

U.S. Labor and Work Before the End of Reconstruction
Focus Questions: *Who Built America*, Chapter 7.

1) What was “Artisan Republicanism?”

- a. Artisan republicanism was an ideology that celebrated small-scale producers, men and women who owned their own shops, and defined the ideal republican society as one. They were also known as craftsmen and were one of the largest sector of population in American seaports, city, and parts of suburbs. They worked in a panoply of trades ranging from gold smithing, silver smithing, and cabinet making.
- b. In mid 18th century artisans could be classified as either wage earners, the beginning of working class, or as master craftsmen. Normally a lad of 13-14 would contract with a master craftsman to learn trade as an apprentice. Artisans worked with their masters who were responsible for their rudimentary education as well as teaching them the secret of trades which was passed down from the gained knowledge of craftsmen over centuries.
- c. While vast majority of artisans remained craftsmen throughout their lives, upward mobility was possible within the middle or lower middling ranks of society. The period of mid 1800s was golden age for American craftsman. In this period, artisan crafts gave birth to American labor movement and to manufacturing and entrepreneurial innovation. They also emerged as major players in American politics. However, in new American economy, journeymen had to accept that they were unlikely to become master craftsmen and to do labor work during industrial revolution.

2) How did industrialization challenge the traditions of labor in the United States? Why did many Americans see this change as a threat to the new republic?

- a. Industrialization revolution started in early 19th century. It was first created to raise people's standard for living. Before the revolution majority of Americans lived on farmland, small towns, or villages where there was little manufacturing. However, the industrial revolution made work more regimented and less skilled. Instead of working for yourself, at your own pace, you had to work for a boss and work when and how hard that boss told you to. This made workers feel less independent than they once had.
- b. During industrialization workers used to create products from start to finish and then market/trade their product. And the means of production came to be controlled by fewer and fewer people like capitalists. Majority of the work was being done by machines like cotton gin, which made workers fear for their jobs. Also the growing demand increased the artisans to hire journeymen and increase the division of labor, which divided people by their skills, making it harder for people to get job, and also so the masters can produce more and make more profit.

- c. Workers were forced to accept low paying jobs because the competition for jobs were really high, also quality of jobs and the standards were also really low, which led to inequality in people. Conditions for urban cities were bleak due to low wages also the reparative nature of work was deadly for workers. The inequality in workforce and lower wages led to inequality in the society and question freedom and independence.

3) “During the 1820s and 1830s, working people began to act together to defend the principles of equality in a divided society.” P 342, *Who Built America?* Detail some of the ways workers did this, and assess how successful they were.

- a. During industrial revolution workers were divided based on their skills which led to inequality in society. However, to defend their principle workers resisted changes in the work process. Working patterns in many trades were irregular. Some masters were kind, while some threatened fines or fired workers for bringing liquor to work and not listening to their masters.
- b. Workers also organize labor unions to secure better pay and hours. Workers went on strikes and protested until master agreed to their demands to make the work day shorter and increase the wages based on the amount of work being done. Some masters agreed to workers’ terms while other hired new workers who were ready to work because they need to money to provide for their family. The workingmen’s movement from 1820s to 1830s was held by men and women to resist their subordination to bosses and asserted equal rights under circumstances in which economic power was un-equally distributed. Workers also campaigned for legal measures that might secure their rights in the harsh economy. Also new political parties like trade unions, labor journals campaigned against emerging division between capital and labor.

4) Describe the early formation of the “workingmen’s movement” in the United States. What were the objectives of this movement’s and what ways did it seek to realize its goals?

- a. The workingmen’s movement few out of the need to protect the common interest of workers. For those in the industrial sectors, organized labors unions fought for better wages, reasonable hours and safer working conditions. The workingmen’s movement used American revolution and the values that American’s fought for as their reference point in asserting their rights.
- b. The first workingmen’s party was formed in Philadelphia in 1828, and in New York in 1829. The party emanated out the concerns of craftsmen and skilled journeymen over their low social and economic status. The workers pressed for universal male suffrage and equal educational opportunities. The Philadelphia party agitated against public education

and an end to competition from prison contract labor. By 1830s, workers, also pledge to enable merchandise to enforce payment for work and to lower the power of banks and capitalists. Workers were able to make minor but powerful presence in electoral college which enabled major parties to adopt some of their values

- c. However, there was too much political competition and due to that workingmen's parties dissolved in 1830s. throughout their effort, the issues they sought to erase were still left unsolved. The party used political approach in trying to tackle the issues that were facing with the new labor. they wanted to represent people however due to political competition they were not successful.

