

## THE RECONSTRUCTION ERA

1865 - 1877

### **5 Periods in Caucasian/Negro "Race" Relations**

1619 - 1865	Slavery	1890 - 1954	Segregation
1865 - 1877	Reconstruction	1954 -	Civil Rights
1877 - 1890	Adjustment		

### **Presidents during 12 years of Reconstruction**

Andrew Johnson (D)  
U.S. Grant (R)  
Rutherford B. Hayes (R)

### **Problems Resulting from the Civil War:**

1. Economic
  - Plantations were ruined; factories, bridges, railroads and other Southern facilities were destroyed
  - Four million Negroes were newly freed without homes, jobs
    - Southern black = once a slave to a white man, now a slave to hunger, cold, disease
  - Three billion dollar debt to be resolved
2. Political
  - Southern states had to be brought back into the Union and civilian governments reestablished
3. Social
  - A new set of relationships had to be worked out between whites and blacks in America
  - The status of the newly freed black had to be clarified

As early as December, 1863 Lincoln had developed a four-part, pragmatic, moderate plan for reconstruction

### **Reconstruction Plan of 1863 (also known as "Lincoln's Plan", "10% Plan", "Moderate Plan")**

Lincoln offered this moderate plan understanding that there was a gradual change needed with the hope that the South would stop military fighting ["forgive and forget" = a good deal for the South]

1. The President has the authority to plan Reconstruction.
2. All confederates or former confederates would be pardoned (given amnesty) if they swore allegiance to both the Union and the U.S. Constitution.
3. All confederate states could "enter" the Union when 10% of their voters swore allegiance to the Constitution and approved the 13th Amendment
  - Lincoln believed the southern states hadn't been allowed to leave
  - Lincoln believed the Civil War was fought to prevent this from happening in the first place
  - 13th Amend means 3/5 now 5/5 = 12 more Congressmen in House of Reps.
4. The Northern states would assume all the South's war debts
  - they would turn "enemies" into friends

\*\* Radicals who tend to be Republican were furious with this leniency and blamed Southern Conservative Democrats for the war.

## ANDREW JOHNSON

1865 - 1869

From April - December, 1865 Congress was not in session (this was common back then) so President Andrew Johnson enforced Lincoln's Plan but added 14 groups exempted from the general amnesty who had to make individual applications for amnesty to the President.

By December 25, 1865 all rebel leaders had been pardoned. Result: (2)

- Radicals in America who tended to be members of the Republican Party, were furious over such a lenient way of dealing with the Southern Democratic Confederates whom they blamed for the Civil War

Southern legislatures pass black codes which were state laws setting fines and/or jail penalties for blacks without jobs, put limits on their civil rights such as their right to marry, get a license for jobs, etc

- no interracial marriages allowed (miscegenation)

1865 - Freedman's Bureau was set up before the war ended by Lincoln and was extended over Johnson's veto.

The Bureau gave food, clothing and medicine to poverty-stricken blacks and whites, helped them pay their rent and find them jobs

- much like a welfare agency
- it kept them economically dependent

The Bureau, was however, under the control of the military and this is why Johnson opposed such an agency continuing in peacetime.

Some Southerners accuse the Bureau of raising false hopes by spreading the rumor of "each recipient getting 40 acres and a mule"

April, 1866 - Civil Rights Act, passed over Johnson's veto, gave protection of citizenship to blacks, guaranteed them equal treatment under the law and troops could be used to enforce civil laws.

June, 1866 - Fourteenth Amendment was passed by Congress and referred to the states for ratification. It defined citizenship, excluded former Confederate officials from holding office and threatened to reduce a state's representation in the House if there was discrimination against black voters. Ten Southern states reject this along with President Johnson

Nov., 1866 - Congressional Elections Johnson tried to unite moderates and conservative Republicans with Democrats in a new Union Party to elect a new Congress but Radical Republicans win 2/3 control of both houses of Congress. The Radical Republican leader in the House of Reps. was Thaddeus Stevens

- 74 years old from Pennsylvania
- a Confederate unit burned his iron works (factory) in the war
- his anger and personal attacks moved him to radicalism

The Radical Republican leader in the Senate was Charles Sumner of Massachusetts.

