

Reconstruction



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

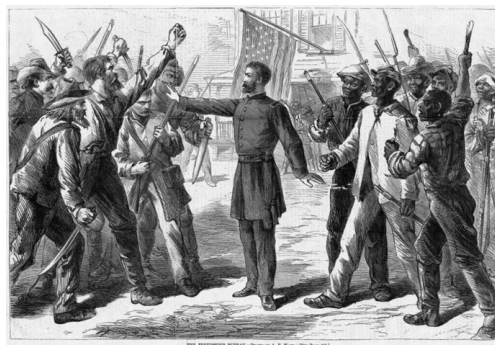
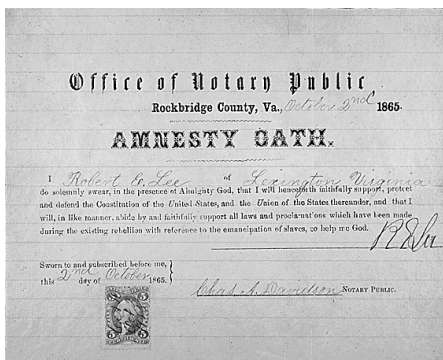


Richmond, Virginia



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

if **10%** 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:

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, education, and housing to newly freed blacks
also tried to help the freedmen and their former masters get along
they could sell Confederate land taken from slaveowners 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)

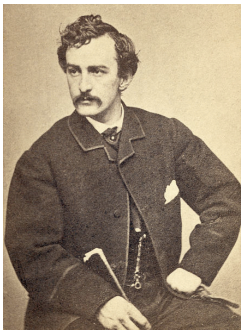
Because the Bureau only provided help with labor, food, and housing, medical attention for the former slaves was severely lacking

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 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*

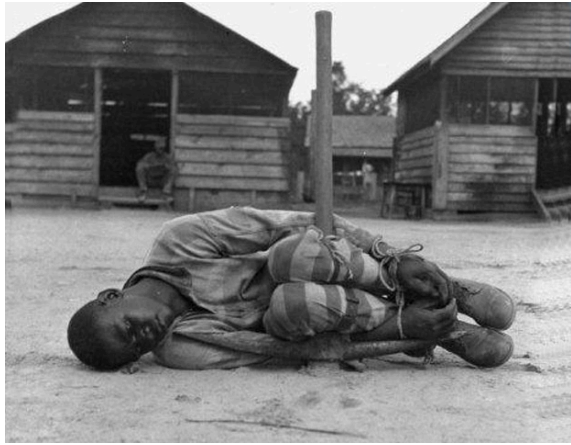


The private box in Ford's Theater, Washington, where President Lincoln was assassinated

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



Black Codes



Jim Crow Laws

“twilight zone between slavery and freedom”

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

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

or

marry whites

they also had to obey **curfews**

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



blacks and whites had full **segregation** in all public facilities, such as 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



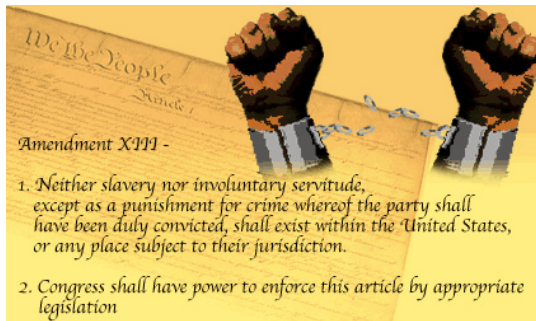
blacks and poor whites lived on the land and worked it, giving the owner a portion of the harvest in theory, they could save money and eventually rent the land from the owner or buy it outright *(this rarely happened)*

“ **tenant** ” farmers own their own mules and equipment

“ **sharecroppers** ” did not own their own supplies *(sharecroppers are poorer and of lower status)*

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

Constitutional Assistance



The Thirteenth Amendment

(ratified by December, 1865)

slaves in “areas in rebellion” against the Union
had been declared free by the

Emancipation Proclamation

this amendment abolished slavery
throughout the nation

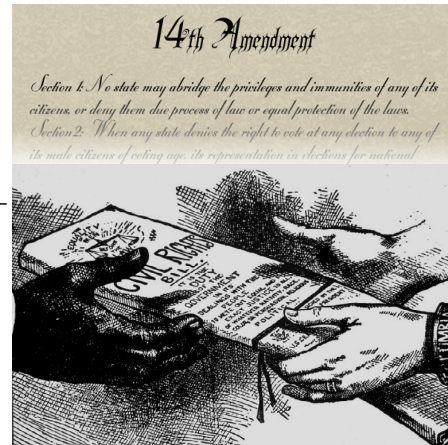
The Fourteenth Amendment

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

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

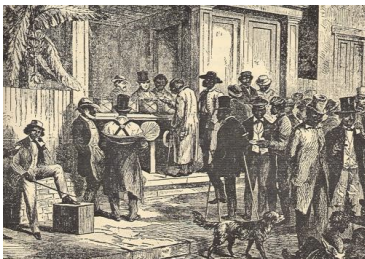
drafted the 14th Amendment to take the place of
the Civil Rights Bill
(more permanent)

*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



put an “understanding clause” in place, which made
the voter read and interpret a portion of the Constitution
“understanding” was decided by a voting clerk (usually white)
put in a “grandfather clause”
which said that you could only vote if your grandfather had voted

added 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 Fifteenth 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

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 Northerners

considered traitors in the South



Carpetbaggers

Northerners who moved to the South after the war

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”
(1/8th 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