

Was Congressional Reconstruction More About Racial Equality Or Political Power

Was Congressional Reconstruction More About Racial Equality or Political Power? A Deep Dive into the Post-Civil War Era

Introduction:

The Reconstruction Era following the American Civil War remains one of the most debated periods in US history. Was it a genuine attempt to achieve racial equality, or was it primarily a struggle for political dominance between the North and the South, with the fate of African Americans a secondary concern? This comprehensive analysis delves into the complexities of Congressional Reconstruction, examining the competing narratives surrounding its aims and ultimately exploring whether racial equality or political power was the more significant driving force. We will analyze key legislation, political maneuvers, and the lived experiences of formerly enslaved people to reach a nuanced understanding of this pivotal era.

1. The Seeds of Conflict: The Immediate Aftermath of the Civil War

The end of the Civil War in 1865 didn't bring immediate harmony. While President Lincoln's vision of a lenient Reconstruction aimed at swift reunification, his assassination paved the way for a far more radical approach from the Radical Republicans in Congress. These lawmakers, driven by a combination of abolitionist ideals and a desire to reshape the balance of power in the federal government, clashed sharply with President Andrew Johnson's lenient policies towards the former Confederate states. Johnson's pardons for Confederate leaders and his reluctance to grant Black Americans full citizenship fueled Radical Republican anger, setting the stage for a dramatic power struggle.

2. The Radical Republican Agenda: A Push for Equality and Federal Dominance

The Radical Republicans championed legislation aimed at securing civil rights for African Americans. The 13th Amendment abolished slavery, while the 14th Amendment granted citizenship and equal protection under the law. The 15th Amendment prohibited denial of suffrage based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude. However, these legislative victories were intertwined with a broader strategy to dismantle the power of the Southern planter class and establish a stronger federal government. By enfranchising Black men, the Radicals aimed to reshape Southern politics, weakening the Democratic Party's dominance and strengthening the Republican Party's hold on power. This dual objective - racial equality and political control - became the defining characteristic of Congressional Reconstruction.

3. The Challenges of Implementation: Resistance and Compromise

Implementing these ambitious goals proved incredibly difficult. Southern resistance to federal authority manifested in various forms, including violence, intimidation, and the creation of white supremacist organizations like the Ku Klux Klan. The federal government struggled to effectively

enforce Reconstruction legislation and protect Black Americans from widespread violence and disenfranchisement. Compromises were made, often at the expense of the Black population. The compromise of 1877, which effectively ended Reconstruction, marked a retreat from the promise of racial equality and solidified the return of white supremacist power in the South.

4. The Lived Experiences of African Americans During Reconstruction: A Mixed Bag

Reconstruction brought about significant changes for African Americans, yet the reality was far from uniformly positive. While Black Americans gained unprecedented political power, holding office at local, state, and even national levels, they also faced immense hardship. The promise of 40 acres and a mule remained largely unfulfilled, and economic opportunities were limited by widespread poverty and systemic discrimination. Black communities established schools and churches, built their own institutions, and fought for their rights, but they were simultaneously subjected to relentless violence and oppression. Their experiences highlight the complexities of the era and the limitations of even the most well-intentioned legislative efforts.

5. The Legacy of Congressional Reconstruction: Unfinished Business

Congressional Reconstruction, despite its shortcomings, left a lasting legacy. The constitutional amendments passed during this period fundamentally altered the fabric of American society, establishing legal protections for African Americans that continue to serve as the bedrock of civil rights struggles today. However, the failure to fully achieve racial equality during Reconstruction resulted in a prolonged period of racial injustice and inequality that persists to this day. The unfinished business of Reconstruction continues to shape the ongoing struggle for racial justice in the United States.

Article Outline:

Title: Was Congressional Reconstruction More About Racial Equality or Political Power?

Introduction: Hook the reader and provide a brief overview of the article's contents.

Chapter 1: The Seeds of Conflict: The immediate aftermath of the Civil War and the emerging clash between President Johnson and Radical Republicans.

