, working people, and others, have received unprecedented attention from historians. New subfields—social history, cultural history, and family history among them—have taken their place alongside traditional political and diplomatic history.

Give Me Liberty! draws on this voluminous historical literature to present an up-to-date and inclusive account of the American past, paying due attention to the experience of diverse groups of Americans while in no way neglecting the events and processes Americans have experienced in common. It devotes serious attention to political, social, cultural, and economic history, and to their interconnections. The narrative brings together major events and prominent leaders with the many groups of ordinary people who make up American society. *Give Me Liberty!* has a rich cast of characters, from Thomas Jefferson to campaigners for woman suffrage, from Franklin D. Roosevelt to former slaves seeking to breathe meaning into emancipation during and after the Civil War.

Aimed at an audience of undergraduate students with little or no detailed knowledge of American history, *Give Me Liberty!* guides readers through the complexities of the subject without overwhelming them with excessive detail. The unifying theme of freedom that runs through the text gives shape to the narrative and integrates the numerous strands that make up the American experience. This approach builds on that of Foner's earlier book, *The Story of American Freedom* (1998), although *Give Me Liberty!* places events and personalities in the foreground and is more geared to the structure of the introductory survey course.

No idea is more fundamental to Americans' sense of themselves as individuals and as a nation than freedom. The central term in our political language, freedom— or liberty, with which it is almost always used interchangeably—is deeply embedded in the record of our history and the language of everyday life. The Declaration of Independence lists liberty among mankind's inalienable rights; the Constitution announces its purpose as securing liberty's blessings. The United States fought the Civil War to bring about a new birth of freedom, World War II for the Four Freedoms, and the Cold War to defend the Free World. Americans' love of liberty has been represented by liberty poles, liberty caps, and statues of liberty, and acted out by burning stamps and burning draft cards, by running away from slavery, and by demonstrating for the right to vote. "Every man in the street, white, black, red, or yellow," wrote the educator and statesman Ralph Bunche in 1940, "knows that this is 'the land of the free' . . . 'the cradle of liberty.'"

The very universality of the idea of freedom, however, can be misleading. Freedom is not a fixed, timeless category with a single unchanging definition. Indeed, the history of the United States is, in part, a story of debates, disagreements, and struggles over freedom. Crises like the American Revolution, the Civil War, and the Cold War have permanently transformed the idea of freedom. So too have demands by various groups of Americans to enjoy greater freedom. The meaning of freedom has been constructed not only in congressional debates and political treatises but also on plantations and picket lines, in parlors and even bedrooms.

Over the course of our history, American freedom has been both a reality and a mythic ideal—a living truth for millions of Americans, a cruel mockery for others. For some, freedom has been what some scholars call a "habit of the heart," an ideal so taken for granted that it is lived out but rarely analyzed. For others, freedom is not a birthright but a distant goal that has inspired great sacrifice.

Give Me Liberty! draws attention to three dimensions of freedom that have been critical in American history: (1) the *meanings* of freedom; (2) the *social conditions* that make freedom possible; and (3) the *boundaries* of freedom that determine who is entitled to enjoy freedom and who is not. All have changed over time.

In the era of the American Revolution, for example, freedom was primarily a set of rights enjoyed in public activity—the right of a community to be governed by laws to which its representatives had consented and of individuals to engage in religious worship without governmental interference. In the nineteenth century, freedom came to be closely identified with each person's opportunity to develop to the fullest his or her innate talents. In the twentieth, the "ability to choose," in both public and private life, became perhaps the dominant understanding of freedom. This development was encouraged by the explosive growth of the consumer marketplace (a development that receives considerable attention in *Give Me Liberty!*), which offered Americans an unprecedented array of goods to satisfy their needs and desires. During the 1960s, a

crucial chapter in the history of American freedom, the idea of personal freedom was extended into virtually every realm, from attire and “lifestyle” to relations between the sexes. Thus, over time, more and more areas of life have been drawn into Americans’ debates about the meaning of freedom.

A second important dimension of freedom focuses on the social conditions necessary to allow freedom to flourish. What kinds of economic institutions and relationships best encourage individual freedom? In the colonial era and for more than a century after independence, the answer centered on economic autonomy, enshrined in the glorification of the independent small producer—the farmer, skilled craftsman, or shopkeeper—who did not have to depend on another person for his livelihood. As the industrial economy matured, new conceptions of economic freedom came to the fore: “liberty of contract” in the Gilded Age, “industrial freedom” (a say in corporate decision making) in the Progressive era, economic security during the New Deal, and, more recently, the ability to enjoy mass consumption within a market economy.

The boundaries of freedom, the third dimension of this theme, have inspired some of the most intense struggles in American history. Although founded on the premise that liberty is an entitlement of all humanity, the United States for much of its history deprived many of its own people of freedom. Non-whites have rarely enjoyed the same access to freedom as white Americans. The belief in equal opportunity as the birthright of all Americans has coexisted with persistent efforts to limit freedom by race, gender, and class and in other ways.

Less obvious, perhaps, is the fact that one person’s freedom has frequently been linked to another’s servitude. In the colonial era and nineteenth century, expanding freedom for many Americans rested on the lack of freedom—slavery, indentured servitude, the subordinate position of women—for others. By the same token, it has been through battles at the boundaries—the efforts of racial minorities, women, and others to secure greater freedom—that the meaning and experience of freedom have been deepened and the concept extended into new realms.

Time and again in American history, freedom has been transformed by the demands of excluded groups for inclusion. The idea of freedom as a universal birthright owes much both to abolitionists who sought to extend the blessings of liberty to Blacks and to immigrant groups who insisted on full recognition as American citizens. The principle of equal protection of the law without regard to race, which became a central element of American freedom, arose from the antislavery struggle and the Civil War and was reinvigorated by the civil rights revolution of the 1960s, which called itself the “freedom movement.” The battle for the right of free speech by labor radicals and birth-control advocates in the first part of the twentieth century helped to make civil liberties an essential element of freedom for all Americans.

