

Reconstruction in Huntsville and Alabama

By

Arley McCormick

In the spring of 1865, carriers filed into General Ulysses S. Grant's headquarters near Petersburg, Virginia day and night. He plotted his forces locations on a map and knew General Robert E. Lee was running out of options. His Army was blocking and capturing all of General Lee's resupply routes. In anticipation of Lee's surrender, General Grant advised President Abraham Lincoln and asked for his guidance. Shortly before April 9, 1865, the day General Lee surrendered, General Grant received the guidance he was seeking.

"I want no one punished. Treat them liberally all around. We want those people to return to their allegiance to the United States and submit to the laws."
-- President Abraham Lincoln, message to General Grant shortly before Lee Surrendered

History records the April 9th meeting well. Many of those present wrote or spoke extensively about the occasion many times over for the rest of their lives. But, a specter of defiance, a Southerner, John Wilks Booth, the celebrated actor, ominously appeared and destroyed the slim hope that the South could rebuild with dignity by assassinating the President who died on April 15, 1865. A prominent Southern diarist jotted down her emotions upon learning of the President's assassination.

"Lincoln, old Abe Lincoln, killed, murdered! ... Why? By whom? It is simply maddening... I know this

**foul murder will bring down worse
miseries on us.”**
**-- Southern diarist Mary Boykin
Chesnut**

.....

The American Reconstruction Era may be the ugliest period of our history. War was not enough, we had to punish ourselves more during Reconstruction (1865 – 1877), nearly twelve years of political conflict, vigilante outrage, racial bigotry, and economic destruction, yet it also illustrated the determination to cope amid the uncertainty, build a future, and for African Americans the first step toward social equality.

Reconstruction is defined by Webster as the act or process of building something that was damaged or destroyed again; the process of putting something (such as a country) back into a good condition; a process in which an event or series of events is carefully examined in order to find out or show exactly what happened. Is that what the Reconstruction era achieved?

The impact of the two belligerent Armies aligned against each other during the American Civil War is illustrated in books, movies, and songs; but Reconstruction? No State or National holidays are set aside to recognize a hero of Reconstruction. There are few events to celebrate and little reason to applaud the political process that continued the destruction of the Southern economy and struggled to socially integrate African Americans.

Current historians challenge the date the era ended; at least one suggests the era ended in Alabama in 1872, most write the end is 1877, others develop a compelling argument that it didn't end till WWI, others WWII, and still others argue the Civil Rights legislation in the 1960's. Regardless of the arguments and the logic few can deny the victims of this American tragedy were all Americans; black and white yet most historians consider Reconstruction as a southern problem not an American problem, but, how can an

American political and economic problem be confined to a single section of America?

Before War and After Peace

The political, economic, and social change the former Confederate States experienced during Reconstruction had its origin before the Revolution that created the Republic from the former colonies of Great Britain. It had a face, African slaves. African American labor provided an economic advantage that fed the Federal government coffers for over seventy years. Depending on the source of information, as much as forty percent of the US treasury was depending on excise taxes collected on the products of the southern plantation industry. The remaining revenue was, in part, land sales.

Boston and New York bankers filled their safes with interest payments collected on loans secured with African Americans as collateral, the most valuable property in the South.

While the economic advantage was strong political incentive to protect and retain the peculiar institution, the social changes advocated by a growing humanitarian movement focused the attention on the inequity of slavery and the expansion to the Pacific Ocean became the catalyst that challenged politicians to retain the profits in the treasury while satisfying the growing dissidence regarding the future of slavery. European and some New World governments outlawed slavery even as the Southern statesmen were securing compromises in Congress over the decades preceding the War.

The Civil War was an American war. The aftermath, with all its political, economic, and social derivatives was an American problem. And if one only focuses on race relations it remains an American problem. Some contemporary historians contend that in the aftermath of Civil War and Reconstruction Southern redeemers, endorsing the rhetoric of the Lost Cause, and the Radical Republicans that traded the South for the Whitehouse during the 1876 elections

caused over 100 more years of strife for the African Americans.

The Radical Republicans Progressive Focus

The plantation society was the target that northern politicians were committed to destroy? It was a closed but integrated society. On the plantation, everyone lived within close proximity of the other; black and white. Slaves lived in quarters not nearly as generously appointed as the masters' house but within shouting distance. The plantation was generally located away from villages and cities and given the road system, five miles was a long way from a village. Slaves were trained to satisfy all the needs of the plantation and the largest group was common labor. Others were trained as domestic servants and artisans such as wheelwrights, carpenters, blacksmiths, and in horticulture. And there is no mistaking the discipline administered by the overseer or owner of the plantation could be life threatening and cruel and given the choice, few if any slaves, would choose to live under the conditions they were forced to accept. Yet, the most lasting impact on slaves was legally restricting literacy.

Impact on Alabama and Madison County

It's not obvious today but Alabama and particularly North Alabama, occupied by Union forces since April 1862, was ravaged by the war. Straight's raid in 1863, Rousseau's raid in 1864; Wilson's raid in 1865, and the capture of Mobile in 1864, each wreaked havoc on the people and the economy of Alabama.

The challenges confronting the South were daunting. In Madison County alone over 5,900 men would be free that could neither read nor write. In both the North and the South, adding a large group of unskilled labor could displace white unskilled labor because African Americans would work for lower wages. As an example; in the Old South white men were stevedores before the war. A stevedore's position was dangerous given the limited technology available for loading

barges, trains, ships and other vessels. Cotton bales weighed approximately 450lb and when one dropped inadvertently it

Civil War Body Count

Alabama

- 8,075 Men Killed
- 13,504 Died of Sickness
- 3,629 Disabled
- Total: 25,208
- Missing Unknown

Madison County

- 147 Men Killed
- 214 Died from Sickness
- 28 Disabled
- Total: 389 i.e., 6% of the 1860 Male Population
- Missing Unknown
- Population in 1860 -- 26,461 +/- 1%
- Colored 5,969 Male

could bounce and easily kill or maim a stevedore. Plantation owners were reluctant to expose an expensive slave to the hazard and run the risk of him getting hurt and being incapacitated or die as a result of an accident. White men could be replaced. Freedmen replaced the white man on the docks after the war.

The majority of America's immigrants were not slaves. They were Northern European and integrated into their new country without the obvious bias of color. The African Americans were immigrants too but not by choice and few, if any, policy makers anticipated the difficulty African Americans would experience being free. Freedom was the principle goal and social integration was assumed.

A slave all their life and forbidden an education, where would they learn to be free and responsible in society? Their basic needs were always accommodated by the Master. Working for a wage, managing their

own finances, and looking for employment were all new concepts that required an adjustment in their life. And the racial bias generated during 200 years of subservient bondage was not considered.