Chapter 2: The Radical Republican Agenda: A detailed examination of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, their aims, and the underlying political motivations.

Chapter 3: Challenges of Implementation: Analyzing the resistance faced by the federal government, the use of violence and intimidation, and the compromises made.

Chapter 4: Lived Experiences of African Americans: Examining the successes and failures of Reconstruction from the perspective of the formerly enslaved population.

Chapter 5: The Legacy of Congressional Reconstruction: A discussion of the long-term consequences, both positive and negative, of this tumultuous period.

Conclusion: Summarize the arguments presented and offer a concluding perspective on the primary driving force behind Congressional Reconstruction.

FAQs:

1. What were the main goals of Congressional Reconstruction? The primary goals were to reintegrate the Confederate states into the Union, secure civil rights for African Americans, and reshape the political landscape of the South.

2. Who were the Radical Republicans, and what was their role in Reconstruction? The Radical Republicans were a faction within the Republican Party who advocated for a more forceful approach to Reconstruction, pushing for greater civil rights for African Americans and a restructuring of Southern society.
3. What were the key pieces of legislation passed during Reconstruction? The 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution are the most significant legislative achievements of Reconstruction.
4. What was the Ku Klux Klan's role during Reconstruction? The KKK used violence, intimidation, and terrorism to suppress Black Americans and undermine Reconstruction efforts.
5. What was the Compromise of 1877, and how did it affect Reconstruction? The Compromise of 1877 effectively ended Reconstruction, leading to the withdrawal of federal troops from the South and the return of white supremacist rule.
6. What were some of the successes of Reconstruction for African Americans? Black Americans gained citizenship, voting rights, and held political office at various levels of government. They also established schools, churches, and other institutions.
7. What were some of the failures of Reconstruction? Reconstruction failed to fully address the economic disparities between Black and white Americans, and widespread violence and disenfranchisement continued in the South.
8. How did Reconstruction shape the later Civil Rights Movement? The constitutional amendments passed during Reconstruction provided a legal foundation for later civil rights struggles.
9. What is the lasting legacy of Congressional Reconstruction? Reconstruction left a complex legacy, shaping the ongoing struggle for racial justice and equality in the United States.

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9. **The Legacy of Reconstruction on American Politics:** Examines the enduring influence of this era on the political landscape of the United States.

was congressional reconstruction more about racial equality or political power: *The Radical and the Republican: Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, and the Triumph of Antislavery Politics* James Oakes, 2011-02-07 A great American tale told with a deft historical eye, painstaking analysis, and a supple clarity of writing.—Jean Baker “My husband considered you a dear friend,” Mary Todd Lincoln wrote to Frederick Douglass in the weeks after Lincoln’s assassination. The frontier lawyer and the former slave, the cautious politician and the fiery reformer, the President and the most famous black man in America—their lives traced different paths that finally met in the bloody landscape of secession, Civil War, and emancipation. Opponents at first, they gradually became allies, each influenced by and attracted to the other. Their three meetings in the White House signaled a profound shift in the direction of the Civil War, and in the fate of the United States. James Oakes has written a masterful narrative history, bringing two iconic figures to life and shedding new light on the central issues of slavery, race, and equality in Civil War America.

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was congressional reconstruction more about racial equality or political power: *The Second Founding: How the Civil War and Reconstruction Remade the Constitution* Eric Foner, 2019-09-17 “Gripping and essential.”—Jesse Wegman, New York Times An authoritative history by the preeminent scholar of the Civil War era, *The Second Founding* traces the arc of the three foundational Reconstruction amendments from their origins in antebellum activism and adoption amidst intense postwar politics to their virtual nullification by narrow Supreme Court decisions and Jim Crow state laws. Today these amendments remain strong tools for achieving the American ideal of equality, if only we will take them up.

was congressional reconstruction more about racial equality or political power: *Reconstruction* Allen C. Guelzo, 2018 Allen C. Guelzo's *Reconstruction: A Concise History* is a gracefully written interpretation of Reconstruction as a spirited struggle to reintegrate the defeated Southern Confederacy into the American Union after the Civil War, to bring African Americans into the political mainstream of American life, and to recreate the Southern economy after a Northern

free-labor model.

