

Name: _____

Date: _____

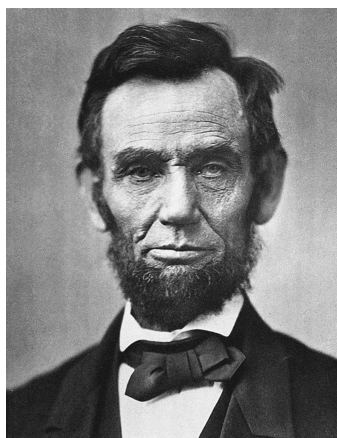
America's Reconstruction: People and Politics After the Civil War

Rights and Power: The Politics of Reconstruction

Reconstruction was an era of unprecedented political conflict and of far-reaching changes in the nature of American government. At the national level, new laws and constitutional amendments permanently altered the federal system and the definition of citizenship. In the South, a politically mobilized black community joined with white allies to bring the Republican party to power, while excluding those accustomed to ruling the region.

The national debate over Reconstruction centered on three questions:

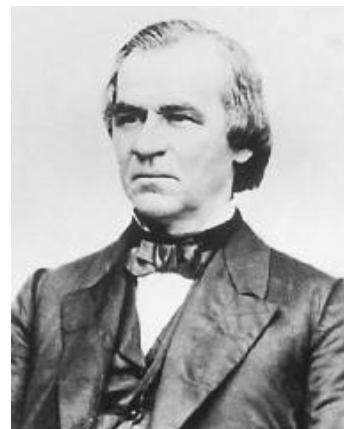
- On what terms should the defeated Confederacy be reunited with the Union?
- Who should establish these terms, Congress or the President?
- What should be the place of the former slaves in the political life of the South?



During the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln announced a lenient plan, with suffrage limited to whites, to attract Southern Confederates back to the Union. By the end of his life, however, Lincoln had come to favor extending the right to vote to educated blacks and former soldiers.

Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson, in 1865 put into effect his own Reconstruction plan, which gave the white South a free hand in establishing new governments. Many Northerners became convinced that Johnson's policy, and the actions of the governments he established, threatened to

reduce African Americans to a condition similar to slavery, while allowing former "rebels" to regain political power in the South.

