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**Legacy of Reconstruction**

by Joe Escobar - Friday, February 20, 2015, 9:50 PM

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

After studying the required materials, address the various questions. For purposes of encouraging discussion, you may decide to separate your responses into SEPARATE 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

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**Cartoon #4**

by Maggie Van Wey-Wells - Friday, February 20, 2015, 10:53 PM

Lady Liberty is looking down upon the men judging their actions and pleads. She seems bored and irritated with them. The quote below reading "Shall I trust these men". You can see the contemplation and and frustration in her face. In the second image Lady Liberty is praising the colored man as he stands with crutches and a amputated left leg. The quote reads "And not this man!"

The artist is saying, why should we trust these white men but not the black man who participated in the wars of our country! A man who fought the U.S just like you, a man who has lost his leg fighting alongside your brothers. The artist supports the equal treatment of colored men and the respect they deserve.

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**help now may hurt later**

by Evan Kossow - Sunday, February 22, 2015, 9:12 PM

The reconstruction period after the civil war is certainly something I haven't ever known that much about making professor Foners claim correct as applies to me. This would be a very difficult and awkward time for anyone holding office to deal with. The country was split in half. One thing I see as an increasing trend when looking at the civil war is the amount of unchallenged federal power. Lincoln seized a great amount of power during the civil war which played a role in winning for the union. If a president prior to the civil

war would have come out with the idea of enforcing a draft I feel he would be challenged from all angles and boot kicked out of office. Wartime makes the idea of expansive power make sense to a greater amount of people and becomes more acceptable in reaction. I haven't yet learned of a time in our history where peacetime yielded a decrease in federal power but I also believe it would be accepted by the masses. A modern example I can tie in to wartime power increases is the patriot act after the trade center attacks. Imagine if the TSA of today went back in time 15 years ago and began implementing the security checks of today, I believe the turn of the millennium crowd would feel extremely molested and the event would make national news as an appalling one. Thinking about where increases in federal power could take us makes me realize I may be a pessimist; that's fine but I just hope for the next generation I don't turn out a realist.

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Re: help now may hurt later

by [Stanley Cates](#) - Monday, February 23, 2015, 10:38 PM

While I agree with you that Lincoln seized a great deal of power during the war; and that it makes an interesting topic for discussion; I don't think "acceptable in reaction" or "unchallenged" are terribly accurate description of the immediate aftermath of the union draft. Over 100 people died in the resulting riots.¹ I would also put forward that the new security checks after the September eleventh attacks did make headlines, maybe not as appalling but I recall many people being very unhappy about them. I think you've made some good points, but maybe missed some of the finer details.

¹ McPherson, James M. *Liberty, Equality, Power: A History of the American People*. Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2005. Print. Page 552

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Re: help now may hurt later

by [Evan Kossow](#) - Thursday, February 26, 2015, 12:15 PM

Oh yeah, im certainly aware that both the draft and airport security were very controversial subjects at the time they were implemented. What im saying is that if they were introduced when the nation was not in a perceivable point of peril these acts granting expansive power would never make it to the point of being implemented at all.

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Types of Nationalism

by [Dalyn Stram](#) - Monday, February 23, 2015, 9:53 PM

Foner's point about the difference between civic nationalism and racial nationalism ties in very well with the idea of American nativism. Really from the beginnings of America, the people thought of themselves through the lens of race. If you were a member of a specific race or religion, you were American. If you were different, you weren't American, regardless of whether you lived here or were even born here. A WASP (white anglo-saxon protestant) was an American citizen and was thus able to enjoy the rights of being a citizen. Native Americans or blacks were not privy to such rights for the most part, and we've seen that even being Irish, Catholic, or different in any other religious or racial aspect was enough to bring prejudice against you (even if you were still white). So during reconstruction, our government took steps to ensure that everyone would at least enjoy most of the rights - in theory - that anyone else enjoyed. Thus we shifted from racial nationalism to civic nationalism. It took a while to really take hold, but in the modern age, we consider anyone born here to be an American citizen. This was a new idea during

reconstruction, and hard for some to deal with. You look at America's history of slavery and this move really makes a lot of sense. We had to put an amendment in place that would ensure nobody would be denied their rights based on race or religion. Foner mentions that many other countries don't have civic nationalism. You aren't a citizen of that country just because you were born there. But many of those countries don't share a similar history of slavery. Understanding our specific history and what unfolded during reconstruction shows just how our current model of civic nationalism makes perfect sense in America, and how that past continues to affect us every day in the modern age.

