

Chapter 22: The Ordeal of Reconstruction (1865-1877)

- Core questions of the time period of the people (copied from book):
 - How would the South, physically devastated by war and socially revolutionized by emancipation, be rebuilt?
 - How would liberated blacks fare as free men or women?
 - How would the Southern states be re-integrated into the Union?
 - Who would direct the process of Reconstruction-- the Southern states themselves, the President, or Congress?

The Problems of Race

- There was the issue of what to do with Confederate leaders
 - Many Northerners wanted to execute or imprison them
 - Davis was imprisoned at first like many of the Southern leaders, but they were all freed by a pardon in 1868 by Johnson
- Economy in the South greatly declined
 - Cities were ruined, people had to rebuild
 - Banks and businesses were hurt by inflation in the South during the war
 - Southern factories were missing labor source and needed repairs
 - Transportation was broken by Sherman's destruction of railroad lines
 - Agriculture had mostly slowed
 - Grain was scarce, weeds were abundant, cattle were freed by Northerners
 - The slave system was missing, no more free labor to man the fields
 - Aristocrats lost \$2 billion in investments in slaves
- Many Southerners were still bitter about war and still thought that secession was the best option— didn't like submission to North

Freedmen Define Freedom

- At first, emancipation was not legally given
 - Some slaveowners lynched or otherwise killed escaping slaves
 - Some Southerners used claim that emancipation was not mandated by law (only by the Emancipation Proclamation, which was technically not law) and therefore doesn't need to be followed
- Some slaves supported their masters, but many supported the Union troops that freed them
 - They sometimes went further to demand formal addresses and to gain some luxuries for the first time (such as finer clothing than rough slave clothing)
- Many thousands of blacks emigrated from the South, especially to the Southwest region, for multiple reasons:
 - To test their freedom
 - To look for separated (from the slave trade) family members
 - To work in factories in black-friendly towns in the North
- African Americans formed their own churches: the Black Baptist Church and the African Episcopal Church

- Both grew rapidly in number, the former tripled and the latter quadrupled in number during Reconstruction
- Freedmen began to have education
 - Short on African American teachers, often turned to government-appointed white educators

American and National Identity: The treatment of the Confederate leaders and the former slaves show the two-sidedness of American compassion. On the one hand, Americans had a history of victories with civilized treaties, such as the Treaties of Paris for the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. After those wars, America was recognized as its own country, and there were no imprisonments. After the Civil War, there were some Confederate leaders imprisoned, but they were released; and the South was *not* recognized as its own nation (but rather the opposite), but the outcome of the war was somewhat graciously accepted by both sides without any military lashback. While this process was nice and diplomatic, it was not the same for the African Americans. Slaves were still lynched and killed after the war because the Emancipation Proclamation was not officially law, and there was no justice for them in the U.S. legal system. This was similar to the Native Americans, for whom the national government rarely protected against the Americans. This shows the discord between a Union of “free” states and the actual state of continued bondage and terrorism of the blacks that followed the war. This is a theme that has continued from the beginning of American history (the Revolutionary War and clashes with the Native Americans) that had continued all the way up to the Civil War, thus making it an integral part of American history.

The Freedmen’s Bureau

- Slaves had few skills outside of plantation farming
 - They were “overwhelmingly unskilled, unlettered, without property or money, and with scant knowledge of how to survive as free people”
- Congress created the Freedmen’s Bureau (1863) to help former slaves
 - It was meant “to provide food, clothing, medicinal cure, and education” — a primitive welfare system
 - It taught 200,000 slaves how to read, and African Americans were usually voracious readers
 - Andrew Johnson didn’t support it (because he was anti-African American), and didn’t succeed in taking the Freedmen’s Bureau out of government but did not allow it to survive past its appointed expiration date in 1872