Everyone in Alabama was impacted by the Civil War. Families in the North endured the absence of their men but the economy, while not booming, except in communities manufacturing war materials, was growing and they were only inconvenienced by the war but few felt the daily pain

like many residents of Alabama that awoke each morning wondering where their next meal was coming from.

Particularly in North Alabama where crops, if they could be planted, were frequently destroyed by soldiers both Union and Southern. Farm implements were destroyed and animals confiscated without remuneration and by the end of the war towns such as Whitesburg, at Ditto's landing, were destroyed and never rebuilt, Paint Rock destroyed, New Hope rebuilt from the ashes of Vienna, Gunterville and Decatur destroyed, Athens and Florence suffered damage as well as Huntsville. Many citizens abandoned their land and property to avoid the destruction and lost their livelihood and belongings in the process.

Mother Nature was not kind either. Alabama was suffering from various stages of drought beginning in the spring of 1862 and it remained under sporadic drought conditions through 1869. Any produce that was grown could not be sold at reasonable prices because portions of the cotton produced was confiscated by the Union Army, commodity markets were rarely active, banks were closed or inactive, industry, particularly after the raids, was at a standstill or destroyed. And, Confederate government policy significantly contributed to the hard times Alabamians would suffer through.

Soldiers returning home had nothing in their pockets and the only celebration was with family or friends. There was no Grand Parade. To further exacerbate the social problems lawlessness was the rule of the day. There was no effective government for months after the war and everything would get worse before it got better.

Bad Times in North Alabama

The guidance regarding Presidential and Congressional Reconstruction policy and law was not created overnight but there were opportunities for Northern politicians and their military leaders to learn something regarding how to govern after the war. Reconstruction policy was shaped in South Carolina, New Orleans, the Mississippi River banks, and the

most extensive experience may have been during the occupation of North Alabama after April 1862.

The first occupation of North Alabama began with a canon shot initiated by General Ormsby Mitchel's Third Division at the crack of dawn April 12, 1862. After the fall of Nashville, Tennessee, a portion of the division marched to Huntsville and as they passed through Fayetteville, Tennessee they were not received with open arms but General Mitchel considered it an anomaly.

President Lincoln's guidance to his Federal forces established the base of departure for Reconstruction policy. In 1862 the federal perspective was partially based upon the voting in North Alabama prior to the war. The voting indicated the population was less pro or at best neutral to secession and not aggressively interested to sever ties with the Union. And, there were other strong indicators of Union support. A move to create the state of Nickajack and avoid secession had failed, Winston County voted to succeed from the state and the Confederacy, and the economy of North Alabama was more closely dependent on the Tennessee River and northern markets than South Alabama.

Thus Lincoln directed his Generals to treat the North Alabamians as wayward citizens and respect their rights as Americans because they were pro-union.

General Mitchel learned very quickly he was not a liberating hero. The expectation of an accommodating reception was dashed almost immediately. All the logic appeared to point to a disgruntled southern population except once the Union forces crossed the border into



General Benjamin
Butler

Alabama the preponderance of the citizens, if not aligning with the South, didn't want Union forces on their land. Yet, Lincoln's guidance was to treat their southern brothers benevolently and that policy included returning slaves approaching the Union forces to their masters and sometimes at gun point. That would all change later in the year and General Benjamin Butler would be the catalyst.

General Benjamin Butler, a commander of Federal troops in Virginia at the time, was receiving a constant stream of slaves into his lines and he refused to return them to their masters. He invoked the term (contraband) that became a common definition for a slave. He reasoned that the South regarded slaves as property and that property could be used to further the military aims of the Confederacy therefore, they were in fact, contraband of war and subject to confiscation from their southern owners. Realizing he needed to attend to their humanitarian needs he employed them to perform logistics duties for the military, i.e., building fortifications and improving roads.

Rehearsal in South Carolina Island

The Coastal Islands of South Carolina became the first major experiment to influence Reconstruction policy. The fall of Fort Royal in November 1861 caused a mass exodus of plantation owners from the islands. The Union forces survey of the islands revealed a slave culture that was different than they expected. There were approximately 195 plantations available to produce goods and slaves were allowed to exert minimal control over their lives such as establishing the length of the workday.

Recognizing the potential for accumulating wealth Boston bankers, private consortiums, and individuals from the North (Carpetbaggers), swooped down to buy plantations and rake in the profits but their expectations were shattered. Slaves didn't want to return to the plantation and preferred to work their gardens, hunt, fish, visit with their families and accept subsistence living. Investors couldn't force the former slaves to work, couldn't pay them enough to return to the plantation life and finally, one by one, the fortune hunters gave up. By the end of 1865 all the plantations were abandoned or sold by the investors. During Presidential Reconstruction the plantations were returned to the original owners.

One experiment did meet with success. The Gideon's arrived to establish schools, teach and coach free labor and

integrate the former slaves into the mainstream American society.

Throughout the Reconstruction era former slaves had many opportunities to learn to distrust their white liberators. General Sherman, by Military Order, dictated that every slave would be given 40 acres and a mule. The assumption being that it would come from their former master's plantation. It never materialized but remained an expectation for the next 25 years.

Rehearsal in New Orleans

In April 1862 General Nathaniel Banks replaced General Benjamin Butler in New Orleans. He learned very quickly that he could not afford to clothe, house, and employ the vast number of slaves entering the union lines.



General Nathaniel Banks

General Banks Polling Result

Former slaves wanted the American Dream.

- A farm of their own
- Fair wage for their labor
- Education for their children
- Practice religion
- Reunite with their family

He attempted to negotiate contracts with plantation owners that would return slaves to the plantation. But, as in South Carolina, the former slaves didn't want the plantation life and, he was constantly becoming involved with disputes between planters and former slaves.

He couldn't make them work and they would not remain on the plantation even with an employment contract. He decided to learn what the former slaves wanted and sent officers to each contraband camp to

administer a survey.

Emancipation Proclamation

The war was entering its third year when President Lincoln declared Emancipation.

On January 1, 1863 his statement regarding Emancipation was published. It declared;

"that all persons held as slaves" within the rebellious states "are, and henceforward shall be free."

The Border States holding slaves and Tennessee, occupied by Union forces, were exempt. In North Alabama it was confusing because an occupying Union force was intermittent and consequently defined a portion of a rebellious state. And like many political announcements there was no direction regarding what to do with the freed slaves or how to accommodate their humanitarian needs.