was congressional reconstruction more about racial equality or political power:

Rethinking the Judicial Settlement of Reconstruction Pamela Brandwein, 2011-02-21 American constitutional lawyers and legal historians routinely assert that the Supreme Court's state action doctrine halted Reconstruction in its tracks. But it didn't. Rethinking the Judicial Settlement of Reconstruction demolishes the conventional wisdom - and puts a constructive alternative in its place. Pamela Brandwein unveils a lost jurisprudence of rights that provided expansive possibilities for protecting blacks' physical safety and electoral participation, even as it left public accommodation rights undefended. She shows that the Supreme Court supported a Republican coalition and left open ample room for executive and legislative action. Blacks were abandoned, but by the president and Congress, not the Court. Brandwein unites close legal reading of judicial opinions (some hitherto unknown), sustained historical work, the study of political institutions, and the sociology of knowledge. This book explodes tired old debates and will provoke new ones.

was congressional reconstruction more about racial equality or political power: From Slavery to Freedom: Narrative Of The Life, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Up From Slavery, The Souls of Black Folk. Illustrated Frederick Douglass, Harriet Ann Jacobs, Booker Taliaferro Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois, 2021-01-08 African American history is the part of American history that looks at the past of African Americans or Black Americans. Of the 10.7 million Africans who were brought to the Americas until the 1860s, 450 thousand were shipped to what is now the United States. Most African Americans are descended from Africans who were brought directly from Africa to America and became slaves. The future slaves were originally captured in African wars or raids and transported in the Atlantic slave trade. Our collection includes the following works: Narrative Of The Life by Frederick Douglass. The impassioned abolitionist and eloquent orator provides graphic descriptions of his childhood and horrifying experiences as a slave as well as a harrowing record of his dramatic escape to the North and eventual freedom. Incidents In The Life Of A Slave Girl by Harriet Jacobs. Powerful by portrayal of the brutality of slave life through the inspiring tale of one woman's dauntless spirit and faith. Up From Slavery by Booker T. Washington. Washington rose to become the most influential spokesman for African Americans of his day. He describes events in a remarkable life that began in slavery and culminated in worldwide recognition. The Souls of Black Folk by W. E. B. Du Bois. W. E. B. Du Bois was an American sociologist, socialist, historian, civil rights activist, Pan-Africanist, author, writer and editor. Contents: 1. Frederick Douglass: Narrative Of The Life 2. Harriet Ann Jacobs: Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl 3. Booker Taliaferro Washington: Up From Slavery 4. W. E. B. Du Bois: The Souls of Black Folk

was congressional reconstruction more about racial equality or political power: Yankee Leviathan Richard Franklin Bensel, 1990 Contending that intense competition for national political economy control produced secession, this study describes the impact of the American Civil War upon the late nineteenth century development of central state authority.

was congressional reconstruction more about racial equality or political power:

Southern Nation David A. Bateman, Ira Katznelson, John S. Lapinski, 2018-07-10 How southern members of Congress remade the United States in their own image after the Civil War No question has loomed larger in the American experience than the role of the South. Southern Nation examines how southern members of Congress shaped national public policy and American institutions from Reconstruction to the New Deal—and along the way remade the region and the nation in their own image. The central paradox of southern politics was how such a highly diverse region could be transformed into a coherent and unified bloc—a veritable nation within a nation that exercised extraordinary influence in politics. This book shows how this unlikely transformation occurred in Congress, the institutional site where the South's representatives forged a new relationship with the rest of the nation. Drawing on an innovative theory of southern lawmaking, in-depth analyses of key historical sources, and congressional data, Southern Nation traces how southern legislators confronted the dilemma of needing federal investment while opposing interference with the South's racial hierarchy, a problem they navigated with mixed results before choosing to prioritize white

supremacy above all else. Southern Nation reveals how southern members of Congress gradually won for themselves an unparalleled role in policymaking, and left all southerners—whites and blacks—disadvantaged to this day. At first, the successful defense of the South's capacity to govern race relations left southern political leaders locally empowered but marginalized nationally. With changing rules in Congress, however, southern representatives soon became strategically positioned to profoundly influence national affairs.