- had been a moderate Democrat before the war
- was "caned" by Preston Brooks in debate over Bleeding Kansas

Northern Radicals refuse to admit Southern Congressmen elected.

- 4 Confederate generals, 6 Confederate cabinet members, and Confederate V P

Northern Radicals also refuse:

- to recognize Southern state governments
- to accept the Lincoln-Johnson Plan for Reconstruction

March, 1867 - Radical Reconstruction Plan had 4 parts:

1. Only Congress as the authority to admit states
2. The 10 Southern states were divided into 5 military districts each occupied by the U.S. Army
  - 20,000 Union blue-clad soldiers in the South
  - Tennessee not included because they are already back in the Union
3. The citizens of each state must ratify the 14th amendment (guaranteed citizenship) and the 15th amendment (guaranteed voting rights).
4. Former Confederates were refused the right to vote and hold government office.
  - aimed at Southern, white, conservative, Democrats
  - keeps 12 S. Congressmen from being elected = keeps power of Dems. minimal

### IMPEACHMENT OF ANDREW JOHNSON

Radicals used all 3 methods to control the opposition and all 3 failed:

- 1 assassination of government leaders
- 2 a politically motivated impeachment of Johnson
3. humiliation by calling Sec of State Seward's purchase of Alaska "Seward's Folly" when actually it was a good financial deal
  - gold and oil there
  - international maneuver = keeps Russia out of the Western Hemisphere

1867 - Congress passes the Tenure of Office Act which prohibited the President from removing government officials he appointed without Senate approval

1868 - President Johnson fired Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, the only Cabinet member friendly to the Radicals

Feb. 24, 1868 - The House of Representatives impeached Johnson by a vote of 126-47 on 11 charges of "high crimes and misdemeanors" in office. The Senate trial took place with Chief Justice Salmon Chase as judge.

Johnson's defense was the Tenure of Office Act was unconstitutional; Lincoln appointed Stanton and he stayed on beyond a Cabinet member's term.

-- as a custom under Pres. Washington, all cabinet members resign upon election of a new pres.

The Senate vote was 35-19 for acquittal; just one short of the needed 2/3 for removal.

- there were 54 senators, so 36 votes were needed
- Sen. Edmund Ross (R) of Kansas changes his vote to "not guilty" at the last minute
- John F. Kennedy's book "Profiles in Courage" cites Ross because he gave up his political career to do "the moral and right thing".

Result of the impeachment:

This attack of the Radical Republicans on Johnson began to turn the public opinion against them as evidenced by the Election of 1868.

-- Republican Ulysses S. Grant was elected by only a small majority and might have lost the election without the black vote.

### U.S. GRANT

1869 - 1877

Grant enforced the Radical Reconstruction Plan.

#### **Results of Radical Reconstruction**

1. Blacks are voting for president and are elected to government offices in the South
  - South Carolina had a black majority in the state's House of Reps.
  - two black U.S. Senators from Mississippi were Hiram Revels and Blanche Bruce Kelso
  - one black governor
  - fifteen blacks in the U.S. House of Reps
2. Southern white confederates (Democrats) are out of power
3. New whites in power in the South.
  - a. Carpetbaggers were Northern whites who moved South after the war: some went for political gain, some for business opportunity, some with a real desire to help newly freed blacks
  - b. Scalawags were native born white Southerners who cooperated with Radical Reconstruction.

