

Give me liberty



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

A Response to Issue 1 Following the Civil War there was a rapid progression of the role of African Americans in the United States. Reconstruction had given African Americans their freedom along with their rights to vote, own land, and even hold positions in office. Many historians would soon report about the great success Reconstruction made in the United States for the African American race in obtaining their 'civil rights'. Even though America had created a society where all men were equal in the eyes of the law, great racism still lingered within many whites.

The lack of protection against racial crimes upon the African American race became very apparent as white supremacy began to rise. Massacres took place, slaying dozens of black men for peacefully doing what the U. S. government clearly permitted them to do. I believe Reconstruction did fail, due not to racism of the country as a whole, but to racism in some white citizens who were reluctant to allow change in the social standing of the black man. African Americans began to gain equal standing in politics and were holding positions in office all over the United States.

As this happened, many white men started to rally against the "Negro Rule", forming white supremacy clans that would soon rise up against all African Americans alike. The largest of these clans was known as the "Old Time Ku Klux Klan" which began to revolt against the Radical Reconstruction of the United States. In many cases the 'KKK' killed law abiding black land owners. In one case an African American man was even reportedly "peacefully building a fence around his land when the men shot him dead. The clansmen were known to then make haven in the African American's homes, exhaust all supplies of food and resources and then ride on to their next destination. In

the town of Colfax, Louisiana the Grant Parish courthouse became the site of the largest racial massacre in United States history. Here a group of men decided to make a stand against the clan. After much anticipation the Ku Klux Klan surrounded the courthouse in battle-like formations, and shortly after, the battle began. The group in defense of the courthouse were outnumbered and out armed.

The clan reportedly scattered the defense with cannon fire, at which time many of them retreated into the courthouse. One African American that was captured during his attempt to flee was held at gunpoint and forced to light flame to the roof of the courthouse in which his fellow defensemen had bunkered in retreat. Some captured African Americans were hung while others forced to retrieve men from the burning courthouse. All of the men that were captured were eventually killed, and some reported various cruel acts to the dead men's bodies and family members.

To this day, no greater racial killing has ever taken place. This account is a prime, even though somewhat extreme, example of the great amount of racism that persisted throughout the United States during Reconstruction. Even though the law allowed African Americans to have equal civil rights as white men it did not protect them from the racism that was directed towards them. Due to this many white men sought out to strip the black man of their unalienable rights, many of which succeeded.