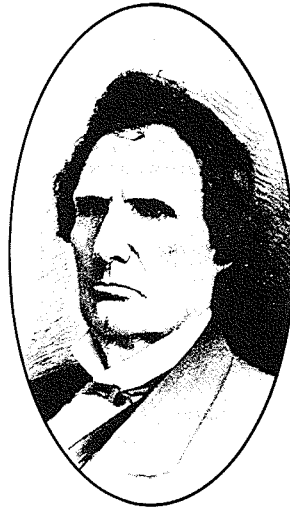




LINCOLN



STEVENS



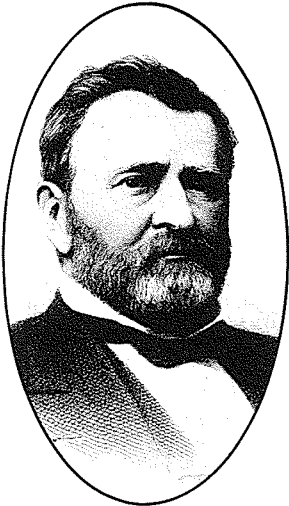
JOHNSON



HAYES



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GRANT

The principal actors in the drama of Reconstruction were President Abraham Lincoln, Radical Republicans Sen. Charles Sumner of Massachusetts and Rep. Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania, President Andrew Johnson, and President Rutherford B. Hayes, elected in 1876.

Northern states would follow up their hardwon victory in the Civil War. The downfall of the Confederacy not only assured the permanence of the federal union but also confirmed the destruction of the "peculiar institution" of slavery.

How to readmit 11 former Confederate states and how to guarantee the rights of 3.5 million former slaves became the central issues of Reconstruction. To the extent that our society, a century later, continues to experience racial crises, and that our national politics must reckon with the remnants of a self-consciously "Solid South," it is clear that the first Reconstruction failed to resolve these central issues completely. Thus, the ambiguous heritage of this failure remains relevant to contemporary America.

The partisan battles in Washington during Reconstruction raised very basic questions, questions then focused around Southern readmission and emancipation. The struggle between Congress and the President for control over the process of readmission foreshadowed the subsequent political crises generated by conflicts between an expansive modern Presidency and the statutory powers of the legislative branch.

Reconstruction also produced America's first truly national political scandals, especially the *Crédit Mobilier* and the Whiskey Ring episodes. These scandals forced the country to wrestle with the conflict arising when certain practices condoned in the world of business were transferred to the arena of public trust. And, lastly, Reconstruction raised the question of how far the government would go in the resolution of racial inequality in America.

Confusion and conflict marred the nation's post-Civil War years. What renders Reconstruction such an enigma is the pervasive sense that somehow American society bungled the process of national reconciliation. So complete was the Northern military victory in 1865 that the way seemed clear to make good on Abraham Lincoln's promise, in his second inaugural, of reunification "with malice toward none and charity toward all." Yet malice proved to be the stock in trade of many Reconstruction politicians, and charity is difficult to discern amid the fury

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of Ku Klux Klan violence. Far from generating a national political consensus, Reconstruction was marked by confusing discontinuities as first Lincoln, then Andrew Johnson, then the Radical Republicans, and then Ulysses S. Grant and Rutherford B. Hayes took turns directing and misdirecting Washington's efforts to cope with the ebb and flow of the intertwined national and local struggles over readmission and emancipation.

We normally think of Reconstruction as beginning with the end of the Civil War. However, the political struggles of the postwar period make no sense whatsoever unless viewed as part of a sustained debate whose roots lay in the war itself. Both emancipation and readmission influenced the conduct of the Civil War. Indeed, much of the postwar bickering between the President and Congress must be understood as an attempt to resolve questions raised during the war but left unresolved at its conclusion.

The Spoils of War

The struggle between Lincoln and some of the Republicans in Congress for control over the readmission process opened almost as soon as the war began. In July 1861, a sharp debate arose over a proposal by Illinois Republican Senator Lyman Trumbull that would have given Congress the right to control military governments established in areas recaptured from the Confederacy. The battle over emancipation followed a similar course. The prominent New York abolitionist Lewis Tappan, for example, published a pamphlet on May 14, 1861 that insisted, "Slavery is the cause of the present war . . . What then is the remedy? . . . Immediate Universal Emancipation."

Thus, pressure from antislavery radicals to transform Lincoln's struggle to save the Union into a war against slavery went hand in hand with congressional insistence that the legislature ought to control readmission of the rebel states. Paralleling the military struggle to win the Civil War were a series of disputes about how best to conduct it and how to get the most from the hoped-for victory.

The wartime argument within the ruling Republican Party over the readmission question turned upon the theoretical issue of how to describe the process of secession. Radicals such as Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts and Representative Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania argued that secession ought to be viewed as "state suicide," while Lincoln insisted that secession was the result of treasonous political leadership. Beneath these semantic differences lay the substance of their dis-

pute. For if the state suicide theory prevailed, then Articles I and IV* of the Constitution gave Congress the obligation to establish the terms upon which these former states could be re-created. But if the treasonous leadership concept was accepted, then all a president had to do was use his power as commander in chief to punish the traitors and restore civil order. Having done so, he could then empower loyal Union men to revive the state and restore it to its former status.

By recognizing a phantom government headed by Francis H. Pierpont at Wheeling as the legitimate government of Virginia, Lincoln actually began presidential Reconstruction in June 1861. This regime had no power. However, Lincoln hoped that the Northern army would install Pierpont as Virginia's governor as soon as Richmond fell. But the Confederacy blocked this plan by clinging stubbornly to its national capital. In the end, Lincoln found himself compelled in late 1862 to accept the creation by Congress of a new state, West Virginia, which was carved out of Virginia's territory. Pierpont was replaced. The new state clearly owed its legitimacy to congressional action and not to presidential dispensation.

Lincoln's inability to coerce Congress on the readmission question dogged his wartime Reconstruction efforts. He could and did appoint military governors to manage civil affairs in states conquered by the Union army. However, he could not compel Congress to accept representatives elected by these governments. And as long as Congress refused to accept these representatives, the states would continue to be excluded from the federal government.

The Price of Readmission

The process of wartime presidential Reconstruction went furthest in Louisiana because the Union army managed to capture the state's capital at Baton Rouge as well as its major commercial center, New Orleans. In Louisiana, representatives elected in 1863 were actually seated by Congress.

Heartened by apparent congressional acquiescence, Lincoln proceeded in December 1863 to promulgate his famous 10 percent amnesty plan, a plan that offered readmission whenever a number of voters equal to 10 percent of the state's vote in the

* Article I, Section 5—"Each House shall be the judge of the elections, returns and qualifications of its own members. . . ." Article IV, Section 3—"New States may be admitted by the Congress into this Union; but no new State shall be formed or erected within the jurisdiction of any other State; nor any State be formed by the junction of two or more States, or parts of States, without the consent of the Legislatures of the States concerned as well as of the Congress."

1860 presidential election took the oath of allegiance. Congress responded early in 1864, first by refusing to continue accepting Louisiana's delegation, and second by enacting its own plan for Reconstruction, a version embodied in the Wade-Davis bill. Because Lincoln's renomination was by no means a certainty in the critical summer of 1864, the President chose to sidestep the issue. He blocked the Wade-Davis bill by pocket veto on July 7 and then issued a proclamation on July 8, 1865 that offered the seceded states the option of seeking readmission under his 10 percent plan or under the more stringent requirements of Wade-Davis.*

Emancipation also followed a zigzag course. But while he acted boldly on the readmission question from the outset, on the emancipation issue Lincoln evinced a marked inclination to wait and see.† Kenneth Stampp offers the most cogent summary of the new perspective on the evolution of Lincoln's emancipation policy: "If it was Lincoln's destiny to go down in history as the great Emancipator, rarely has a man embraced his destiny with greater reluctance than he."¹

Lincoln moved toward emancipation when it became clear that freeing the Confederacy's slaves—and thus depriving the South of its black labor force—was the only means available to turn the balance of the Civil War decisively in the North's favor. Lincoln's Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, recorded the first public utterance of the President's change of mind on July 13, 1862. While riding in a funeral procession, Welles recalled, Lincoln mused about emancipation: "He had given it much thought and had about come to the conclusion that it was a military necessity absolutely essential for the salvation of the Union, that we must free the slaves or be ourselves subdued. . . ."²

The President's reservations about his power to free the slaves show clearly in his Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation of September 22, 1862. Emancipation, as Lincoln proclaimed it, did not affect slaves in states that had not seceded, such as Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri, nor did it

* The Wade-Davis bill provided that each Confederate state was to be ruled temporarily by a military governor who was to supervise the enrollment of white male citizens. A majority of the enrolled electorate, rather than merely 10 percent, was required to take an "ironclad" oath of allegiance before a legal state government could be reconstituted.

† In the course of his debates with Stephen Douglas in 1858, Lincoln asserted, "I am not, nor have ever been, in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races." The President applied these beliefs during the Civil War when he urged a group of black leaders meeting at the White House in August 1862 to leave the United States if they wanted to achieve equality. "Go where you are treated the best," Lincoln advised.

apply to slaves in areas conquered by the Northern army prior to September 1862, such as Tennessee and southern Louisiana. (Freedom for these slaves had to await either state action or ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment in December 1865.)

