Chapter 15: The South in Reconstruction
Objectives:

- We will examine the abandonment of Reconstruction and why it failed.
Jas_2:13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.
THE ABANDONMENT OF RECONSTRUCTION:

- As the North grew increasingly preoccupied with its own political and economic problems, interest in Reconstruction began to wane.
- The Grant Administration continued to protect Republican Governments in the South because they wanted to prevent the reemergence of a strong Democratic party in the region.
THE ABANDONMENT OF RECONSTRUCTION:

- But this was not enough to prevent White Southerners from overturning the Reconstruction regimes, by the time Grant left office.
- Democrats had taken back or as White Southerners called it Redeemed the governments of seven of the eleven former Confederate states.
For three other States, South Carolina, Louisiana, and Florida, the end of Reconstruction had to wait for the withdrawal of the last federal troops in 1876. A withdrawal that was the result of long political bargaining and compromise at a national level. Tennessee never been part of the reconstruction process because it ratified the Fourteenth Amendment and rejoined the Union in 1866.
The Southern States Redeemed:

- In the States where whites constituted a majority, the states of the upper south overthrowing Republican control was relatively simple.
- By 1872 all but a handful of Southern Whites had regained suffrage.
The Southern States Redeemed:

- In other states where African Americans were a majority or the black and white populations were almost equal, whites used intimidation and violence to undermine Reconstruction regimes.
- Such as the Ku Klux Klan that used terrorism to frighten or physically bar blacks from voting.
The Southern States Redeemed:

- Founded by former Confederate general Nathan Bedford Forrest.
- It devised rituals customs and was a secret society.
- This along with economic pressure where some planters refused to rent land to Republican blacks.
- Storekeepers refused to extend them credit, employers refused to give them work, helped restore White Supremacy in the region.
The Republican Party tried for a time to turn back this new wave of white repression.

In 1870 and 1871, it passed two enforcement acts also known as the Ku Klux Klan acts, that were considered the most radical measures of the era.
The Ku Klux Klan Acts:

- The Enforcement Acts prohibited the states from discriminating against voters on the basis of race and gave the federal government power to supersede the state courts and prosecute violations of the law.
- It was the first time the federal government had ever claimed the power to prosecute crimes by individuals under federal law.
The Ku Klux Klan Acts:

- It allowed District Attorneys to take action against conspiracies to deny African Americans such rights as voting, holding office, and serving on juries.
- The new laws authorized the president to use the military to protect civil rights and suspend the rights of habeas corpus when violations of the rights were blatant.
- This allowed Grant to send Federal troops in South Carolina in 1871.
- And it helped weaken the clan.
Waning Northern Commitment:

- The Ku Klux Klan acts marked the peak of Republican commitment to enforce the new rights reconstruction was extending to black citizens.
- But that commitment did not last long.
- Southern blacks were gradually losing the support of many of their former backers in the North.
Waning Northern Commitment:

- As early as 1870, after the adoption of the Fifteenth Amendment, some northern reformers convinced themselves that their long campaign on behalf of black people was now over.
- And with the vote of African Americans, they ought to be able to take care of themselves.
Waning Northern Commitment:

- Also former radical leaders such as Charles Sumner and Horace Greeley now began calling themselves Liberals.
- They cooperated with Democrats, and at times, outdoing even the Democrats in denouncing what they viewed as black and carpetbag mismanagement.
- Within the South itself, many white Republicans joined the Liberals and eventually moved into the Democratic Party.
Waning Northern Commitment:

- The Panic of 1873 further undermined support for Reconstruction.
- The economic crisis spurred Northern Industrialists and their allies to find an explanation for the poverty and instability around them.
- They found it in a new idea known as “Social Darwinism.”
Social Darwinism was a harsh theory that individuals fail in society because they were unfit and thus, unemployed vagrants in the North and poor African Americans in the South were hopeless. This also encouraged a critique against Government support in social and economic life and reconstruction in general.
Democrats also began to win Southern States and won control of the House of Representatives in 1874.

And the only reason why the few southern states that remained Republican because of the presence of federal troops.

Waning Northern Commitment:
With Grant’s declining health and scandals in his administration, he did run for another term.

Rutherford B. Hayes ran for the Republican Party and Samuel J. Tilden ran for the democrats.

The Compromise of 1877:
The November election resulted in an apparent Democratic Victory.

Tilden carried the South and several large Northern states, and his popular margin over Hayes was nearly 300,000 votes.
The Compromise of 1877:

- But disputed returns from Louisiana, South Carolina, Florida, and Oregon, whose total electoral vote was 20, throwing the election in doubt.
- Tilden had undisputed claim to 184 electoral votes only one short of a majority.
The Compromise of 1877:

- But Hayes could still win if he managed to receive all 20 disputed votes.
- The Constitution had established no method to determine the validity of disputed returns.
- It was clear that the decisions lay with Congress.
The Compromise of 1877:

- In January 1877, Congress tried to break the deadlock by creating a special electoral commission to judge the disputed votes.
- The commission was to be composed of five senators, five representatives, and five justices of the Supreme Court.
- Hayes won the commission vote by one vote.
The Compromise of 1877:

- There were compromises leading up to the vote.
- Leaders of the parties met and reached an agreement.
- Southern Democrats, among them some former Whigs exacted several pledges from the Republicans.
- In addition to withdrawal of the troops; the appointment of at least one Southerner to Hayes cabinet,
- Control of federal patronage in their areas, generous internal improvements and federal aid for the Texas and Pacific Railroad.
The Compromise of 1877:

- Southern Democrats favored industrialization, and support for business would aid the South more than the States’ rights policies of the Democrats.
- In his inaugural address, Hayes announced that the South’s most pressing need was the restoration of self-government, and he planned to withdraw federal troops and let white Democrats take over the state governments.
Republican Failure in the South:

- The president and his party and hoped to build a new Republican organization in the South drawn from Whig, Conservative White groups and committed to some modest acceptance of African American rights.
- But all such efforts failed.
Republican Failure in the South:

- Although many Southern leaders sympathized with Republican economic policies,
- Popular resentment of Reconstruction and its attack on white supremacy was so deep that supporting the party was politically impossible.
Republican Failure in the South:

- At the same time, the withdrawal of federal troops signaled that the national government was giving up its attempts to control Southern politics and to improve the lot of African Americans in Southern Society.
- Reconstruction although having done some good was seen largely as a failure.
- For in these years, the U.S. abandoned its first serious effort to resolve the nation’s oldest and deepest social problem, the problem of race.
Republican Failure in the South:

- The experience disappointed and disillusioned and embittered white Americans.
- The people that directed the efforts made mistakes.
- Conservative obstacles so deeply embedded in the nation’s life that they could not be dislodged.
- There was also a pervasive belief that African Americans were inherently inferior that served as an obstacle of equality.
Republican Failure in the South:

- African Americans did make gains and future generation reaped the benefits of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution.