* Chapter 12
* The Reconstruction Era
* 1865-1877
* Section 1
* Even before the end of the Civil War, Congress and the president disagreed about how the South would be rejoined with the North. The South was in ruins and though free, blacks lacked full citizenship and the means to make a living.
* When the war ended, the country entered a period called **Reconstruction**, which was the name of the program implemented by the federal government between 1865-1877 to repair damage to the South caused by the war and to restore the southern states to the Union.
* The government struggled with how to return the 11 southern states to the Union, rebuild the South’s economy and promote the rights of former slaves.
* 3 major issues to Reconstruction:

1. How will the southern states rejoin the Union?

* To many Americans, the most important issue was deciding the political fate of the southern states.
	+ Should Confederate leaders be tried for treason?
	+ Should they be pardoned so that national healing could proceed as quickly as possible?
	+ What should be the process by which southern representatives regain their seats in Congress?
* The Constitution offered no guidance on secession or readmittance of states. It was unclear if Congress or the President should take the lead in forming Reconstruction policy.
* Some felt the southern states should be readmitted quickly and with few conditions.
* Other claimed that the defeated states should first meet certain conditions such as:
	+ Swearing loyalty to the Union
	+ Adopting state constitutions that guaranteed freed-men’s rights
* 3 major issues to Reconstruction:

2. How will the South’s economy be rebuilt?

* The South’s economy was devastated:
	+ The South’s share of the national’s wealth declined from 30% to 12%
	+ The Union army had destroyed factories, plantations and railroads.
	+ Nearly half of the South’s livestock and machinery was gone
	+ About ¼ of the South’s men between the ages of 20-40 were dead
	+ More than 3 million newly freed slaves were without homes and jobs
* The only thing of value the South had left was its land, but who controlled it now?
	+ General Sherman proposed a plan that millions of abandonded or confiscated acres be given to former slaves. He suggested “Forty acres and a mule” would be sufficient to support a farm and a family.
		- Many Northerners thought this might help the South’s productivity and economy.
* White and black southerners disagreed. Some felt it was unconstitutional to take land and give it away. Some also thought the government should pay the white southerners for the land and then sell it to the blacks with easy terms.
* 3 major issues to Reconstruction:

3. What rights to African Americans have?

* The 13th Amendment freed the slaves but did not give them the privileges of citizenship.
* African Americans hoped they could gain the right to vote and access to education (benefits that northern blacks also did not have).
* Many northern Republicans supported programs to extend full citizenship to blacks, but most white southerners opposed the idea.
* Lincoln’s Reconstruction Plan
* Remember that Lincoln was sympathetic toward the South and hoped they could easily rejoin the Union. His goal was to preserve the Union.
* In 1863, Lincoln issued a Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction, known as the “**Ten Percent Plan**.”
	+ Its terms stated that as soon as 10% of a state’s voters took loyalty oaths to the Union, the state could set up a new government.
	+ If the state’s constitution abolished slavery and provided education for African Americans, the state would regain representation in Congress.
* Lincoln was willing to grant pardons to former Confederate and compensate them for their lost property.
* Congress’ Reconstruction Plan
* There were “**Radical Republicans**” in Congress who opposed Lincoln’s plan and insisted the Confederates had committed crimes by entangling America in a war.
* They advocated full citizenship for African Americans, favored punishment and harsh terms for the South and supported Sherman’s plan to confiscate Confederate land and give farms to freedmen.
* Rejecting Lincoln’s Ten Percent Plan, Congress passed the **Wade-Davis Bill** in 1864, requiring that a majority of a state’s prewar voters swear loyalty to the Union before the process of restoration could begin. The bill also demanded guarantees of African American equality.
* Lincoln killed this plan with a “pocket veto” by withholding his signature beyond the 10-day deadline at the end of the congressional session.
* The Radical Republicans also developed the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, known as the **Freedmen’s Bureau**. Its goal was to provide food, clothing, health care, and education for both black and white refugees in the South.
* The Freedmen’s Bureau helped reunite families that had been separated by slavery and war. It negotiated fair labor contracts between former slaves and white landowners. By representing African Americans in court, the Bureau also established a precedent that black citizens had legal rights.
