

# RECONSTRUCTION

Key

## Reconstruction

- The 12 year period when the South was Rebuilt after the Civil War

As well as

- The Federal government's plan to rebuild it.

## Freedmen

- Men and women in the South who had previously been slaves

## Ten Percent Plan

- President Lincoln's Plan
- Under this plan, a southern state could form a new government after 10% of its voters swore an oath of loyalty to the United States
- Once a new state government was formed, it had to abolish slavery
- Voters could then elect members of Congress and take part in the national government once again

## Wade-Davis Bill

- Many Republicans in Congress thought President Lincoln's 10% Plan was too generous toward the South
- Members of Congress passed the Wade-Davis Bill ( or 50 % Plan), which required a majority of white men in each southern state to swear loyalty to the Union
- This plan also denied the right to vote or hold office to anyone who volunteered to fight for the Confederacy
- President Lincoln refused to sign the Wade-Davis Bill because he felt it was too harsh

## Freedmen's Bureau

- A government agency that helped former slaves by providing Food and clothing. It also tried to find Jobs and set up schools in the South for freedmen.

## Lincoln's Assassination

- On April 14, 1865 Lincoln attended a play at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C.
- John Wilkes Booth shot Lincoln in the back of the head
- President Lincoln died the next morning
- Vice President Andrew Johnson becomes the 17<sup>th</sup> President of the United States
- At first many Republicans were pleased that Johnson was President
- Believed he would support a strict Reconstruction Plan
- But Johnson's plan was almost as mild as Lincoln's

## Johnson's Plan

- Called for a majority of voters in each southern state to pledge loyalty to the U.S.
- Demanded that each state ratify the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment, which banned slavery
- Congress had passed the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment in January 1865

## Rebellion in Congress

- Southern states did what Johnson asked
- Then southern voters elected new members to Congress
- Many of the elected had held high offices in the Confederacy
- Republicans were outraged
- Men who had led the South out of the Union were being elected to the House and Senate

- In 1865 when Congress convened Republicans refused to let southern representatives take their seats
- Stage was set for a showdown between Congress and President Johnson

### Part Two

- Before Civil War, rich planters controlled southern politics
- During Reconstruction new groups dominated southern state governments
- They tried to reshape the politics of the South
- 3 groups will take the place of the old leaders

### Scalawags

- White southerners who supported the new Republican governments
- Many southerners felt these people were traitors since they helped the Republicans

### Carpetbaggers

- People who moved to the South after the war were called carpetbaggers
- Some moved South to get rich as the South was being rebuilt
- Some were Union soldiers who had grown to love the South's rich land
- Others were Reformers who wanted to help the freedmen

### Freedmen

- Men and women in the South who had been slaves
- They were voting and were elected to public office
- They became sheriffs, mayors, and legislators in the South's new government
- Between 1869-1880, 16 African Americans were elected to Congress

## Reconstruction resisted

- Southerners who held power before the Civil War (nearly all were Democrats)
- Known as Conservatives they wanted the South to change as little as possible
- Wealthy planters wanted to force the freedmen back to work on plantations
- Small farmers and laborers felt threatened and competed with Freedmen for land and power.

## Whites declare war

- Secret societies formed to help white southerners regain power
- Most dangerous "secret society" was the Ku Klux Klan or KKK
- It worked to keep blacks and white Republicans out of public office
- Members dressed in white robes to hide their identity
- Rode at night to the homes of African Americans
- Shouted threats and burned wooden crosses
- If threats didn't work the Klan used violence
- They murdered hundreds of African Americans and their white allies

## Rebuilding the South

- Public schools, railroads, telegraph lines, bridges, Roads

## South's Economy

- Cotton production recovered slowly
- By 1880, planters were growing as much cotton as they had in 1860
- Industry grew, but still lagged behind the rest of the nation

- By the 1900, the south was producing a smaller part of the nation's manufactured goods than it had in 1860
- Reconstruction governments raised taxes
- Many freedmen and poor whites went to work on large plantations
- They farmed the planer's land and in return were given a share of the crops at harvest
- These landless farmers were called sharecroppers

### Part Three

- By 1866 most states had ratified the 13 Amendment (banned slavery)
- White Southerners did not want to give African American "real Freedom"
- Legislatures passed Black Codes  
-Laws that severely limited the rights of freedmen

