

CHAPTER 15

RECONSTRUCTION AND THE NEW SOUTH

Chapter Summary

The military aspect of the American Civil War lasted less than five years and ended in April 1865, but it would take another dozen years of Reconstruction to determine what the results of the war would be. The only questions clearly settled by the time of Appomattox were that the nation was indivisible and that slavery must end. The nation faced other issues with far-reaching implications. What would be the place of the freedmen in Southern society? How would the rebellious states be brought back into their "proper relationship" with the Union? The victorious North was in a position to dominate the South, but Northern politicians were not united in either resolve or purpose. For over two years after the fighting stopped, there was no coherent Reconstruction policy. Congress and the president struggled with each other, and various factions in Congress had differing views on politics, race, and union. Congress finally won control and dominated the Reconstruction process until Southern resistance and Northern ambivalence led to the end of Reconstruction in 1877. Whites who reasserted their economic and political control set out to industrialize the region but with little success. The South remained a troubled agricultural sector. No economic, political, or social issue in the South could escape the race question. The Jim Crow system of the southern establishment succeeded in evading the spirit of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments and many African Americans began to wonder just who won the Civil War. Meanwhile the South continued its colonial relationship with the North and southern plain folk, black and white, found themselves trapped by crop liens in circumstances some felt were almost as bad as slavery

Objectives

A thorough study of Chapter 15 should enable the student to understand

1. The conditions in the former Confederacy after Appomattox that would have made any attempt at genuine Reconstruction most difficult.
2. The differences between the Conservative and Radical views on the Reconstruction process and the reasons for the eventual Radical domination.
3. The functioning of the impeachment process in the case of President Andrew Johnson and the significance of his acquittal for the future of Reconstruction.
4. Radical Reconstruction in practice and Southern (black and white) reaction to it.
5. The debate among historians concerning the nature of Reconstruction, its accomplishments, and its harmful effects on the South.
6. The national problems faced by President Ulysses S. Grant and the reasons for his lack of success as chief executive.
7. The diplomatic successes of the Johnson and Grant administrations and the role of the presidents in achieving them.
8. The greenback question and how it reflected postwar financial problems of the nation.
9. The alternatives that were available during the election of 1876 and the effects of the Compromise of 1877 on the South and on the nation.
10. The response of African Americans to conditions in the South following Reconstruction.
11. The reasons for the failure of the South to develop a strong industrial economy after Reconstruction.

12. The methods used in the South to regain control of its own affairs and the course of action it chose thereafter.
13. The ways in which Southerners decided to handle the race question and the origin of the system identified with "Jim Crow."
14. The typical pattern of Southern agriculture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the impact this had on the region and its people.
15. The debate among historians over the origins of segregation after the Civil War.

Main Themes

1. That the defeat and devastation of the South presented the nation with severe social, economic, and political problems.
2. How Radical Reconstruction changed the South but fell short of the full transformation needed to secure equality for the freedman.
3. That white society and the federal government lacked the will to enforce effectively most of the constitutional and legal guarantees acquired by blacks during Reconstruction.
4. How the policies of the Grant administration moved beyond Reconstruction matters to foreshadow issues of the late nineteenth century.
5. How white leaders reestablished economic and political control of the South and sought to modernize the region through industrialization.
6. How the race question continued to dominate southern life.

AP US History
Chapter 15 Questions
Assignment 1

Sources:

Textbook: pg. 401 to mid-pg. 409.

Questions:

1. What effects did the Civil War have on the economy and social system of the South?
2. What special problems did the freedmen face immediately after the war? What efforts were made to help them?
3. What were the competing notion of freedom that existed in the post-war South?
4. What political implications did the readmission of the Southern states pose for the Republicans?
5. What were the differences between the Conservative, Radical, and Moderate factions of the Republican Party during Reconstruction?
6. What were the objectives and provisions of Lincoln's plan for Reconstruction? How did the Radical Republicans respond to it?
7. Describe Andrew Johnson's approach to Reconstruction. How was it shaped by his political background and his personality?
8. What did the Southern state governments do during the "Presidential" Reconstruction of 1865 and 1866?
9. How did Congress respond to the Black Codes and other Southern state actions of 1865 and 1866?
10. What did the congressional elections of 1866 reveal about the public attitude toward Reconstruction?
11. Identify the basic provisions of the Congressional plan of Reconstruction of 1867. On what principle was it based?
12. What measures did the Radical Republicans take to keep President Johnson and the Supreme Court from interfering with their plans?
13. Why did Radical Republicans want to impeach President Johnson? Why did they fail?

