

RECONSTRUCTION

1865 - 1876

Reconstruction

- The Civil War devastated the South and it needed to be rebuilt.

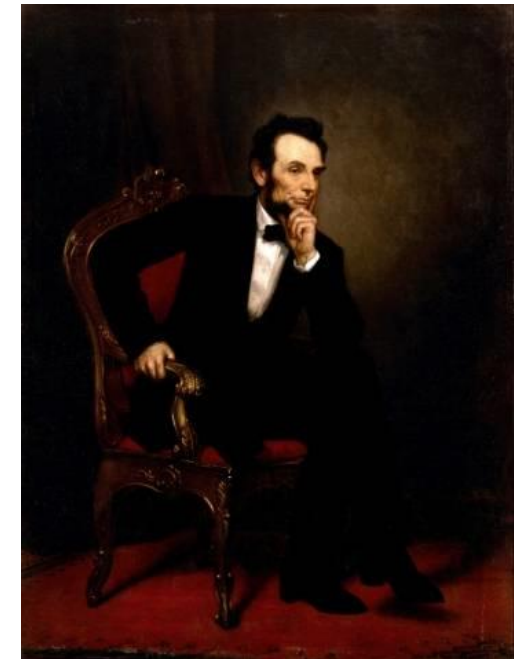
This period of rebuilding was called Reconstruction.

In 1863 President Lincoln issued the Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction which outlined his Ten Percent Plan to rebuild the South.

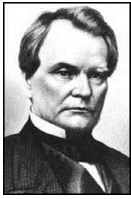
- **10% of voters take oath to the Constitution**
- **Free all slaves**
- **Confederate governments disband**
- **new governments for each Southern state be formed**
- **no former leaders of the Confederate or high ranking officers could be a part of the new government**

- The president offered amnesty—a pardon—to all white Southerners who gave loyalty to the Union,
 - **except Confederate leaders.**

- In 1864, three Southern states set up governments under Lincoln's plan. Louisiana, Arkansas, and Tennessee.



Radical Republicans

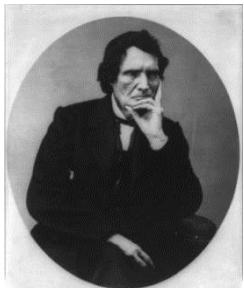


Senator Benjamin Wade (R-OH)



Congressman Henry W. Davis (R-MD)

- Radical Republicans convinced Congress to create their own, much harsher Reconstruction plan.
- Congress passed the Wade-Davis bill in July 1864 which required strict voting and election laws for states reentering the Union.
- For a state to rejoin the Union:
 - 1) A majority of white males in a state had to swear loyalty to the Union
 - 2) Only white males who had not fought in the Civil War could vote for delegates.
 - 3) Former Confederates were barred from public office.
 - 4) Any new state constitution had to end slavery
- Lincoln refused to sign the bill using his pocket veto, but he realized he would need to compromise with the Radical Republicans.
- Some Radical Republicans, led by Thaddeus Stevens, favored a more radical, or extreme, approach to Reconstruction.
 - We have turned... loose four million slaves without a hut to shelter them or a cent in their pockets.”
 - Thaddeus Stevens in a speech to Congress, December 1865
- By Fall 1865 many southerners created new state governments and elected new representatives to Congress.
 - Some of these representatives were former Confederate Officials.
 - When they got to Washington, D.C., Congress refused to seat them.

