

AP US History

Chapter 15 - Reconstruction and the New South

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Key Concepts

What are this chapter's key concepts?

- **5.3.II.A** - 13th Amendment abolished slavery, 14th/15th provided citizenship, legal rights, vote
- **5.3.II.C** - Short-term success for Republicans hoping to change power balance betw. Congress/presidency; Reconstruction ultimately limited pol. opportunities for slave due to Southern resistance
- **5.3.II.D** - Southern plantation owners continued to own land; slaves generally unable to own large amounts due to difficult upkeep for those starting with limited wealth
- **5.3.II.E** - Segregation/violence/Supreme Court/local tactics gradually removed rights from Afr. Americans; 14th/15th Amendments held strong
- **6.1.II.D** - Some southern industrialization based on "New South" ideals; still primarily based around share-cropping/tenant farming
- **6.3.II.C** - *Plessy v. Ferguson* → long-term segregation but Afr. Americans began to stand up for rights

The Problems of Peacemaking

What immediate challenges were faced by post-Civil War leaders?

After the Civil War devastated the South and left both blacks and whites in mourning, several Southerners began to reconsider their notion of freedom: blacks saw it as a life without slavery but also as equal rights to whites; whites saw it as white supremacy and independence from the North. When plans for Reconstruction emerged, Republicans divided into Conservatives, seeking pardoning for Southerners, and Radicals, seeking hard punishments. Lincoln sided with the Conservatives, creating a moderate plan requiring little for readmission. After his assassination at the hands of Booth, Johnson succeeded him and was known for showing little sympathy to the freedmen. His reconstruction plan was strongly based on the Wade-Davis Bill passed by radicals months earlier, placing far more stringent requirements on states before they could return to the Union.

What was the initial aftermath of the Civil War?

- Civil War → unparalleled devastation for South
 - Land, bridges, railroads destroyed; plantations and fields gutted
- White southerners had lost several close to them as well as way of life
 - Most white southerners, without slaves or Confederate bonds/currency or adult males → rebuilt lives independently
 - 258k killed soldiers → 20% of adult white male population killed; with nearly everyone having lost men close to them, mourning emerged for multiple years
 - "Lost Cause" emerged where whites mourned past South, revering Jackson, Lee, later Davis
- Conditions worse for blacks: many had served in war and most had left plantations → no immediate home
 - Roamed between cities, camping in countryside; some hoped for help from Union occupation forces

The aftermath led to both infrastructural and territorial destruction but also devastated the lives of whites and blacks alike. White southerners had lost nearly 20% of adult males in society, and their former way of life was in shambles. Blacks, too, were often left without homes and roamed between cities.

How did the African American notion of freedom conflict with the white one?

- African Americans saw freedom as no slavery but also rights/protections equal to whites
 - Some sought to achieve by redistributing economy (notably land) because all had worked to build it up
 - Others sought legal equality: with equal opportunity, could build themselves up to parallel whites
 - All unified in no white control → formed Afr. American communities with new churches, aid societies, school
- White southerners saw freedom as no Northern/federal intervention and white supremacy
 - Many attempted to restore this notion of freedom post-war by restoring society to antebellum state
 - Several kept black workers legally tied to plantations
- Union troops remained in South to protect freed slaves → Freedmen's Bureau under Congress
 - Bureau provided food to former slaves, created schools led by Freedmen's Aid Societies
 - Supported poor whites devastated by war
 - Never long-term solution

African Americans saw freedom as an unenslaved state with rights equal to whites through legal equality as well as their own independent communities; whites, contrastingly, saw freedom both as independence from the North but also as continued white supremacy. Black freedom was preserved and enforced by Union troops under the Freedmen's Bureau, who also established schools and provided food to freed slaves.

What were the critical questions of Reconstruction?

- Reconstruction based around partisan politics: Republican majorities of 1860/1864 due to disunited Democratic Party/no South
 - Both parties aware that restored South → Democrats likely to regain power → Republican programs issued during majority at risk
 - Several Northerners felt South should be punished for rebellion, and its society be modeled on urban North's
- Republican Party divided about how to approach readmission of South
 - All agreed that slavery must be formally abolished in all state codes; conservatives felt little more necessary
 - Radicals (like **Thaddeus Stevens**, **Charles Sumner**) demanded punishment of military leaders, several Southern whites deprived of right to vote, wealth of rich Southerners assisting Confederacy seized
 - * Some sought suffrage for blacks but many did not want to conflict with Northern laws
 - Moderates sought no punishment but greater concessions for Afr. American rights

Reconstruction was based around party politics and the Republican fear that regained Southern power would mean a Democrat majority. More radical Republicans thus argued for removal of the right to vote and confiscation of wealth for several Southern rights while conservatives pushed only for the abolition of slavery.

