

# Good civil war and reconstruction: another american revolution essay example

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



Historians contend that the American Civil War and Reconstruction created immense changes regarding political, social and economic dispositions among the American people. However, it also produced significant pain and hardship for generations of Americans who are still considered marginalized today. This essay seeks to explain the many changes that occurred due to the American Civil War and Reconstruction (1850s – 1870s). Communities affected will be highlighted. Also, an exploration into whether the Civil War and Reconstruction was another American Revolution would be undertaken. The significance of this era in relation to acquisition of rights and freedoms experienced today will be reviewed as well.

Economic changes of the civil war and reconstruction created surrounded replacement of slave labor. Southerners had to design strategies for addressing this sudden alteration in the social structure. Consequently, the financial position of planters, slave holding white population and emancipated slaves was transformed. This adjustment was very difficult especially, for planters who always had a labor force, which they controlled and exploited fully. Freed slaves refused subjection from masters viewing emancipation as a road to economic autonomy. Besides, freed slaves felt that they had right to claim forty acres of land and a mule. This was a misconception, which led to more difficult relationships among planters and the freed slaves' population from whom they sought continued labor. The ex-slaves thought that they had earned this opportunity after years of unrequited labor (Forten, 587).

These numerous conflicts between planters and ex-slaves forced severe animosities to emerge within the society affecting social cohesion, political

stability and serious economic consistency. Ultimately, both white and non-white farmers (black) had no other alternative, but to depend on merchants locally to fund their businesses. Soon farmers began to experience a debt cycle whereby it was almost impossible to make the huge profits incurred during slavery. Production slumped and the expectation of a prosperous future was apparently obscure (Williams, Dixon, 1).

Social changes pertained to more job opportunities becoming available in both agricultural and marketing sectors. This was evident in Urban cities such as Richmond. However, in the post reconstruction era labor became a persistent challenge. Ex-slaves were not eager to return to the plantation style labor force. It seemed as though they were taking a work holiday. There was always a demand for laborers due to the sharecropping industry, which developed in the South. Children who supplemented the labor force were then placed in schools making their labor situation more intense. Black families eventually rented plots of land, which they cultivated as a family. This system economically was not accumulating enough surpluses to raise the standard of living for Southerners who remained in relative poverty. Cotton, sugar and rice were the three main agricultural crops cultivated in the South (Williams, Dixon, 1).

Northern capital invested in the 1850s, from sugar plantations later realized slow financial growth in the South. Black women left the fields and worked as maids to white planters and the more affluent in the society. As the society continued to change black males worked as laborers accepting the most menial jobs whites refused to do. While textile and tobacco factory work became available in both Northern and Southern states blacks were excluded

from being employed in factories. As such, the transition from plantation life into freedom posed great difficulties for the oppressed marginalized blacks. White planters experienced their fair share of financial degradation with the lost of free slave labor and institution of voluntary labor. This did not work despite serous laws forcing blacks back into a silvery workforce philosophy. Social political and economic changes were immense (Foner, 513).

Political Changes. For Southerners these inevitable developments meant seeking alternative funding from outside sources, which pushed planters into increasing their credit and financial stagnation. By this time the Republican Party gained prominence above Democrats in the North. Mass immigration from Europe helped restore prosperity to the North by 1857. By 1860 railroad millage grew to 30, 000 and remarkable changes in the economic situation of Northerners became evident. The majority of the population lived in small towns. Boston through to Philadelphia and Baltimore coasts developed into magnificent industrial areas. Inland cities such as Buffalo, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Chicago also experienced immense prosperity with expansion of the railroad project. Planters flourished with a reaping labor force of more than 5, 000 annually (Foner, 513).

American Revolution comparison. The activity of the North during this era occurred as if it were another American Revolution. Primarily, the American Revolution was a political upheaval, which ultimately produced independence. Both states in the North and South struggled with maintaining their economic independence, which was enjoyed prior to emancipation. Emancipation really did not free planters because, initially, they experienced financial hardships due to lack of reliable labor force. The American

Revolution was also a fight to gain freedom from colonial rule, which had its fair share of birthing pains. Great Britain imposed laws to prevent the revolutionists from prospering in the same way planters tried to stagnate the blacks financially until they devised a solution to the problem and railroad development emerged (Mead, 10).

Besides, the way in which Northern and Southern states fought to relieve themselves from the oppression of post emancipation politics, seemed very similar incidences occurred during the American Revolution. Importantly, both of these encounters occurred on the American soil among Americans for the common cause of freedom. The reconstruction era was the major difference because after the American Revolution the Founding Fathers slowly glided the country into stability and prosperity emerged, eventually. Similarly, especially, among the Northerners who seemed to have an advantage over Southerners, prosperity was restored after the influx of immigrants (Mead, 10)

Significance of this period to modern developments. The period between 1850s and 1870s has great significance to the development of American history. Mainly, emergence of the Republican Party in the North bringing to subjection democratic rule in the south was remarkable for American political ideology. Another huge unforgettable contribution this period has made is the influx of immigrants from Europe who invested their resources in restoring prosperity to a failing cotton and tobacco plantation culture. Rail roads' construction led the way to a prolonged period of prosperity, which is still being valued today as commuters ride the subway trains. This has become a major means of transportation throughout United States of

America. Both the construction phase and continued operations have since opened many job opportunities, which have been interpreted as part of the American cultural history. These events have shaped America's social classification as a nation of immigrants.

The foregoing essay explained the plight of planters after emancipation when the unexpected challenges surfaced. There was no more free labor. Freed slaves decided to create their own jobs rather than returning to the plantation. Blessings of the railroad construction and influx of immigrants from Europe helped restore prosperity in the north.

.

## **Works cited**

Foner, E. Give me Liberty (4th ed). Seagull. 2013. Print

Forten, C. Life on the Sea Islands, Atlantic Monthly 13: 1864, 587-596.

Accessed from

<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6517>

Mead, Harper's weekly. American Social History Project. 1862. Accessed from

<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6739>

Williams, L. Dixon, T Jr., The Traitor: A Story of the Fall of the Invisible Empire

American Social History Project. 1907. Accessed from

<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6753>