

Reader's Guide

R*ecommendation Era: Biographies* presents twenty-five entries covering twenty-eight people who lived during the Reconstruction era, the period stretching roughly from the end of the American Civil War in April 1865 to the inauguration of President Rutherford B. Hayes in 1877. Reconstruction was a federal policy intended to restore the relationship between the former Confederate states and the federal Union, to oversee the transition of the newly freed slaves into citizens, and to help convert the Southern economy from one based on slave labor to one based on paid labor. Reconstruction officially ended following the resolution to the controversial presidential election of 1876 in which an electoral commission declared Hayes the victor, just days before he was inaugurated in March 1877. The new president had federal troops removed from the former Confederate region in the South to bring an end to the Reconstruction era.

Coverage and features

Reconstruction Era: Biographies profiles a diverse mix of personalities, from political leaders to famous authors and

artists, and from social activists to scientists. The variety of people included reveals the many different concerns and issues Americans faced during a dynamic and difficult period when the wounds of the Civil War were healing and the pursuit of social equality for African Americans and women sparked controversy and debate.

During the Reconstruction era, a president was nearly removed from office; slavery was abolished, but attempts to protect the rights of former slaves were an ongoing and often frustrating challenge; famous works of literature and art were introduced that are still beloved and respected today; and the beginning of professional baseball and the establishment of Yellowstone as a national park were among the sports and recreational developments that balanced the more profoundly serious issues of the day. The biographies reflect the events of the day: those featured include Andrew Johnson, the embattled president who was nearly removed from office by Congress, and Ulysses S. Grant, the Civil War hero whose presidency was riddled by scandal; congressmen who challenged President Johnson for control of Reconstruction policy, including Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner, as well as the first African Americans to serve in the legislative body, including Blanche K. Bruce and Hiram Revels; activists for women's rights (Susan B. Anthony and Julia Ward Howe) and for African American rights (Frederick Douglass); and popular writers, like Louisa May Alcott and Bret Harte.

Reconstruction Era: Biographies also features sidebars containing interesting facts about people and events related to the Reconstruction era. Within each full-length biography, boldfaced cross-references direct readers to other individuals profiled in the volume, helping readers compare and contrast the viewpoints and approaches taken by different people faced with similar challenges during the time period. Finally, each volume includes nearly eighty photographs and illustrations, a "Reconstruction Era Timeline" that lists significant dates and events of the Reconstruction era, and an index.

U•X•L Reconstruction Era Reference Library

Reconstruction Era: Biographies is only one component of the three-part U•X•L Reconstruction Era Reference Library. The other two titles in this set are:

- *Reconstruction Era: Almanac*: This volume presents a comprehensive overview of the Reconstruction era. Its nine chapters are arranged chronologically and explore such topics as the effects of freedom on black family life, Radical Republicans, carpetbaggers and scalawags, amnesty for white Southerners, Black Codes, the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson, the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, attempts to restore the old order in the South, the disputed presidential election of 1876, and the Compromise of 1877. The *Almanac* also contains nearly sixty black-and-white photographs and maps, “Words to Know” boxes, a timeline, research and activity ideas, and an index.
- *Reconstruction Era: Primary Sources*: This title tells the story of the Reconstruction era in the words of the people who lived and shaped it and the laws that contributed to it. Nineteen complete or excerpted documents provide a wide range of perspectives on this period of history. Included are excerpts from abolitionist Frederick Douglass’s famous article about Reconstruction, Frances Butler Leigh’s account of life after slavery as the daughter of a plantation owner, former slave John Paterson Green’s experiences with the Ku Klux Klan, and U.S. senator Charles Sumner’s argument in favor of the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson, *Primary Sources* also contains nearly sixty black-and-white photographs and illustrations, a timeline, and an index.
- A cumulative index of all three titles in the U•X•L Reconstruction Era Reference Library is also available.

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Comments and suggestions

We welcome your comments on *Reconstruction Era: Biographies* and suggestions for other topics to consider. Please write: Editors, *Reconstruction Era: Biographies*, U•X•L, 27500 Drake Rd., Farmington Hills, Michigan 48331-3535; call toll free: (800) 877-4253; fax to (248) 699-8097; or send e-mail via <http://www.gale.com>.