The Union military nor the US population were unified with regard to the proclamation as some Union units from Indiana and Illinois were on the verge of mutiny because as many soldiers would write; *"they were fighting for the unification of the Union not the abolition of slavery."* It was another indicator that the plight of the African was an American issue and not limited exclusively to the South.

Rehearsal in Mississippi

Meanwhile as General Banks made his way up the Mississippi River in July 1863 he extended the concepts of employment contracts, education, and migration. And, the much touted democratic plantation owned by Jefferson Davis, Brierfield, fell apart too. Africans who were the principle administrators of the plantation didn't want anything to do with plantation life. And that may have prompted politicians in Louisiana to propose migrating former slaves to Kansas and let them create their own state.

Rehearsal in North Alabama

The best example of Reconstruction rehearsals may be North Alabama since it was occupied in April 1862 and

intermittently throughout the war. Initially the Federals returned slaves approaching their lines to their masters but after the Emancipation Proclamation the military established contraband camps on Chapman Mountain and on Whitesburg, just south of what is today Huntsville Hospital. The Union Army employed former slaves and allowed teachers to work in the contraband camp. They also forcibly removed slaves to Nashville to work. Contracts were



President Abraham Lincoln held office from March 4, 1861 till April 15, 1865

established with plantation owners and slaves occupied vacated land or freely migrated north. Only the military could discipline the recalcitrant. By the end of 1863 President Lincoln was confident that the war would be won. Vicksburg had fallen and Lee

was

repulsed at Gettysburg, both in July. General Grant relieved Chattanooga in November and orchestrated the defeat of the South's Army of Tennessee and Sherman was preparing to march to Atlanta.

Huntsville Freedmen Labor Scale 1864

- #1 Hand age 18-40: m/per Month \$25
 - #2 Hand age 14-18: m/per Month \$20
 - #3 Hand age 12-14: m/per Month \$15
 - Women corresponding in age: \$18, \$14, \$10
- Plus
- Free Housing, acre for garden, food and clothing; medical expenses; education for children; full pay unless sick or refused to work.
 - Of 5,000 slaves only 250 found employment in 1864

President Lincoln's Guidance Regarding Reconstruction

In the environment of confidence created by General Grant, Lincoln made the proclamation of amnesty and reconstruction. Historians refer to it as the 10% Plan and it was published on December 8, 1863. Lincoln was preparing

legislation to support Reconstruction and offer African's resettlement outside the United States. He introduced the Freedmen's Bureau Bill, which established the Bureau on

Lincoln's 10% Reconstruction Plan December 8, 1863

- Slavery must be abolished
- High Ranking Civilian and Military Officers of the Confederacy Excluded; not allowed to take the oath
- Full pardon and restoration of rights of Southerners taking the oath
- 10% of loyal Southerners in a state of votes cast in 1860 establish new state government
- Could adopt temporary measures regarding freedmen

March 3, 1865, and it was expected to last for one year after the end of War but it anchored the Radical Republicans control of reconstruction.

Alabama politics took a backseat during the War, but in 1864 and 1865 many leaders in the South, regarded as peace Democrats, reached out clandestinely to the North in anticipation

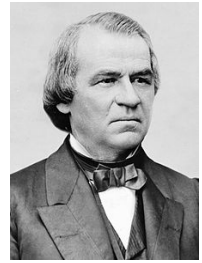
of the Confederacy's defeat. Many former Whigs, Know-Nothing and Confederate Political leaders began organizing a new constitution following President Lincoln's Reconstruction guidance.

Abiding by the 10% plan, they began to "adopt temporary measures regarding freedmen"; (black codes) designed to restrict their participation in government.

Research indicates Lincoln preferred a gradual integration of the Africans into fully entitled citizens of the United States and over a period of years but the Africans themselves with their overwhelming response to freedom may have compelled him to initiate the Freedom Amendment. The 13th Amendment ratified December 6, 1865 abolished slavery.

In Alabama the Democrats, in the absence of any major Republican voice, initiated legislation regarding African Americans and it is not surprising that Republicans and Radicals in the North were aggravated and determined to legally force their will upon the South after learning of the Black Codes.

April 15, 1865, upon the assassination of Abraham Lincoln the Vice President, Andrew Johnson, became president. Andrew Johnson was the Military Governor of Tennessee and freed the slaves there before becoming Vice President. He liberated the slaves but he was not their friend nor was he the friend of the planter class of the South. His approach and perspective regarding Reconstruction policy placed him at odds with the Radical Republicans which resulted in his impeachment.



**President
Andrew Johnson
between April
15, 1865 and
March 4, 1869**

At the end of the war General George Thomas was commanding forces in the Western Theater from Nashville, and Alabama was included in that Theater. In Huntsville the commander was General Gordon Granger and each of these commanders was busy; not only keeping order but calculating the future of the Army.

General Gordon Granger Reconstruction Announcement

May 27, 1865 first public comments regarding Freedmen.

- They could not be Idle; must find employment by reporting to the Contraband Camp.
- Those employed on plantations were required to faithfully perform their work under the contracts validated by the military officers.
- No Freedman will be held for labor without a contract
- Freedmen who work on abandoned plantations will not be turned out without fair compensation as adjudicated by a Judge: Military Officer.

After every war the Army shrinks because the mission changes. The structure of the Union Army was designed to defeat the Confederate Armies. Now the priority changed to subduing the Western Indian Tribes. During the transition period units were being disbanded and officers resigned or were reassigned. The whole effort would take months

to unfold and military personnel changes in leadership

would complicate the transition to a healthy Southern society.

In Huntsville, General Granger was feeling the tension of down-sizing the Army. It was difficult maintaining discipline in an environment where almost every soldier wanted to go home and they wanted to go home immediately. The chore of protecting the local citizens from each other was secondary.

In the environment of military uncertainty and faced with the domestic issues surrounding the Freedmen General

Granger, growing impatient for Presidential guidance, issued his own.

Just two days later on May 29, 1865, President Johnson issued his presidential guidance and it was very clear that white Americans must rule the South and African Americans

Presidential Reconstruction Andrew Johnson

- Whites must rule the south
- Proposed Freedmen emigrate to another country
- May 29, 1865 Andrew Johnson announces plan
 - Major Confederate leaders must apply individually for Pardon
 - 14 categories of amnesty to Confederates that sign the oath
 - Return property rights to Confederates less slaves
 - Support Emancipation
 - Voters limited to whites

should be relocated to another country.