Although concentrating on events within the United States, *Give Me Liberty!* also situates American history in the context of developments in other parts of the world. Many of the forces that shaped American history, including

the international migration of peoples, the development of slavery, the spread of democracy, and the expansion of capitalism, were worldwide processes not confined to the United States. Today, American ideas, culture, and economic and military power exert unprecedented influence throughout the world. But beginning with the earliest days of settlement, when European empires competed to colonize North America and enrich themselves from its trade, American history cannot be understood in isolation from its global setting.

Freedom is the oldest of clichés and the most modern of aspirations. At various times in our history, it has served as the rallying cry of the powerless and as a justification of the status quo. Freedom helps to bind our culture together and exposes the contradictions between what America claims to be and what it sometimes has been. American history is not a narrative of continual progress toward greater and greater freedom. As the abolitionist Thomas Wentworth Higginson noted after the Civil War, “revolutions may go backward.” Though freedom can be achieved, it may also be taken away. This happened, for example, when the equal rights granted to former slaves immediately after the Civil War were essentially nullified during the era of segregation. As was said in the eighteenth century, the price of freedom is eternal vigilance.

In the early twenty-first century, freedom continues to play a central role in American political and social life and thought. It is invoked by individuals and groups of all kinds, from critics of economic globalization to those who seek to secure American freedom at home and export it abroad. We hope that *Give Me Liberty!* will offer beginning students a clear account of the course of American history, and of its central theme, freedom, which today remains as varied, contentious, and ever-changing as America itself. And we hope that it also enables students to understand the connections between past and current events, the historical context and antecedents of the social, political, cultural, and economic issues that the American people confront today.

Acknowledgments

All works of history are, to a considerable extent, collaborative books in that every writer builds on the research and writing of previous scholars. This is especially true of a textbook that covers the entire American experience over more than five centuries. Our greatest debt is to the innumerable historians on whose work we have drawn in preparing this volume. The Suggested Reading list at the end of each chapter offers only a brief introduction to the vast body of historical scholarship that has influenced and informed this book. More specifically, however, we wish to thank the following scholars, who offered valuable comments, criticisms, and suggestions after generously reading portions of this work or who are using it in their classes.

Victoria Ade, West Morris Central High School
Matthew Avitabile, SUNY Cobleskill
Sheri Bartlett Browne, Tennessee State University
Brooke M. Bauer, University of South Carolina Lancaster

Jordan Bauer, University of Alabama at Birmingham
Lee Benjamins, San Jacinto College North Campus
April Braden, Dallas College
Lauren Braun-Strumfels, Raritan Valley Community College
Christopher Cameron, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
Kara Carroll, Central New Mexico Community College
Annette Chamberlin, Virginia Western Community College
Sang Chi, Santa Monica College
Jonathan Colman, University of Central Lancashire
Amy Curry, Lone Star College
Enrico Dal Lago, National University of Ireland Galway
Jewell Debnam, Morgan State University
Christopher Deutsch, University of Missouri
Alan C. Downs, Georgia Southern University
Patrick J. Doyle, Royal Holloway, University of London
Jim Dudlo, Dallas College–Brookhaven Campus
Allison Faber, Texas A&M University
Andrew Fearnley, University of Manchester
Jim Foley, St. Andrews High School
Linda C. Frank, Cayuga Community College
Malcolm Frierson, Dallas College North Lake Campus
Andrej Gaspari, Mercy College
Erik Gellman, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Hillary Gleason, Laredo Community College
Teresa Hall, Central Piedmont Community College
Michael Harkins, Harper College
David C. Hsiung, Juniata College
Beth Hunter, University of Alabama at Birmingham
Courtenay Johnson, Huntington High School
Ryan William Keating, California State University, San Bernardino
Jennifer Koslow, Florida State University
Danton Kostandarithes, Bolles School
Elizabeth LaFray, Siena Heights University
Cornelia Lambert, University of North Georgia
Katherine Sharp Landdeck, Texas Woman's University
Jairo Ledesma, Miami Dade College
Paul Lubotina, Walters State Community College
Sergio Lussana, Nottingham Trent University
Thomas Massey, Cape Fear Community College
Warren Milteer Jr., University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Jen Murray, Oklahoma State University
Laura Murphy, Dutchess Community College
Joseph Myers, Delaware County Community College
Jason Newman, Consumnes River College
Jared Pack, University of Arkansas

Sarah Potter, University of Memphis
Julie Rancilio, Kapi'olani Community College
Lindsay Regele, Miami University
David Ryan, University College Cork
Ruby Smart, San Leandro High School
Matthew Stanley, Albany State University
Laura Stott, Daniel Hand High School
Katherine Scott Sturdevant, Pikes Peak Community College
Paul S. Sutter, University of Colorado Boulder
Stephen Tootle, College of the Sequoias
Felicity Turner, Georgia Southern University
Justin Vipperman, College of Southern Idaho
Dan Ware, TASIS The American School in England
Jeannie Whayne, University of Arkansas
Bryn Willcock, University of Swansea
Michael Williams, Beaumont High School
Eric Wolters, Pasco-Hernando State College
Natasha Zaretsky, University of Alabama at Birmingham

The authors are deeply indebted to the graduate students at the Departments of History at Columbia University, Harvard University, and at the University of North Carolina who helped with this project. For the Seventh Edition, David Dry, Sarah Sadlier, and Garrett Wright provided suggestions related to our guiding theme on Native Americans and freedom, with Wright conducting invaluable research. For earlier editions, Michael "Mookie" Kideckel offered significant assistance in gathering material related to borderlands and Western history and on citizenship and identity; Theresa Ventura assisted in locating material for new sections placing American history in a global context; April Holm did the same for new coverage of the history of American religion and debates over religious freedom; James Delbourgo conducted research for the chapters on the colonial era; and Beverly Gage did the same for the twentieth century. In addition, Daniel Freund provided all-around research assistance and Victoria Cain did a superb job of locating images. The authors are also grateful to the numerous undergraduate students who, while using the textbook, pointed out errors or omissions that we have corrected.

