CHAPTER 22

The Ordeal of Reconstruction, 1865–1877

PART I: REVIEWING THE CHAPTER

A. Checklist of Learning Objectives
After mastering this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Define the major problems facing the nation and the South after the Civil War.
2. Describe the responses of both whites and African Americans to the end of slavery.
3. Analyze the differences between the presidential and congressional approaches to Reconstruction.
4. Explain how the blunders of President Johnson and the resistance of the white South opened the door to the Republicans’ radical Reconstruction.
5. Describe the intentions and the actual effects of radical Reconstruction in the South.
6. Indicate how militant southern white opposition and growing northern weariness with military Reconstruction gradually undermined Republican attempts to empower Southern blacks.
7. Explain why the radical Republicans impeached Johnson but failed to convict him.
8. Explain the legacy of Reconstruction, and assess its successes and failures.

B. Glossary
To build your social science vocabulary, familiarize yourself with the following terms.

1. treason The crime of betrayal of one’s country, involving some overt act violating an oath of allegiance or providing illegal aid to a foreign state. In the United States, treason is the only crime specified in the Constitution. “What should be done with the captured Confederate ringleaders, all of whom were liable to charges of treason?”

2. civil disabilities Legally imposed restrictions of a person’s civil rights or liberties. “But Congress did not remove all remaining civil disabilities until thirty years later. . . .”

3. legalistically In accord with the exact letter of the law, sometimes with the intention of thwarting its broad intent. “Some planters resisted emancipation more legalistically. . . .” (p. 481)

4. mutual aid societies Nonprofit organizations designed to provide their members with financial and social benefits, often including medical aid, life insurance, funeral costs, and disaster relief. “These churches . . . gave rise to other benevolent, fraternal, and mutual aid societies.”

5. confiscation (confiscated) Legal government seizure of private property without compensation, often as a penalty; under eminent domain, the government may take private property for public purposes, but with fair compensation. “. . . the bureau was authorized to settle former slaves on forty-acre tracts confiscated from the Confederates. . . .”
6. **pocket veto** The presidential act of blocking a Congressionally passed law not by direct veto but by simply refusing to sign it at the end of a session. (A president can pocket-veto ten days of a session’s end.) “Lincoln ’pocket-vetoed’ this bill by refusing to sign it after Congress had adjourned.”

7. **lease** To enter into a contract by which one party gives another use of land, buildings, or other property for a fixed time and fee. “... some [codes] even barred blacks from renting or leasing land.”

8. **chain gang** A group of prisoners chained together while engaged in forced labor. “A black could be punished for ‘idleness’ by being sentenced to work on a chain gang.”

9. **sharecrop** An agricultural system in which a tenant receives land, tools, and seed on credit and pledges in return a predetermined share of the crop to the creditor. “... former slaves slipped into the status of sharecropper farmers. . . .”

10. **peonage** A system, once common in Latin America, in which debtors are bound, in permanent or semi-permanent servitude, to labor for their creditors. “Luckless sharecroppers gradually sank into a morass of virtual peonage. . . .”

11. **scalawag** Disparaging term for a white Southerner who supported Republican Reconstruction after the Civil War. “The so-called scalawags were Southerners, often former Unionists and Whigs.”

12. **carpetbagger** Disparaging term for a Northern politician who came south to exploit the unsettled conditions after the Civil War; hence, any politician who relocates for political advantage. “The carpet-baggers, on the other hand, were supposedly sleazy Northerners. . . .” (p. 495)

13. **felony** A major crime for which severe penalties are exacted under the law. “The crimes of the Reconstruction governments were no more outrageous than the scams and felonies being perpetrated in the North at the same time. . . .”

14. **terror (terrorist)** Using violence or the threat of violence in order to create intense fear in the attempt to promote some political policy or objectives. “Such tomfoolery and terror proved partially effective.”

15. **president pro tempore** In the United States Senate, the officer who presides in the absence of the vice president. “Under existing law, the president pro tempore of the Senate . . . would then become president.”

**PART II: CHECKING YOUR PROGRESS**

**A. True-False**

Where the statement is true, circle **T**; where it is false, circle **F**.

1. **T** F Most of the aristocratic southern plantation owners lost their wealth during the Civil War.

2. **T** F Most white southerners recognized that secession had been a mistake and welcomed returning to the United States as American citizens.

3. **T** F Many newly emancipated slaves undertook travel to demonstrate their freedom or to seek separated loved ones.

4. **T** F The focus of black community life after emancipation became the black church.
5. T F The newly established Freedmen’s Bureau proved effective as a social agency providing economic opportunity as well as food, clothing, and medical care to emancipated blacks.

6. T F Lincoln’s 10 percent Reconstruction plan was designed to return the Southern states to the Union quickly and with few restrictions.

