

40 Acres and a Mule

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Description

Professor Eric Foner of Columbia University explains the origin of "forty acres and a mule."

Keywords

40 Acres and a Mule, Forty, Special Field Order 15, General Sherman, Reconstruction, South Carolina, Savannah, Georgia, Land Redistribution, Land Settlement, Plantation Area, Blacks, African Americans, Farmland

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Transcript

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Professor ERIC FONER (Columbia University):

And Sherman issues this "Special Field Order Number Fifteen," in which he says, "Alright, I'm gonna take all the land along the coast of South Carolina here" one of the richest plantation areas in the country, "and divide it up in 40-acre plots to black families. Black families can now have 40 acres of land here. Just come and get it. And, we'll also give you a mule because the army's got loads of mules and you need, so we'll give 'em a mule, too." That's the origin of "Forty Acres and a Mule." And thousands of black families are settled on "Sherman land," as they call it, in last few months of the Civil War. But, later on, Andrew Johnson has them all thrown off.