Eric Foner is particularly grateful to his colleagues in the Columbia University Department of History: Pablo Piccato, for his advice on Latin American history; Evan Haefeli and Ellen Baker, who read and made many suggestions for improvements in their areas of expertise (colonial America and the history of the West, respectively); and Sarah Phillips, who offered advice on treating the history of the environment. Foner also wants to thank his colleagues Elizabeth Blackmar and the late Alan Brinkley for offering advice and encouragement throughout the writing and revising of this book.

Many thanks go to Joshua Brown, former director of the American Social History Project, whose website, *History Matters*, lists innumerable

online resources for the study of American history. We thank Trinidad Gonzales (South Texas College) for his indispensable help in creating a new set of resources to help adopters of *Give Me Liberty!* create more inclusive learning environments. Thanks also to the instructors who helped build our robust digital resource and ancillary package. The Norton Illumine eBook was created with the assistance of Alan Downs (Georgia Southern University), Linda Frank (Cayuga Community College), Hillary Gleason (Laredo Community College), Julie Rancilio (University of Hawai'i-Kapi'olani Community College), and Andrew Frank (Florida State University). InQuizitive for History was revised by Beth Hunter (University of Alabama at Birmingham), Sharon Ann Musher (Stockton University), Daniel Murphee (University of Central Florida), Bettye Hutchins (Vernon College), and Jen Murray (Oklahoma State University). The Instructor's Manual was thoroughly updated by Holly Hernandez (California State University, Long Beach). And our Test Bank was revised to include new questions authored by Hillary Gleason (Laredo Community College), Jared Pack (University of Arkansas), Sascha Cohen (Brandeis University), and Meghan Martinez (Florida State University).

At W. W. Norton & Company, Justin Cahill was an ideal editor who carefully guided all three authors through the revision process with wisdom, patience, and a deep understanding of history. We would also like to thank his associate editor Angie Merila for her indispensable and insightful help on all aspects of the project; Donna Mulder and Mary Kanable for their careful copyediting and proofreading work; Stephanie Romeo and Lynn Gadson for their resourceful attention to the illustrations program; Anne-Michelle Gallero, Ted Szczepanski, and Debra Morton-Hoyt for splendid work on the covers for the Seventh Edition; Layne Broadwater for keeping the many threads of the project aligned and then tying them together; Sean Mintus for his efficiency and care in book production; Carson Russell and his colleagues Hillary Roegelein and Jennifer Jussel for orchestrating the rich media package that accompanies the textbook; Sarah England Bartley, Alison Hodges, Susan Hood, Carrie Polvino, and Julie Sindel for spreading the word about our book to instructors nationwide; and Julia Reidhead, Mike Wright, Steve Dunn, and Ann Shin for maintaining Norton as an independent, employee-owned publisher dedicated to excellence in its work.

Many students may have heard stories of how publishing companies alter the language and content of textbooks in an attempt to maximize sales and avoid alienating any potential reader. In this case, we can honestly say that W. W. Norton allowed us a free hand in writing and revising the book and, apart from the usual editorial corrections, did not try to influence its content at all. For this we thank them, while we accept full responsibility for the interpretations presented and for any errors the book may contain. Since no book of this length can be entirely free of mistakes, we welcome readers to send us corrections and feedback at <http://seagull.wwnorton.com/DearGiveMeLiberty>.

Eric Foner's greatest debt, as always, is to his family—his wife, Lynn Garafola, for her good-natured support while he was preoccupied by a project that

over the years consumed more than its fair share of his time and energy, and his daughter, Daria Rose Foner, who years ago, while a ninth and tenth grader read every chapter of the First Edition as it was written. Her modest payment of twenty-five dollars per chapter was a bargain, as she offered invaluable suggestions about improving the book's clarity, logic, and grammar. Kathleen DuVal thanks her family, including Marty Smith, Quentin DuVal-Smith, Calvin DuVal-Smith, Kay DuVal, John DuVal, and Niell DuVal. She also thanks Alexa Chambers for reading the first ten chapters and giving helpful suggestions from the perspective of an APUSH student. Both Alexa and Quentin provided many happy and fruitful hours of history discussions. Lisa McGirr thanks Sven Beckert, Noah Beckert-McGirr, and Pascal Beckert-McGirr, who have offered advice, encouragement, and support. Noah (who read *Give Me Liberty!* for his U.S. history course) and Pascal have provided valuable insights from the point of view of student readers.

Eric Foner
Kathleen DuVal
Lisa McGirr
2022

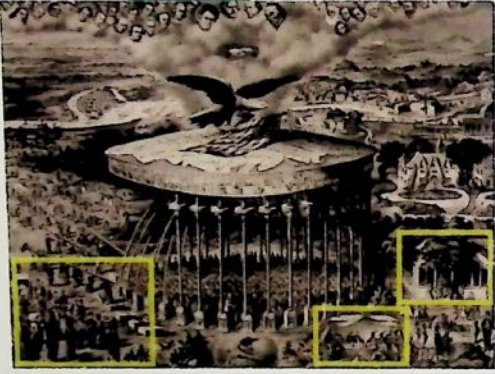
RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTORS

Detail 4: former rivals

Detail 5: freedom and equality

Detail 6: faces in the sky

Detail 7: the eagle



(Lower left and lower right) Scenes surrounding the large structure include a schoolyard, men and women voting, and Indians and whites sitting together.

Question #2: In this speech, Debs references history to make the case for the right of free speech and dissent. Click to identify the passage(s) where Debs relates the history of wartime dissent in the United States.

From EUGENE V. DEBS, SPEECH TO THE JURY BEFORE SENTENCING UNDER THE ESPIONAGE ACT (1918)

Gentlemen, you have heard the report of my speech at Canton [Ohio] on June 16, and I submit that there is not a word in that speech to warrant the charges set out in the indictment. . . . In what I had to say there my purpose was to have the people understand something about the social system in which we live and to prepare them to change this system by perfectly peaceable and orderly means into what I, as a Socialist, conceive to be a real democracy.

and other leaders of the abolition movement who were regarded as public enemies and treated accordingly, were true to their faith and stood their ground. . . . You are now teaching your children to revere their memories, while all of their detractors are in oblivion. . . .