7. T F Andrew Johnson’s first Reconstruction actions pleased radical Republicans by harshly punishing Southern leaders and refusing to grant them pardons.

8. T F The sharecropping system, developed during Reconstruction, trapped most blacks and many poor whites in a condition of perpetual debt to their creditors.

9. T F The Black Codes, enacted by the Johnson-established southern state governments, provided freed slaves with basic political rights but not social integration.

10. T F Congressional Republicans demanded that the Southern states ratify the Fourteenth Amendment in order to be readmitted to the Union.

11. T F Radical Republicans succeeded in their goal of redistributing land to the former slaves.

12. T F During Reconstruction, blacks controlled most of the Southern state legislatures.

13. T F Many women felt betrayed when the Fifteenth Amendment gave voting rights to black males but not to women.

14. T F The federal government made no effort to attempt to suppress the violent white supremacists in the Ku Klux Klan.

15. T F The Republicans impeached Andrew Johnson essentially because of his opposition to their Reconstruction policies and not on the basis of “high crimes and misdemeanors.”

B. Multiple Choice

Select the best answer and circle the corresponding letter.

1. Which of the following was not among the critical questions that faced the United States during Reconstruction?
   a. Would the president, Congress, or the states direct Reconstruction?
   b. How would liberated blacks manage as free men and women?
   c. Would the South be granted some kind of regional autonomy short of independence?
   d. How would the economically and socially devastated South be rebuilt?
   e. How would the southern states be reintegrated into the Union?

2. The Freedmen’s Bureau was originally established to provide
   a. land, supplies, and seed for black farmers.
   b. job registration.
   c. food, clothing, and education for emancipated slaves.
   d. political training in citizenship for black voters.
   e. transportation and assistance in reuniting separated family members.
3. Lincoln’s original plan for Reconstruction in 1863 was that a state could be reintegrated into the Union when
   a. it repealed its original secession act and withdrew its soldiers from the Confederate Army.
   b. 10 percent of its voters took an oath of allegiance to the Union and pledged to abide by emancipation.
   c. it formally adopted a plan guaranteeing black political and economic rights.
   d. it ratified the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution.
   e. it barred from office and punished those who had voted for secession or served in the Confederate government.

4. The Black Codes, passed by many of the Johnson-approved Southern state governments in late 1865, aimed to
   a. provide economic assistance to get former slaves started as sharecroppers.
   b. prohibit interracial sexual relations.
   c. permit blacks to vote if they met certain educational or economic standards.
   d. force blacks to leave the South.
   e. ensure a stable and subservient labor force under white control.

5. The congressional elections of 1866 resulted in a
   a. victory for Johnson and his pro-Southern Reconstruction plan.
   b. further political stalemate between the Republicans in Congress and Johnson.
   c. decisive defeat for Johnson and a veto-proof Republican Congress.
   d. gain for Northern Democrats and their moderate compromise plan for Reconstruction.
   e. split between moderate Republicans in the Senate and radical Republicans in the House.

6. In contrast to radical Republicans, moderate Republicans generally
   a. favored states’ rights and opposed direct federal involvement in individuals’ lives.
   b. favored the use of federal power to alter the Southern economic system.
   c. favored emancipation but opposed the Fourteenth Amendment.
   d. favored returning the Southern states to the Union without significant Reconstruction.
   e. supported policies favorable to poor southern whites as well as blacks.

7. Besides putting the South under the rule of federal soldiers, the Military Reconstruction Act of 1867 required that all the reconstructed southern states must
   a. give blacks the vote as a condition of readmission to the Union.
   b. give blacks and carpetbaggers majority control of Southern legislatures.
   c. provide former slaves with land and education at state expense.
   d. try former Confederate officials and military officers for treason.
   e. effectively suppress the Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacist groups.

8. Which of the following was not among the provisions of the Fourteenth Amendment?
   a. Disqualification from federal and state office for former Confederate officials who had violated their oaths
   b. Reduction in Congressional representation and Electoral College vote for states that did not let blacks vote.
   c. Repudiation of any Confederate debts.
   d. Citizenship and full civil rights (except voting) for former slaves.
   e. Elimination of one senator from each southern state until Reconstruction was complete.

9. The Fifteenth Amendment provided for
   a. readmitting Southern states to the Union.
   b. full citizenship and civil rights for former slaves.
   c. voting rights for former slaves.
   d. voting rights for women.
   e. racial integration of public schools and public facilities.
10. Women’s rights leaders opposed the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments because
   a. they objected to racial integration in the women’s movement.
   b. the amendments granted citizenship and voting rights to black and white men but not to women.
   c. they favored passage of the Equal Rights Amendment first.
   d. most of them were Democrats who would be hurt by the amendments.
   e. they feared interracial sex and marriage.

