CHAPTER 16
Reconstruction: An Unfinished Revolution, 1865–1877

Learning Objectives

After you have studied Chapter 16 in your textbook and worked through this study guide chapter, you should be able to:

1. Examine the clash between the executive and legislative branches of government over the issue of Reconstruction, and discuss the events and forces that affected the development of the congressional Reconstruction plans.
2. Examine and evaluate the Reconstruction experience for blacks.
3. Explain the divergence between the provisions of President Johnson’s Reconstruction plan and its actual operation.
4. Cite the major provisions of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments; indicate the reasons for their passage by Congress; and explain the compromises embodied in each.
5. Cite the major provisions of the First Reconstruction Act of 1867; indicate the reasons for its enactment by Congress; and explain why it diverged from the proposals of the Radical Republicans.
6. Discuss the political, social, and economic impact of the Reconstruction governments on southern society.
7. Examine and evaluate the means by which white southern Conservatives attempted to regain control in the South, and indicate the outcome of their efforts.
8. Examine the events and forces that brought a weakening of the northern commitment to Reconstruction and an end to the Reconstruction era.

Thematic Guide

Reconstruction refers to the process by which the nation was rebuilt after the destruction caused by the Civil War. This rebuilding was social, political, and economic. Since there were no guidelines as to how it would be accomplished, questions and disagreements arose. Given such disagreements, as well as the emotional aftermath of four years of war and the force of individual personalities, Reconstruction proceeded by trial and error.

As early as 1863, some two years before the end of the war, a debate began between the President and Congress over key questions relating to Reconstruction. In this debate, and in the Reconstruction proposals put forward by President Lincoln and Congress, it was apparent that the two disagreed over the scope and objectives of the Reconstruction process. Despite these disagreements, in early 1865 Congress and the
President were able to work together to secure passage of the Thirteenth Amendment and to create the Freedmen’s Bureau.

At war’s end and as the power struggle between the executive and legislative branches over control of the Reconstruction process became more pronounced, blacks renewed their determination to struggle for survival and true equality within American society. On one level they placed faith in education and participation in the political process as means of attaining equality, but they also turned to family and religion for strength and support. Denied the possibility of owning land, they sought economic independence through new economic arrangements such as sharecropping. However, sharecropping ultimately “proved to be a disaster” for all concerned.

When Congress reconvened in December 1865, it was faced with a Reconstruction policy advanced by President Johnson that not only allowed former Confederate leaders to regain power at the state and national levels but obviously abandoned the freedmen to hostile southern whites. Northern congressmen and the constituents they represented were unwilling to accept this outcome of the long, bitter struggle against a rebellious South. Believing that it had a constitutional right to play a role in the Reconstruction process, Congress acted. This action led to clashes with an intransigent President Johnson and to the passage of two congressional Reconstruction plans.

The first of these plans, the Fourteenth Amendment, evolved when the wrangling between President Johnson and Congress produced compromises among the conservative, moderate, and radical factions of the Republican Party. Although Congress passed the Freedmen’s Bureau bill and the Civil Rights Act of 1866 over the president’s veto, there was concern that the Supreme Court would declare the basic provisions of the Civil Rights Act unconstitutional. Therefore, those provisions were incorporated into a constitutional amendment that was presented to the states for ratification in April 1866. The Fourteenth Amendment demonstrated that Congress wanted to guarantee equality under the law to the freedmen, but its provisions make it clear that the moderate and conservative Republicans who controlled Congress were not willing to accept the more progressive concept of equality advanced by the Radical Republicans.

When, at the urging of the president, every former Confederate state except Tennessee refused to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment, Congress passed its second Reconstruction plan—the Reconstruction Acts of 1867–1868. Although these acts demonstrated some movement in the Radical direction by extending to blacks the right to vote in state elections, congressmen were still limited by the prejudices of the age. They labeled as extremist the suggestion that southern land be redistributed and so rejected the idea of giving blacks economic independence. They naively assumed that blacks would need only the ballot in their fight for a better life.