The war of 1812 was opposed and condemned by some of the most influential citizens; the Mexican War was vehemently opposed and bitterly denounced, even after the

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Who Is An American?: Frederick Douglass



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INQUIZITIVE

Chapter 3: Creating Anglo-America, 1660-1750

Pages 134 3.4. what were the directions of social and economic change in the eighteenth century colonies?

By the mid-eighteenth century, the different regions of the British colonies had developed distinct economic and social orders. Identify the economic and social orders of each of the regions.



Drag each item on the left to its matching item on the right.

farmers that produced grain for their own use and sale abroad	Virginia and South Carolina
slave plantations that produced tobacco	Middle Colonies
small family farms that produced food for local consumption	New England

Question Confidence: I think I know it. You can gain or lose up to 60 points on this question.

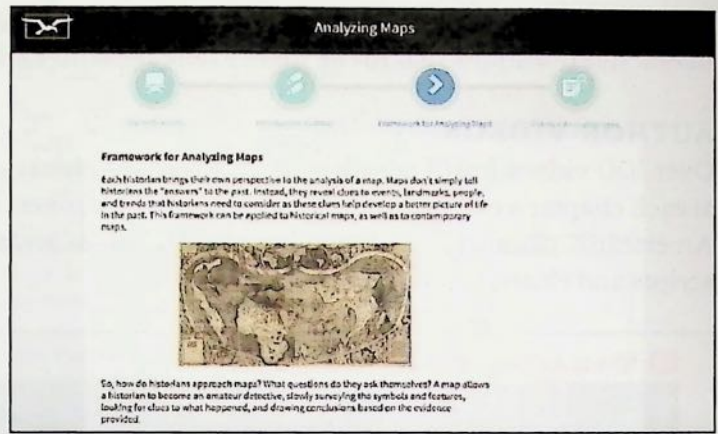
Activity Score: 0

Current Grade: 0%. You must answer at least 20 questions to receive a grade.

Question (Next Question)

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GIVE ME LIBERTY!

AN AMERICAN HISTORY

Brief Seventh Edition



GIVE ME

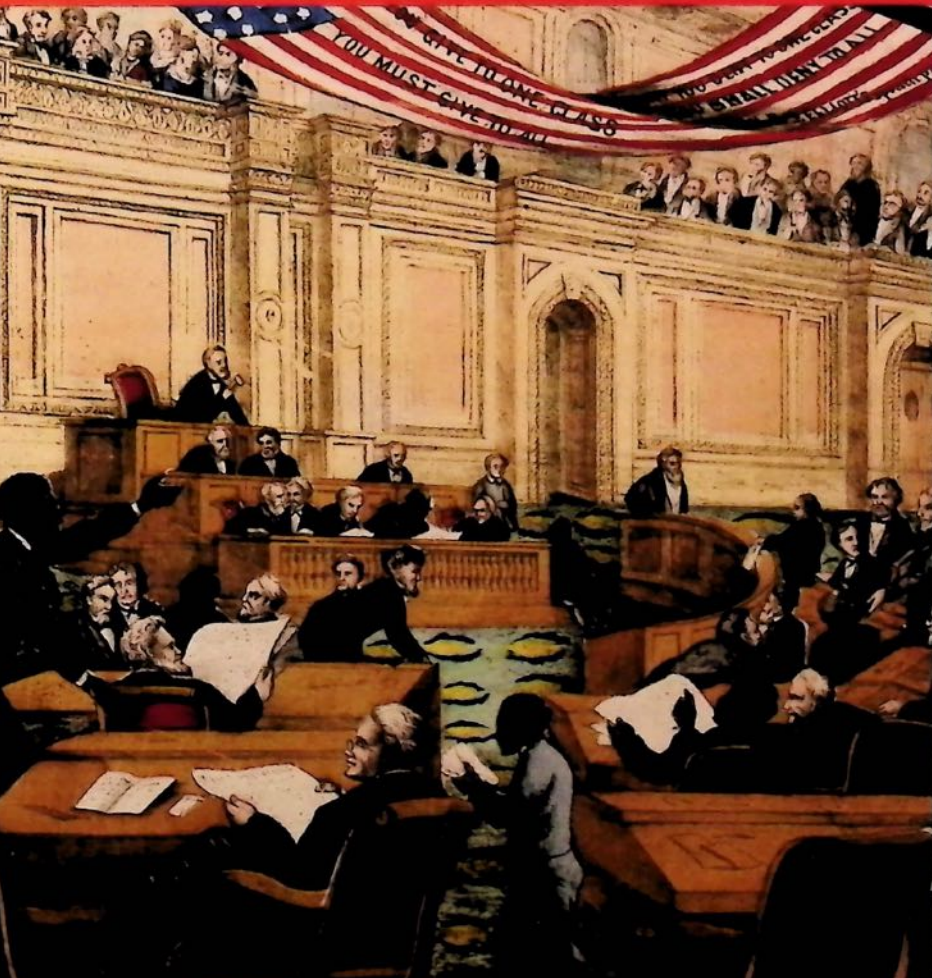
LIBERTY!

CHAPTER 15

“WHAT IS FREEDOM?”



RECONSTRUCTION, 1865–1877



- 1865 Special Field Order 15
- Freedmen's Bureau established
- Lincoln assassinated; Andrew Johnson becomes president
- 1865–1867 Presidential Reconstruction
- Black Codes
- 1866 Civil Rights Bill of 1866
- Ku Klux Klan established
- 1867 Reconstruction Act
- Tenure of Office Act
- 1867–1877 Radical Reconstruction
- 1868 Impeachment and trial of President Johnson
- Fourteenth Amendment ratified
- 1869 Inauguration of Ulysses S. Grant
- 1870 Hiram Revels, first Black U.S. senator
- Fifteenth Amendment ratified
- 1870–1871 Enforcement Acts
- 1872 Liberal Republicans established
- 1873 Colfax Massacre
- Slaughterhouse Cases*
- National economic depression begins
- 1876 *United States v. Cruikshank*
- 1877 Bargain of 1877

The Shackle Broken—by the Genius of Freedom. This 1874 lithograph depicts Robert B. Elliott, a Black congressman from South Carolina, delivering a celebrated speech supporting the bill that became the Civil Rights Act of 1875.



