Reconstruction
Within a few months of the surrender, white Georgians regained their political rights: President Andrew Johnson permitted them to elect delegates to a state constitutional convention. Johnson's plan of restoration, or Reconstruction, of the Union was to reestablish the state governments and then readmit the states to Congress. The delegates duly repealed the 1861 ordinance of secession and recognized the abolition of slavery. They failed, however, to give blacks the right to vote or to testify against whites in court. In general, the new constitution maintained white supremacy. Constitutions drafted in the other Confederate states were similar. The legislatures of Georgia and the other states also passed black codes, a series of laws severely restricting the liberties of the newly freed blacks.

Partly because of these acts by the Southern states, the radical wing of the Republican Party in Congress wrested control of Reconstruction from President Johnson and imposed the harsher regime called Radical Reconstruction. In March 1867 Congress put all the ex-Confederate states except Tennessee under military rule. Readmission to the Union was made conditional on their adoption of new constitutions acceptable to Congress. They were required to extend the vote and basic civil rights to all men, regardless of race. The Republican Party now gained control in Georgia, based on a coalition of blacks, businessmen, and white small farmers from the northern mountain counties. This coalition in 1868 elected a Republican governor, Rufus B. Bullock, and a legislature that ratified the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The amendment extended citizenship to anyone born in the United States and promised all people the equal protection of the laws. Georgia was readmitted to the Union in 1870.

Republican rule was soon undermined, however, by the violence of a secret terrorist organization, the Ku Klux Klan, which acted as a clandestine arm of the state Democratic Party. In 1868 alone, more than 300 Georgia blacks were murdered or assaulted.
by white terrorists. It was soon apparent that most white Republicans in Georgia were not strongly committed to equal rights. Several months into the 1868 legislative session, many Republicans joined with the Democrats in expelling black legislators although they had been fairly elected. The following year the legislature failed to ratify the 15th Amendment, which prohibited race from being used as a requirement for voting.

Despite a feeble attempt by the U.S. Army to restore order, the Republican Party in Georgia was finished. When a new legislature took office in 1871, Governor Bullock fled the state to avoid being impeached. Despite charges of corruption against the Republicans, it is clear that Democrats were also involved in dirty dealings; and corruption did not end with the return of Democratic rule. The state was under one-party rule by the Democrats for almost the next 100 years.

Recovery and Growth
Economically as well as politically, Georgia was greatly disrupted by the war and its aftermath. The state slowly recovered during the latter part of the 19th century. With the aid of Northern as well as Southern capital, new banks and businesses were founded, and railroad and business facilities were restored. After Reconstruction, almost all prominent politicians in Georgia were Democrats. One faction was known as the New Departure, or Bourbon, Democrats, who encouraged industrialization. The cotton textile industry was expanded; the production of cottonseed oil, cattle feed, and fertilizer was undertaken. In the 1870s, Georgia became a major source of naval stores, and other natural resources were developed. Atlanta, which became the state capital in 1868, grew into a prosperous manufacturing and commercial center.

The hands of the Bourbons were tied, however, by a new constitution in 1877, which prohibited state debt, limited state funding of public schools to the elementary grades, prevented most forms of aid to business, and guaranteed rural control of the legislature. In general, farmers wanted low property taxes and few government services, so the state was prevented from doing much to attract industry. Southern businesses were further handicapped by discriminatory railroad rates, which favored Northern over Southern shippers. Not surprisingly, Georgia and the South lagged far behind the rest of the country economically.
Agriculture remained the chief economic activity, but many large cotton and rice plantations, formerly dependent on slave labor, were broken up into smaller farms operated by tenant farmers or
sharecroppers. Rice production ceased, but the production of cotton, emphasized under the sharecropping system, continued to increase. A modest trend toward diversified farming began in the 1890s with the introduction of peach trees. Soon Georgia was noted for its peach, apple, and pecan orchards. Still, Georgia remained dependent on the cotton crop. A symptom of Georgia's agricultural stagnation was the high rate of sharecropping and tenant farming. By 1910 half the white farmers and 87 percent of the blacks did not own the farms they operated. Sharecropping and tenant farming were substitutes for paid farm labor where little cash was available to pay wages. A sharecropper raised part of the landlord's crop and was paid a share of the profits after deductions for living expenses and the cost of tools and supplies. A tenant farmer sold what he raised and paid the landlord a share of the profits as rent. The landlord chose the crop to raise and either owned it (in sharecropping) or had a lien on it (in tenant farming). If the profit was low, the landlord's share was paid first. The cropper or tenant took what was left or, if none was left, got an advance to keep going for another year.

