

Title of Lesson: *An African American Represents Alabama during Reconstruction*

(Suggested grade level: 4th)

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Background Information:

The teacher needs an understanding of the events leading up to and during Reconstruction in Alabama, and of the prominent people involved in Reconstruction in Alabama. The [*Encyclopedia of Alabama*](#) has some articles that may be helpful. They are:

- [Reconstruction in Alabama](#)
- [Presidential Reconstruction in Alabama](#)
- [Congressional Reconstruction in Alabama](#)

The following links will provide information about Benjamin Sterling Turner:

<http://history.house.gov/People/Detail?id=23140&cid=38165&cs=1&ce=113&f=All#biography>

http://www.virginiamemory.com/online_classroom/shaping_the_constitution/people/benjamin_sterling_turner

<http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=T000414>

<http://www.blackpast.org/?q=aah/turner-benjamin-sterling-1825-1894>

<http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-3271>

<http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Multimedia.jsp?id=m-4603>

[Composite photo of Africa American members of the United States Congress from 1869 to 1901](#)

If students do not have computers with internet access, copy the materials needed to research Benjamin Sterling Turner.

Overview of lesson:

This lesson engages students in research on a prominent African American and his role in politics during Reconstruction in Alabama. Photographic primary sources are used in this lesson.

Content Standards

[*Alabama Course of Study: Social Studies*](#) (Bulletin 2004, No. 18)

Fourth Grade: Standard 9 (p. 33)

Identifying the role of African Americans in politics during Reconstruction in Alabama

- Benjamin Sterling Turner

[*National Standards for History, 1996*](#)

Standards in History for Grades 5-12 (p.101)

Era 5, Standard 3 – How various Reconstruction plans succeeded or failed

3C – The student understands the successes and failures of Reconstruction in the South, North, and West.

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, (Bulletin 111, 2010)

Standard 5 – Individuals, Groups, and Institutions (p. 78)

Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.

Primary Learning Objective(s):

- The student will analyze a photograph
- The student will write a short biography of Benjamin Sterling Turner, which shows an understanding of the role that he played in Reconstruction in Alabama.

Time allotted: 30 - 45 minutes

Materials and Equipment:

- Photos of Benjamin Sterling Turner
 - [Benjamin Sterling Turner](#), Congressman
 - [Benjamin Sterling Turner](#)
- Web Research Assignment sheet for students or printed information from the Web sites (attached)
- Rubric for assessment of student-written biographies (attached)
- List of African American Reconstruction politicians if extension is completed (attached)

Technological Resources:

- Computer with internet access
- Document camera, overhead projector or projector

Background/Preparation:

- The students should have an understanding of events leading up to Reconstruction in Alabama.
- The following links will provide information about Benjamin Sterling Turner:
<http://history.house.gov/People/Detail?id=23140&cid=38165&cs=1&ce=113&f=All#biography>
http://www.virginiamemory.com/online_classroom/shaping_the_constitution/people/benjamin_sterling_turner
<http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=T000414>
<http://www.blackpast.org/?q=aah/turner-benjamin-sterling-1825-1894>
<http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-3271>
<http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Multimedia.jsp?id=m-4603>

Procedures/Activities:

Engagement/Motivation Activity:

Ask the students to imagine that they are adult African American males living in Alabama during the period of Reconstruction (1865-1877). Remind them that because of the 14th and 15th Amendments, they have civil rights guaranteed by the Constitution and enforced by United States military presence in the former Confederacy.

Ask the students the following questions:

- “What are civil rights?”
- “How would you exercise your newly granted civil rights?”
- “Will you vote? Why or why not?”
- “Will you run for public office?”

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|---------------|--|
| Step 1 | <p>Show the composite image of African American members of the United States Congress from 1869 to 1901 from the Alabama Department of Archives and History, covering the title of the image. Ask the students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Who do you think these men are?” • “Why are they shown as a group?” <p>Uncover the title and identify the group. Point out the picture of Benjamin Sterling Turner.</p> |
| Step 2 | <p>Show students the picture of Benjamin Sterling Turner found at http://history.house.gov/People/Detail?id=23140&cid=38165&cs=1&ce=113&f=All#biography or from the Alabama Department of Archives and History:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Benjamin Sterling Turner, Congressman ○ Benjamin Sterling Turner. <p>Ask the following questions, and allow time for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What is your first impression?” • “Where do you think this photo was taken?” • “What objects are in the photo?” • “What kind of clothing is being worn?” • “Why do you think this picture was taken?” • “Who do you think the person is in the photo?” |
| Step 3 | <p>Tell the students that the person in the photograph is Benjamin Sterling Turner. Tell the students that he played a very important role in the Reconstruction of Alabama. Tell the students that they are going to research him on the internet, collect five facts about him, and write a biography about him.</p> |
| Step 4 | <p>Either take students to the computer lab or pass out the information that you printed from the Web sites. Guide them to the above-listed Web sites to gather facts necessary to write the biography.</p> |
| Step 5 | <p>When students are finished collecting information, divide them into groups of three to four students, and allow them to discuss their findings. Ask one person from each group to share with the class five facts that he/she learned.</p> |
| Step 6 | <p>Tell students to use the information that they collected from the internet, from their group, and from class discussion to write a biography of Benjamin Sterling Turner. Collect their writings when they are finished.</p> |

Assessment Strategies:

- The student’s writing should be assessed using the Writing Rubric. (attached)

Extension:

- Students may research other African American Reconstruction political figures.
- Students may create a poster of Benjamin Sterling Turner with the facts and pictures that they found.
- Students may create a *PhotoStory* or slide show presentation to present to the class.

