Now that the Civil War was over, blacks wanted the same rights that whites had. Many whites in the South did not want this to happen. They did everything in their power to continue to control the blacks who stayed in the South.

One way they tried to control blacks was with Black Codes. These codes or rules were a way for whites to try to keep things the same as they were before the Civil War. These rules would limit the freedoms of blacks who used to be slaves.

Black Codes were different in every state in the South. But many of the laws were very similar. They all had the same goal in mind. The laws would continue to control the lives of former slaves.

The states started the codes after they rejoined the Union. Under the Republican plan, the states had to ratify the Thirteenth Amendment before they could rejoin the Union. This amendment outlawed slavery in the entire country. The Black Codes were a way to still control the former slaves.

These rules regulated rights from marriage to owning land. It forced men to work as farmers or laborers. Even women who wanted to stay home with their children could not. They were also forced to go to work.

Blacks who weren't working could be charged with vagrancy. A person found guilty of this could be fined or whipped. He or she could also be put into jail.

The codes set the hours that former slaves could work. It told them how to behave and what their jobs were. The Black Codes put a limit on almost everything that they did.

The rules prevented blacks from growing their own crops. Former slaves were having a hard time finding their own land. These rules made it even harder for them to survive on their own.

Blacks were not allowed to live or own houses within city limits. They also could not enter a town without permission. Often, they weren't allowed to enter a town at all after dark. This further limited what kind of jobs they could do.

If blacks could not enter a town without permission, it made it harder for them to find work there. This made it harder for them to do anything but be a farmer on another man's land. Often former slaves would have to work for the man that had owned them before the war.

People who were working had to sign an agreement in January. The agreement said that they would work for one year. If the person left before the one year was up, he or she could lose all of the money that was made so far.

The Black Codes angered the people in the North. The Civil War had been fought to restore the Union and end slavery. These new laws were a way for the South to avoid the fact that they had lost the war.

After the elections of 1866, Republicans had control of Congress. They split the South into five parts. Each part was put under the control of the military. New elections were held and blacks were allowed to vote. Most of the Black Codes were repealed under the new governments and were never started again.

Questions

1. What outlawed slavery in the entire country?
2. Why were Black Codes started?

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3. Most former slaves were forced to work as:
   A. Farmers
   B. Blacksmiths
   C. Store clerks

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4. A black who was found not working could be charged with:
   A. Nothing
   B. Vagrancy
   C. Robbery

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5. The Black Codes angered people in the:
   A. North
   B. South
   C. West

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6. Who took control of Congress in the election of 1866?
   A. Democrats
   B. Republicans
   C. Whigs

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Do you think blacks in the South could have done anything to fight back against the Black Codes? Explain your answer.