Presidential Reconstruction in Alabama and Huntsville

It took nearly all the remaining months of 1865 for Madison Counties' soldiers to make it home and begin to adjust to the new normal. Union soldiers were still headquartered at the Calhoun House but they no longer patrolled the streets or established checkpoints at designated cross roads and Blevins Gap. But their presence could not be missed. Other elements entered the transformation. Carpetbaggers arrived with next to nothing but an eye toward positions of authority and profit. Moss

backs or Scallywags, the home grown Yankees, began to assert themselves and gradually migrated from thieves to political activists of the Freedman's Bureau. Over the course of intermittent Union occupation during the war, many of the residents that had abandoned their farms and houses began returning and after the war more arrived.

Late in 1865 black representatives, mostly ministers met in Mobile twice and determined the future depended upon advocating a policy of peace, friendship and good will. While the Freedmen represented a significant portion of the population and in some counties a majority their political and social future remained dependent upon their white contemporaries.

The 1865 economic conditions affecting everyone poisoned social integration. There were more whites than blacks supported by Government Charity and the schools in Huntsville were so small and dilapidated that half the children were taught in the morning the other half in the afternoon.

Confusion and confrontation was common. Early in 1866, the 110th U.S. Colored Infantry (USCI) disbanded and bars were closed to prevent white and black soldiers from getting drunk and into trouble with the former Confederates that frequently wore, what could not be mistaken as a Confederate uniform because they had no other clothes. The hard drinking and conflicts between Union soldiers and civilians became so frequent that Military Orders were issued forbidding anyone to sell or barter liquor to enlisted men which sorely impacted the profits of the numerous bars that had accommodated soldiers for some time.

The 15th Regulars put a flag pole in front of the Calhoun House probably as a token of a permanent presence. It was also during this period that a woman was discovered in the Union Army disguised as a man.

The 44th USCI and 18th USCI remained in Huntsville for a short time. In April white troops replaced the colored troops and the Negroes of the 44th Regiment, as their train headed out of town, fired volleys into the air and in the direction of

the buildings. And as early as 1866 there were only two black regiments remaining in Alabama.

With several years of drought, bank closers, and a tight money supply, the economy was severely depressed yet there were signs of an optimistic future because the Bell factory resumed business.

Adding to the misery of drought and a bad economy it seemed that dreaded communicable diseases could not be controlled. The Easley's Hotel was quarantined because of smallpox and the Military pest house was not large enough to house all the sick. One extreme measure taken was draining the city pond to rid the town of small pox and cholera. And in the midst of all the turmoil the city of Milwaukee, Wisconsin sent seven hundred barrels of white fish to Huntsville to help feed the homeless and starving.

The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned lands, Sub-District of Huntsville was active almost from the day it became law and the local Military commander supervised it. For the first time the former slaves could have their day in court and during the first month of 1866 the Freedman's Bureau approved over 400 contracts for freedmen to work on plantations and in other locations.

By February 16, 1866 the Freedman's Bureau had established 6 schools for Freedmen in the district with 375 attending. They employed 14 teachers to teach reading, writing, and geography. In addition, 994 freedmen, women and children in Huntsville were depending on the bureau for rations, clothing, and medicines. An additional 729 refugees were also depending on the bureau for supplies and they were not exclusively freedmen.

Zebulon Pike

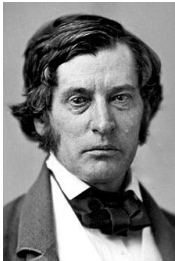
Davis was the Mayor (the position was referred to as President). He served in 1855-1859, 1860-1861, 1865-1866, and 1878-1882. He lived at 426 Randolph Avenue. It is written that he was considered a faithful and honest man that discharged his duties honorably. It was also remarked that he was kind, courteous to all yet firm in the discharge of his official duties. He served during the difficult years of Federal purges.

In spite of the tragic hardship, the citizens were demonstrating the resolve and determination to survive and thrive as a community. The abandoned lands were restored to their rightful owners with the exception of 115 acres that remained unclaimed. The Catholic Church was seeking money to complete rebuilding the church and the city was addressing the repair of the culverts and causeways on Church Street. Citizens were voicing the need to replace the fence around the cemetery and remove the pile of manure at the corners of Greene and Randolph Streets, so long ignored by the Union cavalry. The city government was looking toward the future too when the Mayor decided a City Engineer position was needed.

Under Presidential Reconstruction everyone required to personally apply for amnesty, take the oath, and become a normal citizen again was approved. Then congress placed restrictions on voting privileges.

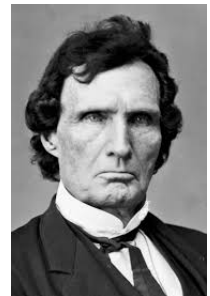
Congressional Reconstruction 1867-1877

The Radical Republicans dominating Congressional politics were not happy with President Andrew Johnson's policy regarding the South. They were led by two equally vocal and aggressive individuals; Thaddeus Stevens in the Congress and Charles Sumner in the Senate. Each wanted to punish the South and specifically destroy the



Senator Charles Sumner April 24, 1851 - March 11, 1874

Plantation Aristocracy for their role in dragging the common southerner to the battlefield and sustaining slavery for so many years. They rejected the President's plan for Reconstruction and initiated action to create the first three Congressional acts that were referred to as the Military Reconstruction Act and passed



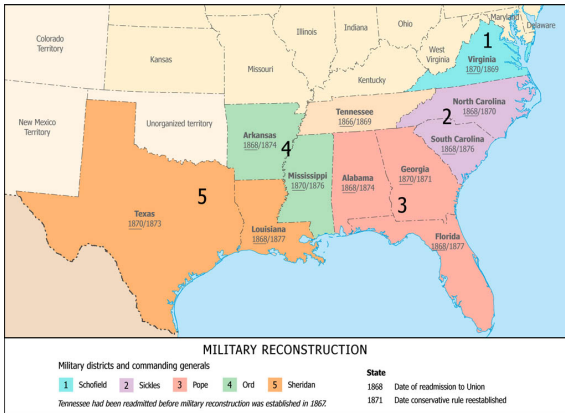
Congressman Thaddeus Stevens in office March 4, 1859 - August 11, 1868

into law on March 2, 1867 over President Andrew Johnson's veto. President Johnson's veto was just

the beginning as eventually he would become the first President impeached.

Another statute passed on March 23, 1867, a third on July 19, 1867 and a fourth on March 11, 1868. The acts applied to all the former Confederate states, except Tennessee having already ratified the Fourteenth Amendment.

The former Confederate States were divided into five military districts and Federal forces were officially redefined as an Army of Occupation that would govern the states



under martial law and insure the Radical Republican agenda was executed.

General John Pope was charged to oversee Reconstruction policy in the states of Alabama, Georgia, and Florida.

Colonel Wagner Swayne was assigned to administer

Reconstruction policy in Alabama from Montgomery.