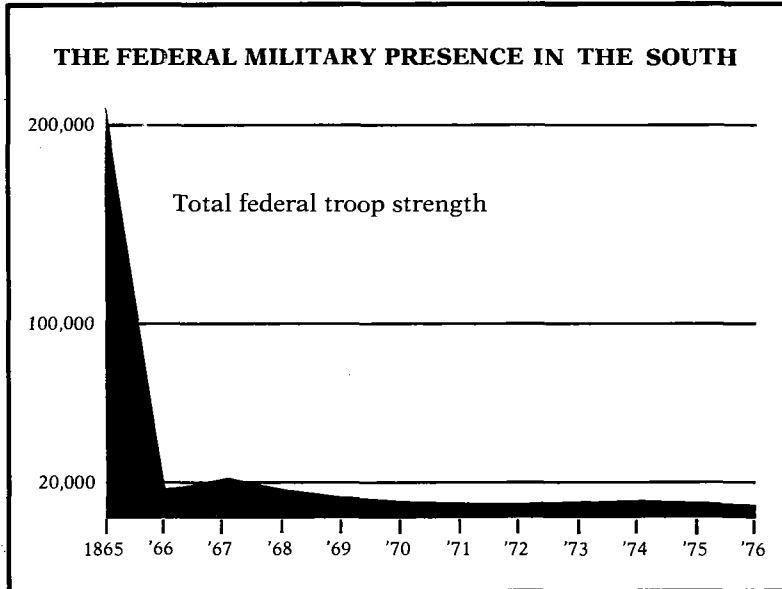
What Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation actually offered was a powerful inducement for slaves to run away from their masters. As we shall see, the threat of a slave exodus proved critically important for the course of Reconstruction. But the tentative nature of Lincoln's strategy toward emancipation reflected his sense that the prospect of freeing the slaves raised fundamental political questions in the North.

Speaking in Washington in February 1862, Senator Trumbull expressed the perspective that most Northerners took on the question of wartime emancipation. Trumbull demanded to know what plans were being made to cope with the newly freed blacks if emancipation ever came about: "We do not want them set free to come among us; we know it is wrong that the rebels should have the benefit of their services to fight us; but what do you propose to do with them?"³

Popular resistance to resettlement of the freed blacks outside the South found expression in a series of wartime race riots, most prominently the 1863 Copperhead draft riots in New York, Detroit, and Chicago, sparked largely by the reluctance of new Irish and German immigrants to be conscripted for a war of emancipation. What these riots told Northern politicians was very clear: Readmission was a national political question but the social consequences of emancipation would ultimately have to be resolved within the former slave states.

As slaves became aware of the promise of freedom contained in Lincoln's emancipation policy, they ran away from their plantations whenever Northern troops drew near. Because much of the Union army tended to move by water—as in the Sea Island, South Carolina, Fort Henry, and Vicksburg campaigns—its advances brought it into close proximity with the largest plantation regions in the South. Slaveholders in such areas had little choice if they expected to retain their human property; either they had to move or watch most of their slaves flee. Plantation abandonment made short-term sense. But by leaving vacant much of the richest land in the South, such as the 20-mile swath along the Mississippi River from Memphis to New Orleans, the exodus of planters and slaves created an opportunity for significant land redistribution in the postwar period.

Such redistribution became the heart of the earliest Radical Republican plan for coping with emancipation. Senator Sumner wrote in March 1865, "We must see that the freedmen are estab-



Source: James E. Sefton, *The United States Army and Reconstruction, 1865-1877* (La. State Univ., 1967).

To uphold Reconstruction laws, federal troops remained in the South for a decade: 20,117 of them in 1867, but only 6,011 in 1876.

lished on the soil and that they may become proprietors. From the beginning I have regarded confiscation only as ancillary to emancipation."⁴ By giving the freed people small plots of land upon which they could support themselves, Radicals felt they would remove any inducement to a massive migration of land-hungry blacks out of the South. These plans were embodied in the Freedmen's Bureau bill passed by Congress and signed into law by Lincoln on March 3, 1865, a month before Appomattox. Although the agency created by this law came to be known as the Freedmen's Bureau, its actual title was the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands.

The bureau was designed as a general welfare agency whose basic purpose was to assist in the reconstruction of the South. It was empowered to take control of property abandoned during the war and to distribute it in 40-acre parcels to poor whites and poor blacks. The inclusion of "refugees," that is, poor whites, stemmed from the Northern Democrats' refusal to allow the bill to pass until it did as much for whites as it promised to do for blacks; it seemed unfair to give land only to blacks when many

whites were both impoverished and landless. And indeed, in many states, the Freedmen's Bureau actually fed more poor whites than former slaves during the lean summer of 1865.

Neither poor whites nor poor blacks were ever likely to benefit permanently from the bill because Lincoln insisted as early as 1861 that no federal confiscation act could remove the actual title to the land from the heirs of the former owners. Thus, the bill provided for the lease of abandoned land to blacks and whites for only four years, after which time the government would sell the lessees "whatever title it can convey."

Political Plotting

Later, the Radicals renewed the legislative battle for permanent land confiscation and distribution. They failed in their efforts to make this part of the First Reconstruction Act passed on March 2, 1867. By the time the Second Reconstruction Act was enacted on March 23, 1867, land distribution was a dead issue. It was a keen disappointment to Senator Sumner who, during the debates on the Reconstruction bills, insisted that Reconstruction "would be incomplete unless in some way we secured to the freedmen a piece of land."⁵

All in all, a tangled situation greeted Andrew Johnson as he embarked upon his Presidency. In the aftermath of Lincoln's assassination on April 14, 1865, the Republican Party found itself in the anomalous position of having a former Southern Democrat as its titular head. Johnson had been a senator from Tennessee and had served during the war as the state's military governor. Lincoln selected Johnson as his running mate in 1864 to broaden the base of support for his *ad hoc* National Union Party. After the assassination, Johnson recognized that he had no real future in the Republican Party; he used his powers during the earliest stages of presidential Reconstruction trying to build a national conservative coalition that he could lead.

But Johnson faced politicians who had postwar goals of their own. Northern Democrats, led by Representative Samuel Cox of Ohio, looked with horror upon Republican success at exploiting the wartime crisis to push through most of its prewar high-tariff, pro-industry economic program as embodied in the Morrill Tariffs, the Homestead Acts and railroad land grants.*

*The Morrill Tariff, enacted March 2, 1861, ended a period of low duties by imposing an import tax of 10 percent on specific items. There was a gradual rise in duties to an average of 47 percent by 1870. The Homestead Act of May 20, 1862 granted a 160-acre parcel of public land to any settler who would reside on it for five years and pay a small fee. The railroad land grants gave generous portions of public land to railroads as inducements to extend the rail system.

Democratic hopes for the future lay in speedily reviving their Southern wing so as to forestall further Republican political gains.

Moderate Republicans, like Senator John Sherman of Ohio, wanted to perpetuate their party's rule while using Reconstruction to guarantee the inviolability of the Union. Their plan was to create a Republican Party in the South at the local level to garner black votes and to ease the task of electing a Republican president. Radical Republicans shared Sherman's goals of political power and national unity and hoped to implement them by effecting the removal of those ante-bellum Southern leaders thought responsible for starting the war. Realizing the delicacy of their position, Southern Democrats, led by former Governor Herschel Johnson of Georgia, fought a masterful holding action, hoping that delays in Washington and in the South would prevent the imposition of truly radical changes on the structure of Southern society. Thus, the immediate postwar period produced conflicting visions about how the process of reunification ought to be accomplished. That the Radical Republicans triumphed for a time suggests how tangled and confused these politics actually became.

Presidential Power Plays

With Congress in adjournment from April through December 1865, President Andrew Johnson had an opportunity in the early months after Lincoln's death to exert great influence upon the outcome of these disputes. During that summer, Johnson used his presidential pardon and amnesty powers to relieve Southern landowners from the civil disabilities (*e.g.* loss of the right to vote and to hold public office) contemplated in the Freedmen's Bureau bill while simultaneously asserting the President's power to supervise the process of readmission. In his Amnesty and North Carolina proclamations, both issued on May 19, 1865, Johnson set out to complete Lincoln's program.

By pardoning thousands of former Confederates, Johnson not only gave them back their land—scotching any redistribution plans—but also allowed them to re-enter politics in their states during the crucial autumn and fall elections in 1865, elections that determined the entire slate of state officers and congressional representatives. Thus Johnson hoped to establish conservative (Democratic) governments headed by men who owed their positions to him. But Johnson could not control what the Southerners did with the power he gave them. In every former Confederate state except Tennessee and Texas, the pro-

visional governments held elections that put numerous former Confederate officials—men like the Confederacy's former Vice President, Alexander Stephens—in high state and national posts.

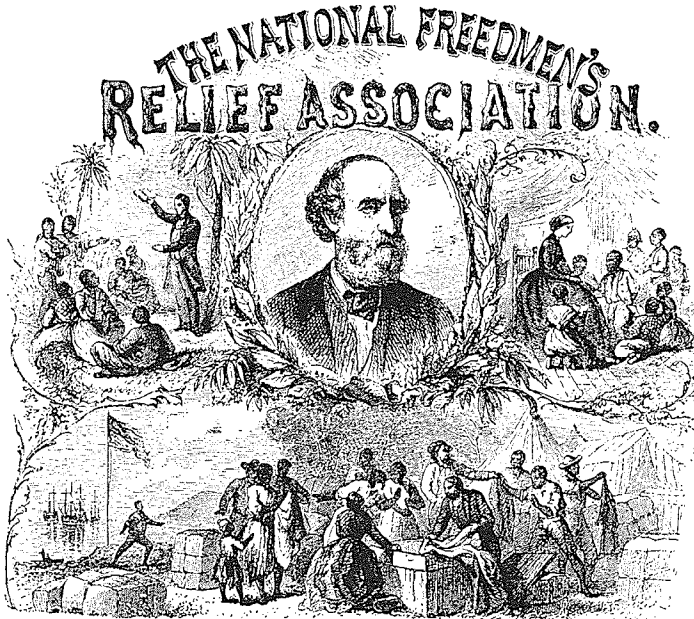
During this same critical period of 1865, the reconstituted Southern state legislatures took their turn at coping with emancipation. In South Carolina, the legislature declared as vagrants any blacks found without regular employment; it then decreed that blacks could not leave the premises without their "master's" permission; and finally, it barred blacks from any non-agricultural jobs or the skilled trades without special permission from a local judge. As a group, these laws, which came to be known as the "black codes," had the effect of denying the recently freed former slaves most of their basic citizenship rights. The blacks could neither vote nor serve on juries and they were subject to vagrancy laws designed to control the labor force by restricting blacks' movements.

