Chapter 15: “What is Freedom?: Reconstruction 1865-1877” Study Guide

Identify and give the historical significance of each of the following terms, events, and people in a paragraph or two.

1. Fourteenth Amendment
2. Ku Klux Klan
3. Liberal Republicans
4. Andrew Johnson
5. sharecropping
6. black officeholders
7. Radical Republicans
8. Black Codes
9. Freedmen’s Bureau
10. Fifteenth Amendment
11. Redeemers
12. feminists

Potential Essay Questions:

1. Was Reconstruction a success or a failure? Or was it something in between? In your response, consider land policy, key legislation during Presidential and Radical Reconstruction, southern politics, racial and political violence, and northern “fatigue” with Reconstruction. Be sure to make clear what you mean by success and failure.

2. There were many proposals for land reform. Describe the various plans, why they did not work, and the consequences of their failure. Discuss the petition to Andrew Johnson in “Voices of Freedom.”

3. What did freedom mean for the ex-slaves? Be sure to address economic opportunities, gender roles, religious independence, and family security.

4. Who were the Redeemers, what did they want, and what were their methods? How did the Redeemers feel that their freedom was being threatened by Radical Reconstruction? Conclude your essay with a comment on how you think the federal government should have responded to the Redeemers.

5. Stating that he “lived among men, not among angels,” Thaddeus Stevens recognized that the Fourteenth Amendment was not perfect. Explain the strengths and weaknesses of the Fourteenth Amendment. What liberties and freedoms did it extend in the nineteenth century—and to whom? How did it alter the relationship between the federal government and the states?