

# Reconstruction: North and South

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- ❖ **What were the different approaches to Reconstruction?**
- ❖ **How did Congress try to reshape southern society?**
- ❖ **What was the role of African Americans in the postwar south?**
- ❖ **What were the main issues in national politics in the 1870s?**

## The War's Aftermath

- **Important questions arose**
  - Should the Confederate leaders be tried for treason?
  - How should new governments be formed?
  - How and at whose expense was the South's economy to be rebuilt?
  - Should debts incurred by the Confederate state governments be honored?
  - Who should pay to rebuild South's railroads and buildings?
  - What was to be done for the freed slaves?
- Some wanted to forgive and forget, others were vengeful

## Development in the North

- **To some Americans the Civil War had been more truly a social revolution**
  - Lowered power of agrarian elite
  - Strengthened captains of industry
- **Government favored northeastern businessmen and western farmers**
- **In absence of southern members, Congress enacted Republican economic agenda**
  - Morrill tariff—doubled average level of import duties
  - National Banking Act—created uniform system of banking and currency
  - Transcontinental railroad legislation
  - Homestead Act of 1862—Congress voted free federal homesteads of 160 acres to settlers
  - Morrill Land Grant Act—conveyed to each state 30,000 acres of federal land per Congress member

## Devastation in the South

- **South contrasted to North**
  - Ruin and desolation
- **Property values collapsed**
  - Bonds and paper money was worthless
  - Expansion of cotton market was over, as was tobacco, rice, and hemp

## A Transformed South

- **Planters were left homeless and destitute**
  - Freeing of slaves, destruction of property, collapse of land value
- **Some were so embittered that they moved to Canada, Europe, South America, and Asia**
  - Some settled in Midwestern cities
- **Those that remained in the south found old social roles reversed**

- Negroes were living a good life, but still somewhat subservient to whites
- Fervent southern nationalists hated Yankees

### Legally Free, Socially Bound

- **Newly freed slaves suffered most of all**
  - Former slaves remained dependent
  - Even dedicated abolitionists shrank from proposals to confiscate white-owned land and distribute it to the freed slaves
  - Instead of land or material help, freed slaves often got advice about proper behavior

### The Freedmen's Bureau

- **Congress set up Bureau of Refugees**
  - Provide provisions, clothing, fuel to relieve the destitute
  - Agents were responsible for negotiating labor contracts
  - Providing medical care, schooling
  - Courts to deal the labor disputes and land titles
- **Stubbornness of whites thwarted efforts of Freedman's Bureau agents**
  - Congress was not willing to strengthen the Bureau
  - Temporary measures were uncertain

### The Battle over Reconstruction

- **The problem of reconstructing the South politically centered on deciding what governments would constitute authority in the defeated states**
- As Union forces advanced in the South, Lincoln named military governors in Tennessee, Arkansas, and Louisiana

### Lincoln's Plan and Congress's Response

- **Lincoln issued Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction:** any rebel state could form a Union government whenever a number equal to 10 percent of those who had voted in 1860 took an oath of allegiance to the Constitution and the Union had received a presidential pardon
- **Under this plan, government loyal to the Union appeared in Tennessee, Arkansas, and Louisiana but Congress recognized them neither in terms of representation nor in counting the electoral votes of 1864**
  - **Lincoln claimed right to direct Reconstruction under state republican governments**
  - Republican Congressmen argued that this implied Presidential, not Congressional role in Reconstruction
- **A few conservatives and most moderate Republicans supported Lincoln's program of immediate restoration**
  - **Radical Republicans favored sweeping transformation of southern society –wanted to dismantle planter class and Democratic Party**
- **Radicals wanted that Congress control the Reconstruction program, Lincoln wanted Presidential control**
  - **Wade-Davis bill:** in contrast to Lincoln's 10% plan, the Wade-Davis bill required that a **majority** of white male citizens declare their allegiance and that only those who could take an "ironclad" oath attested to their *past* loyalty could vote or serve in constitutional conventions
- **Lincoln vetoed Wade-Davis bill**
  - Republicans retaliated with **Wade-Davis Manifesto**—accused president of usurping power and attempting to use readmitted slaves to ensure his reelection

