

## **“A Bleak Future for Freedmen”**

### **The Views of a Former Slave from Tennessee in 1865**

Following Tennessee’s ratification of the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment ending slavery, a former slave in Nashville wrote a letter to the editor of the *Weekly Anglo-African*. The opinions of Samuel Childress were published in the November 29, 1865 edition of the weekly newspaper.

Mr. Editor:

You desire to know our opinions respecting the policy of the President [Andrew Johnson] concerning the colored race. We are not acquainted with the whole of it.... To us the prospect seems gloomy. We have no permanent homes, and we see no prospect of getting any.

Most of us are accustomed to farm labor, and whatever skill we possess is chiefly in that direction. Land is dear, and few of us are able to buy it. We can hire out to our former masters, it may be said. It is true that we can do so to a considerate extent; but it is well known that the temper of our former masters had not greatly improved toward us.

Is it the intention of the Government to drive us to our worst enemies to ask for work...? Our race has tilled this land for ages; whatever wealth has been accumulated in the South has been acquired mainly by our labor. The profits of it have gone to increase the pride and wickedness of our old masters, while we have been left in ignorance and degradation.

It cannot be denied that the colored race earned nearly all this property. Justice required that it should be paid over to the colored race who had been robbed of it. But what did they do with it? It has gone back again to the very hands are dripping with the blood of murdered prisoners, and whose cruelties cry to heaven for vengeance.

It would seem that it was regarded as a greater crime to be black than to be a rebel. We think the Government ought in justice to the race to provide for their obtaining farms at such prices, and on such terms as would enable our people in a reasonable time to have a home of their own, on which they might hope to earn a living, and educate their children.

*Samuel Childress, 1865*

*Source: Witness for Freedom, edited by C. Peter Ripley, published in 1993 by University of North Carolina Press*

#### Questions to consider while reading:

- Why did Samuel Childress think that the future for freedmen in the South was “gloomy?”
- What did Childress believe the United States government should do to help the freedmen?

## **Report of the Board of Education for Freedmen, Department of the Gulf The Perspective of Teachers at African American Schools in 1864**

During and after the Civil War, teachers spread throughout the South in an effort to educate freed black children and adults. There were many difficulties associated with starting education for African Americans, especially before the war ended in 1864.

### **Instances of privation [hardship] and peril**

In a parish, some distance from New Orleans, a building was procured [obtained], an energetic teacher sent, scholars gathered, and the work begun. (The report) came subsequently, as follows: "Arrived. Went about gathering scholars [students], have forty. Did well enough till it rained, since then have walked three miles a day, ankle deep in thick black mud that pulls off my shoes. Nothing to eat but strong pork and sour bread. Insulted for being a '(black) teacher.' Can't buy anything on credit, and haven't a cent of money. The school shed has no floor, and the rains sweep clean across it, through the places where the windows should be. The Provost Marshal won't help me. Says 'he don't believe in (black) teachers.' The children come rain or shine, plunging through the mud. Pretty picture they are."

Another class of obstacles is indicated by the following extract from the report of a country teacher:

"I have, in vain, attempted to form a night school. I never dared take more than two pupils, because some of the officers are so opposed to the instruction of negroes. One use to let his dogs loose after supper to but the night-scholars, till I told him I would kill them if they bit my pupils. A great many would come to night-school only they are afraid."

In Thibodeaux the school-house has been broken open, on successive nights, for months past, the furniture defaced, the books destroyed. Bricks have been hurled through the windows, greatly risking limb and life, and making general commotion. Complaint after complaint has not afforded relief or protection....

### **Characteristics of the Pupils**

The pupils, as a class, are orderly, industrious, and easily governed. They are exceedingly grateful for any interest and kindness shown to them. Another habitude of these colored children is their care of books and school furniture. The walls and fences about the colored schools are not defaced. From the two most prevailing and disgusting vices of school children, profanity and obscenity [swearing], they are singularly free.

*Source: The Report of the Board of Education for Freedmen, Department of the Gulf, for the Year 1864 by the U.S. Army, printed in 1865 in New Orleans, available on Google Books*

### Questions to consider while reading:

- What were the challenges for teachers and students at African American schools?
- According to this report, what were the attitudes of African American pupils?

## **“Our Country is now in a Disturbed Condition” The Views of a Former Confederate Supporter in 1865**

In this letter from 1865, Edwin H. McCaleb, a former supporter of the Confederacy, responds to Lincoln’s death, describes conditions in the post-war South, and expresses distrust towards President Andrew Johnson.

Our country is now in a disturbed condition caused by the fiery ordeal through which we just passed and the total absence of both military or civil laws. Were it not for the law abiding disposition of our people we would be subjected to the augur of lawlessness and outrage. All good citizens deeply deplore the assassination of Pres. Lincoln ... Mr. L – was a great man and more than that was a good man and the country could ill afford to lose his services at this important crisis.... Mr. Johnson has disregarded the requirements of the Constitution & undertakes to enact military governments over the states. And more than this, men are now being tried for their lives before military courts...instead of the civil tribunals [courts] of the land. This is in direct violation of the Constitution as these...were in no way connected with the Army.

By this sudden system of Emancipation, this spasmodic transformation of the ignorant Negro from a peaceful laborer who has been accustomed to have all needs...provided...both in sickness & health to a self reliant citizen will paralyze the productive resources of the South. It can cause a famine in this fertile land. If we could have a system of gradual emancipation our people would universally rejoice & be glad to get rid of slavery which as ever been a cancer upon the body politic of our social organization....We would gladly substitute white for slave labor but we can never regard the Negro our equal either intellectually or socially.

