

Reconstruction and Republican Rule

Main Idea As African Americans entered politics, some Southerners began to resist Republican reforms.

Reading Connection Have you heard of recent activities of the Ku Klux Klan? Read on to find out when and why the KKK was founded.

By the fall of 1870, all of the former Confederate states had rejoined the Union under the congressional Reconstruction plan. With many issues unresolved, Reunification did little to restore harmony between the North and South.

Carpetbaggers and Scalawags During Reconstruction, a large number of Northerners traveled to the South. Many were eventually elected or appointed to positions in the South's new state governments. Southerners, particularly supporters of the Democratic Party, referred to these newcomers as carpetbaggers because some arrived with their belongings in suitcases made of carpet fabric. Local residents saw them as intruders seeking to exploit the South's postwar turmoil for their own gain.

Some white Southerners worked with the Republicans and supported Reconstruction. Other Southerners called these people scalawags—an old Scotch-Irish term for weak, underfed, worthless animals. The scalawags were a diverse group. Some were former Whigs who had grudgingly joined the Democratic Party before the war. Many were owners of small farms who did not want the wealthy planters to regain power. Still others were business people who favored the Republican economic plans for the South.

African Americans Having gained the right to vote, African Americans quickly began organizing politically. Within a few remarkable years, African Americans went from enslaved workers to legislators and administrators on nearly all levels of government. Hundreds of formerly enslaved people served as delegates to the conventions that created the new state constitutions. They also won election to numerous local offices, served in Southern state legislatures, and were elected to the House of Representatives. Two others served in the Senate.

Many African Americans desired an education, something they had been denied under slavery. In the first years of Reconstruction, the Freedmen's Bureau, with

the help of Northern charities, had established schools for African Americans across the South. Gradually, the number of both African American students and teachers increased, and by 1876 about 40 percent of all African American children (roughly 600,000 students) attended school in the region.

Formerly enslaved people across the South also worked to establish their own churches. Churches served as the center of many African American communities, as they housed schools and hosted social events and political gatherings.

Republican Politics and Reforms Because of past disloyalty, some Southern whites were barred from participating in the new Southern governments, and many others simply refused to do so. As a result, a coalition of Northerners, Southern-born whites, and African Americans created Republican governments in the Southern states. Republicans had the support of a large number of white Southerners. These were usually poor white farmers, who resented the planters and Democratic Party that had dominated the South before the war.

The newly elected Republican governments in the South quickly instituted a number of reforms. In addition to repealing the black codes, they established state hospitals and institutions for orphans. To improve the **infrastructure**, they rebuilt roads, railways, and bridges damaged during the Civil War and provided funds for the construction of new railroads and industries in the South.

Picturing History

Schools for African Americans O.O. Howard, head of the Freedmen's Bureau, is pictured here (far right) with the students of a Freedmen's school. **Why do you think these schools were so successful?**





◀ *Early KKK robe and hood*

Most white Southerners scorned these reforms, which did not come without cost. Many state governments were forced to borrow money and to impose high property taxes to pay for the repairs and new programs. Many property owners, unable to pay these new taxes, lost their land.

Southern Resistance Unable to strike openly at the Republicans running their states, some Southern opponents of Reconstruction organized secret societies to undermine Republican rule. The largest of these groups was the Ku Klux Klan. Started in 1866 by former Confederate soldiers in Pulaski, Tennessee, the Klan spread rapidly throughout the South. Hooded, white-robed Klan members rode in bands at night terrorizing African Americans, white Republicans, carpetbaggers, teachers in African American schools, and others who supported the Republican governments. Republicans and African Americans responded to the attacks by organizing their own militias to fight back.

As the violence increased, Congress passed three Enforcement Acts in 1870 and 1871, one of which outlawed the activities of the Klan. Although local authorities and federal agents arrested more than 3,000 Klan members, only a few hundred were convicted and served time in prison.

The Troubled Grant Administration During his first term, Ulysses S. Grant faced a growing number of Republicans who were concerned that interests in making money and selling influence were beginning to dominate the Republican Party. These critics also argued that the economic policies most Republicans supported, such as high tariffs, favored the rich over the poor. Eventually these critics, known as Liberal Republicans, broke with the Republican Party in 1872 and nominated their own

candidate, the influential newspaper publisher Horace Greeley. Despite this split, Grant easily won reelection.

During Grant's second term, a series of scandals damaged his administration's reputation. In addition, the nation endured a staggering and long-lasting economic crisis that began during Grant's second term. After a powerful banking firm declared bankruptcy, a wave of fear known as the Panic of 1873 quickly spread though the nation's financial community. The panic soon set off a full-fledged depression that lasted until almost the end of the decade.

The scandals in the Grant administration and the nation's deepening economic depression hurt the Republicans politically. In the 1874 midterm elections, the Democrats won back control of the House of Representatives and made gains in the Senate.

Reading Check **Explaining** Why did only some Southerners support Republican reforms?

Reconstruction Ends

Main Idea Reconstruction came to an end as Democrats regained power in the South and in Congress.

