

## CHAPTER 16

# Reconstruction: An Unfinished Revolution, 1865–1877

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After you have studied Chapter 16 in your textbook and worked through this study guide chapter, you should be able to:

1. Examine the clash between the executive and legislative branches of government over the issue of Reconstruction, and discuss the events and forces that affected the development of the congressional Reconstruction plans.
2. Examine and evaluate the Reconstruction experience for freed men and women.
3. Explain the divergence between the provisions of President Johnson's Reconstruction plan and its actual operation.
4. Cite the major provisions of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, indicate the reasons for their passage by Congress, and explain the compromises embodied in each.
5. Cite the major provisions of the First Reconstruction Act of 1867, indicate the reasons for its enactment by Congress, and explain how and why it diverged from the proposals of the Radical Republicans.
6. Discuss the political, social, and economic impact of the Reconstruction governments on southern society.
7. Examine and evaluate the means by which white southern Conservatives attempted to regain control in the South, and indicate the outcome of their efforts.
8. Examine the events and forces that brought a weakening of the northern commitment to Reconstruction and an end to the Reconstruction era.

### THEMATIC GUIDE

*Reconstruction* refers to the process by which the nation was rebuilt after the destruction caused by the Civil War. This rebuilding was social, political, and economic. Since there were no guidelines as to how it would be accomplished, questions and disagreements arose. Given such disagreements, as well as the emotional aftermath of four years of war and the force of individual personalities, Reconstruction proceeded by trial and error.

As early as 1863, some two years before the end of the war, a debate began between the president and Congress over key questions relating to Reconstruction. In this debate, and in the Reconstruction proposals put forward by President Lincoln and Congress, it was apparent that the two disagreed over the scope and objectives of the Reconstruction process. Despite these disagreements, in early 1865 Congress and the president were able to work together to secure passage of the Thirteenth Amendment and to create the Freedmen's Bureau.

At war's end and as the power struggle between the executive and legislative branches over control of the Reconstruction process became more pronounced, freed men and women renewed their determination to struggle for survival and true equality within American society. On one level they placed faith in education and participation in the political process as means of attaining equality, but they also turned to family and religion for strength and support. Denied the possibility of owning land, they sought economic independence through new economic arrangements such as sharecropping. However, sharecropping ultimately proved to be a disaster for all concerned.

When Congress reconvened in December 1865, it was faced with a Reconstruction policy advanced by President Johnson that not only allowed former Confederate leaders to regain power at the state and national levels but also obviously abandoned the freedmen to hostile southern whites. Northern congressmen and the constituents they represented were unwilling to accept this outcome of the long, bitter struggle against a rebellious South. Believing that it had a constitutional right to play a role in the Reconstruction process, Congress acted. This action led to clashes with an intransigent President Johnson and to the passage of two congressional Reconstruction plans.

The first of these plans, the Fourteenth Amendment, evolved when the wrangling between President Johnson and Congress produced compromises among the conservative, moderate, and radical factions of the Republican Party. Although Congress passed the Freedmen's Bureau bill and the Civil Rights Act of 1866 over the president's veto, there was concern that the Supreme Court would declare the basic provisions of the Civil Rights Act unconstitutional. Therefore, those provisions were incorporated into a constitutional amendment that was presented to the states for ratification in April 1866. The Fourteenth Amendment demonstrated that Congress wanted to guarantee equality under the law to the freedmen. However, its provisions make it clear that the moderate and conservative Republicans who controlled Congress were not willing to accept the more progressive concept of equality advanced by the Radical Republicans.

When, at the urging of the president, every former Confederate state, except Tennessee, refused to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment, Congress passed its second Reconstruction plan—the Reconstruction Acts of 1867–1868. Although these acts demonstrated some movement in the Radical direction by extending to blacks the right to vote in state elections, congressmen were still limited by the prejudices of the age. They labeled as extremist the suggestion that southern land be redistributed and so rejected the idea of giving blacks economic independence. They naively assumed that blacks would need only the ballot in their fight for a better life.

The same kinds of limitations worked within Reconstruction governments, preventing fundamental reform of southern society. Concurrently, southern Republicans adopted a policy that returned voting rights to former Confederates. These former Confederates, or Conservatives, ultimately led a campaign designed to return political and economic power to their hands by discrediting the Reconstruction governments. Adopting tactics ranging from racist charges and intimidation to organized violence, the Conservatives were able to achieve their objectives, as events in Alamance and Caswell Counties in North Carolina demonstrated.