In the effort to recover financially, landowners relied almost exclusively on their traditional cash crop, cotton. However, the price of cotton was low through the rest of the century, while living costs rose. Mounting debt forced small farmers to give up their land and become tenants or sharecroppers. Once in that system, they were forced to remain because they could seldom earn enough to pay off their yearly advances. Not until World War II (1939-1945), when widespread mechanization of agriculture made sharecropping unprofitable, did the system begin to disappear.

Some impoverished whites were able to escape from the fields to the factories. However, Georgia industry demanded low skills and paid low wages. Company paternalism protected workers to some degree, as mill owners typically provided housing, schools, hospitals, and churches. Nonetheless, even young women in the Georgia mills were described in 1891 by an observer as carrying "the weight of a century on their bowed backs ... a slouching gait; a drooping chest ... yellow, blotched complexion; dead-looking hair; stained lips, destitute of color and revealing broken teeth—these are the dower of girlhood in the mills." During the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries, industry offered little opportunity for Georgia workers to rise in society.

The Agrarian Revolt
As elsewhere in the nation, small farmers suffered as wealth created by commerce and manufacturing was concentrated in the hands of a few business barons. Among the causes of unrest were the declining prices of farm products, the growing indebtedness of farmers to merchants and banks, and discriminatory freight rates imposed on farmers by the railroads. In the 1870s and 1880s American farmers in the Midwest formed self-help groups such as the Grange and Farmers' Alliance. The movement spread nationwide and was called populism. When these organizations decided that agricultural grievances had to be addressed with political action, they formed an important third political party, the People's Party.

A leading spokesperson for both the Alliance and the People's Party was Congressman Thomas Watson of Georgia. His radical views, his willingness to appeal to black farmers, and his outspoken attacks on the two major parties made the 1892 election in his Tenth District a focus of national attention. The dominance of the state Democratic Party, which stood for white power, was seriously threatened, and they stole the election using a variety of methods. Watson's opponent, Major James Black, publicly warned of the specter of black "domination." Newspapers inveighed against "anarchy and communism." Ballot box stuffing, intimidation, and bribery were used flagrantly. In one county the election judges accepted a total vote, overwhelmingly for Black, that was far beyond the number of registered voters in the county. Watson fought through several bitter losing campaigns for the People's Party, running for vice president and president, among other offices, before the party faded in 1908. Ironically, in his embittered old age, when he had turned into an anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic white supremacist, he was finally elected a Democratic U.S. senator from Georgia in 1920. He died in office in 1922.

The populists' coalition of black and white farmers had fallen apart after 1896 as a result of intimidation and white susceptibility to racist Democratic appeals. Segregation of the races, through separate public facilities for whites and blacks, became a basic rule in Georgia and all Southern society in the last two decades of the 19th century. Blacks had to live in different parts of towns, go to separate schools, eat at separate restaurants, and use different laundries, restrooms, and even drinking fountains. The facilities provided for blacks were never as good as those provided for whites. The poll tax and other devices were instituted to prevent most blacks from voting.
World War I and After
During World War I (1914-1918) the country’s needs stimulated growth in Georgia’s industries, and Georgia farmers profited from high wartime prices for their crops. Good times continued into the 1920s for Atlanta, Georgia’s largest city. Atlanta’s growth was largely a product of Georgia’s excellent network of railroads, which brought trade and tourist dollars to Atlanta. The Coca-Cola Company, started in the 1880s, was the city’s best known industrial concern. Under the leadership of Robert Woodruff, Coca-Cola in the 1920s began to expand its markets throughout the world. Atlanta was also a banking and insurance center. During the early part of the 20th century, Atlanta became a premier cultural center for the Deep South. It was the home of a symphony orchestra, numerous blues and country music performers, and a number of colleges for blacks and whites.

