Freedom's Uneven Roads

Work, power, and migration in the postwar South

8.C.13.3 "Analyze the emerging social structure of the postwar South. Identify the various motives of carpetbaggers including economic gain, exploitative aims, and genuine concern for the civil and political rights of freed Blacks..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the different motives of newcomers from the North, circle details that show how farming could trap families in debt, and write 1 beside the Klan's tactics and 2 beside reasons people moved away.

Choices After Emancipation

1. In 1868, a freed family in Mississippi might own no land but still seek wages, schooling, and a vote. Former plantation owners kept much of the farmland, while newly freed Black people worked to build independent lives. Some newcomers from the North, called carpetbaggers, entered southern politics and business. Their motives differed: some hoped to make money, some used unfair deals to exploit people, and others defended freed people's civil rights and right to vote. A person's label alone could not reveal why that person came.

2. Landowners needed workers after slavery ended, and many freed families needed land to farm. Under tenant farming, a family rented land and paid rent, sometimes in cash or crops. Under sharecropping, a family farmed an owner's land and paid with a share of the harvest. Families often borrowed for seed and food, promising part of the crop as payment. Low crop prices and high charges could leave them in debt, making it hard to leave or buy land. Landowners regained a dependable labor force without owning workers.

3. Economic limits were not the only barrier. The Ku Klux Klan sought to restore white control by frightening Black voters and attacking Black leaders and their allies. Members used threats, beatings, and murder to block political participation and enforce racial inequality. To escape discrimination and seek land or work, some Black southerners moved west to Kansas during the 1879 Exoduster migration. Larger numbers moved to northern cities in the early 1900s for jobs and greater freedom. Moving could open doors, but migrants still faced racism in their new homes.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why would it be unfair to assume that all carpetbaggers wanted the same thing?

2. How could borrowing for seed and food make it harder for a sharecropping family to buy land?

3. How did the Klan's actions serve its goal of restoring white control?

4. How did the opportunities sought by Black migrants to Kansas and northern cities differ in the passage?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 5- to 6-sentence diary entry from a fictional Black southerner deciding whether to stay or move in the decades after slavery. Link a farming problem and a political or social threat to your decision, and name an opportunity in the place you choose using at least two details from the passage.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 8 · 8.C.13.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the different motives of newcomers from the North, circle details that show how farming could trap families in debt, and write 1 beside the Klan's tactics and 2 beside reasons people moved away. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why would it be unfair to assume that all carpetbaggers wanted the same thing?	**Some sought profit, some exploited people through unfair deals, and others defended freed Black people's civil rights and voting rights.**
2	How could borrowing for seed and food make it harder for a sharecropping family to buy land?	**The family promised part of its harvest to repay what it borrowed. Low crop prices or high charges could leave it in debt, with little money to buy land.**
3	How did the Klan's actions serve its goal of restoring white control?	**Threats and violence frightened Black voters and attacked Black leaders and allies, limiting their political participation.**
4	How did the opportunities sought by Black migrants to Kansas and northern cities differ in the passage?	**Migrants to Kansas sought land, while those moving to northern cities sought jobs and greater freedom. Both groups were leaving discrimination in the South.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

It is 1879, and our family farms a landowner's field for part of the harvest. We owe money for seed, so buying land feels farther away each year. Klan members threaten Black voters, and I fear what could happen if I cast my ballot. We have decided to leave Mississippi for Kansas, where we hope to find land. Starting over will be difficult, but staying keeps us tied to debt and fear.

Accept answers that accurately connect motives, debt, intimidation, or migration to the effects described in the passage. For the diary entry, the destination and opportunity should fit the period the student chooses.