These setbacks indicated that northern commitment to equality had never been total. The federal government even began to retreat from partial commitment—a retreat made obvious by the policies of President Grant, the gradual erosion of congressional resolve on Reconstruction issues, the conservative decisions of the Supreme Court, and the emergence of other issues that captured the minds of white Americans. Finally, with the resolution of the disputed Hayes-Tilden election in 1876, Reconstruction ended. The promise of equality for African Americans remained unfulfilled.

## IDENTIFICATION AND SIGNIFICANCE

After studying Chapter 16 of *A People and a Nation*, you should be able to identify *and* explain fully the historical significance of each item listed below.

- Identify each item in the space provided. Give an explanation or description of the item. Answer the questions *who*, *what*, *where*, and *when*.
- Explain the historical significance of each item in the space provided. Establish the historical context in which the item exists. Establish the item as the result of or as the cause of other factors existing in the society under study. Answer this question: *What were the political, social, economic, and/or cultural consequences of this item?*

1. Radical Republicans
2. Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner
3. the Thirteenth Amendment
4. the Freedmen's Bureau
5. the sharecropping system
6. Johnson's Reconstruction plan
7. the black codes



16. “carpetbaggers”
17. “scalawags”
18. the Ku Klux Klan
19. the Civil Rights Act of 1875
20. *Ex parte Milligan*
21. the *Slaughter-House* cases
22. the presidential election of 1876

## IDEAS AND DETAILS

### Objectives 1 and 3

1. Many northerners questioned President Johnson’s Reconstruction plan because
  - a. it promised federal aid to help the South rebuild.
  - b. in actual operation, it returned power to the prewar southern elite.
  - c. the plan required repudiation of the Confederate war debt.
  - d. it did not extend the vote to the yeoman class.

### Objectives 1 and 2

2. Which of the following is true of the black codes?
  - a. They required the freedmen to pay “freedom dues” to their former masters.
  - b. They extended the right to vote to property-owning blacks.
  - c. They were an attempt to relegate blacks to a position of servitude.
  - d. They extended to the freedmen equal protection under the law.

### Objective 1

3. Congress believed that it had a right to a voice in the Reconstruction process because the Constitution
  - a. grants treaty-making powers to Congress.
  - b. grants Congress the power to declare war.
  - c. assigns Congress the duty of guaranteeing republican governments in the states.
  - d. assigns Congress the responsibility of “providing for the general welfare.”

### Objective 1

4. In order to develop a new Reconstruction program, conservative and moderate Republicans began to work with the Radical Republicans because
  - a. events in the South convinced them that blacks should be given full political rights.
  - b. the Radicals convinced them that black freedom depended on a redistribution of land in the South.
  - c. President Johnson and the congressional Democrats refused to cooperate with them.
  - d. the northern electorate clearly favored the goals of the Radical Republicans.

### Objectives 1, 3, 4, and 5

5. The northern public became convinced that Johnson’s Reconstruction policies were too lenient due to
  - a. the election of Jefferson Davis to the Senate.
  - b. the president’s appointment of Alexander Stephens to his cabinet.
  - c. the president’s insistence that the federal government assume the Confederate debt in full.
  - d. accounts of antiblack violence in the South.

**Objective 4**

6. The Fourteenth Amendment
  - a. guaranteed blacks the right to vote.
  - b. was strongly supported by President Johnson.
  - c. extended civil and political rights to women.
  - d. was the product of a compromise among the Republican factions in Congress.

**Objective 5**

7. The First Reconstruction Act
  - a. required the southern states to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment.
  - b. called for a redistribution of land in the South.
  - c. guaranteed blacks the right to vote in federal elections.
  - d. stipulated that the southern states would be “adjusted” back into the Union over a ten-year period.

**Objective 1**

8. The Senate’s failure to convict President Johnson of the charges brought against him
  - a. enhanced Johnson’s prestige and power.
  - b. established that impeachment was not a political tool.
  - c. is evidence that northern opinion toward Johnson and the South was softening.
  - d. caused a serious rift between the House and Senate.

**Objective 6**

9. The new state constitutions of the former Confederate states
  - a. eliminated property qualifications for voting.
  - b. extended the right to vote to women.
  - c. made public school attendance compulsory.
  - d. made yearly reapportionment of legislative districts mandatory.