11. Achieving the right to vote encouraged southern black men to
   a. form a third political party as an alternative to the Democrats and Republicans.
   b. seek a formal apology and reparations for slavery.
   c. organize the Union League as a vehicle for political empowerment and self-defense.
   d. organize large-scale migrations out of the South to the West.
   e. demand that each southern state grant blacks “forty acres and a mule.”

12. The radical Reconstruction regimes in the Southern states
   a. took away white Southerners’ civil rights and voting rights.
   b. consisted almost entirely of blacks.
   c. established public education and adopted many needed reforms.
   d. were largely the pawns of white northern carpetbaggers.
   e. were almost one hundred percent honest and free from corruption.

13. The major long-term effect of white terrorist organizations like the Ku Klux Klan was to
   a. disempower blacks politically and restore white supremacy.
   b. drive the U.S. Army out of the South.
   c. create a permanent secret government of former Confederates in the southern states.
   d. make most southerners forget their nostalgia for the lost cause of the Confederacy.
   e. encourage many blacks to arm themselves for self-defense.

14. The radical Republicans’ impeachment of President Andrew Johnson resulted in
   a. Johnson’s acceptance of the radicals’ Reconstruction plan.
   b. a revision in the impeachment clause of the Constitution to make such an action more difficult.
   d. Johnson’s resignation and appointment of Ulysses Grant as his successor.
   e. a failure to convict and remove Johnson from the presidency by a margin of only one vote.

15. The skeptical public finally accepted Secretary of State William Seward’s purchase of Alaska partly because it
   a. learned that there were extensive oil deposits in the territory.
   b. was found to be strategically vital to American defense in the northern Pacific.
   c. realized that Alaska would be the last frontier after the settling of the West.
   d. was grateful to Russia as the only great power friendly to the Union during the Civil War.
   e. became entranced by the natural beauty and wildlife of the territory.

C. Identification
Supply the correct identification for each numbered description.

1. _________  Federal agency that greatly assisted blacks educationally but failed in other aid efforts
2. _________  The two largest African American denominations (church bodies) by the end of Reconstruction
3. _________  Lincoln’s 1863 program for a rapid Reconstruction of the South
4. ________ The congressional bill of 1864 requiring 50 percent of a state’s voters to take an oath of allegiance before rejoining Union; vetoed by Lincoln
5. ________ The harsh Southern state laws of 1865 that limited black rights and imposed harsh restrictions to ensure a stable black labor supply
6. ________ The constitutional amendment granting civil rights to freed slaves and barring former Confederates from office
7. ________ Law of March 1867 that imposed military rule on the South and disenfranchised former thousands of former Confederates
8. ________ Laudatory term for white southerners who worked to overthrow Reconstruction and establish Home Rule regimes in the southern states
9. ________ The black political organization that promoted self-help and defense of political rights during Reconstruction
10. ________ Supreme Court ruling that military tribunals could not try civilians when the civil courts were open
11. ________ Derogatory term for white Southerners who cooperated with the Republican Reconstruction governments
12. ________ Derogatory term for Northerners who came to the South during Reconstruction and sometimes took part in Republican state governments
13. ________ Constitutional amendment guaranteeing blacks the right to vote
14. ________ White supremacist organization that created a reign of terror against blacks until it was largely suppressed by federal troops

D. Matching People, Places, and Events
Match the person, place, or event in the left column with the proper description in the right column by inserting the correct letter on the blank line.

1. ___ Exodusters
2. ___ Oliver O. Howard
3. ___ Andrew Johnson
4. ___ Abraham Lincoln
5. ___ Andrew Stephens
6. ___ Charles Sumner
7. ___ Thaddeus Stevens
8. ___ Military Reconstruction Act of 1867
9. ___ Hiram Revels
10. ___ Ku Klux Klan
11. ___ Force Acts of 1870 and 1871
12. ___ ”swing around the circle”
13. ___ Union League

a. President Andrew Johnson’s angry, disastrous political trip attacking Congress in the campaign of 1866
b. Former Confederate vice president whose election to Congress in 1865 infuriated northerners
c. Born a poor white southerner, he became the white South’s champion against radical Reconstruction
d. Secretary of state who arranged an initially unpopular but valuable land deal in 1867
e. Laws designed to stamp out Ku Klux Klan terrorism in the South
f. Black Republican senator from Mississippi during Reconstruction
14. ___ Benjamin Wade
15. ___ William Seward

g. Secret organization that intimidated blacks and worked to restore white supremacy

h. Blacks who left the South for Kansas and elsewhere during Reconstruction

i. Congressional law that imposed military rule on the South and demanded harsh conditions for readmission of the seceded states

j. Beaten in the Senate chamber before the Civil War, he became the leader of Senate Republican radicals during Reconstruction

k. Pro-black general who led an agency that tried to assist the freedmen

l. Leading black political organization during Reconstruction

m. Author of the moderate 10 percent Reconstruction plan that ran into congressional opposition

n. The president pro tempore of the Senate who hoped to become president of the United States after Johnson’s impeachment conviction

o. Leader of radical Republicans in the House of Representatives

E. Putting Things in Order

Put the following events in correct order by numbering them from 1 to 5.