was congressional reconstruction more about racial equality or political power: Black Reconstruction in America 1860-1880 W. E. B. Du Bois, 1998 The pioneering work in the study of the role of Black Americans during Reconstruction by the most influential Black intellectual of his time. This pioneering work was the first full-length study of the role black Americans played in the crucial period after the Civil War, when the slaves had been freed and the attempt was made to reconstruct American society. Hailed at the time, Black Reconstruction in America 1860-1880 has justly been called a classic.

was congressional reconstruction more about racial equality or political power: Thaddeus Stevens Hans L. Trefousse, 2000-11-09 One of the most controversial figures in nineteenth-century American history, Thaddeus Stevens is best remembered for his role as congressional leader of the radical Republicans and as a chief architect of Reconstruction. Long painted by historians as a vindictive 'dictator of Congress,' out to punish the South at the behest of big business and his own ego, Stevens receives a more balanced treatment in Hans L. Trefousse's biography, which portrays him as an impassioned orator and a leader in the struggle against slavery. Trefousse traces Stevens's career through its major phases: from his days in the Pennsylvania state legislature, when he antagonized Freemasons, slaveholders, and Jacksonian Democrats, to his political involvement during Reconstruction, when he helped author the Fourteenth Amendment and spurred on the passage of the Reconstruction Acts and the impeachment of Andrew Johnson. Throughout, Trefousse explores the motivations for Stevens's lifelong commitment to racial equality, thus furnishing a fuller portrait of the man whose fervent opposition to slavery helped move his more moderate congressional colleagues toward the implementation of egalitarian policies.

was congressional reconstruction more about racial equality or political power: The Era of Reconstruction Kenneth M. Stampp, 1967-10-12 Stampp's classic work offers a revisionist explanation for the radical failure to achieve equality for blacks, and of the effect that Conservative rule had on the subsequent development of the South. Refuting former schools of thought, Stampp challenges the notions that slavery was somehow just a benign aspect of Southern culture, and how the failures during the reconstruction period created a ripple effect that is still seen today. Praise for The Era of Reconstruction: “. . . This “brief political history of reconstruction” by a well-known Civil War authority is a thoughtful and detailed study of the reconstruction era and the distorted legends still clinging to it.”—Kirkus Reviews “It is to be hoped that this work reaches a large audience, especially among people of influence, and will thus help to dispel some of the myths about Reconstructions that hamper efforts in the civil rights field to this day.”—Albert Castel, Western Michigan University

was congressional reconstruction more about racial equality or political power: The Reconstruction Era and the Fragility of Democracy Facing History and Ourselves, 2017-11-22 provides history teachers with dozens of primary and secondary source documents, close reading exercises, lesson plans, and activity suggestions that will push students both to build a complex understanding of the dilemmas and conflicts Americans faced during Reconstruction.

was congressional reconstruction more about racial equality or political power: Class, Race, and the Civil Rights Movement Jack M. Bloom, 2019-07-09 Revised and updated: the award-winning historical analysis of the civil rights movement examining the interplay of race and class in the American South. In Race, Class, and the Civil Rights Movement, sociologist Jack M. Bloom explains what the civil rights movement was about, why it was successful, and why it fell short of some of its objectives. With a unique sociohistorical analysis, he argues that Southern racist practices were established by the agrarian upper class, and that only when this class system was

undermined did the civil rights movement became possible. He also demonstrates how the movement was the culmination of political struggles beginning in the Reconstruction era and influenced by the New Deal policies of the 1930s. Widely praised when it was first published in 1987, *Race, Class, and the Civil Rights Movement* was a C. Wright Mills Second Award-winning book and also won the Gustavus Myers Center Outstanding Book Award. In this second edition, Bloom updates his study in light of current scholarship on civil rights history. He also presents an analysis of the New Right within the Republican Party, starting in the 1960s, as a reaction to the civil rights movement.