* Johnson’s Reconstruction Plan
* Andrew Johnson was Lincoln’s VP and so he became president when Lincoln died.
* Johnson, like Lincoln, wanted to restore the southern states as quickly as possible. He also offered pardons and the restoration of land to Confederates who swore allegiance to the Union and the Constitution.
* However, Johnson resented wealthy planters and required that they and other Confederate leaders write to him personally to apply for a pardon. Johnson also did not desire to elevate blacks. He did not want them to vote and he had little sympathy for their plight.
* Johnson believed strongly in states’ rights, which would allow the states the power to limit the freedom of former slaves.
* The Southern states set up their governments to rebuild their prewar world.
* The Southern states instituted **black codes**, which were laws that sought to limit the rights of African Americans and keep them as landless workers.
	+ The codes required African Americans to work only in a limited number of occupations.
	+ Prohibited African Americans from owning land
* Set up vagrancy laws, which stipulated that any black person who did not have a job could be arrested and sent to work as prison labor.
* Congress was furious by the South’s disregard for Reconstruction and so they:
	+ Refused southern representatives their seats in Congress
	+ Created a committee to investigate the treatment of former slaves
	+ They passed the **Civil Rights Act of 1866**, which created federal guarantees of civil rights and superseded any state laws that limited them.
* President Johnson accused Congress of trying to “Africanize” the south and he vetoed all of their efforts. He was openly defying Congress at every turn.
* Congressional Reconstruction
* As violence in the South against African Americans grew, Congress did something unprecedented: for the first time in history, with the required 2/3 majority, they passed The Civil Rights Act of 1866 over the president’s veto.
* Congress then got together and created a Reconstruction plan.
	+ They passed the **14th Amendment** which guaranteed equality under the law for all citizens and made all people born in the U.S. citizens (gave African Americans citizenship).
	+ Next Congress passed the **Military Reconstruction Act of 1867** which divided the southern states that had not yet been readmitted to the Union into 5 military districts governed by former Union generals.
	+ Also, this act listed what each state must do to reenter the Union:
		- Set up a new government
		- Include suffrage (right to vote) for African American men in their constitutions
		- Ratify the 14th amendment
* The power struggle between the president and Congress reached a crisis in 1867.
* To limit the President’s power, Congress passed the Tenure of Office Act requiring the President to obtain Senate approval to remove certain officials from office.
* When President Johnson tried to fire the last of Lincoln’s cabinet members the House of Representatives voted to impeach him, which means they formally disapproved of his conduct and were charging him with wrongdoing.
* During his trial in the Senate, Johnson promised to enforce the Reconstruction Acts and he kept that promise in remaining time in office.
* Next, Congress passed the **15th Amendment**, which gave African Americans the right to vote by stating no citizen may be denied the right to vote because of “race, color or previous conditions of servitude.”
	+ This left loopholes that soon the southern states would take advantage of.
* Section 2
* By 1870, all the southern states had completed the requirements of Congressional Reconstruction and had rejoined the Union.
* Black men helped usher the Republican Party into the South.
	+ By 1868, many southern states had both African American elected officials and a strong Republican Party.
* Since the Radical Republicans required a loyalty oath, many white southerners were not eligible to vote, or chose to stay away from politics.
* The Republican Party not only attracted blacks, but also whites who were looking for change. **Scalawags** was a derogatory name for white men who had been locked out of pre-Civil War politics by their wealthier neighbors and so they joined the Republican Party.
	+ Scalawags found friends in the northern white or black men who relocated to the South. Many white southerners resented what they felt was an invasion of the opportunists, coming to make their fortunes from the South’s misfortune.
* Southerners labeled these newcomers “**carpetbaggers**,” after the inexpensive carpet cloth suitcases often carried by northerners.
* For carpetbaggers, the opportunities in the South were very abundant: new land to be bought, new careers to be shaped.
* Charactersitics of carpetbaggers:
	+ They were often young
	+ Since only the wealthy minority of white southerners were literate, a northerner with even a basic education had a real advantage.
	+ Why did the move South? For blacks, the South was the only place to pursue a political career. Even though the 15th Amendment established suffrage nationally, no black congressman was elected in the North until the 20th century.
