

Effects of Reconstruction on the Southern States

The Return of White Southerners to Power

In 1877, Reconstruction ended when Northern troops were withdrawn from the South.

Congress and the nation had grown tired of the Reconstruction question. The energies of the nation were now directed toward **westward expansion** and **industrialization**.

Once again white southerners took control of their state governments, and moved to prevent African-Americans from voting and participating in government.

They sought to keep blacks in an inferior position socially, economically and politically.

Economic Effects

Without the workforce provided by enslaved people, the plantation system fell apart and the economy of the South changed forever.

The failure to give freedmen their own plots of land after the civil war meant that most African-Americans in the South remained dependent on their former masters.

Many freedmen became sharecroppers.

Economics cont.

Southern agriculture gradually changed and improved. New methods of farming allowed people in the South to raise larger crops.

Northerners invested large sums of money to build railroads and factories in the South. As a result, people began moving from the farms to the cities looking for jobs.

Social Effects

The social system that developed after the period of Reconstruction in the South was one of **racial segregation and white supremacy**.

Most of the freedmen were uneducated, and this weakened their ability to compete with whites on equal terms.

Secret societies like the **Ku Klux Klan terrorized** Southern blacks with threats and acts of **violence** against those who attempted to assert their rights.

Political Effects

Following Reconstruction, Southern state governments systematically stripped African-Americans of their basic political and civil rights.

Methods Used in the South to Deny African-Americans Their Rights

Literacy Tests. Many freedmen, lacking a formal education, could not pass these reading and writing tests. As a result, they were barred from voting.

Poll Taxes. African-Americans, who could not afford to pay special voter registration fees called poll taxes were barred from voting.

Methods cont.

Grandfather Clauses. Those who had been qualified to vote in 1867 could avoid literacy tests and poll taxes. This barred blacks from voting, since none were qualified to vote in 1867.

Jim Crow Laws. Southern legislatures passed laws segregating blacks from whites in restaurants, hotels and movie theaters.