

# The civil rights act and reconstruction act essay sample

War



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The American Civil War and Reconstruction Era have caused a general and social change, most particularly for the African Americans in the South. The passing of the Civil Rights Act, Reconstruction Act, and the unwritten Compromise of 1877 to end Reconstruction was all a fight for the African Americans to gain their equality and freedom. The Civil War had entirely changed how Americans viewed their morals. During the American Civil War and Reconstruction period, continuity and change were constantly occurring through the legislations that the President and government were passing, along with the impact it had on the African Americans, and the southerners reaction to these new measures.

One of the legislations that were passed by Congress that had impacted the African Americans and white southerners were the Civil Rights Act of 1866. The Civil Rights Act of 1866 purpose was to protect the Freedmen from the Black Codes and sharecropping system that had developed in the South, and it also had given additional rights to the slaves whom were free. This new law however was passed in a two-thirds majority vote, reason being, President Andrew Johnson had vetoed the bill. He had strongly felt that African Americans were not entitled to any citizenship in the United States. Therefore, his refusal of the bill had angered the Congress and many anti-slavery citizens. The passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1866, had angered many of the southern states, many southerners had involved themselves in secret white supremacist groups such as the infamous Ku Klux Klan or also known as the KKK. The impact this had on African Americans was that it benefited the freed slaves in the southern states, and enabled them to own

property and be treated fairly in court. This act was a big social change that had brought ups and downs in need for more reconstruction in America.

Shortly after the Civil Rights Act of 1866 was passed, Congress had passed the Reconstruction Act which therefore branched the South into five separate military districts, that were each commanded by a general from the Union. The responsibilities of each Union general and soldier was to ensure the civil rights of each individual were being protected. Congress had passed this in hopes that if the Southern states wanted out of the military rule then they would accept the 14th amendment and reunite with the Union. Even though President Johnson attempted to veto this bill, just like to the Civil Rights Act of 1866, Congress had overridden it. The African Americans were all longing for the southern states to ratify the 14th amendment so they would be treated fairly. The southern whites were supposedly fine with the current situation of being under military command, but Congress continued to pass laws that would enforce the south to ratify the amendment.

Eventually the south had been readmitted to the Union, and Congress had passed the 15th Amendment which enabled African American men the right to vote. This change in society was a big stride into rebuilding for peace in the United States.

Lastly another act Congress had passed that changed the society and officially ended the Reconstruction period was the Compromise of 1877. After President Johnson had violated the Tenure of Office Act passed by Congress, it had been the last straw for them. President Johnson had been voted for impeachment due to his high misdemeanors and crimes. To result

Ulysses S. Grant had been elected as President in 1868. As though Grant did not make major changes during his presidency, he had voted for a third term. Unfortunately for Grant, Congress passed that limited the presidency to only two terms. Rutherford B. Hayes had won the election and therefore became President. The Southern Democrats reaction to this election was in outrage and would accept Hayes as the president if he withdrew the federal troops from the south. In result, President Hayes settled the squabble by taking out the rest of the federal troops. This act was known as the Compromise of 1877, it was an accepted contract which had finally ended the Reconstruction Era.

In conclusion, during the American Civil War and Reconstruction period, continuity and change was constantly occurring through the legislations that the President and Congress were passing, along with the impact it had on the African Americans, and the southerners reaction to these new measures. The Reconstruction period had involved a lot of action from the Congress in protecting the African Americans. Even though the south had formed their way of retaliation, Congress had a foothold over them. The end to Reconstruction was settled in a calm manner, by the Compromise of 1877 and it had restored the United States as one nation. However it did not stop the south political power to execute laws against the African Americans. The Civil War and period of Reconstruction was a form of another American Revolution for America. There was a lot of rebellions and changes between the North and South. It was a fight for the African Americans to win their freedom, which is pretty similar to the first American Revolution where the United States fought for their independence from Britain. The thought of the

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Civil War being viewed as a second American Revolution was all for the reason being that it had transformed the outlook of what was necessary to the sentiment of a greater democracy.