5) Assess the role that women played in the working class political cultures that emerged in the United States during the period of early industrialization in the urban North.

- a. Women played a significant role in working class political culture. From mid 1820s to late 1830s there was a tide of protests by both working men and women who resisted their subordination to bosses and asserted their equal rights under circumstances in which economic power was unequally distributed. In 1834, when Lowell mill cut women's wages, they protested in which 1/6 of the Lowell workforce's women went on strike. However, their action failed because they were replaced by new workers. But it provoked a more widespread and better organized response from women workers who stayed out and strike until the housing rent increase was cancelled.
- b. In 1833, women from Lxnn formed their own protective organization. They also seek for women's right. Women also took part in strikes when the increasing competition in textile mills cut wages. In 1824, pawtucker mill owners tried to extended the workday and lower wages, women with support of other town members also went on strikes to prevent changes.
- c. Organization across trades and regions were mostly made of craftsmen, but other groups including women were equally militant. Some male unions supported campaigns by women workers, but the labor movement was generally hostile to women.

Focus Questions, *Who Built America*, chapter 8

1) Describe the efforts at social reform in the mid nineteenth century. What causes were addressed? How did reformers explain the causes for social problems, and did they agree on the solutions?

- a. Inspired by the Second Great Awakening and Transcendentalism, Americans started a number of social reform movements in the antebellum era, including the fight against alcohol and slavery, as well as the fight for public schools, humane prisons and asylums, and women's rights.

- b. The **temperance** movement sought to limit or even ban the consumption of alcohol. Strongly supported by American Protestants, there were thousands of individual temperance societies at the local level by the 1830s. Temperance group members could be affiliated with any political party - the movement was not structured around partisanship. In early America, few schools existed outside of Massachusetts; children were taught at home by parents or tutors or were sent away to a boarding school. By the 1830s, a growing number of concerned Americans began to advocate at all levels for free public education, at least for white boys. In 1837, Horace Mann took control of the new Massachusetts Board of Education and pursued free, equal, non-religious schooling for all social classes, provided by trained, well-paid, professional teachers. His reforms set the standard for public education in the United States, and by 1870, all states had at least some free elementary schools.
- c. The best-known of the social reform movements of the antebellum era may be **abolition** - the effort to end slavery in the United States. There had been abolitionists since colonial days, notably the Quakers, and a vocal minority had tried to abolish slavery with the founding of the nation. But slavery itself had changed with the invention of the cotton gin and the fabulous wealth earned from 'King Cotton.' While Southerners became more committed to maintaining and even expanding the peculiar institution, many Northerners began to see slavery as a moral evil.

2) What role did theater, music, sports, and other forms of entertainment play in the lives of working people in the mid nineteenth century? How did these forms of culture reflect racial and class divisions in American society?

3) What explains the tensions and conflicts that arose between native-born white Americans, African Americans, and recent immigrants from Ireland, Germany, and other European nations in mid nineteenth century cities and workplaces?

- a. No group of native-born workers in the North was more affected by the mass immigration of the mid-nineteenth century than African Americans. Although gradually freed from slavery in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by state legislative actions in the Northeast, blacks still suffered enormous disadvantages and discriminations. In north, African Americans had to meet higher standards of residency and property qualifications than did whites in order to vote. Education facilities were often segregated, and schools for blacks were more crowded and less well funded. Theaters, and most white-controlled churches forced African Americans to sit in separate inferior sections.
- b. In addition, white trade unions excluded black workers from their ranks, white employers refused to hire them for any but the most unskilled and lowest paying jobs; and newly arrived immigrants pushed them out of

the few more lucrative occupations like construction, the maritime trades, and carpentry.

- c. Despite the many obstacles they faced, African Americans fought to improve their status within the US. When whites advocated colonization African Americans vigorously objected. African Americans gathered in churches, which formed the centerpiece of community life for many northern African Americans. A small number of African American who had achieved success in business and the professions also served as spokespersons for their community.

