

# Political, Social & Economic Changes (1877 - 1918)

## **Day 1**

# Learning Targets

- I can evaluate the impact of the **Bourbon Triumvirate**, Henry Grady, International Cotton Exposition, Tom Watson and the Populists, **Rebecca Latimer Felton**, the 1906 Atlanta Riot, the Leo Frank Case, and the county unit system on Georgia during this period.

# Redemption Period

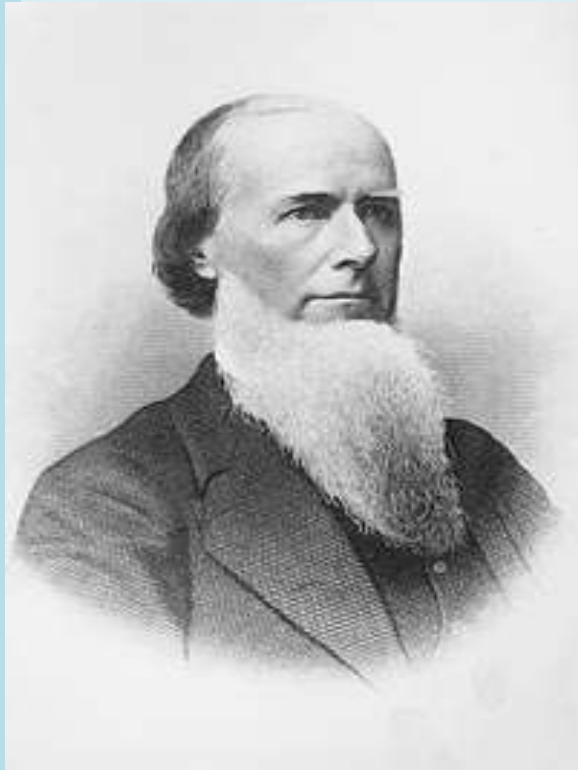


**The State was struggling to overcome the hardships that Reconstruction had brought to the state and a faltering economy.**

**Wanted to take back control of the state government from the Republicans.**

# The Bourbon Triumvirate

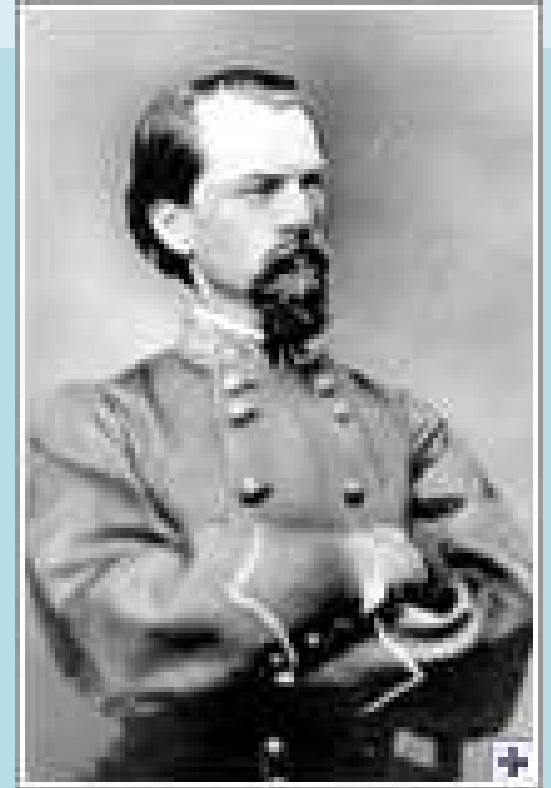
Powerful Democratic leaders, known as the  
“Bourbon Triumvirate”



