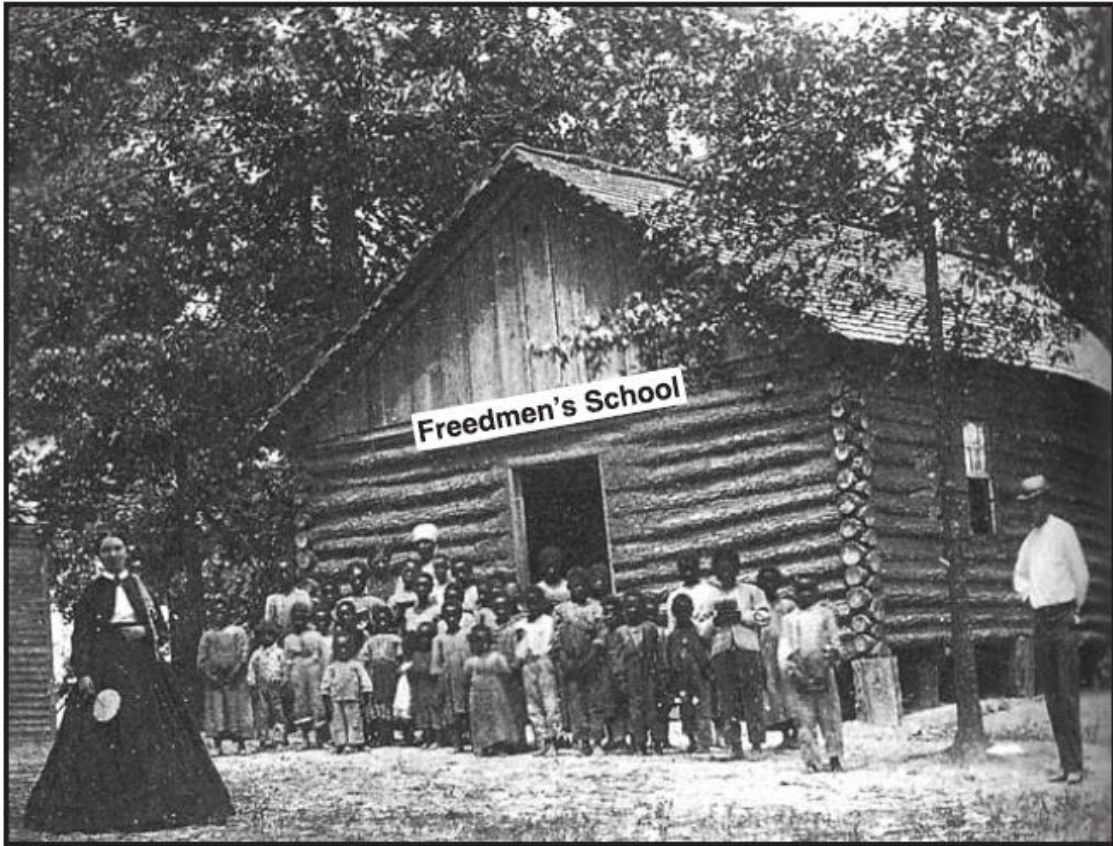


Warm-Up: Freedmen's Schools



By 1869, some 600,000 freed slaves attended schools set up by the **Freedmen's Bureau** – a federal agency created to help former slaves adjust to free life. For teachers, the schools relied on volunteers from the North, half of which were women. Many had been abolitionists before the war, and teachers found both old and young eager to learn. Grandmothers and granddaughters sat side by side in the classroom. Some schools stayed open nights so that sharecroppers could attend class after a day's work in the fields. One bureau agents in South Carolina wrote that the freed slaves *"will starve themselves, and go without clothes in order to send their children to school."* The Freedmen's Bureau laid the foundations for the South's public school system by setting up over 4,300 grade schools. The bureau created four universities, giving blacks the opportunity to get a higher education.

1. What was the Freedmen's Bureau and how did it help former slaves?
2. Why do you think that former abolitionists made good bureau teachers?
3. How do we know that formers slaves were motivated to learn? What might be the reason for this?
4. What long term effects did the Freedmen's Bureau have on the South?