## The Assassination of Lincoln

- Lincoln was killed in Ford's Theater by John Wilkes Booth
- Booth was pursued and killed in a burning barn, his collaborators were convicted and hanged
- President Johnson pardoned them all except one (who was jailed)

## Johnson's Plan

- Johnson was short-tempered, lacked self-control, held prejudices, pro-Union, Democrat, racist
- Johnson's loyalty to the Union sprang from a strict adherence to the Constitution and belief in limited government
  - Preferred "restoration" to "reconstruction"
- Johnson's plan to restore the Union closely resembled Lincoln's
  - Proclamation of Amnesty: excluded people from pardon
- Johnson's plan for readmitting former Confederate states
  - Unionist became governor in each state
  - Lincoln's 10% requirement was omitted
  - Johnson called upon state conventions to invalidate secession ordinances, abolish slavery, repudiate debts
  - Each state was to ratify the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment
  - Johnson desired moderation and conciliation

## Southern Intransigence

- New state governments in the South were remarkably like the old ones
  - Extreme disregard for northern feelings
  - Alexander Stephens—former Confederate vice-President joined Senate
- New southern state legislature passed repressive "black codes" restricting African American freedom
  - Demonstrated that they intended to preserve slavery as nearly as possible
  - Black codes were intended to highlight distinction between whites and blacks
- Black codes varied from state to state
  - Blacks could own property
  - They could sue and be sued
  - Licensing for specific trades
  - Unemployed blacks were fined
- In response, moderate Republicans in Congress drifted toward Radical view
  - Joint Committee of Reconstruction—gather evidence of southern efforts to thwart Reconstruction

## The Radical Republicans

- The Republicans needed African American votes to maintain their control
- Secessionists were now arguing that rebel states had remained part of the Union
  - Thaddeus Stevens: argued that Confederate states were now conquered provinces
  - Most Republicans: forfeited-rights—Joint Committee on Reconstruction
    - States continued to exist but by the acts of secession and war, had reverted to territory-status
    - Congress > President

## Johnson's Battle with Congress

- Radical Republican victory gained majority in Congress.

- End of 1866—gradual waning of Johnson’s power and influence
- **Johnson challenged Congress in 1866 when he vetoed a bill to extend life of the Freedmen’s Bureau**
  - Bill violated Constitution
- **Johnson lost credibility when he assaulted Radical Republicans with speech**
  - Republicans backed away from Johnson
  - Radical Republicans took the offensive
- **In 1866, Radical-led Congress passed the Civil Rights Act**
  - Response to black codes
  - Declared all persons “born in the United States and not subject to any foreign power, excluding Indians, were citizens entitled to full and equal benefit of all laws”
    - **Johnson disapproved and vetoed**
    - **Congress overrode veto**
- Johnson lost public and political support

### The Fourteenth Amendment

- **To remove doubt of Civil Rights Act, joint committee proposed Amendment**
- **14<sup>th</sup> Amendment went far beyond the Civil Rights Act**
  - Reaffirmed the state and federal citizenship of person born or naturalized in the US
  - Forbade any state to “abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens”
  - States could not deny any person the equal protection of the laws
- **“Due process of law”**—state and federal power are subject to Bill of Rights
- Growing acrimony on both sides of the Reconstruction debates—race riots in Memphis and New Orleans

## Reconstructing the South

### The Triumph of Congressional Reconstruction

- **Split between Congress and Johnson**
  - Radical Republicans could easily override Johnson’s vetoes with their majority
- **Two acts passed in 1867 extended suffrage to African Americans in DC and the territories**
- Another law provided that the new Congress would convene on March 4 instead of the following December, depriving Johnson of a breathing spell.
- **Three basic laws promoting congressional Reconstruction:**
  - **Military Reconstruction Act**—victory of Radical Reconstruction; declared that there was no legal state governments or adequate protection of rights in rebel states, military governments set up
  - **Command of the Army Act**—required that all orders from commander in chief go through headquarters of the general of the army
  - **Tenure of Office Act**—required Senate permission for the president to remove any officeholder whose appointment the Senate had confirmed (used to maintain Radical Republican Stanton in cabinet)
- **Second Reconstruction Act:** remedied doubt of Constitutionality of Military Reconstruction Act
  - Directed the army commanders to register all adult men who swore they were qualified
- **Third Reconstruction Act:** directed registrars to go beyond the loyalty oath and determine each person’s eligibility to take it and authorized district commanders to remove and replace officeholders

