

## **Chapter 22- The Ordeal of Reconstruction**

**1865-1877**

### **A. The Problems of Peace**

1. What should be done with the captured Confederate ringleaders (all liable of treason)?
  1. Davis was temporarily clapped into irons during the early days of his two-year imprisonment but he and his “conspirators” were finally release, partly because the odds were that no Virginia jury would convict them of the charge of treason
  2. All rebel leaders were finally pardoned by President Johnson as sort of a Christmas present in 1868 but Congress did not remove all remaining civil disabilities until thirty years later and only restored Davis’s citizenship more than a century later
2. In the South, not only had an age perished, but a civilization had collapsed, in both its economic and its social structure (Old South had forever gone with the wind)
  1. Charleston and Richmond were rubble-strewn and weed-chocked
  2. Economic life had creaked to a half; banks and business houses had locked their doors, ruined by runaway inflation; factories were smokeless, silent, dismantled
  3. The transportation system had broken down completely; agriculture—the economic lifeblood of the South—was almost hopelessly crippled
  4. The cotton fields now yielded a lush harvest of nothing, the slave-labor system had collapsed, seed was scarce, and livestock had been driven off by plundering Yankees
3. Beaten but unbent, many high-spirited white Southerners remained dangerously defiant; they cursed the “damnyankees” and spoke of “your government” in Washington; conscious of no crime, these former Confederates continued to believe that their view of secession was correct and that the “lost cause” was still a just war (provided problems)

### **B. Freedmen Define Freedom**

1. Confusion abounded in the South about the precise meaning of “freedom” for blacks
  1. Emancipation took effect haltingly and unevenly in different parts of the conquered Confederacy; as Union armies marched in and out of various localities, many blacks found themselves emancipated and then re-enslaved (process of freedom slow)
  2. The variety of responses to emancipation, by whites as well as blacks, illustrated the sometimes startling complexity of the master-slave relationship
  3. Loyalty to masters prompted some slaves to resist the liberating Union armies, while other slaves’ pent-up bitterness burst forth violently on the day of liberation; many newly emancipated slaves joined Union troops in pillaging their master’s possessions

4. Prodded by Yankee armies of occupation, all masters were eventually forced to recognize their slaves' permanent freedom; though some blacks initially responded to news of their emancipation with suspicion and uncertainty, they soon celebrated
2. Many freed slaves took new names; though many whites perceived such behavior as insubordinate, they were forced to recognize the realities of emancipation
3. Tens of thousands of emancipated blacks took to the roads, some to test their freedom, others to search for long-lost spouses, parents, and children
  1. Emancipation thus strengthened the black family, and many newly freed men and women formalized "Slave marriages" for personal and pragmatic reasons, including the desire to make their children legal heirs to plots of land they now owned
  2. Other blacks left former masters to work in towns and cities, where existing black communities provided protection and mutual assistance (whole communities moved)
  3. The westward flood of these "Exodusters" was stemmed only when steamboat captains refused to transport more black migrants across the Mississippi River
4. The church became focus of black community life in the years following emancipation
  1. As slaves, blacks had worshiped alongside whites, but now they formed their own churches pastured by their own ministers (Baptist, Methodist Episcopal Church)
  2. These churches formed the bedrock of black community life, and they soon gave rise to other benevolent, fraternal and mutual aid societies (protected newly won freedom)
5. Emancipation also meant education for many blacks; learning to read and write had been a privilege generally denied to them under slavery; freedmen wasted no time establishing societies for self-improvement, which undertook to raise funds to purchase land, build schoolhouses, and hire teachers (Southern blacks found out that demand stripped supply)
6. They accepted the aid of Northern white women sent by the American Missionary Association, who volunteered their services as teachers (federal government for help)

#### C. The Freedmen's Bureau

1. Abolitionists had long preached that slavery was a degrading institution; now the emancipators were faced with the brutal reality that the freedmen were overwhelmingly unskilled, unlettered, without property or money, and with scant knowledge
  1. To cope with the problem throughout the conquered South, Congress created the Freedmen's Bureau on March 3, 1865 (intended to be a primitive welfare agency)
  2. It was to provide food, clothing, medical care, and education both to freedmen and to white refugees; heading the bureau was a warmly sympathetic friend of the blacks, Union general Oliver O. Howard (founded and president of Howard University)

