

Reconstruction after the civil war

[History](#)



Reconstruction After The Civil War Andrew Johnson was a war democrat that opposed secession. In 1864 Johnson was tapped by Republican President Abraham Lincoln as his running

mate to balance the Union ticket. He became president following Lincoln's

assassination in April 1865, just days after the Civil War ended. As president,

Johnson's desire to scale back Lincoln's Reconstruction legislation following the

Civil War angered the Radical Republican majority that sought to punish the

former rebels of the Confederacy. The stage was set for a partisan fight that

would ultimately center around a single act. In February 1868, Johnson fired

Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, who was sympathetic to the Radical

Republicans and who was overseeing the military's Reconstruction efforts. A

year earlier, Congress had passed the Tenure of Office Act, which prohibited

a

president from dismissing any officer confirmed by the Senate without first

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getting

its approval. With Stanton's firing, the call for Johnson's impeachment began.

I do not believe the House of Representatives quest to impeach Andrew

Johnson was called for. It was nothing more than political opportunism. He was

opposed to congressional Reconstruction so he blocked it. The Republicans

decided this was a strong enough basis to throw him out so they tried though

they were ultimately unsuccessful.

There was corruption in the government after the Civil War. Many ex

Confederate soldiers and members of the old planter class joined the Ku Klux

Klan which targeted blacks who owned land, prospered, and any educators of

the black people. Their goal was to keep them powerless and this supported

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Democratic Party's desires. The Democratic platform in 1868 had called reconstruction policies " unconstitutional, revolutionary, and void." It demanded

that Freedmen's Bureau be shut down. The white robed, gun-toting, horse riding

Klansmen attacked Republicans. In every county where the Klan was active, Republican voters stayed away from the polls.

The support for Radical Reconstruction was mainly due to the northern states need for racial equality. In 1876 the Democratic Party chose Samuel J. Tilden, governor of New York, to run for President. The Republicans nominated

Rutherford B. Hayes, governor of Ohio. Under the Compromise of 1877, Hayes

was elected President. In return, Hayes agreed to remove the last troops from

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the South. As soon as he became President, Hayes did just that. The last few

Reconstruction governments collapsed. With them went black southerners' best

hope for equality. Reconstruction ended in 1877 and was effective in reaching its

goal which was to improve the South socially, politically, and economically.

Although the South did not fully recover, many of the problems that arose after

the Civil War were solved. The Confederate states met various requirements for

readmission, and all rejoined the Union by 1870. Congress passed laws and

proposed constitutional amendments to protect the rights of the former slaves

and to give them the right to vote. However, the Reconstruction governments

failed to win enough support from Southern whites to survive without aid

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from the

North. Most Southern whites considered these governments illegal, and some

whites used violence to prevent blacks from voting. Many blacks ended up

working for whites because sharecropping created economic inequality. As a

result, many blacks lost their political power as well. Reconstruction didn't totally

recover the South, but it did help to improve the South and was an important part

in U. S. history since it still effects our lives today.