



Chapter Seventeen

Reconstruction, 1863—1877



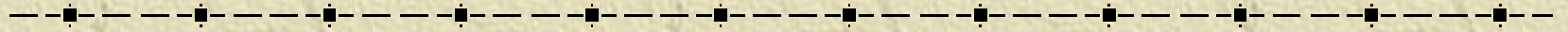
Part One:



Introduction



Reconstruction, 1863–1877



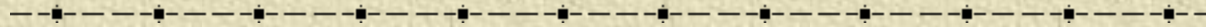
✦ What does this painting indicate about the task of Reconstruction?

Chapter Focus Questions

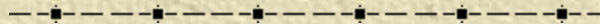
- ✦ What were the competing political plans for reconstructing the defeated Confederacy?
- ✦ How difficult was the transition from slavery to freedom for African Americans?
- ✦ What was the political and social legacy of Reconstruction in the southern states?
- ✦ What were the post-Civil War transformations in the economic and political life of the North?



Part Two:



American Communities

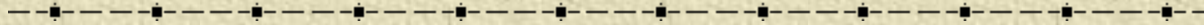


From Slavery to Freedom in a Black Belt Community?

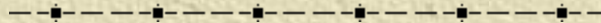
- ✦ In Hale County, former slaves showed an increased sense of autonomy, expressing it through politics and through their new work patterns.
- ✦ One planter described how freed people refused to do “their former accustomed work.”
- ✦ Former slaveholders had to reorganize their plantations and allow slaves to work the land as sharecroppers, rather than hired hands.
- ✦ Freed people organized themselves and elected two of their number to the state legislature.
- ✦ These acts of autonomy led to a white backlash, including nighttime attacks by Ku Klux Klansmen intent on terrorizing freed blacks and maintaining white social and political supremacy.



Part Three:



**The Politics of
Reconstruction**



The Defeated South

- ✦ The South had been thoroughly defeated and its economy lay in ruins.
- ✦ The presence of Union troops further embittered white Southerners.
- ✦ The bitterest pill was the changed status of African Americans whose freedom seemed an affront to white supremacy.

Abraham Lincoln's Plan

- ✦ Lincoln promoted a plan to bring states back into the Union as swiftly as possible protecting private property and opposing harsh punishments.
 - ◆ Amnesty was promised to those swearing allegiance.
 - ◆ State governments could be established if 10 percent of the voters took an oath of allegiance.
- ✦ Lincoln used a pocket veto to kill a plan passed by Congressional radicals
- ✦ Redistribution of land posed another problem.
- ✦ Congress created the Freedman's Bureau and passed the Thirteenth Amendment

Andrew Johnson and Presidential Reconstruction

- ✦ Andrew Johnson, the new president, was a War Democrat from Tennessee.
- ✦ He had used harsh language to describe southern “traitors” but blamed individuals rather than the entire South for secession.
- ✦ While Congress was not in session he granted amnesty to most Confederates.
 - ◆ Initially, wealthy landholders and members of the political elite had been excluded, but Johnson pardoned most of them.
- ✦ Johnson appointed provisional governors who organized new governments.
- ✦ By December, Johnson claimed that “restoration” was virtually complete.

The Radical Republican Vision

- ✦ Radical Republicans wanted to remake the South in the North's image, advocating land redistribution to make former slaves independent landowners.
- ✦ Stringent "Black Codes" outraged many Northerners.
- ✦ In December 1865, Congress excluded the southern representatives.
- ✦ Congress overrode Johnson's vetoes of a Civil Rights bill and a bill to enlarge the scope of the Freedman's Bureau.
 - ◆ Fearful that courts might declare the Civil Rights Act unconstitutional, Congress drafted the Fourteenth Amendment.
- ✦ Republicans won the Congressional elections of 1866 that had been a showdown between Congress and Johnson over Reconstruction and the amendment.

Congressional Reconstruction and the Impeachment Crisis

- ✦ Map: Reconstruction of the South, 1866–1867
- ✦ The First Reconstruction Act of 1867 enfranchised blacks and divided the South into five military districts.
- ✦ A crisis developed over whether Johnson could replace Secretary of War Edwin Stanton.
 - ◆ In violation of the Tenure of Office Act, Johnson fired Stanton.
- ✦ The House impeached Johnson but the Senate vote fell one vote short of conviction.
 - ◆ This set the precedent that criminal actions by a president—not political disagreements—warranted removal from office.