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Re: Types of Nationalism

by [Michael Leopold](#) - Friday, February 27, 2015, 12:15 PM

Agreed. To add, I liked what Escobar pointed out in class yesterday(thurs.) about us being the first civilization ever to adhere to a policy of voting and equal citizenship(in writing anyway) with the 13th-15th amendments. No other civilization had tried this, and I feel as with any new experiment there are going to be people that don't agree, even if it is the right thing to do. Ethnic nationalism had been the way of the world and we challenged that ideal with this integration. The only question I would bring up is your last point about these other countries not having a similar history of slavery.

Although not having the cotton fields to compare, many many countries, especially if we are referring to Europe, indeed had slavery. Slavery and indentured servitude dating back centuries before the "New World" had even been discovered. They may have abolished it many years before America did, it was still prevalent in the history of almost every European civilization, if not the world.

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Slavery

by [Dalyn Stram](#) - Friday, February 27, 2015, 3:11 PM

Well, slavery is not slavery is not slavery. Slavery has existed for as long as mankind as been around, but there were/are many different kinds. For example, the native Americans had slaves, but they were typically captured in raids or battles and either released after a period of time or assimilated and accepted into the tribe. Some tribes were comprised of upwards of 75% former slaves. Europe, on the other, had more or less replaced slavery by 1000-1100 AD. Europe's system of labor was serfdom, not slavery. Most European countries had banned slavery hundreds of years before America. The Atlantic slave trade (taking slaves from Africa and bringing them here) was really a new type of racial slavery to the world, on a pretty massive scale. The vast majority of those slaves were brought to the new world, not Europe. So no, most other countries do not share our history of slavery. We have issues that still linger to this day that most other countries do not deal with. They may have their own differences and issues of culture (ie when you had the ethnic issues of different people groups and cultures living in Yugoslavia which led up to the Yugoslav War), but I can't think of another country which shares the history of the Atlantic slave trade like we do. We have a pretty specific type of history regarding the slavery that endured here for so long.

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Controversial birthrights.

by [Stanley Cates](#) - Monday, February 23, 2015, 11:34 PM

I think Foner ties the definition of citizenship as put forth in the 14th amendment to modern day rather well, although I feel he has left a little to be desired on the subject; being that it's not necessarily very popular today, and I would imagine wasn't universally well received during the reconstruction period.

In order to truly free the slaves it would of course be necessary to provide them access to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as described in the *Declaration of Independence*. In order to do this they must be granted citizenship. Things get a little more complicated when you then have to define the mechanism which determines citizenship. Ancestral heritage and homeland doesn't work here as it would ultimately exclude the white population as well, having originated in Europe. Generational heritage is complicated because you then have to define how many generations are adequate. Place of birth is the only logical vehicle by which to define citizenship of the freed slaves. It excludes room for debate as this generation of slaves; presumably, given the downfall of the international slave trade; had all been born on American soil, even though their parents were not citizens at the time, were citizens. I cannot fathom by any stretch that this sat well with the white population given the racial tensions of the times.

With the idea of nativism in mind this notion of birthright citizenship isn't as widely accepted as maybe it ought to be. The idea that someone is equal under the laws of your nation without having any roots or "claim" to the rights granted by your country is by nature somewhat curious. Please do not interpret that as me being anti-immigration; as I certainly am not; it's simply an interesting question based on observations in our society. What right do you have to our rights? An individual who has followed the legal process of adopting citizenship has proven their loyalty and desire to contribute to our society. These individuals even tend to know more about the roots of our country than those who are natural born citizens. That can't be said to a child born on American soil through no will of it's own, myself included. I think that's as close to the mindset of the 19th century populous that I can approach.