was congressional reconstruction more about racial equality or political power: Beyond BIM Danelle Briscoe, 2015-10-14 *Beyond BIM* explores the vast and under-explored design potential undertaken by information modeling. Through a series of investigations grounded in the analysis of built work, interviews with leading practitioners, and speculative projects, the author catalogs the practical advantages and theoretical implications of exploiting BIM as a primary tool for design innovation. Organized by information type, such as geographic data, local code, or materials, each chapter suggests a realm of knowledge that can be harvested and imported into BIM to give meaningful specificity to architectural form and space. While highly sustainable, the work documented and envisioned in this book moves well beyond 'normalization,' to reveal inventive takes on contemporary practice. *Beyond BIM* serves as a primary resource for professional architects from practice, researchers and designers engaged in information related spatial design processes, as well as students and faculties of architecture schools in search of BIM design inspiration. Likewise, those highly attuned to computation and unconventional ways of creating form and space, particularly built outcomes that utilize BIM, will find this book meaningful and essential.

was congressional reconstruction more about racial equality or political power: Freedom, Racism, and Reconstruction LaWanda C. Fenlason Cox, 1997 LaWanda Cox is widely regarded as one of the most influential historians of Reconstruction and nineteenth-century race relations. Imaginative in conception, forcefully argued, and elegantly written, her work helped reshape historians' understanding of the age of emancipation. *Freedom, Racism, and Reconstruction* brings together Cox's most important writings spanning more than forty years, including previously published essays, excerpts from her books, and an unpublished essay. Now retired from Hunter College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, Cox gave Donald G. Nieman her full cooperation on this project. The result is a cohesive book of refreshing and sophisticated analysis that illuminates a pivotal era in American history. It not only serves as a lasting testament to a highly original scholar but also makes available to readers a remarkable body of scholarship that remains required reading for anyone who wishes to understand the age of emancipation and the historian's craft.

was congressional reconstruction more about racial equality or political power: The Revolution that Failed Adam Fairclough, 2018-02-09 A masterful and revelatory examination of Reconstruction populated by a cast of compelling characters who leap to life in all their glory, gore, and pathos.--Lawrence N. Powell, author of *The Accidental City: Improvising New Orleans* Illuminates a complex period, city, and state and advances a reinterpretation of Reconstruction politics that is both welcome and overdue.--Paul D. Escott, author of *Uncommonly Savage: Civil War and Remembrance in Spain and the United States* The chaotic years after the Civil War are often seen as a time of uniquely American idealism--a revolutionary attempt to rebuild the nation that paved the way for the civil rights movement of the twentieth century. But Adam Fairclough rejects this prevailing view, challenging prominent historians such as Eric Foner and James McPherson. He argues that Reconstruction was, quite simply, a disaster, and that the civil rights movement triumphed despite it, not because of it. Fairclough takes readers to Natchitoches, Louisiana, a majority-black parish deep in the cotton South. Home to a vibrant Republican Party led by former slaves, ex-Confederates, and free people of color, the parish was a bastion of Republican power and the ideal place for Reconstruction to have worked. Yet although it didn't experience the extremes of violence that afflicted the surrounding region, Natchitoches fell prey to Democratic intimidation. Its

Republican leaders were eventually driven out of the parish. Reconstruction failed, Fairclough argues, because the federal government failed to enforce the rights it had created. Congress had given the Republicans of the South and the Freedmen's Bureau an impossible task--to create a new democratic order based on racial equality in an area tortured by deep-rooted racial conflict. Moving expertly between a profound local study and wider developments in Washington, *The Revolution That Failed* offers a sobering perspective on how Reconstruction affected African American citizens and what its long-term repercussions were for the nation.