The Election of 1868

- ✦ By 1868, eight of the eleven ex-Confederate states were back in the Union.
- ✦ Republicans nominated Ulysses Grant for president.
- ✦ The Republicans attacked Democrats' loyalties.
- ✦ Democrats exploited racism to gather votes and used terror in the South to keep Republicans from voting.
- ✦ Republicans won with less than 53 percent of the vote.

Reconstruction and Ratification

- ✦ The remaining unreconstructed states (Mississippi, Texas, and Virginia) had to ratify both the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to be admitted to the Union.
 - ◆ National citizenship included former slaves (“all persons born or naturalized in the United States”).
 - ◆ “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”
- ✦ The states ratified the amendments and rejoined the Union in 1870.

Woman Suffrage and Reconstruction

- ✦ Women's rights activists were outraged that the new laws enfranchised African Americans but not women.
- ✦ The movement split over whether to support a linkage between the rights of women and African Americans.
 - The more radical group fought against the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment and formed an all-female suffrage group.
 - A more moderate group supported the amendment while working toward suffrage at a state level and enlisting the support of men.



Part Four:

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The Meaning of Freedom

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Moving About

- ✦ For many freed people, the first impulse to define freedom was to move about.
- ✦ Many who left soon returned to seek work in their neighborhoods.
- ✦ Others sought new lives in predominantly black areas, even cities.
- ✦ Former slaves enjoyed the freedom of no longer having to show deference to whites.

The African American Family

- ✦ Freedom provided the chance to reunite with lost family members.
- ✦ The end of slavery allowed African Americans to more closely fulfill appropriate gender roles.
 - ◆ Males took on more authority in the family.
 - ◆ Women continued to work outside the home.

African American Churches and Schools

- ✦ Emancipation allowed ex-slaves to practice religion without white interference.
- ✦ African-American communities pooled their resources to establish churches, the first social institution that they fully controlled.
- ✦ Education was another symbol of freedom.
 - ◆ By 1869 over 3,000 Freedman's Bureau schools taught over 150,000 students.
 - ◆ Black colleges were established as well.

Land Labor After Slavery

- ✦ Most former slaves hoped to become self-sufficient farmers, but with no land redistribution this dream was not fulfilled.
- ✦ The Freedman's Bureau was forced to evict tens of thousands of blacks that had been settled on confiscated lands.
- ✦ At war's end most planters expected blacks to work for wages in gangs, but this was unacceptable to many ex-slaves.
- ✦ Sharecropping came to dominate the southern agricultural economy.

Sharecropping and Living Patterns

- ✦ Sharecropping represented a compromise between planter and former slave.
- ✦ Sharecroppers set their own hours and tasks.
- ✦ Families labored together on adjoining parcels of land.

The Origins of African American Politics

- ✦ Former slaves organized politically to protect their interests and to promote their own participation.
- ✦ Five states had black electoral majorities.
- ✦ The Union League became the political voice of former slaves.
- ✦ New leaders, drawn from the ranks of teachers and ministers, emerged to give direction to the black community as it fought for equal rights.



Part Five:

**Southern Politics and
Society**

Southern Republicans

- ✦ Most northerners were satisfied with a reconstruction that brought the South back into the Union with a viable Republican Party.
 - ◆ Achieving this goal required active Federal support to protect the African-American voters upon which it depended.
- ✦ Republicans also drew strength from:
 - ◆ white, northern, middle-class emigrants called carpetbaggers
 - ◆ native southern white Republicans called scalawags who were businessmen and Unionists from the mountains with old scores to settle
- ✦ The result was an uneasy alliance, with each group pushing an agenda that was incompatible with the plans devised by its allies.

Reconstructing the States

- ✦ Throughout the South, state conventions that had a significant African-American presence drafted constitutions and instituted political and humanitarian reforms.
 - ◆ The new governments insisted on equal rights, but accepted separate schools.
- ✦ The Republican governments did little to assist African Americans in acquiring land though they did help protect the rights of black laborers to bargain freely.
 - ◆ Republican leaders envisioned promoting northern-style prosperity and gave heavy subsidies for railroad development.
 - ◆ These plans frequently opened the doors to corruption and bankrupted the states.

