

HST 202: History of the United States W14 (Escobar Meta 31101 31100)

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Forum 3

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Legacy of Reconstruction

by Joe Escobar - Saturday, February 22, 2014, 12:53 PM

This forum thread is for Legacy of Reconstruction posts and replies.

After studying the required materials, address the questions in your posts.

To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post.

To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Legacy of Reconstruction

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The Winner of Fed. vs. States

by Linh Tran - Monday, February 24, 2014, 10:27 AM

Reconstruction can be seen as one of the most controversial era in the history of United States. It witnessed the period of changes in the society that deeply influence how American community politically and socially shaped today. During the era, many laws were passed to re-enact the country that was "recovering" from slavery. However, "passing laws or 'having rights' is not the same as enforcing the laws or exercising rights." In the success of imposing the exercising the new laws throughout the country, it called for a strong federal power that implemented the united utilization of the states. That is, Reconstruction proved the rise of federal government over the states' government that maintains as today politics. (As to recall the "game" of federal power vs. states' power had always been a controversial issue before and during the Civil War). After rejecting the Reconstruction plan of President Andrew Johnson, the Republican Congress enacted laws and Constitutional amendments that empowered the federal government to enforce the principle of equal rights, and gave black Southerners the right to vote and hold office. The two most significant are the

Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments that were being used effectively in debates of modern era.

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Re: The Winner of Fed. vs. States

by Austin McQuaw - Thursday, February 27, 2014, 11:30 AM

What you said about the rise of the federal government over the states' government is interesting to think about. It's easy to look back and be happy about the federal government stepping up to support something like racial equality. But even when we're glad that the federal power has overpowered states in a way we've liked, it pushes the boundaries of our foundation and creates a new norm for the governmental powers. With progress may come reactions that we don't want. It seems true that "progress and freedom in U.S. History does not move forward in a positive and upward trajectory". There are various ups and downs.

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Passing Laws vs Enforcing Laws

by Maisie Smith - Monday, February 24, 2014, 5:02 PM

Eric Foner stated that "Passing laws or "having rights" is not the same as enforcing the laws or exercising rights." I strongly agree with this statement in the sense that during the time or the reconstruction era, many laws were passed that not many people today know about or have a good understanding of. With the amount of bills and laws passed during this time, it was easy to pass a law but not necessarily follow through with it and enforce it. And the laws that were enforced were often loosely enforced. For example, when the Fourteenth Amendment passed, blacks were then to be considered citizens and have equal rights to those of whites, but in the south many of the black were still getting mistreated, they just couldn't call it slavery anymore. As Professor Foner put it, being written down does not mean that laws were enforced.

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Re: Passing Laws vs Enforcing Laws

by Courtney Reeser - Monday, February 24, 2014, 9:06 PM

I feel the reconstruction was a vengeful punishment of the south that definitely to not go far enough. It was almost as if it was a new kind of slavery

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Re: Passing Laws vs Enforcing Laws

by Maisie Smith - Tuesday, February 25, 2014, 12:32 PM



I agree with you. Although the black were free, they still got the worst jobs, didn't get payed well, and didn't have the resources in way of property and becoming a state official of sorts. There was also the problem of segregation that was still continuing.

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Re: Passing Laws vs Enforcing Laws



by Spencer Phillipson - Thursday, February 27, 2014, 12:06 PM

Agreed, I think a big part of this was the problem of debt and economic struggle after the war had ended. It was virtually impossible for the South to pay back the debt that they collected during the war and many of the hopes of reconstruction suffered because of this. This is also a big part of sharecropping, blacks ended up getting paid such small amounts of money because the former slave owners had nothing to pay them with as they were in debt themselves. This resulted in virtually the continuation of slavery.

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Re: Passing Laws vs Enforcing Laws



by Maisie Smith - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 8:48 PM

Good point! I didn't really consider the impact that sharecropping and the debts of the south had on the reconstruction era. I also agree that this was a continuation of slavery in the sense that blacks were still being mistreated and not getting paid what they deserved for the work they did. Many of our sources also touched on this fact and stated that this was indeed a continuation of slavery, but because black were getting paid, while it wasn't nearly what they deserved, that whites couldn't necessarily be reprimanded because this wasn't called slavery anymore.