was congressional reconstruction more about racial equality or political power: *When the Stars Begin to Fall* Theodore R. Johnson, 2021-05-04 A "persuasive . . . heartfelt and vividly written" call to counter systemic racism and build national solidarity in America (Publishers Weekly). The American Promise enshrined in our Constitution states that all men and women are inherently equal. And yet racism continues to corrode our society. If we cannot overcome it, Theodore Johnson argues, the promise that made America unique on Earth will have died. In *When the Stars Begin to Fall*, Johnson presents a compelling blueprint for the kind of national solidarity necessary to mitigate racism. Weaving together history, personal memories, and his family's multi-generational experiences with racism, Johnson posits that solutions can be found in the exceptional citizenship long practiced in Black America. Understanding that racism is a structural crime of the state, he argues that overcoming it requires us to recognize that a color-conscious society—not a color-blind one—is the true fulfillment of the American Promise. Fueled by Johnson's ultimate faith in the American project, grounded in his family's longstanding optimism and his own military service, *When the Stars Begin to Fall* is an urgent call to undertake the process of overcoming what has long seemed intractable.

was congressional reconstruction more about racial equality or political power: **Republican Party Politics and the American South, 1865-1968** Boris Heersink, Jeffery A. Jenkins, 2020-03-19 Traces how the Republican Party in the South after Reconstruction transformed from a biracial organization to a mostly all-white one.

was congressional reconstruction more about racial equality or political power: *Inequality and American Democracy* Lawrence R. Jacobs, Theda Skocpol, 2005-08-25 In the twentieth century, the United States ended some of its most flagrant inequalities. The rights revolution ended statutory prohibitions against women's suffrage and opened the doors of voting booths to African Americans. Yet a more insidious form of inequality has emerged since the 1970s—economic inequality—which appears to have stalled and, in some arenas, reversed progress toward realizing American ideals of democracy. In *Inequality and American Democracy*, editors Lawrence Jacobs and Theda Skocpol headline a distinguished group of political scientists in assessing whether rising economic inequality now threatens hard-won victories in the long struggle to achieve political equality in the United States. *Inequality and American Democracy* addresses disparities at all levels of the political and policy-making process. Kay Lehman Scholzman, Benjamin Page, Sidney Verba, and Morris Fiorina demonstrate that political participation is highly unequal and strongly related to social class. They show that while economic inequality and the decreasing reliance on volunteers in political campaigns serve to diminish their voice, middle class and working Americans lag behind the rich even in protest activity, long considered the political weapon of the disadvantaged. Larry Bartels, Hugh Hechler, Rodney Hero, and Lawrence Jacobs marshal evidence that the U.S. political system may be disproportionately responsive to the opinions of wealthy constituents and business. They argue that the rapid growth of interest groups and the increasingly strict party-line voting in Congress imperils efforts at enacting policies that are responsive to the preferences of broad publics and to their interests in legislation that extends economic and social opportunity. Jacob Hacker, Suzanne Mettler, and Dianne Pinderhughes demonstrate the feedbacks of government policy on political participation and inequality. In short supply today are inclusive public policies like the G.I. Bill, Social Security legislation, the War on Poverty, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that changed the American political climate, mobilized interest groups, and altered the prospect for initiatives to stem inequality in the last fifty years. *Inequality and American*

Democracy tackles the complex relationships between economic, social, and political inequality with authoritative insight, showcases a new generation of critical studies of American democracy, and highlights an issue of growing concern for the future of our democratic society.

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The Civil War Years, 1861-1865 -- The Early Reconstruction Era, 1865-1871 -- The Demise of Reconstruction, 1871-1877 -- The Redemption Era, 1877-1891 -- The Wilderness Years, 1891-1918.

was congressional reconstruction more about racial equality or political power: An Example for All the Land Kate Masur, 2010-10-04 An Example for All the Land reveals Washington, D.C. as a laboratory for social policy in the era of emancipation and the Civil War. In this panoramic study, Kate Masur provides a nuanced account of African Americans' grassroots activism, municipal politics, and the U.S. Congress. She tells the provocative story of how black men's right to vote transformed local affairs, and how, in short order, city reformers made that right virtually meaningless. Bringing the question of equality to the forefront of Reconstruction scholarship, this widely praised study explores how concerns about public and private space, civilization, and dependency informed the period's debate over rights and citizenship.

