

# Unit 11: *Reconstruction*

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## Lecture 11.1 • *Restoring the Union*

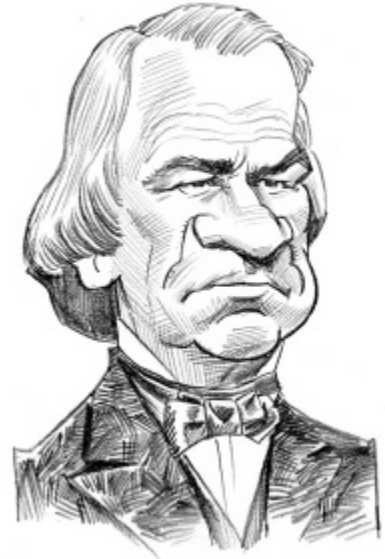
*After the Civil War was over, the federal government had to devise a plan for Reconstruction (rebuilding the country).*

- The task before them was enormous. The government needed to decide how to:
  1. rebuild the physical infrastructure of the South
  2. readmit the former Confederate states back into the Union
  3. deal with former Confederate politicians and officers, and
  4. help craft a future for nine million former slaves

**Option 1:** Make the South pay for starting the war and make it difficult for them to get readmitted back into the United States. This option was favored by the Republican-controlled Congress.

**Option 2:** “Bury the hatchet” and get the country back together as quickly as possible. This option was favored by the Republican President, Abraham Lincoln, and the Democrats in Congress.

- The President and Congress were preparing to debate which route to take, when in April, 1865, Lincoln was assassinated by a Southerner, **John Wilkes Booth**, as part of a plot to topple the government.
- Lincoln was replaced by Vice-President Andrew Johnson, a Southern Democrat who had an even more forgiving view of Reconstruction than Lincoln.
- Congress was constantly upset with Johnson for veto’ing all the Reconstruction bills that it passed. In 1866 though, the Republicans gained a two-thirds majority in Congress and they passed the **Reconstruction Act**.
- Pressing their political advantage, Congress went a step further and tried to have Johnson **impeached**.
- Johnson survived being impeached, but in 1868, he lost the presidency to Ulysses S. Grant. Before leaving office though, Johnson issued an **amnesty** to all former Confederates.



**Who is this?**

### **Personal Reflection:**

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#### **impeach:**

to place an elected official on trial for a crime

#### **amnesty:**

an official pardon for a politically motivated crime

## Lecture 11.2 • *Reconstruction*

- In the late-1860s, with the Republicans & President Grant firmly in control of the government, the **Reconstruction Act** went into full effect.
- Southern states were told that they wouldn't be readmitted to the U.S. until they approved the **13th Amendment**, which outlawed slavery.
- The South was divided into military districts, and the U.S. Army was left in the South to enforce federal laws, and protect former slaves.
- With the old Southern social order gone many blacks began to run for office, buy land, open businesses, and demand social equality.
- Many white Southerners resisted these changes to the old social order. Because they wanted to conserve the old Southern way of life, they were called "conservatives", and they did everything they could to keep the blacks from gaining power.
- All across the South, many former Confederate states begin passing new laws to limit black power:
  1. **Black Codes** - laws banning blacks from voting, owning guns, and sitting on juries
  2. **Poll Taxes** - a tax on voting
  3. **Literacy Tests** - "You can't vote if you can't read."
  4. **Grandfather Clauses** - "You can vote, if your father voted."
  5. **"Jim Crow" Laws** - Blacks and whites had to have separate areas in schools, hospitals, restaurants, theaters, trains, beaches, and even churches & cemeteries!
- As the South began to slide back into the hands of conservatives, all eyes turned to Washington. How would the government react?