FOCUS QUESTIONS

- *What visions of freedom did the former slaves and slaveholders pursue in the postwar South? p. 443*
- *What were the competing visions of Reconstruction? p. 453*
- *What were the social and political effects of Radical Reconstruction in the South? p. 463*
- *What were the main factors, in both the North and South, for the overthrow of Reconstruction? p. 467*

On the evening of January 12, 1865, less than a month after Union forces captured Savannah, Georgia, twenty leaders of the city's Black community gathered for a discussion with General William T. Sherman and Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton. The conversation revealed that the Black leaders brought out of slavery a clear definition of freedom. Asked what he understood by slavery, Garrison Frazier, a Baptist minister chosen as the group's spokesman, responded that it meant one person's "receiving by irresistible power the work of another man, and not by his consent." Freedom he defined as "placing us where we could reap the fruit of our own labor, and take care of ourselves." The way to accomplish this was "to have land, and turn it and till it by our own labor."

Sherman's meeting with the Black leaders foreshadowed some of the radical changes that would take place during the era known as Reconstruction (meaning, literally, the rebuilding of the shattered nation). In the years following the Civil War, former slaves and their white allies, North and South, would seek to redefine the meaning and boundaries of American freedom and citizenship. Previously an entitlement of whites, these would be expanded to include Black Americans. The laws and Constitution would be rewritten to guarantee African Americans, for the first time in the nation's history, recognition as citizens and equality before the law. Black men would be granted the right to vote, ushering in a period of interracial democracy throughout the South. Black schools, churches, and other institutions would flourish, laying the foundation for the modern African American community. Many of the advances of Reconstruction would prove temporary, swept away during a campaign of violence in the South and the North's retreat from the ideal of equality. But Reconstruction laid the foundation for future struggles to extend freedom to all Americans.

Four days after the meeting, Sherman responded to the Black delegation by issuing Special Field Order 15. This set aside the Sea Islands and a large area along the South Carolina and Georgia coasts for the settlement of Black families on forty-acre plots of land. He also offered them broken-down mules that the army could no longer use. In Sherman's order lay the origins of the phrase "forty acres and a mule," which would reverberate across the South in the next few years. Among the emancipated slaves, Sherman's order raised hopes that the end of slavery would be accompanied by the economic independence that they, like other Americans, believed essential to genuine freedom.

THE MEANING OF FREEDOM

“What is freedom?” asked Congressman James A. Garfield in 1865. “Is it the bare privilege of not being chained? If this is all, then freedom is a bitter mockery, a cruel delusion.” Did freedom mean simply the absence of slavery, or did it imply other rights for the former slaves, and if so, which ones? Equal civil rights, the vote, ownership of property? During Reconstruction, freedom became a terrain of conflict, its substance open to different, often contradictory interpretations.

African Americans’ understanding of freedom was shaped by their experiences as slaves and their observation of the free society around them. To begin with, freedom meant escaping the numerous injustices of slavery—punishment by the lash, the separation of families, denial of access to education, the sexual exploitation of Black women by their owners—and sharing in the rights and opportunities of American citizens. “If I cannot do like a white man,” Henry Adams, an emancipated slave in Louisiana, told his former owner in 1865, “I am not free.”

Families in Freedom

With slavery dead, institutions that had existed before the war, like the Black family, free Blacks’ churches and schools, and the secret slave church, were strengthened, expanded, and freed from white supervision. The family was central to the postemancipation Black community. Former slaves made remarkable efforts to locate loved ones from whom they had been separated under slavery. One northern reporter in 1865 encountered a freedman who had walked more than 600 miles from Georgia to North Carolina, searching for the wife and children from whom he had been sold away before the war.

While freedom helped to stabilize family life, it also subtly altered relationships within the family. Immediately after the Civil War, planters complained that freedwomen had “withdrawn” from field labor and work as house servants. Many Black women preferred to devote more time to their families than had been possible under slavery, and men considered it a badge of honor to see their wives remain at home. Eventually, the dire poverty of the Black community would compel a far higher proportion of Black women than white women to go to work for wages.

Conflicts over freedom

Family Record, a lithograph marketed to former slaves after the Civil War, is an idealized portrait of a middle-class Black family with scenes of slavery and freedom.





Five Generations of a Black Family, an 1862 photograph that suggests the power of family ties among emancipated slaves.

Black Colleges

Mother and Daughter Reading, Mt. Meigs, Alabama, an 1890 photograph by Rudolph Eickemeyer. During Reconstruction and for years thereafter, former slaves exhibited a deep desire for education, and learning took place outside of school as well as within.



Church and School

At the same time, Blacks abandoned white-controlled religious institutions to create churches of their own. On the eve of the Civil War, 42,000 Black Methodists worshiped in biracial South Carolina churches; by the end of Reconstruction, only 600 remained. As the major institution independent of white control, the church played a central role in the Black community. A place of worship, it also housed schools, social events, and political gatherings. Black ministers came to play a major role in politics.

Another striking example of the freedpeople's quest for individual and community improvement was their desire for education. The thirst for learning sprang from many sources—a desire to read the Bible, the need to prepare for the marketplace, and the opportunity, which arose in 1867, to take part in politics. Blacks of all ages flocked to the schools established by northern missionary societies, the Freedmen's Bureau, and groups of ex-slaves.