Southern Self-Determination

By propelling so many former Confederates into high offices and by enacting what many Northerners considered to be oppressive black codes, Johnson's provisional governments provided ammunition for the President's Radical adversaries. Johnson temporized on the black codes, refusing to condemn them, perhaps because he felt that "white men should determine the way of life that was to be led in the Southern states." When the commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, General O. O. Howard, issued decrees in the fall of 1865 that invalidated the Mississippi and South Carolina black codes, Johnson responded to Southern protests by observing that, "none of the (codes) should be nullified except by courts of law."

Johnson's complicity in the attempt to deny civil rights to former slaves allowed congressional Radicals to brand him a Southern sympathizer. In addition, Johnson played into the Radicals' hands by making ill-tempered personal attacks on their leaders. During a celebration of Washington's Birthday on February 22, 1866, the President delivered an off-the-cuff speech attacking his congressional opponents. When challenged to give the names of the men he said were as guilty of treason as the Confederacy's leaders, Johnson replied, "A gentleman calls for their names. Well, I suppose I should give them . . . I say Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania—I say Charles Sumner of Massachusetts—I say Wendell Phillips of Massachusetts."⁶

Having decided to fight the Radicals rather than com-



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The National Freedmen's Relief Association, privately organized in 1862 to help freed slaves, was the precursor of the Freedmen's Bureau.

promise with them, Johnson achieved some initial successes with his vetoes of a bill to strengthen and extend the life of the Freedmen's Bureau in February 1866 and of a civil rights bill in March 1866. But the tide turned quickly. The hasty actions of the governments Johnson created in the South—such as passage of the black codes—and Johnson's own misreading of the national political temper combined to force moderate Republicans, like Senator John Sherman of Ohio, into the Radical camp; it soon became clear that there was no alternative between support for Johnson's apparently pro-Confederate policies and support for the Radicals, who at least remained loyal to the Union.

Johnson looked to the November 1866 congressional elections for popular vindication. Unfortunately for him, during the spring and summer of 1866, race riots erupted in Memphis and New Orleans, riots initiated by Southern whites enraged at what they considered disrespectful conduct by former slaves. The riots added to the North's growing conviction that former

Confederates would not accept the war's results. Although Johnson embarked upon an energetic "swing around the circle" through New England and the Midwest trying to stem the tide, Republicans swept all before them in the fall elections, winning two-thirds majorities in both houses of Congress.

Taking this victory as a mandate for radical action, Congress passed four Reconstruction acts between March 1867 and July 1868. These laws embodied the state suicide theory against which Lincoln had struggled for so long. Former states were to be treated as territories, complete with military governors under the control of Congress. The former states had to adopt new constitutions in order to qualify for readmission at Congress's discretion. These constitutions had to allow all adult males to vote, blacks as well as whites; prominent former Confederates were barred from the conventions in which the new constitutions were drafted and the states had to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment as a condition for readmission.

The Futility of Impeachment

Passage of the Reconstruction acts marked the height of the Radical Republicans' power but they, in turn, soon squandered this influence in a futile effort to remove Andrew Johnson from the Presidency. Many congressional Radicals viewed Johnson's conduct of his office as verging on treason. For example, during an unsuccessful effort in 1867 to have the House of Representatives impeach Johnson, the House Judiciary Committee accused the President of trying to reconstruct the "Rebel states in accordance with his own will, in the interests of the great criminals who carried them into rebellion." This effort failed, in large measure because the Judiciary Committee could find no impeachable offense.

The Radicals tried again and in February 1868 they succeeded in getting the House to vote for Johnson's impeachment. During the Senate trial, Sumner and Stevens exerted tremendous personal, political, and moral pressure to achieve Johnson's conviction and removal and they came within a razor's edge of achieving their goal. The Senate's vote on each of the 11 articles of impeachment was 35 for to 19 against, just one vote short of the required two-thirds majority.

This episode was a turning point of the whole Reconstruction story: the failure to oust Johnson served to shatter the Radicals' political power. Neither Stevens nor Sumner ever recovered his former influence. Grant's nomination and election as President in the 1868 campaign signalled the end of effective

BLACK SOLDIERS AND RECONSTRUCTION

Nearly 180,000 black soldiers (including 100 commissioned officers) fought for the Union during the Civil War. Several thousand of these veterans were stationed in the South as part of the occupation forces during the first year of Reconstruction. Some Southern historians—among them, E. Merton Coulter in *The South During Reconstruction, 1865-1877* (1947)—have maintained that black occupation soldiers “ravished white women” and exerted a “vicious influence.” Such assertions reflect the bias of the Southern interpretation; the black soldiers, more than three-quarters of them former slaves, were generally better disciplined than white soldiers.

To placate Southern whites during the pre-radical phase of Reconstruction (1865-66), the army quietly withdrew its black troops from the South in 1866. By this time nearly all of the black (and white) soldiers in the great Civil War volunteer army had been demobilized. Most black veterans returned to their Southern homes. There, some of them joined the state militia regiments—some black and some racially mixed—formed by Republican governors, notably in South Carolina, Louisiana and Mississippi, to protect freedmen and Republicans against Ku Klux Klan violence. In most of the armed clashes between the militia and white paramilitary groups, the whites were victorious.

Although Southern historians have often blamed the black militia for provoking racial bitterness and violence, the truth was more nearly the reverse. As in the case of the black Union soldiers, it was not the militia's behavior but its very existence that inflamed white hatred. Armed black men in uniform were the most frightening symbol to whites of the racial revolution of the late 1860s and therefore attracted the most concentrated counter-revolutionary violence.

—James M. McPherson

Radical control in Congress as a group of moderate conservative Republicans led by John Sherman seized the reins of power. Ironically, the Radicals lost national power just at the point when their Reconstruction program was being put into effect in the former Confederate states. They were forced to watch from the sidelines as the more conservative Grant administration temporized and delayed implementing a Radical program with which it disagreed.

This Radical plan for Reconstruction looked toward creating new political alignments in the South. Only in South Caro-

lina and Louisiana were black voters likely to be able to sustain a majority position. Thus, in the rest of the former Confederacy, Radicals sought to fashion a biracial coalition of poor whites and poor blacks, with some assistance from wealthy former Whigs such as Mississippi's James Alcorn. As improbable as it may sound, these alliances worked for a time during 1867–68, especially in Mississippi. The constitutional conventions mandated by the Reconstruction acts proceeded to modernize archaic Southern state constitutions. They updated the criminal codes, chiefly by effecting a sharp reduction in the number of capital crimes. The conventions also established a whole range of social services unknown in pre-Civil War times, such as state-supported public schools and institutions for the care of the retarded. Indeed, the brief Reconstruction-era alliances of poor whites and poor blacks brought about major changes in the laws of every former Confederate state before the white counter-revolution began.

The wealthy slaveholding group which led the South into the war did not need to be told that this newly forged Republican coalition had the potential to remain in power simply because it represented a majority of the voters. Predictably, these ante-bellum leaders reacted bitterly to every Radical move. For example, during the summer of 1866, the *Memphis Avalanche*, a conservative newspaper, protested sharply when it discovered that the Freedmen's Bureau intended to continue the policy of maintaining schools for former slaves. By the fall of 1865, these Bureau schools were offering blacks in Memphis formal instruction in basic literacy; hundreds of freed people, from children to the very elderly, seized this new opportunity. The *Avalanche* disapproved of federal interference in what it considered local social matters, and was especially indignant about schools that taught "Ethiopian wretches to play the piano."

Ending Republican Rule

Similarly, the Republican plan for biracial coalitions among the poor found itself a target for conservative criticism. In August 1868, the Raleigh, North Carolina *Daily Sentinel* quoted the former chief justice of the state's supreme court as saying he had joined the Republican party in order to put "an end to that alliance between the negro and the lower class white which is the other side of the Republican coin." In short, Radical Reconstruction confronted the South's white political leadership with a serious threat to its survival. Responding to the threat, this leadership used whatever means seemed necessary

to terminate Republican rule.

These means varied greatly from state to state. In Virginia, conservatives led by Alexander H. H. Stuart were able peacefully to delay action on the 1868 constitution until they could dominate the election that ensued in 1870. As a result, although Gilbert Walker, the first governor selected under the new constitution, was a Republican, he owed his position to conservative influence; Walker pursued a course so mild that Virginia is generally regarded as having escaped congressional Reconstruction. In Mississippi, on the other hand, conservative whites endured Republican control from 1867 through 1875. In 1876, these conservatives employed racial demagoguery, terrorism, fraud, bribery, and corruption to remove the Republican government. Conservatives threatened to kill any white man caught engaging in Republican political activity, and they warned that blacks who voted Republican would never find employment. Where threats failed, violence was used; indeed, the Democratic slogan in 1875 was, "Carry the election peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must." Yet, in South Carolina, Democrats were unable to oust the Republicans until the 1876 presidential campaign. By removing federal troops in 1877, President Hayes permitted local conservatives to complete the destruction of South Carolina's Republican Party.

The Redeemers

Among the most persistent of Reconstruction myths are those which seek to justify the tactics employed by the self-styled "Redeemers" as they struggled to "rescue" the South from Republican control. By depicting the Republican state governments as being wastefully corrupt regimes dominated by ignorant former slaves acting as dupes for vicious scalawags and greedy carpetbaggers, the Redeemers, who were mostly wealthy former slaveowners, tried to justify their use of extralegal means. Myths die hard, particularly when they appeal to regional or racial pride.

Corruption certainly existed in Reconstruction state governments, as in the fraudulent misappropriation of Florida railroad bonds in the 1870s. But these governments also created public schools across the South, a region that possessed none before the Civil War. And the Redeemers, themselves, did not put an end to corruption (though they did cut back the public schools severely).

We ought not to allow ideology to confuse our perceptions of what actually occurred during Reconstruction. A large number

of poor men, black and white, found themselves in positions of real political power for the first time. Mistakes were made but there were solid achievements as well. Given the contemporary background of national political corruption, the Tweed Ring in New York City, and the *Crédit Mobilier* and Whiskey Ring scandals in Washington, D.C., the corruption of Reconstruction state governments was small potatoes indeed.