What formal plans emerged for Reconstruction?

- Lincoln supported Moderates/Conservatives on issue: felt few demands → more Southern Republicans; felt freedman fate could be postponed
 - Reconstruction plan pardoned white Southerners (apart from Confederate leaders) who were loyal to govt., agreed with abolishment of slavery; hoped suffrage would be given to educated, property-owning blacks from Union army
 - After 10% of voters took Lincoln's oath, allowed to form state govt.; LA, AR, TN formed govt. in 1864
- Radicals felt too mild, initially hesitant for solution; passed **Wade-Davis Bill** through Congress
 - Allowed president to select provisional governor; after *majority* pledged oath to U.S., allowed to form constitutional convention with requirements of abolishment, repudiation of debts
 - Delegates only those who swore they had never borne arms against U.S.
 - Lincoln quickly vetoed but realized importance of conceding to radicals

Lincoln produced a moderate plan for reconstruction pardoning all non-Confederate leader-white Southerners and allowed a state government after 10% of voters promised they would abolish slavery, would remain loyal to government. Radicals produced the Wade-Davis Bill, which gave the president the choice of governor; a constitutional convention could be formed only after 50% pledged oath and could only be populated by those who promised to have never attacked U.S. armies. Lincoln vetoed it.

What were the effects of Lincoln's death?

On April 14th, 1865, Lincoln was assassinated at a theatre by Confederate actor John Wilkes Booth.

- Lincoln hailed as martyr throughout North
- Several accused Booth of being part of Southern conspiracy; in fact linked with group seeking to assassinate Lincoln, secretary of state Seward, VP Johnson
- Booth escaped to VA countryside but pursued and killed by Union forces; four of associates hanged
- Republicans interpreted as continued hostility from Southern leaders

Booth, part of a group seeking to kill Lincoln, Seward, and Johnson, assassinated Lincoln in April 1865, but was soon killed in the Virginia countryside. Republicans saw Lincoln's assassination as a sign of continued Southern tensions.

How did Andrew Johnson implement restoration plans of his own?

- Johnson, Democrat until joining forces with Lincoln, hostile toward freedmen and felt reconstruction should be driven by South
- Developed plan for Reconstruction known as "Restoration"
 - Southerners who took oath immediately pardoned; high-ranking officials/wealthy plantation owners forced to appeal directly to him for pardon
 - Generally based on Wade-Davis Bill w/ provisional governor to select unspecified # of voters to elect delegates (w/ majority required)
 - State would need to abolish slavery, revoke secession, ratify 13th Amendment, reject Confederate/state war debts
 - No assistance to former slaves w/ many often remaining in similar conditions
- By end of 1865, all seceded states formed new govt. based on Lincoln/Johnson plans; radicals would not accept
 - Radicals felt reluctance to abolish slavery + election of Confederate leaders (like Confed. VP to GA Senate) reflected false loyalty

Johnson, a Democrat at heart, was hesitant about reconstruction and developed a plan very similar to the Wade-Davis Bill. Although all states not already following Lincoln's plan formed state governments, radicals refused to accept their admission to Congress as Northern opinion had slowly hardened due to the South reluctance to abolish slavery.

Radical Reconstruction

How did Reconstruction begin to align with Radical perspectives?

After the Radicals took over Reconstruction, they created two constitutional amendments (14th and 15th) making blacks citizens and granting them suffrage and forced several states to accept them for chance at readmission through military districts. To preserve their control, Radicals limited presidential and judicial power and attempted to impeach President Johnson.

How did Johnson lose control of Reconstruction?

Congress reconvened in December 1865 and formed the Joint Committee on Reconstruction to override Johnson's policies with their own more radical ones.

What were the Black Codes?

- Southern states began to enact **Black Codes** to allow whites to control former slaves
 - Unemployed Afr. Americans could be seized, fined for loitering
 - Private employers would then hire them to pay off fee (no wage)
 - Some banned from owning land, required that they become plantation workers/domestic servants
- Congress first extended Freedmen's Bureau to limit abuse; 1866: **first Civil Rights Act**: African Americans were citizens → federal govt. could intervene
 - Johnson vetoed, but he was overridden by Congress

The "Black Codes" allowed Southern whites to exercise control once again over African Americans, often justifying unfair fines (like for mere vagrancy) and then requiring them to pay them off by working for companies without wage; others prevented them from owning land or working specialized jobs. Congress retaliated with the first Civil Rights Act, naming African Americans citizens.

What was the 14th Amendment?