In rural areas, however, prosperity did not last long after the war. During the early 1920s much of the state’s cotton crop was destroyed by the boll weevil. In addition, the soil in many areas was exhausted by overproduction and erosion. Thousands abandoned the farms and migrated to cities and towns. So many blacks left the region for Northern cities that their exodus is called the Great Migration. The hard times of the 1920s were followed by the even harder times of the Great Depression, which lasted through the 1930s. By the 1940s, the old plantation system was gone. The number of farms had declined and the remaining farmers consolidated their holdings and began to operate increasingly with machinery. Diversification became a necessity, with peanuts, soybeans, cattle, poultry, and tree farms replacing cotton.

Political Developments, 1930s-1940s
During the early 1930s, Governor Richard B. Russell, Jr., was instrumental in reorganizing some branches of the state government. One major change was the placing of all of the separate state-supported institutions of higher learning under the administration of a single state board of regents. Eugene Talmadge, who succeeded Russell as governor in 1933, was the major figure in Georgia politics for the next 12 years. In his first two terms he strenuously opposed the attempt of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s administration to establish its New Deal programs of economic relief in the state. However, Talmadge’s successor, Eurith D. Rivers, was a Roosevelt supporter, and various federal and state relief programs were carried out in Georgia during his two terms. The state’s revenues failed to meet the cost of its relief services, however, and Talmadge was elected again in 1940 on a platform of economy in state
government. He continued most of Rivers's programs despite his past opposition to them.

After Governor Ellis Arnall took office in 1943, Georgia entered a period of progressive change. It became the first state in the nation to lower the voting age to 18. Before most Deep South states, Georgia in 1945 abolished the poll tax. A merit system was instituted for jobs in state government, and a new constitution was adopted. Arnall went to the U.S. Supreme Court with a case against the railroads, forcing them to charge the same freight rates in the South as they did in other parts of the nation. Between 1943 and 1947, Arnall achieved the most remarkable record of progressive reform that Georgia had seen to that time.

Rapid change, however, was not favored by all, and provoked a backlash in "Gene Talmadge country," the rural areas of south Georgia. Talmadge was elected governor for the fourth time in 1946, but died before inauguration. The legislature then chose his son, Herman, as governor on the grounds that he had received the largest number of write-in votes in the election. Arnall, maintaining that the governorship should go to the lieutenant governor-elect, Melvin E. Thompson, refused to leave his office on inauguration day. Talmadge then forcibly occupied the office. Thompson set up a government in exile in downtown Atlanta, and for 67 days Georgia had two governors. Finally the state supreme court ruled in favor of Thompson, and he was sworn in. In a special election in 1948, however, Herman Talmadge defeated Thompson and served the last two years of his father's term. Talmadge was reelected in 1950, and later represented the state in the U.S. Senate for 24 years.

**Economic Growth During World War II and the 1950s**

From the Civil War to the mid-20th century, Georgia was one of the poorest states in the Union; the only states as poor were other Southern states. Indeed, during the Great Depression, President Roosevelt made a speech in Georgia declaring the South to be "the Nation's No. 1 economic problem." In 1940 the average Georgia family earned only 57 percent as much as the typical family nationwide. The American entry into World War II in 1941 began the economic revival of Georgia and the South. Military bases were created or expanded near virtually all sizable Georgia towns. Federal dollars poured into the region to build airplanes, ships, and munitions for the war effort. Suddenly there were more good jobs at decent pay than Georgians had ever known.
A good example of the economic impact of the war is the Bell Aircraft Company, which converted Marietta from a sleepy town to a booming industrial center. Bell built a plant in Marietta in 1942 to build B-29 bombers for the war effort. A town of about 8,000 in 1940, Marietta became the home of a business employing almost 29,000 workers, and at much higher wages than Southerners were accustomed to earning. With a large number of men off fighting, a significant part of the workforce consisted of women. Despite Southern customs of segregation, Bell also provided some opportunities for blacks. Although the Bell plant closed at the end of the war, it was reopened by Lockheed Corporation in 1950 with the outbreak of the Korean War. In the 1990s, Lockheed continued to be a major employer, relying primarily on government contracts.