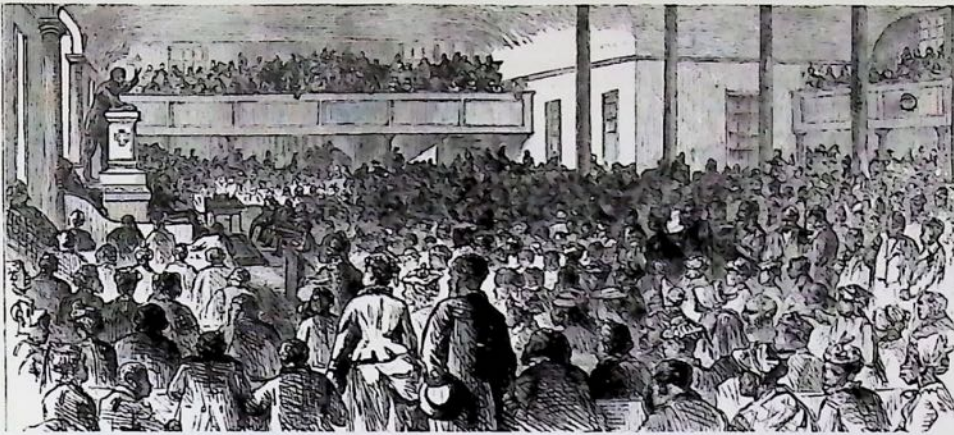
Before the Civil War, few colleges admitted Black students (an exception was Wilberforce University in Ohio, an institution for Blacks founded by the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1856). During Reconstruction, Black colleges proliferated, including Fisk University in Tennessee, Hampton Institute in Virginia, and Howard University in the nation's capital.

Political Freedom

In a society that had made political participation a core element of freedom, the right to vote inevitably became central to the former slaves' desire for empowerment and equality. As Frederick Douglass put it soon after the South's surrender in 1865, "Slavery is not abolished until the Black man has the ballot." In a democracy, "where universal suffrage is the rule," excluding any group meant branding them with "the stigma of inferiority." Anything less than full citizenship, Black spokesmen insisted, would betray the nation's democratic promise and the war's meaning.

Land, Labor, and Freedom

Former slaves' ideas of freedom were directly related to landownership. On the land they would develop independent communities free of white control. Many former slaves insisted that through their unpaid labor, they



The First African Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia, as depicted in *Harper's Weekly*, June 27, 1874. The establishment of independent Black churches was an enduring accomplishment of Reconstruction.

had acquired a right to the land. "The property which they hold," declared an Alabama Black convention, "was nearly all earned by the sweat of *our* brows." In some parts of the South, Blacks in 1865 seized property, insisting that it belonged to them.

In its individual elements and much of its language, former slaves' definition of freedom resembled that of white Americans—self-ownership, family stability, religious liberty, political participation, and economic autonomy. But these elements combined to form a vision very much their own. For whites, freedom, no matter how defined, was a given, a birthright to be defended. For African Americans, it was an open-ended process, a transformation of every aspect of their lives and of the society and culture that had sustained slavery in the first place. Although the freedpeople failed to achieve full freedom as they understood it, their definition did much to shape national debate during the turbulent era of Reconstruction.

Freedom's meaning for former slaves

Masters without Slaves

Most white southerners reacted to military defeat and emancipation with dismay, not only because of the widespread devastation but also because they must now submit to northern demands. The appalling loss of life, a disaster without parallel in the American experience, affected all classes of southerners. Nearly 260,000 men died for the Confederacy—more than one-fifth of the South's adult male white population. The wholesale destruction of work animals, farm buildings, and machinery ensured that economic revival would be slow and painful. In 1870, the value of property in the South was 30 percent lower than before the war, not counting that represented by slaves.

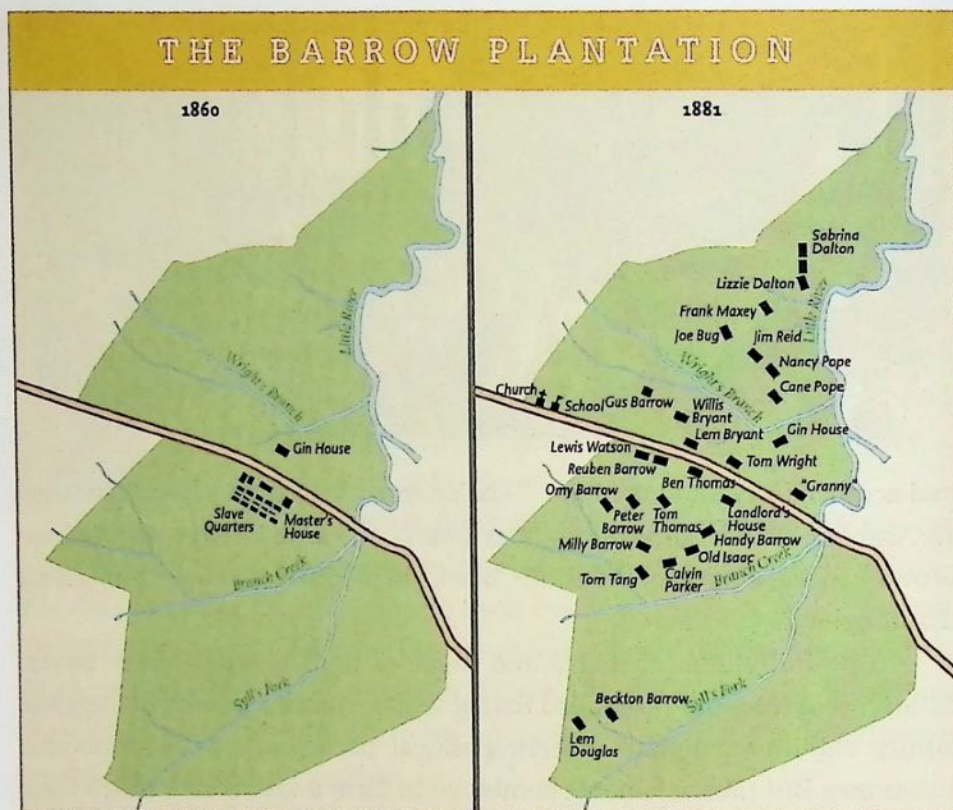
The southern white reaction to emancipation

Confederate deaths

Planter families faced profound changes in the war's aftermath. Many lost not only their slaves but also their life savings, which they had patriotically invested in now-worthless Confederate bonds. Some for the first time found themselves compelled to do physical labor.

Planters

Two maps of the Barrow plantation illustrate the effects of emancipation on rural life in the South. In 1860, slaves lived in communal quarters near the owner's house. Twenty-one years later, former slaves working as sharecroppers lived scattered across the plantation and had their own church and school.