Johnson: The Tailor President

- Johnson was a very self-made man
 - He had a very humble beginning, was an orphan, taught himself in academics, was a champion of poor whites in the South
 - He was popular in the North as a Congressman because he refused to secede with his state
 - He was chosen by Lincoln because they needed a Democrat to gain support from the Democrats

- He was intelligent, honest, and stuck to the Constitution
- Johnson was not a great fit for president
 - He wasn't a true Republican or Northerner, and the South didn't like him
 - He wasn't elected to be president
 - He was "hotheaded, contentious, and stubborn"

Presidential Reconstruction

- Abraham Lincoln created the "10 percent" Reconstruction plan to allow states to be reintegrated into the Union
 - Stated that a state needed 10% of its voters to pledge allegiance to the U.S. and support emancipation in order to be reintegrated into the Union
 - If the vote was successful, the state needed to organize a new state government before it could be accepted by the Union
 - Republicans were worried that Lincoln's bill was too lenient, might allow planter aristocracy to return to power like in pre-war era
- Republicans passed the Wade-Davis bill (1864)
 - A stronger version of Lincoln's bill that required 50% voter allegiance and support for emancipation
 - Congress had stronger views of readmission than Lincoln, believed that the seceded states had no rights and needed strict measures for readmission
 - This was pocket-vetoed by Lincoln
- Two factions emerged as a result of the differences between Lincoln's (the more moderate) and Congress's (the more radical) plan
 - First faction was moderate and sided with Lincoln, but wanted Reconstruction to be done by Congress
 - Second faction was radical and believed the South should pay more severely for their actions
 - Some were pleased at Lincoln's death, believing that he was too soft and Johnson would strongly attack the Southern aristocrats like he was known to do (being a champion of poor whites in the South)
- Johnson created his own plan as president (May 28, 1865)
 - He believed that states had never actually left the Union, like Lincoln, and thus admitted the 10% voted states back into the Union
 - He disfranchised (took away the right to vote) from several Confederate leaders
 - He called for state conventions in the South, "which were required to repeal the ordinances of secession, repudiate all Confederate debts, and ratify the slave-freeing Thirteenth Amendment" — the states that followed this could be let back into the Union
 - He ended up pardoning many Confederate leaders
 - The Southern states scrambled to reorganize their government to comply with these rules and become states again
 - The Republicans were furious at Johnson's plan

Politics and Power: Like usual, there was a source of conflict in American politics that divided politicians into multiple factions. This was the division between the moderate and the radical Republicans that dominated Congress— rather than being totally opposite groups, such as the two parties of a two-party presidential system, they were two factions of the same party. However, the political difference between them was on such a controversial issue that they may well have been opposite sides rather than the same party. There were the moderate Republicans, including both President Lincoln and Johnson, that preferred a more lenient re-entry of the former Confederate states back into the Union. Then there were the radical Republicans, which formed a minority of Congress, which wanted more punitive or strict re-entry conditions. Every issue, such as the Freedmen's Bureau, was highly contested— this bureau, for example, was created by radical Republicans and discontinued by the moderate Republican of Johnson. Both sides were trying to undermine the power of the other. This two-sided political setup helped strengthen the American society of the time by opening up the debate on such a contested issue and prevented the issue of black rights from being too liberal (radical) or conservative (moderate), but a compromise in between that benefitted both the North and the South most and kept a balance that prevented the Union and Confederacy from splitting again.

The Baleful Slave Codes

- Johnson allowed the Black Codes in the South to be erected
 - These limited the actions of freedmen in the South, similar to pre-war slave statutes
 - They all established a “stable and subservient labor force” — essentially slavery again
 - Labor contracts were strictly enforced, and escaped laborers were usually caught and fined heavily
- All blacks were legally free, but still had many restrictions as before emancipation
 - They could not serve on a jury
 - Some could not rent or buy land
 - Some were even put into chain gangs for being idle
 - They were not allowed to vote anywhere
- Sharecropping was a failed system, especially with the Black Codes
 - Even after the Black Codes were lifted, blacks were without money and couldn't rise to the top of the economic ladder
 - Former slaves just became poor laborers