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Enforcing Laws



by Terry Coming - Monday, February 24, 2014, 11:55 PM

This is so true of this country even today, there are several laws that were created that the people who are elected in office fail to enforce or even adequately try to enforce. The Fifteenth Amendment is a good example, the black community in the US was fighting well after WWII for a right that was granted to them in 1870 but pales in

comparison compared to what the government did to native American Indians despite laws that were passed and treaties that were made.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

1

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Re: Enforcing Laws



by Rae Gardner - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 7:24 PM

I think you bring a valid point about laws not being enforced even in today's society. Speed limit comes to mind. If there is a posted speed limit of 55MPH and someone is going 60-65 MPH they generally are not pulled over even though they are technically breaking the law by speeding. Yet if you were to go over the 65 MPH speed you are more likely to get pulled over. Yet on the flip side you have those law enforcement officers who follow the letter of the law exactly and will enforce things like the speed limit. Officer discretion is a double edged sword and it goes along with the enforcement or lack thereof in certain laws.

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Birthright citizenship...creating our own immigration issues.



by Rae Gardner - Monday, February 24, 2014, 11:37 PM

The birthright citizenship is a topic of controversy when speaking on immigration. Slaves and free-blacks were not considered slaves prior to the Civil War, so when lawmakers were looking at the multitude of free blacks after the Civil War they had to come up with a way to grant citizenship. The 14th amendment introduced birthright citizenship for those born in the United States. This amendment in many ways created the issue of illegal pregnant immigrants attempting to come into the United States to give birth. By reversing the Dred Scott decision and giving citizenship to freed slaves and free blacks the 14th amendment inadvertently created a loophole in gaining American citizenship.

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2

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Will We Ever Learn?



by Amanda Daniels - Tuesday, February 25, 2014, 3:42 AM

I would definitely agree with Eric Foner when he says, "that many people know little, if anything, about this period of history, or if they do know something, they often misunderstand it." I don't ever remember learning anything or hearing it even mentioned in my high school history about after the war.

It seems odd that although the majority of people did not want slavery in this country, they also didn't really want blacks in society either, and those who believed in equal rights for all men were definitely the minority. Even as Congress began passing laws such as the 14th amendment stating that all blacks would become citizens, there were many people who refused to be accepting of this, and acted out in violent protest and continuing the *racial*

oppression of blacks, that even today can still be seen in our society.

It really bothered me when he talked about our country's history being looked at as something that started out good and has just gotten better ever since because I think this is what a lot of people believe or that is what they "would like to believe" because it sounds much better than the truth. I really believe that we should always be looking at history and learning from it so that the same mistakes are not repeated but sadly that is not the case. If you really learn the truth about history you will find that this country has done a lot of things it really shouldn't be proud of, but sadly it's just swept under the rug and then given a little sugar coating and a nice little story to be passed on to the future generations as history. Unfortunately, or as some might say luckily "we are quick to forget," when it comes to our nation's history. Usually by the time the next generation rolls around many issues have all been forgotten, as we have done so many before leaving the opportunity for the same mistakes to happen again and again. I definitely have a lot of respect and admiration for those who have fought so hard to give equal rights to everyone.

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Re: Will We Ever Learn?

by Tamara Gould - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 6:40 PM

I also do not remember learning about the Reconstruction era in high school. It never made sense to me why there was such an immense inequality between races a hundred years after the Civil War. Knowing now that there were many factors involved between political, economic, and the vast population of freedmen, it fits together how complicated the issue really was and that there were bound to be a long hard road to equality.

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Re: Will We Ever Learn?

by Karlie Edwards - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 7:29 PM

This is very true, I remember spending a lot of time learning about the civil war, but never anything on the reconstruction afterwards. I think when people consider the progress of our country they look at how far we've come and how badly blacks were treated then to now, it does seem like a huge change, but it shouldn't stop there. There are still issues today with racial oppression that are horrible and should be noticed. It is sad, and our generation should be working on solving problems in our society today in relation to todays standards without comparison to our past.