Reading Connection What values and policies do you associate with today's Republican and Democratic Parties? Read on to learn about the roles these parties played during the Reconstruction period.

The rising power of the Democrats in Congress and Republican concerns over scandals and the economy led to an end of Reconstruction.

Democrats Regain Strength In the 1870s, Democrats began to regain power in the South. They did so in part through intimidation and fraud, and in part by defining the elections as a struggle between whites and African Americans. They also won back support by promising to cut the high taxes the Republicans had imposed and by accusing Republicans of corruption. Southern Democrats viewed their efforts to regain power as a crusade to help save the South from Republican rule. By 1876 the Democrats had taken control of all but three Southern state legislatures.

That year, the nation's presidential election pitted Republican Rutherford B. Hayes, a former governor of Ohio, against Democrat Samuel Tilden, a wealthy corporate lawyer and former governor of New York. On Election Day, twenty electoral votes

HISTORY
Online

Student Web Activity Visit the *American Vision: Modern Times* Web site at tav.mt.glencoe.com and click on **Student Web Activities—Chapter 2** for an activity on Reconstruction.

were disputed. Nineteen of the votes were in the three Southern states controlled by Republicans. As a result, congressional leaders worked out an agreement known as the **Compromise of 1877**.

Historians are not sure if a deal really took place or what its exact terms were. Among the conditions that were reported, the Republicans agreed to withdraw the remaining federal troops from the South. In April 1877, after assuming the presidency, Hayes did pull federal troops out of the South. Without soldiers to support them, the last remaining Republican governments in the South quickly collapsed. Reconstruction had come to an end.


A “New South” Arises During his inaugural speech in March 1877, President Hayes expressed his desire to move the country beyond the quarrelsome years of Reconstruction. Hoping to narrow the divisions of sectionalism that had long plagued the nation, he vowed “to put forth my best efforts in behalf of a civil policy which will forever wipe out . . . the distinction between North and South.”

Eventually the South did develop closer ties with the North. Southern leaders realized the South could never return to the pre-Civil War agricultural economy dominated by the planter elite. Instead, these Southerners called for the creation of a “New South” based on a strong industrial economy. An alliance between Southerners and Northern financiers brought great economic changes to some parts of the South. Northern capital helped to build thousands of miles of railroads and dozens of new industries.

The South, in fact, changed very little. Despite its industrial growth, the region remained largely agricultural. As late as 1900, its number of manufacturing establishments equaled only 4 percent of its number of farms. For many African Americans in particular, the end of Reconstruction meant a return to the “old South” and an end to their hopes of owning their own land. Instead many returned to plantations owned by whites, where they, along with many poor white farmers, either worked for wages or became **tenant farmers** paying rent for the land they farmed. Most tenant farmers could not afford to buy their own land and became **sharecroppers**. They paid a share of their crops, often as much as two-thirds, to cover their rent as well as the cost of the seed, fertilizer, tools, and animals they needed.

Although sharecropping allowed African American farmers to control their work schedules and working conditions for the first time in their lives, they rarely had enough crops left over to sell to enable them to buy their own land. The Civil War ended slavery, but Reconstruction’s failure left many African Americans, as well as many whites, trapped in economic **circumstances** beyond their control.

 **Reading Check** **Explaining** What major issue was settled by the Compromise of 1877?

HISTORY
Online  **Study Central**

For help with the concepts in this section of *American Vision: Modern Times* go to tav.mt.glencoe.com and click on **Study Central**.

SECTION 5 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

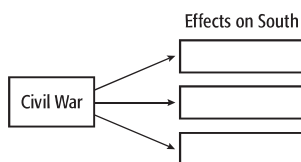
1. **Vocabulary** Define: Reconstruction, amnesty, pocket veto, freedman, black codes, impeach, infrastructure, tenant farmer, sharecropper, circumstance.
2. **People and Terms** Identify: Freedmen’s Bureau, Andrew Johnson, Fourteenth Amendment, Military Reconstruction Act, Fifteenth Amendment, Compromise of 1877.
3. **Explain** the major goals of the Radical Republicans.

Reviewing Big Ideas

4. **Explaining** What new amendments were added to the Constitution during the Civil War and Reconstruction period?

Critical Thinking

5. **Historical Analysis** **Evaluating** Do you think Presidents Lincoln and Johnson were wise in not seeking harsh treatment of the Southern states? Why or why not? CA HI2
6. **Historical Analysis** **Analyzing** Why did Southerners resent both carpetbaggers and scalawags? CA HI3
7. **Categorizing** Use a graphic organizer similar to the one below to describe the effects of the Civil War.



Analyzing Visuals

8. **Examining Photographs** Study the photograph of O.O. Howard and a Freedmen’s school on page 223. How would you describe the children depicted in this photograph?

Writing About History

9. **Expository Writing** Write a short essay explaining what you consider to be the three most important events of the Reconstruction period. Explain why you chose these events. Check your essay for grammar, spelling, and punctuation. CA 11WS1.1; 11WA2.4a