The same kinds of limitations worked within Reconstruction governments, preventing fundamental reform of southern society. Concurrently, southern Republicans adopted a policy that returned voting rights to former Confederates. These former Confederates, or Conservatives, ultimately led a campaign designed to return political and economic power to their hands by discrediting the Reconstruction governments. Adopting tactics ranging from racist charges and intimidation to organized violence, the Conservatives were able to achieve their objectives, as events in Alamance and Caswell counties in North Carolina demonstrated.

These setbacks indicated that northern commitment to equality had never been total. The federal government even began to retreat from partial commitment—a retreat made obvious by the policies of President Grant, the gradual erosion of congressional resolve on Reconstruction issues, the conservative decisions of the Supreme Court, and the emergence of other issues that captured the minds of white Americans. Finally, with the resolution of the disputed Hayes-Tilden election in 1876, Reconstruction ended. The promise of equality for black Americans remained unfulfilled.
Building Vocabulary

Listed below are important words and terms that you need to know to get the most out of Chapter 16. They are listed in the order in which they occur in the chapter. After carefully looking through the list, refer to a dictionary and jot down the definition of words that you do not know or of which you are unsure.

paramilitary

enfranchise

circumspection

odyssey

compensation

philanthropy

staunch

ardent

vehemently

blatant

repudiate

grudgingly

curfew
suffrage

sabotage

intransigence

infuse

mandate

confiscation

belligerent

conscientious

repudiate

vacillate

curry

enmity

reconciliation

vindictive

futile
Identification and Significance

After studying Chapter 16 of *A People and a Nation*, you should be able to identify fully and explain the historical significance of each item listed below.

1. Identify each item in the space provided. Give an explanation or description of the item. Answer the questions who, what, where, and when.
2. Explain the historical significance of each item in the space provided. Establish the historical context in which the item exists. Establish the item as the result of or as the cause of other factors existing in the society under study. Answer this question: *What were the political, social, economic, and/or cultural consequences of this item?*
Robert Smalls

Identification

Significance

Wade Hampton

Identification

Significance

special Field Order number 15

Identification

Significance

Lincoln’s “10 percent” plan

Identification

Significance

the Wade-Davis Bill

Identification

Significance
the Thirteenth Amendment

Identification

Significance

the Freedmen’s Bureau

Identification

Significance

reunification of African American families

Identification

Significance

Freedmen’s Bureau schools

Identification

Significance

the founding of African American colleges

Identification

Significance
Francis Cardozo, Blanche K. Bruce, and Hiram Revels

Identification

Significance

the sharecropping system

Identification

Significance

Johnson’s Reconstruction plan

Identification

Significance

the black codes

Identification

Significance

Radical Republicans

Identification

Significance
the civil rights bill of 1866

Identification

Significance

the Fourteenth Amendment

Identification

Significance

Johnson’s “swing around the circle”

Identification

Significance

the congressional elections of 1866

Identification

Significance

the First Reconstruction Act

Identification

Significance
Thaddeus Stevens

Identification

Significance

the Tenure of Office Act

Identification

Significance

Johnson’s impeachment trial

Identification

Significance

the presidential election of 1868

Identification

Significance

Ulysses S. Grant

Identification

Significance
the Fifteenth Amendment

Identification

Significance

the southern Republican Party

Identification

Significance

the constitutional conventions in the former Confederate states

Identification

Significance

Republican governments in the former Confederate states

Identification

Significance

industrialization in the former Confederate states

Identification

Significance
public schools in the former Confederate states

Identification

Significance

the southern Conservatives

Identification

Significance

the charge of “Negro rule”