White Resistance

- ✦ Many white southerners believed that the Republicans were not a legitimate political group.
- ✦ Paramilitary groups like the Ku Klux Klan used terror to destroy the Reconstruction governments and intimidate their supporters.
 - ✦ Congress passed several laws to crack down on the Klan.
- ✦ The Civil Rights Act of 1875 outlawed racial discrimination in public places.

Redemption

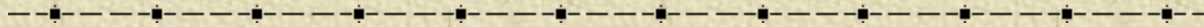
- ✦ As wartime idealism faded and Democrats gained strength in the North, northern Republicans abandoned the freed people and their white allies.
- ✦ Conservative Democrats (Redeemers) won control of southern states.
- ✦ Between 1873 and 1883, the Supreme Court weakened enforcement of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments and overturned convictions of Klan members.

“King Cotton”

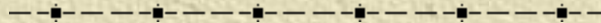
- ✦ Map: Southern Sharecropping and the Cotton Belt
- ✦ The South grew more heavily dependent on cotton.
- ✦ The crop lien system provided loans in exchange for a lien on the crop.
- ✦ As cotton prices spiraled downward, cotton growers fell more deeply into debt.
- ✦ Merchants became the elite in the South.
- ✦ The South emerged as an impoverished region.



Part Six:



**Reconstructing
the North**



The Age of Capital

- ✦ Republicans like Lincoln believed that their society was bound by a harmony of interests without class conflict that allowed for social mobility.
- ✦ A violent railroad strike in 1877 suggested that the North had undergone its own reconstruction, shattering that harmony.
- ✦ Fueled by railroad construction, the postwar years saw a continued industrial boom that concentrated industries into the hands of a few big businesses.
- ✦ Several Republican politicians maintained close connections with railroad interests resulting in the Crédit Mobilier scandal.

Liberal Republicans and the Election of 1872

- ✦ The Republican Party underwent dramatic changes because:
 - ◆ the old radicals were dying or losing influence
 - ◆ party leaders concentrated on holding on to federal patronage
 - ◆ a growing number of Republicans were appalled by the corruption of the party and sought an alternative.
- ✦ The Liberal Republicans:
 - ◆ were suspicious of expanding democracy
 - ◆ called for a return to limited government
 - ◆ proposed civil service reform to insure elites would have federal posts
 - ◆ opposed continued federal involvement in Reconstruction
- ✦ In 1872, Horace Greeley challenged Ulysses Grant for the presidency. Grant easily won but the Liberal Republican agenda continued to gain influence.

The Depression of 1873

- ✦ In 1873, a financial panic triggered the longest depression in American history.
- ✦ Prices fell, unemployment rose, and many people sank deeply in debt.
- ✦ Government officials rejected appeals for relief.
- ✦ Clashes between labor and capital led many to question whether their society was one with a harmony of interests.

The Election of 1876

✧ Map: The Election of 1876

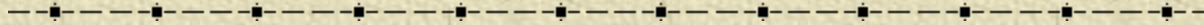
- ✧ As the election of 1876 approached, new scandals in the Grant administration hurt the Republicans.
- ✧ The Democrats nominated Samuel J. Tilden of New York, a former prosecutor. Democrats combined attacks on Reconstruction with attacks on corruption.
- ✧ The Republican nominee, Rutherford B. Hayes of Ohio, accused Democrats of treason and promised to clean up corruption.

Crisis and Resolution

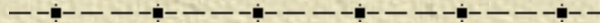
- ✦ Tilden won more votes than Hayes, but both sides claimed victory.
- ✦ In three southern states two sets of electoral votes were returned.
- ✦ An electoral commission awarded the disputed votes to Hayes.
- ✦ Hayes struck a deal that promised money for southern internal improvements and noninterference in southern affairs.
- ✦ The remaining federal troops were removed from the South.
- ✦ The remaining Republican governments in the South lost power.



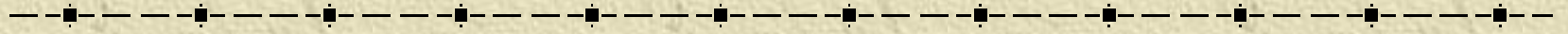
Part Seven:



Conclusion



Reconstruction , 1863–1877



✦ Media: Chronology