**Objective 6**

10. The decision of the Republican-controlled governments in the southern states not to disfranchise many ex-Confederates
  - a. meant that southern Republicans had to gain white support or face defeat.
  - b. led to the formation of a broad-based Republican Party in the South.
  - c. caused the freedmen to support the more liberal southern Democrats.
  - d. was politically embarrassing to congressional Republicans.

**Objectives 2 and 7**

11. Blacks participating in Reconstruction governments
  - a. had little interest in the political process.
  - b. were subjected to a racist propaganda campaign against them undertaken by the white Conservatives.
  - c. insisted on social equality for blacks.
  - d. displayed a vindictive attitude toward their former masters.

## Objective 7

12. Activities of the Ku Klux Klan in Alamance and Caswell Counties in North Carolina
- were disorganized and sporadic.
  - were organized by the impoverished classes in North Carolina society.
  - were undertaken by the former elite for the purpose of regaining political power.
  - had little success in areas where blacks and yeoman farmers allied.

## Objectives 2 and 6

13. In the final analysis, the Reconstruction governments of the South
- were able to alter the social structure of the South.
  - effected a lasting alliance between blacks and whites of the yeoman class.
  - gave blacks the means to achieve equality by giving them the right to vote.
  - left blacks economically dependent on hostile whites.

## Objective 8

14. In the *Slaughter-House* cases, the Supreme Court
- ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment did not protect the civil rights of individuals from state interference.
  - protected a citizen of the United States against discrimination by an individual or a group.
  - ruled that corporations were legal persons and were protected under the Fourteenth Amendment.
  - ruled that national citizenship was more important than state citizenship.

## Objective 8

15. From the outcome of the 1876 presidential election, it is evident that the electorate
- supported an inflationary monetary policy.
  - feared that the expansionist policies of Secretary of State Seward would lead to war.
  - had lost interest in Reconstruction.
  - rejected government aid to business interests.

## ESSAY QUESTIONS

### Objectives 1 and 3

1. Discuss Johnson's Reconstruction plan, and explain its actual operation. How did Congress respond to the plan? Why?

### Objectives 1, 4, and 5

2. Discuss the political, social, and economic views of the Radical Republicans, and examine the role they played in the development of Congress's plans for Reconstruction.

### Objective 1

3. Examine the attitudes and events that led to the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson, and assess the outcome of his trial by the Senate.

**Objective 6**

4. Discuss the successes and failures of the Reconstruction governments in the South.

**Objective 7**

5. Discuss the goals of the white southern Conservatives and the means they used to achieve those goals.

**MULTIPLE-CHOICE ANSWERS**

1.
  - b. Correct. At first it appeared that Johnson’s Reconstruction plan would prevent the prewar southern elite from returning to power. However, in practice Johnson did not adhere to his own plan. After southerners defiantly elected prominent ex-Confederates such as Alexander Stephens, vice-president of the Confederacy, to Congress, Johnson began freely to hand out pardons to planters and to former Confederate leaders. This was done despite the fact that some southern state conventions were slow to repudiate secession and some state legislatures in the South were enacting black codes to keep African Americans in an inferior and servile position. Therefore, northerners were angry because it seemed that no one was being held responsible for the terrible war and that the South, despite having lost that war, was still defiant.
  - a. No. Although Johnson demonstrated a considerable amount of sympathy toward the South, he did not go so far as to promise federal aid to rebuild the region.
  - c. No. Congress supported the requirement in Johnson’s plan that the Confederate war debt be repudiated. Congress was angered when two southern states defiantly refused to abide by this requirement.
  - d. No. The Johnson plan stipulated that most white southern males, including yeoman farmers, could gain the right to vote by swearing an oath of loyalty to the United States government.
2.
  - c. Correct. The black codes, adopted by most southern state legislatures immediately after the war, were in large measure restatements of the old slave codes. Those responsible for enacting the codes intended permanently to relegate blacks to a subservient position in southern society. See page.
  - a. No. Although some of the southern states were reluctant to admit that slavery was a thing of the past, the black codes did not require that freedmen pay “freedom dues” to their former masters.
  - b. No. The black codes did not extend political rights to any freedmen.
  - d. No. The black codes did not indicate acceptance of the Thirteenth Amendment and did not protect the civil rights of the freedmen.
3.
  - c. Correct. Article IV, Section 4, of the Constitution states: “The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a republican form of government.” It was on the basis of this statement that Congress claimed its right to have a voice in Reconstruction.
  - a. No. The Constitution stipulates that treaties must be ratified by the Senate, but Congress (the Senate and the House) did not base its claim that it had a right to have a voice in the Reconstruction process on this constitutional grant of power to the Senate.
  - b. No. The Constitution does grant Congress the power to declare war, but this was not the basis for Congress’s claim that it had a right to a voice in the Reconstruction process.