Identification

Significance

carpetbagger

Identification

Significance

scalawag

Identification

Significance
Republican tax policies in the former Confederate states

Identification

Significance

the Ku Klux Klan

Identification

Significance

Klan violence in Alamance and Caswell counties North Carolina

Identification

Significance

the Enforcement Acts and the anti-Klan law

Identification

Significance

the Liberal Republican revolt

Identification

Significance
the Amnesty Act of 1872

Identification

Significance

the Civil Rights Act of 1875

Identification

Significance

the Panic of 1873

Identification

Significance

greenbacks vs. sound money

Identification

Significance

Ex parte Milligan

Identification

Significance
the *Slaughter-House* cases

Identification

Significance

*Bradwell v. Illinois*

Identification

Significance

*United States v. Cruikshank*

Identification

Significance

*United States v. Reese*

Identification

Significance

the presidential election of 1876

Identification

Significance
the Exodusters

Identification

Significance

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**Organizing Information**

Much of Chapter 16 is devoted to changes in civil rights during the Reconstruction era, with much of the change triggered by the immediate situation of the defeat of the Confederacy. To sharpen your understanding of the evolution of civil rights during the period, complete the chart “Evolution of Civil Rights and Legal Empowerment, 1865-1878.”

Moving across each row, indicate what legislative, constitutional, or court action listed in Column One had to say about the rights or power/authority of each group or entity named in the headings for Columns Two through Five. In the last column, indicate what happened to the legislative action, amendment or court decision named in Column One. (Was it voted down, enacted, repealed, or what? What kind of effect has it had?)

Your entries should be mere reminders, labels that will stir your recollection of details needed for a full explanation and that can serve as prompts when you review Chapter 16 or plan mock essays to answer essay questions that you anticipate seeing on a test on Chapter 16.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislative, Constitutional, or Court Action</th>
<th>Former Confederate Leaders</th>
<th>Black Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>States’, Federal Government’s Role in Guaranteeing Civil Rights</th>
<th>Fate and/or Impact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil Rights Bill of 1866</td>
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<td>Anti-Klan law (1870)</td>
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<td>Enforcement Acts (1870–1871)</td>
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<td>Civil Rights Act of 1875</td>
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### Evolution of Civil Rights and Legal Empowerment, 1865-1878 (continued)

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>Supreme court Decisions:</td>
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<td><em>Slaughter-House Cases</em></td>
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#### Interpreting Information

Analyze the chart you completed as part of the preceding Organizing Information exercise and, based on your chart entries, invent two or three questions that you think would make good essay questions for a test on Chapter 16. Consider the significance of the material that the respondent would be required to provide, how well the question reflects one or more themes of the chapter, the amount of relevant, specific, concrete information on the topic that the chapter and your class notes provide, and what your professor has emphasized in class. Choose the best of your questions, and compose a mock essay that responds directly to it.
Ideas and Details

Objectives 1 and 3

1. Many northerners questioned President Johnson’s Reconstruction plan because
   a. it promised federal aid to help the South rebuild.
   b. in actual operation, it returned power to the prewar southern elite.
   c. the plan required repudiation of the Confederate war debt.
   d. it did not extend the vote to the yeoman class.

Objectives 1 and 2

2. Which of the following is true of the black codes?
   a. They required the freedmen to pay “freedom dues” to their former masters.
   b. They extended the right to vote to property-owning blacks.
   c. They were an attempt to relegate blacks to a position of servitude.
   d. They extended to the freedmen equal protection under the law.

Objective 1

3. Congress believed that it had a right to a voice in the Reconstruction process because the Constitution
   a. grants treaty-making powers to Congress.
   b. grants Congress the power to declare war.
   c. assigns Congress the duty of guaranteeing republican governments in the states.
   d. assigns Congress the responsibility of “providing for the general welfare.”

Objective 1

4. In order to develop a new Reconstruction program, conservative and moderate Republicans began to work with the Radical Republicans because
   a. events in the South convinced them that blacks should be given full political rights.
   b. the Radicals convinced them that black freedom depended on a redistribution of land in the South.
   c. President Johnson and the congressional Democrats refused to cooperate with them.
   d. the northern electorate clearly favored the goals of the Radical Republicans.