### Black Codes

- Forbade African Americans to vote, own guns and serve on Juries
- Permitted them to work only as servants or farm laborers
- They did get some rights. They were allowed to legally marry and own some kind of property
- Republicans were angered by the black codes and election of former Confederate leaders to Congress
- Republicans sent a report condemning these things to President Johnson - He ignored it
- Members of Congress vowed to take Reconstruction out of the President's hands

### Radical Republicans or simply Radicals

- Led the opposition to President Johnson
- 2 main goals

1. to break the power of the Planters who had ruled the South for years
2. to make sure Freedmen received the right to vote

- In April 1866, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act, this gave citizenship to African Americans
- President Johnson vetoed the bill
- Congress overrode the veto
- Worried that the Supreme Court might declare it unconstitutional, Republicans proposed the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment

### 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment

- Granted citizenship to all persons born in the U.S. (this included African Americans)
- Guaranteed all citizens "equal protection of the laws"
- Declared no state could "deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law"
- Made it illegal for states to discriminate against an individual on "unreasonable grounds" such as the color of the person's skin
- President Johnson opposed the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment
- Urged all former Confederate states to reject it. All did except Tennessee
- It became an issue in the November 1866 Congressional elections
- Results were a disaster for Johnson – Republicans won majorities in both Houses of Congress
- Congress could now override President Johnson's vetoes

### Radical Reconstruction

- The period that followed the election of 1866
- Congress passed the 1<sup>st</sup> Reconstruction Act over President Johnson's veto

This Act:

1. Threw out the southern governments that had refused to ratify the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment
2. Divided the South into 5 "military districts" each commanded by an army general
3. Required the former Confederate states to write new constitutions
4. Required the new state governments to ratify the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment before rejoining the Union
5. (and most importantly) stated that African American must be allowed to vote in all southern states

In the elections that followed, Freedmen turned out to exercise their right to vote. Republicans gained control of southern state governments.

- Afraid the Johnson would not enforce these laws, Republicans decided to remove him from office
- February 24, 1868, the House of Representatives voted to impeach Johnson
- Constitution states that a President may be impeached for "high crimes and misdemeanors"
- The case is tried in the Senate
- President is removed from office only if found guilty by 2/3 of the Senators
- Vote was 35-19. One vote short of the 2/3 to remove Johnson from office.

### Ulysses S. Grant

- In 1868 Grant runs for President and easily wins
- In 1869 Congress proposes the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment
  - It forbade any state from denying African Americans the right to vote because of their race

- It was ratified in 1870

#### Part Four

- By 1860 Radical Republicans were losing power
- Grant won reelection 1872
- Many northerners grew tired of trying to change the South and lost faith in Republican leaders and policies
- By 1876 only 3 southern states were under Republican control – South Carolina, Florida, and Louisiana

#### Election of 1876

- Democratic candidate – Samuel Tilden
  - Republican candidate - Rutherford B. Hayes
  - Tilden won the popular vote, but was 1 vote short of the 182 electoral votes needed to win
  - 20 electoral votes were in dispute
  - Congress set up a special committee to settle the crisis
  - The committee gave all the disputed votes to Hayes. He wins the election.
  - Hayes had agreed to end Reconstruction
  - He removed all remaining federal troops from South Carolina, Florida and Louisiana
  - Reconstruction is over
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- By the late 1880, many southern states passed Poll taxes. This required voters to pay a Fee each time they voted
  - Poor Freedmen could not afford to pay the poll tax, so they could not vote
  - Literacy test required voters to read and explain a difficult part of the Constitution. Freedmen had little education so these tests kept them away from the polls
  - Some southern whites were poor and illiterate (not able to read or write). To allow them to vote, states passed grandfather clauses.



- If a voter's father or grandfather had been eligible to vote on January 1, 1867, the voter did not have to take a literacy test
- Since NO African Americans in the South could vote before 1868, grandfather clauses were a way to ensure only white men could vote.

### Segregation

- Became the "Law of the South"
- Means – separating people of different races
- Southern laws separated blacks and whites in schools, restaurants, theaters, trains, streetcars, playgrounds, hospitals, and cemeteries
- They were called Jim Crow Laws
- Lawsuits were filed to challenge segregation
- In 1896 the Supreme Court upheld segregation in Plessy v. Ferguson
- The court ruled that segregation was legal as long as the facilities for blacks and whites were equal