When the war ended, soldiers returned home to households with much more spending money than in the past. By 1950 the average Georgia family income was 70 percent of the national average, and Georgians continued to narrow the income gap during the next several decades. National corporations, noting the healthier economy of the South, established regional headquarters in cities such as Atlanta. The availability of air conditioning made the hot, humid Southern summers less of a deterrent to Northerners. The war also improved the training of Georgia’s industrial workforce. A number of Northern industries moved south, attracted by the large labor pool, low wage scale, lack of unions, low taxes, and favorable climate. National migration patterns began to reverse. For decades many of the South's brightest young people had deserted the region for the greater opportunities of the North. By the mid-1950s more whites were moving into Georgia each year than were departing, and by the mid-1970s the same was true for blacks. Moreover, those arriving tended to be better educated and skilled than those leaving, so that the net gain for Georgia was large.

Some sluggish older industries became more dynamic as they moved to the South. For example, for more than 100 years, carpet manufacturers had made beautiful, high-quality woven rugs in Northern plants. The floor coverings were so expensive, however, that only the affluent could afford wall-to-wall carpeting. The typical prewar house had a hardwood floor because wood was cheaper than carpets. But in the Dalton area of north Georgia, local entrepreneurs in the 1940s built machines to produce carpeting by a new, cheaper technique called tufting. After they discovered in the 1950s that durable, inexpensive rugs could be made with nylon thread, the carpet industry experienced unparalleled growth. Within a generation of the war's end,
United States home builders had virtually stopped installing hardwood floors, and wall-to-wall carpeting was nearly universal. In the late 1990s north Georgia continues to be the center of the world carpet industry.

The Civil Rights Movement

The transformation of the South's economy was coupled with an even more remarkable alteration of society in the area of race relations. Black soldiers returning home from World War II were often in the forefront in demanding change. In general, young people were no longer willing to tolerate the indignities their parents had suffered. Soon the white politicians found themselves confronted with a movement demanding an end to racial segregation and discrimination.

In 1946 a federal court knocked down Georgia's white primary law, a device to ensure white control of party machinery. That February the vote of Atlanta blacks made the difference in sending to Washington a white liberal, Helen Douglas Mankin, the first Georgia woman elected to Congress. Police departments began to hire black officers, first in Savannah in 1947, then in Atlanta the next year; at that time, however, black police were only allowed to arrest fellow blacks.

The U.S. Supreme Court in 1954 decided, in Brown v. Board of Education, that segregated schools were unconstitutional. Soon Georgia blacks filed a number of cases in federal courts to force public schools and colleges to abide by the Brown decision. In January 1961 two students, Hamilton Holmes and Charlayne Hunter, forced the University of Georgia to open its doors to black students. That fall, following a federal court order in the case of Calhoun v. Latimer, the Atlanta public schools began to desegregate. Over the next decade the tradition of segregated education was fundamentally altered.

The civil rights movement in the United States was centered in Atlanta, which was the home of Martin Luther King, Jr., the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. In March 1960 black college students in Atlanta, and soon other Georgia cities, began holding sit-ins at segregated restaurants, lunch counters, parks, and churches. The nonviolent protests also included marching, picketing, and occasional boycotting of stores. While demonstrators were usually met with hostility, they sometimes got results. In Atlanta, for instance, business leaders feared the negative publicity the city received when it arrested or harmed peaceful demonstrators. Progressive mayors such as William B. Hartsfield and Ivan Allen, Jr., had worked hard to
build Atlanta into the commercial and transportation center of the South. They advertised Atlanta as "the city too busy to hate." By 1961 they were willing to end segregation at lunch counters and negotiate with civil rights leaders on other reforms.

At the same time, many Georgia politicians in the 1950s and 1960s engaged in massive resistance to integration of public facilities. Following Brown v. Board of Education the state threatened to cut off public funding to any school that integrated. In 1956 the state flag was changed to include the Confederate battle flag. For some this was merely a way to honor the memory of the brave soldiers who fought for the Confederacy, but for others it represented resistance to federal attempts to change the racist laws and customs of the past. In 1964 Congress passed a civil rights act that ended segregation in public places. Lester Maddox became a folk hero to some whites by closing his Atlanta restaurant rather than admit black customers. Two years later he was elected governor. While his record as governor was more progressive than his image, he nevertheless symbolized a defiant Georgia that stood outside the national mainstream.