2. The bureau helped education the most; it taught 200,00 blacks how to read—many former slaves had a passion for learning, partly because they wanted to close the gap between themselves and whites and partly because they longed to read the Word of God
3. But in other areas, the bureau's accomplishments were meager—or even mischievous
  1. Although the bureau was authorized to settle former slaves on forty-acre tracts confiscated from the Confederates, little land actually made it into blacks' hands
  2. Instead local administrators often collaborated with planters in expelling blacks from towns and cajoling them into signing labor contracts to work for their former masters
  3. Still the white South resented the bureau as a meddling federal interloper that threatened to upset white racial dominance (it eventually expired in 1872)

#### D. Johnson: The Tailor President

1. Few presidents have faced with a more perplexing sea of troubles than that confronting Andrew Johnson; no citizen has ever reached the White House from humbler beginnings
  1. Born to impoverished parents in North Carolina and early orphaned, Johnson never attended school but was apprenticed at age ten to a tailor in North Carolina—like many self-made man, he was inclined to over-praise his maker
  2. John became active in politics in Tennessee, where he had moved to and shone as an impassioned champion of the poor whites against the planter aristocrats
  3. Elected to Congress, he attracted much favorable attention in the North but not the South when he refused to secede with his own state (appointed war governor of TN)
2. Political exigency next thrust Johnson into the vice presidency; Lincoln's Union party in 1864 needed to attract the support from the War Democrats and other pro-Southern elements, and Johnson, a Democrat, seemed to be the ideal man (typhoid fever//whiskey)
3. Johnson was a man of parts; he was intelligent, able, forceful, and gifted with honesty; he was also steadfastly devoted to duty and to the people, he was a dogmatic champion of states' rights and the Constitution (he often presented a copy of the document to visitors)
4. Yet the man was a misfit; a Southerner who did not understand the North, a Tennessean who had earned the distrust of the South, a Democrat who had never been accepted by the Republicans, a president who had never been elected to the office, he was not at home
5. Hotheaded, contentious, and stubborn, he was the wrong man in the wrong place at the wrong time; a reconstruction policy devised by angels may have failed in his hands

#### E. Presidential Reconstruction

1. Even before the shooting war had ended, the political war over Reconstruction had begun

1. Abraham Lincoln believed that the Southern states had never legally withdrawn from the Union; their formal restoration to the Union would therefore be relatively simple
2. Accordingly, Lincoln in 1863 proclaimed his “10 percent” Reconstruction plan; it decreed that a state could be reintegrated into the Union when 10 percent of its voters in the presidential election of 1860 had taken an oath of allegiance to the United States and pledged to abide by emancipation (formal erection of state government)
2. Lincoln’s proclamation provoked a sharp reaction in Congress; Republicans feared the restoration of the planter aristocracy to power and the possible re-enslavement of blacks
  1. Republicans there rammed through Congress in 1864 the Wade-Davis Bill which required that 50 percent of a state’s voters take the oath of allegiance and demanded stronger safeguards for emancipation than Lincoln’s as the price of readmission
  2. Lincoln “pocket-vetoed” this bill by refusing to sign it after Congress had adjourned; Republicans were outraged and refused Louisiana (who had followed Lincoln’s 10%)
3. Controversy surrounding the Wade-Davis bill had revealed deep differences between the president and Congress; unlike Lincoln, many in Congress insisted that the seceders had indeed left the Union and had therefore forfeited all their rights (“committed suicide”)
4. They could be readmitted only as “conquered provinces” (Congress decreed conditions)
5. This episode further revealed differences among the Republican party
  1. Two factions were emerging; the majority moderate group tended to agree with Lincoln that the seceded states should be restored to the Union as simply and swiftly as reasonable—though on Congress’s terms, not the president’s
  2. Minority radical group believed that the South should atone more painfully for sins
  3. Before the South should be resorted the radicals wanted its social structure uprooted, the planters punished and the newly emancipated blacks protected by federal power
6. Some of the radicals were secretly pleased when the assassin’s bullet felled Lincoln, for the martyred president had shown tenderness toward the South; spiteful “Andy” Johnson, who shared their hatred for the planter aristocrats, would presumably also share their desire to reconstruct the South with a rod of iron (radical groups of Republicans)
  1. Johnson disillusioned them; he agreed with Lincoln that the seceded states had never legally been outside the Union; thus he recognized several of Lincoln’s 10 percent governments and on May 29, 1865, issues his own Reconstruction proclamation
  2. It disenfranchised certain leading Confederates, including those with taxable property worth more than \$20,000 though they might petition him for personal pardons

