

African American Life After Enslavement

Newly freed African Americans wanted a measure of control over their own lives. After being forced to work and severely punished for not working hard enough on top of not being paid wages, African Americans were ready to have the lives that they wanted without the tyranny of a master. While there were many people that helped blacks have the lives that they wanted, there were many difficulties to surmount for former slaves.

The ideal outcome of the civil war in the eyes of the slaves was to own the land of their owners, stating that they were the only reason that the land was successful and thus they should be the ones to keep it. Obviously this idea was heavily opposed by southern land owners and having blacks free to do whatever they pleased was not ok with many white people because they thought that blacks were prone to criminal tendencies and laziness.

What actually ended up happening is that southern farmers used many of their former slaves as sharecroppers, to farm their land and pay them a portion of the profits. This led to many freed slaves being taken advantage of for their lack of education. White owners would inflate the costs of materials and take more money than they needed to to keep the black people under an cloud of dept that they would have to keep working in order to pay off.