4) How did women's roles in the American workplace change by the mid-1800s? What options did women have in terms of employment? How did women assert themselves as social actors during these years?

- a. All wage earning women in the mid 19th century faced a small circle of options, most of them low paying and low status. In 1840, women held almost half of all manufacturing jobs in the nation and about two third of those in New England. As immigrants grew, the irregular employment and low wages of men put a premium on increasing the family income through the labors of women and children.
- b. Racial and gender discrimination put African American women in a double bind when seeking employment. Teaching and selling homemade goods remained almost the only means by which black women could achieve a modicum of economic independence. Their opportunities in industry were far more restricted than those available to immigrants or native-born white women.
- c. Technological advancement sometimes improved the opportunities available to workers, but the innovation of the sewing machine in 1846 did not work to women's advantage. The machine reduced the labor requirement to make each garment. Some female clothing workers were the wives and daughters of poor day laborers, declining craftsmen, and men seeking work in the west, but many headed their own households and had children to support. In 1850, more than half of all female wage earners were domestics whose wages averaged just over a dollar a week, plus room and board. These women were often on call twenty-four hours a day, six days a week, and under the constant surveillance of their employers. Teaching was one of the few occupations that offered women some real economic independence, yet it too, was underpaid. As northern states began to require public education at the elementary level, local officials saw the advantage of hiring women at one-third to half the salary of men.

Focus Questions, *Who Built America?* chapter 9.

1. Why did planters feel threatened by the presence of free blacks in the south? Were non slaveholding whites opposed to the presence of free blacks for the same reasons or different reasons? Explain.

- a. Free slaves in the south as well as slaves threatened planter's authority. In fact, by the 1830s, free blacks were often seen as a more serious threat to white supremacy than were rebellious slaves. The mere existence of free blacks in the south challenged any simple connection between race and enslavement. Free black men showed more threat because they were viewed as hard working competitors with white working men, while black women were seen as less threat because their most marketable skills were in the area like laundry, domestic work, petty trades, and sewing.
- b. The number of free blacks in the south remained low through out mid-nineteenth century, yet, their presence still created considerable anxiety among whites. By 1840, Mississippi passed a law that prohibited blacks from testifying against white, and voting. A year later, a group of Natchez whites called a meeting at city hall to consider imposing a fine on the owners of slaves who permitted them to go at large and hire their time; and also requiring free persons of color to remove from Mississippi and prevent their emigration into the state.
- c. Like planters, non-slaveholding whites often opposed the presence of free blacks in the south. they tended to see free black workers as unwanted competition for jobs. In the north, immigrants from Ireland, Germany, and elsewhere reshaped the labor force and created tensions among whites as well as between whites and blacks. With smaller cities and less industry, the south attracted less immigrants, leaving free blacks as the major source of economic competition. In cities where white workers competed directly with free black laborers, tensions between them grew and whites wanted to ensure that restrictive laws were enforced.

2. Explain the emergence of the proslavery movement in the 1830s. How did white politicians like John C. Calhoun and George Duffie, white professors and authors like Thomas Dew and George Fitzhugh, and other southern elites use religion, "science," and comparisons to northern wage labor to defend the institution of slavery?

- a. Much of the 18th century and 19th century saw the continuing debate over slavery. The pro-slavery ideology in the South peaked between the late 1830s through the early 1860s. By 1860, the slave states had approximately four million slaves comprising a third of the South's population. Much of the American South believed that slavery was vital to the continuation of its livelihood and lifestyle and therefore defended the institution of slavery. As the abolition movement picked up, southerners became organized in their support of slavery in what became known as the pro-slavery movement.
- b. Defenders of slavery noted that slavery was often mentioned in the Bible. For instance, the Bible mentions that Abraham had slaves. The

defenders claimed that slavery was divine, and that it allowed Christianity into the lives of African Americans. According to this argument, slavery is a good thing for the enslaved. John C. Calhoun thought that white southerners should not apologize for slavery. Instead, he argued that slavery was “indispensable to the peace and happiness of both” whites and blacks. He claims that slavery is “a good- a positive good” instead of an evil.