Congressional Reconstruction

- The South had a say in Congress again after the war
 - The Republicans were horrified that some Confederate leaders were trying to run for office, such as vice president of the Confederacy Alexander Stephens
- The North had had a majority in Congress
 - Easily passed the Morrill Tariff, the Pacific Railroad Act, and the Homestead Act without the South in Congress during the war
 - Pacific Railroad Act allowed the government to build a transcontinental railroad across the U.S., including through government bonds and land leases (which

showed a very strong central government and weak states' rights and the South would likely have opposed it)

- After the War, the South gained 12 seats in Congress and electoral votes, which increased their Congressional power
- If the Democrats sided with the Southern states, then they likely would have taken over Congress and the presidency and enforced the Black Codes very strictly

Work, Exchange, and Technology: Now that slaves were free, there was a great revolution in Southern economics. Former slaves emigrated on a mass scale away from their masters for multiple reasons: to test out their freedom, to meet former relatives, and to work in factories in the North. As a result, the South created the Black Codes to regulate the blacks and essentially return them to pre-war conditions of slavery. These Black Codes evaded the 13th Amendment by technically not being slavery but still restricted black freedoms and bound them to the land so as to prevent the total collapse of the Southern economy. Meanwhile, during the War, the North had created acts such as the Pacific Railroad Act, the Morrill Tariff, and the Homestead Act— all of which had been developing the economy and systems of work and exchange in the North. Northerners could now cheaply and quickly travel across the continent on the transcontinental railroad or settle land for free in order to benefit themselves economically. This widening gap between the North (prospering) and the South (barely holding onto its already collapsing one-crop agricultural system) shows a continuity from the pre-war social divide of the prosperous industry and commerce in the North and the economically unable-to-compete agriculture of the South.

Johnson Clashes with Congress

- Johnson vetoed a bill extending the life of the Freedmen's Bureau (February 1866)
 - Made Republicans very angry
- Republicans responded to veto of the Freedmen's Bureau by passing the Civil Rights Bill (March 1866)
 - Johnson vetoed the bill, but Congress managed to overturn his veto
 - To protect their position on Civil Rights should the pro-slavery Democrats take power, the Southerners passed the Fourteenth Amendment (1868), which:
 - "(1) conferred civil rights, including citizenship but excluding a specific guarantee of the franchise, on freedmen"
 - "(2) reduced proportionately the representation of a state in Congress and in the Electoral College if it denied blacks in the ballot, thereby abolishing the original Constitution's notorious '3/5ths' clause but stopping short of a constitutional guarantee of the right to vote"
 - "(3) disqualified from federal and state office former Confederates who as federal officeholders had once sworn 'to support the Constitution of the United States'" — this eliminated lying or unloyal Confederates
 - "(4)" guaranteed the federal debt, while repudiating all Confederate debts"
- Republicans all wanted the Southern states to ratify this amendment before being admitted into the Union
 - Johnson advised the Southern states not to ratify it, and all but Tennessee did not ratify it

Swinging 'Round the Circle with Johnson

- Johnson infuriated the Republicans
 - He had allowed the Black Codes to be passed in many of the newly reaccepted Southern states
 - He vetoed the Freedmen's Bureau extension bill and the Civil Rights Bill
 - He wanted the Southern states not to pass the fourteenth amendment
- As the presidential election of 1866 approached, Johnson went on a "swing 'round the circle." meaning that he went around the country to make speeches
 - He was a bad orator and the speeches often ended in angry cries between him and the audience, losing popularity for him