The End of Reconstruction

Reconstruction ended as it began, amid bitter partisan conflict and confusion. In the November 7, 1876 balloting for President, Samuel J. Tilden, the Democratic nominee, received 184 of the 185 electoral college votes needed to win. Rutherford B. Hayes, the Republican, received only 165. But there were 20 disputed electoral votes in four states that held the balance—South Carolina, Florida, Louisiana, and Oregon.

For Hayes to win, some method had to be found through which each of the 20 disputed votes could be awarded to him. A deal was struck between Southern Democrats willing to abandon their party's nominee and Hayes's representatives. As it happened, South Carolina, Florida, and Louisiana were the last states in which garrisons of federal troops were still nominally active in overseeing civil affairs. Southerners knew that Tilden intended to remove these troops. But they sided with Hayes in return for concessions and promises, including the U.S. Postmaster Generalship and federal assistance for Southern internal improvements—such as repairing Civil War damage to river levees and providing federal subsidies for the Southern Pacific Railroad.

No one would argue that Reconstruction offers noble examples of how democracy ought to operate. The corruption of the Grant era followed hard on the heels of Radical moral idealism, when this idealism spent its force during the futile effort to remove Andrew Johnson from the Presidency. The Grant era was marked by a Southern strategy that practiced benign neglect as far as enforcing Radical Reconstruction. Indeed, so alienated did the Radicals become that they supported Horace Greeley's liberal Republican revolt against Grant's conservatism; Greeley ran an unsuccessful campaign for the Presidency on a national fusion ticket with the Democrats. Grant defeated Greeley in 1872, running on a platform that restated his 1868 campaign slogan, "Let us have Peace." Thus, Grant's two victories reflected a national yearning for a period of normalcy after the tumult of Civil War and Radical Reconstruction.

Grant's status quo attitude on civil rights enforcement mirrored the country's reversion to a laissez faire ideology; one saw the reassertion of the ideal that each person ought to take care of himself, with the government assuming as small a role as possible in the resolution of social problems.

History seldom repeats itself and never in precisely the same context. But there are uncanny parallels between the Civil Rights Era out of which we are emerging and the Reconstruction period. In the cases of both Andrew Johnson and Richard Nixon, the President who followed an often unpopular wartime leader found himself beset by congressional furies intent upon reasserting the power of the legislative branch, even if this required removing him from office. In both instances, a period of explicit national commitment to the cause of civil rights was followed by a conscious drawing back as new administrations refused to push vigorously for the enforcement of laws with which they disagreed. And in both instances, these more conservative administrations generated major political scandals, scandals that touched the Presidency itself.

Historian C. Vann Woodward put it best when he argued that the first Reconstruction willed a legacy of ambiguity to our time. It is a legacy seen in the continuing struggle to integrate blacks fully into American society and to enable them to share fully in the fruits of that society; a struggle to give further substance to the American dream of equal opportunity.

1. Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Era of Reconstruction: 1865-1877*, New York: Knopf, 1965, p. 44.
2. *The Diary of Gideon Welles*, Cambridge: Houghton-Mifflin, 1911, Vol. 1, p. 71.
3. *Congressional Globe*, 37th Congress, 2nd Session, 1862, p. 2301.
4. James M. McPherson, *The Struggle for Equality: Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964, p. 408.
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FROM LORDS TO LANDLORDS

by James L. Roark

By April 1865, the Southern planters' dreams of perpetuating slavery in an independent republic had vanished. Secession had cost the South a quarter of a million men dead and nearly \$3 billion in slave property when three and a half million black laborers were freed. As some Southern anti-Secessionists had prophesied, the Civil War ended in the destruction of the "peculiar institution" it was intended to make secure.

Before Appomattox, the planters had identified the South's entire society and culture with slavery. When they came home from the war, economic survival required that they grapple with emancipation at its most immediate and practical level—as the loss of their labor system. If we assume that ownership of 20 or more slaves constituted membership in the "planter class," then some 43,000 previously well-to-do Southern white families, heavily dependent on slavery and the plantation system, were threatened in 1865 with economic extinction.

Before the war, slavery had led to the rapid concentration of land and wealth. The Southern countryside was dominated economically by great slave plantations. Plantation staples—cotton, sugar, rice, tobacco, and hemp—were produced for the market rather than for home consumption. Cotton was clearly king. In 1860, cotton employed more than three-fourths of all the slaves engaged in agriculture. The crop that year reached nearly 4 million bales (valued at \$250 million), two-thirds of which were exported, making up the major portion of the world's supply.

During and after Reconstruction, the primary goal of the planters was the economic recovery of plantation agriculture, with some new form of black labor. The problem for the planters was not just economic. The war-stricken South's transformation from a slave economy to a free labor economy represented a

psychologically shattering loss of power for the planter—a shift from being lord to being landlord. Although planters' daily lives continued to revolve around cotton culture, black labor, and the plantation, they knew they had passed "from that Old World to this New One, through the war-Storm."¹

The first summer of peace found most members of the planter class back on their plantations, face to face with what one of them called the "emancipation trials." A few planters had emigrated—some to Northern cities and the rich farmlands of the West, others to Europe and Latin America (from whence most returned within a few years)—but a majority stayed, not because they wanted to but because they felt they had no alternative. "I am obliged to try," wrote Georgia planter John Dobbins to a friend in January 1866, as he returned to his cotton fields, "for I have no other way to make money."²

A willingness to return to the fields did not mean that they had changed their view of society. Where attitudes toward slavery and blacks, Southern agriculture, and Southern civilization were concerned, the planters ended the war much as they had begun it.

Reinventing Slavery

"Nothing could overcome this rooted idea," a visiting Northern journalist, Whitelaw Reid, noted in the summer of 1865, "that the negro was worthless, except under the lash."³ Slavery may have been destroyed, but planters remained convinced that blacks were innately and immutably inferior, that without total subordination they were dangerous and destructive, and that without coercion they would not work.

Without slavery, the *Charleston Mercury* had asserted in January 1865, the South would become a "most magnificent jungle." Emancipation would mean that "our great productions, cotton, rice, and sugar . . . must quickly be swept away." It was "absurd to suppose that the African will work under a system of voluntary labor . . . the labor of the negro must be compulsory—he must be a slave."⁴

Emancipation, therefore, confronted planters with a problem their deepest convictions told them was impossible to resolve—the management of large plantations employing free black labor. But even as they equated successful plantations with slavery, the gentry could not acquiesce in the final decline of their holdings just because the old labor system was gone. Preservation of their estates had dictated the planters' behavior for generations, and most were resilient enough in 1865 to make

yet another effort.*

What planters believed they needed to ensure satisfactory black performance was a comprehensive labor law shaped to fit their needs. Consequently, in late 1865, several Southern states began devising a new labor system under so-called Black Codes. Officially, the aim of the codes was to "guard [blacks] and the States against any evils that may arise from their sudden emancipation." But the immediate effect was to channel blacks back to the plantations, and once there, to coerce them into working.

The codes differed from state to state, but they clearly defined a new system of involuntary servitude. In some cases, the codes made it illegal for blacks to own land or to work except as field labor and in domestic service. Loosely drawn vagrancy statutes made it possible for police to round up unemployed blacks in time of labor shortages. Planters would then post bond, bail the blacks out of jail, and "allow" them to work off their debts at wage rates of a few pennies per day.

Radical Republican Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts saw the codes as a blatant attempt at "semi-peonage."⁵ The planters thought they were absolutely necessary, for in the behavior of blacks lay the key to the future of the South.

Resurrection of the old plantation system required the continuation of white supervision, work gangs, task systems, clustered cabins, and minimal personal freedom. But members of the planter class were no longer able to organize and operate plantations as they wished. Congress, through the Fourteenth Amendment, legally disallowed the Black Codes by forbidding the states to pass discriminatory legislation against the rights of any citizens, even as the Army and the Freedmen's Bureau rendered null the harsh provisions of some codes by not permitting them to be carried out.

*Emancipation caused some planters to overcome their traditional fear of foreign immigrants, and there were organized efforts to attract white immigrant labor to the South. Few chose to come and these few did not relish plantation work. In 1866, John Floyd King brought about 100 German immigrants from New York City to work on plantations along the Mississippi River. Within weeks, 35 had fled.

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Before everything else, the freed slave wanted land of his own as a material base with which to support his legal freedom. Although lacking well-developed political power, blacks were determined to remove all vestiges of slavery, and they expected the federal government to supply them with the means. If they could not share the land in 1865, they wanted at least to share in decisions about how they would farm the land. They wanted the right to decide whether or not to work their children in the fields. They wanted to be rid of gang labor which, under slavery, had meant dawn-to-dusk plowing or hoeing on assigned amounts of acreage under constant white supervision.

Wholesome Compulsion

Like the planters, however, the federal government was eager to keep freedmen working on plantations. There, the blacks would be fed, clothed, productively employed, and off the federal relief rolls. General Oliver Otis Howard, commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, cheerily remarked apropos of labor contracts for blacks that "wholesome compulsion eventuated in larger independence."⁶ Building upon a contract labor system developed during the war in some areas occupied by Union forces (parts of Virginia and the Carolinas, Louisiana, and the Mississippi Valley), the Freedmen's Bureau launched a campaign to bind ex-slaves and ex-masters by legal contracts.

Planters entered into these contracts in 1865 with little confidence that the agreements would solve their labor problems. But in reality, the contracts were largely favorable to the planters, and Bureau agents saw to it that blacks signed and fulfilled contracts to work on plantations. Federal encouragement took many forms—patient explanations, tirades, whippings, even hanging by the thumbs. The recalcitrant were sometimes made to work on government road gangs or threatened with denial of government food rations.

But Federal troops, and more importantly, the new Freedmen's Bureau, stood guard against re-enslavement. The Bureau was ready to protect freedmen from the planter's whip and it sought to make sure that the planters also lived up to the contracts; planters were ordered to provide whatever food, clothing, shelter, medical care, if any, was called for in the contract, as well as to pay the stipulated cash wages or shares of the crop.

