

## Sharecropping Lesson Plan

### Central Historical Question:

*How accurate is the textbook's description of sharecropping?*

#### Materials:

- Overhead of Sharecropper Photograph
- Classroom Textbook Excerpt on Sharecropping
- Copies of Sharecropper Contract
- Copies of Guiding Questions

#### Plan of Instruction:

1. Focus Activity: Describe what you see in this picture. What is this a picture of? Why do you think that?
2. Share Out:
  - Explain to students that this is not a picture of slaves on a plantation, but rather, sharecroppers working on a plantation in Georgia in 1898.
  - Explain that the goal today is for students to figure out what sharecropping was.
3. In pairs, students read the classroom textbook's section on sharecropping.  
  
Ask students for a gist of their understanding of sharecropping.
4. Hand out Sharecropper Contract:
  - In pairs, students read the contract and answer the Guiding Questions.
  - As a class, review questions.
5. Discussion:
  - According to students, did the textbook give an accurate portrayal of life under sharecropping?
  - How did the contract expand or challenge the description in the textbook?

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#### Citation:

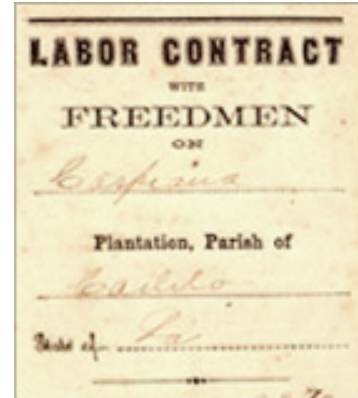
Grimes Family Papers (#3357), 1882; Held in the Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.



## A Sharecropping Contract: 1882 (Modified)

To everyone renting land, the following conditions must be agreed to:

For every 30 acres of land (rented by sharecroppers), I will provide a mule team, plow, and farming tools. The sharecroppers can have half of the cotton, corn, peas, pumpkins, and potatoes they grow if the following conditions are followed, but--if not--they are to have only two-fifths.



For every mule or horse furnished by me there must be 1000 good sized rails (logs) hauled, and the fence repaired if I so direct. All sharecroppers must haul rails (logs) and work on the fence whenever I may order. The wood must be split and the fence repaired before corn is planted. No cotton must be planted by sharecroppers on their home patches of land. No sharecropper is to work off the plantation when there is any work for them to do for me.

Every sharecropper must be responsible for all farming gear placed in his hands, and if not returned must be paid for unless it is worn out by use.

Nothing can be sold from their (sharecroppers') crops until my rent is all paid, and all amounts they owe me are paid in full.

I am to gin & pack all of the cotton and charge every sharecropper an eighteenth of his part, the cropper to furnish his part of the bagging, ties, & twine.

The sale of every sharecropper's part of the cotton to be made by me when and where I choose to sell, and after taking all they owe me.

*Source: Grimes Family Papers (#3357), 1882; Held in the Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.*

**“Sharecropper Contract” Questions**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

1. When and where was this contract written?
2. What did the sharecropper have to do in order to use the plantation owner’s land, farming tools, and mules?
3. Do you think this is a fair contract? Why or Why not?
4. What parts of this contract do you think caused the sharecroppers to be in debt to plantation owners?
5. Does this contract seem more or less extreme than the impression you had of sharecropping after you read the textbook? Explain.