

Impact of lincoln's assassination



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“ A house divided against itself cannot stand...I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half slave and half free.” America will become all one thing, or all the other.” This is a famous quote spoken by Abraham Lincoln in 1858 to describe one of the reasons for fighting in the Civil War. During the war, the United States was bitterly divided between the North and the South. When the war ended in 1865, many leaders were unsure about the future course of our nation. But, not Lincoln. He had a plan and the leadership skills to reunite the nation. This process of rebuilding became known as Reconstruction. Most battles and destruction took place on southern soil. Which made living conditions hard to overcome, especially agricultural lands used for crops and plantation. Reconstructing the nation was important in order to keep the nation running smoothly instead of it falling apart.

To begin with the nations failures were the fact that all fighting took place in the South. The Civil War lasted from 1861 to 1865. In those four years, the Union, which is the North, lost 370, 000 troops, and the Confederacy, the South, lost 260, 000. In addition to lives lost, there were 375, 000 soldiers injured or maimed from both sides. Many soldiers were killed in battle, but the majority of them died as a result of illness. Several civilians, non-military people, died in the South because food was scarce. More American lives were lost in the Civil War than in all other American wars combined. Owing more than \$2 billion dollars, the southern states were severely crippled after the war. Most battles and destruction took place on southern soil. In fact, one reason the Union won was because it engaged in total war. Total war is the

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military practice of destroying the enemy's ability to fight by attacking civilian and economic targets as well as military targets. Southerners' daily lives came to a halt since the fighting occurred near their towns and communities. Also, the economy of the South was based on agriculture, so they had more difficulty recovering and manufacturing needed supplies. The North was also hit hard, but the effects were not as long-lasting as the South's. War costs for the Union totaled more than \$3.2 billion. Since the northern economy was already based on industrialization, trade, and banking, it was able to recover more quickly than the southern economy. Also, fighting was removed from northerners' daily lives, except for those living in areas bordering Confederate states.

In Addition, to the negative aspects were the successful ones. In that it restored the United States as a unified nation: by 1877, all of the former Confederate states had drafted new constitutions, acknowledged the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments, and pledged their loyalty to the U. S. government. Reconstruction also finally settled the states' rights vs. federalism debate that had been an issue since the 1790s. However, Reconstruction failed by most other measures: the sharecropping system- essentially a legal form of slavery that kept blacks tied to land owned by rich white farmers-became widespread in the South. With little economic power, blacks ended up having to fight for civil rights on their own, as northern whites lost interest in Reconstruction by the mid-1870s. By 1877, northerners were tired of Reconstruction, scandals, radicals, and the fight for blacks' rights. Reconstruction thus came to a close with many of its goals left unaccomplished. As well as, Radical Republican legislation ultimately failed

to protect former slaves from white persecution and failed to engender fundamental changes to the social fabric of the South. When President Rutherford B. Hayes removed federal troops from the South in 1877, former Confederate officials and slave owners almost immediately returned to power. With the support of a conservative Supreme Court, these newly empowered white southern politicians passed black codes, voter qualifications, and other anti-progressive legislation to reverse the rights that blacks had gained during Radical Reconstruction. The U. S. Supreme Court bolstered this anti-progressive movement with decisions in the Slaughterhouse Cases, the Civil Rights Cases, and *United States v. Cruikshank* that effectively repealed the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments and the Civil Rights Act of 1875.

In conclusion, while some historians have suggested that had Lincoln not been assassinated, Radical Republicans in the House might have impeached him instead of Andrew Johnson. After the Civil War, many Bureaus were underfunded and cut short, leaving the vast majority of free slaves uneducated and still in the South. There was no land reform, meaning slaves were forced into a sharecropping system and did not own their own farms, which might have made them more independent, equal, and successful. The Black Codes and other laws restricting former slaves, though clearly unconstitutional, were not challenged in court or struck down by local military authorities, leaving African-Americans virtually unprotected and subject once again to working for whites involuntarily. And finally, the effort of Reconstruction was cut off after only 12 years, leaving the economy of the South still in ruins and its population largely in poverty.