In 1971 Maddox was succeeded by a man who projected a much different image—Jimmy Carter. In his inaugural address Carter said something that Georgians had not heard a governor utter since Reconstruction. The achievement of the civil rights movement in transforming attitudes was apparent when Carter announced: "I say to you quite frankly that the time for racial discrimination is over. Our people have already made this major and difficult decision, but we cannot underestimate the challenge of hundreds of minor decisions yet to be made." Carter went on to call for equal opportunity for all. Five years later, he was elected president of the United States. Carter himself has often credited the civil rights movement with making it possible for statesmen from the Deep South to ascend to the presidency. He represented a new generation of Southern leaders who no longer had to defend segregation and thus could appeal to the majority of Americans outside the region.

Carter was perhaps correct that the majority of Georgians, sometime in the 1960s and 1970s, stopped trying to defend segregation and white supremacy. A change in practices, to some degree, led to a change in attitudes. Yet a backlash against the civil rights movement was also apparent. The integration of the Atlanta public schools, a high crime rate, high taxes, and the high cost of housing, were contributing factors to white flight,
the movement of white residents from the city to the suburbs. Atlanta went quickly from being a majority-white to a majority-black city, encircled by a ring of white communities. In 1968 Georgians were so disenchanted with both the Democrats and the Republicans that they cast their presidential ballots for third-party candidate George Wallace of Alabama, the onetime symbol of Southern resistance to school integration.

Modern Georgia After 1970
Georgia in the last quarter of the 20th century has continued to be a place of contrasts and contradictions. On one hand it is a state of remarkable promise, an economic powerhouse with a thriving economy. On the other hand it remains a state with immense social problems, where opportunity is often far from equal for those in rural areas or inner cities. Atlanta has continued to symbolize modern, progressive Georgia. As far back as the 1920s, visionary Atlantans promoted the development of the city’s airport as the key to future growth. Following World War II, as air traffic increasingly supplanted passenger trains, the Atlanta airport grew into one of the nation’s busiest. The end of segregation allowed Atlanta in the 1960s to become the home of major league sports teams, first in baseball, then football and basketball. In the 1970s, blacks rose to political power. In 1972 Andrew Young, one of Martin Luther King’s chief lieutenants, became the state’s first black congressman since Reconstruction, and he was elected from a majority-white district. The next year Maynard Jackson became Atlanta’s first black mayor. When Carter became president, he named Young to represent the United States at the United Nations, where the former civil rights leader gained international influence.

The most visible example of modern Atlanta business leadership has been Ted Turner, who inherited a small outdoor advertising company and turned it into a communications empire, first through a cable television station, Turner Broadcasting System (TBS), then through the Cable News Network (CNN). In the meantime Turner became owner of two of the town’s sports teams, the Braves and the Hawks. While CNN carried Atlanta’s name abroad, state and local leaders put much money and energy into attracting foreign companies to the Atlanta area. In large part due to Atlanta’s success in becoming an international city and to the prestige throughout the world of leaders such as Carter, King, and Young, the Georgia capital was able to attract the 1996 Summer Olympic Games. The event was held during July and August 1996. The Olympic Games were generally considered a
success, despite some logistical problems and a still-unsolved bombing that killed two people.

While Georgia has grown in prosperity, it has also experienced with the rest of the South an amazing political transformation away from one-party rule by the Democratic Party. The Democratic Party generally dominated state and local politics in Georgia after Reconstruction. Successful candidates in Democratic primary elections were often assured of winning office. However, the perceived liberalism of the national Democrats on race issues was part of white Georgians’ alienation from the party. The South’s economic recovery produced a more affluent, better educated population, with more people living in suburbs. These voters tended to identify with the Republicans’ commitment to low taxes. They favored limiting the growth of federal welfare programs, and they considered the Republicans to be more pro-family than the Democrats.

The Republican Party became important in presidential politics in the state in the 1960s. Republican Barry Goldwater carried Georgia in the 1964 presidential election and that same year Howard (“Bo”) Callaway became the first Republican elected to Congress from Georgia since Reconstruction. In the 1968 presidential election Georgia supported George C. Wallace of Alabama, the candidate of the ultra-conservative American Independent Party.