1. __________ Constitution is amended to guarantee former slaves the right to vote

2. __________ Lincoln announces a plan to rapidly restore southern states to the Union.

3. __________ Northern troops are finally withdrawn from the South, and Southern state governments are reconstituted without federal constraint.

4. __________ An unpopular antiradical president escapes conviction and removal from office by one vote.

5. __________ Johnson’s attempt to restore the South to the Union is overturned because of congressional hostility to ex-Confederates and southern passage of the Black Codes.
F. Matching Cause and Effect

Match the historical cause in the left column with the proper effect in the right column by writing the correct letter on the blank line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Effect</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The South’s military defeat in the Civil War</td>
<td>a. Provoked a politically motivated trial to remove the president from office</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. The Freedmen’s Bureau</td>
<td>b. Intimidated black voters and tried to keep blacks “in their place”</td>
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<td>3. The Black Codes of 1865</td>
<td>c. Prompted Republicans to refuse to seat Southern delegations in Congress</td>
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<td>4. The election of ex-Confederates to Congress in 1865</td>
<td>d. Destroyed the Southern economy but strengthened Southern hatred of yankees</td>
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<td>5. Johnson’s “swing around the circle” in the election of 1866</td>
<td>e. Successfully educated former slaves but failed to provide much other assistance to them</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Military Reconstruction and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments</td>
<td>f. Forced all the Southern states to establish governments that upheld black voting and other civil rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. The radical Southern state Reconstruction governments</td>
<td>g. Embittered white Southerners while doing little to really help blacks</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. The Ku Klux Klan</td>
<td>h. Engaged in some corruption but also enacted many valuable social reforms</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. The radical Republicans’ hatred of Johnson</td>
<td>i. Weakened support for mild Reconstruction policies and helped elect overwhelming Republican majorities to Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. The whole Reconstruction era</td>
<td>j. Imposed slavery-like restrictions on blacks and angered the North</td>
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G. Developing Historical Skills

Interpreting Photographs and Drawings

Answer the following questions about the photographs and drawings in this chapter.

1. *Educating Young Freedmen and Women, 1870s*

What appears to be the average age of the students in the photograph? What does the dress of the students suggest about the freedmen’s attitudes toward education? From their positioning in the photograph, how might you describe the teachers’ relationships with the children?
2. **Sharecroppers Picking Cotton**
   What tasks are the sharecroppers engaged in? Is there possibly a gender division of labor among the field workers? How does the white man in the background—likely the landowner—display his social and economic superiority to the black sharecroppers?

3. **Freedmen Voting, Richmond, Virginia, 1871**
   What appears to be the economic status of the new black voters portrayed here? How does their condition differ from that of the voting officials, black and white? What does the drawing suggest about the power of the newly enfranchised freedmen?

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**PART III: APPLYING WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED**

1. What were the major problems facing the South and the nation after the Civil War? How did Reconstruction address them or fail to do so?
2. How did freed blacks react to the end of slavery? How did both Southern and Northern whites react?
3. Why did the white South’s treatment of the freed slaves so enrage many northerners in 1865? Was the Republican anger at Johnson motivated primarily by concern that the fruits of emancipation would be lost or by fear that a restored white South would be more powerful than ever?
4. What was the purpose of congressional Reconstruction, and what were its actual effects in the South?
5. What did the attempt at black political empowerment achieve? Why did it finally fail? Could it have succeeded with a stronger Northern political will behind it?
6. How did African Americans take advantage of the political, economic, religious, and social opportunities of Reconstruction, despite their limitations? In what areas were blacks most successful, and in which least?
7. The legend of the Reconstruction state governments is that they were vicious and corrupt failures run by unprepared blacks and greedy northern carpetbaggers. How did the reality of Reconstruction compare with this portrayal?
8. The radical Republicans believed that only a complete economic and social revolution, including redistribution of land and property, could permanently guarantee black rights in the South. Were they right? Why were most northerners of the time, including the moderate Republicans, unwilling to support such a drastic government-sponsored transformation?
9. Why did Reconstruction apparently fail so badly? Was the failure primarily one of immediate political circumstances, or was it more deeply rooted in the history of American sectional and race relations?
10. What was the greatest success of Reconstruction? Would you agree with historians who argue that even though Reconstruction failed at the time, it laid the foundations for the later successes of the civil rights movement?