4. Reconstruction governments were established and they expanded the free public school systems, built (4) needed roads, bridges and other public facilities; aided the needy; reorganized local governments, court and tax systems

- Weaknesses of the governments: their extravagance and corruption, dishonest officials handed out "favors" in return for bribes, looted state treasuries, squandered money on worthless projects (however, all sections had government corruption after the Civil War)

5. Secret Terrorist Societies are formed to prevent blacks, scalawags, and carpetbaggers from using their new power.

Knights of the White Camelia (1867-1877)

Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (1867 - present)

- formed in Pulaski, Tenn.
- Nathan Bedford Forrest was the first Klan Wizard
- conservatives pushed to the reactionary side by Radicals
- southern white men who were confederates and insecure, anxious, threatened by their loss of power and superiority
- wore a white medieval robe with a trinity cap and a hood on the face to insure secrecy until 1877 (when Northern troops leave = free to wreak havoc)
  - white sheets also said to represent the "ghosts of the confederacy"
- original insignia was a white (purity) celtic cross outlined in red (violence) on a black (evil) circle (the world).
- four principles: chivalry, humanity, mercy, patriotism
- organization: Grand Wizard, 10 Genii, Grand Dragon, 8 Hydras, Grand Teton, 6 Furies, Grand Giant, 4 Goblins, Grand Cyclops, 2 Night Hawks, Grand Magii, and Ghouls (new members)
- 1920s: targets of the Klan were enlarged to include Catholics, Jews, foreigners
- 1950s: women were admitted as members (needed numbers and financial clout)
- 1980s: offshoots develop (Skinheads, NeoNazis)

The 1870 Force Act created the Justice Department to prosecute violators of the new Civil Rights laws (14th and 15th Amendments)

The 1871 Ku Klux Klan Act allowed the Justice Department to bring terrorists who commit state crimes into the federal courts for trial.

- 600 convictions under this law helped to break up the organized force of the Klan by 1872

White Supremacy was gradually restored in the South due to the following:

1. Most blacks didn't vote.
2. Radical Republicans' influence declined as Liberal Republicans gained power.
3. Amnesty Act of 1872 restored political rights to most ex-Confederates
4. More young white Southerners reached voting age each year.
5. More Northerners came to believe the "natural rulers" of the South were upper-class whites.
6. In 1877 President Rutherford B. Hayes withdrew federal troops; abandoning the freed blacks, scalawags and carpetbaggers and thereby nullifying the 14th and 15th Amendments
7. Supreme Court Cases:
  - 1866 - Exparte Milligan stated neither Congress nor the President can create military courts to try civilians in areas remote from war
  - 1867 - Cummings v. Missouri made loyalty oaths illegal
  - 1873 - Slaughter-House Case allowed the states to define rules by which citizens conduct their lives

**SEGREGATION: 1890s - 1950s**

Led by Southern white conservative Democrats

**Political Segregation** (always done first; allows other restrictions (econ., social, etc.) to be enacted legally)

**GOAL:** to keep blacks from voting and holding government offices

(try to subvert the 15th Amendment)

1. Poll tax: one must pay \$1-\$2 each time a person voted
  - made illegal by the 24th Amendment (1964) on grounds it was discriminatory on basis of income
  - problem = some blacks could afford it and some poor whites couldn't, so...
2. Literacy test: one had to pass a reading and writing test on the U.S. Constitution in order to register to vote
  - (1896) Supreme Court case *Williams v. Mississippi* approved of the "Mississippi Plan" so the literacy test was given constitutional approval
  - overturned in 1971 by a Supreme Court ruling as part of the Civil Rights Movement on grounds it was discriminatory against a person's IQ, the blind and the disabled
  - problem = some blacks were smart and some whites were not, so...
3. Grandfather Clause: was added to state constitutions and gave the right to vote to those registered as of March 1, 1867 or to their son, grandson
  - this seals their goal so all whites can vote and no blacks can before 1867
  - overturned by the Supreme Court in 1915
  - yet by 1915, blacks customarily weren't voting