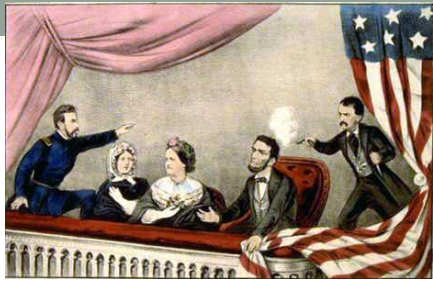


Freedmen's Bureau

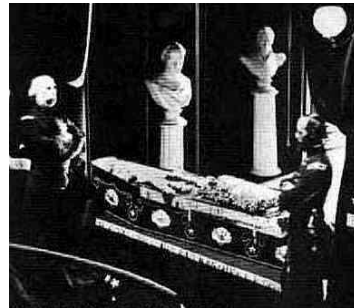
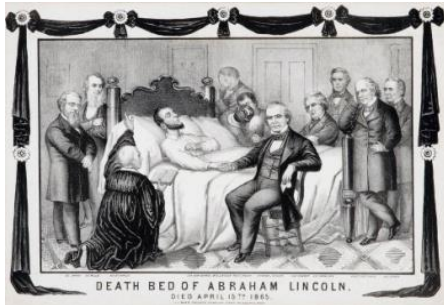


- In March 1865, a new government agency was set up to help freedmen, or former enslaved persons.
- This agency was called the Freedmen's Bureau.
 - The agency distributed food and clothing.
 - Provided medical services.
 - Set up schools staffed by Northern teachers like Charlotte Forten Grimke
 - Gave aid to African American colleges such as Atlanta, Howard, and Fisk Universities.
 - Helped freed people acquire land or work for fair wages.
 - The agency also redistributed confiscated southern land to the freed men who swore loyalty to the Union. (40 acres and a Mule)
- The Bureau's main goal was to help African Americans but it also helped pro-Union Southerners.

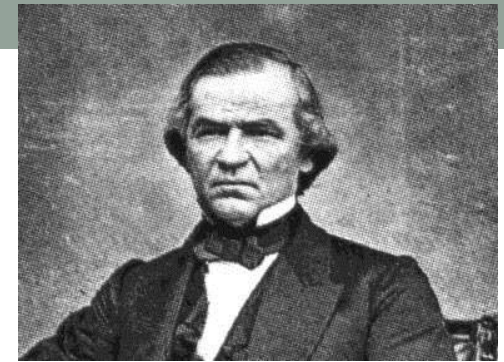
Lincoln Dies



- On April 14, 1865, five days after the Confederate army surrendered. President and Mrs. Lincoln attended a play at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C.
- John Wilkes Booth, a pro-Confederate actor, shot the president in the head during the performance and then escaped.
- President Lincoln was taken to a boarding house across from the theater.
- He died a few hours later.
- Lincoln's body was held in state for visitors to come and grieve before his burial.
- Booth rode on horseback to Virginia, where Union forces found him and several of his co-conspirators in a barn. After the shoot-out Booth was found dead.



A New President



- Democratic Vice President Andrew Johnson became President after Lincoln's death.
- Johnson announced his own Presidential Reconstruction plan in May 1865 while Congress was on recess.
- Under his plan:
 - most Southerners would be granted amnesty once they swore loyalty to the Union. Fifty percent of the citizens had to take the oath.
 - High-ranking and wealthy Confederates would be pardoned after appealing to the president.
 - Only pardoned whites could vote for state delegates to constitutional conventions.
 - Before entering the Union, states had to denounce secession.
 - States had to ratify the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery.
- By the end of 1865, all southern states but Texas were ready to rejoin the Union. Johnson declared Reconstruction over.
- All this was done without Congressional consent.