was congressional reconstruction more about racial equality or political power: Reconstruction in the United States David Lincove, 2000-01-30 The only comprehensive bibliography on Reconstruction, this book provides the definitive guide to literature published from 1877 to 1998. In over 2,900 entries, the work covers a broad range of topics including politics, agriculture, labor, religion, education, race relations, law, family, gender studies, and local history. It encompasses the years of the Civil War through the conclusion of the 1876 election and the end of the federal government's official role in reforming the postwar South and protecting the rights of Black citizens. In detailed annotations, the book covers a range of literature from scholarly and popular studies to published memoirs, letters and documents, as well as reference sources and teaching tools. The issues of Reconstruction—civil rights, states' rights and federal-state relations, racism, nationalism, government aid to individuals—continue to be relevant today, and the literature on Reconstruction is large. This book provides a systematic and comprehensive bibliographic guide to that literature. It is organized by topics and geographical regions and states, thereby emphasizing the local diversity in the South. In addition to a variety of literature, it covers the relevant Supreme Court cases through 1883, provides full citations to federal acts and cases cited, and includes the texts of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution. The book will be useful to scholars and students researching a wide range of topics in Southern history, constitutional history, and national politics in post Civil War United States.

was congressional reconstruction more about racial equality or political power: Framing the Solid South Paul E. Herron, 2017 Antebellum Southern State Constitutionalism -- Secession, Sovereignty and state constitutional revision -- Framing the Southern Republic -- Presidential requests -- Congressional demands -- Reaction, retrenchment, an resistance

was congressional reconstruction more about racial equality or political power: The Color-Blind Constitution Andrew Kull, 2009-07 From 1840 to 1960 the profoundest claim of Americans who fought the institution of segregation was that the government had no business sorting citizens by the color of their skin. During these years the moral and political attractiveness of the antidiscrimination principle made it the ultimate legal objective of the American civil rights movement. Yet, in the contemporary debate over the politics and constitutional law of race, the vital theme of antidiscrimination has been largely suppressed. Thus a strong line of argument laying down one theoretical basis for the constitutional protection of civil rights has been lost. Andrew Kull provides us with the previously unwritten history of the color-blind idea. From the arguments of Wendell Phillips and the Garrisonian abolitionists, through the framing of the Fourteenth Amendment and Justice Harlan's famous dissent in Plessy, civil rights advocates have consistently

attempted to locate the antidiscrimination principle in the Constitution. The real alternative, embraced by the Supreme Court in 1896, was a constitutional guarantee of reasonable classification. The government, it said, had the power to classify persons by race so long as it acted reasonably; the judiciary would decide what was reasonable. In our own time, in *Brown v. Board of Education* and the decisions that followed, the Court nearly avowed the rule of color blindness that civil rights lawyers continued to assert; instead, it veered off for political and tactical reasons, deciding racial cases without stating constitutional principle. The impoverishment of the antidiscrimination theme in the Court's decision prefigured the affirmative action shift in the civil rights agenda. The social upheaval of the 1960s put the color-blind Constitution out of reach for a quartercentury or more; but for the hard choices still to be made in racial policy, the colorblind tradition of civil rights retains both historical and practical significance.

was congressional reconstruction more about racial equality or political power: The Voting Rights Act of 1965 United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1965