**Joseph E.  
Brown**



**Alfred H.  
Colquitt**



**John B.  
Gordon**

# Bourbon Triumvirate???

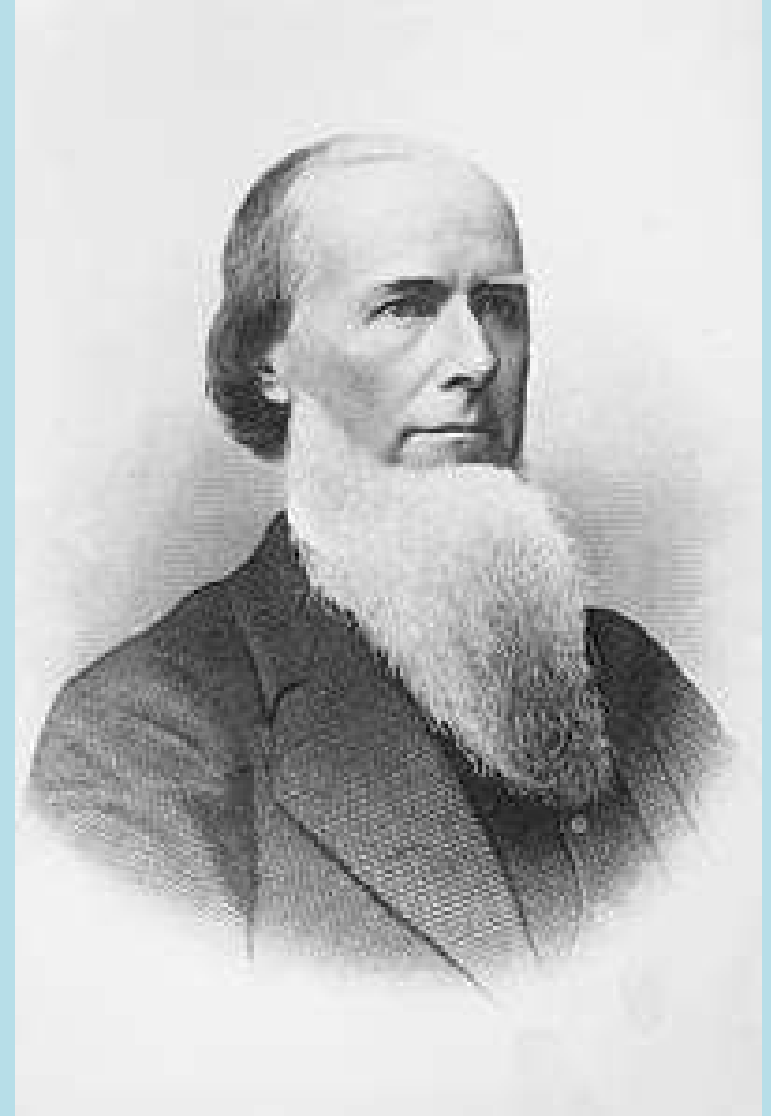
- ***Bourbon*** = name of a castle and territory in France, as well as a line of French kings who ruled for over 200 years.
- ***Triumvirate*** = a ruling body of 3.

# **Their Goals Were:**

- expand Georgia's economy and ties with industries in the North;**
- maintain the tradition of white supremacy (the belief that the white race is superior to any other race.)**

# Joseph E. Brown

- Oldest Member
- Born in South Carolina but grew up in Union County, Georgia
- Graduated from Yale Law School
- State Senator (1849 – 1855)
- Judge for the Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit
- 1857 – Became Georgia' Governor
- Popular “states’ rights” governor
- Chief Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court