Narrow understanding of freedom

Southern planters sought to implement an understanding of freedom quite different from that of the former slaves. As they struggled to accept the reality of emancipation, most planters defined Black freedom in the narrowest manner. As journalist Sidney Andrews discovered late in 1865, "The whites seem wholly unable to comprehend that freedom for the negro means the same thing as freedom for them."

The Free Labor Vision

Free labor and the good society

Along with former slaves and former owners, the victorious Republican North tried to implement its own vision of freedom. Central to its definition was the antebellum principle of free labor, now further strengthened as a definition of the good society by the Union's triumph. In the free labor vision of a reconstructed South, emancipated Blacks, enjoying the same opportunities for advancement as northern workers, would labor more productively than they had as slaves. At the same time, northern capital and migrants would energize the economy. The South would eventually come to resemble the "free society" of the North, complete with public schools, small towns, and independent farmers.

With planters seeking to establish a labor system as close to slavery as possible, and former slaves demanding economic autonomy and access

to land, a long period of conflict over the organization and control of labor followed on plantations throughout the South. It fell to the **Freedmen's Bureau**, an agency established by Congress in March 1865, to attempt to establish a working free labor system.

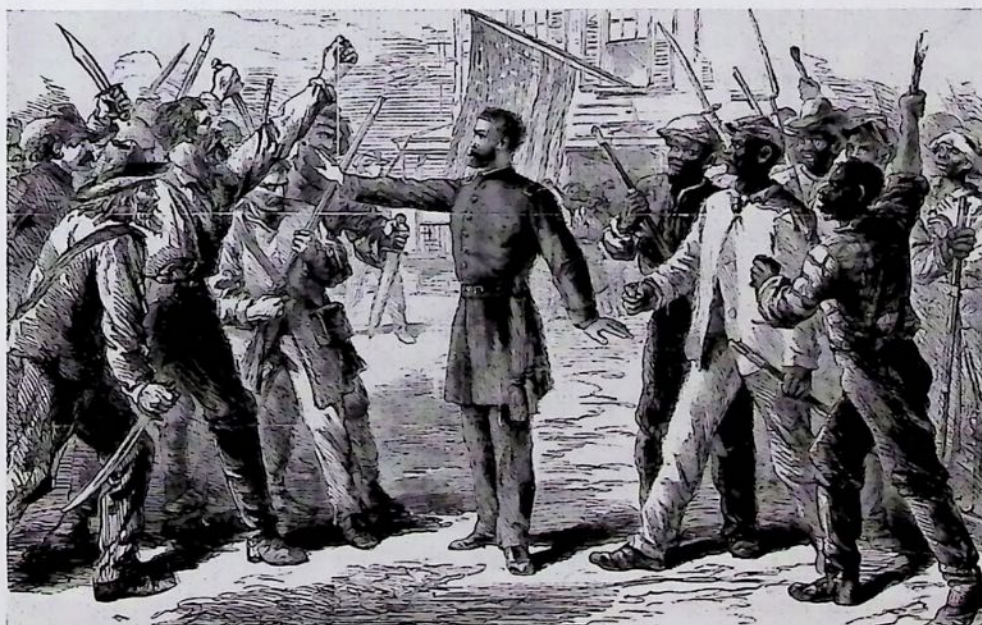
The Freedmen's Bureau

Under the direction of General O. O. Howard, a veteran of the Civil War, the bureau took on responsibilities that can only be described as daunting. The bureau was an experiment in government social policy that seems to belong more comfortably to the New Deal of the 1930s or the Great Society of the 1960s (see Chapters 21 and 25, respectively) than to nineteenth-century America. Bureau agents were supposed to establish schools, provide aid to the poor and aged, settle disputes between whites and Blacks and among the freed-people, and secure for former slaves and white Unionists equal treatment before the courts. "It is not . . . in your power to fulfill one-tenth of the expectations of those who framed the Bureau," General William T. Sherman wrote to Howard. "I fear you have Hercules' task."

The bureau lasted from 1865 to 1870. Even at its peak, it had fewer than 1,000 agents in the entire South. Nonetheless, the bureau's achievements



Winslow Homer's 1876 painting *A Visit from the Old Mistress* depicts an imaginary meeting between a southern white woman and her former slaves. Their stance and gaze suggest the tensions arising from the birth of a new social order. Despite the clear class difference suggested by their clothing, Homer places his subjects on an equal footing, yet maintains a space of separation between them. He exhibited the painting to acclaim at the Paris Universal Exposition in 1878.



The Freedmen's Bureau, an engraving from *Harper's Weekly*, July 25, 1868, depicts the bureau agent as a promoter of racial peace in the violent postwar South.



VOICES OF FREEDOM

From Petition of Committee in Behalf of the Freedmen to Andrew Johnson (1865)

In the summer of 1865, President Andrew Johnson ordered land that had been distributed to freed slaves in South Carolina and Georgia returned to its former owners. A committee of freedmen drafted a petition asking for the right to obtain land. Johnson did not, however, change his policy.

We the freedmen of Edisto Island, South Carolina, have learned from you through Major General O. O. Howard . . . with deep sorrow and painful hearts of the possibility of [the] government restoring these lands to the former owners. We are well aware of the many perplexing and trying questions that burden your mind, and therefore pray to god (the preserver of all, and who has through our late and beloved President [Lincoln's] proclamation and the war made us a free people) that he may guide you in making your decisions and give you that wisdom that cometh from above to settle these great and important questions for the best interests of the country and the colored race.

Here is where secession was born and nurtured. Here is where we have toiled nearly all our lives as slaves and treated like dumb driven cattle. This is our home, we have made these lands what they were, we are the only true and loyal people that were found in possession of these lands. We have been always ready to strike for liberty and humanity, yea to fight if need be to preserve this glorious Union. Shall not we who are freedmen and have always been true to this Union have the same rights as are enjoyed by others? . . . Are not our rights as a free people and good citizens of these United States to be considered before those who were found in rebellion against this good and just government? . . .

[Are] we who have been abused and oppressed for many long years not to be allowed the privilege of purchasing land but be subject to the will of these large land owners? God forbid. Land monopoly is injurious to the advancement of the course of freedom, and if government does not make some provision by which we as freedmen can obtain a homestead, we have not bettered our condition. . . .

