

Reconstruction

After the Civil War ended, the country needed to rebuild. The period following the Civil War in which Congress passed laws designed to rebuild the country and bring the southern states back into the Union was called **Reconstruction**.

During this time, Virginia faced many problems. Millions of freed African Americans needed housing, education, clothing, food, and jobs because as enslaved African Americans, they had very little. Virginia's economy was in ruins because money had no value, banks were closed, and railroads, bridges, plantations, and crops were destroyed.

The government took measures to solve these problems. The **Freedmen's Bureau** was a government agency that provided food, schools, and medical care for freed African Americans and others in Virginia. **Sharecropping** was a system common in Virginia after the war in which freedmen and poor white farmers rented land from a landowner by promising to pay the owner with a share of the crop.