Remediation:

- Student may be given additional time to complete the assessment.
- Student may be given one-on-one teacher time to review the lesson.

Accommodation:

- Students may use the computer to complete the writing.
- Student may be allowed to work with a peer during the lesson.

Modification:

- Students may be given a smaller number of facts.
- Students may present their biographical paragraph orally.

**Web Research Assignment
for
Benjamin Sterling Turner**

Directions: Using the following Web sites, research the life of Benjamin Sterling Turner. You will collect five (5) facts about Benjamin Sterling Turner and write them and the number of the Web site in which you found them in the chart below. You will use the facts to write a ONE PARAGRAPH biography, complete with the role that he played in Reconstruction in Alabama. Please remember that you may NOT copy information, you must use your own words. You may ONLY use the Web sites below and you may NOT use *Wikipedia*.

The following Web sites will provide information about Benjamin Sterling Turner:

1. <http://history.house.gov/People/Detail?id=23140&cid=38165&cs=1&ce=113&f=All#biography>
2. http://www.viriniamemory.com/online_classroom/shaping_the_constitution/people/benjamin_sterling_turner
3. <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=T000414>
4. <http://www.blackpast.org/?q=aah/turner-benjamin-sterling-1825-1894>
5. <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-3271>
6. <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Multimedia.jsp?id=m-4603>

Five Facts about Benjamin Sterling Turner:

| Fact about Benjamin Sterling Turner | Number of the Web Site Used for the Fact |
|-------------------------------------|--|
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African-American Legislators in Reconstruction Alabama

1867 Constitutional Convention

Ben F. Alexander - Greene
Samuel Blandon - Lee
John Carraway - Mobile
Thomas Diggs - Barbour
Peyton Finley - Montgomery
James K. Greene - Hale
Ovide Gregory - Mobile
Jordan Hatcher - Dallas
Benjamin Inge - Sumter
Washington Johnson - Russell
Columbus Jones - Madison
L.S. Latham - Bullock
Thomas Lee - Perry
J. Wright McLeod - Marengo
James T. Rapier - Lauderdale
Lafayette Robinson - Madison
Benjamin F. Royal - Bullock
Alfred Strother - Dallas

1875 Constitutional Convention

Hugh A. Carson - Lowndes
Alexander H. Curtis - Perry
Greene S.W. Lewis - Perry

Legislature 1868

Senate

Benjamin F. Royal - Bullock

House

Benjamin Alexander - Greene
James H. Alston - Macon
Matt Avery - Perry
Samuel Blandon - Lee
Nathan A. Brewington - Lowndes
Richard Burke - Sumter
John Carraway - Mobile
George Cox - Montgomery
Thomas Diggs - Barbour
Joseph Drawn - Dallas
Ovide Gregory - Mobile
James K. Greene - Hale
D.H. Hill - Bullock
George Houston - Sumter

1868 House – continued

Benjamin Inge - Sumter
Columbus Jones - Madison
Edward R. Rose - Marengo
Shandy W. Jones - Tuscaloosa
Horace King - Russell
Thomas Lee - Perry
Greene S. W. Lewis - Perry
Jefferson McCalley - Madison
A.G. Richardson - Wilcox
Lawrence S. Speed - Bullock
W.L. Taylor - Chambers
Holland Thompson - Montgomery
William V. Turner - Elmore
Spencer Weaver - Dallas
L. J. Williams - Montgomery
Henry Young - Lowndes

Legislature 1870

Senate

B.F. Royal - Bullock

House

George W. Braxdell - Talladega
Thomas Clark - Barbour
Henry A. Cochran - Dallas
Henry H. Craig - Montgomery
Alexander H. Curtis - Perry
Thomas H. Diggs - Barbour
John Dozier - Perry
William D. Gaskin - Lowndes
Edward Gee - Dallas
James K. Greene - Hale
Jere Haralson - Dallas
Horace King - Russell
R.L. Johnson - Dallas
Henry St. Clair - Macon
Lawrence Speed - Bullock
Holland Thompson - Montgomery
Mansfield Tyler - Lowndes
Levie Wells - Marengo
L.J. Williams - Montgomery

Legislature 1872

Senate

A.H. Curtis - Perry
Jeremiah Haralson - Dallas
John W. Jones - Lowndes
Lloyd Leftwich - Greene
Benjamin F. Royal - Bullock