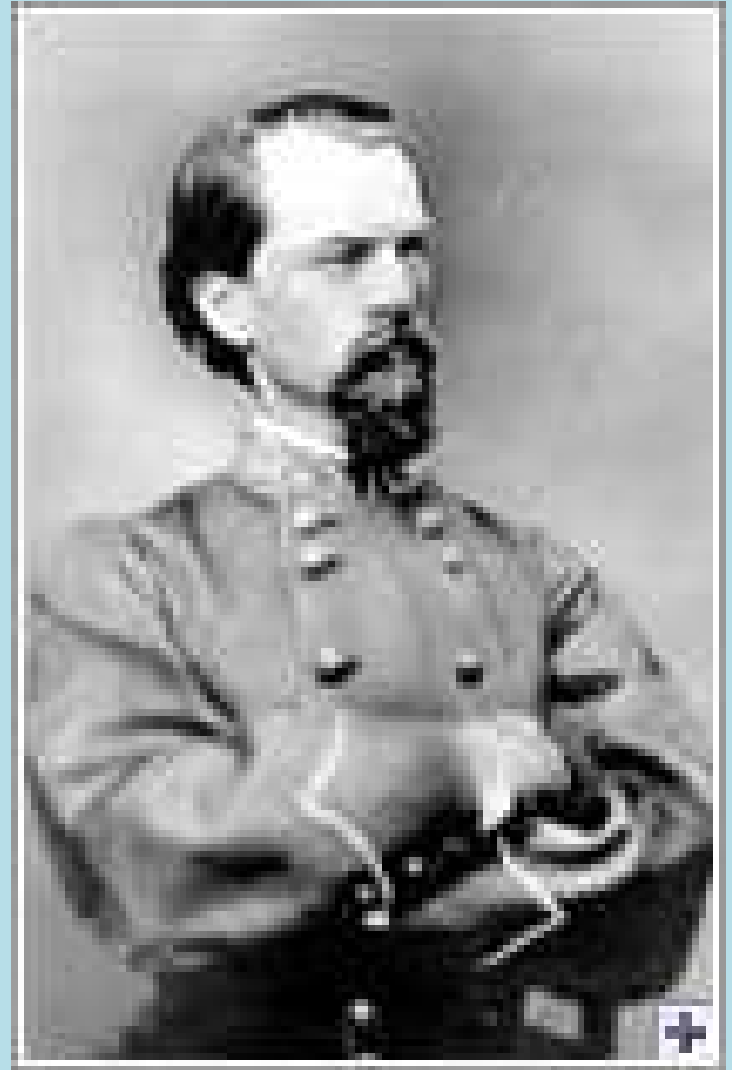
# Alfred H. Colquitt

- Graduated from Princeton University
- State Senator from 1883 – 1888
- Elected Governor in 1876 by the largest majority in state history up to that time
- State's Debt was reduced
- Political Bond with Joseph E. Brown



# John B. Gordon

- Born in Upson County Georgia
- Attended University of Georgia
- Lieutenant General in Civil War
- After war, wrote a book and became a popular speaker
- Defeated Alexander Stephens to become U. S. Senator.
- Governor of Georgia
- Reduced state's debt and brought new industry to Georgia
- Gordon College in Barnesville is named after him



**Along with Fiery Segregationist Robert Toombs, these men helped carry Georgia through economic reconstruction...**

**--Lowered taxes**

**--Reduced war debts**

**--Expanded business and industry**

# Not All Georgians Agreed



Bourbon  
Triumvirate



Democrats

# By this Time...

- The influence of the Republican Party had almost ended completely.
- Democrats took over state politics.



# Decline of the Bourbon Triumvirate

**“Independent Democrats” criticized the Bourbons for not attending to the needs of the poor or improve education and working conditions in factories, improve mental health facilities, or improve the lives of convicts...**



# Independent Democrats Emerge

- A new group calling themselves Independent Democrats was slowly gaining recognition.
- Leader: William Felton (Doctor, Farmer, Methodist Preacher, Public Speaker)
- His wife, Rebecca Latimer Felton worked with him to support political causes.



# ***The Cartersville Courier***

- ◆ Family-owned newspaper of the Feltons
- ◆ Used it to attack the Bourbons
- ◆ Traveled the state arguing that the leaders of the Democratic party in Georgia were ignoring the poor and lower middle class
- ◆ Also clashed over convict lease system