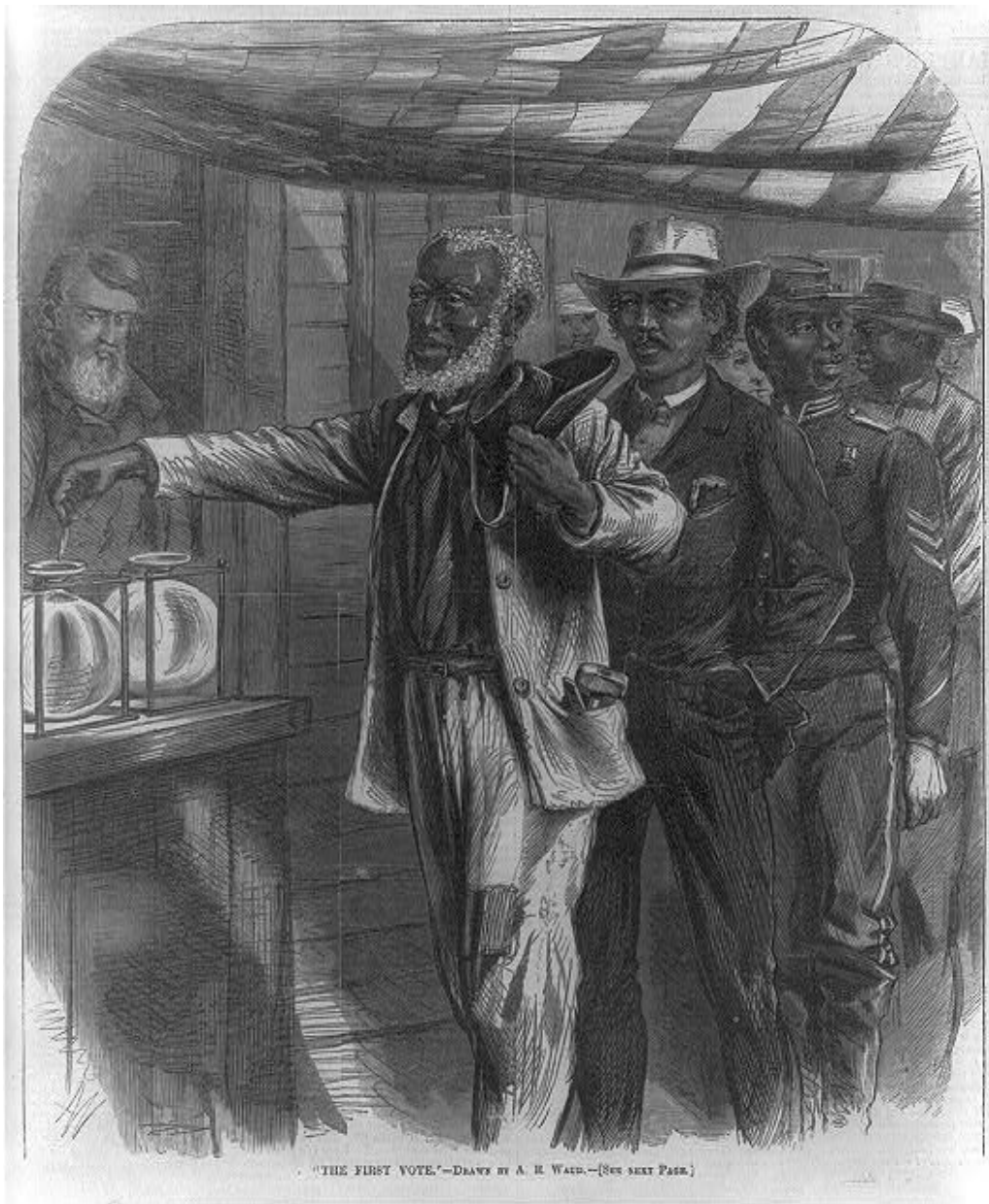


As a result, Congress overturned Johnson's program.

Between 1866 and 1869, Congress enacted new laws and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments to the Constitution, guaranteeing blacks' civil rights and giving black men the right to vote.

These measures for the first time enshrined in American law the principle that the rights of citizens could not be abridged because of race. And they led directly to the creation of new governments in the South elected by blacks as well as white - America's first experiment in interracial democracy.

***The First Vote* - Drawn by A. R. Waud (Harper's Weekly - Nov. 16, 1867)**



Use the image above to answer parts a, b, and c.

- a) Briefly explain the point of view expressed through the image above about ONE of the following
- Emancipation
 - Citizenship
 - Political participation
- b) Briefly explain ONE outcome of the Civil War that led to the historical change depicted in the image.
- c) Briefly explain ONE way in which the historical change you explained in part b was challenged in the period between 1866 and 1896

From Slave Labor to Free Labor

The most difficult task confronting many Southerners during Reconstruction was devising a new system of labor to replace the shattered world of slavery. The economic lives of planters, former slaves, and non-slaveholding whites, were transformed after the Civil War. Planters found it hard to adjust to the end of slavery. Accustomed to absolute control over their labor force, many sought to restore the old discipline, only to meet determined opposition from the freed people, who equated freedom with economic autonomy. Many former slaves believed that their years of unrequited labor gave them a claim to land; "forty acres and a mule" became their rallying cry. White reluctance to sell to blacks, and the federal government's decision not to redistribute land in the South, meant that only a small percentage of the freed people became landowners. Most rented land or worked for wages on white-owned plantations.

The postwar South remained overwhelmingly agricultural. The implements of work were the same as before the war, but relations between planters, laborers, and merchants had changed forever. As under slavery, most rural blacks worked on land owned by whites. But they now exercised control over their personal lives, could come and go as they pleased, and determined which members of the family worked in the fields. In early Reconstruction, many black women, seeking to devote more time to their families, sought to withdraw from field labor, a decision strongly resisted by plantation owners. Children, whose labor had been dictated by the owner under slavery, now attended school. As a result, landowners complained of a persistent "labor shortage" throughout Reconstruction, another way of saying that free labor could not be controlled as rigidly as slave labor.