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Enforcing Laws and Excercising Rights

by Karlie Edwards - Tuesday, February 25, 2014, 9:12 AM

As Eric Foner states in the video, the Reconstruction period is most likely the least well known and understood. Today we are still living with the changes that took place during that time, yet we aren't even sure what those changes were. The rights that we have now and have had all of our lives are possible because people fought and sacrificed for laws to be passed to grant us these rights. It is important for us to know that people before us didn't always have the luxuries we do now. It was simple for laws to be passed to satisfy or quiet people outraged by slavery and to give blacks equal rights. Although racism didn't just disappear after the 14th Amendment was passed, and in some places blacks weren't treated any differently. Laws were passed but not enforced, and rights were granted but not exercised. This has shown me that it is crucial for us today to know our rights and understand them so we are sure they are being exercised.

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Re: Enforcing Laws and Exercising Rights

by Courtney Reeser - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 5:02 PM

I definitely agree with you in here. Today I feel as if a lot of Americans know our rights but not a lot really understand them. Sometimes as Americans I do feel that we are taking advantage of due to a lot of people not really understanding what rights our government really has.

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Re: Legacy of Reconstruction

by kazu Inaba - Tuesday, February 25, 2014, 12:10 PM

I definitely agree with Eric Foner. Even though the reconstruction was one of the greatest steps for everyone to get equality and citizenship, nowadays, the U.S government is ignoring. Actually, still I can see the *racial oppression of blacks in our society*. *In the video, Eric Foner said that the revolution goes backward; that is true because if revolution went to a certain way, this society would be no racial oppression of black and violent protest. Therefore, I feel that Progress and freedom in U.S. History does not move forward in a positive.*

Sum of ratings: 1 (1)

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Re: Legacy of Reconstruction

by Karlie Edwards - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 7:17 PM

I agree, people strived to gain equality and citizenship for so long and then when it was finally stated that they should be granted, there were still issues with the laws not being enforced completely. As you said racial oppression is still in effect today. There has definitely been great progress from the past until now, but still not where we should be.

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Re: Legacy of Reconstruction



by Spencer Phillipson - Tuesday, February 25, 2014, 12:11 PM

Although Reconstruction can be seen as a modest and well fought effort to rebuild the South, in some respects, the movement failed through the struggles and problems it faced during the time. The panic of 1873 left the South poverty stricken and destroyed the plan of re-constructing the run down railroad system. The escalating tension within political parties became harder and harder to resolve and eventually ended in Southern white supremacy. The North may have won the war, but the morals and beliefs of the South were still very alive and Reconstruction was not able to provide a solution for the racism and mistreatment of blacks in the South. Instead of Blacks being fully freed and becoming equals within Society, they were seen as second class citizens and were given very few rights and power.

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Re: Legacy of Reconstruction



by Kylie Stiglbauer - Friday, February 28, 2014, 5:56 PM

I liked the point that you brought up about the North winning the war, but the south still maintaining its morals and beliefs. This almost makes one question what the north actually got out of winning the war. I agree with you and feel like for having lost, the south sure didn't seem to care. They were proud to carry out their traditions and ways of life wether people disliked it or not. It almost seemed as if the north won the physical war, but the south won the emotional one.

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Re: Legacy of Reconstruction



by Tamara Gould - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 7:25 PM

I don't think the South carried on as usual, it seems to me that they still held pride in their beliefs and ways of life and wanted to quickly restore as much of that as they could. Like the song that was played in class on Thursday, "Good Ole Rebel," there was an understanding of what was lost they just weren't going to lay down and accept it easily. With the federal laws that were not enforced and state laws, like segregation, the South was able to construct a new way of dealing with their racist views toward the freedmen.

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Re: Legacy of Reconstruction



by Maisie Smith - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 9:13 PM

I agree that the north winning the war didn't have much of a benefit, but I disagree with the insinuation that the south carried on like nothing had happened. Losing the war put the south in even more debt, which made it difficult for the whites who, as you pointed out, were considered first class citizens, to pay the backs for their work who, as you also mentioned, were considered second class citizens. I also agree with the fact that the south ended up being, yet again, more influential in ways due to political differences.

