

Reconstruction of the South

A. Conflicting Reconstruction Plans

1. While the Civil War was still in progress, Union politicians were already debating ways to achieve *Reconstruction* (bringing the South back into the Union)
 - a. *Abraham Lincoln* had the main goal of reunifying the nation, so he favored a more moderate Reconstruction plan that was more lenient on the South than congressional leaders desired
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. Before Lincoln could gain support for his Reconstruction plan, on April 14, 1865, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated at Ford's Theater in Washington by John Wilkes Booth
 - (1)
 - (2)
2. President Johnson favored a plan that restored political power to southerners if they merely swore allegiance to the U.S.
 - a. Under Johnson's plan, in exchange for the South accepting the end of slavery, he promised to uphold states' rights, with the laws of individual states taking precedence over federal regulations
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. Knowing that Johnson favored states' rights over federal laws encouraged southerners to adopt *Black Codes* (laws limiting the freedom of former slaves)
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - c. Johnson's actions paved the way for *Black Codes* aimed at preventing blacks from achieving equality at any level

3. Arguing that southerners had caused the Civil War, **Radical Republicans** favored punishment & harsh reorganization for the South, advocated full citizens' rights for African Americans, & wanted states' authority to be subordinate to federal power

B. Johnson & Congress Clash over Reconstruction

1. While initially few northerners supported black suffrage, after Congressional hearings in 1866 found evidence of postwar violence, many moderate Republicans joined forces with the Radicals
 - a. In February 1866, the Republican Congress passed a bill that would extend the life of the **Freedmen's Bureau** (a federal agency designed to aid freed slaves & relieve the South's immediate needs)
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. Congress was shocked when Johnson vetoed the *Freedmen's Bureau Bill*
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - c. When Johnson vetoed the *Civil Rights Act*, it destroyed his support in Congress & united both moderate & Radical Republicans against him
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - d. Republicans feared a future Democratic Congress might repeal the Civil Rights Act, so its provisions were written into the **14th Amendment**
 - (1)
 - (2)
2. During the 1866 congressional elections, Johnson campaigned around the Midwest in support of candidates who opposed the 14th Amendment, but northerners overwhelmingly voted Republican, putting them in firm control over the Reconstruction process capable of overriding any presidential veto

- a. The Radical Republican plan for Reconstruction was encompassed in the ***Reconstruction Acts of 1867***, which divided the former Confederacy into 5 military districts with Union army troops stationed to enforce order
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. Public opinion for the Radical Republicans began to wane when they impeached President Johnson for violating the ***Tenure of Office Act of 1867*** by his firing of Sec. of War Edwin Stanton
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - 3. During the presidential election of 1868, Republicans nominated Civil War hero Gen. Ulysses S. Grant against Democrat Horatio Seymour
 - a. Grant defeated Seymour in a surprisingly close race
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. Republicans were eager to protect the blacks right to vote, so they drafted the ***15th Amendment*** that said the right to vote could not be denied on account of “race, color, or previous condition of servitude”
- C. Reconstruction in the South
- 1. Radicals did not allow many former Confederates any say in their own governments & left this task to ***carpetbaggers***, ***scalawags***, & newly freed blacks
 - a. ***Carpetbaggers*** were northern Republicans that moved to the South to participate in state & local governments, while ***scalawags*** (scoundrels) were southern whites who backed the Union during the Civil War & then supported Reconstruction
 - (1)
 - (2)

- b. Several angry white southerners formed a secret terrorist group known as the *Ku Klux Klan (KKK)*, which was determined to destroy the Republican Party, to keep blacks from voting, & to frighten African American political leaders
 - (1)
 - (2)
- c. In 1870 & 1871, Congress passed the *Enforcement Acts* that empowered the federal government to combat terrorism with military force & to prosecute guilty individuals, which led to a dramatic decline in KKK violence for a time
- 2. During the *Panic of 1873*, Republicans were ridiculed for favoring businesses over laborers & abandoning universal voting rights
 - a. Such arguments resulted in Republicans losing control of Congress in the 1874 congressional election
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. To aid this shift of control, southern Democrats used terrorist tactics to “redeem” their states from Republican control
 - (1)
 - (2)
- 3. During the presidential election of 1876, Democrat Samuel J. Tilden beat Republican Rutherford B. Hayes by about 250,000 popular votes
 - a. Republicans challenged Tilden’s votes in 4 states & produced alternate returns favoring Hayes
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. A commission was appointed to resolve the conflict, which was composed of 8 Republicans & 7 Democrats
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - (3)

- c. In the *Compromise of 1877*, Democrats agreed to accept election results in exchange for Republicans promised federal improvements in the South & withdrawal of all remaining federal troops from the South
 - (1)
 - (2)

D. The New South

- 1. One of the final Reconstruction laws was the *Civil Rights Act of 1875*, which guaranteed blacks the right to ride trains & use public facilities
 - a.
 - b.
- 2. Southern legislators instituted several measures to deprive blacks of the right to vote in spite of Constitutional protections
 - a. Southern states got around the 15th Amendment's guarantee of voting rights by passing a number of restrictive measures including *poll taxes, literacy tests, "grandfather clauses,"* white primaries, & lengthy residence requirements
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - (3)
 - b. Additionally, whites also resorted to violence to keep blacks from voting
- 3. To further strip blacks of their rights, state legislatures initiated a series of laws designed to enforce *segregation* (known as *Jim Crow laws*)
 - a. *Segregation* is the legal separation of the races
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. The Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of segregation in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which ruled that "separate but equal" facilities did not violate the 14th Amendment

4. Leaders of the African American community responded to this Jim Crow era in different ways
- a. **Booker T. Washington** advocated that blacks needed to make themselves economically indispensable to whites & should not focus their energies on seeking to overturn *Jim Crow* laws
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - b. **W.E.B. Du Bois** criticized Washington's willingness to accommodate southern whites & argued that blacks should demand full & immediate equality & not limit themselves to vocational education
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - c. **Ida B. Wells** also argued that unfair treatment should be protested as she used her editorials of her Memphis newspaper to insist on federal action to prevent the lynching of African Americans
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - d. **George Washington Carver** advocated the utilization of undeveloped southern resources & sought to expand markets for crops like peanuts, sweet potatoes, pecans, & soybeans