

Three Plans for Reconstruction

Lincoln's Plan

President Lincoln was never able to carry out his plan for reconstruction, which was referred to as the Ten Percent Plan. From the beginning of the Civil War and his first inaugural address, Lincoln was focused on returning all regions of the country peacefully to the Union. He reiterated this concern in his second inaugural address: "*With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and for his orphan--do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.*"

Under Lincoln's Ten Percent Plan (outlined in his 1863 Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction), 10 percent of residents in former Confederate states would need to sign an oath of loyalty to form a new government and rejoin the Union. A full pardon (or amnesty) would be offered to all Southerners, even those who supported the Confederacy. States would then need to accept Emancipation.

Radical Reconstruction

Many Republicans in Congress felt Lincoln's plan was too lenient on those they considered traitors to the Union. Led by a group known as the Radical Republicans, members of Congress passed the Wade-Davis Bill in 1864. In this plan, 50 percent of state residents would need to swear an oath to the United States, and that number excluded any known supporter of the rebellion. It did not ask states to ratify Emancipation, but left it up to the courts to enforce.

Johnson's Plan

Andrew Johnson, a Southern Democrat with a disdain for the Southern privileged class, took over after Lincoln's assassination. Under Johnson's plan for Reconstruction, any high-ranking Confederate official or wealthy plantation owner had to obtain a presidential pardon before he would be allowed to vote or hold office. The new state government needed to ratify the Thirteenth Amendment, which outlawed slavery. His plan did not provide much protection for the newly freed slaves and would allow Jim Crow Laws and Black Codes to exist for decades. Under Johnson's plan, many former Confederate leaders were re-elected after their pardons.

Sources:

Divine, Robert A., et al. *America: The People and the Dream*. Teachers' Edition. Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman, 1994

Viola, Herman, J. *Why We Remember United States History through Reconstruction*. Menlo Park, California: Addison-Wesley, 1997

Document A: The 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments

The 13th, 14th and 15th amendments to the United States Constitution are sometimes called the “Reconstruction Amendments.” They were passed in order to abolish slavery and to establish the rights of former slaves.

13th Amendment (1865)

AMENDMENT XIII

Section 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.

Section 2.

Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Passed by Congress January 31, 1865. Ratified December 6, 1865.

14th Amendment (1868)

AMENDMENT XIV

Section 1.

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

15th Amendment (1870)

Article XV.

Section 1. 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—

Guiding Questions:

- **Why was each amendment passed? What rights did each guarantee?**

Document B: Black Codes

The following example of “Black Codes” come from laws passed in Opelousas, Louisiana immediately after the Civil War.

"No negro or freedmen shall be allowed to come within the limits of the town of Opelousas without special permission from his employers. . . . Whoever shall violate this provision shall suffer imprisonment and two days work on the public streets, or pay a fine of five dollars. No negro or freedman shall be permitted to rent or keep a house within the limits of the town under any circumstances. . . . No negro or freedman shall reside within the limits of the town . . . who is not in the regular service of some white person or former owner . . . No public meetings or congregations of negroes or freedmen shall be allowed within the limits of the town. . . . No negro or freedman shall be permitted to preach, exhort, or otherwise declaim to congregations of colored people without a special permission from the mayor or president of the board of police.. . . No freedman ... shall be allowed to carry firearms, or any kind of weapons.... No freedman shall sell, barter, or exchange any article of merchandise within the limits of Opelousas without permission in writing from his employer."

Source: In the years following the Civil War - throughout the South -state, city, and town governments passed laws to restrict the rights of free African-American men and women. These laws were often called “Black Codes.”

Guiding Questions:

- **What things of importance were freed men and women not allowed to do according to the Black Codes? Why the white Southerners create laws that controlled the movement of freed Blacks?**

Document C: Henry Adams Statement (ORIGINAL)

In September I asked the boss to let me go to Shreveport. He said, "All right, when will you come back?" I told him "next week." He said, "You had better carry a pass." I said, "I will see whether I am free by going without a pass."

I met four white men about six miles south of Keachie, De Soto Parish. One of them asked me who I belonged to. I told him no one. So him and two others struck me with a stick and told me they were going to kill me and every other Negro who told them that they did not belong to anyone. One of them who knew me told the others, "Let Henry alone for he is a hard-working nigger and a good nigger." They left me and I then went on to Shreveport. I seen over twelve colored men and women, beat, shot and hung between there and Shreveport.

Sunday I went back home. The boss was not at home. I asked the madame, "where was the boss?" She says, "Now, the boss; now, the boss! You should say 'master' and 'mistress' -- and shall or leave. We will not have no nigger here on our place who cannot say 'mistress' and 'master.' You all are not free yet and will not be until Congress sits, and you shall call every white lady 'missus' and every white man 'master.'"

During the same week the madame takin' a stick and beat one of the young colored girls, who was about fifteen years of age and who is my sister, and split her back. The boss came next day and take this same girl (my sister) and whipped her nearly to death, but in the contracts he was to hit no one any more. After the whipping a large number of young colored people taken a notion to leave. On the 18th of September I and eleven men and boys left that place and started for Shreveport. I had my horse along. My brother was riding him, and all of our things was packed on him. Out come about forty armed men (white) and shot at us and takin' my horse. Said they were going to kill ever' nigger they found leaving their masters....

Source: *Former slave Henry Adams made this statement before the U.S. government in 1880 about the early days of his freedom after the Civil War.*

Guiding Questions:

- **What was life like for freed men and women according to the source? Do you trust this account? Why or why not?**

Document E: Education (ORIGINAL)

In 1865 the United States government created the Freedmen's Bureau to help former slaves in Southern states. The Freedmen's Bureau helped people by providing medical supplies, health care and establishing schools.

The creation of schools for former slaves was an important part of Reconstruction. Before the Civil War, Southern states outlawed the teaching of reading and writing to slaves.

Many of the negroes in some localities, common plantation negroes, and day laborers in the towns and villages, were supporting little schools themselves. Everywhere, I found among them a disposition to get their children into schools, if possible. I had occasion very frequently to notice that porters in stores and laboring men about cotton warehouses, and cart-drivers on the streets, had spelling-books with them, and were studying them during the time they were not occupied with their work. Go into the outskirts of any large town, and walk among the negro habitations, and you will see the children, and in many instances grown negroes, sitting in the sun alongside their cabins studying.

Source: Sydney Andrews quoted in the Joint Report on Reconstruction, 1866. The document above is an excerpt from a report by a Northern white man to the United States government in 1866.

Guiding Question:

- How does this description of life for freedmen compare to Henry Adam's statement?