Republican Principles and Programs

- Republicans gained around ⅔ of both houses of Congress after Johnson lost the Democrats' popularity
 - While the Republicans had a sure majority of Congress, there was still a battle between radical and moderate Republicans. The radical Republicans were led by:
 - Charles Sumner led the radicals in Senate
 - He was radical even before the war, when he got beaten with a cane by Congressman Brooks for speaking out strongly against South in Bleeding Kansas
 - He wanted not only black freedom but also racial equality
 - Thaddeus Stevens led the radicals in the House
 - He was an extreme pro-equality figure
- The radical Republicans wanted to keep out the Southern states for as long as possible from Congress so as to keep power in Congress and enforce many social changes in the South before the South had Congressional power again
- The moderate Republicans wanted to apply less federal control over the South but prevent the South from restricting citizens' rights
 - Both the radicals and the Republicans agreed that the right to voting for blacks was necessary

Politics and Power: Not only was there a restored see-saw of power resting between the radical and moderate Republicans during this debate over post-war blacks' rights, but this see-saw was heavily rocking. This was no stable two-party system like that of Jefferson vs. Hamilton or Jackson vs. the Whigs; rather, both sides openly opposed each other's victories and celebrated victories of their own. Johnson successfully discontinued the Freedmen's Bureau; then the radicals successfully rammed through the Civil Rights Bill; then Johnson made the rounds to try and gain support for another presidential election; then the radicals successfully jeered him and the Democrats out of popularity. Just like before the war, with the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the subsequent "Bleeding Kansas," the situation was highly volatile and power was very likely to switch from the hands of one group to the next. However, this still kept power in balance in the long run—the struggles and victories of each side

eventually balanced each other out, with radical policies (such as black franchisement) and moderate policies (such as the refusal of blacks to own land) persisted in the ultimate outcomes of Reconstruction.

Reconstruction by the Sword

- Congress passed the Reconstruction Act (March 2, 1867)
 - Created as a result of “vicious and bloody race riots that had erupted in several Southern cities”
 - It divided the South into five districts that were controlled by the Union army and led by a Union general
 - It also disfranchised tens of thousands of (former) Confederates
 - It also made the rules for readmission into the Union stricter, now forcing Southern states to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment as well and give blacks suffrage (voting rights)
 - It did *not* give blacks land or free, government-funded education because of moderate sentiment
 - The moderates wanted to guide the states into a black-franchised territory so that the military regime could be lifted and the federal government wouldn't have to take care of the states anymore
 - The radicals were worried because the Southern states might change their Constitutions after re-joining the Union
 - They passed the Fifteenth Amendment (1870) that protected the right of all men to vote
- Military reconstruction was not very legal
 - Ex parte Milligan (1866) court case stated that military courts could not try civilians if civilian court was around
 - However, because of the extreme circumstances in this era just following the war, the Supreme Court decided not to offend the Republicans and prevent this military regime
- All of the states had reorganized their governments according to the guidelines in the North by 1870
 - All of the federal troops were removed from the South by 1877
 - The South quickly appointed their own officials, who they called “redeemers” for taking power back from the Northerners, and they were predominantly Democratic

American and National Identity: The idea of military occupation beginning to become a trend, begun by Jackson in South Carolina's threat to secede in response to the Abominable Tariff, carried out by Lincoln in the Civil War, and now with Johnson's passage of the Reconstruction Act with military district. While the Constitution has the Third Amendment that prevents the quartering of soldiers in a person's house, this act narrowly misses that by stationing embittered troops in the South in peacetime, which is close to unconstitutional. However, this demonstrates the American will to survive and break rules in times of political exigency, which in turn demonstrates American dynamicness and innovation. The South too showed their ability to change when they hastened to rejoin the Union, even if they were held under strict military lockdown—it's still a wonder that they were able to accept the outcome of the war and comply to the North's somewhat harsh requisites to return to the Union.