The government ought to pursue a magnanimous [generous] merciful & conciliatory [peace-making] course towards those who have striven to be honorable & who have acknowledged ourselves fairly beaten. Let the northern people arise in the majesty of their power and stay the uplifted hand of official oppression and hatred.

I was only 17 years of age when this war commenced & the last speech I made before leaving college for the army was against secession and advocating the sovereignty of the Federal Government and yet I am not among the proscribed [banned from participation in government] because I held a petty office in the army.

*Source: Digital History at [http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/documents/documents\\_p2.cfm?doc=180](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/documents/documents_p2.cfm?doc=180)*

### Questions to consider while reading:

- What was Edwin McCaleb’s opinions of President Lincoln and President Johnson?
- Why was McCaleb concerned about the “sudden system of Emancipation” of former slaves?

# Civil Rights and Freedoms Puzzle

## CIVIL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

Puzzle by Frank A. Longo  
 Edited by Will Shortz

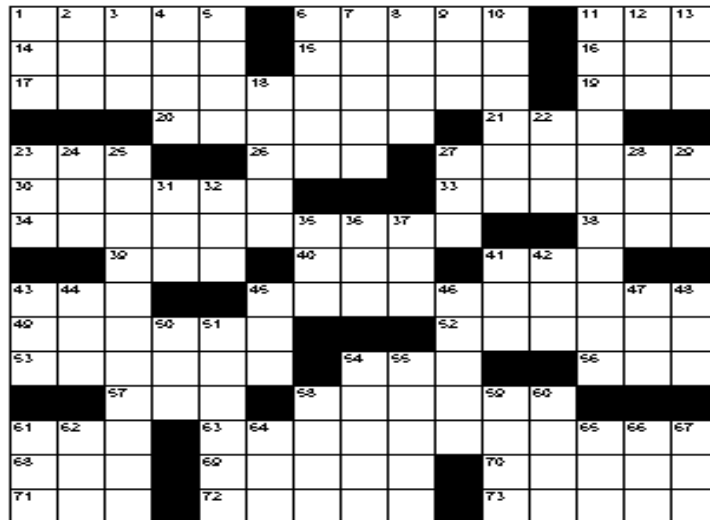


### ACROSS

1. Separation of church and \_\_\_\_ (topic of the First Amendment)
6. What a wound might do
11. Avenues: Abbr.
14. Gave a hoot
15. Pound division
16. Before, to poets
17. Bringing together of formerly separated races
19. Refuse to agree to
20. Got close to
21. French holy woman: Abbr.
23. One who oversees the employees: Abbr.
26. N.F.L. six-pointers
27. Drinking vessel in a Chinese restaurant
30. Having only a single section, as a short play: Hyph.
33. Illinois city next to Champaign
34. This was started in Montgomery when Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat: 2 wds.
38. National Association \_\_\_\_ the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P.)
39. Psychic power
40. Leann Rimes' "How \_\_\_\_ Live?": 2 wds.
41. Alternative to Delta or US Airways
43. Hockey Hall-of-Famer Bobby
45. State ordinance discriminating against blacks: 3 wds.
49. Greet with a hand motion: 2 wds.
52. "The Mighty Ducks" star Estevez
53. National Urban \_\_\_\_ (group working against racial segregation and discrimination)
54. Steam bath site
56. \_\_\_\_-mo replay
57. Heavy weight
58. \_\_\_\_ off (repelled)
61. Moo goo \_\_\_\_ pan (Chinese dish)
63. Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous phrase: 4 wds.
68. "A long time \_\_\_\_ in a galaxy ..."
69. Clowns wear big red ones
70. Hospital worker in white
71. Japanese coin
72. First, reverse and neutral
73. One more time

### DOWN

1. The \_\_\_\_-Fi Channel
2. Beige



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3. Paintings, sculptures, etc.
4. "Dawson's Creek" watcher, usually
5. A razor has a sharp one
6. Brown v. \_\_\_\_ of Education (1954 case in which segregation in public schools was ruled unconstitutional)
7. Stringed instruments played by minstrels
8. Barenaked Ladies song from "Gordon"
9. \_\_\_\_-friendly (not harmful to the environment)
10. More tightly packed together
11. \_\_\_\_ Convention (1848 women's rights conference organized by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott): 2 wds.
12. Prefix meaning "three"
13. The 19th Amendment guaranteed that voting rights were not restricted based on this
18. Dilapidated
22. Soda can opener
23. Disorderly crowd
24. African antelope also known as a wildebeest
25. Tract of land set apart for the use of an Indian tribe
27. Egyptian boy-king
28. Game with "Reverse" cards
29. Good score for a golfer
31. Tummy muscles
32. Speeding ticket issuer
35. 401, in Roman numerals
36. \_\_\_\_-pah-pah (tuba's sound)
37. \_\_\_\_-tao-toe
41. "Saving Private Ryan" star Hanks
42. Global conflict of 1914-18: Abbr.
43. Bird that hoots at night
44. "Mask of Death" actress \_\_\_\_ Dawn Chong
45. Quarterback Montana
46. \_\_\_\_ book (be literate): 2 wds.
47. Feel sick
48. Try to win the affection of
50. Self-importance
51. Correcting a piano
54. One who makes regular bank deposits
55. Freedom of the \_\_\_\_ (topic of the First Amendment)
58. "That \_\_\_\_ close one!": 2 wds.
59. "The Simpsons" schoolteacher Krabappel
60. Caffeine or nicotine, for example
61. \_\_\_\_ rights movement (organized effort to stop discrimination based on sexual orientation)
62. What tree rings indicate
64. Weed-whacking tool
65. Proposed 27th amendment that would prohibit sexual discrimination: Abbr.
66. "Just \_\_\_\_ thought!": 2 wds.
67. "... all \_\_\_\_ are created equal"