A state Constitutional Convention was directed by the Military District Commander; General Order No. 76 dated November 5, 1867.

The Second Reconstruction Act passed March 23, 1867 directed military officials to register voters, organize elections and call conventions. The third Reconstruction Statute passed July 19, 1867 declared existing state governments in the South illegal and subjected them to Congress and military control.

In compliance with the Reconstruction Acts, officers traveled all over the state to register voters. Most of those registered were Freedmen because many white men were disqualified.

A constitutional Convention was held in Montgomery the end of 1867 and as required by law the Constitution was voted on by the population of Alabama.

Both the Radical Republicans and the Democrats raced to entice their constituents to support their agenda; the Republicans for and the Democrats against the constitution.

The Radical Republicans were depending on the Freedman's vote. The Democrats publically encouraged a boycott on voting day and attempted to convince Freedmen to restrain from voting because of all the promises Radical Republicans had made and not achieved.

In Crenshaw County, Alabama the white dominated population up rope barricades on each side of the walk to the polling station. Black voters had to go through a gauntlet of jeers and threats as plantation owners stood by watching to see if their hands voted. Bureau officials partitioned the military governor to place polling sites in defensible positions, protect ballot boxes, and appoint honest election officials. But, the election officials found as much transgression between competing Republican freedman candidates' and aspiring black outsiders.

In Greenville, Alabama a white man stabbed a freedman for voting but was acquitted later by an all white jury. While in Montgomery, no less than 100 freedmen complained they had been discharged by their employer for exercising their right to vote.

The Republicans were divided by the aspirations of carpetbaggers in the Black belt and scallywags and yeoman farmers in other parts of the state. General Thomas Swayne reported Mobile residents violently opposed to colored schools burned two buildings one a Presbyterian church designated for the purpose. And, there were other divisions between the Mobile residents. Mobile was the residence of a significant number of free blacks before the war. Similar to New Orleans they were in business, paid taxes, established schools and lived a more liberated life than the former slaves had experienced. They voiced opposition to sending their children to school with the recently freed black children instigating a racial divide between black residents.

Voting day concluded with a glitch for the Republicans. The majority of votes cast approving the Constitution did not meet the lawful test. The Constitution was approved by the

majority of voters but the number of votes cast did not represent the majority of registered voters.

The boycott achieved the Democrats objective, but the Republicans referred the Constitution to the U.S. Congress that declared it lawful, accepted the constitution, and accepted Alabama into the Union.

The next insult was passed on March 11, 1868 and the act changed the voting rules to allow passage with a majority of those voting for a new constitution, regardless of the turnout.

The Mobile Demonstration

In Mobile, Alabama on May 14, 1867 the tone was clear regarding the white citizens relationship with the military occupation. A Radical Republican from Pennsylvania named (Pig Iron) William D. Kelley scheduled a speech in a public square in Mobile. The local post commander, Colonel Oliver L. Shepherd, issued orders that freedmen not ride the streetcars. It was an order intended to avoid a clash between the freedmen and former Confederate soldiers and white citizens of the community. Congressman Kelly ignored the Colonel and encouraged his black listeners to violate the order condemning it as a violation of their Civil Rights.

During the speech a white heckler called out, "Pull him down!" and Kelley replied that the federal soldiers stationed nearby were his guarantee of free speech but the soldiers were over one and one half miles away. The police chief attempted to control the situation and arrested a heckler; the heckler resisted and shots were fired. More shots from unknown sources erupted as heavily armed freedmen in the audience fired their pistols in the air. Luckily, no casualties were reported and by the time the local military arrived order had been restored. An investigation resulted in changing the policy regarding the availability of the military during scheduled public gatherings, Colonel Shepherd was replaced by the Military Governor, Colonel Wager Swain, and the Congressman never returned to Mobile.

It is not clear if the incident inspired the free black community to lobby for black police officers but Mobile became one of the first cities in Alabama to integrate the police force and to their credit they arrested more black residents than white residents demonstrating a far policing practice.

Martial Law 1867

With the passage of the Congressional/Military Reconstruction Bills the Radicals in the midst of the population became more vocal, ambitious, and openly defiant. Union meetings were frequent and Freedmen, the principle target of their rhetoric, openly demonized the white community. Freedmen seemed to have a couple of things in common; as soon as they could afford to buy a gun and acquire a dog they did. Consequently, nearly all the freedmen attending the meetings were armed and mischievous after the meeting ended. There were frequent reports of Freedmen stashing weapons of all sorts in secret locations. One of the largest stashes was discovered near Anniston, Alabama.

Misbehavior was reported from nearly every county in the state. To counter the behavior of Radical Republicans a new clandestine organization appeared, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). They draped themselves in sheets from horse hooves to the tips of their head and startled, beat, burned, and in some cases hanged their principle targets, i.e., carpetbaggers, scallywags, and the aggressive Freedmen. Church burnings, barn burnings, beatings and murder were normal. The offending group was not confined to the KKK. Republicans, mimicking KKK practice were also perpetrators and cast blame on the KKK to bolster their position in some communities. There were also reports of Freedmen coming to the defense of some white farm owners when the night riders attempted to burn their barns or conduct other travesties. The entire population was at the mercy of the vigilantes not just Freedmen.

To their credit, the Freedmen and white population on the whole conducted themselves with restraint even when they began to realize that many Republican and Democrat promises were hollow. Partially because, for the Republicans to remain in office they had to appeal to white voters as well as the migration of Alabama's black population to Kansas and other northern cities indeed determined their vote alone would not guarantee Republican victory.

Another consequence of Radical Republican Reconstruction was the expectation the South was going to pay for all the public services extended to the Freedmen, specifically, education and the Freedman's Bureau operations. The result was higher taxes and inflation that hit the plantation owners when the economy was shattered. The plantation owners responded by selling parcels of their land, going bankrupt, contracting with freedmen, and initiating share cropping.

Sharecropping was not a new concept. It had been practiced in Northeast Mississippi for years but in the Black Belt of Alabama there was no need. Sharecropping was a joint venture with the landowner providing a parcel of land, seed, and occasionally implements to a farmer that borrowed money from a lending institution to cover his living expenses and paid the plantation owner in product and the lender in cash when his crop sold.

There were indications that the courts were operating and a semblance of law and order was being promoted as many citizens filed for bankruptcy which relieved them of being constantly badgered by creditors but held them responsible to pay their debts.

With the Freedman's Bureau being the center of the Reconstruction administration, in August 1867 Officers began canvassing the country side administering loyalty oaths and registering voters. The Bureau was working tirelessly to provide relief for the destitute citizens, both black and white. And the almost universal desperation prompted at least one white woman to abandon her child on the courthouse steps even as benevolent Northern

communities, recognizing the hard times being experienced by all in Alabama, donated food to the community.

