Chapter 12: Reconstruction and Its Effects

The U.S. begins to rebuild the South, but former slaves face new challenges as support fades for the policies of Reconstruction.

Reconstruction and Its Effects
12 1: The Politics of Reconstruction
12 2: Reconstructing Society
12 3: The Collapse of Reconstruction

Section 1: The Politics of Reconstruction

Main Idea: Congress opposes Lincoln’s and Johnson’s plans for Reconstruction and instead implements its own plan to rebuild the South.

I. Lincoln’s Plan for Reconstruction
   A. Reconstruction—period of rebuilding after CW, 1865–1877
   B. Lincoln’s Ten–Percent Plan
      1. Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction calls for 10% allegiance
      2. Radical Republicans led by Charles Sumner, Thaddeus Stevens
         a. want to destroy power of former slaveholders
         b. give full citizenship, suffrage to African Americans
   C. Radical Reaction
      1. 1864 Wade–Davis Bill makes Congress responsible for Reconstruction
      2. Lincoln uses pocket veto to kill Wade–Davis; Radicals outraged

II. Johnson’s Plan
   A. President Andrew Johnson Continues Lincoln’s Policies
      1. Staunch Unionist, but Southerner
   B. Johnson’s Presidential Reconstruction:
      1. states must swear allegiance, annul war debts, ratify 13th Amendment
      2. does not address voting rights, land, laws for former slaves
      3. States that had not applied under Lincoln agree to Johnson’s terms
a. some states do not fully comply

C. Presidential Reconstruction Comes to a Standstill
   1. Radical Republicans in Congress refuse new Southern legislators
   2. Congress enlarges Freedmen’s Bureau—helps former slaves, poor whites
      a. gives social services, medical care, education

D. Civil Rights Act of 1866
   1. Congress passes Civil Rights Act of 1866:
      a. grants citizenship to African Americans
      b. forbids black codes or discriminatory laws
      c. Black codes restore many restrictions of slavery
      d. Whites use violence to prevent blacks from improving their lives
      e. Johnson vetoes Freedmen’s Bureau and Civil Rights Act
      f. Alienates moderate Republicans; angers Radicals

III. Congressional Reconstruction
   A. Johnson’s vetoes anger many Northerners
   B. Moderates and Radicals Join Forces
      1. In mid–1866, moderate Republicans join Radicals to override veto
      2. Draft Fourteenth Amendment—makes African Americans full citizens
         a. Most Southern states reject amendment; not ratified until 1868

C. 1866 Congressional Elections
   1. Johnson jeered on tour urging election of supporters of his plan
   2. Moderates, Radicals win 2/3 SUPERmajority in Congress, can override veto

D. Reconstruction Act of 1867
   1. 1867 Reconstruction Act doesn’t recognize most new state governments
      a. divides South into military districts
      b. sets new conditions for reentry in Union
   2. Johnson believes act unconstitutional, vetoes; Congress overrides

E. Johnson Impeached
   1. Radicals seek to impeach—formally charge with misconduct in office
2. Johnson fires Stanton—test constitutionality of Tenure of Office Act
3. House Radicals vote to impeach Johnson; but Senate does not convict
   a. Senators fear dominance of legislative branch would upset balance of powers
F. Ulysses S. Grant Elected
   1. 1868, Grant wins presidency with help of African–American vote
   2. Fifteenth Amendment—gives voting rights to all, regardless of color
      a. Problem: South does not enforce 14th, 15th Amendments
   3. White Southerners use violence to prevent blacks from voting
      a. Enforcement Act of 1870—federal government can punish violators

12 2: Reconstructing Society
Various groups contribute to the rebuilding of Southern society after the war.

I. Conditions in the Postwar South
   A. By 1870, all Confederate states in Union with Republican governments
      1. How much do the people follow Republicans?
   B. Physical and Economic Conditions
      1. Buildings, infrastructure, farms destroyed throughout South
      2. People poor; property value plummets, Confederate bonds worthless
      3. 1/5 white males dead, many maimed; tens of thousands black males dead
   C. Public Works Programs
      1. Transportation; homes for orphans, disabled; public schools built
      2. Northern capitalists do not invest in South; states must raise taxes
II. Politics in the Postwar South
   A. Different groups with the South have different goals
B. Scalawags and Carpetbaggers
1. Democrats call Southern white Republicans scalawags
   a. most are small farmers
   b. want better economic position
2. Carpetbaggers—Northerners who moved to South after war
3. African Americans as Voters
   a. African Americans are largest group of Southern Republicans
   b. In many areas, 90% of African–American voters vote
4. Political Differences
   a. Few scalawags support civil rights for blacks; many rejoin Democrats
   b. Republican governors appoint Democrats; do not win white support
   c. Some whites support Republicans; think end of slavery good for South
   d. Many whites refuse to accept new status or equal rights for blacks
      a. Several thousand Southerners emigrate to Europe, Mexico, Brazil

III. Former Slaves Face Many Challenges
A. New-Won Freedoms
1. At first, former slaves cautious about testing limits of freedom
   a. Many return to plantations as wage laborers
2. Some travel to new places
3. Many leave plantations to find work in Southern towns
B. Reunification of Families
1. Many search for loved ones on different plantations
2. Couples can marry legally and be sure of keeping their children
C. Education
1. Freed people of all ages seek education
2. African Americans establish schools and universities
3. Initially, most teachers Northern whites; by 1869, most are black
D. Churches and Volunteer Groups
1. Many African Americans found churches; mostly Baptist, Methodist
2. Black ministers become influential community leaders
3. African Americans form thousands of volunteer organizations:
   a. foster independence
   b. give financial, emotional support
   c. offer leadership opportunities

