**13.0 Reconfiguration of Southern Agriculture: Sharecropping and the Crop-Lien System**

1. What were freed blacks now called?

2. What was the economy of the South like in 1865, why?

3. Why is the Wade-Davis Bill and example of Radical Reconstruction? What was its fate?

4. What is Presidential versus Congressional Reconstruction (also known as Radical Reconstruction)?

5. How is Alexander Stephens an example of Presidential versus Radical Reconstruction?

6. Summarize the protections given by the following amendments:

a. Thirteenth Amendment

b. Fourteenth Amendment

c. Fifteenth Amendment

7. Why did Congress create the Tenure in Office Act and how was it a trap to force Andrew Johnson to break the law?

8. Why was the Freedman’s Bureau a failure?

9. By whom and why was the Ku Klux Klan formed?

10. From where did the never-implemented idea of “forty acres and a mule” come?

11. Why did Southerners resent “carpetbaggers?”

12. How were Black Codes an attempt of the South to control Freedmen?

13. What is a lien?

14. How was sharecropping remarkably similar to slavery? How was it different?

15. Describe Northern manufacturing in the years immediately following the Civil War. Describe manufacturing in the North ten years after the Civil War.

16. What factors contributed to the Panic of 1873? Describe this Panic.

17. What are Jim Crow Laws and why were they clearly unconstitutional, but permitted by both Federal Courts, as well as State Courts?

18. Describe how and why the Supreme Court discriminated between “state” and “national” citizenship in the slaughterhouse cases. What impact did this have on blacks in the South?

19. How could poll taxes, literacy tests, and grandfather clauses, all of which are clearly in violation of the 14th Amendment and the 15th Amendment, be created by Southern states and permitted by the Supreme Court of the United States?

20. Were there any attempts of legislators in the Congress of the United States to enforce the 14th and 15th Amendments with laws to force Southern states to abide by these new Constitutional Amendments? Were any of them successful?

21. Why did people begin to become weary of the “Southern Question” and the “Black Question?”

22. Why was the Election of 1876 called The Second Corrupt Bargain?

23. What did the South get out of the Compromise of 1877? What did the North get?

24. Describe how the Compromise of 1877 officially ended Reconstruction

**Origins of the New South Summary**

Once the Civil War had ended, there were literally millions of former slaves, called Freedmen, who had little or no skills, no land, no money, no tools, homes, or property. They were a displaced people in their own land. White planters, who had relied on slave labor no longer, had laborers. The economy of the South was destroyed by the Union Army and there was extremely little infrastructure to promote commerce, communication, or travel. The South literally had to be Reconstructed with the help of the North. The South also had to be re-enfranchised into politics. Some in Congress wanted to punish the South as is evident in the **Wade-Davis Act**, while others believed in a less punitive and more conciliatory approach.

**Presidential Reconstruction**, lead by President Andrew Johnson who replaced Lincoln after his assassination, at first took a hard stance against the South, but ultimately collapsed as Johnson allowed high-ranking officials from the **Confederate Army** and Government back into the House of Representatives and the Senate. Even the former Vice-President, **Alexander Stephens**, of the Confederacy was elected to the US Senate!

However, Congress would not allow Andrew Johnson’s soft re-enfranchisement of the South. Congress usurped power from Johnson and implemented **Congressional Reconstruction** which they controlled, not the president! The Congress barred former Confederate Officials from holding office, they forced Southern states to ratify the **Thirteenth Amendment** which banned slavery, the **Fourteenth Amendment** which forced states to provide “equal protection under the law” and citizenship to blacks, and the **Fifteenth Amendment** which ensured that black men could vote and participate in democracy. The Congress essentially took all power away from Johnson by over-riding his vetoes, actively working against his directives, and ultimately tried to impeach him by forcing him to violate the **Tenure in Office Act** which was created specifically because Johnson vetoed nearly every act of Congress and they wanted to remove him from office!

At first, this **Congressional Reconstruction,** also known as **Radical Reconstruction**, seemed to be effective. Southern states elected black Senators and House Representatives. The **Freedman’s Bureau** was created by Congress to help former slaves find work and housing and food. Congress divided the South up into five zones, each occupied by the US military and under the authority of Congressionally-appointed military commanders, under the ultimate discretion of Congress.

However, all of these things made the South absolutely resent the ever-present and imposing North. The **Ku Klux Klan** was formed by former Confederate soldiers. The KKK terrorized blacks that attempted to vote, participate in politics, be community leaders, or in any way demonstrate freedom or non-conformity to white authority. It was a terrorist organization aimed directly at scaring black people from participating in society or government. The South was attempting to reinstate the status quo of the Pre-Civil War Era.

**Sharecropping and the Lien-Economy**

“The sole ambition of the freedman, appears to be to become the owner of a little piece of land, there to erect a humble home, and to dwell in peace and security, at his own free will and pleasure,” wrote one New Englander while visiting South Carolina in 1865.

**Government Interventions**

The idea of “**forty acres and a mule**” which was popularized as a way to create opportunities for former slaves (Union General William Sherman set aside former plantations on Georgia’s sea islands immediately after the fall of Savannah for freedmen to farm) never took shape. The federal government could not find legal standing to simply take private land and distribute it to former slaves. And the violent and political backlash against that sort of policy would have been tremendous!!!

The Southern Homestead Act provided 44 million acres for freedmen and loyal whites in five southern states, but the soil was poor and few black or white farmers took advantage of the land, and even fewer produced much on it. The **Freedman’s Bureau** was underfunded and poorly operated and failed to find much work or much relief for the former slaves in the South. Many government officials in the South were transplanted Northerners who were reviled by the Southerners as **Carpetbaggers**. **Black Codes** were enforced by white government in the South to limit the mobility of slaves so that planters could keep black laborers around to work on farms as low-wage earners. Cash was extremely scarce and most wages were paid in the form of food and clothing and often shelter. The system had a remarkable resemblance to the former slave system.

Freedmen had no money to buy land or farm equipment to farm the land. Cotton prices fell as production declined. England began buying cotton from India, where they were colonizing. Freedmen wanted to create farms to grow food to feed themselves. Southern politicians and elites wanted the South to continue to be the **center of cotton production** for the world. They wanted black labor to produce cotton on huge plantations owned by whites, not have tiny farms to grow their own food. The climate was ripe for violence and turmoil and the ever-present Ku Klux Klan kept Freedmen in fear.

**Sharecropping**

Many former slave owners, who wished to preserve the status quo as much as possible, began to enter into **sharecropping** arrangements with freedmen. Sharecropping is when a **tenant farmer** is given an acreage (usually 30 to 50 acres) and must grow a crop on this land. In exchange for the use of the land, the sharecropper must pay the landlord a share of the crop, usually fifty-percent. The landlord can expel sharecroppers and ultimately retains control over his land.

**The Lien System**

Because sharecroppers had little or no property and very little if any cash, they could not buy farming tools and seed. So, merchants extended credit to sharecroppers by putting a **lien** on their next harvest. Since they had no collateral, the liens were usually exorbitant. This means that half of whatever is produced must go to the landlord, and another significant portion of what is produced must go to the merchant (usually also the landlord) who had paid for the sharecropper’s seed and farming tools. Plus, the sharecropper had to pay lien, or the interest that had accumulated during the duration of the loan, usually around 50% interest. This left the sharecropper extremely little for he and his family. In many respects, both free whites and free blacks were enslaved by the sharecropping system and the Panic of 1873. The US had relied on distant market that they could not control. And lost.

A severe depression occurred in 1873 known as the **Panic of 1873**. The price of cotton plummeted and by 1880, 80% of the cotton-producing South was devoted to sharecropping by both white and black farmers. Sharecroppers were in many ways, at the mercy of their landlords. They owned nothing and lived meagerly from harvest to harvest. They possessed little if any cash, and were often times so indebted that it was impossible to escape from their miserable situation.

**The Expansion of Manufacturing and Industrialization**

The Civil War’s demand for the North to create tremendous **industrial outpu**t to supply the Union Army created more infrastructure and manufacturing in the North. The South, even after the Civil War, failed to industrialize in any major way. The North’s economy boomed immediately after the Civil War with frantic speculation in markets and investments, the **generous supply of credit by banks**, and the production a cross-continental railroad. The steel market was booming, new markets were created as more people were able to buy more things, and people had jobs because of all of this.

Other factors also contributed to the **Panic of 1873.** In 1873, the **Northern Pacific Railroad**’s costs exceeded its money supply, largely fueled by the nation’s largest bank, and railroad’s construction ground to a halt. The bank shut down. Other banks soon collapsed as credit became scarce. The entire nation’s economy, which was largely dependent on speculative investments that relied on the completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad, fell into a five-year economic depression. Eight thousand businesses went bankrupt, 3 million people were unemployed, labor protests consumed the nation, and labor disputes began to replace the importance of Reconstruction!

**The politics of segregation: Jim Crow and disfranchisement**

The Thirteenth Amendment freed the slaves, the Fourteenth Amendment provided citizenship and equal protection for blacks, and the Fifteenth Amendment ensured black men could vote. **Jim Crow laws** are laws that Southern States enacted to nullify these amendments and continue to control the lives of blacks. They were laws that created racism intentionally.

The Supreme Court failed to force states to comply with the 14th and 15th Amendments in several cases. In[**Ex parte Milligan 1866**](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/supremecourt/antebellum/landmark_exparte.html), the Court ruled that military courts established by Congress could not judge cases concerning upholding provisions of the Freedman’s Bureau, only state courts could. Thus, ensuring weak enforcement by state courts of many Reconstruction policies in Southern States. In the **slaughterhouse cases**, the Court ruled that people have “**dual citizenship**” in regards to the law, meaning there are rights of “**national citizenshi**p” that are delineated in the Constitution, such as the right to interstate travel and there are rights of “**state citizenshi**p” that are not in the Constitution and therefore fall exclusively under the authority of the states and NOT the national government. In the slaughterhouse cases, the Court ruled that the federal government could only ensure “equal protection under the law” as provided by the 14th Amendment concerning “national rights” and not “state rights.” This set up the abuse of blacks’ rights in Southern states for 95 more years. In **United States v. Reese and United States v. Cruikshan**k, the Supreme Court cut the power of the Enforcement Bill and its effectiveness. They allowed **grandfather clauses** to disenfranchise blacks whose grandfather’s had been “subject to previous servitude,” condoned **poll taxes** to vote, and permitted **literacy tests** as a requirement for voting. The Supreme Court also invalidated the **Civil Rights Act of 1875** and the **Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871**.

The Death of Reconstruction did not come quickly, nor did it end evenly in all places. Passionate Congressmen fighting for equal rights died off or were voted out of office, as people got sick of the “**Southern Question**” and the “**Black Question**.” Economic troubles caused many to want to end Reconstruction in order to devote money elsewhere. The South increasingly demanded the removal of federal troops and influence in its political affairs.

**The Election of 1876** was a contested one. No clear winner had been decided by the Electoral College and all presidential nominees accused the others of voter-fraud. An independent commission of Northern and Southern Congressmen, Supreme Court Justices, and political elites were selected to sit in a room and hammer out a compromise to end the disputed Election of 1876. When the cigar smoke cleared and the doors were opened, **Rutherford B. Hayes** from Ohio was selected as President and in return he was sworn to end Reconstruction by withdrawing all federal troops in the South. The deal is known as the **Second Corrupt Bargain**, reminiscent of the Election of 1824 when John Q. Adams became president in a backroom deal! It is also known as the **Compromise of 1877,** but in any case, it was the was the official death of Reconstruction and the solidification of Jim Crow laws that would ensure oppression of blacks by whites, especially in the South, for the next 85 years!