

Rebuilding the Union

MAIN IDEA

During Reconstruction, the president and Congress fought over how to rebuild the South.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Reconstruction was an important step in the African-American struggle for civil rights.

TERMS & NAMES

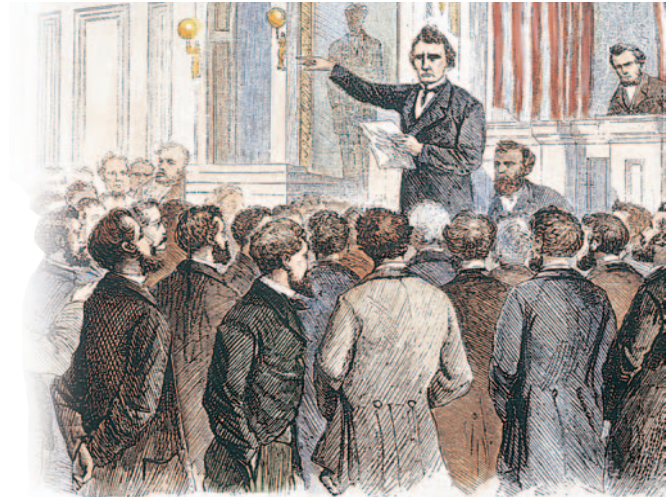
Radical
Republicans
Reconstruction
Freedmen's
Bureau

Andrew Johnson
black codes
civil rights
Fourteenth
Amendment

ONE AMERICAN'S STORY

After the Civil War, Pennsylvania congressman Thaddeus Stevens became a leader of the Radical Republicans. This group of congressmen favored using federal power to create a new order in the South and to promote full citizenship for freed African Americans. Stevens stated that “the whole fabric of southern society must be changed.”

In this section, you will learn how political leaders battled over how to bring the Southern states back into the Union.



Thaddeus Stevens addresses Congress.

Reconstruction Begins

After the Civil War ended in 1865, the South faced the challenge of building a new society not based on slavery. The process the federal government used to readmit the Confederate states to the Union is known as **Reconstruction**. Reconstruction lasted from 1865 to 1877.

In his Second Inaugural Address, in March 1865, Lincoln promised to reunify the nation “with malice [harm] toward none, with charity for all.” Lincoln’s plan included pardoning Confederate officials. It also called for allowing the Confederate states to quickly form new governments and send representatives to Congress.

To assist former slaves, the president established the **Freedmen’s Bureau**. This federal agency set up schools and hospitals for African Americans and distributed clothes, food, and fuel throughout the South.

When Lincoln was killed in April 1865, Vice-President **Andrew Johnson** became president. Johnson was a Democrat. The Republicans

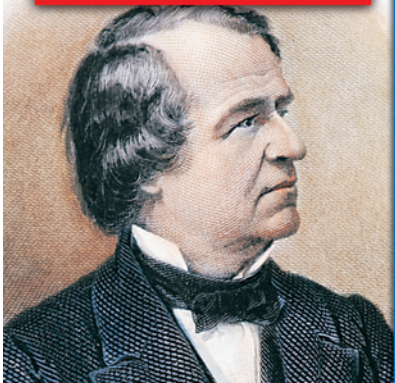
Taking Notes

Use your chart to take notes about black codes and President Johnson.

Problems

Black codes	➔
President Johnson	➔
Education	➔
Economy	➔
Ku Klux Klan	➔
Voting	➔

AMERICA'S HISTORY MAKERS



ANDREW JOHNSON

1808–1875

Andrew Johnson was a self-educated man whose strong will led to trouble with Congress.

As a former slaveholder from Tennessee, Johnson called for a mild program for bringing the South back into the Union. In particular, he let states decide whether to give voting rights to freed African Americans.

Johnson's policies led to a break with the Radical Republicans in Congress and, finally, to his impeachment trial (see page 537).

Why might Johnson have chosen not to punish the South?

had put him on the ticket in 1864 to help win support in the nation's border states. Johnson was a former slaveholder and, unlike Lincoln, a stubborn, unyielding man.

Johnson believed that Reconstruction was the job of the president, not Congress. His policies were based on Lincoln's goals. He insisted that the new state governments ratify the Thirteenth Amendment, which prohibited slavery. He also insisted that they accept the supreme power of the federal government.

Johnson offered amnesty, or official pardon, to most white Southerners. He promised to return their property. In return, they had to pledge loyalty to the United States. At first, the large plantation owners, top military officers, and ex-Confederate leaders were not included in this offer. But they, too, eventually won amnesty.