**Economic Segregation**

**GOAL:** to keep blacks as poor farmers, servants to whites and property-less

1. Tax assessors raised the property tax evaluations so high on property owned by blacks, it was foreclosed by local governments.
  - all tax assessors were whites elected or appointed by whites
2. Labor Unions excluded blacks from membership so they were discouraged from entry into skilled trades
  - repealed by Civil Rights Act of 1964 ["open jobs"]
3. They really had only a choice of Farm Tenancy where they rented a white person's land in return for a fixed money rental or Sharecropping whereby the owner of the land provided fertilizer, seed, tools, farm animals and a cabin, while the "cropper" worked the land for a share of the crop paid as "rent" at the end of the harvest
  - this had a harmful effect on the South's economy too as it put the emphasis on cotton (the "cash" crop) and there was not rotation or diversification so depletion of the land resulted

**Social Segregation**

**GOAL:** to separate the races in public areas

1. Social segregation or "Jim Crow" laws were passed by states providing separate facilities for blacks
  - (1896) *Plessy v. Ferguson* Court Case = Supreme Court stated that separate but equal public facilities were constitutional.
    - Homer Plessy was a black butler
    - Ferguson was a white railroad conductor who threw Plessy off the train as he sat in a "white's car seat"
    - overturned in 1954 by Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (problem = only desegregated schools)
2. Fear was instilled in blacks by the spread of lynchings. From 1889-1899 there was an average of 187 lynchings per year (this was the peak period)

### THE "NEW SOUTH"

The term "New South" refers to the attempt to replace the old Southern economy with the Northern economic system after the Civil War.

There was agricultural progress in the South by the 1880s, but this section still lagged behind the rest of the U.S.

1. new farm machinery was introduced
2. agricultural colleges were established
3. there was some diversification of crops (tobacco, rice, sugar, peanuts, beef cattle, vegetables)
  - for example, James Duke of North Carolina set up the American Tobacco Co. in Durham in 1889

Industrial progress in the South in the 1880s and 1890s:

1. Atlanta Constitution was a journal edited by Henry Grady which preached laissez-faire capitalism for the South
2. Joel Chandler Harris wrote Uncle Remus in 1881 as well as editorial writings for the Constitution which encouraged the new industrialization of the South.
  - romanticized Brer Rabbit, Fox, the Tarpit as in Disney's "Song of the South"
3. Booker T. Washington (1856-1919) became the first true black leader in America; he set up an industrial school, Tuskegee Institute in Alabama in 1881 and in his 1895 Atlanta Compromise speech he preached patience, conservatism, and the need for blacks to enter the skilled trades.
  - a conservative black leader
  - "Get yourself right and the world will be alright."
  - economics is the key; don't organize and protest; get a job instead

#### **Election of 1868**

Republican candidate U.S. Grant approved of the Radical Plan

- wanted to redeem the debt in gold (for creditors)
- gold = hard money
- broke with Andrew Johnson over Tenure of Office Act

Democratic candidate Horatio Seymour was for amnesty and restoration of political rights for Confederates and for the "Ohio Idea" to pay the war debt in greenbacks (for debtors)

- greenbacks = soft money

Result: 214-80 but Grant only received 53% of the popular vote.

- this was the first time blacks voted for President and showed they could swing an election

Grant's rating as President is "third rate":

1. He failed to provide strong leadership in the Reconstruction Era
  - his greatest failing was not corruption but Reconstruction
2. He put confidence in people who didn't deserve it.
  - a. His cabinet was outrageous except for Sec. of State Hamilton Fish (N.Y.) who was responsible for the Alabama Claims whereby the peaceful settlement of international disputes was demonstrated.
    - considered to be a great idea
    - Teddy Roosevelt learned the value of using this
      - (1905) he used it to settle the Russo-Japanese War, successfully delaying World War I and earned the Nobel Peace Prize for it
  - b. He appointed his in-laws, the Dents, to government jobs.
  - c. He allowed himself to be unduly influenced by the Radicals

## NATIONAL SCANDALS

Known by many as the “Era of Good Stealings”

### 1. “Black Friday” Scandal

Two financial speculators, Jay Gould and James Fisk, persuaded Grant to change the gold-selling policies of the U.S. Treasury

-- Gould: at his death he was worth \$72 million

-- Fisk: bold, unprincipled, imprudent

On Sept. 24, 1869 (known as “Black Friday”) the Stock Market collapsed in large part due to their manipulation. Many innocent persons (workers, businessmen, financiers) lost a lot of money.