- 14th Amendment passed by Joint Committee on Reconstruction in 1866
 - Gave citizenship to all born in U.S. (or naturalized) with no exceptions
 - Penalized states limiting voting rights of *any* adult male
 - Former members of Congress/officials who were part of Confederacy could only hold state/fed. office if pardoned by 2/3 of Congress
- Radicals readmitted any state ratifying amendment: only TN did, not even DE/KY → lacking 3/4 approval
- Radicals more confident w/ race riots targeting Afr. Americans in Southern cities
 - Johnson supported Conservatives in 1866 midterms but weak speeches → mostly Radical Republicans elected (few Southerners, Democrats)

The 14th Amendment made all people born in America citizens, gave all adult men the right to vote, and limited the potential power held by former Confederate officials. Initially, however, Tennessee was the only former Confederate state to ratify it; however, Radical Republicans gained power in the 1866 midterms.

How did Radicals continue with Reconstruction post-midterms?

- Passed 3 more bills → complete plan, overrode Johnson's vetoes
- TN readmitted but Lincoln-Johnson govts. of 10 other states rejected, becoming 5 military districts
 - Commander led each district with permission to register qualified voters: adult black males, white males not in Confederate rebellion
 - Registered voters elected delegates for convention with constitution to be ratified by voters; state government elected after Constitution
 - Once Congress approved constitution, enough states ratified 14th Amendment to bring to 3/4, states would be readmitted
- 1868: AR, NC, SC, LA, AL, GA, FL fulfilled w/ 14th Amendment part of Constitution
 - VA/TX in 1869 and MS in 1870 due to resistance of white conservatives
 - Congress added new requirement: ratification of 15th Amendment, preventing suffrage discrimination based on race
- Radicals limited presidential and judicial power due to risk of interfering w/ plans
 - **Tenure of Office Act** prevented removal of cabinet w/o Senate approval due to War Sec. Edwin M. Stanton's work w/ Radicals
 - **Command of the Army Act** prevented president from making military orders unless through commanding general (Grant) who was selected by Senate
 - *Ex parte Milligan* banned military tribunals in places w/ civil courts → military government in South at risk → *proposed* (but never passed) bill requiring 2/3 of justices to agree to overturn Congressional law → no justices took on Reconstruction cases

The Radicals readmitted Tennessee but turned the remaining 10 states into military districts with a forced path to statehood still requiring the 14th Amendment. By 1870, all states had returned, also required to ratify the 15th Amendment extending suffrage to all races. The Radicals strengthened their position by limiting presidential and judicial power to overturn their rule.

How did the Radicals attempt to impeach Johnson?

- Johnson no longer genuine obstacle but Radicals still sought to impeach
 - After Johnson dismissed War Sec. Stanton w/o Congressional approval, saw room for impeachment
 - Easily passed through House
- In Senate, Radicals pressured rest of Republicans but some Moderates sided w/ Democrats → one away from 2/3 majority for impeachment → dropped efforts

After Johnson violated the Tenure of Office Act, Radicals attempted to impeach him but they were short of one vote in the Senate due to some Moderates' siding with the Democrats.

The South in Reconstruction

What major Reconstruction reforms were made to the South?

Reconstruction entailed creating new Republican-dominated political structures unifying Northern white and Southern black and white Republicans under one political force often seen as corrupt due to heavy spending. Education became far more widespread, particularly for freedmen; although no attempts at forced land redistribution succeeded, inevitable changes occurred with blacks receiving more land over time but also several becoming trapped in cycles of debt as a result of the crop-lien system. However, African American familial structure, too, developed in several ways, often nearing white family structures with a greater focus on women performing stereotypically female jobs of cooking and cleaning; several still had to work due to their abject poverty.

- $\frac{1}{4}$ of white males init. excluded from voting/holding office → black majority in SC/MS/LA/AL/FL
 - Govt. soon removed restrictions → nearly all white males could vote
- Republicans enjoyed majority support in govt.
 - White Southern Republicans known as **scalawags**
 - * Generally due to lack of interest in Democrats or were former Whigs
 - * Some were poor farmers hoping to promote internal improvements, serving personal economic goals
 - Northern Republicans oft. led in South as **carpetbaggers**
 - * Well-educated/middle-class, but nickname gave impression of penniless explorers
 - * Generally Union veterans seeing new opportunity in South
 - Most Southern Repubs.: black freedmen w/o experience in politics → sought institutions to express power
 - * Several formed "colored conventions" (as dubbed by Southern whites), others joined black churches to unify former slaves as political forces
 - * Critical to Southern pol.: delegates at constitutional conventions, held near-every office (incl. House and Senate)
 - * Power lamented by Southern whites but still much lesser than whites w/ no governors, never controlling state legislatures; % of officeholders far lower than % in overall pop.
- Several Reconstruction govts. seen as corrupt w/ heavy spending, illegal activities to expand budgets → raised debt; same in North w/ econ. expansion of govt. → corruption
 - Costs much larger than antebellum times because govt. had neglected important services

Reconstruction governments initially saw several whites excluded and thus black majorities in several states; although whites increasingly received their former voting privileges, blacks still became a force critical to the progression of Southern politics as Republicans. Republicans consistently held majorities, driven by "scalawag" white Southern Republicans and "carpetbagger" Northern Republicans. Under their governance, Reconstruction governments were frequently classified as corrupt due to their increasingly extravagant spending.