The minority of planters that could put the psychology of the master-slave relationship behind them soon recognized that Bureau enforcement of contracts meant the restoration of planter control, perhaps even plantation prosperity. During the

early years of Reconstruction, however, a majority of planters regarded the contracts as humiliating symbols of their lost power and of the transformation of blacks from slaves to freedmen. Instead of treating the black as chattel, the planter now was compelled to sign a contract with him as an equal.

Frustrated Hopes

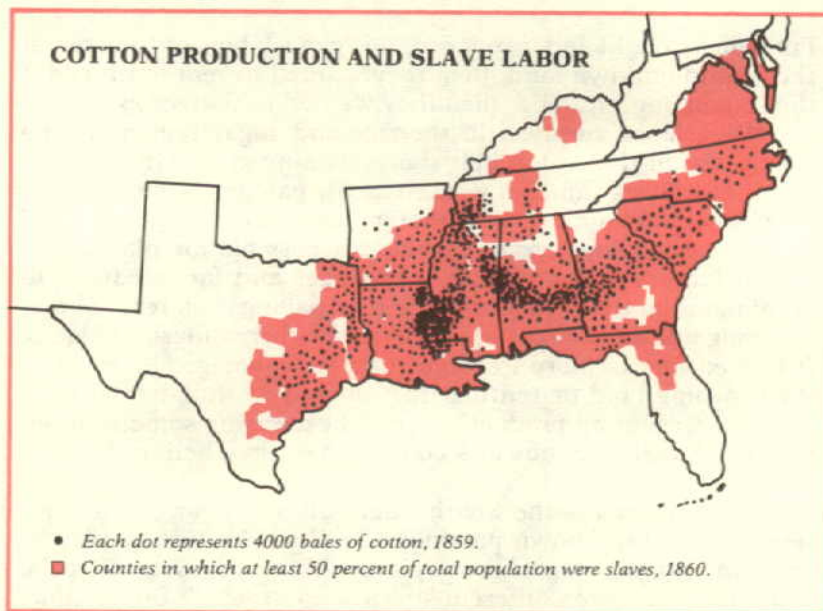
Nor were the freedmen satisfied. Although a series of Reconstruction measures was eventually enacted by Congress, the new laws fell short of buttressing the freedom of ex-slaves with the economic security of land ownership. During the War, Northerners had struck a blow at property rights—the rights of slaveholders to their slave property. But during Reconstruction, despite the pleas of some Northern radical Republicans for a revolution in Southern landholding, Congress refused to strike a second blow by permanently confiscating plantations and redistributing land to freedmen. Congress had decided to maintain the system of large landholdings in the South rather than replace it with a system of small yeoman farms.

Why? The Republican-controlled Congresses of the immediate postwar years were not primarily worried about the well-being of Southern aristocrats. They were more concerned with upholding property rights. They were determined to restore the Union and feared that expropriation of white-owned land in the South would be highly divisive and a permanent obstacle to binding up the nation's wounds. They feared social and racial turmoil in the South and were anxious to restore agricultural production, particularly of cotton, which made up 60 percent of American exports in 1860.

In short, the victorious Northerners blocked the conflicting plans and hopes of both white and black Southerners for agricultural reorganization. There was to be neither pseudo-slavery under the Black Codes nor the black man's hope of "40 acres and a mule." Northern policy demanded adjustments from both former masters and former slaves, but it did no more than sketch the broadest outlines of the economic system that would replace slavery.

Thus, the South's new economic system was developed not in Washington but on the plantations. Battle lines were formed in thousands of separate plantations. On one side stood an army of formerly enslaved agricultural workers, on the other a smaller but more powerful force of landlords. Landowners without laborers confronted laborers without land.

"All the traditions and habits of both races had been sud-



Adapted from *Historical Atlas of the United States* (Holt, 1944) and *Historical Geography of the United States* (Greenwood, 1932).

The population of the South in 1860 totaled 10,800,000, of which almost 4 million were slaves heavily concentrated in a rich cotton belt that produced more than 5 million bales in 1859.

denly overthrown," Joseph B. Killebrew, a Tennessee planter recalled, "and neither knew just what to do, or how to accommodate themselves to the new situation."⁷ Even so, planters and freedmen set about experimenting with new arrangements, moving ahead by trial and error, hoping to find a system that worked. Planters were determined to keep their plantations from breaking up, and almost no one would sell land to blacks. Many whites even refused to rent, arguing that renting to Negroes was "very injurious to the best interests of the community."⁸

During the first two years after the war, many planters were successful in retaining slave-style gang labor, paying blacks either wages or shares of the crop. Some landowners adopted the practice of paying shares because they were short of cash with which to pay wages and because they hoped that workers with an interest in the outcome of the crop would be a steadier, more industrious labor force.

Although the share system was widespread, it was unstable.

Freedmen sought independence, not gang labor and shares. If they could not own land, then they wanted to rent land, and if they could not rent land, then they wanted to sharecrop.*

Wage labor survived in the rice and sugar regions of the South, but in the cotton belt sharecropping gradually came to dominate. Black families worked small patches of land owned by whites, and landlord and laborers divided the crop at the end of the season. Sharecropping made it possible for planters to obtain labor without paying cash wages and for freedmen to obtain land to till without buying it or paying cash rent. Sharecropping was a compromise, satisfying neither whites nor blacks. It offered blacks more freedom than the labor gangs, but less than owning land or renting it; it offered white landowners a means of resuming production and of exercising some supervision of black labor, but less control than they believed necessary.

For a few years the South's agricultural arrangements resembled its well-known patchwork quilts. "On twenty plantations around me," an Arkansas planter observed a year after the war, "there were ten different styles of contracts."⁹ But in time, a degree of uniformity appeared in the cotton South. Thus, sharecropping, originally intended as simply a temporary expedient, a makeshift arrangement spawned by a lack of cash and credit and the breakdown of the labor system, was fastened on the region. Once established, it varied little until well into the 20th century.

Seedy Remnants

Under the sharecropping system, cotton production revived, attaining prewar levels in the late 1870s. In time, whites accepted the fact that slavery was not indispensable after all for growing cotton. Planters did not necessarily praise the new labor arrangements, however. Virginian George W. Munford complained in 1870 that "the sharing system is a shearing system."¹⁰ In this instance it was the planter who felt "sheared." Remembering their former wealth, power, and status, the Southern planter aristocracy found that sharecropping in times of falling cotton prices meant economic decline for most, disaster for some.

William Alexander Percy, born in Mississippi in 1885, described the post-Reconstruction generation: "There was no em-

*Working for shares and sharecropping were not the same. The former allowed for gang labor and plantation discipline. The latter meant independent family labor on rented farms, the rent being paid by a specified share of the crop going to the landlord.

battled aristocracy, for the descendants of the old-timers were already a rather seedy remnant, and there was no wealth. White folks and colored folks—that's what we were—and some of us were nice and some weren't."¹¹

War and the Boll Weevil

In many ways, however, the South remained what it was when the Civil War began, a region with a highly inequitable distribution of land. Plantations not only survived, but, as a 1910 census revealed, actually increased in size and remained the most important units of agricultural production in the South.

Small farmers throughout the United States were finding it increasingly difficult to hold onto their lands (for example, there was a 35 percent rate of tenancy in the Midwest by 1900), but the small Southern landowner faced the added problems of wartime destruction: postwar tax laws that represented a shift from personal property taxes to land taxation, and a slide in land values that meant a loss of collateral with which to secure credit. On top of these came problems caused by poor growing conditions in 1866 and 1867, a decline in cotton prices, and, in the late 19th century, the ravages of the boll weevil.

Without being given land and without cash wages, blacks found it difficult to become landowners in the first place. In 1910, only about 20 percent of black agricultural workers in the South owned the land they farmed. But the problems faced by all small farmers meant that by the 1930s two out of every three tenant farmers in the South were white.

Yet, the survival of the large plantation did not necessarily mean the survival of the ante-bellum planters. The transfer of land titles by court order, mortgage foreclosures, and the sale of plantations after the war left many properties intact but dispossessed their ante-bellum owners. How many is impossible to say. A recent study of five black-belt counties in Alabama reveals that only 43 percent of the elite planters who were there in 1860 remained in 1870.¹² An enormous though still unquantified number of plantations changed hands in the decades after the war.

James Gregorie, for example, was a cotton planter in coastal South Carolina who found himself in desperate circumstances in 1867. He sought and found operating capital from Charles Rose, a New York financier. Rose loaned him \$15,000 that year, and Gregorie resumed planting. His next crop was a complete failure. Unable to pay even the interest on the loan, he appealed

THE SOUTH'S POSTWAR DEPRESSION

Because local banks were either unable or unwilling to extend credit, crucial financial functions devolved upon country merchants, thousands of whom arose in the rural South to supply provisions to millions of black and white tenants in exchange for a lien on their share of the cotton crop. Exercising a monopoly in their local areas, they were able to demand that their customers grow only cotton, an easily marketed commodity. When it came time to settle up at the end of the season, the tenant was likely to find that he had fallen even further into debt. Tenants were more severely injured, but planters, judged by their income, the value of their lands, and the productivity of their farms, also found the new economic system permanently damaging.

Poverty became the South's most distinguishing characteristic. Its monopolistic credit system prevented economic diversification, and in 1900 the South's share of the nation's manufacturing output was smaller than it had been in 1860. Its inefficient system of agricultural production (and the unwillingness of freedmen to work like slaves) meant that in 1900 its agricultural output per member of the rural population was only three-quarters of that achieved under slavery. Its reliance on a single agricultural crop, at the moment when the world price for cotton was declining precipitously, meant that the South's per capita income at the turn of the century was only about half that of the North—less than it had been on the eve of the war.

for more money. Again Rose responded.

For six seasons, Gregorie met disaster and six times the New Yorker bailed him out. Each year—just as a rich crop of sea-island cotton was about to ripen—rain, drought, or caterpillars destroyed it. In 1873, after thousands of dollars had been invested and not a penny returned, Rose foreclosed and Gregorie lost his plantation.

Lands such as Gregorie's were often acquired by the rising merchant and industrial class of Southern cities, by banks, by rural merchants, and by wealthy Northerners who would continue planting with the services of a resident manager or perhaps let the land go back to bush and use it as a hunting preserve, the fate of many rice plantations along the Carolina coast.

