

## Reconstruction Module Notes:

- After the end of the Civil War, there were three major questions that needed to be answered:
  - How do you bring the South back into the Union?
    - Some politicians wanted a hard peace. They wanted heads to roll because they viewed the Southerners as traitors.
    - However, Lincoln did not want to punish the South for the rebellion. He wanted to take a slow and steady approach to reconstructing the country.
  - How do you rebuild the South?
    - Four million slaves freed, which created an additional loss of \$4 billion, or \$80 trillion today
    - South had little to no industry outside of agriculture
  - How do you deal with former slaves?
    - 3.5 to 4 million newly freedmen and women. Little to no occupational skills, no homes of their own, were not allowed to learn how to read, and broken up families due to being sold to different plantations.
- Lincoln's Ten Percent Plan – Wanted all Southerners to take “amnesty oath” and promise to be loyal to Union and that everything would be forgiven; All Confederate leaders had to formally apply for forgiveness with Lincoln himself; when ten percent of those in a former Confederate state had taken the oath, the state would be allowed to start a new government. Plan did not have any provisions for newly freed men.
  - Harsher plans arose as a counter to Lincoln's plan. Many believed the South needed to pay.
- Lincoln was assassinated less than one week after General Robert E. Lee surrendered.
- Andrew Johnson became president after Lincoln's assassination.
  - Born in North Carolina to a landless laborer and a washerwoman. Apprenticed as a tailor at 14. Ran away, was hunted down, and then rebuffed when he tried to finish his indentured servitude. He then took what was left of his family and crossed the mountains into Tennessee.

- Became member of Senate in Tennessee. When they seceded from the US, he refused to leave. Instead, he insisted on remaining in Congress. This is why Lincoln asked him to join the ticket, as an effort to bring the South back.
- Was seen as a traitor by the South and the original carpetbagger by the North. Hot tempered, stubborn, and ill tempered. Made worse by drinking.
- Originally tried to maintain Lincoln's Ten Percent plan. Included that states must ratify the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment, and that high ranking political leaders or those with more than \$20,000 in property were banned from political participation in the US.
  - o However, Johnson granted so many pardons that these leaders quickly retook their political positions.
  - o By the end of 1865, all states but Mississippi were considered reconstructed. These states then elected members to Congress, many of which were high ranking Confederates (including the Vice President of the Confederate states, and 4 former Confederate generals).
- With everything considered, Johnson was alienated from Congress. They tried to have him impeached, but it fell through by 1 vote. Congress became dominating national branch.
- By the end of 1865, Congress had taken control of the reconstruction process. They refused to seat newly elected members, and put up more requirements. Within Congress's reconstruction, there were phases.
  - o Early phase (1865 – 1867): Construction of Freedmen's Bureau and 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Freedmen's Bureau created by Department of War. Aimed to help freedmen make the transition to freedom. Provided anything from food, clothes, medicine, some education, and job training. Established historically black colleges. Between 1866 and 1872, 25 institutions were established. Bureau ran into many obstacles. Did not have its own budget. Was unpopular, and Johnson vetoed a bill to extend life of agency. Bill had veto overridden by Congress, but put a damper on the view of the agency. Success was limited because of the size and scope of what needed to be done.
  - o "Radical Republican" phase: Ultimately decided the plan for Reconstruction.

- The Reconstruction Act of 1867: Declared Tennessee reconstructed because it had followed Lincoln's plan and Johnson's plan, as well as ratified the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment. The other 10 Confederate states were divided into 5 military districts, which each placed under the command of a general. States had to carry out voter registration for non-confederate men, had to rewrite their constitutions to allow black men to vote, and had to ratify the 14<sup>th</sup> (And later 15<sup>th</sup>) amendments.
- Reconstruction Amendments:
  - 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment: Ratified in December of 1865. Abolished and prohibited slavery and involuntary servitude, except as punishment for a crime.
  - 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment: Ratified in 1868. Redefined American citizenship to include anyone born or naturalized in the US. Eliminated the option of South to prevent freedmen by claiming they weren't citizens. Also stated that former Confederates could only be accepted into political life by Congress, not the President.
  - 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment: Ratified in 1870. Provided right to vote to all American citizens, regardless of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude".
  - Many southerners tried to find loopholes around these laws.
- After Johnson, Grant became president. Elected in 1868 and 1872. He ran the presidency like he ran his military. He trusted the wrong people, delegated too much power and authority, and wasn't suited for the political life.
  - As he was leaving the White House, the Panic of 1873 began. With the Panic in full swing (reports of violence and people becoming less concerned with Reconstruction), 1873 is considered the unofficial end date of Reconstruction. The official end date, however, is 1877.
- In 1876, Democrats nominated Samuel J. Tilden. He was a businessman from New York. Republicans nominated Rutherford B. Hayes, governor of Ohio. Hayes won 48% of popular vote, while Tilden won 51%. However, electoral votes were in the air for several months. The 20 disputed votes came from Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina. As the