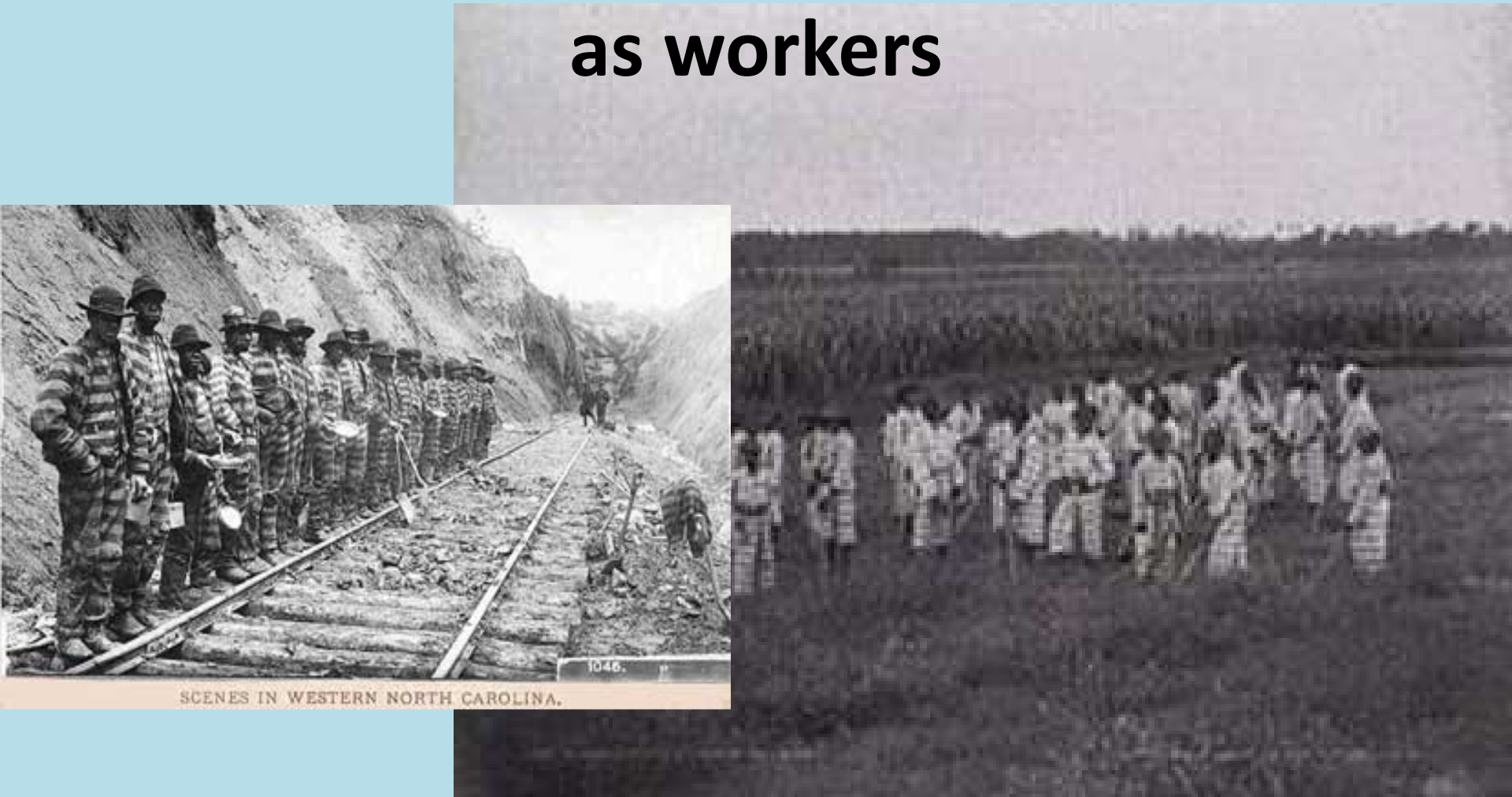
# Treatment of Prisoners

- **Serious problem**
- **Many prisons had been destroyed during Civil War**
- **After the war, lack of jobs led to increased crime**
- **90% were blacks**



# Convict Lease System

**“Rented” prisoners to companies to use  
as workers**



SCENES IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA.

**Most of the prisoners were leased to one of three large companies. Two of these companies were owned by Bourbons Joseph E. Brown and John B. Gordon. They paid the state \$25,000 a year, no matter how many convicts it used.**

### **PRISONERS**

- Complete public works projects such as rebuilding roads destroyed during the war.
- Convicts cleared land, farmed, mined coal and built railroads

### **COMPANIES**

- Provided housing and food
- Provided medical care
- Allowed prisoners to rest on Sundays

# Problems

- Rules were widely ignored.
- Prisoners often did not receive clothes, medical care, and little food.
- Paid laborers lost out on the jobs convicts did.
- Increased the number of poor and unemployed.



# Rebecca Latimer Felton

- Tireless worker for fairness and justice for the “little people.”
- Leader in the suffrage and temperance (anti-alcohol) movements
- Publically active for women’s rights
- Published her views in the *Atlanta Journal*.



# Dr. William Felton

- In 1874, Dr. Felton was elected to 3 times to Congress on a campaign to help the farmer.
- Became a member of the Georgia General Assembly in 1880.
- Pushed for improvements in education, prison reform, and limits on alcohol traffic in Georgia.