- c. People who were pro-slavery believed that killing the slavery system would also kill the South’s cotton reliant economy. In other words, the cotton economy would undoubtedly collapse and destroy the South if all slaves were freed. Those who favored slavery argued that if slavery was abolished, it would result in chaos, leading to revolts and uprisings and great economical destruction. In 1835 by George McDuffie, Democratic governor of South Carolina from 1834-1836, strongly attacks Northern abolitionists. He stoutly defends the institution of slavery as a positive good rather than a necessary evil. He states that slavery is a moral institution that benefits both the slaves and society as a whole. Many of the ideas expressed in this speech were central to the southern defense of slavery.
- d. In the United States, pro-slavery sentiment arose in the Antebellum period in response to the growing development of the anti-slavery movement in the United States. The period preceding the Civil War is widely known as the Antebellum Period. Those who favored slavery were often challenged by Abolitionists during this time period. Those who were for slavery included economics, religion, and legality to strengthen their arguments and defend their way of life.

3. What was the political platform of the Free-Soil Party following the Mexican American War? Why did the Free-Soilers oppose slavery in the western territories? Did they oppose slavery on the same grounds as the abolitionists?

- a. The Free Soil Party evolved in the 1840s in response to the growing split between pro- and anti-slavery movements in the United States. National politics was controlled primarily by two parties, Democratic and Whig. Within both parties there were supporters and opponents of slavery, and the issue became more heated as the U.S. added territory. Proponents of slavery wanted to extend it into the newly acquired territories, while opponents wanted the territories to remain free. The issue grew especially heated among members of the state democratic party in New York. Two groups emerged: the "Barnburners," who opposed slavery, and the "Hunkers," who supported slavery or were neutral on the question.
- b. The Mexican War, which began in 1846, further exacerbated the slavery question. David Wilmot, a Democratic congressman from Pennsylvania, introduced what became known as the Wilmot proviso. It called for a prohibition of slavery in any territory acquired by the United States in the

war with Mexico. The Wilmot Proviso came up for a vote several times; it was routinely passed by the House and defeated by the Senate. Democrats joined with the Barnburners in New York to create the Free Soil party.

The party held its convention in Buffalo, New York, in August 1848 and adopted the slogan, "Free soil, free speech, free labor, and free men."

- c. The Free Soilers had a mixed reception. Many people saw them as a cynical group of Van Buren loyalists who had no real desire to abolish slavery but merely to take votes away from the major parties. The slavery question continued to divide the country, although the compromise of 1850 attempted to provide a framework that everyone could accept by legislating which states and territories would be free and which would be slave. By 1854 the Free Soil party had disappeared, but many of its supporters and former members still held sway in national politics. These influential men became key figures in the creation of the republican party, whose 1860 candidate for president was Abraham Lincoln.

Focus Questions, *Who Built America?*, chapter 10:

1. What were the origins of the 1849 California Gold Rush? How did the Gold Rush transform small communities into "boom towns?"

- a. The discovery of gold nuggets in the Sacramento Valley in early 1848 by James Williams sparked the Gold Rush, arguably one of the most significant events to shape American history during the first half of the 19th century. As news spread of the discovery, thousands of prospective gold miners traveled by sea or over land to San Francisco and the surrounding area; by the end of 1849, the non-native population of the California territory was some 100,000. A total of \$2 billion worth of precious metal was extracted from the area during the Gold Rush, which peaked in 1852.
- b. Throughout 1849, people around the United States borrowed money, mortgaged their property or spent their life savings to make the arduous journey to California. In pursuit of the kind of wealth they had never dreamed of, they left their families and hometowns; in turn, women left behind took on new responsibilities such as running farms or businesses and caring for their children alone. Thousands of would-be gold miners, known as '49ers, traveled overland across the mountains or by sea, sailing to Panama or even around Cape Horn, the southernmost point of South America.
- c. By the end of the year, the non-native population of California was estimated at 100,000. To accommodate the needs of the '49ers, gold mining towns had sprung up all over the region, complete with shops, saloons, brothels and other businesses seeking to make their own Gold Rush fortune. The overcrowded chaos of the mining camps and towns

grew ever more lawless, including rampant banditry, gambling, prostitution and violence. San Francisco, for its part, developed a bustling economy and became the central metropolis of the new frontier.