- **Congress simply removed the power of the Supreme Court to review cases arising under the Military Reconstruction Act**
  - ***Texas v. White***: Supreme Court asserted the right of Congress to reframe state governments—**endorsed Radical Republicans**

### The Impeachment and Trial of Johnson

- **Johnson continued to pardon former Confederates**
  - **Johnson was narrow-minded and unwise**
  - Public opinion of him was poor
- **Initially, charges against Johnson were flimsy, but he presented reason for impeachment**
  - He deliberately violated Tenure of Office Act in order to test its constitutionality—Edwin Stanton
- **Republican dominated Congress passed eleven articles of impeachment**
  - Focused on unlawful removal of Stanton
  - Issued orders in violation of Command of the Army Act
  - Criticized for inflammatory speeches
- **At the trial, Johnson's attorneys pointed out that Tenure of Office Act was unconstitutional**
  - Vote was unsuccessful in impeaching—one short of two-thirds majority
  - Why did some Republicans vote in favor of Johnson? Two reasons:
    - Feared damage to separation of powers
    - Assured by Johnson's attorneys that Johnson would stop obstructing congressional policy
- **Failure to impeach damaged Radical Republican morale and support**

### Republican Rule in the South

- **Seven states were readmitted—compelled to ratify the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment**
  - 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment forbade states to deny vote based on race, color, servitude
- **Union League** was founded to promote support for the Union
  - League recruiters enrolled African Americans and loyal whites

## The Reconstructed South

### The Freed Slaves

- **Southern blacks were active agents in affecting the course of Reconstruction**
- **Participation in the Union army or navy had provided many freedmen with training in leadership**
- **Former slaves established independent churches after the war**
  - Blacks preferred Baptist denomination because of decentralized structure
  - By 1890 there were over 1.3 billion black Baptists in the South
- **The freed slaves also hastened to reestablish their families**
  - Freedmen's Bureau legitimized marriages
  - Many former slaves turned to sharecropping
- **African American communities also sought to establish schools**
  - Relied on Northern assistance due to former slaveholder resistance

### Blacks in Southern Politics

- **New role of African Americans in politics caused the most controversy**

- **Several African American delegates participated in the statewide political conventions**
  - Free mulattoes played the most prominent roles
- **In 1867 former slaves began to gain political influence**
  - Southern blacks resented the presence of northern brethren who moved south after the war
  - Northern blacks and southern free black elite opposed efforts to redistribute land to rural freedmen
  - **Political influence was limited mainly to voting**
  - **Only South Carolina's state convention had a black majority**
- **Although 600 blacks—most former slaves—served as legislators, none became governor, few judges**
  - Pinckney Pinchblack won office of lieutenant governor and served as acting governor

### **Carpets and Scalawags**

- **Top positions in southern state governments went primarily to white Republicans, whom the opposition whites soon labeled carpetbaggers and scalawags, depending upon their place of birth**
  - **Northern opportunists: carpetbaggers—usually Union veterans, teachers, social workers, preachers**
  - **Native white Republicans: scalawags—opposed secession, former Whigs**

### **The Radical Republican Record**

- **Conspicuous among Radical innovations were such steps toward greater democracy as requiring universal manhood suffrage, reapportioning legislatures, more elective state offices**
- **They constructed an extensive railroad network, established state school systems, gave more attention to the poor and orphanages, asylums, public roads, bridges, buildings**
- **Blacks achieved new rights and opportunities—equality before law and right to own property, carry business, enter professions, attend schools, read and write**
- **Corrupt practices—publican money and credit were often awarded to private corporations**

## **The Grant Years**

### **The Election of 1868**

- **Northern voters supported the “Lion of Vicksburg” because of his military record**
- **Favored by both parties but was more favored by Radical Republicans**
- **Republican platform:** black suffrage, payment of national debt in gold, “Let us have peace,” Congress-led Reconstruction
- **Democratic platform:** opposite positions on Reconstruction and debt, turned to **Horatio Seymour**
- **Grant won**
  - Other than Secretary of State, Hamilton Fish, cabinet members were incompetent
  - Passive, politically inexperienced