* Successes of Reconstruction
* Reconstruction offered women—both white and black—opportunities.
	+ They were able to begin careers in the medical field, orphanages and other relief agencies. They also participated heavily in the establishment of public schools.
* The establishment of public schools
	+ These grew slowly because establishing a new school system was expensive, especially since southerners wanted **segregation**, or separation of the races.
* Failures of Reconstruction
* The South lagged behind the North.
	+ Many southerners remained illiterate and uneducated.
	+ The quality of medical care, housing and economic production was not comparable to the North.
* Legal protection for blacks was limited and racial violence remained a problem until well into the 20th century.
* Political corruption flourished in both the North and the South.
* Many African Americans left plantations and headed for the cities where they could develop churches, schools, and other social institutions. They also hoped to find work.
* Those with skills looked for work as carpenters, blacksmiths, cooks or house servants. Many women did laundry, child care or domestic work. Most often, black workers had to settle for what they had under slavery: poor housing and food in exchange for hard labor.
* The Freedmen’s Bureau spent about $5 million to set up about 4,300 schools for former slaves. Roughly 300,000 students attended and paid about 10% of their wages in tuition.
* The Freedmen’s Bureau schools taught basic literacy (reading and writing) and arithmetic as well as occupational and life skills.
* The Bureau also worked to establish and advance black colleges. They also provided certificates to legalize existing marriages and birth certificates for children.
* Because even large land owners lacked the money after the war to buy supplies or pay workers, they adopted one of three arrangements:
* 1. **Sharecropping**: a system where a landowner provided the sharecropper with a place to live, seeds and tools in return for a “share” of the harvested crop.
	+ The landowner often bought the needed supplies on credit with high interest rates. This cost was passed on to the sharecropper.
	+ This system created a perpetual cycle of debt—the sharecropper always owed the landowner and the landowner always owed the supplier.
* 2. **Share-tenancy**: much like sharecropping, except that the farmworker chose what crop he would plant and bought his own supplies. Then he gave a share of the crop to the landowner.
	+ Here the farmworker had a bit more control over the cost of supplies. He might be able to grow a variety of crops and feed his family from them. Under this system, it was more possible to save money.
* 3. **Tenant farming**: the tenant paid cash rent to the landowner and then was free to choose and manage his own crop and free to choose where he would live.
	+ The most independent arrangement for both farmer and landowner.
* The struggle to make a living in a region devastated by war led to fierce economic competition. Having to share this economic uncertainty with blacks fueled white southerners rage. The more progress African Americans made, the more hostile white southerners got.
* During Reconstruction, dozens of loosely organized groups of white southerners emerged to terrorize African Americans. The best known of these groups was the **Ku Klux Klan**, which formed in Tennessee in 1866.
* Klan members traveled around, mostly at night, burning homes, schools, and churches, and beating, maiming and killing African Americans and their white allies.
* One of their main focuses was to scare freed men away from voting.
* Congress responded by passing the **Enforcement Acts** in 1870-71, which made it a federal offense to interfere with a citizen’s right to vote.
* Congress also held hearings inviting black politicians and observers to describe the situation in the South.
* Congress used the acts to charge hundreds of Klansmen throughtout the South.
* These acts helped bring a decline in the violence, but it would come up again in the coming decades.
* Section 3
* The nation had been focusing on regional strife for almost 20 years, but other social, political and economic issues came to the surface and required attention.
* Political Scandal
* Ulysses S. Grant was a great war hero, but a poor president. He appointed untrustworthy friends and acquaintances to high-ranking government jobs and they used their position to line their own pockets.
* More and more scandals surrounding Grant’s administration came out during his second term, including his Secretary of War, his private secretary and members of Congress.
* When all of this happened, Grant was totally innocent but he seemed to look the other way and lack the will to root out the corruption.
* Scandals in local governments also came out across the nation. The most famous was the “Tweed Ring” where New York state senator William Tweed stole millions of dollars from the New York City treasury.
* The public lost confidence in public officials.
* Economic Panic
* In 1873, one of the nation’s most influential banks failed, appartently from overextended loans to the expanding railroad industry.
* This economic slump caused the public’s discontent to worsen and suddenly the South’s economy was not the only one hurting.