E. Politics and African Americans
1. 1865–1877, African Americans hold local, state, federal office
2. At first, most officeholders freeborn; by 1867 some former slaves
3. Almost as many black as white citizens; black officeholders minority
   a. only 16 African Americans in Congress
   b. Hiram Revels is first black senator

F. Laws Against Segregation
1. By 1866, Republican governments repeal most black codes
2. Anti-segregation laws created, but many not enforced
3. Blacks focus on building up their community, not total integration

IV. Changes in the Southern Economy
A. Land owning opportunities limited for former slaves
   1. 40 Acres and a Mule
B. Sherman: slaves who follow him can have 40 acres, use of army mules
   1. freed slaves settle on abandoned land
   2. Johnson orders them evicted
   3. Many Republicans reject seizing property; pass weak land-reform laws
C. Restoration of Plantations
   1. African Americans, poor whites want small farms
   2. Planters, Northern merchants, mill owners want cotton plantations
   3. Planters fear will be unable to make profit if must pay wages
   4. Freedmen work in mills, railroad, farming
      a. planters prevent them getting land
D. Sharecropping and Tenant Farming
   1. Landless African Americans sign labor contracts with planters
a. neither freedmen nor planters happy with system
2. Sharecropping—owner gives land, seed, tools for part of crops
3. Tenant farming—rent land from owner; buy own tools

E. Cotton No Longer King
1. Other countries increase cotton production; South creates oversupply: i.e. Egypt, India
2. Try to diversify—textiles, tobacco products; wages lower than North
3. Banks hold Confederate debt, mounting planters’ debts; many fail

12 3: The Collapse of Reconstruction
Southern opposition to Radical Reconstruction, along with economic problems in the North, end Reconstruction.

I. Opposition to Reconstruction
A. Most reaction to shattering of Southern culture was indirect, still many whites reacted overtly
B. Ku Klux Klan
1. Ku Klux Klan (KKK)—Confederate veterans group that turns terrorist
2. Grows rapidly; aims to restore white supremacy
C. Anti-Black Violence
1. 1868–1871 Klan, others kill thousands, burn schools, churches, homes
2. Klan works to force Republican state governments out of power
3. Southern Democrats use violence to intimidate black voters
4. White Democratic candidates win back state elections in 1875, 1876
D. Economic Pressure
1. Black landowners, non-farmers attacked, have property destroyed
2. Need forces freedmen into wage labor, sharecropping for whites
E. Legislative Response
1. 1870, 1871 Enforcement Acts passed to curtail Klan, Democrats
   a. Supreme Court rules 1871 act unconstitutional
2. Klan violence decreases because restore white supremacy in South

F. Shifts in Political Power
1. 1872 Amnesty Act returns voting rights to many former Confederates
2. Congress allows Freedmen’s Bureau to expire

II. Scandals and Money Crises Hurt Republicans
A. Southern States’ Republicans have little success enforcing principles of Reconstruction—their Federal counterparts lose credibility at the same time
B. Fraud and Bribery
   1. Grant considered honest; appoints friends to political office
   2. Beginning in 1872, series of Grant administration scandals exposed
C. Republican Unity Shattered
   1. 1872, Liberal Republican Party forms, nominates Horace Greeley
   2. Democrats also nominate Greeley; Grant wins by wide margin
   3. Liberal Republicans weaken Radicals, make Reconstruction difficult
D. Continued Scandal
   1. Administration corruption continues; Grant does not seek reelection

III. Economic Turmoil
A. The Panic of 1873
   1. Business opportunities in South lead investors to excessive debt
   2. Largest government securities dealer bankrupts, starts panic of 1873
      a. banks, businesses close; stock market collapses
   3. Panic triggers 5–year economic depression
B. Currency Dispute
   1. Panic of 1873 fuels dispute over currency
      a. financial experts want return to gold standard
         i. feel it’s safer
      b. South, West want more greenbacks to pay debts
   2. 1875, Specie Resumption Act puts country back on gold standard

IV. Judicial and Popular Support Fades
A. USSC contributes to the powerlessness of the Radical Republicans’ plans for Reconstruction

B. Supreme Court Decisions
   1. 1870s Supreme Court decisions undermine 14th, 15th Amendments
   2. Federal government loses power to protect African-American rights

C. Northern Support Fades
   1. Northerners grow indifferent to events in South:
      a. shift attention to national problems
      b. want reconciliation between regions
      c. begin to dislike Reconstruction policies
   2. Republicans give up from lack of judicial, public support, leaders
   3. Republicans conclude government cannot impose moral, social changes

V. Democrats “Redeem” the South
A. Remaking “The South”
   1. Redemption—return of Democrats to power in the South, 1869–1875

B. Election of 1876
   1. Republicans nominate Governor Rutherford B. Hayes, not Grant
   2. Democrats choose Governor Samuel J. Tilden
   3. Tilden wins popular vote, 1 shy of electoral; 20 electoral disputed
   4. Compromise of 1877—Hayes gets presidency, Democrats get:
      a. federal troops leave LA, SC
      b. funding for Southern railroad, waterways
      c. conservative Southerner in cabinet
   5. Compromise means end of Reconstruction

C. Home Rule in the South
   1. After Hayes removes federal troops, Democrats take over states
      a. No one to enforce federal law
   2. Home rule—running state government without federal intervention

D. Legacy of Reconstruction
   1. Republicans fail to protect rights they gave to former slaves
2. Unwillingness to distribute land blocks economic independence
3. Amendments abolish slavery, give basis for civil rights legislation
4. African–American schools, civic groups increase literacy, opportunity