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Re: Controversial birthrights.

by [Cesar Rodriguez](#) - Saturday, February 28, 2015, 8:34 PM

I Completely agree with you. The debate over birthright citizenship begins but doesn't end with the 14th Amendment, passed in the aftermath of the Civil War, which says in part, "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside." I believe that the court's holding was consonant with the intentions of the Congress that wrote the 14th Amendment namely, that citizenship would be conferred on children born in the U.S. to "resident aliens." But does that principle extend to immigrants living in the country illegally, a category that didn't exist at the time the amendment was adopted, when immigration was unrestricted? I believe that Congress could abolish or modify birthright citizenship for the children of foreigners in the country illegally. But even if Congress could, should it?

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Re: Controversial birthrights.

by [Erik Fischer](#) - Saturday, February 28, 2015, 10:35 PM

I believe that it should. The former slaves who the 14th amendment was aimed at were not brought here by their wishes. It was more of We're sorry by the government for slavery. I don't think that it was intended as a free ticket to citizenship that it is being used as in modern times. Those slaves weren't criminals who broke laws to sneak into this country to benefit from our freedom and government hand outs, they were forced here against their will and had not broken any laws in coming here. After the generations of slavery they earned the right to be citizens because the country was literally built on their backs. If illegal immigrants are not punished to the letter of the law then why even have any

laws. By not enforcing laws it makes them mean nothing like Professor Foner was saying about the freedoms promised in the 14th amendment not really being in effect for nearly one hundred years when African Americans had to fight for equal rights in the 1960's.

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Birthright Citizenship

by [Trinidad Delgado](#) - Thursday, February 26, 2015, 8:32 PM

In the Reconstruction era, the 14th Amendment reads that blacks who are born in the America are granted citizenship and protective rights. Before Lincoln enacted the Emancipation Proclamation, slaves who born children were slaves under the mother's status, and no right to American citizenship. They were property to their owners, and were not considered legal citizens in the U.S. Lincoln made a statement to create a "new birth of freedom", meaning to put an end to slavery in southern states based on free-labor.

During the Reconstruction era, many Africans still faced discrimination. Black codes were established that limited their freedom. They couldn't buy their own land only if they saved enough money. In some ways they were still treated as slaves that had no birth-right- citizenship.

Professor Foner makes points about the birthright citizenship of immigrant children, which he refers to the 14th Amendment of freedmen. The children who were born to former slaves wanted equal rights as an American. They were born here, and deserve these rights. What place did they have on American soil if they were not citizens under the 14th Amendment? The amendment does not exclude race, or color because it applies to everybody.

It is almost similar instances when illegal immigrants come to the U.S. seeking opportunities for a better life, and for equal citizen rights. Their children that are born here are automatically naturalized citizens, which parents hope this would secure them for permanent residency. Eventually, they apply for their citizenship, and help contribute to the economy. To conclude, America is a land of opportunity for people seeking equality. That is what every immigrant and African in the 19th century wanted is freedom to live among their peers without discrimination.

Murrin, John M. "Reconstruction , 1863-1877." *Liberty, Equality, Power: A History of the American People*. 4th ed. Vol. 17. Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2005. 584, 587. Print.

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Immigration

by [Dalyn Stram](#) - Friday, February 27, 2015, 3:27 PM

Agreed. However, not to sound like a grouch, and not to get too political, but I think there's a big difference between the slaves of the 16th-19th centuries and illegal immigrants of today. America is a nation of immigrants, and we should be immensely proud of that. We are a unique experiment in the world. However, we are a nation of legal immigrants, and we are a nation of laws. Compared to most other countries, we are extremely lenient when it comes to immigration. I think that reflects our history of immigration, and nobody can honestly say we are "against immigration" here. However, immigration must be done legally. So while I agree with you in general, I don't think illegal immigration (a conscious to break the law) is a "similar instance" to the slaves who were forced to come here in bondage. I think that's going a bit too far.

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Re: Immigration

by [Cori Ross](#) - Friday, February 27, 2015, 10:22 PM

I have to agree with Dalyn here the fact that the current day illegal immigrants who know that they are here breaking the law and using the birthright as a way to stay, vs the slaves that were brought here from Africa against their will, treated beyond poorly, and having kids that were treated just as poorly is two very different situations.