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What type of legacy did the Reconstruction era leave?



by Kylie Stiglbauer - Tuesday, February 25, 2014, 12:19 PM

The reconstruction era is apart of a legacy that has an impact on the United States that we see today. Although many people may not know much about the civil war, the can surely understand the impact that this event had on the nation when it is compared to issues that are very common today. The issue of Birthright citizenship is one that is one of the "hot button" issues that has become a very prominent discussion topic for citizens and politicians alike. The civil war showed us the dilemma of slave citizenship and how descendants of these individuals should be classified. Today, we see "illegal aliens" and the debate on wether their children (those born in the United States) should be granted citizenship or not. Professor Foner brought up very interesting points in his podcasts and also made very clear connections between the issues during the reconstruction era, to now. Similarly to now, the issue of wether or not an individual is a citizen or not was one that was highly debated over. Individuals who were free African Americans were seen lacking in citizenship until constitutional solutions were reached. It took the induction of the 14-16 amendments for these individuals to gain the rights they deserved. We see a very similar issue today as far as citizenship of illegal alien's children. The idea of Birthright citizenship is one that Foner reminds the people of being a mainly American way of seeing things. Wlth that being said, if these issues were distinguished and "solved" in the past, it is curious why they are coming up again in such a heated way.

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2

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Re: What type of legacy did the Reconstruction era leave?



by Kylie Stiglbauer - Tuesday, February 25, 2014, 1:36 PM

*Amendments 13-15

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Was it progress or regression?



by Bryan Sanders - Tuesday, February 25, 2014, 8:45 PM

It was stated that progress and freedom do not necessarily move in an upward trajectory. As we've seen in class and read in the book, slavery was abolished by the 13th

Amendment. The subsequent amendments afterward granted citizenship and voting rights for all adult males. However, that did not translate to better lives for the freedmen. The south simply turned to a system of Jim Crow to force the freedmen into second class citizenship, which would technically still be legal since it wasn't slavery and it recognized they had citizenship. They were however bound by legal contracts that were written to benefit the whites. The illiterate freedmen wouldn't had much chance. The voter intimidation conducted by the Ku Klux Klan would have discouraged most freedmen from voting, thus preventing them from changing anything at the ballot box.

All this put together and you get regression during and even after Reconstruction. Even with progress like the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the Constitution, it goes to show that progress and freedom does not necessarily mean things will get better.

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regression



by Courtney Reeser - Friday, February 28, 2014, 8:06 AM

I definitely agree with you that there was very little progress made and a lot more regression. Reconstruction was a truly revolutionary time. It was the sort of experiment in expanded federal authority and intervention that could only have come after a war.at least, that was true in the nineteenth century. I mean a bunch of people suddenly freed from the chains of bondage, walking around amidst the ruins of the South and still interacting with the people who used to own them, who used to whip them or sell their relatives down the river if they chose. Under slavery, racial boundaries had been clearly established. then the south turns it into how free are they really. That turned out to be an extremely difficult question. It left the people in the south terrified and did everything they could to make these freedman slaves just without the official title. I feel like they took a huge step forward with freeing the slaves bug 10 steps backwards with the way these freedman were treated. The reconstruction was just a new kind of slavery. These men woman and children were treated worse then they were treated as slaves.

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Re: regression



by Tamara Gould - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 7:12 PM

Slaves in the South were seen as little more than work mules. They were property, exceptionally valuable property. So of course once they were all freed after the Civil War, where Southerners lost so much; soldiers, property, economic structure, and political standing, their resentment much have been outstanding. Without the proper Government follow-through on protecting the safety, and later the Rights, of the Freedmen, the resentment led to violence and brutality toward Freedmen. One step forward, ten steps back sound about right.

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Citizen Rights

by Amanda Hough - Saturday, March 1, 2014, 11:12 PM

What stood out to me the most after watching the video on Reconstruction, was the topic on immigration and citizen/ birth rights. To this day, this topic brings up many questions and concerns with both U.S. citizens and immigrants. I don't see a problem with having birth right citizenship, but the laws that surround non-citizen immigrants who give birth in our country are very tricky to effectively enforce. All sorts of these 'rights' that we have as American citizens should be clearly understood. I think that there is a problem with this today, and in the Reconstruction area, and not only having to do with the amendments added then.

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