- d. Though gold mining continued throughout the 1850s, it had reached its peak by 1852, when some \$81 million was pulled from the ground. After that year, the total take declined gradually, leveling off to around \$45 million per year by 1857. Settlement in California continued, however, and by the end of the decade the state's population was 380,000.

2. What was the “underground railroad?” How did the Fugitive Slave Law (part of the Compromise of 1850) affect runaway slaves living in the north? How did the Fugitive Slave Law fuel the abolitionist movement?

- a. The Underground Railroad was the term used to describe a network of persons who helped escaped slaves on their way to freedom in the northern states or Canada. Although George Washington had commented upon such practices by the Quakers as early as the 1780s, the term gained currency in the 1830s, as northern abolitionists became more vocal and southern suspicions of threats to their peculiar institution grew.
- b. The popular perception of a well-coordinated system of Quaker, Covenantan, and Methodist “conductors” secretly helping fugitives from “station” to “station” is an exaggeration. The most active of the Railroad workers were northern free blacks, who had little or no support from white abolitionists. Estimates of the number of slaves assisted vary widely, but only a minuscule fraction of those held in bondage ever escaped.
- c. The Fugitive Slave Acts were a pair of federal laws that allowed for the capture and return of runaway slaves within the territory of the United States. Enacted by Congress in 1793, the first Fugitive Slave Act authorized local governments to seize and return escaped slaves to their owners and imposed penalties on anyone who aided in their flight. Widespread resistance to the 1793 law later led to the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which added further provisions regarding runaways and levied even harsher punishments for interfering in their capture. The Fugitive Slave Acts were among the most controversial laws of the early 19th century, and many Northern states passed special legislation in an attempt to circumvent them. Both laws were formally repealed by an act of Congress in 1864.

3. What was the significance of the *Dred Scott* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1857? How did the decision affect the legal rights of both slaves and free blacks? How did the decision sanction slavery in free states and territories?

- a. On this day in 1857, the United States Supreme Court issues a decision in the *Dred Scott* case, affirming the right of slave owners to take their slaves into the Western territories, thereby negating the doctrine of popular

sovereignty and severely undermining the platform of the newly created Republican Party.

- b. At the heart of the case was the most important question of the 1850s: Should slavery be allowed in the West? As part of the Compromise of 1850, residents of newly created territories could decide the issue of slavery by vote, a process known as popular sovereignty. When popular sovereignty was applied in Kansas in 1854, however, violence erupted. Americans hoped that the Supreme Court could settle the issue that had eluded a congressional solution.
- c. Dred Scott was a slave whose owner, an army doctor, had spent time in Illinois, a free state, and Wisconsin, a free territory at the time of Scott's residence. The Supreme Court was stacked in favor of the slave states. Five of the nine justices were from the South while another, Robert Grier of Pennsylvania, was staunchly pro-slavery. Chief Justice Roger B. Taney wrote the majority decision, which was issued on March 6, 1857. The court held that Scott was not free based on his residence in either Illinois or Wisconsin because he was not considered a person under the U.S. Constitution—in the opinion of the justices, black people were not considered citizens when the Constitution was drafted in 1787. According to Taney, Dred Scott was the property of his owner, and property could not be taken from a person without due process of law. In fact, there were free black citizens of the United States in 1787, but Taney and the other justices were attempting to halt further debate on the issue of slavery in the territories. The decision inflamed regional tensions, which burned for another four years before exploding into the Civil War.

Focus Questions, *Who Built America*, Chapter 11

1) How did war transform the economic conditions of the United States between the years 1861-1865?

- a. As the Civil War unfolded, economic change in the north occurred at a quickening pace. Despite military and economic setbacks in 1861 and 1862, the Union grew stronger as the war progressed. Northern factories turned out weapons, ammunitions, blankets, clothing, shoes, and other products and northern shipyards built the fleets that blockaded southern ports. Leading in the production of war materials, the north continued to serve as the centre of American industrial development. By 1860, manufacturing establishments in the north outnumbered those in the south six to one, and there were 1.3 million industrial workers in the North, compared to 110,000 in the South.
- b. Effects of the war on northern industry had been little short of disastrous. New England textile production declined precipitously as the flow of raw southern cotton dried up. In 1863, coal mining and iron production boomed in PA, and woolen manufacturing took up the slack left by the decline of cotton in new England. Merchants dealing in war orders made handsome profits and industrialist ran their factories at a frenzied pace

- c. Economic boom of 1863-1864 was also linked to vast expansion in the federal government activities. Direct orders of war office for blankets and firearms spark the manufacturing upturn. Government also stimulated the economy by granting large contracts to northern railroads to carry troops and supplies, making loans that would finance the railroads. Also creation of national currency and national banking system gave federal government the power to create currency, which led to increase in federal budget from \$63 million to 1.3 billion.
- d. However, in the war over half a million workers left to serve in the Union army, which led to shortage of labor. Northern industrialists hired immigrants in response to this labor shortage. Unskilled workers, especially women were hit hard by these inflations. Industrialists garnered huge profit as production boomed, woolen industry nearly tripled and railroad stocks reached sky high.

2) In what ways did the Civil War expose class-based tensions in American society?

- a. After civil war, skilled workers, whose labor was in high demand were able to keep up with inflation post civil war but unskilled workers especially women were hit hard by inflation. From 1863-1865 there were dozens of strikes as workers began to form unions to demand higher wages. In 1863, employers broke strikes staged by largely immigrant workers by hiring A.A. from jobs in which they had traditionally been excluded. The phrase that had seemed so cynical in 1862 – “a rich man’s war and a poor man’s fight” – had become the rallying cry of southern peace movement by 1864.
- b. Industrialization also led to a vast expansion of the region’s small urban working class and to a new activism on its part. Skilled workers in the war industries formed unions, went on strike, and tried to put political pressure on the Confederate government. In 1863, when Virginia legislators introduced bill to control food prices and a large crowd of Richmond workers expressed their support for prices control and their resentment towards the rich. From the fact that he consumes all and produces nothing, they proclaimed, we know that without our labor and production the man with money could not exist.
- c. Lavish balls hosted by the wives of wealthy industrialists, planters, and politicians only reinforced southern workers disparaging view of confederate leaders. The others insisted that such events were shameful displays of indifference to national calamity. Small farmers and their families bore the heavy burdens. Small farmers in the south saw their farms, animals, and crops being destroyed since the war was only fought in the Upper South. Despite their loyalty to the Confederacy early in the war, taxation, impressment, inflation, and the inequalities of the draft eventually took their toll.

3) Why did the North win the Civil War?

- a. One of the main reason North won the civil war was because North had more resources. The Civil War was a modern war in that it was won largely by economic forces. It was a war that relied on industrial output as much as anything. Unions in the north had more advantage then the south. There were about 22 million people in the north compared to about only 9 million in the south. In 1860 the northern states produced 97% of USA's firearms and 94% of its pig iron. Even in agriculture the north enjoyed the edge. While the southern economy was based solely on agriculture. When the civil war started there was only one iron foundry in the south compared to many in the north.
- b. The railroad system in the north was also better then the one in the south, which helped northern states to transfer supplies and uniforms faster to and from the factories. North also had a superior navy. The war was mostly on land, but the US navy was very important. The Navy's ability to blockade the south prevented the south from receiving help from the European countries.
- c. In addition to that, the North also had an established government and knew how to function as well as work together. The North's moral cause through the Emancipation Proclamation given to the war by president Lincoln which encouraged international support to the North. North recruited black men and may free slaves to Union Army after the Emancipation Proclamation was approved. The south started to recruit black men and free slaves too but their ware not as successful as the north.

4) Some historians have argued that the Civil War marked "the second founding of the American Republic." Assess the validity of this statement, being sure to back up your argument with facts from our selected readings.

- a. First founding of the American Republic was during the American Revolution, which makes the Civil War the second found of the American Republic. American Republic was founded on certain principles of individuality and freedom but there was a big asterisk around that since so much of America did not benefit from it. The American Revolution ended up being about the freedom of white males and the civil war ended up being about the freedom of blacks. In a sense, you are recreating the country and rights that were initially fought for.
- b. At the end of the civil war, country was reignited and told everyone that we will only work under one labor system and that is free labor. The definition of citizen in the country changed as well. Before the civil war, it was very exclusive, excluding the women and the slaves. However, after the civil war it has become a lot more inclusive. The county can have citizens of different ethnic backgrounds and became full citizen of country and everyone can be included in the country. This idea came out of the civil war. Notion of free republic that embraces everyone and access to free labor to work as free person and aspire to the America dream and be

able to rise up through own merit and provide for family were possible after the civil war.