No Women Voters

- The three Amendments passed during Reconstruction (13-15) were focused on black rights, but they ignored women's rights
 - However, many women recognized the movement towards black equality as supplementary to their own women
 - Leaders such as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Stanton worked towards black emancipation
 - The Women's Loyal League helped gather 400,000 signatures for the Thirteenth Amendment
 - After the Fourteenth Amendment, women started to turn against the anti-slavery movement
 - The Fourteenth Amendment explicitly stated that it was geared towards men, and they believed that it was "the Negro's hour" rather than one for equality for both blacks and women
 - It took fifty more years for the franchisement of women

The Realities of Radical Reconstruction in the South

- The franchisement of blacks was reluctant
 - Presidents Lincoln and Johnson had only initially planned "to give the ballot gradually to selected blacks who qualified for it through education, property ownership, or military service"
 - Most Northern states didn't allow blacks to vote until the Fifteenth Amendment (like the South)
- African Americans organized the Union League after the Fifteenth Amendment
 - They educated people in civic duties
 - They persuaded people to vote for the Republicans
 - They built black churches and schools
 - They recruited militias to protect black communities
- African American women played a new role in society
 - They helped run the new black institutions (churches and schools) and communities
 - Some even attended Southern constitutional conventions and participated in informal votes
- Black congressmen and delegates to constitutional conventions were the most powerful African American influence on American politics
 - There were 14 black congressman and two black senators between 1868 and 1876
 - Some blacks held positions of lieutenant governor, mayors, magistrates, sheriffs, and justices
- Southerners accused people of being scalawags and carpetbaggers
 - Scalawags were Southerners who became radical people opposed to slavery
 - Carpetbaggers were Northerners who moved to the South and tried to modernize it, especially businessmen and professionals
- Radical government actually was very beneficial

- Established needed reforms such as providing adequate public schools, better tax systems, more infrastructure projects, and better property rights for women

The Ku Klux Klan

- The Ku Klux Klan (formed in 1866), or the “Invisible Empire of the South,” amongst other savage Southern anti-radical-Republican groups were formed
 - They intimidated and killed many blacks and black-supporters
 - Many blacks were intimidated out of voting— this significantly weakened the effect of black franchisement
- Congress passed the Force Acts (1870-1) in response to the KKK
 - However, it was established too late, and the KKK had already done most of its damage, continuing in “the guise of ‘dancing clubs,’ ‘missionary societies,’ and ‘rifle clubs.’”
- The South had many ways to loosen blacks’ grip on voting
 - Some places did not follow the 14th and 15th amendments and outrightly banned blacks from voting
 - Some poll booths had literacy tests, which prevented illiterate blacks from voting (while sometimes allowing illiterate whites to still pass, unfairly)

Culture and Society: The true effect of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments were truly not as great as they were in ideal. For example, in terms of women’s rights, it did not live up to its intended purpose of bringing equality and franchisement to all, but only to the African American males. Blacks did attain some government positions, but did not hold any governor positions. The KKK formed and greatly endangered black voting in general. Basically, the societal changes were all undermined by white conservative movements that sought to eliminate black rights. The South accused other Southerners of being “scalawags” and Northerners of being “carpetbaggers” when they tried to support the liberal policies and changes that the North was trying to instill with these amendments. These amendments turned out to essentially be a failed experiment in these early years, and Southern culture was not very affected in practice, even though it legally should have been very different.

Johnson Walks the Impeachment Plank

- Radicals in Congress wanted to remove Johnson from office because he was so racist and vetoed so many of their bills
 - They passed the Tenure of Office Act (1867) that forced the President to consult the Senate before removing anyone he appointed from office
 - Edwin Stanton, who was loyal to Johnson but also to the radical cause (for which he was a spy), was secured into Secretary of War with this act
- When Johnson dismissed Stanton from office in 1868, the House of Representatives impeached him for violating the Tenure of Office Act and for using contemptuous language against Congress

A Not-Guilty Verdict for Johnson

- The Senate and House were both eager to accuse Johnson of guilty of impeachment charges