Rebuilding Brings Conflict

As the Southern states rebuilt, they set up new state governments that seemed very much like the old ones. Some states flatly refused to ratify the Thirteenth Amendment. "This is a white man's government," said the governor of South Carolina, "and intended for white men only."

The Southern states passed laws, known as **black codes**, which limited the freedom of former slaves. In Mississippi, for instance, one law said that African Americans had to have written proof of employment. Anyone without such proof could be put to work on a plantation. African Americans were forbidden to meet in unsupervised groups or carry guns. Because of such

laws, many people in the North suspected that white Southerners were trying to bring back the "old South."

When Congress met in December 1865, its members refused to seat representatives from the South. Many of these Southern representatives had been Confederate leaders only months before.

Under the Constitution, Congress has the right to decide whether its members are qualified to hold office. So instead of admitting the Southerners, Congress set up a committee to study conditions in the South and decide whether the Southern states should be represented. By taking such action, Congress let the president know that it planned to play a role in Reconstruction.

Republicans outnumbered Democrats in both houses of Congress. Most Republicans were moderates who believed that the federal government should stay out of the affairs of individuals and the states.

The Radical Republicans, however, wanted the federal government to play an active role in remaking Southern politics and society. Led by Thaddeus Stevens and Massachusetts senator Charles Sumner, the

Background

Not all Confederate leaders were pardoned. Former Confederate president Jefferson Davis, for example, was imprisoned for two years awaiting trial for treason. But he was never tried.

ReadingHistory

A. Analyzing Causes What was the main reason Southern states passed black codes?

Vocabulary

moderates: people opposed to extreme views



group also demanded full and equal citizenship for African Americans. Their aim was to destroy the South's old ruling class and turn the region into a place of small farms, free schools, respect for labor, and political equality for all citizens.

The Civil Rights Act

Urged on by the Radicals, Congress passed a bill promoting **civil rights**—those rights granted to all citizens. The Civil Rights Act of 1866 declared that all persons born in the United States (except Native Americans) were citizens. It also stated that all citizens were entitled to equal rights regardless of their race.

Republicans were shocked when President Johnson vetoed the bill. Johnson argued that federal protection of civil rights would lead “towards centralization” of the national government. He also insisted that making African Americans full citizens would “operate against the white race.” Congress voted to override Johnson’s veto. That is, two-thirds of the House and two-thirds of the Senate voted for the bill after the president’s veto, and the bill became law.

The Fourteenth Amendment

Republicans were not satisfied with passing laws that ensured equal rights. They wanted equality to be protected by the Constitution itself. To achieve this goal, Congress proposed the **Fourteenth Amendment** in 1866. It stated that all people born in the United States were citizens and had the same rights. All citizens were to be granted “equal protection of the laws.” However, the amendment did not establish black suffrage. Instead, it declared that any state that kept African Americans from voting would lose representatives in Congress. This meant that the Southern states would have less power if they did not grant black men the vote.

Johnson refused to support the amendment. So did every former Confederate state except Tennessee. This rejection outraged both moderate and Radical Republicans. As a result, the two groups agreed to join forces and passed the Reconstruction Acts of 1867. The passage of these

Radical Republicans pose for a formal portrait. Standing (left to right): James F. Wilson, George S. Boutwell, and John A. Logan. Seated: Benjamin F. Butler, Thaddeus Stevens, Thomas Williams, and John A. Bingham.

ReadingHistory

B. Making

Inferences

How did the Fourteenth Amendment encourage states to give African Americans the vote?

acts began a period known as Radical Reconstruction. From this point on, Congress controlled Reconstruction.

One of the Reconstruction Acts of 1867 divided the South into five military districts, each run by an army commander. Members of the ruling class before the war lost their voting rights. The law also stated that before the Southern states could reenter the Union, they would have to do two things:

1. They must approve new state constitutions that gave the vote to all adult men, including African Americans.
2. They must ratify the Fourteenth Amendment.

The New Southern Governments

In 1867, Southern voters chose delegates to draft their new state constitutions. About three-fourths of the delegates were Republicans. About half of the Republicans were poor white farmers. Angry at planters for starting what they called the “rich man’s war,” these delegates were called scalawags (scoundrels) for going along with Radical Reconstruction.

Another one-fourth of the Republican delegates were known as carpetbaggers—white Northerners who had rushed to the South after the war. Many Southerners accused them, often unfairly, of seeking only to get rich or gain political power.