The Government attempted to reduce its land holding and offered many acres for sale through a homestead act. The auctions attracted a black woman that walked 50 miles to take advantage of the Homestead Law. Freedmen's schools reopened in November and churches began to build the cash they needed to build and rebuild. Company D, 33rd Regiment

Activities of the KKK

- Established in 1866 - disbanded March 1869
- Effective in removing Scallywags and Carpetbaggers
- Blacks led by Radical Whites mimicked KKK procedures
- KKK gave radicals the political high ground
- Alabama troops shifted 15 times to counter KKK for years after October 1868; Mostly in North Alabama
- Huntsville KKK Parade before Presidential elections; 1500 circled square and shooting broke out.
- Official Report: Judge Thurlow of Limestone County shot accidentally, several Negros wounded, KKK never fired a shot.
- Citizens mimicking KKK procedures are evident in some locations today.

U.S. Infantry contributed \$50 to the Catholic Church and bids were taken to build a new Methodist Church and the Colored Cumberland Church made over \$400 at a church sponsored gala that attracted hundreds of people. The Episcopal and Cumberland Churches and Female Seminary had children's Christmas Parties. And in the midst of all this activity, Admiral Semmes, the Captain of the great Confederate Raider, CSS Alabama gave a lecture on the adventures of the vessel to the citizens of Huntsville.

Martial Law 1868

Carpetbaggers and Scallywags were aggressively rallying the Freedmen with rhetoric that cast the white population as oppressor's intent upon keeping the Freemen in a position of servitude. The effort was so

pervasive that what began in Pulaski, Tennessee as a gathering of Confederate veterans for social revelry turned

into ugly bands of vigilantes that would forever scare and impede the effort for racial harmony in the South and elsewhere. In 1866 the KKK was born and its clandestine rides in the night targeting carpetbaggers, scallywags, and accretive Freedmen turned Madison County into the most inhospitable County in Alabama. By 1868 the Huntsville district was unstable and in disarray. Huntsville Mayor (President) E. B. Clapp was appointed by Colonel Swane and served during 1867–1868 but based upon the turmoil in North Alabama and specifically Madison County he was gracefully allowed to resign in 1868. General Hayden, an officer that had previous service in Huntsville replaced General J.B. Callis in Command of the Huntsville District Bureau as Army units assigned to Huntsville changed frequently, initially because of the reduction in the Army's force structure and secondly because of lawless activities in Madison County. This year the 43rd Regiment of the Regular Army arrived in Huntsville. Companies A and I of the 15th Infantry came from Mobile relieved Company D, which proceeded to Selma. There were eight Companies totaling 500 total troops camped on Whitesburg Pike with their headquarters at the Calhoun House.

Under Martial Law soldiers often become the recalcitrant citizens of the community. One soldier convicted of stealing was marched through the streets to the tune of the Rogue's March, his head was shaved, and he was drummed out of the service. But, soldiers are an accessible labor force and Captain Harrison of the Freedman's Bureau frequently used them to issue 4000 bags of corn and a large amount of bacon to the destitute citizens and they ran a soup kitchen. A "Relief Committee" was formed to relieve Huntsville's suffering.

Unionist William Hugh Smith had opposed session and was elected governor in 1868, he was routinely harassed by Democrats as he toured the state and at the Courthouse in Sumner County a offensive drunk rabble rouser with a drawn knife in his hand supported by other Democratic hecklers made him very uncomfortable but allowed him to leave alive.

When a widow named Octavial Otey rented land to black family hooded henchmen surrounded her house at night to intimidate her and they demanded one tenant by name. She refused to produce the tenant and immediately her livestock began to disappear. This was an experience of intimidation occurring in numerous portions of the state.

Huntsville's local commander, Captain Harrison, had a duty to supervise the local Freedman's bank which reported deposits of \$5,097.97. But the Freedman's Bank became one of the institutions that caused considerable distrust among the freedman population.

In 1868 there appeared to be optimism regarding investing in business, possibly because of the number of soldiers in the community were paid in Federal dollars, but whatever the reason the Rialto Saloon opened on Washington Street, Smith-Harstein and Co. located on North Side Square and Eustis Street opened and sold chinchilla cloaks, furs, and Balmorals Skirting. Ernest Dentler's, Confectionary and Bakery, established in 1850 added an assortment of fine French candies, cakes, cordials, German and French wines at his business on Eustis Street.

Other aspects of community life improved as the Huntsville High School Spring term began in February with board costing \$100 per term. The first services in the new Methodist Church were held May 15. Peter Haynes, an old colored, and respected grave digger died and Mollie Barton, alias "Sand Mountain", presumably practicing the world's oldest profession, was trampled by a runaway horse at the soldier's camp on Whitesburg Pike. When the Circuit Court met: two Freedmen selected to serve were excused to tend to their crops. And Huntsville just could not seem to shake the disease that persisted in this agricultural community as they learned Murrain was killing cattle.

Impact of Reconstruction on Madison County after 1868 and 1869

The tone for Reconstruction Era had been set in 1866 and 1867. Fiery rhetoric from both political parties, inflation,

raising taxes, vigilantes enforcing their own law, and the destruction of the Plantation economy continued, but, the majority of the population recognized they were victims and rise above and attempted to make a living and care for their families.

Congressman Thaddeus Stevens, one of the fiery leaders of the Radical Republicans died in August of 1868. Without the major reconstruction antagonist in the House the tenor and tone of the Radicals may have appeared less aggressive. They still had the military checking and acting on their behalf to insure Congressional policy was administered.

Once Alabama was accepted into the Union the political focus shifted from Washington D. C. to Montgomery. The cost of Government had grown because of Federal education directives, aid to the Freedmen and other social groups that could not make a living in the depressed economy. The State government focused on expanding the economy, education, welfare, and, over time, limiting the African American access

Financial Status of the State

- *Land Value in 1860;*
\$725,000,000
- *Land Value in 1875;*
\$160,000,000
- *Governor Patton Report Nov 11, 1867 Convention*
 - *Cotton Crop in 1860*
..... 842,729 Bales
 - *Cotton Crop in 1868*
..... 366,193 Bales
- *Madison County Tax*
 - *1859 State and County*
..... \$39,950
 - *1869 State and County*
..... \$130,821

to the fundamental rights of other Americans.

Share cropping grew with both white and African Americans attempting to benefit from the desire of land owners to hang on to their property, but, the plantation industry was shattered and in the absence of slave labor, fields were barren, land values plummeted, and the

limited money supply made getting loans expensive if a farmer could find a lender. In Dallas County the personal

wealth of planters was one sixth of the prewar average ten years later.