**AP US History
Chapter 15 Questions
Assignment 2**

Sources:

Textbook: mid-pg. 409 to mid-pg. 414.

Questions:

1. What three groups constituted the Republican Party in the South during Reconstruction?
2. What role did blacks play in southern political life during Reconstruction?
3. What was the balance between corruption and positive accomplishments by the Reconstruction-era state governments in the South?
4. What patterns of Southern education began to emerge during Reconstruction?
5. What changes in land distribution occurred in the South after the Civil War?
6. How did the sharecropping system of labor assist Southern whites in reasserting control over black labor?
7. Why did the government's attempt to redistribute land to freedmen fail?
8. What economic advances did the freedmen make? How did the economic status of blacks compare with that of the average white Southerner?
9. How did the crop-lien system overshadow the economic gains made by blacks and poor whites?
10. How did freedom affect black family life?

**AP US History
Chapter 15 Questions
Assignment 3**

Sources:

Textbook: mid-pg. 414 to top of pg. 421.

Question:

1. How did Ulysses S. Grant's political accomplishments compare with his military ability?
2. What was President Grant's position on Reconstruction?
3. What were the scandals that came to light during the Grant Administration? What role did Grant play in these scandals?
4. People in what financial condition were most likely to favor expansion of the currency supply with greenbacks?
5. What was done about the "greenback" issue?
6. What were some of the diplomatic accomplishments of the Grant administration?
7. What tactics did white Southern Democrats use to restrict or control black suffrage?
8. Why did Northern Republicans begin to take less interest in Reconstruction and the cause of the freedmen after about 1870?
9. Why was the presidential election of 1876 disputed? How was the controversy resolved by the "Compromise of 1877?"
10. What was President Rutherford B. Hayes's objective in the South? How successful was he in meeting that objective?
11. Compare white and black expectations for Reconstruction with the actual results.
12. How have historians differed over the nature of Reconstruction? What part has the public played in this debate? Why is the era so controversial?

**AP US History
Chapter 15 Questions
Assignment 4**

Sources:

Textbook: top of pg. 421 to mid-pg. 425.

Questions:

1. What were the socio-economic and political characteristics of the "Redeemers" [Bourbons]?
2. How did the policies of the "Redeemer" governments compare with those of the Reconstruction-era administrations?
3. In what particular products was industrialization in the South most advanced? What factors attracted industrial capital to the region after the war?
4. How did industrialization in the South compare with that in the North?
5. Identify the composition of the industrial workforce in the South. What problems did the workers face?
6. What was the typical pattern of Southern agriculture in the late 19c and early 20c? What problems confronted most farmers?
7. How was the minstrel show both a testament to the high awareness of race and the high level of racism in American society before the Civil War?

**AP US History
Chapter 15 Questions
Assignment 5**

Sources:

Textbook: mid-pg. 425 - pg. 431; mid-pg. 583 to mid-pg. 584.

Questions:

1. Describe the rise of the black middle class. How widespread were economic gains by Southern blacks?
2. What was Booker T. Washington's prescription for black advancement? Why did many blacks feel that Washington favored a second-class citizenship?
3. How did W. E. B. DuBois's approach differ from that of Booker T. Washington?
4. How did the civil-rights cases of 1883 and Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) substantially negate the effect of the equal-protection clause of the 14th Amendment?
5. What strategies and legal devices did the Southern states use to evade the spirit of the 15th Amendment?
6. List several of the Jim Crow laws that appeared in Southern states during and immediately after Reconstruction.
7. What alternative paths of accommodation and resistance did black leaders propose to the rise of Jim Crow?
8. Explain how Southern whites used lynching to control the black population. How did some whites, both Northern and Southern, respond?
9. What role did Ida B. Wells play in response to the increased horror of lynchings?
10. How have historians attempted to explain the origins of segregation in America?
11. How have social and political developments in the United States influenced the debate over the origins of segregation?