What were the political implementations made during Reconstruction?

How did Reconstruction leaders promote education?

- ↑ education of former slaves initially driven by North thru. Freedmen's Bureau, private orgs.
 - White Southerners opposed due to risk of "false" equality but lg. networks
- Reconstruction govt. developed public schools w/ around $\approx 50\%$ of whites and $\approx 40\%$ of blacks attending school; advanced "academies" → black colleges like Fisk/Atlanta Universities
- Early desegregation efforts unsuccessful w/ Freedmen's Bureau and New Orleans offering schools to all but few whites attended; **Civil Rights Act of 1875** saw desegregation removed

Education efforts were first driven by Northern organizations and later Reconstruction governments (expanding the public school and university system for whites and blacks), who both made several attempts at creating desegregated schools, but few whites would attend.

How did the Reconstruction implement land ownership policies?

- Freedmen's Bureau initially sought to redistribute Southern land but failed in long term
 - In final years of war, supplied abandoned plantations in Sea Islands of SC/GA, parts of MS to blacks, providing 10k families w/ land → great hope
 - After war, whites returned and demanded return of land → Johnson supported, returning most of land to white owners
- Northern Republicans saw no right to redistribute land
- Southern land distribution patterns changed nonetheless
 - Smaller % of whites owned land by end of Reconstruction (80% → 67%) due to debt/taxes; others moved to rented land elsewhere
 - Afr. Americans rose from $\approx 0\%$ → $\geq 20\%$; some thru. hard work but others thru. assistance from white institutions (like Freedman's Bank)
 - * Institutions allowed blacks to invest money but many made poor investments → Freedman's Bank collapsed in 1874 after depression
- Sharecropping w/ some blacks renting lands from white owners, paying rent/giving portion of crops; others worked for wages ($\approx 25\%$)
 - Opposite to old gang-labor system w/ no direction of master, instead physical independence
 - Landlords benefitted in that no longer needed to care for workers

Although the Freedmen's Bureau attempted to redistribute land, they failed as Northern Republicans in Congress felt they had no right to confiscate land. Regardless, Southern land patterns changed, with fewer whites owning and far more African Americans (some through hard work, others through white institutions) owning land. Those African Americans not owning land generally worked as tenants on white lands, paying a fixed rent to work the land.

What was the crop-lien system?

- Numerically, Reconstruction seems great success for Afr. Americans w/ earning increasingly greater share of agri. while white share rapidly declined
 - Part of agri. decline as a whole w/ ↓ cotton market
 - Afr. Americans earned more per hour than equivalent in slavery but worked $\approx \frac{2}{3}$ of original amnt. (to same as white laborers)
 - Black per capita income went from $\frac{1}{4}$ of white to $\frac{1}{2}$ but stagnated there
- Crop-lien system devastating to low-income farmers
 - Unable to pay sufficient money to local stores required for food, clothing, seed, farm tools → forced to use credit but w/ ↑ interest → farmers gave up claim (lien) on crops → often cycle of debt
 - Former slaves lost earned land due to high debt; farmers also dependent on cash crops due to greatest immediate revenue → land destroyed, never diversification

Reconstruction blacks began to earn a greater share of the agricultural economy but this was paired with an overall decline of Southern agriculture; furthermore, their income per capita remained around half of that of whites. The crop-lien was devastating, too, allowing stores to make claims on farmers' crops if they were unable to pay their high-interest debt back in sufficient time, often leading to a cycle of poverty and stimulating a one-dimensional economy reliant only on the most profitable crops.

How did African American family structures shift in Reconstruction?

- Blacks attempted to rebuild family structures after destruction from slavery
 - Travelled throughout South to find lost relatives; black newspapers published info. abt. lost relatives
 - Rapid marriage due to previous ban; relocation to private cabins throughout countryside
- Black families often began to mirror white families in gender relations
 - Women/children saw field-work as part of slavery → women cooked/cleaned/gardened/raised children only
 - Some black men refused wives' working as servants for whites: wanted exclusive servitude for himself
- Impoverished families often required black women to work in former activities like domestic servants, laundry, field work; \approx half of black women worked for wages, most wage-earners married

African American family structures were emphasized with a strong effort to rebuild them by finding lost relatives, marrying in large numbers, and moving to private cabins. However, black families increasingly saw women restricting themselves to stereotypically female roles like cooking and cleaning, generally encouraged by men. Regardless, several more impoverished families required women to work in their former activities simply to earn a wage.