-- not Gould or Fisk, though

A Congressional investigation revealed Grant hadn’t done anything illegal but had used poor judgment.

Result:

1870 - Hepburn v. Griswold = the Supreme Court ruled that wartime act stating contracts must be paid with greenbacks was unconstitutional

1871 - Legal Tender Case = wartime currency could be used to pay debts

### 2. Credit Mobilier Scandal of 1873

1867 - Union Pacific Railroad received government assistance

-- owned by Cornelius Vanderbilt

Credit Mobilier was the corporation that built the railroad which received favorable treatment from Congress and therefore made huge profits.

-- Congress paid \$50,000 a mile for construction, and it cost only \$30,000 a mile

[FRAUD]

-- Congressmen and Vice President Schuyler Colfax received “gifts” of stock which paid dividends of 348%

Result of Congressional Investigation:

-- Congressman Oakes Ames was censured by the House of Reps.

-- In 1872, Henry Wilson replaced Colfax as Vice President.

### 3. Whiskey Ring Scandals

Grant appointees and his private secretary, Orville Babcock, were found guilty of having a ring of whiskey distillers defraud the government of millions in excise taxes.

-- Grant knew Babcock was guilty but still helped him win an acquittal.

## STATE GOVERNMENT SCANDALS

One famous scandal involved financiers Daniel Drew, Jay Gould and James Fisk who bribed members of the New York Congress to get “favours” for the Erie Railroad, which they controlled.

## CITY GOVERNMENT SCANDALS

The Tweed Ring of New York City’s political machine known as Tammany Hall was under the control of “Boss” William Tweed who controlled NYC by selling jobs, franchises, charters, and contracts to friends. He stayed in power by such tactics as giving jobs to immigrants, “packing” ballot boxes at election time. These abuses cost NYC some \$200 million before they were exposed by Samuel Tilden

-- example: a plasterer got \$138,000 for 2 days’ work

-- Tilden gained national recognition

-- cartoonist Thomas Nast attacked Tweed

- developed the Republican symbol of the elephant and the Democratic symbol of the donkey

- elephant symbolism = larger in size, noble (rich), never forgets (Dems support of slavery)

- donkey symbolism = a mongrel (jackass), immigrant support, working-class support

## Growth of a Reform Movement

Republicans who were upset by the postwar corruption formed a new third political party and called themselves Liberal Republicans

- they were led by Sen. Carl Schurz of Missouri who was against graft and for civil service reform
  - he was a German immigrant
  - intellectual, war hero

## Election of 1872

This was known as a mudslinging campaign.

- both were poor presidential candidates by training and temperament

Liberal Republicans backed Horace Greeley.

Democrats nominated Horace Greeley.

- Republicans called him a "brown-bread eater, idiot, atheist, communist, free lover and vegetarian"

Republicans renominated U.S. Grant.

- Democrats called him a "dictator, loafer, swindler, drunkard, utterly depraved horse jockey"

The vote was 286-66 but it did reflect that more citizens were opposed to Grant's administration.

- Greeley died a few weeks after the election.

## Panic of 1873 and the Six Year Depression

This was caused by the failure of the Jay Cooke and Co. bank along with the collapse of the Freedmen's Savings Bank.

## Congressional Election of 1874

Revelations of scandals and depression allow the Democrats to win control of the House of Reps.

Southern Democrats known as "Redeemers" tried to take control in the South back and in 1876 nominated white candidates to force an end to Reconstruction (called the "Mississippi Plan")

- they violently reestablished white rule

## Election of 1876

This was the Centennial of the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

Republicans chose Rutherford B. Hayes, reform governor of Ohio.

