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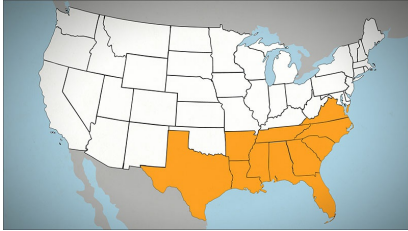
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# Reconstruction

## The Reconstruction Amendments

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.

1.



b'

The Confederate states

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Conflict and struggle in the United States didn't end when the Civil War

ended. Remember, the Confederate states had tried to secede from the US. Losing the war meant that they now had to remain part of a country they had wanted to leave. How would the Union readmit those states and what should the terms for readmittance be? Indeed, what was the best way to reconstruct the South and the United States as a whole? These were the big questions of the era. The week that the Civil War ended, President Lincoln was assassinated. He was the first president killed while in office. This created even more pain and uncertainty for the nation recovering from war.

Notes

2.



b'

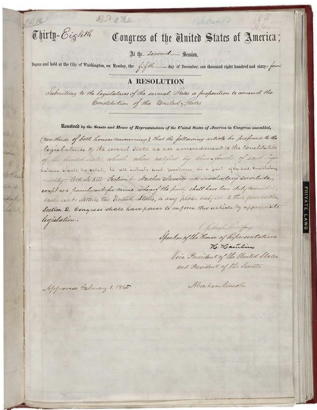
After the Civil War, the sharecropping system took the place of the plantation system.

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The Emancipation Proclamation, issued by Abraham Lincoln in 1863, freed slaves from states in active rebellion. The Thirteenth Amendment, passed by Congress in 1865, legally abolished slavery. This amendment ended slavery throughout the United States, freeing four million African Americans. However, these men and women faced extreme challenges to their freedom right away. In the South, many states passed laws that fined or imprisoned freedmen who did not find work. Other state laws prohibited freedmen from assembling or required them to sign yearly labor contracts. Collectively, these laws were known as "Black Codes." The end of slavery also marked the end of the plantation system in the South. The sharecropping system took its place. Sharecroppers rented their land and paid the owners a portion of their crops. This new system kept many former slaves in debt to their former masters.

Notes

3.



b'

The 13th Amendment, signed by Abraham Lincoln

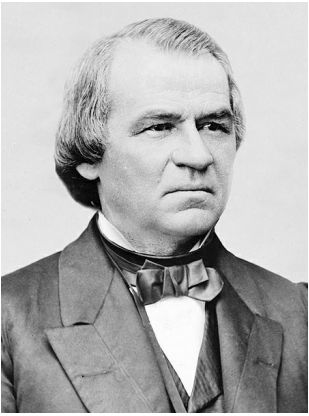
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The Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments are together known as the Reconstruction amendments. The Thirteenth Amendment, passed in 1865, ended slavery at the national level. In 1866, Congress sent the

Fourteenth Amendment to the states for ratification. It was ratified in 1868. This amendment granted citizenship to anyone born or naturalized in the US, which included former slaves. It also provided all citizens "equal protection under the law." Congress passed the Fifteenth Amendment in 1869, and it was ratified in 1870. The Fifteenth Amendment aimed to address the disenfranchisement of black voters in the South. It stated that the right to vote cannot be denied based on a person's race.

Notes

4.



b'

President Andrew Johnson

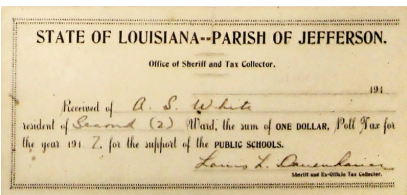
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With Lincoln's assassination in 1865, Andrew Johnson became president. Johnson, a Democrat, believed state governments should have more power than the federal government. While he led the Reconstruction efforts, he pardoned many former

Confederates and did not oppose the new "Black Code" laws many Southern states were enacting. Radical Republicans in Congress clashed with President Johnson over his approach. The Radical Republicans included Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner, among others. They wanted a much stricter approach to the former Confederacy. They also wanted to ensure that African Americans in the South had rights and freedoms. Eventually, moderate Republicans joined forces with the Radical Republicans and took control of Reconstruction efforts, passing the Fourteenth Amendment. They then passed the Reconstruction Act, which divided the South into five districts under federal control. Months later, the tension between Congress and the President peaked. Andrew Johnson became the first president to be impeached. He kept his office by a single vote.

Notes

5.



b'

A poll tax receipt

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The Fifteenth Amendment did not solve the problem of disenfranchisement for black voters. With literacy tests, poll taxes and other laws, many Southern states found new ways to deny African-American men the right to vote. But in 1870 Georgia became the last former Confederate state to be readmitted to the Union. And in 1877, Reconstruction came to an abrupt end. That year, there was a close presidential election and both candidates claimed to have won. It is reported that Republicans and Democrats made a compromise. Republicans agreed to withdraw federal troops from the South in exchange for the presidency. Rutherford B. Hayes became the President of the United States. Civil rights for African Americans would re-gain national attention again, but not for several decades.

Notes