Few of those prewar planters who managed to hold on were able to restore their plantations' prosperity or former organizational structure. By 1880, the internal fragmentation of the cot-

ton plantation into an assemblage of small tenant farms was almost complete. Measured either by the size of the cultivated unit or by the persistence of gang labor, fewer than 1 percent of all farms in the cotton belt bore any resemblance to ante-bellum plantations.¹³

The arrangements eventually made between landlords and laborers on Southern plantations were more than mere parochial agreements made in an economic context. Collectively, they provided the answer to the question that was at the heart of Reconstruction—the place of blacks in Southern society. In March 1864, during debate on a land-reform bill (which, if it had passed, would have confiscated the lands of disloyal planters and redistributed them in 40-acre plots), Republican Congressman George W. Julian of Indiana asked, “Of what avail would be an act of Congress totally abolishing slavery, or an amendment of the Constitution forever prohibiting it if the old agricultural basis of aristocratic power shall remain?”¹⁴

No Happy Ending

Throughout the Reconstruction period and afterward, planters and plantations continued to dominate the rural landscape in the South. In place of the master-slave relationship, white Southerners developed sharecropping and liens, segregation and militant white supremacy. Whites regained control of state government, and blacks remained at the bottom of the economic and social ladder.

As the major landholders in an agricultural society, planters continued to wield considerable power, but slavery had perished, and with it much that had characterized the ante-bellum South. Accustomed as they were to mastery, planters felt crippled and frustrated. Plantations were reorganized, but prosperity remained elusive. Plantations survived, but plantation life was transformed. Enmeshed in an unyielding economic network, planters saw their prized independence slipping away. In the end, white Southerners of all classes joined hands to end Republican rule in the South, but the planter class was unable to regain unquestioned political dominance or halt the economic deterioration of Southern agriculture.

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THE DIMENSIONS OF CHANGE: THE FIRST AND SECOND RECONSTRUCTIONS

by James M. McPherson

Eight or nine years ago, during a classroom discussion of the federal government's retreat in the 1870s from its commitment to protect black civil and political rights in the South, a student offered a remark that remains etched in my memory. "This time," he said, "the story will be different." Having grown up during the civil-rights movement of the 1960s, his generation, he asserted, was "more enlightened" than its forebears and would make sure that no backsliding occurred. That attitude reflects many Americans' views of both the first and second Reconstructions.

The first Reconstruction is usually defined as the period from 1863 to 1877. It began with the Emancipation Proclamation, witnessed the conferring of equal rights to the freedmen as part of a program to restore the defeated Confederate states to the Union, and concluded with a compromise that resolved the disputed 1876 presidential election in exchange for the removal of federal troops from the South and the abandonment of the black man to his fate.

No such clear signposts mark the beginning or end of the second Reconstruction, defined as the federal effort to confront and eliminate racial discrimination in the mid-20th century. Indeed, many consider it to be still in progress; and no consensus exists on whether its beginnings should be dated from the famous report of Truman's Civil Rights Commission in 1947, the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* school desegregation decision in 1954, the Montgomery bus boycott led by Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1955, or from some other event.

Whatever dates one chooses, the parallels between the two Reconstructions are obvious and striking. President Kennedy's

eloquent support for civil-rights legislation came almost exactly a century after President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation; the Civil Rights Act of 1964 reinstated many provisions of the Civil Rights Acts of 1866 and 1875; Supreme Court decisions outlawing discrimination based on the Fourteenth Amendment occurred almost on the centennial of the passage and ratification of that Amendment in 1868; the Voting Rights Act of 1965 accomplished some of the same results as the Reconstruction Acts of 1867; and the election in recent years of a number of blacks to government positions recalls the years between 1868 and 1875 when hundreds of blacks were elected county officials, state legislators, lieutenant governors, congressmen, and United States senators. Yet, despite these parallels, the first Reconstruction is generally considered a failure and the second, so far at least, a success.

Scholars' evaluations of the first Reconstruction have varied over time. For a half century after 1900, the *dominant* interpretation reflected a Southern viewpoint. It portrayed Reconstruction as an era of fraud and repression imposed on the prostrate white South—with vengeful Northern radicals and rapacious carpetbaggers using ignorant black voters as dupes in an orgy of misgovernment and plunder.

The Progressive interpretation, which enjoyed a brief vogue in the 1930s, depicted federal Reconstruction policy as a cynical plot to protect Northern industrial capitalism from a resurgent, Southern-dominated Democratic Party. Puppet governments were set up in the South, it was argued, primarily to ensure continuing Republican control in Washington; and the Fourteenth Amendment, which declared that no state could deprive "any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law," was construed by Republican Congressional leaders as shielding businesses, notably the railroads, from state regulation.

The Marxist interpretation, also popular in the 1930s, described the radical Republicans of the 1860s as bourgeois revolutionaries who destroyed the Old South's feudal organization

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and replaced it with free, democratic, capitalist institutions in step with the world-historical march toward the ultimate triumph of socialism.

During the 1960s, the Liberal interpretation came to the fore as a product of the second Reconstruction. This analysis emphasized the parallels between civil-rights legislation of the 1960s and Reconstruction measures of the 1860s. Both, it was thought, sprang from a creative alliance between egalitarian activists and political pragmatists; both attempted to extend equal rights and opportunities to black people; and both achieved triumphs of justice over oppression, of democratic nationalism over reactionary regionalism.

All of these interpretations sprang from a common perception of the 1860s as a decade of revolutionary change. The foremost proponent of the Progressive view, Charles A. Beard, called the Civil War/Reconstruction period "the Second American Revolution" because it transformed the United States from a Southern-dominated agricultural country into a Northern-dominated industrial one. The Southern, Marxist, and Liberal interpretations emphasized the revolutionary changes in the status of black people. All four considered the 1870s a decade of reaction during which most of the race-related changes of the 1860s were wiped out.

The Compromise of 1877

By 1876, the Democratic Party had regained control of the House of Representatives and of all but three Southern states (Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina) and had come close to claiming the White House in the presidential election of that year. Although the Republican Rutherford B. Hayes was inaugurated in 1877, he gained the Presidency at the price of conceding "home rule" to the South, which meant the rule of Southern states by the white-supremacist Democratic Party. In the Progressives' opinion, this represented not so much a counter-revolution as a "return to normalcy" by which Northern capitalists, who had never really believed in racial equality, made their peace with the now friendly New South.

The Compromise of 1877 was seen by the Southern school as a triumph of decency and civilization over darkness and misrule. To the Marxists and Liberals, it meant a counterrevolutionary betrayal of the gains of the 1860s.

But a fifth interpretation, espoused by some historians in the late 1960s and early 1970s, maintains that there was no counterrevolution in the 1870s because there had never been a

true revolution in the first place. This neo-Progressive reading holds that, during and after the war, the policy of the Union Army and the Freedmen's Bureau toward the emancipated slaves was to ensure "stability and continuity rather than fundamental reform." A disciplined, tractable, cheap labor force rather than an independent, landowning yeomanry was the real goal of Reconstruction. The Republicans who freed the slaves were themselves infected with racism. Their biases limited their vision of the Freedmen's place in the new order, undercut the effectiveness of Reconstruction legislation (whose revolutionary potential was largely an unwanted by-product of attempts to strengthen the Republican party), and predestined the quick and easy retreat in the 1870s from the limited gains of the 1860s. In the words of John S. Rosenberg, a pioneer neo-Progressive, the Civil War was "a tragedy unjustified by its results. . . . What little progress Negroes have been allowed to achieve has occurred almost exclusively in the past fifteen years."¹

Reading History Backwards

Apart from its failure to acknowledge that much recent progress has been based on constitutional amendments and legislation passed during the first Reconstruction, this argument suffers from faulty logic and empirical narrowness. It reads history backwards, measuring change over time from the point of arrival rather than the point of departure.

An increase of black literacy from about 10 percent in 1860 to 20 percent in 1870 and 30 percent in 1880 may appear minimal, even shameful—from the perspective of nearly 100 percent literacy today. But for the black people of the 19th century, long denied access to education while living in the midst of one of the world's most literate populations, the sudden opportunity to learn to read and write, however limited, represented radical change. In 1860, only 2 percent of the black children in the United States attended school; by 1880, the proportion had grown to 34 percent. During the same period, the proportion of white children in school rose only slightly, from 60 to 62 percent. In no other period of American history did either the absolute or relative rate of black literacy increase so much.²

If one turns from education to political and economic developments, the same radical changes appear. In 1866, only one-half of 1 percent of American black adult males could vote. Yet in 1870, with the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment, all one million of them possessed the franchise, and at least 700,000 voted in the 1872 presidential election.

The Civil War and emancipation also accomplished the most sudden and vast redistribution of wealth in American history. Three billion dollars worth of capital were transferred from slaveholders to former slaves, who—by now owning themselves—possessed the human capital once the property of their masters. A recent study by economists Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch has attempted to calculate the economic benefits of emancipation for blacks. It concludes that the immediate benefits were dramatic. Under slavery, the slave received in the form of food, shelter, and clothing only 22 percent of the output he produced. With freedom this jumped to 56 percent. Another recent analysis by economist Robert Higgs describes even greater economic progress for blacks after emancipation. Between 1867 and 1900, according to Higgs, the per capita income of black people increased about 140 percent, a growth rate one-third greater than the increase of white per capita income during the same period.³

In the matter of landownership, a vital measure of wealth in an agricultural society, the picture at first glance appears bleak. In 1880, nearly a third of the blacks employed in Southern agriculture were laborers owning no property. Of the remaining two-thirds, classified in the census as farm operators, only 20 percent owned their land. At the same time, two-thirds of the white farm operators owned their land, and the average value of white-owned farms was more than double that of farms owned by blacks. Negroes were unquestionably at the bottom of the economic ladder.