Objectives 1, 3, 4, and 5

5. The northern public became convinced that Johnson’s reconstruction policies were too lenient due to
   a. the election of Jefferson Davis to the Senate.
   b. the President’s appointment of Alexander Stephens to his cabinet.
   c. the President’s insistence that the federal government assume the Confederate debt in full.
   d. accounts of antiblack violence in the South.
Objective 4

6. The Fourteenth Amendment
   a. guaranteed blacks the right to vote.
   b. was strongly supported by President Johnson.
   c. extended civil and political rights to women.
   d. was the product of a compromise among the Republican factions in Congress.

Objective 5

7. The First Reconstruction Act
   a. required the southern states to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment.
   b. called for a redistribution of land in the South.
   c. guaranteed blacks the right to vote in federal elections.
   d. stipulated that the southern states would be “adjusted” back into the Union over a ten-year period.

Objective 1

8. The Senate’s failure to convict President Johnson of the charges brought against him
   a. enhanced Johnson’s prestige and power.
   b. established that impeachment was not a political tool.
   c. is evidence that northern opinion toward Johnson and the South was softening.
   d. caused a serious rift between the House and Senate.

Objective 6

9. The new state constitutions of the former Confederate states
   a. eliminated property qualifications for voting.
   b. extended the right to vote to women.
   c. made public school attendance compulsory.
   d. made yearly reapportionment of legislative districts mandatory.

Objective 6

10. The decision of southern Republicans to restore the voting rights of former Confederates
    a. meant that southern Republicans had to gain white support or face defeat.
    b. led to the formation of a broad-based Republican Party in the South.
    c. caused the freedmen to support the more liberal southern Democrats.
    d. was politically embarrassing to congressional Republicans.

Objectives 2 and 8

11. Blacks participating in Reconstruction governments
    a. had little interest in the political process.
    b. were subjected to a racist propaganda campaign against them undertaken by the white Conservatives.
    c. insisted on social equality for blacks.
    d. displayed a vindictive attitude toward their former masters.
Objective 7
12. Activities of the Ku Klux Klan in Alamance and Caswell counties in North Carolina
a. were disorganized and sporadic.
b. were organized by the impoverished classes in North Carolina society.
c. were undertaken by the former elite for the purpose of regaining political power.
d. had little success in areas where blacks and yeoman farmers allied.

Objectives 2 and 6
13. In the final analysis, the Reconstruction governments of the South
a. were able to alter the social structure of the South.
b. effected a lasting alliance between blacks and whites of the yeoman class.
c. gave blacks the means to achieve equality by giving them the right to vote.
d. left blacks economically dependent on hostile whites.

Objective 8
14. In the *Slaughter-House* cases, the Supreme Court
a. ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment did not protect the civil rights of individuals from state interference.
b. protected a citizen of the United States against discrimination by an individual or a group.
c. ruled that corporations were legal persons and were protected under the Fourteenth Amendment.
d. ruled that national citizenship was more important than state citizenship.

Objective 8
15. From the outcome of the 1876 presidential election, it is evident that the electorate
a. supported an inflationary monetary policy.
b. feared that the expansionist policies of Secretary of State Seward would lead to war.
c. had lost interest in Reconstruction.
d. rejected government aid to business interests.
Essay Questions

Objective 3

1. Discuss Johnson’s Reconstruction plan, and explain its actual operation. How did Congress respond to the plan? Why?

Objectives 1, 4, and 5

2. Discuss the political, social, and economic views of the Radical Republicans, and examine the role they played in the development of Congress’s plans for Reconstruction.

Objective 1

3. Examine the attitudes and events that led to the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson, and assess the outcome of his trial by the Senate.

Objective 6

4. Discuss the successes and failures of the Reconstruction governments in the South.

Objective 7

5. Discuss the goals of the Conservatives and the means they used to achieve those goals.