We look to you . . . for protection and equal rights with the privilege of purchasing a homestead—a homestead right here in the heart of South Carolina.

From A Sharecropping Contract (1866)

Few former slaves were able to acquire land in the post-Civil War South. Most ended up as sharecroppers, working on white-owned land for a share of the crop at the end of the growing season. This contract, typical of thousands of others, originated in Tennessee. The laborers signed with an X, as they were illiterate.

Thomas J. Ross agrees to employ the Freedmen to plant and raise a crop on his Rosstown Plantation. . . . On the following Rules, Regulations and Remunerations.

The said Ross agrees to furnish the land to cultivate, and a sufficient number of mules & horses and feed them to make and house said crop and all necessary farming utensils to carry on the same and to give unto said Freedmen whose names appear below one half of all the cotton, corn and wheat that is raised on said place for the year 1866 after all the necessary expenses are deducted out that accrues on said crop. Outside of the Freedmen's labor in harvesting, carrying to market and selling the same the said Freedmen . . . covenant and agrees to and with said Thomas J. Ross that for and in consideration of one half of the crop before mentioned that they will plant, cultivate, and raise under the management control and Superintendence of said Ross, in good faith, a cotton, corn and oat crop under his management for the year 1866. And we the said Freedmen agrees to furnish ourselves & families in provisions, clothing, medicine and medical bills and all, and every kind of other expenses that we may incur on said plantation for the year 1866 free of charge to said Ross. Should the said Ross furnish us any of the above supplies or any other kind of expenses, during said year, [we] are to settle and pay him out of the net proceeds of our part of the crop the retail price of the county at time of sale or any price we may agree upon—The said Ross shall keep a regular book account, against each and every one or the head of every family to be adjusted and settled at the end of the year.

We furthermore bind ourselves to and with said Ross that we will do good work and labor ten hours a day on an average, winter and summer. . . . We further agree that we will lose all lost time, or pay at the rate of one dollar per day, rainy days excepted. In sickness and women lying in childbed are to lose the time and account for it to the other hands out of his or her part of the crop. . . .

We furthermore bind ourselves that we will obey the orders of said Ross in all things in carrying out and managing said crop for said year and be docked for disobedience . . . and are also responsible to said Ross if we carelessly, maliciously maltreat any of his stock for said year to said Ross for damages to be assessed out of our wages.

Samuel (X) Johnson, Thomas (X) Richard, Tinny (X) Fitch, Jessie (X) Simmons, Sophe (X) Pruden, Henry (X) Pruden, Frances (X) Pruden, Elijah (X) Smith.

QUESTIONS

1. *Why do the Black petitioners believe that owning land is essential to the enjoyment of freedom?*
2. *In what ways does the contract limit the freedom of the laborers?*
3. *What do these documents suggest about competing definitions of Black freedom in the aftermath of slavery?*



A nursemaid and her charge, from a daguerreotype around 1865.

Economic limits to Reconstruction

in some areas, notably education and health care, were striking. By 1869, nearly 3,000 schools, serving more than 150,000 pupils in the South, reported to the bureau. Bureau agents also assumed control of hospitals established during the war and provided medical care to both Black and white southerners.

The Failure of Land Reform

One provision of the law establishing the bureau gave it the authority to divide abandoned and confiscated land into forty-acre plots for rental and eventual sale to the former slaves. In the summer of 1865, however, President Andrew Johnson, who had succeeded Lincoln, ordered nearly all land in federal hands returned to its former owners. A series of confrontations followed, notably in South Carolina and Georgia, where the army forcibly evicted Blacks who had settled on “Sherman land.” When O. O. Howard, head of the Freedmen’s Bureau, traveled to the Sea Islands to inform Blacks of the new policy, he was greeted with disbelief and protest. Land, the freedmen insisted, was essential to the meaning of freedom. Without it, they declared, “we have not bettered our condition” from the days of slavery—“you will see, this is not the condition of really free men.”

Because no land distribution took place, the vast majority of rural freedpeople remained poor and without property during Reconstruction. They had no alternative but to work on white-owned plantations, often for their former owners. Far from being able to rise in the social scale through hard work, Black men were largely confined to farm work, unskilled labor, and service jobs, and Black women to positions in private homes as cooks and maids. The failure of land reform produced a deep sense of betrayal that survived among the former slaves and their descendants long after the end of Reconstruction. “No sir,” Mary Gaffney, an elderly ex-slave, recalled in the 1930s, “we were not given a thing but freedom.”

Out of the conflict on the plantations, new systems of labor emerged in the different regions of the South. **Sharecropping** came to dominate the Cotton Kingdom and much of the Tobacco Belt of Virginia and North Carolina. Sharecropping initially arose as a compromise between Blacks’ desire for land and planters’ demand for labor discipline. The system allowed each Black family to rent a part of a plantation, with the crop divided between worker and owner at the end of the year. Sharecropping guaranteed the planters a stable resident labor force. Former slaves preferred it to gang labor because it offered them the prospect of working without day-to-day white supervision. But as the years went on, sharecropping became more and more oppressive. Sharecroppers’ economic



opportunities were severely limited by a world market in which the price of farm products suffered a prolonged decline.

The White Farmer

Wartime devastation set in motion a train of events that permanently altered the independent way of life of white yeomen, leading to what they considered a loss of freedom. To obtain supplies from merchants, farmers were forced to take up the growing of cotton and pledge a part of the crop as collateral (property the creditor can seize if a debt is not paid). This system became known as the **crop lien**. Since interest rates were extremely high and the price of cotton fell steadily, many farmers found themselves still in debt after marketing their portion of the crop at year's end. They had no choice but to continue to plant cotton to obtain new loans. By the mid-1870s, white farmers, who cultivated only 10 percent of the South's cotton crop in 1860, were growing 40 percent, and many who had owned their land had fallen into dependency as sharecroppers who now rented land owned by others.

By 1880, sharecropping had become the dominant form of agricultural labor in large parts of the South. The system involved both white and Black farmers.