An Uphill Struggle

Yet viewed another way, the 20 percent who owned their farms in 1880 represented an extraordinary increase from 1865, when scarcely any blacks owned land in the South. And while black farmers were progressing from almost nothing to 20 percent landownership, the proportion of white farm operators who owned their land was declining from about 75 percent at the end of the war to 66 percent in 1880.⁴

The point here is not that Reconstruction was a golden age in black history. Of course it was not. Despite educational gains, most blacks were still illiterate. Despite voting and holding office, they did not achieve political power commensurate with their numbers (although in South Carolina they did constitute a majority of elected officeholders from 1868 to 1876, something never again matched by blacks in any American state). And despite economic gains, most blacks were sharecroppers and wage

laborers, victims of a ruthless credit system in the poorest sector of the American economy. They were also the victims of violence and intimidation practiced by the Ku Klux Klan, the White League, and similar organizations.

Southern whites of the 1860s knew that they were living through a revolution, even if some modern scholars do not. "The events of the last five years have produced an entire revolution in the entire Southern country," declared the *Memphis Argus* in 1865. It was the "maddest, most infamous revolution in history," said an editorial in a South Carolina newspaper in 1867. Black spokesmen made the same point in reverse. "The good time which has so long been coming is at hand," said one. "We are on the *advance*," declared another.⁵ Black leaders were aware that the revolution was incomplete, and modern scholars who point out the inadequacies of the Reconstruction are of course correct. But to conclude that there were no "fundamental changes," that "the new birth of freedom never occurred" is a mistake that those who lived through these events did not make.

Not all the gains of Reconstruction were eliminated immediately after the troops pulled out in 1877. The full-scale disfranchisement and legalized segregation of blacks in the South occurred in the 1890s and 1900s when a new generation of Southern whites came to power—not immediately after the withdrawal of federal troops. Negroes continued to vote in substantial numbers in most Southern states until the 1890s, and their turnout actually exceeded that of whites in some state elections during the 1880s. The Republican party, predominantly a black party in the South, garnered some 40 percent of the Southern vote in the three presidential elections of that decade.

Black men continued to be elected to Southern state legislatures *after* Reconstruction: 67 in North Carolina from 1876 to 1894; 47 in South Carolina from 1878 to 1902; 49 in Mississippi from 1878 to 1890; and similar numbers elsewhere. Every U.S. Congress but one from 1869 to 1901 had at least one black congressman from the South.

Black literacy improved steadily, from 30 percent in 1880 to 55 percent in 1900 to nearly 90 percent by 1940. In the economic sphere, the quantum leap of black per capita income may have leveled off by 1880. But by 1910, 25 percent of black farm operators in the South owned their farms, while the percentage of white owners had declined to 60 percent.⁶

What about the second Reconstruction? Have the 1970s been free of regression from the gains of the 1960s?

Consider the matters of income and employment. Between

THE BLACK OFFICEHOLDERS IN DIXIE

Several hundred black men were elected as state legislators and state officials during Reconstruction. Hundreds more—no one knows exactly how many—served in local or county offices. Most had been born slaves, but some were free-born, and a substantial number had been educated in the North.

Francis L. Cardozo, who was South Carolina's secretary of state for four years and state treasurer for another four, had attended the University of Glasgow and theological schools in Edinburgh and London. Jonathan Gibbs, secretary of state in Florida, was an 1852 graduate of Dartmouth College.

Of the 22 black men elected to the U.S. Congress—20 to the House (five of them after 1876) and 2 to the Senate (in 1870 and 1875), 10 had attended college, and all but four had gone to secondary school. This record compares well with that of white congressmen of that era.

Indeed, one black Northern-born congressman, Robert B. Elliott, was educated at Eton in England, studied law in London, and after the war moved to South Carolina, where he owned one of the finest law libraries in the state.

One of South Carolina's slave-born congressmen, Robert Smalls, achieved fame in 1862 when he took the Confederate dispatch-boat *Planter*, of which he was assistant pilot, out of Charleston harbor and turned it over to the Union navy; Smalls became a pilot and an honorary captain.

Two of the slave-born congressmen, James T. Rapier of Alabama and John M. Langston of Virginia, were the illegitimate sons of their white owners, who freed them and provided them unusual opportunities, including education in the North or abroad. In sum, the black congressmen and state officials were for the most part reasonably talented, dedicated men who provided good leadership for their race against strong odds. And, although less able, the lower-echelon black officeholders merit greater respect than most historians have given them.

—J.M. McP.

1958 and 1970, the median income of black families, expressed as a percentage of median white income, increased from 49 to 61 percent. Since 1970, it has declined to about 58 percent. From 1965 to 1969, the median income in constant dollars of black families increased by 32 percent. But black income barely kept pace with inflation between 1969 and 1973, and since then there has been an actual decline in real median income.⁷

From the Korean War to the mid-1960s, the unemployment

rate among blacks averaged slightly more than twice the white rate. This ratio began to decline in the late 1960s, reaching a low of 1.8 to 1 in the early 1970s. But in the last three years it has climbed again and in the final quarter of 1977 stood at a ratio of 2.3 to 1, a historic postwar high.⁸

The Compromise of the 1970s

Of course the total economic picture for blacks is not all bad. There have been significant gains in the percentage of blacks holding professional, white collar, and skilled-labor jobs. But even here the rate of gain has slowed in recent years. It seems impossible to argue that the economic improvement of the black population, measured by the degree of change, has been greater in the second Reconstruction than in the first.

Well then, what about school integration? The first Reconstruction produced nothing to match it, for outside of a few pockets—New Orleans, the University of South Carolina, and Berea College—there were virtually no integrated schools in the South during the 19th century. One might speculate that the opening of schools of any kind to blacks in the first Reconstruction was a greater achievement than desegregation in the second. But let us assume that the integration of schools in the last 20 years has been an important accomplishment. I would then insist that the much discussed “white flight” from the urban public school systems constitutes a major retreat from the goals of the second Reconstruction. If the withdrawal of troops from the South was the Compromise of 1877, the withdrawal of whites from integrated public schools is the Compromise of the 1970s.

From 1972 to 1975, some 40,000 white students left the Atlanta public schools, creating a student population now nearly 90 percent black (up from 56 percent in 1972). Public schools in Baltimore, Detroit, Newark, New Orleans, St. Louis, Chicago, and Philadelphia are 70 to 85 percent nonwhite. In three years (1973–76), half the white students vanished from the Memphis public schools, and the system went from 50 percent white to 75 percent black. More than 100,000 white students have disappeared from the Los Angeles public schools in the past six years, and the school population is now only 33 percent Anglo-Caucasian, compared with 45 percent in 1970–71.⁹ At the time of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954, only one of the nation’s 20 largest cities, Washington, D.C., had a white minority in its public schools; today whites are a minority in the schools of 18 of the country’s 20 largest cities.

Private schools have been the beneficiaries of white flight. Their enrollments tripled within three years in Memphis and doubled within five years in Charlotte, N.C., when these cities underwent court-ordered busing to achieve integration. While Pasadena's public schools have lost half their white students, its private schools are flourishing. The time is soon coming, probably within three years, when more white students in Pasadena will attend private schools than public schools. The whole state of California may eventually go the same way. The tradition and quality of public education is stronger there than in perhaps any other state. Students in California's public schools now outnumber those in private schools by more than 10 to 1. But if recent trends continue, white students in private schools will outnumber those in public schools within about 30 years.¹⁰

Benign Neglect

By 1877, prominent supporters of radical Reconstruction in the 1860s had come to the conclusion that the national government had tried to force too many changes too fast in the South. They called for a period of benign neglect in racial policy; they began to argue that "intractable" social problems could only work themselves out gradually, that big government and national "solutions" had failed. There is an uncanny similarity between the rhetoric of lapsed liberals of that day and their "neoconservative" counterparts today. One of the latter wrote:

The basic lesson most of us have learned from the 1960s is that the great majority of the publicly funded programs then begun were utter fiascos. Without accomplishing anything for the poor, they enriched poverty-program bureaucrats. While crime was increasing, once-stable neighborhoods were being destroyed, schools became jungles, business left in disgust, and the middle class fled in despair.¹¹

With some changes in wording but not in spirit, this statement could have appeared a century ago in *Harper's Weekly*, *The Nation*, or in numerous other journals that spoke for Northerners disillusioned with the first Reconstruction.

I do not mean to suggest that we are about to witness an abandonment of the second Reconstruction or that the reaction of the 1890s will repeat itself in the 1990s. I *do* mean to suggest that an interpretation of the first Reconstruction that denies the occurrence of meaningful change and contrasts that era un-

favorably with our own is off the mark. It is true that white Americans a hundred years ago were less enlightened than we are today in matters of race, economics, and the role of government in social change. Black Americans were then mostly illiterate, propertyless, and still shackled by the psychological bonds of slavery. Given this disparity in knowledge and resources, it is remarkable that our ancestors accomplished so much—and we so little.

1. John S. Rosenberg, "Toward a New Civil War Revisionism," *American Scholar*, Spring 1969, pp. 266, 271.
2. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1975, pp. 370, 382.
3. Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1977, pp. 4-7; Robert Higgs, *Competition and Coercion: Blacks in the American Economy, 1865-1914*, Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1977, p. 102.
4. Ransom and Sutch; for landholding by whites in 1860, see Frank L. Owsley, *Plain Folk of the Old South*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949, Appendix, pp. 150-229.
5. *Memphis Argus*, quoted in Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1974, p. 110; a South Carolinian, quoted in Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877*, New York: Knopf, 1965, p. 170; black spokesmen, quoted in James H. McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1965, pp. 310, 311.
6. C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, New York: Oxford University Press, 3rd rev. ed., 1974, ch. 1-2; J. Morgan Kousser, *The Shaming of Southern Politics: Suffrage Restriction and the Establishment of the One-Party South, 1880-1910*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974, passim; *Historical Statistics of the United States*, pp. 382, 465.
7. Harry A. Ploski and Warren Marr, eds., *The Negro Almanac: A Reference Work on the Afro American*, New York: Bellwether Publishing Co., 3rd rev. ed., 1976, pp. 475, 480.
8. *Negro Almanac*, pp. 450, 452, 455; *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 5, Dec. 3, 1977, Jan. 12, 1978.
9. *Newsweek*, July 12, 1976, p. 76; *Time*, Sept. 15, 1975, p. 41, Sept. 12, 1977, p. 71; *U.S. News & World Report*, Sept. 13, 1976, pp. 31-32; *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 27, Nov. 30, 1977. The second "Coleman Report" (James S. Coleman, *Recent Trends in School Integrating*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1975) generated considerable controversy over the true extent of white flight and the reasons for it. Further data on the whole issue of busing and integration can be found in a report issued by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Fulfilling the Letter and Spirit of the Law: Desegregation of the Nation's Public Schools*, Washington: 1976.
10. *Time*, Sept. 15, 1975, p. 41; *U.S. News & World Report*, May 31, 1976, pp. 51-52; *Newsweek*, Nov. 1, 1976, p. 81; *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 28, 1977; information on Pasadena schools supplied by the Department of Research, Pasadena Unified School District.
11. Letter to the *New York Times*, quoted in "The Talk of the Town," *The New Yorker*, Aug. 8, 1977, pp. 16-17.