### **The Government Debt**

- **Financial issues dominated Grant's presidency**
- Treasury assumed that nation would revert to gold coins
- Debtors and agrarian groups opposed contraction of greenbacks—believed it would lower crop price
- Radical Republicans thought combination of high tariffs and inflation would generate more economic growth
- **Hard money advocates (bankers and merchants) opposed using greenbacks to pay back bonds**
  - **Grant agreed**

- **Public Credit Act of 1869:** endorsed paying back debt with gold
- **Refunding Act of 1870:** Treasury was to replace 6% Civil War bonds with a new bond specifying gold

## Scandals

- **Jay Gould and James Fisk:** planned to create public craze for gold
  - only danger to the scheme was the federal Treasury's selling large amounts of gold
  - Gold rose in price due to craze
  - On "Black Friday," Grant ordered treasury to sell a large quantity of gold and the bubble burst
- Many more scandals, involving politicians, pg 689

## White Terror

- **Southern resistance had turned violent**
  - Prototype of the KKK was first organized in Tennessee in 1866
  - Louisiana Knights of the White Camelia
- **Klansmen focused terror on prominent Republicans, black and white**
  - Especially active in South Carolina
- **Congress struck back with three Enforcement Acts to protect black voters**
  - Levied penalties on persons who interfered with citizens right to vote
  - Election of congressmen under surveillance by federal marshals
  - **KKK Act: outlawed Klan activities, suspend habeas corpus if necessary**
- **Weak and inconsistent enforcement**

## Conservative Resurgence

- **In upper south, KKK had little impact**
- **In Deep South, KKK violence impacted political balance—favored Democrats**
- **Northern interest in civil rights eroded due to many factors, including economic factors**
  - Desperate economic circumstances created new racial tensions
  - Republican control of South loosened as "Conservative" parties mobilized the white vote
  - Drift away from Radical Republicans due to white pressure
  - **Republican political control collapsed in many southern states—it remained only in Louisiana, South Carolina, and Florida**

## Reform and Election of 1872

- **Liberal Republicans favored free trade, gold, stable currency, end to federal Reconstruction, civil service reform**
  - Platform: condemned Radical Republican reconstruction policy
  - Nominated **Horace Greeley**
  - Democrats supported, but only to beat Grant
- **Grant won—he still had support of Radical Republicans**

## Panic and Redemption

- **Economic distress and public scandals explain why north lost interest in Reconstruction**
  - Withdrawal of greenbacks = financial unease
  - **Panic of 1873:** railroad bonds disintegrated, Jay Cooke and Company went bankrupt
    - **Blamed placed on Radical Republicans**

- **Hard times and political scandals favored Democrats, who won control of House**
- **Most people spent greenbacks first and used gold to settle foreign accounts—gold drain out of the US**
  - Led to reissue of greenbacks
  - Debtors hurt most
- **In 1874, Grant vetoed a bill to issue more greenbacks**
  - Called for resumption of gold
  - Made greenbacks as good as gold
  - **Specie Resumption Act of 1875: gold given to people who turned in greenbacks**
    - Led to infuriated paper-money supporters—**Greenback Party**

### The Compromise of 1877

- **Republicans nominated Rutherford Hayes**—Mulligan letters associated Blaine with railroad scandal
- **Democrats nominated Samuel Tilden**
  - Both candidates favored trend toward relaxing federal authority
- Democratic House and Republican Senate were unable to agree
  - **Special Electoral Commission was established—Hayes elected as president**
- **Wormley Conference, Compromise of 1877: The Republicans promised that if elected, Hayes would withdraw the last federal troops from Louisiana and South Carolina, in return, Democrats promised to withdraw opposition to Hayes**

### The End of Reconstruction

- **Republican government collapsed in Louisiana and South Carolina, as promised**
  - Most other Wormley Conference promises were forgotten or renounced
- **Protection of black civil rights crumbled due to pressure from white rule in the South and force of the Supreme Court narrowing down Reconstruction amendments**