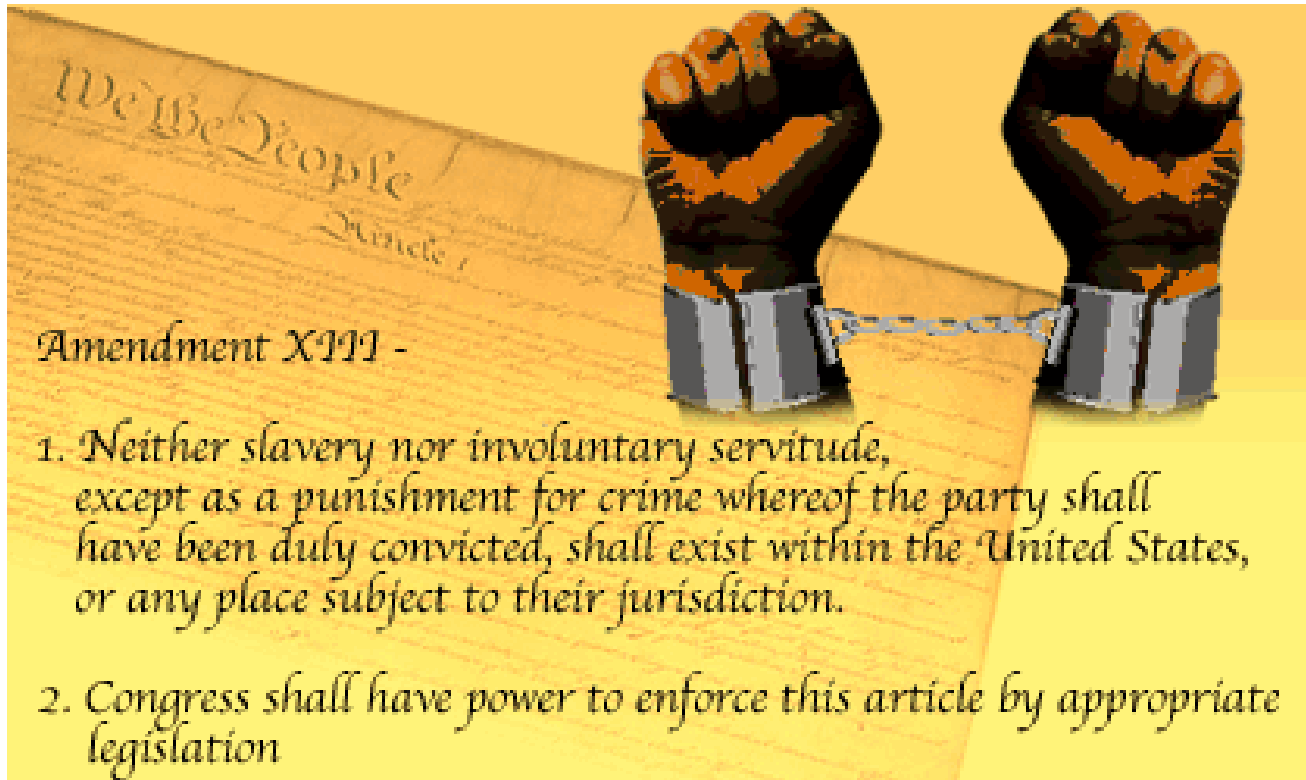
Civil Rights Act of 1866

- Johnson, never a supporter of the Freedman's Bureau, undermined its power by making it return all confiscated land to the south.
- **In retaliation for this and his reconstruction plan implemented while Congress was on recess.**
 - Congress gave the Freedman's Bureau the power to try individuals charged with violating the rights of African Americans.
 - **Congress also passed the Civil Rights Act of 1866 guaranteeing citizenship to all Americans (except Native Americans).**
 - It gave
 - slaves the right to own property,
 - Sue and testify in court
 - And sign legal contracts.
- **President Johnson vetoed both bills, saying that the federal government was going beyond its authority.**
- Congress had enough votes to override, or defeat, both vetoes, and the bills became law.



13th Amendment

- The 13th Amendment was ratified on December 6, 1865.
- The amendment abolished slavery in all of the United States.

An illustration featuring two clenched fists, one in the foreground and one slightly behind it, both wearing silver handcuffs. The fists are positioned over a document that has the words "We the People" written in a cursive script. The background is a warm, yellowish-gold color.

Amendment XIII -

1. *Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.*
2. *Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation*

African American Rights

- Despite all this, the treatment of African Americans in the South was not improving.
- In reaction to the Civil Rights Act of 1866 many southern states passed **black codes**, or laws, made to control freed men and women.
- Under Black Codes freedmen could not:
 - **Serve on juries**
 - **Vote**
 - **Rent or lease land**
 - **Carry firearms without a license**
 - **If found to be vagrants, drunkards, or beggars they received stiff fines**
 - **If they couldn't pay sentenced to chain gang**
 - **Had to enter into annual labor contracts**



Fourteenth Amendment

- Congress passed the 14th Amendment in 1866 but it was not adopted until 1868.

• The amendment gave full citizenship to anyone born in the United States, so African Americans became full citizens.

• Congress demanded Southern states ratify the amendment before they could join the Union.

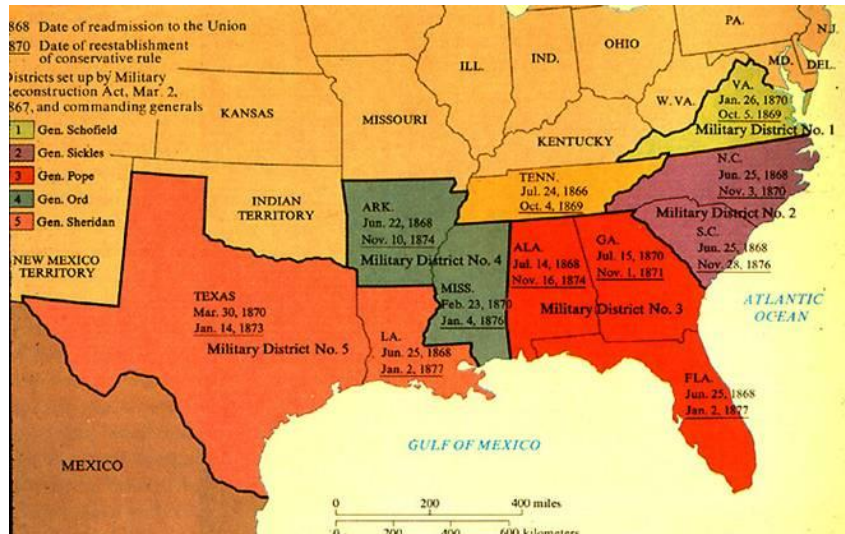
• In the election of 1866, President Johnson campaigned against the 14th Amendment and its Republican supporters.

• But the Radical Republicans won overwhelming victories thereby ending Presidential Reconstruction.



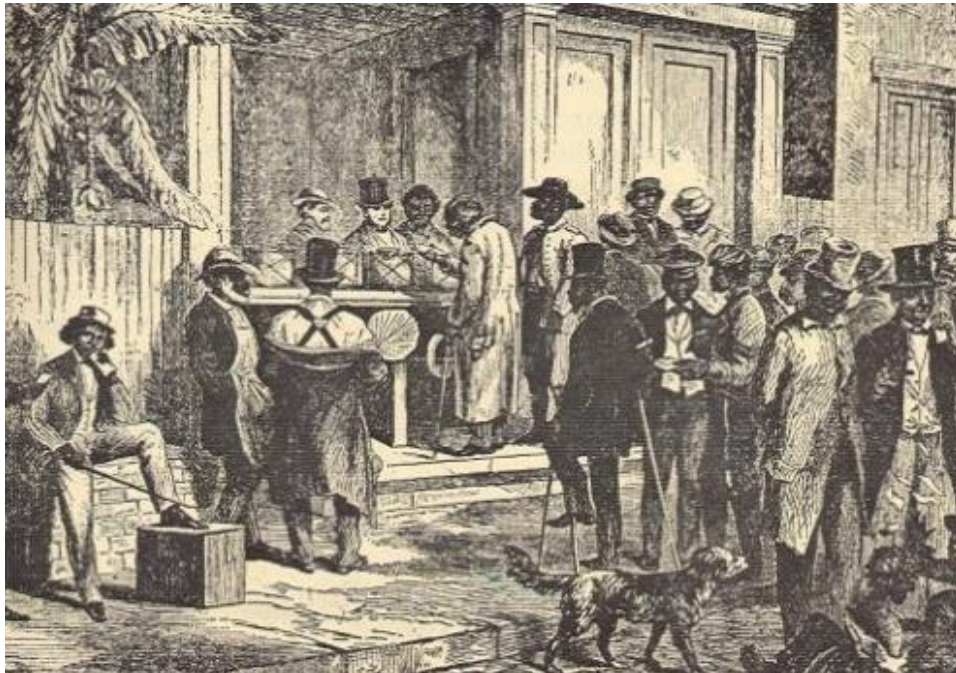
Radical Reconstruction

- The Republicans took charge of Reconstruction, and Johnson could not stop them.
- This period is known as Radical Reconstruction.
- In March 1867, Congress passed the First Reconstruction Act,
 - Called for creation of new governments in the Southern states that had not ratified the Fourteenth Amendment.
 - These states were divided into military districts until new governments were formed.
- Under the Reconstruction Act, states had to submit redrafted constitutions, ratify the Fourteenth Amendment and provide suffrage to African Americans to rejoin the Union.
- The Second Reconstruction Act put Union troops in charge of voter registration.

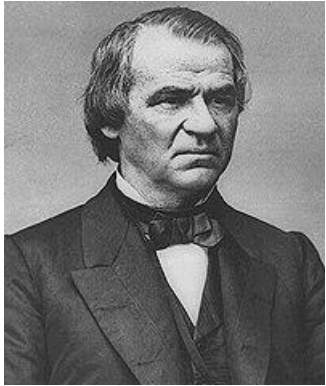


Radical Reconstruction

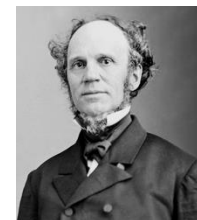
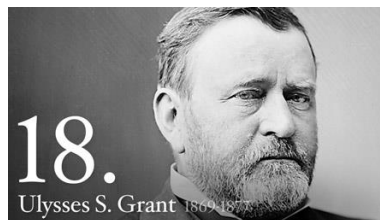
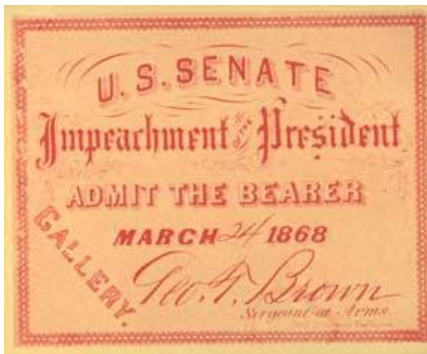
- Many white Southerners refused to take part in the elections for constitutional conventions and state government.
- **But, many African American men, who had been given the right to vote in state elections under the Reconstruction Act, did use their right to vote.**
- By 1870, all southern states had rejoined the Union.



Impeachment

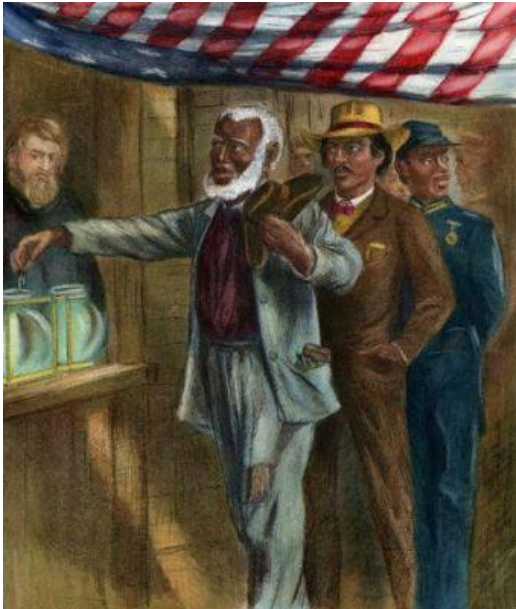


- Congress passed a series of laws to limit the president's power.
- In August 1867, Johnson suspended Secretary of War Edwin Stanton without the Senate's approval.
- When the Senate refused to approve the suspension, Johnson removed Stanton from office, violating one of Congress's new laws.
- The House of Representatives voted to impeach—formally charge with wrongdoing—the president.
- The impeachment trial began in March 1868. After three months, the senators cast two votes.
- In both instances the result was one vote short of a two-thirds majority to convict the president.
- The Senate acquitted Johnson.
- In the election of 1868, the Republicans chose General Ulysses S. Grant as their presidential candidate, and the Democrats nominated Horatio Seymour. Grant won the election.



Fifteenth Amendment

- Congress passed the 15th Amendment in February 1869.
- This amendment prohibited the state and federal governments from denying the right to vote to any male citizen because of “race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”
- The ratification of this amendment won African American men the right to vote.



African American Politics

- The Republicans dominated Southern politics due to 700,000 African Americans.
- African Americans were important as voters and as officials. African Americans served in state legislatures as well as fourteen African Americans in the House of Representatives and two in the Senate.
- Hiram Revels and Blanche K. Bruce were African American senators. Frederick Douglass was also an important leader who insisted on full equality for African Americans.
- Some Southern whites supported the Republicans. Former Confederates called these people scalawags, meaning “worthless rascals.”
- Northern whites living in the South were called carpetbaggers because they arrived with their belongings in cheap suitcases made of carpet fabric.



The South During Reconstruction

- Many Southerners accused Reconstruction governments of corruption, or dishonest or illegal actions, although there was probably more corruption in the North.
- Most Southerners opposed expansion of African Americans' rights, and life became more difficult for African Americans.
- Secret societies, such as the Ku Klux Klan, used fear and violence to deny rights to African Americans. Many Southerners supported the Ku Klux Klan.
- In 1870 and 1871 Congress tried to pass laws to prevent Klan violence, but the laws had limited success because most white Southerners refused to speak against the secret societies.

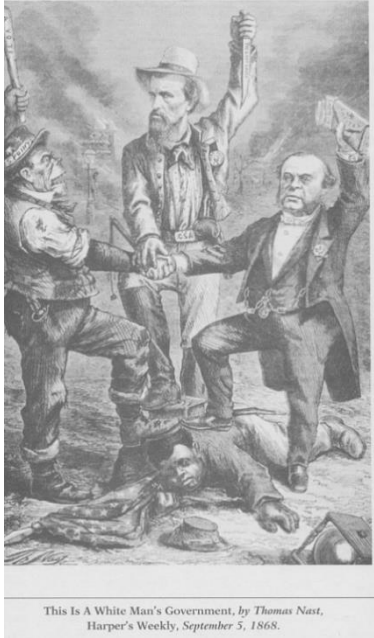


Things Improve

- Reconstruction brought improvements to education for African Americans and whites.
- The Reconstruction government created public school systems for both races.
 - Within a few years about half of all children in the South were enrolled in public schools.
- In most Southern states, African Americans and whites attended different schools.
 - Louisiana, South Carolina, and Florida required that schools be integrated—include both whites and African Americans—but the laws were not enforced.
- The Freedmen's Bank helped some African Americans buy land for farming.
- The most common form of farm work for African Americans was sharecropping, a system in which a landowner rented a plot of land to a sharecropper, or farmer, along with a crude shack, some seeds and tools, and perhaps a mule. Sharecropping was little better than slavery.



Reconstruction Ends

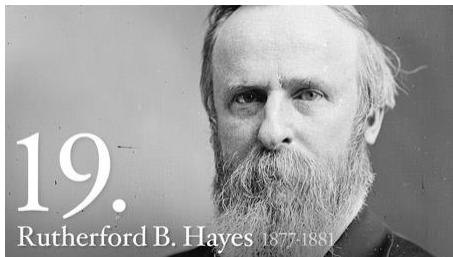


This Is A White Man's Government, by Thomas Nast, Harper's Weekly, September 5, 1868.



- Many Northerners began to lose interest in Reconstruction, believing it was time for the South to solve its own problems.
- The old Radical leaders began to disappear, and Southern Democrats were taking back political control in the South.
- Reports of corruption in the federal government spread throughout the nation in the early 1870s.
- The issue of corruption caused a group of Republicans to break away from the party and propose peaceful reconciliation—coming together again—with Southern whites.
- This group, known as the Liberal Republicans, joined another group of Republicans that had split from the party to nominate Horace Greeley to run against Ulysses S. Grant in the 1872 presidential election.
- During the presidential campaign, Liberal Republicans called for expanded amnesty for white Southerners.
- Grant won an easy victory over Greeley to serve a second term as President
- Despite Grants victory Congress passed the Amnesty Act in May 1872.

Reconstruction Ends



Democrats regained control of Southern state governments, with the help of violent groups such as the Ku Klux Klan.

By the time of the congressional elections in 1874, charges of corruption and economic mismanagement had badly weakened the Republican Party. Democrats gained seats in the Senate and won control of the House.

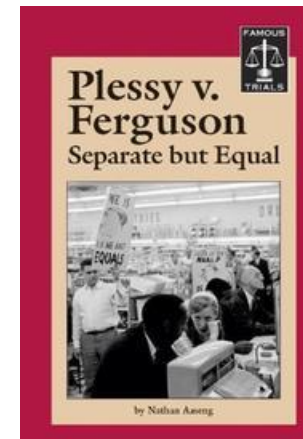
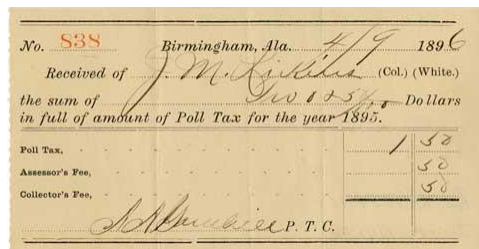


- The Republicans nominated Rutherford B. Hayes as their candidate in the presidential election of 1876, and the Democrats nominated Samuel Tilden.
- A dispute occurred over the electoral votes, and Congress created a special commission, or group, to settle the dispute. The commission gave the presidency to Hayes.
- In March 1877 Congress confirmed the verdict of the commission, and Hayes was inaugurated two days later.
- The Compromise of 1877 made concessions to the South:
 - more aid would be given to the South
 - troops would be removed from Southern states.
 - Southern Democrats promised to maintain African Americans' rights.
- Hayes made a goodwill trip to the South and made it clear he intended to let Southerners handle racial issues.
- Reconstruction was over.



A Divided Society

- Southern leaders found ways to prevent African Americans from voting, despite the Fifteenth Amendment.
 - a poll tax, a fee that people had to pay before voting,
 - a literacy test, in which voters had to read and explain difficult parts of state constitutions or the federal Constitution.
- Because the literacy test also kept some whites from voting, states also passed grandfather clauses.
 - If they did not pass the literacy test they could still vote if their fathers or grandfathers had voted before Reconstruction.
- Segregation, or the separation of the races, was a feature of life in the South.
- The South formed a segregated society by passing Jim Crow laws, which required African Americans and whites to be separated in almost every public place.
- The Supreme Court upheld the segregation laws in 1896 in *Plessy v. Ferguson*.
- According to the Court's ruling, public facilities should be separate but equal for each race.



A Divided Society

- Violence against African Americans increased after Reconstruction including lynching, in which an angry mob killed a person by hanging.
- **Reconstruction was both a success and a failure.**
- Reconstruction helped the South begin rebuilding its economy, and African Americans gained greater equality.
- **However, Reconstruction did not truly free African Americans because of segregation in the South.**
- Leaders such as W.E.B. Du Bois would continue to demand the full political rights for African Americans that Reconstruction did not deliver.

