

“The Reconstruction Ordeal”

Assignment for Reconstruction: Your assignment is to read Kennedy’s Chapter 22 as well as the Second Inaugural Address. I have provided you the notes to help you understand the material. Instead of covering Reconstruction in the normal class format, we will discuss the Reconstruction period in a seminar-format. This means that you are responsible for knowing the information below, actively participating in the discussion, and studying the material for the exam.

Participation in the Seminar and proving that you have read will constitute your seminar grade. A pop reading quiz may also be possible. Discussion questions will be posted online before the seminar.

Read Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address (posted online)

Where do we start?

- How should the South be re-built? (Physical devastation by war; social change through emancipation)
- Biggest topic: How will states be re-integrated into the Union? (political and legal status)
- How to deal with former Confederate leaders? (many Confed leaders will serve brief jail terms and later pardoned)
- Of course, southerners still believed that they were right!

Freedmen and the Freedmen’s Bureau

- Emancipation is slow – some slaveholders refuse to allow it
- Former slaves travel – to the north, to towns and cities, to form families, etc. (also got married, re-united with separated family members, formed own churches, tried education)
- “Exodusters” – former slaves attempt to travel to Kansas
- Freedmen’s Bureau created March 3, 1865 – intended to be a welfare policy to help freedmen get on their feet (food, clothing, etc.)
- Biggest success for Freedmen’s Bureau: EDUCATION
- Johnson not always a big supporter of the bureau – saw it as meddling

Presidential Reconstruction (16th President Abraham Lincoln to 17th President Andrew Johnson)

- Lincoln’s 10 percent plan: speedy reintegration into the Union (see page 485)
- Lincoln’s plan not popular in Congress, in 1864 the Congress passed the **Wade-Davis Bill** of 1864 (50% of voters swear allegiance and tougher safeguards for re-admission) – Lincoln pocket-vetoed
- Two camps develop: moderate re-admission or atonement for sins (shows division between Lincoln and Congress on this issue)
- President Johnson’s Reconstruction Plan – May 29, 1865 (see details in Kennedy text)
 - Johnson always seen as a champion of poor whites – remember why he was selected as Lincoln’s 2nd term Vice President (p. 485)
 - Idea was a swift re-admission plan after a few basic conditions were met.

The Black Codes

- Laws passed to regulate the activities of emancipated blacks
- Goals were to establish stable and subservient labor system
- Former slaves become “sharecroppers” and become quasi-slaves!
- Codes included bans on jury service, bans on renting lands, punishments for idleness, and fines for contract violations
- Reaction in the North?

Congressional Reconstruction (Congressional view: South is “conquered”)

- Former Confederates hoped to re-gain seats in Congress
- Republicans are not willing to allow these “rebels” in; Johnson announces that they had met the requirements for re-admission
- Feb. 1866 – Johnson vetoes extension bill for the Freedmen’s Bureau; March 1866 – Civil Rights Bill passed by Congress
- Johnson vetoes – veto overridden – becomes the 14th Amendment (begins clash between President and Congress)

Fourteenth Amendment

- ☑ Citizenship and civil rights to freed slaves and prohibited ex-Confederate leaders from holding public office (remember, the 13th amendment actually freed the slaves)
- ☑ See details in Kennedy, 489
- ☑ Debate between President and Congress rolls into the midterm elections of 1866 – Republicans win 2/3rds of Congress (endorsement for Congressional Reconstruction)

Radical Reconstruction

- ☑ Charles Sumner is resurrected! (barely able!) – leads radicals in the Senate; Thaddeus Stevens leads radicals in the House
- ☑ Radicals want to keep the South out as long as possible
- ☑ Moderates (majority) still wanted states' rights
- ☑ Radicals and moderates agree on black voting
- ☑ **Military Reconstruction:** divided the South into 5 military districts by the Reconstruction Act of March 2, 1867
 - Required to ratify the 14th Amendment
 - Required to guarantee suffrage to black males
- ☑ 15th Amendment: Guaranteed black suffrage (1870)
- ☑ Military tribunals used (despite what *Ex Parte Milligan* said)
- ☑ While under military rule, new state constitutions were made

Reconstruction on the Ground

- ☑ Blacks exercise political freedoms
- ☑ “Scalawags” were Southerners who were former Unionists or Whigs
- ☑ “Carpetbaggers” were Northerners who came to the South to seek personal power and wealth
- ☑ Political corruption in both the North and the South
- ☑ Radical state legislatures pass needed reforms: public education, tax systems, public works
- ☑ White reactions to radical Reconstruction: Ku Klux Klan
- ☑ As a reaction to the KKK, Congress passed **the Force Acts** of 1870/1871 (but white resistance frightens blacks from voting)

Woes for President Johnson

- ☑ Congress passes the Tenure of Office Act (1867) – remove the power of the President to remove appointed officials
- ☑ Johnson ignores the Act, dismisses Sec. of War Edwin Stanton
- ☑ Johnson impeached by the House, tried by the Senate
- ☑ Senate removal failed by one vote (needed 2/3rd majority)
 - Why acquit? could be seen as abuse of checks and balances; who would be President next?; might destabilize the government; Johnson promised to stop obstructing Congressional plans
- ☑ (Problem of removal: there still is no Vice President – president pro tempore of the Senate Ben Wade would be President)

1867 – Secretary of State William H. Seward purchases Alaska from Russia for \$7.2 million

(May need to jump somewhat into Kennedy's Chapter 23 here...sorry!)

Former General Ulysses S. Grant becomes President after the Election of 1868 (wins by the “bloody shirt”)
Gains voter support from former slaves

Grant's presidency is riddled with corruption – will talk about Crédit Mobilier scandal after the break
(and Will Smith doesn't play Jim West here)

Grant is re-elected in 1872 (defeats Horace Greeley)

Election of 1876: Rutherford Hayes is chosen by Compromise (contested election: Rutherford B. Hayes vs. Samuel Tilden)
Reconstruction formally ends with Hayes

NEXT UNIT (in January)... The Gilded Age!