African Americans made up the rest of the Republican delegates. Of these, half had been free before the war. Most were ministers, teachers, or skilled workers. About 80 percent of them could read.

The new constitutions written by these delegates set up public schools and gave the vote to all adult males. By 1870, voters in all the Southern states had approved their new constitutions. As a result, the former Confederate states were let back into the Union and allowed to send representatives to Congress.

During Reconstruction, more than 600 African Americans served in state legislatures throughout the South, and 14 of the new U.S. congressmen from the South were African Americans. Two African Americans served as U.S. senators during this time. One was Hiram Revels of Mississippi, a minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. He had recruited African Americans to fight for the Union during the Civil War.

Background

Attempts to secure voting rights for African Americans applied only to men. Women were not allowed to vote until 1919.

Background

Carpetbaggers were said to have headed south carrying only a cheap suitcase, known as a carpetbag.

Reading History

C. Finding Main Ideas

What political gains did African Americans make during Reconstruction?

HISTORY through ART

His First Vote, an 1868 oil painting by Thomas Waterman Wood, shows a new African-American voter.

How do you think the man felt about voting?



For an activity about Johnson's impeachment . . .



Johnson Is Impeached

President Johnson fought against many of Congress's reform efforts during Radical Reconstruction. For instance, he chose people friendly to ex-Confederates to serve as military commanders in the South. The conflict between Johnson and Congress soon brought a showdown.

In 1867, Congress passed the Tenure of Office Act, which prohibited the president from firing government officials without the Senate's approval. In February 1868, Johnson fired his secretary of war, Edwin Stanton, over disagreements about Reconstruction. Three days later, the House of Representatives voted to impeach the president. This means that the House formally accused him of improper conduct while in office. By removing Johnson from office, they hoped to strengthen Congress's role in Reconstruction.

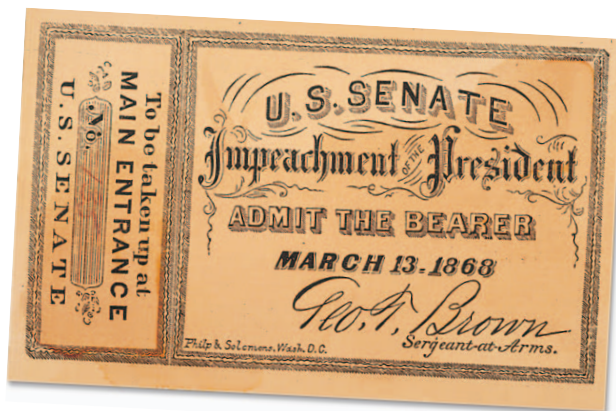
The case moved to the Senate for a trial. After several weeks of testimony, the senators prepared to vote. George Julian, a 20-year congressman from Indiana, recalled the tension in the air.

A VOICE FROM THE PAST

The galleries were packed, and an indescribable anxiety was written on every face. Some of the members of the House near me grew pale and sick under the burden of suspense. Such stillness prevailed that the breathing in the galleries could be heard at the announcement of each Senator's voice.

George Julian, quoted in *Grand Inquests*

In the end, President Johnson was acquitted by a single vote. But much work remained to be done in rebuilding the South. In the next section, you will learn how African Americans in the South worked to improve their lives.



This is a ticket to the 1868 impeachment trial of President Johnson.

ReadingHistory

D. Drawing Conclusions Why did Congress decide to impeach President Johnson?

Vocabulary

acquitted: cleared of a charge

Section 1 Assessment

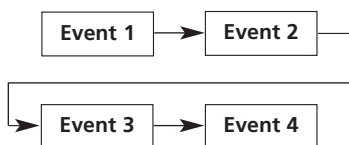
1. Terms & Names

Explain the significance of:

- Radical Republicans
- Reconstruction
- Freedmen's Bureau
- Andrew Johnson
- black codes
- civil rights
- Fourteenth Amendment

2. Using Graphics

Use a diagram to review the events that led to Johnson's impeachment.



Which event seems most important and why?

3. Main Ideas

- What was Lincoln's Reconstruction plan?
- How did white Southerners plan to restore the "old South"?
- What impact did the Reconstruction Acts of 1867 have on the South?

4. Critical Thinking

Evaluating Do you think the House was justified in impeaching President Johnson? Why or why not?

THINK ABOUT

- the clash over Reconstruction policies
- Congress's motives for impeaching Johnson

ACTIVITY OPTIONS

TECHNOLOGY SPEECH

Research an African American who served in Congress during Reconstruction. Design his Internet **home page**, or make a **speech** about his accomplishments.