- Johnson's lawyers argued that the Tenure of Office Act was unconstitutional, lessened the Senate and House's argument
- The Republicans were one vote shy (of $\frac{2}{3}$ majority for impeachment) of voting Johnson guilty of impeachment charges
 - Most of the people who voted not guilty were moderate Republicans
 - The people also didn't want impeachment to destabilize the weakly-bonded nation
 - People were also worried that the Presidency would turn over to the Speaker of the House, who had disliked economic policies
 - Johnson also promised to stop obstructing Republican policies in exchange for staying in office
- Some radicals angry that Johnson had stayed in office and could continue to block their policies

American and National Identity: While the popular sentiment lay otherwise, the impeachment trial of Johnson was perfectly American and legal as per the Constitution. The Republicans explicitly tried to force a radical spy (Stanton) into the high office of secretary of war or get Johnson impeached if he failed to comply; such is highly dubiously legal, and the resulting impeachment trial that failed helped to prevent this sort of political persuasion that borders on corruption. This shows the national identity that focuses on preserving a pure, corruption-free government that is not ruled by unlawful actions, but rather by the lawful democratic process. This is a core part of American politics because it dates back to the Revolution and the American people saying that the King's taxes were unconstitutional; likewise, Johnson's ousting would have been somewhat unconstitutional because it was based on such manipulated conditions, and thus the democratic process—the way free of corruption—prevailed.

The Purchase of Alaska

- Russia was looking to give away Alaska
 - It thought that Alaska was a barren, cold wilderness
 - Russia was about to get into a conflict with Great Britain and didn't believe that it could keep Alaska
 - It was looking to sell to the U.S., who they helped would serve as another barrier against Britain
- William Seward bought Alaska from Russia for \$7.2 million in 1867
 - Many people thought it was foolish, called the bargain Seward's Folly
 - Congress hoped that the land was rich in natural resources ("furs, fish, and gold"), which it eventually did
 - U.S. also hoped not to disturb friendly relations with Russia, who had been friendly during the Civil War

America in the World: During the Civil War, the U.S. maintained a very isolationist perspective. While the Confederacy tried to gain support from Britain and France to strengthen their fleet with European ships, the strength of the Northern military and the need for Northern corn and grain kept the South largely out of Europe as the Union. This interaction with Russia proved to be friendly, and it worked out well for the Americans like many of the bargains before the war such as the annexation of Oregon, of Texas, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the Louisiana Purchase, and the Adams-Onís treaty—none of them ended in military engagement, and all of them resulted in America gaining more land to its benefit. In this

case, America strengthened its relationship with Russia, all while gaining a large expanse of wilderness for not much cost (\$7 million for the entire nation was not much compared to the billions of dollars spent in the war) which would later pay off in natural resources. Thus the Manifest Destiny continued with this deal, strengthening American ideals and foreign relations.

The Heritage of Reconstruction

- Many Southerners hated Reconstruction more than the Civil War
 - There was a total revolution of their social structure in an unfavorable way
 - There was too much federal intervention that undermined the idea of states' rights
- Reconstruction was largely unplanned and dynamic — Lincoln and Johnson had no idea what the era after the Civil War was going to be like
 - The Republicans tried their best to get rid of slavery, but they didn't do very well because the laws they enacted had little effect
 - They didn't realize how strong an obstacle Southern racism (including that of Johnson) would be and how hard it would be to get legal equality

American and National Identity: Many of the actions that the federal government has taken towards slavery were failures, such as the Dred Scott case. Much of the Reconstruction Era, with its indecision and opposite factions, did also not ultimately last through Reconstruction, nor did all of it benefit the slaves— the Black Codes were allowed to persist, for example, and the federal government could not really enforce the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments everywhere in order to completely allow black franchisement. However, it was a step towards more equal rights for African Americans and the white Americans, just like every abolitionist step leading up to the Civil War was a step towards emancipation, no matter how feeble. This shows the American identity of tenacity to persist through unfruitful failures such as the struggle of anti-slavery policies. Eventually, with the Civil Rights movement in the 1900s, this would prevail, but the Reconstruction Era was the first step.