3. It called for special state conventions (required to repeal the ordinances of secession, repudiate all Confederate debts, and ratify the slave-freeing 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment)
4. States that complied with these conditions would be swiftly readmitted to the Union
7. Johnson, savoring his dominance over the high-toned aristocrats who now begged his favor, granted pardons in abundance (bolstered by political resurrection of the planter elite, the recently rebellious states moved rapidly in 1865 to organize governments)

#### F. The Baleful Black Codes

1. Among the first acts of the new Southern regimes sanctioned by Johnson was the passage of the iron-toothed Black Codes (these laws were designed to regulate the affairs of the emancipated blacks, much as the slave statutes had done in pre-Civil War days)
  1. Mississippi passed the first such law in November 1865, and other southern states soon followed suit; the Black Codes carried in severity from state to state (MI > GA)
  2. The Black Codes aimed, first of all, to ensure a stable and subservient labor force; the crushed Cotton Kingdom could not rise until the fields were once again put under hoe and plow—and many whites wanted to make sure that they retained tight control
  3. Dire penalties were therefore imposed by the codes on blacks who “jumped” their labor contracts, which usually committed them to work for one year (pittance wages)
  4. Violators could be made to forfeit back wages or could be forcibly dragged back to work by paid “Negro-catchers” (captured freedmen could be fined and then hired out)
  5. The codes also sought to restore as nearly as possible the pre-emancipation system of race relations; freedom was legally recognized, as were some other privileges, such as the right to marry; all codes forbade a black to serve on a jury, some even barred blacks from renting or leasing land and nowhere were blacks allowed to vote
2. These oppressive laws mocked the ideal of freedom, so recently purchased by buckets of blood; the Black Codes imposed terrible burdens on unfettered blacks, struggling against mistreatment and poverty to make their way as free people (economic dependence)
3. Lacking capital, and with little to offer but their labor, thousands of impoverished former slaves slipped into the status of sharecropper farmers, as did many landless whites
  1. Luckless sharecroppers gradually sank into a morass of virtual peonage and remained there for generations; countless blacks as well as poorer whites in effect became slaves to the soil and to creditors (some thought it conceded too much to freedom)
  2. Black Codes made an ugly impression in the North (Had the North won the war?)

#### G. Congressional Reconstruction

1. Congressional delegations from the newly reconstituted Southern states presented themselves in the Capitol in December 1865—to the shock and disgust of the Republicans, many former Confederate leaders were on hand to claim their seats
  1. The appearance of these ex-rebels was a natural but costly blunder; voters of the South, seeking able representatives, had turned to their experienced statesmen
  2. But most of the Southern leaders were tainted by active association with the “lost cause”—among them were four former Confederate generals, five colonels, and various members of the Richmond cabinet and Congress (Stephens ex-vice pres)
2. The presence of these “whitewashed rebels” infuriated the Republicans in Congress
  1. The Republicans were in no hurry to embrace their former enemies—virtually all of them Democrats—in the chambers of the Capitol; when the South had been out, the Republicans in Congress had enjoyed a relatively free hand
  2. They had passed much legislation that favored the North, such as the Morrill Tariff, the Pacific Railroad Act, and the Homestead Act; on the first day of the congressional session, December 4, 1865, they shut out the newly elected Southern delegates
  3. The Republicans were alarmed to realize that a restored South would be stronger than ever in national politics; before the war a black slave had counted as three-fifths of a person in apportioning congressional representation; now the slave was a full person
  4. Now, owing to full counting of free blacks, the rebel states were entitled to twelve more votes in Congress, twelve more presidential electoral votes, than they had had
3. Republicans had good reason to fear that ultimately they might be elbowed aside
  1. Southerners might join hands with Democrats in the North and win control of Congress or maybe even the White House (they could perpetuate the Black Codes)
  2. They could dismantle economic program—lower tariffs, reroute transcontinental railroad, repeal the Homestead Act, or even possibly repudiate the national debt
  3. President Johnson thus deeply disturbed the congressional Republicans when he announced on December 6, 1865, that the recently rebellious states had satisfied his conditions and that in his view the Union was now restored