- the "great unknown"

Democrats chose Samuel J. Tilden, reform governor of New York.

- bachelor

- condemned Republican scandals

Both Hayes and Tilden were economic conservatives.

Returns: Tilden received 250,000 more popular votes than Hayes.

- Tilden had 184 electoral votes to 165 for Hayes with 20 disputed votes from South Carolina, Florida, Louisiana, and Oregon due to two sets of returns. 185 was needed for a majority.

An electoral commission (organized by Republican President Grant) was set up to make a judgment composed of 7 Republicans, 7 Democrats and Justice Davis, an independent. However, Davis resigned to become a U.S. Senator and he was replaced with a Republican.

- The commission gave all 20 votes to Hayes so he won by a vote of 185-184.

- Hayes forever known as "Old 8 to 7" or "His Fraudulency"

The Democrats denounced the results and so the Compromise of 1877 was reached which provided the following:

The Democrats would let Hayes be president if he promised to:

1. withdraw federal troops from the South
2. appoint a Southerner to his cabinet
3. help get federal funds for Southern internal improvements

**RUTHERFORD B. HAYES**

1877 - 1881

Taking office in 1877, Hayes fulfilled his pre-election bargain and in his Inaugural Address let it be known that party politics were still in vogue when he said: "He serves his party best who serves his country best."

- both he and his wife were temperance advocates
- his term was known as the "cold water" administration
- she is known as "Lemonade Lucy"

**RESULTS OF THE POST-CIVIL WAR PERIOD**

- 1 The South now votes solidly for the Democratic Party [the "Solid South"] due to bitterness over Radical Republican Reconstruction
  - "Solid South": a political term which remained true until 1980 when Ronald Reagan won the South as a Republican
- 2 There was widespread corruption and graft in government and industry throughout the entire nation.
- 3 The "New South" or economy of the South was characterized by tenant farming, sharecropping, later diversification of agriculture and the rise of industry.
- 4 Racial tensions were heightened as discrimination was used to "get around" legislation intended to bring racial equality

## AFRO-AMERICAN LEADERS IN AMERICAN HISTORY

### 1. BOOKER TALIAFERRO WASHINGTON (1856-1915)

Born into slavery in Virginia, his mother was the slavemaster's cook. The plantation owner's children nicknamed him "booker" because of his desire to learn to read and write.

Freed from slavery at age 9, he worked two jobs to earn money to attend grammar school and high school.

At age 16 he was accepted at Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute. He worked at the school on a scholarship where he learned many vocational skills.

Upon graduation, he founded and became the principal of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama.

As a leader his three messages to Afro-Americans was:

1. Be patient, take things slowly
2. Don't protest or organize
3. Set an example for other blacks by getting a skilled job and develop your own self-esteem and then hopefully "white" Americans will treat you as an equal.

### 2. WILLIAM DUBOIS (1868-1963)

As a mulatto (Afro-American mother, French father), DuBois was born free in Great Barrington, Massachusetts and lived in a middle class family.

Upon his graduation from high school, a white minister gave him a four year scholarship to Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee.

DuBois then got his PhD in history from Harvard University and took a job as a Professor at Atlanta, University.

As a leader, his three messages to Afro-Americans was:

1. Don't wait; demand changes from whites
2. Be active, protest
3. Join organizations to fight for changes (He founded the NAACP=National Association for the Advancement of Colored People)

### 3. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. (1929-1968)

Born into a segregated middle-class area of Atlanta, Georgia, King was the son of a minister. He earned a scholarship and worked his way through Boston University where he earned a PhD. As a minister of his own church in Atlanta, Georgia, he organized the SCLC=Southern Christian Leadership Conference to work to end discrimination in America.

King used CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE to end racism—to purposely disobey what you believe to be an unjust law in order to change it. To work, it must be Peaceful, Organized, and a Sacrifice.