

Reconstruction Introduction:

- Myth and Counter-myth:
 - Vindictive Yankees – Unreconstructed Rebels
 - Vivid economic growth in the south 1865 - 1876
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- Quandaries:
 - Confederacy didn't legally exist / neither did war
 - Gov't had no precedent in US or Euro experience
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 - The central question of the Civil War & Reconstruction is "What is freedom or equal rights?"
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- South devastated:
 - Crops, infrastructure, no capital
 - Virtually all assets destroyed
 - Southern capital non-existent (except war-time smugglers)
 - Carpet-baggers – investing businessmen from North
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 - 265 men dead / 400K casualties
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 - Rural displacement – forfeited land, roving freedmen
 - 4M Blacks had nowhere to go
 - 200K Blacks fought for Union with 38K deaths

Reconstruction:

Competing ideas of what Reconstruction should mean:

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- White southerners – restore antebellum society minus slavery with no Federal interference
- African-Americans wanted access to land and freedom from white control
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- Northern influence was both military and political
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- Freedman's Bureau: (semi-military Fed bureau)
 - March 1865
 - Under military command but staffed by NGOs
 - Fewer than 1K agents throughout the South
 - Land, Education, Justice (from 1863 study)
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 - Distribution of food to displaced Southerners
 - Administer labor contracts / credit
 - First Fed Gov't agency attempt to remake society
 - Strategy of labor to owner / earn a place in society

Reconstruction policy:

- Political issues
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- Lincoln's 10% plan
 - Announced in 1863 a lenient policy based on supposed Southern Unionists
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 - Amnesty except for high officials with pledge of loyalty and renunciation of slavery
 - 10% of 1860 voters took the pledge, the state could apply for re-admission into the Union
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- Congressional "Radical" reaction:
 - outraged over Lincoln plan and did not accept 1864 representatives of re-admitted states
 - July 1864 – Wade-Davis Bill :
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 - 51% of white males took loyalty oath, a constitutional convention elected by voters who had never borne arms against Union
 - Requirements of new State Constitutions were to abolish slavery, disenfranchise Confederate civil and military leaders and repudiate Confederate debts
 - Blacks' rights left up to States
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 - Lincoln's assassination gave Radicals more power

Reconstruction – first phases:

- Johnson’s “Presidential Reconstruction” 1865 :
 - Democrat in Republican administration & congress
 - Intent on reconstructing Democratic political future
 - Offered more lenient version of Wade-Davis bill
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 - All former confederate states had “Reconstructed” by December 1865:
 - Awaited Congressional approval of new State Constitutions
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 - Some refused to ratify 13th Amendment
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 - Congressional outrage:
 - Pre-war leaders again in control / No Black suffrage
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 - “The Black Codes” were slavery by another name
 - Vagrancy / Loitering laws on California model
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 - Blacks restricted from voting, juries, being witnesses against whites, owning arms, trades, owning land, etc.
 - Dec. 1865 “Joint Committee on Reconstruction”
 - Coordinated Congressional response to both Southern states and President Johnson
 - Republican party power base in North and future of National power.
 - Fruits of victory worth the effort “Blood Red Banner”

Congressional Reconstruction:

- Congressional Joint Committee actions:
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 - Supported by and supported Lincoln’s cabinet, Grant, Sherman and Republican military.
 - December 1865 refused to seat new States and formed their own committee to proceed:
 - 1866 – Reestablished the Freedman’s Bureau to counteract Black Codes
 - Civilian / Gov’t / Military coordination and action
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 - Education, training and teacher recruitment
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 - Semi-judicial powers in trials concerning Blacks
- 1866 – 1st Civil Rights Law (over Veto) allowed the Federal Gov’t to intervene when citizen’s rights were being denied
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 - Former Confederates could not hold state office
 - “Equality before the law” had wide support from Republicans / Northern Democrats
 - Ineffectual – not in Congressional scope

Reconstruction Second Phase:

- 13th Amendment prohibits Slavery – Dec 1865
- 1866 By-elections returned more Republican Radicals to Congress
- 14th Amendment Civil Rights defined and guaranteed by Fed Gov't. – June 1866
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 - a 2/3 majority of Congress pardoned him
 - Only Tennessee of former Confederacy ratified it
- Reconstruction Laws of 1867
 - TN readmitted because supported 14th Amendment
 - Combined 10 remaining former confederates into 5 military districts (destroying the old states)
 - Military to registered qualified voters – all Blacks, and Whites who had not supported Confederates
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 - 1867 Tenure of Office Act – kept President from firing Federal officials without Senates consent
 - 1867 Command of the Army Act – kept President from ordering military to do anything except through the Commanding General – US Grant
 - Command couldn't be transferred, changed or dismissed without consent of the Senate

Reconstruction Second Phase - II:

- April 1868 Johnson tried for impeachment on Tenure of Office Act violations – Johnson saved by one vote
- 1867-8 Imposed gov'ts on South
 - Republican (Blacks, Carpetbaggers, Scaliwags)
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- New States:
 - 1868 Seven had accomplished tasks: AK, NC, SC, LA, AL, GA, and Florida and were readmitted Texas and Virginia in 1869 and MS in 1870
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 - “Black political participation continued, though minimized
 - 25% of White males excluded from polls meant Black majorities in LA, SC & MS and close in FL and AL
 - “Republican” militia / Urban power
 - Black separatism, pronounced in churches and a few industries
 - Demobilization and fewer occupation forces meant more violence and intimidation of countryside
- 1868 – Death of Thaddeus Stevens meant land-reform demands of Congress lessened
- 1869 – 15th Amendment – voting not denied for Race, color or previous condition of servitude

Reconstruction Second Phase – III:

- Store-based Credit and bad years wiped out small holders – white and black alike Crop-lien system
 - Tenancy evolved toward crop share vs cash
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 - Distributed Black housing diluted resistance
 - Cotton or Cash crop demanded to cover credit
 - Merchants acquired land
- Newly “reformed” plantation system became general throughout “Cotton” south
- Grant Administration – 1868 & 1872
 - Supported Radicals in Congress – 500K Black Republicans in South elected him
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 - Greenback crisis over credit – Republicans favored hard money
- 1876 with money tight, Congress not as interested in Reconstruction – 7 of the 10 were already Democrat by 1872
 - Upper South – white majorities voted solid and won
 - Rising taxes split white vote from Republicans which made them more city, black and “yankee”

End of Reconstruction

- Former Confederate violence, intimidation and economic coercion
 - Redeemers - Democratic solidarity & resurrection
 - Bourbon (terror with a civil face) [minimalist cooperation]
 - Readjusters (taxes low so no public works or education – but unify the white Democratic vote)
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 - Once made, Democratic majority permanent through “Race Card”
- Congress replied to violence with Enforcement Acts 1871
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 - Meridian MS 1871 – 30 Blacks killed by “gun clubs”
 - Colfax LA 1873–50 Black militia were killed after surrender
 - Unpopular and expensive (How far will White Northerners go to defend Southern Blacks?)
- Presidential Campaign of 1872
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 - Social Darwinism gave political domination and social segregation “science”
- HR went Democratic in 1874
 - Depression of 1873 further reduced Republicans and desire to spend on Southern problems

End of Reconstruction - II

- 1876 Election – FL, SC and LA were contested election results
 - Hayes – Republican / Tilden – Democrat
 - Problem returns of LA, SC, FL
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 - Deal for patronage / improvements / Southerner in cabinet exchanging for a withdrawal of troops
 - Contested State Republican gov'ts fell
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 - State gov't became Democratic after election and Gov't troops left cities
- Legacies:
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 - “States Rights” vs Federal authority
 - Southern backwardness, poverty and slowed economic evolution
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 - Jim Crow / Share-cropping / Economic and Physical intimidation / Vagrancy laws / Local enforcement of 15th Amendment - - Slavery without slaves