#### H. Johnson Clashes with Congress

1. A clash between the president and Congress exploded open in February 1866, when the president vetoed a bill extending the life of the controversial Freedmen’s Bureau
  1. The Republicans swiftly struck back in March 1866 with the Civil Rights Bill, which conferred on blacks the privilege of American citizenship—struck at the Black Codes

2. President Johnson resolutely vetoed this forward-looking measure on constitutional grounds, but in April congressmen steamrolled it over his veto—repeatedly done
3. The hapless president (“Sir Veto,” “Andy Veto”) had his presidential wings clipped, as Congress increasingly assumed the dominant role in running the government
2. The Republicans now undertook to rivet the principles of the civil Rights Bill into the Constitution as the Fourteenth Amendment; they feared that the Southerners might one day win control of Congress and repeal the hated law; the proposed amendment, as approved by Congress and sent to the states in June 1866, was sweeping
  1. It conferred civil rights, including citizenship but excluding the franchise, on the freedmen; reduced proportionately the representation of a state in Congress and in the Electoral College if the state government denied blacks the ballot
  2. It disqualified from federal and state office former Confederates who as federal office-holders had once sworn “to support the Constitution of the United States”
  3. It guaranteed the federal debt, while repudiating all Confederate debts (14<sup>th</sup>)
3. The radical faction was disappointed that the Fourteenth Amendment did not grant the right to vote, but all Republicans were agreed that no state should be welcomed back into the Union fold without first ratifying the Fourteenth Amendment (All of the “sinful eleven,” except Tennessee, defiantly spurned the amendment)

#### I. Swinging ‘Round the Circle with Johnson

1. The battle grew between the Congress and the president as 1866 lengthened
  1. The root of the controversy was Johnson’s “10 percent” governments that had passed the most stringent Black Codes (Congress had tried to temper the worst features of the codes by extending the life of the Freedmen’s Bureau and the Civil Rights Bill)
  2. Both measures Johnson had vetoed and now the issue was whether Reconstruction was to be carried on with or without the Fourteenth Amendment (Republicans)
2. The crucial congressional elections of 1866 were fast approaching; Johnson was naturally eager to escape from the clutch of Congress by securing a majority favorable to his soft-on-the-South policy—he undertook to speak at various cities in support of his views
3. Johnson’s famous “swing ‘round the circle,” (invited to dedicate a Chicago monument to Stephen Douglas) beginning in the late summer of 1866, was a serious comedy of errors
  1. The president delivered a series of “give ‘em hell” speeches, in which he accused the radicals in Congress of having planned large-scale anti-black riots and murder in the South—as he spoke, hecklers hurled insults at him (he shouted back angry retorts)

2. As a vote-getter, Johnson was highly successful for the opposition; his inept speechmaking heightened the cry of “Stand by Congress”; when the ballots were counted, the Republicans had rolled up more than two-thirds majority in both houses

#### J. Republican Principles and Programs

1. The Republicans now had a veto-proof Congress and unlimited control of Reconstruction policy—but moderates and radicals still disagreed over how to pursue with South
  1. The radicals in the Senate were led by the principled idealist Charles Sumner, who had tirelessly labored not only for black freedom but for racial equality
  2. In the House, the most powerful radical was Thaddeus Stevens, a congressman from Pennsylvania; though seventy-four years old in 1866, he was an unswerving friend of blacks who had defended runaway slaves in court without fee
  3. His affectionate devotion to blacks was matched by his vitriolic hatred of rebellious white Southerners—was a leading figure on the Joint Committee on Reconstruction
2. Still opposed to rapid restoration of the southern states, the radicals wanted to keep them out as long as possible and apply federal power to bring about a drastic social and economic transformation in the South; moderate Republicans, recoiled from full implications of the radical program (attuned to principles of states’ rights and self-govt)
  1. They preferred policies that restrained the states from abridging citizens’ rights, rather than policies that directly involved the federal government in individual lives
  2. The actual policies adopted by Congress showed the influence of both these schools of thought, though the moderates, as the majority, faction, had the upper hand
  3. One thing both groups had come to agree on by 1867 was the necessity to enfranchise black voters even if it took federal troops to enforce the action