- d. No. The Preamble to the Constitution states that one of the purposes of the government is to “promote the general welfare,” but this was not the section of the Constitution on which Congress based its claim to a voice in the Reconstruction process.
4. c. Correct. All those who questioned Johnson’s program, even conservatives and moderates, were labeled as “radical” by Johnson and the Democrats. Therefore, to make changes they thought necessary, conservative and moderate Republicans were forced into an alliance with the Radicals.
- a. No. Most conservative and moderate Republicans believed that voting was a privilege, not a right. They did not ally with the Radical Republicans out of the belief that full political rights should be extended to blacks.
- b. No. Most conservative and moderate Republicans viewed property rights as sacred. They rejected the contention by the Radical Republicans that a redistribution of southern land was necessary.
- d. No. The Radical Republicans held views that most northerners rejected. For example, some Radicals went beyond advocating equality under the law for freedmen by advocating political, social, and economic equality as well.
5. d. Correct. In 1866, northerners began to read daily newspaper accounts of violence against blacks in the South. Especially disturbing were reports of antiblack riots in Memphis and New Orleans in which the police aided mobs in their attacks. Such revelations convinced the northern public and Republicans in Congress that Johnson’s Reconstruction plan was too lenient.
- a. No. After the Civil War, Jefferson Davis, former president of the Confederacy, was arrested in Georgia and imprisoned from 1865 to 1867. Although he was indicted for treason in 1866, a trial was never held. He was released on bail from prison in 1867. Therefore, Jefferson Davis was not elected to the Senate after the Civil War.
- b. No. President Johnson did not appoint Alexander Stephens, former vice-president of the Confederacy, to his cabinet. However, Stephens was elected to the Senate under Johnson’s Reconstruction plan, and this convinced many northerners that President Johnson’s Reconstruction plan was too lenient.
- c. No. President Johnson’s Reconstruction plan called for the repudiation of the Confederate war debt. Northerners did, however, become convinced that Johnson’s Reconstruction plan was too lenient when two former Confederate states refused to repudiate the Confederate war debt and some refused to repudiate secession.
6. d. Correct. Conservative and moderate Republicans disagreed with Radical Republicans over extension of voting rights to freedmen. The second section of the Fourteenth Amendment clearly indicates a compromise favoring the conservative/moderate view on this question.
- a. No. The Fourteenth Amendment allowed the southern states to decide whether or not to extend voting rights to freedmen. If a state denied voting privileges to its black citizens, the state’s delegation to the House of Representatives would be reduced proportionately. This provision was never enforced.
- b. No. Johnson condemned the Fourteenth Amendment. He actively worked against the amendment by urging northerners to reject it and southern state legislatures to vote against ratification.
- c. No. The Fourteenth Amendment ignored women.
7. a. Correct. Only one southern state (Tennessee) had initially accepted and been reconstructed under the Fourteenth Amendment. However, under the Reconstruction Act of 1867, the southern states were required to ratify the amendment before returning to the Union.