Many African Americans would not return to the cotton fields at any wage, at least not in the numbers required to maximize the production achieved before the war. Contracts with African Americans were supervised by the Freedman's Bureau; but not even the Bureau could not force a share cropper to work. Being allowed to establish their own work day, work habits, and in some cases crops, they learned to enjoy the family, hunting and fishing, and socializing at church gatherings. They didn't worry much about maximizing their crop production.

Even without the KKK intervention Northern opportunists were learning quickly the riches they expected would not materialize and were departing the state.

Soldiers continued to contribute to the unsettled atmosphere in Huntsville and a couple of incidents are representative of their impact as a drunken soldier's disturbance at the Easley Hotel after being refused liquor resulted in one soldier shot dead and another wounded. Soldiers attacked two homes belonging to Freedmen and badly hurt an old woman and in the midst of unbecoming conduct a bill passed the US House of Representatives to pay compensation to Captain J. H. Springfield and Captain John B. Kennemer's Companies of Scouts and Guides, both companies raised in North Alabama in 1864 serving the Federal Army. Many believed these organizations were nothing but brigands that stole, killed, and destroyed to settle private scores rather than any Federal war aims. And that was just another insult perpetrated by the Carpetbag government that would benefit from their votes.

While the Military Bands provided music for funeral processions and concerts on the courthouse lawn, the ruminants of the KKK outlawed and disbanded yet intimidating raids and harassment of carpetbaggers and scallywags continued. A known mossback, Jere Doroty, was hanged by disguised men near his residence.

Progress in the midst of the violence included a group of local teachers opening a school for colored and white

children; a male school opened on Church Street. A Normal School educating colored teachers was constructed by a Mr. O'Donnell of Pennsylvania on a one acre lot on Franklin Street beyond the bridge.

In the absence of free labor that would work in the cotton fields a committee of men from Memphis and the Railroad came to Huntsville to discuss recruiting European emigrants to the area. And as businesses struggled, Robinson and Murphy sold photographs of a Baptismal scene at Big Spring and 500 acres was sold for \$20 an acre to a man from Pennsylvania. Travel on the Tennessee River was increasing and that attracted the Whitesburg Hack to depart from the Hotel to Ditto Landing on a scheduled basis.

Mayor W.B. Figures played a prominent role in developing the city and because of the rise in the use of bicycles he outlawed their use on the streets and sidewalks downtown due to danger to people in vehicles and on horseback. He also suspended a constable because he had knowledge of disguised men beating a citizen and failed to arrest them. But that didn't discourage Governor Smith from issuing a proclamation against lawlessness in Madison County because citizens were being whipped and murdered by disguised men.

Huntsville Reconstruction 1870-1872

These years mark a departure from the anger and frustrations of the previous few years because across the social spectrum there was progress even as vigilantes burned 26 schools in one county alone but finally the KKK organization had raised the anger of President Grant and he pledged to put a stop to stop it.

Mayor William Mastin was working with an architect to build a City Hall near the Huntsville Hotel at the corner of Jefferson and Clinton Street and the construction began by builders Hundley, Sullivan and Steele rather quickly. Huntsville had not lost its influence in the state as a local attorney David P. Lewis was elected Governor of Alabama and the state congressional representatives began

demonstrating their influence in Washington D. C. When St. Bartley's Primitive Baptist Church, the first building burned by Union troops during the Civil War, received money appropriated by President Ulysses S. Grant to rebuild. A new City Charter was passed by the Legislature and approved by the governor that specified an election for mayor and aldermen would take place on the first Tuesday in April, after ten days public notice. Glenwood Cemetery was established as a Black Cemetery because the slave cemetery known as Georgia was full. And Rust School, on Franklin Street, was established as a Freedman's school. A new steam Fire company was organized and a Fireman's ball was held at the Huntsville Hotel. Residents were asked to clean out refuse and trash on July 28 to be hauled off by corporation carts. And the city was looking to the future when it opened the Huntsville Infirmary on the West Side of Madison Street and the First Chamber of Commerce originally known as the Merchants Association was formed. After the adoption of the 15th Amendment (the Right to Vote) Republicans met to celebrate at Miller's Grove with speeches and a basket picnic attended by 2000 people.

The winter of '71 was bad. Snow and Ice covered the community for more than a week, and cotton continued to lag behind pre-war production statistics significantly. The agriculture community was beginning to look to technology as the only alternative that would shore up the agriculture disaster. A Huntsville Agricultural and Mechanical Association was incorporated to develop Agriculture and improve mechanical methods.

In 1871 Huntsville became the site of the KKK

Ku Klux Klan Madison County Committee Findings

Congressional Committee met in Huntsville October 6 to October 16, 1871; Washington DC for a month prior

Senators: Pratt and Price;
Representatives Beck, Buckley, and Blair

Published Statistics

- Killed 6
- Outrages 19
- Shootings 5
- Whippings 11
- Total 49 Separate events

Congressional Committee hearings and the Committee determined that Madison County was the most oppressive in Alabama.

Business was depressing but it didn't discourage Mr. W.F. Struve from manufactured Lager Beer and furnishing a good wholesome tonic and febrifuge. He also returned small change in silver. A symbol of hope, residents could drink the lager and watch the Stone and Murray's Combination Circus perform in Huntsville as well as Whooten and Haight's Empire City Circus. Other performing troops made their way through Huntsville, i.e., a Grand Concert Troupe of vocalists, the Queen Sisters, and flutist Henry Farmer; all performing at the Huntsville Hotel. Tickets were 50 cents each. Decastro, the Great Illusionist, performed at the Skating Rink and admission was 50 cents; reserved seats 75 cents. And while the more accomplished citizens of the community attended the Huntsville Opera House opening on Jefferson Street and observed Actor Sol Smith Russell perform; other citizens could enjoy a good baseball game between the Athletics and the Gallaghers being played on a new field beyond the Donegan Hotel. Gallaghers won 60 to 37.

Planters in North Alabama were accommodating the new free labor concepts but still lobbied to contractually require Freedmen to be bound to the plantation until crops came in as in the prewar years. They were finding it very difficult to manage a workforce that could come and go as they pleased.

It was progress however slight in other parts of the state and as 1872 ended blacks held 15% of the political offices in the South.

**The Freedmen's Bank
As of August 1872**

- Deposits for the month
\$7,343.50
- Drafts for the Month \$10,127.61
- Total Deposits \$416,617.72
- Total Drafts \$364,382.51
- Total Due Depositors
\$52,235.21

- ❖ 1874 the Bank Failed based upon fraud and corruption

Huntsville 1873 and Beyond

The next four years, in spite of the depressed agricultural market, military presence, increase in taxes, and repeated disease outbreaks the residents were coping.