Week 14 Focus Questions, *Who Built America?*, chapters 12-13 and 1877: *The Grand Army of Starvation*

1) What was Reconstruction? What promises did it hold for freed African Americans in the south? In what ways did white southerners resist Reconstruction and how did this resistance contribute to its failure?

- a. The reconstruction was about reconstructing southern states and the interracial democracy. After the civil war, the Union needed to effectively bring the south back into the country on equal footing, revive their economy, and rebuild their shattered landscape. Nevertheless, division in the federal government over Reconstruction caused a failure to achieve these goals. Lincoln first proposed the 10% plan, which offered a lenient way for southern states to rejoin the union, however, once Lincoln was assassinated, Andrew Johnson, a former owner of slaves, became the president and initiated his own plan for reconstruction. Although his plan initially worked, former confederates eventually worked their way into the government and however, republicans refused to seat these southerners.
- b. Furthermore, the republican party itself was divided. Moderates and conservatives wanted the south to be readily admitted into the Union and Congress. These Republicans also wanted more reforms than those Johnson was providing. At the same time, radical Republicans wanted drastic change, desiring to remake the south in the image of the north. These tensions within the republican party, and the seemingly southern leaning president, led to little progress and even an impeachment trial of Andrew Johnson. The northern disputes sidetracked the union from real progress and did not help to bring the south back into the union.
- c. Another issue of reconstruction, the integration of freed slaves into society, also shows the unsuccessful nature of reconstruction. There were several promising times during reconstruction when progress was made for freed African Americans. The first was the 13, 14, and 15 amendments guaranteeing African Americans certain civil liberties. Also, 14 African American were selected to congress and numerous other served in the states and local governments. However, the rise of the KKK and other white supremacy groups began to intimate freed slaves and push back their civil liberties. Which also lead to the failure of reconstruction. The north was at odds and distracted over how the effort should be addressed and thus did not effectively rebuild the south and bring it back to the unions.

- 2) **What was the meaning of “redeeming” the South at the end of Reconstruction? What were the consequences for African Americans?**
- 3) **What were the major causes of the 1877 Great Railroad Uprising? Why did it spread from being a local work stoppage to a major rebellion in cities throughout the United States?**
- a. A lot of the causes of the strike were very risky and made the workers have to change the style of their work as well. When the civil war ended, the railroads required large amounts of capital investments, and also entailed massive financial risks too. With the financial risks coming into play, the workers had to change what they had going and hire masonry for shop buildings and such. However, speculators fed large amounts of money into the industry, which caused an abnormal growth and over expansion on railroads. By 1877, there was about a 10% wage cut to all workers in Maryland and Ohio line at Camden Junction, the distrust of capitalists and poor workers conditions also led to a number of railroad strikes all around that prevented the trains from moving to one place from another.
 - b. Although, many railroads at the time were using other materials to build everything instead of metal such as wood. They used wood and other materials because they were more populated at the time and they could use the wood for other things as well such as building bridges, tunnels, snow fences when the weather was bad, sheds for equipment and possibly even homeless people and telegraph poles too. All this led to building new tracks in areas where land has not yet been cleared or settled which required a good amount of land grants and loans that only the government could provide. Since the government was the only ones to allow this to happen, these grants and loans set Cooke's bankruptcy on the nation's economy and it left the economy on a terrible note.
 - c. some critical causes that the strike has done was pretty serious to all working citizens on the railroad tracks at the time. Paychecks being cut, jobs being taken away, and lives were even being killed. People were being shot because of the types of striking they were doing and this made a situation larger than it needed to be. President Hayes ordered federal troops to protect the mail and to quell the riots. Since the strikers weren't getting what they wanted, they changed their whole lifestyle and who they worked as well. They chose to do what they felt was right instead of what they were told which triggered some controversy with the government.
- 4) **How do the events of 1877—including the end of Reconstruction and the Great Railroad Uprising—relate to themes about race relations, social class and labor relations, and the possibilities for collective action in earlier moments in American history that we have discussed in this course? Are these themes still relevant today?**