was congressional reconstruction more about racial equality or political power: When It Was Grand LeeAnna Keith, 2020-01-14 A Civil War Monitor best book of 2020 A group biography of the activists who defended human rights and defined the Republican Party's greatest hour In 1862, the ardent abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison summarized the events that were tearing apart the United States: "There is a war because there was a Republican Party. There was a Republican Party because there was an Abolition Party. There was an Abolition Party because there was Slavery." Garrison's simple statement expresses the essential truths at the heart of LeeAnna Keith's *When It Was Grand*. Here is the full story, dramatically told, of the Radical Republicans—the champions of abolition who helped found a new political party and turn it toward the extirpation of slavery. Keith introduces us to the idealistic Massachusetts preachers and philanthropists, rugged Midwestern politicians, and African American activists who collaborated to protect escaped slaves from their captors, to create and defend black military regiments and win the contest for the soul of their party. Keith's fast-paced, deeply researched narrative gives us new perspective on figures ranging from Ralph Waldo Emerson and John Brown, to the gruff antislavery general John Fremont and his astute wife, Jessie Benton Fremont, and the radicals' sometime critic and sometime partner Abraham Lincoln. In the 1850s and 1860s, a powerful faction of the Republican Party stood for a demanding ideal of racial justice—and insisted that their party and nation live up to it. Here is a colorful, definitive account of their indelible accomplishment.

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Literary Supplement

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Trial of Democracy Wang, Xi, 2012-01-15 After the Civil War, Republicans teamed with activist African Americans to protect black voting rights through innovative constitutional reforms--a radical transformation of southern and national political structures. The Trial of Democracy is a comprehensive analysis of both the forces and mechanisms that led to the implementation of black suffrage and the ultimate failure to maintain a stable northern constituency to support enforcement on a permanent basis. The reforms stirred fierce debates over the political and constitutional value of black suffrage, the legitimacy of racial equality, and the proper sharing of power between the state and federal governments. Unlike most studies of Reconstruction, this book follows these issues into the early twentieth century to examine the impact of the constitutional principles and the rise of Jim Crow. Tying constitutional history to party politics, The Trial of Democracy is a vital contribution to both fields.

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extreme abolitionists on the one hand and the more cautious gradualists on the other, as they strove to break the slaveholder's domination of the federal government and then to wrest from the postbellum South an acknowledgment of the civil rights of the Negro. The author delineates their key role in founding the Republican party and follows their struggle to keep the party firm in its opposition to the expansion of slavery, to commit it to emancipation, and finally to make it the party of racial justice. This is the story as well of the tangled relationship of the Radical Republicans with Abraham Lincoln—a relationship of both quarrels and mutual support. The author stresses the similarity between Lincoln's ultimate aims and those of the Radical Republicans, demonstrating that without Lincoln's support Sumner and his colleagues could never have accomplished their ends—and that without their help Lincoln might not have succeeded in crushing the rebellion and putting an end to the slavery. And he argues that by 1865 Lincoln's Reconstruction policies were nearing those of the Radicals and that, had he lived, they would not have broken with him as they did with his successor. Lincoln's assassination left the Radicals with no means to translate their demands into effective action. Their efforts to remake the South in such a way as to secure justice for the Negro brought them into conflict with President Johnson, in whose impeachment they played a leading role. Although they succeeded in initiating congressional Reconstruction and adding the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the Constitution, the Radicals lost power after the failure of the Johnson impeachment. Mr. Trefousse shows how, despite their declining influence throughout the 1870s, their accomplishments helped make possible—a century later—the resumption of the struggle for civil rights.

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vital to this day.

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Practical Liberators Kristopher A. Teters, 2018-04-24 During the first fifteen months of the Civil War, the policies and attitudes of Union officers toward emancipation in the western theater were, at best, inconsistent and fraught with internal strains. But after Congress passed the Second Confiscation Act in 1862, army policy became mostly consistent in its support of liberating the slaves in general, in spite of Union army officers' differences of opinion. By 1863 and the final Emancipation Proclamation, the army had transformed into the key force for instituting emancipation in the West. However, Kristopher Teters argues that the guiding principles behind this development in attitudes and policy were a result of military necessity and pragmatic strategies, rather than an effort to enact racial equality. Through extensive research in the letters and diaries of western Union officers, Teters demonstrates how practical considerations drove both the attitudes and policies of Union officers regarding emancipation. Officers primarily embraced emancipation and the use of black soldiers because they believed both policies would help them win the war and save the Union, but their views on race actually changed very little. In the end, however, despite its practical bent, Teters argues, the Union army was instrumental in bringing freedom to the slaves.

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