* Across the nation, bank closures, job losses and economic uncertainty added to the concerns that preoccupied northerners.
* The economic panic combined with the concern over political corruption distracted the North from their ability to keep pressure on the South to complete Reconstruction.
* Why did Reconstruction end?
* The end of Reconstruction did not come suddenly. It was a slow death.
* 1. The North was distracted by many things:
	+ Economic issues
	+ Political corruption
	+ Cost of military presence in the South (gradually and quietly, beginning in 1871, troops were withdrawn from the South and in 1872 the Freedmen’s Bureau was dissolved)
* 2. The death of Radical Republican leader Charles Sumner signaled the end of a generation of white reformers focused on carrying out Reconstuction. (Northern racial prejudice would now reemerge)
* 3. The 13th, 14th and 15th amendments were passed but it was left up to the courts to interpret how to apply these amendments.
* In a series of landmark cases, the Supreme Court chipped away at blacks’ rights in the 1870s.
* The *Slaughterhouse Cases* (1873) the Court restricted the scope of the 14th amendment and concluded that though a citizen has certain national rights, the federal government would have no control over how a state chose to define those rights for the citizens who resided in that state.
* In *United States v. Cruikshank* (1876), the Court ruled that the due process and equal protection clauses of the 14th amendment protected citizens only from action of state and not from the action of other citizens.
* Some white southern Democrats devised a more subtle strategy for suppressing black’s rights. They put together an association to return the South to the rule of white men.
	+ To appeal to small farmers, they emphasized how Republican programs like schools and road-building resulted in higher taxes.
	+ The compromised with local Republicans by agreeing to African Americans suffrage.
	+ Playing on the national sensitivity to corruption, they seized every opportunity to discredit black politicians.
* They believed that racial segregation should be the rule of the new South.
* The main focus of their strategy was *compromise*: finding common issues that would unite white southerners around the goal of regaining power in Congress.
* These compromisers became known as **Redeemers**, because they were politicians who aimed to “repair” or “redeem” the South.
* They were successful and by the election of 1874, the Republicans had lost their control over the House of Representatives.
* Election of 1876
* With the Republican’s loss of power, the stage was set to end northern domination of the South.
* Republican Rutherford B. Hayes ran against Democrat Samuel Tilden
* Hayes was a respected Union general who had served in the House of Representatives and governor of Ohio. He was known for his honesty and reform-mindedness.
* Tilden had been active in fighting corruption in New York City.
* In the election, Tilden won 51% of the popular vote and carried all of the southern states.
* Republicans claimed that the votes had been miscounted in 3 southern states, which happened to be where Republicans controlled the reporting of the ballots.
* In the recount, the Republicans found enough mistakes to swing the election to Hayes by one vote.
* When the southern Democrats protested the results of this vote, Congress was assigned to mediate the process. Congress created a commission of 5 Senators (chosen the by the Republican-dominated Senate) and 5 representatives (chosen by the Democratic House of Reps) and 5 Supreme Court Justices.
* This became known as the **Compromise of 1877**:
	+ Hayes was elected President. In return, the remaining federal troops were withdrawn from the South, a southerner was appointed to a powerful cabinet position, and southern states were guaranteed federal subsidies to build railroads and improve their ports.
* Reconstruction failed to heal the bitterness between the North and South or to provide lasting protection for freed people.
* The lasting effect of Reconstruction, however, was it did raise African Americans’ expectations of their right to citizenship, and it placed before Americans the meaning and value of the right to vote.
* Lasting Effect of Reconstruction
* Before the Civil War, no African Americans in the South and only a few in the North had the right to vote or own land. Reconstruction changed this.
* Reconstruction offered African Americans choices for the first time.
* While Reconstruction gave the vote to black *men*, it split the women’s suffrage movement:
	+ Some wanted to attach women’s right to vote to the 15th amendment. These women formed the **National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA)**.
	+ Other women felt that the 15th amendment could not get ratified if women were attached to it and felt women should wait. These women formed the **American Woman Suffrage Associaition (AWSA)**.
* Reconstruction shaped American politics.
	+ The Republican Party was born out of the slavery controversy and the Democrats became the party of the South.