

# Reconstruction



The ruins of the Richmond and Petersburg Railroad bridge in Richmond, Virginia

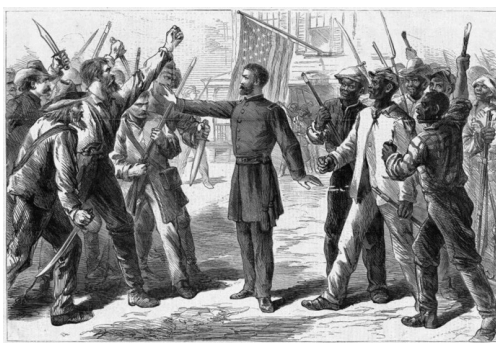
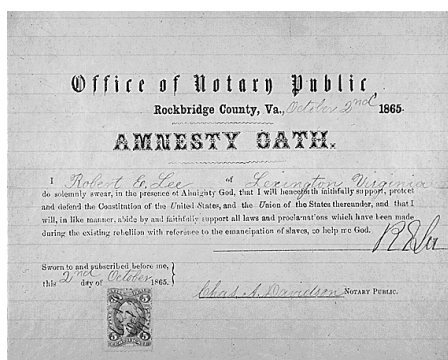


Richmond, Virginia



## Reconstruction

1865-1877; the rebuilding of America right after the Civil War



### Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction

Lincoln's plan: he wanted to restore the Union quickly and painlessly granted pardons to Confederates who would swear allegiance to the Union powerful Confederate officials and those accused of war crimes weren't included if 10% of of the voters registered in 1860 swore to follow the Constitution, that state can re-form their government and petition for reinstatement

### Wade-Davis

### Bill

### Radical Republicans

plan:

Northern politicians who wanted to punish former Confederates (especially slave owners) and give Southern blacks full citizenship Confederate states could form state governments as soon as a majority of those on the 1860 voting lists took an oath to uphold the Constitution would also have to swear that they never supported the Confederacy in any way

# Freedmen's Bureau



federal organization created to provide food, clothing, fuel, and advice on negotiating labor contracts to newly freed blacks

also attempted to oversee relations between freedmen and their former masters

authorized to sell confiscated Confederate land in portions of up to 40 acres per buyer

(a myth was that slaves had been promised 40 acres and a mule, but this is not so)

With the Freedmen's Bureau's help, the recently freed slaves began voting

*(700,000 blacks voted for Grant in the 1868 election and swayed the election in Grant's favor)*

Because the Bureau only provided help with labor, food, and housing,

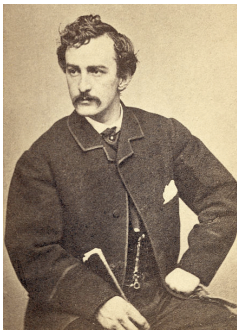
medical attention for the former slaves was severely lacking

unfortunately, the Bureau was unable to protect the slaves from the KKK, who terrorized freedmen for trying to vote, hold a political office, or own land

*fun fact: the Freedmen's Bureau was headed by Union Army General Oliver O. Howard, born in Leeds, Maine; he attended Monmouth Academy, North Yarmouth Academy, and Kents Hill School and graduated from Bowdoin College; graduated fourth in his class from the United States Military Academy and fought valiantly for the Union in the Civil War, losing his arm and earning the Medal of Honor*

# Lincoln is Assassinated

April 14, 1865



**John Wilkes**

Booth



"The Assassination of President Lincoln"

Currier & Ives print

*\*from left to right: Major Henry Rathbone, Clara Harris, Mary Todd Lincoln, Abraham Lincoln, and John Wilkes Booth*



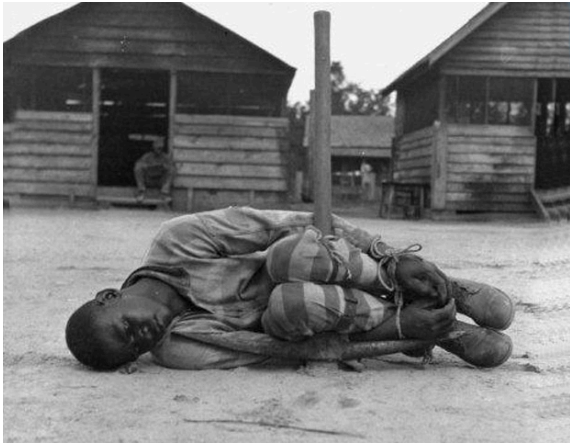
The private box in Ford's Theater, Washington, where President Lincoln was assassinated

President Lincoln on his death bed  
(from Harper's Weekly, May 6, 1865)





## Black Codes



### Jim Crow Laws

“twilight zone between slavery and freedom”

began right after the war ended

blacks *could* legally marry, own property, sue in court, and go to school

blacks *could not* serve on juries, carry weapons, testify against or

marry whites, or start their own businesses

they also had to obey curfews and needed permits to travel

many were unjustly arrested and placed in work camps, used for their labor



established a pattern of segregation in all public facilities

blacks and whites were separated in railway cars, schools, hospitals, restaurants, parks, playgrounds, water fountains, etc. began in 1870 and by 1890 existed throughout the entire South

## Sharecropping and Tenant Farming



“ tenant ” farmers own their own mules and equipment

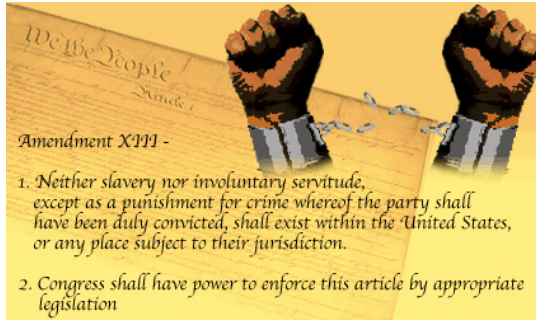
“ sharecroppers ” do not  
(*sharecroppers are poorer and of lower status*)

blacks and poor whites lived on the land and worked it, giving the owner a portion of the harvest in theory, they could save money and eventually rent the land from the owner or buy it outright (*this rarely happened*)

they grew cash crops = at the mercy of the market

after crops were shared and they paid their debts there was usually no money left

# Constitutional Assistance



## The Thirteenth Amendment

(ratified by December, 1865)

although slaves had been declared free by the **Emancipation Proclamation**

in 1863, it was only in

“areas in rebellion” against the Union

the 13th Amendment abolished **slavery** and “involuntary servitude” throughout the nation

## The Fourteenth Amendment

(passed by Congress June 13, 1866; ratified in 1868)

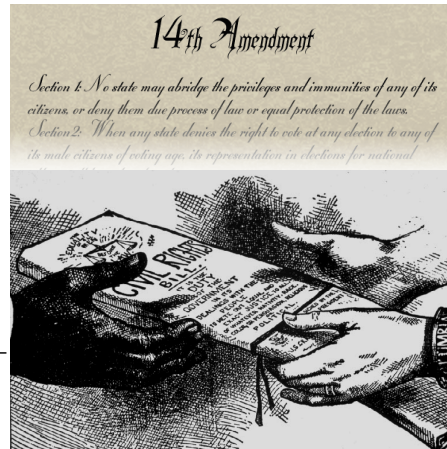
in 1866, Johnson vetoed a bill to provide black civil rights and one that would continue to fund the Freedmen’s Bureau

angry Radical Republicans overrode Johnson’s vetoes

drafted the 14th Amendment to take the place of the Civil Rights Bill (more permanent)

the 14th Amendment stated that all US citizens were entitled to **equal protection** under the law

*it also said that any state barring black people from voting would lose seats in Congress!*



# Voting Rights

**disenfranchisement**: to take the right to vote away from someone

at first, racist Southern whites didn’t want to take the right to vote away from blacks in poorer “white counties” they controlled the black vote

but then they started making it more and more difficult for blacks to vote

added a two year **residency requirement**: young blacks moved around

men convicted of certain crimes couldn’t vote

instituted the “**understanding clause**”: the prospective voter had to read and interpret a portion of the Constitution “understanding” was decided by a voting clerk (usually white)

instituted a “**grandfather clause**”: if your grandfather voted, then you could



instituted a **Poll Tax**: a yearly tax paid to vote and had to bring receipt with you

the “**Eight-Box Ballot Act** of 1882” (SC): separate boxes for each position illiterate voters couldn’t tell which box to use - boxes were even moved around!

## The Fourteenth Amendment

(ratified in 1870)

granted African American men the right to vote

*“the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude”*

(only fully realized when the Voting Rights Act was passed in 1965)





# Reconstruction Ends

focus began to shift from social to economic problems

South needed rebuilding and the North was tired of dealing with racial problems

Southern resentment for the North continued to build

## Scalawags :

white Southerners who worked with Northern businessmen and politicians considered traitors in the South



## Carpetbaggers :

Northerners who moved to the South after the war some teachers and ministers felt a moral duty to help some business people wanted to start new industries some were dishonest, stealing from the locals

*supposedly carried all their belongings in a bag made of carpet*

## Election of 1876

Republican - Hayes (northern support) v. Democrat - Tilden (southern support)

in some southern states both the Democrats and Republicans claimed victory

House set up an electoral commission of 8 Republicans and 7 Democrats the commission (by majority vote) gave all the disputed votes to Hayes (of course)

Southern states cried foul, but agreed to accept Hayes as the winner if:

> Southern states received funds for railroads, roads, bridges, etc.

> federal troops were withdrawn from the South

called the Compromise of 1877

Reconstruction is essentially over (especially for the blacks)

## Plessy v. Ferguson

(1896)



in 1892 Louisiana passed the Separate Car Act, legally segregating railroad cars

30-year-old Homer Plessy, an “octoroon” (1/8<sup>th</sup> black), sat in white section of a railroad car was was arrested

his case was appealed all the way to the Supreme Court

in 1896, the Supreme Court upheld the Louisiana segregation as constitutional

Justice Henry Brown wrote:

*“The object of the Fourteenth Amendment was undoubtedly to enforce the absolute equality of the two races before the law, but in the nature of things it could not have been intended to abolish distinctions based upon color, or to enforce social, as distinguished from political equality, or a commingling of the two races upon terms unsatisfactory to either.”*

the Plessy decision set the precedent that “separate” facilities for blacks and whites were constitutional as long as they were “equal”

the “separate but equal” doctrine was quickly extended to cover many areas of public life, such as restaurants, theaters, restrooms, and public schools

facilities for blacks, however, were always inferior to those for whites

not until the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education case would “separate but equal” be struck down