

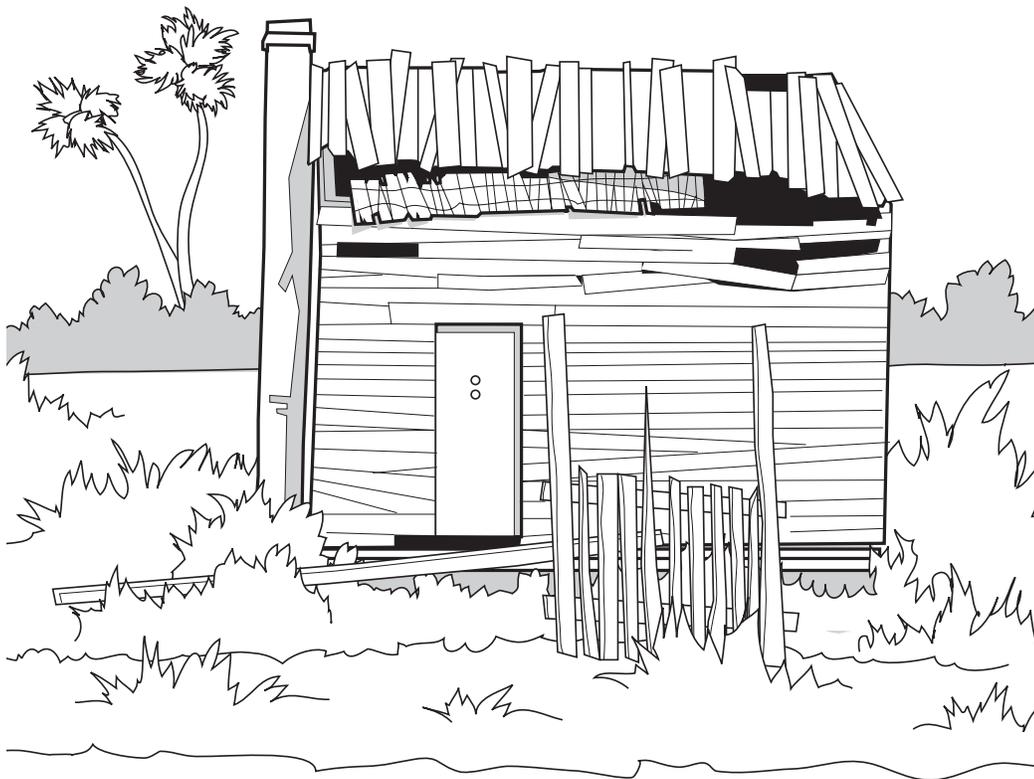
Reconstruction

Following the Civil War, there was a period of rebuilding known as “The Reconstruction.” The states that had fought so hard against each other realized that they needed to reunite. This was difficult to do.

Sharecropping

The period of reconstruction was filled with uncertainty for the people in the south. Having once relied on the free labor of slaves to produce economic wealth, the plantation owners now found themselves without workers. The freed slaves were equally distressed, as they did not own land or have jobs to sustain them. Many slaves were uneducated and lacked skills. Often they returned to the plantations to work for pay. However, the plantation owners often lacked the money with which to pay salaries.

A solution to both problems was the concept of sharecropping. With sharecropping, freed slaves would pay the plantation owner rent on a portion of property by giving the owner a share of the crops grown on that land. The plantation owners provided housing, materials, and machinery needed for farming the land. The practice of sharecropping sustained the plantation owners far better than it sustained the freed slaves.



A sharecropper's shack in Florida.

Black Codes

Unfortunately, rejoining the United States would prove to be even more difficult than running plantations. The southern states had laws called “Black Codes” which oppressed the former slaves. President Andrew Johnson required states to write new constitutions outlawing these codes and to pass the 14th Amendment, which would give citizenship to all people born in the United States. He also reinstated military rule in the south until all the requirements had been met. Florida met the requirements and rejoined the United States on July 25, 1868. Eventually, all the southern states met the requirements and rejoined the United States.

Florida During Reconstruction

Florida had not suffered major damage in the Civil War. Consequently, the state was able to supply materials such as lumber to the other states for rebuilding. In order to ship materials, an extensive railroad system was built. This opened up many areas of Florida for development.

Many people began to travel throughout Florida. They discovered a land of warmth and beauty. Hotels were built to house visitors. Florida was becoming a valuable state in the new south and the reunited United States of America.

Although it was to take much longer to integrate all Americans economically and fully into society, the official period of reconstruction was over.



Black Americans were denied access to many public places.