**Who is this black folk character?**

**Personal Reflection:**

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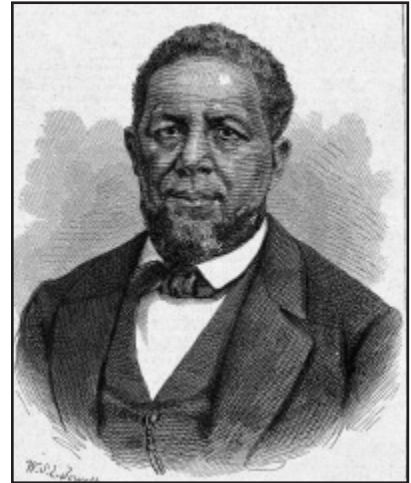
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# Lecture 11.3 •

## *The Battle for the South*

- Even with the U.S. Army enforcing federal law, literacy tests, poll taxes, Jim Crow laws, and **segregation** (the separation of people based upon their race) started to spread across the South.
- Congress fought back with the **Civil Rights Act of 1866**, which affirmed the rights of blacks to sign contracts, file law suits, testify in court, and own property.
- Over the next five years, two more amendments were added to the Constitution; the **14th** in 1868, which guaranteed people’s citizenship, and the **15th** in 1870, which guaranteed voting rights ... both despite a person’s race.
- As Congress became more aggressive, so did Southern conservatives, and many began to favor a more “direct” approach in dealing with blacks.
- In 1865, former Confederate general Nathan Bedford Forrest established a “club” for Southern “gentlemen” called the **Ku Klux Klan**.
- From 1865 to 1868, the Klan terrorized the citizens of the South, and conducted 1,300 lynchings.
- Congress fought back against the KKK with the Civil Rights Act of 1871 — the “Klan Act” — which made lynchings, and other civil rights violations federal crimes, with harsher penalties, and longer jail sentences.
- But it was over 10 years since the end of the Civil War, and both politicians and the American people were growing weary of the constant debate. For better or for worse, Reconstruction was coming to a close...



**In 1870, Hiram Revels became the first African-American to hold what U.S. political office?**

### **Personal Reflection:**

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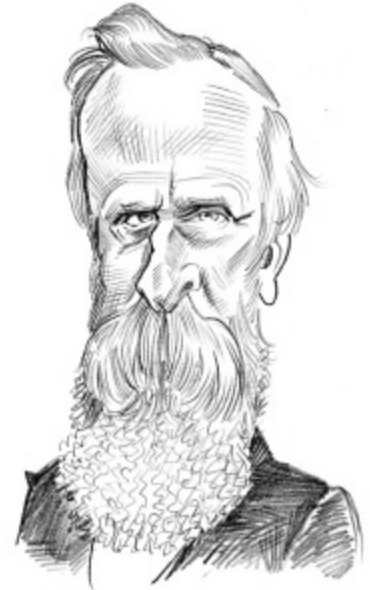
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**segregation:**  
the separation of people based upon their race

# Lecture 11.4 •

## *Segregation & The New South*

- The end of Reconstruction started with a political compromise in Washington.
- The presidential election of 1876 resulted in an electoral vote tie between the Democratic candidate, Samual Tilden, and the Republican, Rutherford B. Hayes.
- So the “Compromise of 1877” was devised. In exchange for Democratic support for Hayes, the Republicans agreed to end Reconstruction, and return control of the South to the Southern states themselves.
- Federal troops were removed from the South. With them went any real enforcement of the 14th & 15th Amendments, and the Civil Rights Acts.
- With the Civil War now 15 years in the past, and Reconstruction officially over, much of the progress made by blacks began to be whittled away.
- The clock was rolled back even further, when in 1883, the Supreme Court ruled that racial discrimination by private businesses was Constitutionally legal.
- Southern conservatives regained control of their state governments, and the South began to “re-brand” the Civil War as a noble “lost cause” instead of an armed rebellion against the federal government, and an attempt to perpetuate slavery.
- As blacks lost more and more political and social influence, racial discrimination and segregation became the norm all across the South.
- **Segregation** would remain a part of the South until the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and ‘60s ... nearly 100 years after the Civil War.



**Who is this?**

### **Personal Reflection:**

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