House

William E. Carson - Lowndes
Thomas J. Clarke - Barbour
Henry A. Cochran - Dallas
Mentor Dotson - Sumter
John Dozier - Perry
Hales Ellsworth - Montgomery
Samuel Fantroy - Barbour
Joseph H. Goldsby - Dallas
James K. Greene - Hale
R.L. Johnson - Dallas
Reuben Jones - Madison
Greene S.W. Lewis - Perry
Perry Mathews - Bullock
January Maull - Lowndes
Willis Merriwether - Wilcox
G.R. Millen - Russell
George Patterson - Macon
Samuel J. Patterson - Autauga
Robert Reed - Sumter
Bristo W. Reese - Hale
Lawrence S. Speed - Bullock
Henry St. Clair - Macon
Lawson Steele - Montgomery
William Taylor - Sumter
B.R. Thomas - Marengo
Frank H. Threatt - Marengo
J.R. Treadwell - Russell
Thomas H. Walker - Dallas
A.E. Williams - Barbour
L.J. Williams - Montgomery

Legislature 1874

Senate

Alexander H. Curtis - Perry
James K. Greene - Hale
Jeremiah Haralson - Dallas
John W. Jones - Lowndes
Lloyd Leftwich - Greene

Benjamin F. Royal - Bullock

House

G.W. Allen - Bullock
Elijah Baldwin - Wilcox
Granville Bennett - Sumter
William H. Blevins - Dallas
James Bliss - Sumter
Matthew Boyd - Perry
Hershel V. Cashin - Montgomery
Elijah Cook - Montgomery
D.J. Daniels - Russell
Charles Fagan - Montgomery
Adam Gachet - Barbour
Prince Gardner - Russell
William Gaskin - Lowndes
Charles E. Harris - Dallas
A.W. Johnson - Macon
Samuel Lee - Lowndes
Greene S.W. Lewis - Perry
Edwin C. Locke - Wilcox
Jacob Martin - Dallas
Perry Matthews - Bullock
Willis Merriwether - Wilcox
Edward Odum - Barbour
George Patterson - Macon
Bristo W. Reese - Hale
Robert Reid - Sumter
Charles Smith - Bullock
A.E. Williams - Barbour
J.R. Witherspoon - Perry
Manly Wynne - Hale

Legislature 1876

Senate - none

House

Elijah Baldwin - Wilcox
William H. Blevins - Dallas
Hugh A. Carson - Lowndes
Hershel V. Cashin - Montgomery
Charles O. Harris - Montgomery
Green T. Johnston - Dallas
Captain Gilmer - Montgomery
Greene S.W. Lewis - Perry
Nimrod Snoddy - Greene
William J. Stevens - Dallas

Legislature 1878

Senate - none

House

George English - Wilcox

Hugh A. Carson - Lowndes

Sources: Richard Bailey, *Neither Carpetbaggers nor Scalawags* (2010); Beth Thacker [long-term staff member of the House of Representatives], unpublished roster of Alabama House members, 1997.

Biography of Benjamin Sterling Turner

Student Name: _____

Directions: Using the Web Research Assignment sheet that you have completed, write a biography of Benjamin Sterling Turner. You will be graded using the rubric below.

- You will use the facts to write a ONE PARAGRAPH biography, complete with the role that Benjamin Sterling Turner played in Reconstruction in Alabama.
- Please remember that you may NOT copy information, you must use your own words.
- You may ONLY use the Web sites provided and you may NOT use *Wikipedia*.
- You must have an introductory sentence and a conclusion sentence.
- You must have at least FIVE (5) sentences in your paragraph.

| CATEGORY | 4 points | 3 points | 2 points | 1 point |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| Focus on Topic (Content) | There is one clear, well-focused topic. Main idea stands out and is supported by detailed information. | Main idea is clear but the supporting information is general. | Main idea is somewhat clear but there is a need for more supporting information. | The main idea is not clear. There is a seemingly random collection of information. |
| Accuracy of Facts (Content) | All five facts are reported accurately. | Four facts are reported accurately. | Three facts are reported accurately. | Less than three facts are reported OR most are inaccurately reported. |
| Word Choice | Writer uses vivid words and phrases that linger or draw pictures in the reader's mind, and the choice and placement of the words seems accurate, natural and not forced. | Writer uses vivid words and phrases that linger or draw pictures in the reader's mind, but occasionally the words are used inaccurately or seem overdone. | Writer uses words that communicate clearly, but the writing lacks variety, punch or flair. | Writer uses a limited vocabulary that does not communicate strongly or capture the reader's interest. Abbreviations may be present and detract from the meaning. |
| Grammar & Spelling (Conventions) | Writer makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content. | Writer makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content. | Writer makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content. | Writer makes more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content. |
| Capitalization & Punctuation (Conventions) | Writer makes no errors in capitalization or punctuation, so the paper is exceptionally easy to read. | Writer makes 1 or 2 errors in capitalization or punctuation, but the paper is still easy to read. | Writer makes a few errors in capitalization and/or punctuation that catch the reader's attention and interrupt the flow. | Writer makes several errors in capitalization and/or punctuation that catch the reader's attention and greatly interrupt the flow. |

TOTAL POINTS _____