#### K. Reconstruction by the Sword

1. Against a backdrop of vicious and bloody race riots that had erupted in several Southern cities, Congress passed the Reconstruction Act on March 2, 1867
  1. This drastic legislation divided the South into five military districts, each commanded by a Union general and policed by blue-clad soldiers (about 20,000 in total)
  2. The act also temporarily disfranchised tens of thousands of former Confederates
2. Congress additionally laid down stringent conditions for the readmission of the seceded states; the wayward states were required to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment
  1. The bitterest pill of all to white Southerners was the stipulation that they guarantee in their state constitutions full suffrage for their former adult male slaves



2. Yet the act stopped short of giving the freedmen land or education at federal expense; overriding purpose of the moderates was to create an electorate in the Southern states that would vote those states back into the Union on acceptable terms and thus free the federal government from direct responsibility for the protection of black rights
3. This approach proved woefully inadequate to the cause of justice for blacks
3. The radical Republicans were still worried; the danger loomed that once the unrepentant states were readmitted, they would amend their constitutions so as to withdraw the ballot from the blacks—the only ironclad was to incorporate black suffrage into Constitution
4. This goal was finally achieved by the Fifteenth Amendment, passed by Congress in 1869 and ratified by the required number of states in 1870 (black suffrage)
5. Military Reconstruction of the south not only usurped certain functions of the president as commander in chief but set up a martial regime of dubious legality
  1. The Supreme Court had already ruled in the case *Ex parte Milligan*, that military tribunals could not try civilians, even during the wartime (in civil courts)
  2. The circumstances were extraordinary in the Republic's history, and for the time being the Supreme Court avoided offending the Republican Congress
6. Prodded by federal bayonets, the Southern states got on with the task of constitution making; by 1870 all of them had reorganized their governments and had been accorded full rights (the last federal guns were removed from state politics in 1877)

#### L. No Women Voters

1. The passage of the three Reconstruction-era Amendments—the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup>—delighted former abolitionists but deeply disappointed advocates of women's rights
  1. Women had played a prominent part in the prewar abolitionist movement and had often pointed out that both women and blacks lacked basic civil rights (right to vote)
  2. The struggle for black freedom and the crusade for women's rights were one and the same in the eyes of many women; yet during the war, feminist leaders such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony had temporarily suspended their own demands and worked wholeheartedly for the cause of black emancipation
  3. The Women's Loyal League had gathered nearly 400,000 signatures on petitions
2. Now with the war ended and the Thirteenth amendment passed, feminist leaders believed that their time had come; they reeled with shock when the wording of the Fourteenth Amendment, which defined equal national citizenship, for the first time inserted the word male into the Constitution in referring to a citizen's right to vote

3. Both Stanton and Anthony campaigned actively against the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment despite the pleas of Frederick Douglass, who had long supported woman suffrage but believed that his was the Negro's hour—women lost the battle with the Fifteenth Amendment as well

