

* Read & take notes - there will be a quiz.



TELESCOPING THE TIMES

Reconstruction and Its Effects

CHAPTER OVERVIEW As Congress enacts a policy of punishing the South for the Civil War, African Americans struggle to establish new lives. Eventually, the North tires of Reconstruction, and Southern whites regain control over the South.

Summary

o The Politics of Reconstruction

MAIN IDEA Congress opposed Lincoln's and Johnson's plans for Reconstruction and instead implemented its own plan to rebuild the South.

Reconstruction refers to the period from 1865 to 1877, when the country rebuilt from war and the federal government determined how the Southern states were to reenter the Union. Lincoln wanted the Southern states to rejoin quickly. His plan readmitted a state once 10 percent of voters took an oath of allegiance. He also promised to pardon most former Confederates.

Four states applied for readmission under this plan, but Radical Republicans in Congress blocked them. They wanted to deny power to former slave owners and to give the right to vote to African Americans. They passed a more severe bill in 1864, but Lincoln vetoed it.

After Lincoln was killed, Andrew Johnson of Tennessee became president. His Reconstruction policy was also lenient. Among provisions, a state had to declare secession illegal and ratify the Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery. Many Southern states met these terms, and in December 1865, new Southern members of Congress arrived in Washington.

The Radicals—outraged because many of these members had served in the Confederate government or fought in its armies—refused to seat the new members. Congress passed a law extending the Freedmen's Bureau, which had been created to help former-slaves adjust to a new life. It also passed a civil rights bill. This law made African Americans citizens and banned the black codes. The codes were new Southern laws that restricted African Americans' freedom.

Johnson, feeling the two bills made the federal government too powerful, vetoed both. Congress voted to override the veto. It also passed the Fourteenth Amendment, which confirmed African Americans' citizenship and barred most former Confederate leaders from political office. Johnson,

thinking the bill too punishing, angered Congress again by urging Southern states not to approve the amendment.

In the 1866 congressional elections, Johnson campaigned against the Radicals. His harsh words angered many Northern voters, as did race riots in the South that left many African Americans dead. The freed slaves needed the federal government, many thought. The Radicals won an overwhelming victory, gaining enough seats to override any presidential veto.

In 1867, the new Congress passed the Reconstruction Act. It declared the reorganized state governments invalid, put the Southern states under military control, and called for new state constitutions. Those new state laws had to give African Americans the right to vote.

The next year, the conflict between president and Congress reached a head. The House of Representatives voted to impeach President Johnson. If the Senate found him guilty, he would be removed from office. After an eleven-week trial, the Senate did not find him guilty.

That fall, Ulysses S. Grant won the presidential election with overwhelming support from African American voters in the South. Congress then passed the Fifteenth Amendment, which outlawed the denial of voting rights due to race.

o Reconstructing Society

MAIN IDEA Various groups contributed to the rebuilding of Southern society after the war.

The Southern states wrote new constitutions, and by 1870 all were back in the Union under the Radicals' terms. The war had destroyed the population and economy of the region, however. The new state governments undertook ambitious rebuilding programs and instituted the first public school systems in many Southern states. They had to raise taxes to fund these programs.

Three groups made up the Republican party in the South. Scalawags—white Southerners who joined the party—were mostly former Unionists.

Carpetbaggers were Northerners who moved South after the war to reform Southern society or to make a fortune. The third group was African Americans eager to vote. Most white Southerners disliked the new governments. They resented Northern attitudes and could not accept equality for African Americans.

African Americans worked hard to improve their lives. Many sought husbands or wives who had been sold elsewhere in the South. Once reunited, they married and raised their families. Thousands—of all ages—sought an education in newly established schools. Many joined churches and volunteer groups to better African American society. Some joined the new state governments, and more than a dozen served in the U.S. Congress.

Economic changes were harder to enact, however. Congress debated whether to break up the plantations and give land to the freed slaves, but most members were unwilling to overturn the right to property. Southern planters forced black workers to sign labor contracts, but neither white landowners nor black workers liked the system. African Americans thought the wages too low. Planters lacked the cash to pay workers.

Two new labor systems developed. In sharecropping, planters gave small plots of land to workers—black and white—in return for a share of the crop. In tenant farming, laborers rented land. Both systems faced a new reality of Southern agriculture: world demand for Southern cotton—and thus the price of cotton—had fallen.

➊ The Collapse of Reconstruction

MAIN IDEA *Southern opposition to Radical Reconstruction, along with economic problems in the North, ended Reconstruction.*

Some white Southerners formed groups that tortured and murdered former slaves. The most famous of these groups was the Ku Klux Klan. Between 1868 and 1871, the Klan killed several thousand people—including whites who helped African Americans. In the mid-1870s, Klan violence prevented African Americans from voting and returned Democrats to power in several Southern states. Congress took action with laws in 1870 and 1871 to try to suppress the Klan. Other laws, however, weakened the Republican Party in the South.

Meanwhile, the Grant administration was plagued by scandal. Though Grant never engaged in any corruption, some of his appointees did, including his first vice-president; private secretary; and the secretaries of war, navy, and interior. In 1872, the Republican Party splintered. Reform-minded members chose newspaper editor Horace Greeley to run for president. Though the Democrats also backed Greeley, Grant won.

A financial panic in 1873 upset the country further. Many banks closed, and a depression followed. People argued about whether or not to stop using paper money. The debate took attention away from Reconstruction.

By the mid-1870s, Northern desire to maintain Reconstruction was low. At the same time, Supreme Court decisions had weakened the power of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. Sentiment in the North grew to reconcile the two sections of the country. A disputed election then helped Democrats regain control of Southern state governments.

In the 1876 presidential election, Democrat Samuel J. Tilden finished one electoral vote short of victory. Congress appointed a commission to settle disputed electoral votes. The commission chose Republican Rutherford B. Hayes after Hayes made a deal with Southern Democrats to end Reconstruction. Upon taking office, Hayes pulled federal troops out of the South. Democrats, called Redeemers, now controlled every Southern state government.

Reconstruction had failed to secure equality for African Americans. The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments remained part of the Constitution, however. In later years, they were used to protect African Americans' rights.