At the national level, Congressman Charles Sumner, the remaining Radical Republican antagonist and leader died in 1864. The Republicans continued to pursue the progressive agenda but congressional priorities were changing and there were fewer voices attacking the southern adaptation to change.

The Alabama Labor Union urged the state government to exempt from taxation all farms with corn, peas, and potatoes as the principle crops and the lost revenue be recovered from increased levies on the holdings of “monopolists and speculators.

The Mayor and City Aldermen voted to buy uniforms for the police force and when the residents saw them for the first time they cried out with disgust that they looked like Yankee soldiers. The city board also voted to compensate the Street Lamp Lighter for attending to the 43 street lights located in the corporate limits of Huntsville.

The city was, once again, caught in the grip of a cholera outbreak and John Erwin, the mayor, appointed a Sanitary Committee or Board of Health consisting of two alderman and three physicians to ensure all buildings and streets follow sanitary guidelines.

Financial hardship continued to plague the county but there was sufficient money to attract traveling entertainment groups to the city such as the Lent’s Great and Only New York Circus, Museum, Menagerie, Caravan and Metropolitan Musical Brigade and a Huntsville Glee Club and Dramatic Corps was formed each performed at the Opera House. The Dramatic Corps performed the play “Golden Farmer and Toodies”.

There was flooding in West Huntsville and the Depot sat in a lake while Big Spring spread out over the old union soldiers’ camp area. Jere Murphy became Mayor for a second term and in August General Leroy Pope Walker and Mr.

Freedman Stick Swindle

- Unscrupulous white men contracted with Freedmen to sell for \$4.75; 4 colored sticks/sometimes striped
- Included a contract complete with racial slurs and bigotry.
- Sticks were to be placed at four corners of any property; presumably his former master's property and then henceforth the property would be his.
- Easily duped because the Freedman could not read and rumors circulated that each Freedman would get "40 acres and a mule" from his former master.
- The swindle was last known to be used in South Alabama in 1902.

William Lowe were elected delegates to the Alabama Constitutional Convention. That may have influenced the Alabama Press Association to meet at the Huntsville Opera House.

By 1874 there were deep divisions between the black and white Republicans. Controlled by white party leaders the Republican convention nominated an all white state ticket, defeated an attempt to endorse the Civil Rights Bill, and disclaimed any desire to promote "the social equality of different races" or "mixed schools and mixed accommodation." The concern was that Republicans in the

Northern part of the state could not secure the vote without accepting the edicts.

In the end the Democrats won so many so many seats in the Alabama campaign that the subsequent General Assembly became known as the "Grange legislature". And, a new Constitution was ratified in November 1875 as Democrats won control of the state office and both houses arguably defining an end to Reconstruction in Alabama.

The vote plus the continuing dismal economic conditions may have influenced the massive migration of Freedmen to the north and Kansas.

But, life in Huntsville continued to attract recreational pursuits as more entertainment troupes performed including a London Circus and Minstrels' and residents were entertained with baseball games. One in particular attracted a crowd when John Reeds of Huntsville defeated Red Stockings of Decatur 31 to 23.

The End and Aftermath of Reconstruction

1877 marked the end of Reconstruction, but not the end of the economic hardship, tax increases, and the continued destruction of the old plantation aristocracy. One by one nearly all of the old planters either sold or lost their land to pay taxes or as collateral to cover unpaid loans. The Old South was indeed a memory. Even speculators, those that survived the intimidation of the KKK and lookalike vigilantes had given up their goals and moved north or west.

Events in history are nearly always accompanied by conflicting political events, economic impacts and other priorities. In 1877 the nation was focused on the expanding opportunities in the west and still troubled by the Plains Tribes.

President Grant's administration was plagued with graft and corruption and Radical Republican state governments in the South consistently cried for more soldiers to quell any breach of law. Their shouts impacted the limited military resources President Grant had available for the westward expansion and he grew weary of propping up the Radical Republican policies that antagonized the unruly Southerners.

On the whole, after ten years of Republican policy the South was dirt poor with few indicators of improvement and it became less and less attractive as an investment option.

The Presidential Election of 1876 was a bitterly contested campaign between Rutherford B. Hayes, heading the Republican ticket, and Samuel J. Tilden, heading the Democratic ticket. The Compromise of 1877 was unwritten but in substance guaranteed support to Rutherford B. Hayes through the Electoral Commission if he agreed to remove troops from the South. The guarantee was given and President Grant removed troops from Florida before leaving office and President Hays followed up by removing troops from other key Southern States including Alabama and that effectively removed the stick from the hand of the Radical Republicans.

The Presidential elections of 1876 ended Reconstruction. The political compromises that accompanied the tallied results were challenged and an electoral commission established. Politics had come full circle. The same political party that destroyed the plantation aristocracy and enticed the freedmen abandoned them to maintain control of the Whitehouse.

The story of Reconstruction is a nasty tale of deceit, vigilante justice, and betrayal. Debates continue regarding the effectiveness of Reconstruction. It did fulfill the definition of rebuilding; particularly with regard to African Americans freedom and education. But it did little to rebuild the economy or bridge the race gap. Of course, bridging the race gap was never an objective and applying the accepted standards of American law and culture today to the Reconstruction era is not very helpful. After Reconstruction it would take another 43 years before women had the right to vote and the 200 years of slavery that was accompanied by all the negative perceptions cast on a race enslaved is not eradicated today.

References:

- A Dream Come True; the Story of Madison County and Incidentally of Alabama and the United States Volume 1 & 2; by James Record 1970
- Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama by Walter Lynwood Fleming
- Eden of the South; A Chronology of Huntsville, Alabama 1805-2005 Edited by Renee' G. Pruitt
- The South During Reconstruction 1865 – 1877 by E. Merton Coulter Volume Eight A History of the South Louisiana State University Press and the Littlefield Fund for Southern History of the University of Texas 1947.
- A Short History of Reconstruction by Eric Foner 1984 Harper and Row, New York, New York

- Early History of Huntsville, Alabama, 1804 to 1870 by Edward Chambers Betts 1999 Google E-Book
- The Yellowhammer War; The Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama: By Professor Kenneth W. Noe Ph.D. (Editor, Contributor), and 14 more authors. University of Alabama Press 2014
- The Wars of Reconstruction; The Brief, violent history of America's most progressive era by Douglas R. Egerton, Bloobsbury Press, 2015 paperback.
- Reconstruction; America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877, by Eric Foner, Harper Perennial, 2014.