#### **M. The Realities of Radical Reconstruction in the South**

1. The blacks now had freedom; their friends in Congress had only haltingly and somewhat belatedly secured the franchise for them; both Presidents Lincoln and Johnson had proposed to give the ballot gradually to selected blacks who qualified for suffrage
2. Moderate Republicans and even many radicals at first hesitated to bestow suffrage on the freedmen; the Fourteenth Amendment had fallen short of guaranteeing the right to vote but by 1867 hesitation had given way to hard determination to enfranchise former slaves
3. By glaring contrast, most of the Northern states, before ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870, withheld the ballot from their tiny black minorities; Whites southerners naturally concluded the Republicans were hypocritical (black suffrage)
4. Having gained their right to suffrage, Southern black men seized the initiative and began to organize politically—their primary vehicle became the Union League (originally a pro-Union organization based in the North—assisted by Northern blacks)
  1. The League was turned into a network of political clubs that educated members in their civic duties and campaigned for Republican candidates—the league's mission soon expanded to include building black churches and schools, recruiting militias)
  2. African-American women attended the parades and rallies common in black communities during the early years of Reconstruction and helped assemble mass meetings in the newly constructed black churches (constitutional conventions)
5. But black men elected as delegates to the state constitutional conventions held the greater political authority; they formed the backbone of the black political community
  1. At the conventions, they sat down with whites to hammer out new state constitutions, which most importantly provided for universal male suffrage
  2. Between 1868 and 1876, fourteen black congressmen and two black senators, Hiram Revels and Blanche K. Bruce of Mississippi, served in Washington D.C.
  3. Blacks also served in state governments as lieutenant governors and representatives, and in local governments as mayors, magistrates, sheriffs, and justices of the peace
6. The sight of former slaves holding office deeply offended their onetime masters, who lashed out with particular fury at the freedmen's white allies (former Unionists/Whigs)
  1. Former Confederates accused them of plundering the treasuries of the southern states through their political influence in the radical governments ("scalawags")

2. The “carpet baggers” were supposedly sleazy Northerners who had packed all their worldly goods into a carpetbag suitcase at war’s end and come South to seek personal power and profit (most were former Union soldiers and Northern businessmen)
7. The radical legislatures passed much desirable legislation and introduced many badly needed reforms; for the first time in the South, steps were taken toward public schools
8. Tax systems were streamlined, public works were launched, property rights were guaranteed to women; many welcome reforms were retained by the all-white “Redeemer” governments that later returned to power—spoils still ran rampant in many governments
  1. This was especially true in South Carolina and Louisiana, where promoters and pocket-paddlers used politically inexperienced blacks as pawns (money fraud)
  2. This sort of corruption was by no means confined to the south in these postwar years

#### **N. The Ku Klux Klan**

1. Embittered, some Southern whites resorted to savage measures against “radical” rule
  1. Many whites resented the success and ability of black legislators as much as they resented alleged “corruption”; a number of secret organizations sprang up, the most notorious of was the “Invisible Empire of the South, or Ku Klux Klan (TN, 1866)
  2. Be-sheeted nightriders, their horses’ hoofs muffled, would approach the cabin of an “upstart” black and hammer on the door—scared the blacks from the polls
  3. Such foolery and terror proved partially effective; many ex-bondsmen and white “carpet-baggers,” quick to take a hint, shunned the polls; those stubborn souls who persisted in their “upstart” ways were flogged, mutilated, or even murdered
  4. The Klan became a refuge for numerous bandits and cutthroats (any scoundrel)
2. Congress, outraged by this night-riding lawlessness, passed the harsh Force Acts of 1870 and 1871; Federal troops were able to stamp out much of the “lash law,” but by this time the Invisible Empire had already done its work of intimidation on the voters
3. White resistance undermined attempts to empower the blacks politically; the white south, openly flouted the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments for many decades
  1. Wholesale disfranchisement of the blacks, starting conspicuously about 1890, was achieved by intimidation, fraud, and trickery (literacy tests with advantage to whites)
  2. Goal of white supremacy fully justified these dishonorable devices

#### **O. Johnson Walks the Impeachment Plank**

1. Radicals meanwhile had been sharpening their hatchets for President Johnson

1. Not content with curbing his authority, they decided to remove him altogether by constitutional processes; under existing law the president pro tempore of the Senate, the corrupt and rabidly radical “Bluff Ben” Wade would then become president
2. As the initial step, Congress in 1867 passed the Tenure of Office Act; contrary to precedent, the new law required the president to secure the consent of the Senate before he could remove his appointees once they had been approved by that body
3. One purpose was to freeze into the cabinet the secretary of war, Edwin M. Stanton, although outwardly loyal, he was secretly serving as a spy and informer for radicals
2. Johnson provided the radicals with a pretext to begin impeachment proceedings when he abruptly dismissed Stanton early in 1868; the House of Representatives immediately voted to impeach Johnson for “high crimes and misdemeanors” as required by the Constitution, charging him with the various violations of the Tenure of Office Act

#### P. A Not-Guilty Verdict for Johnson

1. With evident zeal the radical-led Senate now sat as a court to try Johnson on the dubious impeachment charges; the House of Representatives conducted the prosecution
  1. The trial aroused intense public interest and a thousand tickets for a show in 1868
  2. Johnson kept his dignity and sobriety and maintained a discreet silence; his battery attorney argued that the president, convinced that the Tenure of Office Act was unconstitutional, had fired Stanton merely to put a test case before the Supreme Court
  3. House prosecutors, had a harder time building a compelling case for impeachment
2. On May 16, 1868, the day for the first voting in the Senate, the tension was electric; by a margin of only one vote, the radicals failed to muster the two-thirds majority for Johnson’s removal (seven independent-minded Republican senators voted “not guilty”)
3. Several factors shaped the outcome; fears of creating a destabilizing precedent played a role, as did opposition to abusing the constitutional mechanism of checks and balances
  1. As the vice presidency remained vacant under Johnson, his successor would have been radical Republican Ben Wade, the president pro tempore of the Senate
  2. Wade was disliked by many members of the business community for his high-tariff, pro-labor views, and distrusted by many moderate Republicans
4. Die-hard radicals were infuriated by their failure to muster a two-thirds majority for Johnson’s removal; but the nation accepted the verdict with a good temper that did credit to its political maturity; in a less stable republic, it might have been an armed uprising
5. The nation thus narrowly avoided a dangerous precedent that would have gravely weakened one of the three branches of the federal government (he was not guilty)

#### Q. The Purchase of Alaska

1. Johnson's administration achieved its most enduring success in foreign relations
2. The Russians by 1867 were in a mood to sell the vast and chilly expanse of land known as Alaska; they had already overextended themselves in North America and saw that in another war with Britain they would probably lose their defenseless northern province
  1. Alaska had been ruthlessly "furred" out and was a growing economic liability; the Russians were therefore quite eager to unload their "frozen asset" on the Americans
  2. They preferred the United States to any other purchaser, primarily because they wanted to strengthen further the Republic as a barrier against their enemy, Britain
3. In 1867 Secretary of State William Seward, an ardent expansionist, signed a treaty with Russia that transferred Alaska to the United States for the bargain price of \$7.2 million but Seward's enthusiasm for these frigid wastes were not shared by his countrymen
4. The American people, still preoccupied with Reconstruction and other internal vexations, were economy-minded and anti-expansionists ("Seward's Folly, "Seward's Icebox")
5. Then why did Congress and the American public sanction the purchase?
  1. Russia had been conspicuously friendly to the North during the recent Civil War, Americans did not feel that they could offend their great and good friend, the tsar
  2. The territory was rumored to be teeming with furs, fish, and gold, (profitable)
  3. So Congress and the country accepted Alaska somewhat derisively but hopefully

#### R. The Heritage of Reconstruction

1. Many white Southerners regarded Reconstruction as a more grievous wound than the war
  1. They resented the upending of their social and racial system, political empowerment of blacks, and the insult of federal intervention in their local affairs
  2. Given the explosiveness of the issues that had caused the war, and the bitterness of the fighting, the wonder is that Reconstruction was not far harsher than it was
  3. The Republicans acted from a mixture of idealism and political expediency; they wanted both to protect the freed slaves to promote fortunes of the Republican party
  4. Reconstruction conferred only fleeting benefits on the blacks and virtually extinguished the Republican party in the South for nearly one hundred years
2. Moderate Republicans never fully appreciated the extensive effort necessary to make the freed slaves completely independent citizens, nor the lengths to which Southern whites would go to preserve their system of racial dominance

3. Deep-seated racism, ingrained American resistance to tampering with property rights, and rigid loyalty to the principle of local self-government, combined with spreading indifference in the North to the plight of the blacks, formed a formidable obstacle; the Old South was in many ways more resurrected than reconstructed