Republican Richard Nixon won Georgia in the 1972 presidential election. In 1976 Jimmy Carter, the Democratic candidate and a former Georgia governor, carried both the state and the nation, becoming the first native Georgian to win the presidency. In the 1980 election, however, Georgia was one of only six states to support Carter. In that election, Republicans achieved their next major breakthrough in Georgia. Mack Mattingly defeated Georgia’s senior U.S. senator, Herman Talmadge. Georgia went for Republicans Ronald Reagan in 1984 and George Bush in 1988 but supported Democrat Bill Clinton of Arkansas in 1992. Although the Republicans lost their Senate seat in 1986, they won it back in 1992 with the election of Paul Coverdell. Greater success came in 1994 when Republicans captured 7 of Georgia’s 11 seats in the House. The Republicans not only seized control in Georgia, but for the first time in 40 years gained national control of Congress. Georgian Newt Gingrich, who helped mastermind the Republican takeover, became Speaker of the House.

In 1995 the state’s U.S. congressional districts were redrawn for the second time in three years after the U.S. Supreme Court declared that the 11th District, which had been gerrymandered to
produce a black majority, was unconstitutional. The 11th had been redrawn in 1992 to link black communities after the U.S. Justice Department told Georgia it was not in compliance with the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The high court, however, disagreed with the Justice Department and held that race could not be used as a predominant factor in drawing district boundaries. In 1996 the court upheld Georgia’s new districting map, which reduced the number of majority-black districts from three to one. Despite the redrawing, Georgia’s three black U.S. congressional representatives all won reelection in November 1996.

Georgia at the Millennium
Toward the end of the 20th century Georgia was growing much more rapidly than the nation as a whole. The state added a million residents in the 1980s, then another 723,000 between 1990 and 1995. Georgia’s 1995 population was approximately 7.2 million, making it the tenth largest state in the nation. People in other states and countries obviously found Georgia to be an attractive place to live: In the first half of the 1990s about 360,000 more people moved in to the state than moved away. The black population at mid-decade was growing slightly faster than the white population. Some 28 percent of Georgians had black ancestry, compared to 13 percent nationwide. By 1994 per-capita personal income in Georgia was 93 percent of the national average, while in the metropolitan Atlanta area it was 109 percent.

These positive indicators, however, masked the fact that not everyone participated in the good times. Georgia in the 1990s had one of the worst records of any state for the percentage of births to teenage and unwed mothers. The infant mortality rate in 1993 was 10.4 per 1,000 live births, compared to 8.4 per 1,000 nationwide. Twenty-nine percent of all Georgians age 25 or older lacked a high school diploma in 1990, compared to 25 percent in the rest of the country. The gap between whites and blacks was especially great. In 1989 per-capita income for Georgia’s black population was only 51 percent of that for whites, almost unchanged in 20 years and very close to what it was before the civil rights movement. Nevertheless, as the century comes to a close, Georgia is much closer to national norms than it once was.
Key Terms

Andrew Johnson
Black Codes
Radical Reconstruction
Rufus B. Bullock
Fourteenth Amendment
Ku Klux Klan
Bourbon
Atlanta
Georgia Constitution of 1877
Sharecropping
Mill towns
Populism or People's Party
Thomas Watson
Democratic Party
Republican Party
Segregation
Poll Taxes
White supremacy
The economic impact of World War I
Boll weevil
The Great Migration
Richard Russell, Jr.
Eugene Talmadge
Eurith D. River
Herman Talmadge
Franklin D. Roosevelt
The New Deal
Ellis Arnall
Melvin E. Thompson
The social and economic impact of World War II
Influence of national corporations in 1950s
The Civil Rights Movement
White primary law
Savannah
Brown v. Board of Education
Hamilton Holmes
Charlayne Hunter
Helen Douglas Mankin
Martin Luther King
Lester Maddox
Civil Rights Act of 1964
Jimmy Carter
William B. Hartsfield
Ivan Allen, Jr.
Maynard Jackson
Andrew Young
Barry Goldwater
Richard Nixon
Newt Gingrich
Voting Rights Act of 1965
"Massive Resistance"
George C. Wallace
Howard "Bo" Callaway
Maynard Jackson
Olympic Games