- b. No. Although most Radical Republicans called for redistribution of southern land, most people rejected the idea as being beyond the power of the federal government and as unwarranted interference in private property.
- c. No. The act stipulated that the ten southern states to which it applied had to guarantee freedmen the right to vote in elections for state constitutional conventions and in subsequent state elections, but it did not guarantee freedmen the right to vote in federal elections.
- d. No. The Reconstruction Act of 1867 did not stipulate a definite time period during which the Reconstruction process would take place.
8. b. Correct. The Radical Republicans who led the prosecution of Johnson in his Senate trial advanced the belief that impeachment was political in nature. The Senate’s acquittal of Johnson was a rejection of that idea.
- a. No. Johnson’s impeachment by the House and subsequent trial in the Senate rendered him almost totally powerless as president.
- c. No. The Senate fell only one vote shy of the two-thirds majority necessary to convict Johnson of the charges brought against him. This is not an indication that northern opinion toward Johnson and the South had softened.
- d. No. The Senate’s failure to convict Johnson did not cause a rift between the House and the Senate.
9. a. Correct. By eliminating property qualifications for voting, the new state constitutions made the South more democratic and brought the South in line with the rest of the nation.
- b. No. Although these state constitutions extended more rights to women, women’s suffrage, advocated by some black delegates, was considered radical and was not adopted.
- c. No. The new constitutions did provide for public schools, but attendance at these schools was not compulsory.
- d. No. Yearly reapportionment of legislative districts was not made mandatory by the new state constitutions.
10. a. Correct. Southern Republicans quickly restored the voting rights of former Confederates. This meant that the Republican Party would face defeat if it could not gain white support. In courting the white vote, the Republican Party abandoned its most loyal supporters—blacks.
- b. No. Although the southern Republicans appealed for support from a broad range of groups in the South, they were never able to build a broad popular base for the party.
- c. No. In the first place, southern Democrats were not more “liberal” than the southern Republicans. Furthermore, freedmen themselves supported restoration of the voting rights of former Confederates.
- d. No. The evidence does not indicate that congressional Republicans were embarrassed by the decision of southern Republicans to restore the voting rights of former Confederates.
11. b. Correct. Charges of “black domination” and “Negro rule” are examples of the racist propaganda used by white Conservatives to discredit the Reconstruction governments.
- a. No. The evidence indicates that freedmen throughout the South, and especially those participating in Reconstruction governments, were very interested in participating in the political process and did so with great dignity and distinction.

- c. No. Those blacks who participated in Reconstruction governments were practical and realistic in their approach to power. They extended the right to vote to former Confederates, did not insist on an integrated school system, and did not insist on social equality.
- d. No. The evidence indicates that those blacks participating in Reconstruction governments were not vindictive toward their former masters. Their actions demonstrate their belief in “the Christian goal of reconciliation.”
12. c. Correct. Terrorist campaigns by the Klan were organized and purposeful after 1867. This was clearly the case in these North Carolina counties where the wealthy and powerful organized the campaign of terror for the purpose of regaining political control.
- a. No. The evidence indicates that after 1867 the terrorist activities against blacks became more organized and purposeful, and the campaign of terror in Alamance and Caswell Counties clearly fits this characterization.
- b. No. The campaign of terror in the North Carolina counties of Caswell and Alamance was organized by the wealthy and the powerful.
- d. No. Blacks and whites of the yeoman class were allies in Alamance and Caswell Counties, and the Klan successfully used racism to destroy this coalition.
13. d. Correct. The Reconstruction governments did not demand and Congress did not bring about a redistribution of land in the South. As a result, blacks were denied economic independence and remained economically dependent on hostile whites.
- a. No. Although the Reconstruction governments were able to affect some reform in the South, they chose not to demand redistribution of land. This decision is one of the main reasons that these governments were not able to alter the social structure of the region.
- b. No. The success of the Klan’s terrorist campaign in Alamance and Caswell Counties in North Carolina is evidence that there was not a lasting alliance between blacks and whites of the yeoman class.
- c. No. Blacks were given the right to vote, but it was naive to believe that the ballot was an adequate weapon in the struggle by African Americans for a better life.
14. a. Correct. John Campbell argued that the Fourteenth Amendment brought individual rights under federal protection by making the Bill of Rights applicable to the states. The Court disagreed and said that state citizenship and national citizenship were separate, with the former being more important. The due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, said the Court, protected only the narrowly defined rights that accompanied national citizenship.
- b. No. The Court ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment protected only those rights that went along with national citizenship, and the Court narrowly defined those rights.
- c. No. Although the Court later ruled that corporations were legal persons protected under the Fourteenth Amendment (the 1886 Santa Clara case), this was not its ruling in the Slaughter-House cases.
- d. No. The Court ruled that, of the two, state citizenship was more important than national citizenship.
15. c. Correct. The fact that both candidates in this disputed election favored removal of federal troops from the South and an end to Reconstruction indicates that the electorate had lost interest in Reconstruction. This is especially important in relation to the northern electorate.

- a. No. The monetary issue aroused a great deal of interest during the 1870s, especially among farmers, who tended to favor an inflationary policy. However, by the 1876 election a “sound money” policy had basically won out.
- b. No. William H. Seward was secretary of state from 1861 to 1869. His policies had no direct bearing on the outcome of the disputed presidential election of 1876.
- d. No. Since the end of the Civil War, the government had been injecting money into the economy and extending indirect aid to business interests. Most people favored a continuation of this practice, which had spurred industrial growth, especially in the North.