

Reconstruction (1865-1877)



Charleston, 1865 (Library of Congress)

I. Problems Facing Post Civil War America

- A. Political re-entry of formerly rebellious states
- B. Economic devastation of the South
- C. Education and support of freedmen

II. Presidential Reconstruction

A. Lincoln's plan

1. Amnesty to Confederates taking loyalty oath
2. If 10% of voters took the oath, statehood would be re-established
3. Major goal: to strengthen Republican Party in the South

B. Opposed by some Republicans who offered the Wade-Davis Bill

1. Military governors to rule Southern states
2. Majority of citizens required to take loyalty oath
3. Attitude: South should be treated as conquered territory

C. Johnson's plan

1. Confederate leaders and wealthy Southerners would have to ask presidential permission to take the loyalty oath
2. 13th Amendment (abolishing slavery) would have to be approved by state
3. Viewed as too soft on the South by Radical Republicans

II. Southern Reaction to Reconstruction

- A. Former Confederate officials elected to public office when eligible
- B. Resentment of Freedmen's Bureau and occupying troops

C. Passage of black codes limiting rights of blacks

III. Radical Reconstruction

A. Civil Rights Act of 1865 defined citizenship and outlawed discrimination on the basis of race

B. 14th Amendment providing due process of law and applying Bill of Rights to state governments

C. Johnson opposed Radical plans, arousing their ire

D. Motives of the Radicals

- 1) Punishment of the South
- 2) Retain Republican power
- 3) Protect industrial growth with high tariffs
- 4) Aid the freed slaves

E. South divided into five military districts

F. Radical governments formed in Southern states composed of blacks, northern carpetbaggers, and Southern scalawags

G. Violence rose with the creation of the Ku Klux Klan and other vigilante groups

IV. Attack on the Presidency

A. As Johnson attempted to counter Radical moves, they planned his impeachment

1. Passed Tenure of Office Act, requiring Senate approval to remove Cabinet officials
2. Fell one vote short of convicting Johnson (35-19)

B. Inability of Radicals to convict Johnson helped preserve the balance of power between the executive and legislative branches of the government

V. The End of Reconstruction

A. Republican interest in Reconstruction waned as old abolitionists were replaced by Liberal Republicans with different interests.

B. Compromise of 1877 settling disputed 1876 Hayes-Tilden election

1. Removed all federal troops from the South
2. Republican governments turned out of state offices
3. Hayes elected as president though receiving fewer popular votes