BACKGROUND BOOKS

RECONSTRUCTION

"Without the negro there would have been no Civil War. Granting a war fought for any other cause, the task for reconstruction would, without him, have been comparatively simple." So wrote Walter Lynwood Fleming in **THE SEQUEL OF APPOMATTOX: A Chronicle of the Reunion of the States** (Yale, 1919).

"With him, however," Fleming went on, "reconstruction meant more than the restoring of shattered resources; it meant the more or less successful attempt to obtain and secure for the freedman civil and political rights, and to improve his economic and social status. In 1861, the American negro was everywhere an inferior, and most of his race were slaves . . . in 1868 he was in the South the legal equal of the white even in certain social matters."

The historians of Reconstruction have a history of their own. Fleming's view, the classic Southern view, had already been enunciated in William A. Dunning's **RECONSTRUCTION, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC, 1865-1877** (Harper, 1907), and this scholarly perspective persisted into the 1940s. E. Merton Coulter's **THE SOUTH DURING RECONSTRUCTION** (La. State Univ., 1947, 1970) may be its last, best statement. Earlier, however, with the publication—and selection by the Literary Guild—of Claude G. Bowers' **THE TRAGIC ERA: The Revolution after Lincoln** (Houghton Mifflin, 1929, cloth; 1930, paper), the Southern view reached its widest audience.

To rebut Bowers' popular anti-Negro, antiradical, anticarpetbagger, antiscalawag book, black historian W. E. B. Du Bois six years later published his ground-breaking work, **BLACK RECONSTRUCTION** (Harcourt, 1935; Kraus reprint, 1976).

Du Bois's radically different—some thought alarmingly radical—interpretation garnered favorable reviews in the *New York Times*. Jonathan Daniels, then editor of the Raleigh (N.C.) *News and Observer*, wrote that *Black Reconstruction* had "far less narrative in it than argument" but was "well written throughout, with some passages approximating poetry" and called it "a corrective for much white history about a period in which the negro played a great part." The *New Yorker's* reviewer, in a pithy paragraph, noted that Du Bois "with great earnestness, sometimes rising to moving passion . . . takes the odd view, in distinction to most previous writers, that the Negro is a human being."

Today's reader may want only to know that the above books exist (all are still in print) before turning to more recent treatments of the period. One good survey to start with (its first chapter is a detailed discussion of the changing interpretations over the years) is **THE ERA OF RECONSTRUCTION, 1865-1877** by Kenneth M. Stampp (Knopf, 1965, cloth; Random, 1967, paper).

Another brief, readable account is **RECONSTRUCTION AFTER THE CIVIL WAR** (Univ. of Chicago, 1961, cloth; 1962, paper) by John Hope Franklin, the dean of black historians. Franklin's treatment is thorough and dispassionate.

THE CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION by James G. Randall and David Donald (Heath, 1969; Little, Brown, 1973) is a solid textbook, and there are other excellent specialized studies with a narrower focus that help to clarify broad Reconstruction issues.

The story of those dissident Southerners who opposed slavery, supported the Union, and became Republicans during

Reconstruction is vividly told in Carl N. Degler's **THE OTHER SOUTH: Southern Dissenters in the Nineteenth Century** (Harper, 1974, cloth; 1975, paper). Degler's memorable opening line: "This book is about losers."

The blacks of South Carolina's Sea Islands are the subject of **REHEARSAL FOR RECONSTRUCTION: The Port Royal Experiment** by Willie Lee Rose (Bobbs-Merrill, 1964; Oxford, 1976, cloth & paper). Federal forces occupied the Sea Islands in November 1861. Former slaves were recruited as Union soldiers, and the first extensive schools for blacks got under way; abandoned land was confiscated, and freedmen were given temporary title to it. Rose, an award-winning author, takes full advantage of what she calls "a rare opportunity to review the vast spectacle in miniature and see it in its germinal phases."

There were severe limits on the experiment. Congress was unwilling to commit itself to full black equality, and even though Sea Islands blacks fared better than their brothers elsewhere (many were able to retain small patches of land and in time became a kind of yeomanry), they discovered overall that "revolutions may go backward."

In **FROM CONTRABAND TO FREEDMAN: Federal Policy Toward Southern Blacks, 1861-1865** (Greenwood, 1973), Louis S. Gerteis contends that wartime federal policies in the South aimed mostly at mobilizing black laborers and soldiers and preventing violent change; these policies "did not create the necessary conditions for sweeping reforms" during the postwar years.

YANKEE STEPFATHER: General O. O. Howard and the Freedmen by William S. McFeely (Yale, 1968, cloth; Norton, 1970, paper) is one of those biographies that provides a better understanding of events and of institutions under stress through the experience of one individual.

McFeely argues that the flaws of the

newly reunited America—particularly its conservatism and racism—were mirrored in the Freedmen's Bureau itself, and most particularly in its commissioner, General Oliver Otis Howard (for whom Howard University is named). Although the commissioner began with the radical goal of obtaining land for blacks and assisting them in gaining employment and education, his on-the-job record was one of "naivete and misunderstanding, timidity, misplaced faith, disloyalty to subordinates who were loyal to the freedmen, and an attempt to diminish the Negroes' aspirations."

Another biography of the period, Eric McKittrick's **ANDREW JOHNSON AND RECONSTRUCTION** (Univ. of Chicago, 1960), is neither blindly hostile nor overly sympathetic toward the "accidental" President. McKittrick argues that Johnson's good intentions were undercut by the limitations of his own background.

Scholars frequently suggest certain novels as useful background reading on Reconstruction. One of these is Margaret Mitchell's perpetually popular **GONE WITH THE WIND** (Macmillan, 1936; most recent ed., Avon, 1976, paper), later made into a movie that still draws record crowds whenever it is revived. The romantic story of Scarlett O'Hara, says an academic enthusiast, is "probably as effective as any of the formal histories in getting at the essential truths of Reconstruction and its aftermath."

Another novel recommended by scholars is William Faulkner's **LIGHT IN AUGUST** (N.Y.: Smith & Haas, 1932; Random, 1967, cloth; 1972, paper). The Nobel laureate's portrayal of displaced Yoknapatawphans makes painfully real the South's outraged, enduring pride of place.

Out of Reconstruction and the plantation world that preceded it came "the New South"—in several successive guises, vividly described by succeeding generations of writers.

Wilbur J. Cash, a Southern journalist who came to maturity in the 1920s and '30s, saw his South as a place where white people were held together by a "proto-Dorian pride." In **THE MIND OF THE SOUTH** (Knopf, 1941, cloth; Random, 1960, paper), a sweeping interpretation of Southern intellectual history, he pictured Reconstruction as a successful attempt to destroy the old Southern world: "The land was stripped and bled white—made, indeed, a frontier once more, in that its people were once more without mastery of their environment and [had to] begin again from the beginning to build up social and economic order out of social and economic chaos."

C. Vann Woodward, the most widely respected of all contemporary white historians specializing in Reconstruction, has written many books about the political and social consequences of the failure of the Radicals. In **REUNION AND REACTION: The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction** (Little, Brown, 1951; rev. 1966, cloth & paper), he sorts out the tangled circumstances under which Rutherford B. Hayes managed to gain the Presidency in the disputed election of 1877. In **ORIGINS OF THE NEW**

SOUTH, 1877-1913 (La. State Univ., 1951; rev. 1972, cloth & paper), he describes in detail the process by which the South was, in effect, reduced to a colony. In a study that has had considerable influence, **THE STRANGE CAREER OF JIM CROW** (Oxford, 1955; 3rd rev. 1974, cloth & paper), he traces the evolution of American racial attitudes and practices from the first through the second Reconstructions.

Finally, in a volume of collected essays, **THE BURDEN OF SOUTHERN HISTORY** (La. State Univ., 1960), Woodward makes this observation: "Once Southern historians have purged their minds of rancor and awakened out of a narrow parochialism they should be in a singularly strategic position to teach their fellow countrymen something of the pitfalls of radical reconstruction: of the disfranchisement of old ruling classes and the indoctrination of liberated peoples. . . . They should at least have a special awareness of the ironic incongruities between moral purpose and pragmatic result, of the way in which laudable aims can be perverted to sordid purposes, and of the readiness with which high-minded ideals can be forgotten."

EDITOR'S NOTE. *The above titles are selected from a considerably larger number recommended by specialists on the Reconstruction period. Our advisers included the authors of the articles that this essay follows: Armstead L. Robinson, James L. Roark, and James M. McPherson, whose own useful books are mentioned in their biographies. Other scholars who furnished advice and comments are Wilson Center Fellow ('77) Harold D. Woodman, Purdue University, author of **KING COTTON AND HIS RETAINERS: Financing and Marketing the Cotton Crop of the South, 1800-1925** (Univ. of Ky., 1968), and Joel Williamson, now at the Center for Advanced Studies, Stanford University, and author of **AFTER SLAVERY: The Negro in South Carolina During Reconstruction** (Univ. of N.C., 1965, 1969, cloth; Norton, 1975, paper).*