Under the sharecropping system, which emerged as the dominant labor system in the rural South, black families rented individual plots of land. The system placed a premium on utilizing the labor of all members of the family.



The Ending of Reconstruction

In the 1870's, violent opposition in the South and the North's retreat from its commitment to equality, resulted in the end of Reconstruction. By 1876, the nation was prepared to abandon its commitment to equality for all citizens regardless of race.

As soon as blacks gained the right to vote, secret societies sprang up in the South, devoted to restoring white supremacy in politics and social life. Most notorious was the Ku Klux Klan, an organization of violent criminals that established a reign of terror in some parts of the South, assaulting and murdering local Republican leaders.

In 1871 and 1872, federal marshals, assisted by U. S. troops, brought to trial scores of Klansmen, crushing the organization. But the North's commitment to Reconstruction soon waned. Many Republicans came to believe that the South should solve its own problems without further interference from Washington. Reports of Reconstruction corruption led many Northerners to conclude that black suffrage had been a mistake. When anti-Reconstruction violence erupted again in Mississippi and South Carolina, the Grant administration refused to intervene.

The election of 1876 hinged on disputed returns from Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina, where Republican governments still survived. After intense negotiations involving leaders of both parties, the Republican candidate, Rutherford B. Hayes, became president, while Democrats assumed control of the disputed Southern states. Reconstruction had come to an end.

From the outset, Reconstruction governments aroused bitter opposition among the majority of white Southerners. Though they disagreed on specific policies, all of Reconstruction's opponents agreed that the South must be ruled by white supremacy.

The reasons for white opposition to Reconstruction were many. To numerous former Confederates, the new governments appeared as living reminders of military defeat. Their ambitious programs of economic development and school construction produced rising taxes and spiraling state debts. In some states, these programs also spawned corruption, in which Democrats as well as Republicans shared, but which served to discredit Republican rule. Many whites deeply resented the absence of the region's former leaders from positions of power, and planters disliked the tendency of local officials to side with former slaves in labor disputes.

The essential reason for the growing opposition to Reconstruction, however, was the fact that most Southern whites could not accept the idea of African Americans voting and holding office, or the egalitarian policies adopted by the new governments. Beginning in 1867, Southern Democrats launched a campaign of vilification against Reconstruction, employing lurid appeals to racial prejudice as well as more measured criticisms of Reconstruction policies.

THE FREEDMAN'S BUREAU!

AN AGENCY TO KEEP THE **NEGRO** IN IDLENESS AT THE **EXPENSE** OF THE WHITE MAN.
 TWICE VETOED BY THE **PRESIDENT**, AND MADE A LAW BY **CONGRESS**.
SUPPORT CONGRESS & YOU SUPPORT THE NEGRO. SUSTAIN THE PRESIDENT & YOU PROTECT THE WHITE MAN

IN THE SWEAT OF THY FACE SHALT THOU EAT THY BREAD

THE WHITE MAN MUST WORK TO KEEP HIS CHILDREN AND PAY HIS TAXES

Freedman's Bureau! Negro Estimate of Freedom!

CONGRESS, IN JULY, 1865, VOTED THE **NEGRO TROOPS \$300** Each as a Bounty

IN JUNE, 1866, VOTED THE **WHITE Veterans \$100** Each as a Bounty.

What is the use for 'em to work so long as they make done appropriation.

APPROPRIATED BY CONGRESS, JULY, 1865, To Support the Freedman's Bureau **\$6,944,500**

Commissioners and Clerks for Negroes	\$200,000
Printing for Negroes	65,000
Transport and Freight for Negroes	1,500,000
Food for Negroes	5,000,000
Medical for Negroes	500,000
Medical Stores & Salaries	500,000
House for Negroes	500,000
TOTAL	\$6,944,500

APPROPRIATED BY CONGRESS, FOR THE WHITE MAN, **HEAVY TAXES, HARD LABOR**

For 1864 and 1865, the **FREEDMAN'S BUREAU** cost the Tax-payers of the Nation, at least **TWENTY-FIVE MILLIONS OF DOLLARS**. For 1866, THE SHARE of the Tax-payers of Pennsylvania will be about **ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS**. **GEAR** is FOR the Freedman's Bureau. **CLYMER** is OPPOSED to it.