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Re: Immigration

by [Cesar Rodriguez](#) - Saturday, February 28, 2015, 8:16 PM

It's true that an undocumented parent may be eligible for some benefits for her child, and under current law some unauthorized immigrants with U.S.-born children may qualify for relief from deportation. And of course, parents might want to have a child in the U.S. not out of pure self-interest but because their children will derive benefits from U.S. citizenship. But it is not clear that women decide to enter the U.S. illegally because of these potential advantages (or are even aware of them). I think it is unlikely that this is a decisive factor in many cases. I agree with you when you say that slavery is not a similar instance as today's immigration, but I would disagree that we should change birthright citizenship just because of that fact alone. The 14th amendment I think purposely is lenient to allow opportunity to the people it applies to, back then being African Americans and now extending to all immigrants looking for opportunity for themselves and their children in this great country of ours.

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Re: Legacy of Reconstruction

by [Maggie Van Wey-Wells](#) - Thursday, February 26, 2015, 10:38 PM

I agree with Eric Foner that a lot of people don't know very much about the civil war and the reconstruction period. Before this class I never even had heard about the Reconstruction time period and had been taught very little about the history of the civil war. It wasn't until this class that I really understood why the civil war even happened and the true mentality Abe Lincoln had towards the slaves. I wasn't aware of the differences between the Republicans and Democrats compared to today or that not all Southerners had slaves and not all Northerners were abolitionists. I also had never thought about how hard it was for the Union to get the ex C.S.A to ratify the equal treatment and voting rights of the freedmen. I suppose most people know that the war happened because the mean old Southerners wanted the slaves to be working on their plantations and the Northerners were allies of Abe Lincoln and revolted against slavery all together. After the war no one really considers what it took to get the country mended back together and how the democrats treated the freedmen once they weren't slaves anymore.

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Re: Legacy of Reconstruction

by [Michael Leopold](#) - Friday, February 27, 2015, 12:26 PM

I was actually talking to friend about this this morning. About how little information we

were given as children about what really happened back then. I was "taught" about Reconstruction back then but it was portrayed (aside: I was born in Wisconsin, so definitely a yankee bias) that after the North put the union back together fixing, to quote you, what "the mean old southerners" had wrecked, the North then paid to fix all the building and roads and railroads in the South that were wrecked and the North were these great saviors. That was all. Similar to what you mentioned, it was only until this class that I realized that "Reconstruction" was more than the North fixing the South, structurally and otherwise. That it was more of a healing process between the two sides, or a reconstruction of trust and loyalty more than just a reconstruction of buildings and roads. I also was never aware of how the 14th and 15th amendments had managed to be passed. It was unexpected but not surprising to learn of the ultimatum and coercion involved in their passing. We didn't just return to the happy-go-lucky union that was portrayed in midwestern public school. I think Eric Foner even touched on the point that we are STILL dealing with some of the effects of this time period today, and I think certain animosities still exist, pointedly Joe's story about the southern man's "Sherman" name hatred.

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Re: Legacy of Reconstruction

by [Trinidad Delgado](#) - Friday, February 27, 2015, 7:01 PM

Same here, I never knew that the aftermath of the Civil War made an impact on North and the South. I was taught that the war was meant to free slaves, and that would be the end to slavery. I agree that the Reconstruction period was a crisis that meant to trust both sides, eventually the South returning to the Union. The war left the southern economy in ruins; moreover, without help, it would have never been restored. Yes, I do not believe the South returned to the Union on "good terms" as perceived in grade school because they had no choice; it was for the benefit of their economy.

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Progress and Retrogression

by [Michael Leopold](#) - Friday, February 27, 2015, 8:16 AM

Progress in our history, as Eric Foner points out in his speech, is not, and has never been, a straight line of progress, but with many ups and downs along the line of time. Foner quotes Thomas Wentworth Higgins as saying that "Revolutions may go backward." This is especially true during the time of Reconstruction. The laws and amendments passed during this time were surely making an attempt at moving in the right direction toward freedom and rights for all, but they were only on paper. A document may say whatever it chooses, but it means nothing if it is not carried out by the people and/or government. These new laws were "not self-enforcing." But as Foner explains, these laws did lay the groundwork and the basis for a later generation's movement toward freedom for all. The Civil Rights movement a century later didn't need to pass any new laws or need a new constitution, but rather just needed the laws already in place in the old constitution to be enforced. I feel that this helped immensely during the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s as the Constitution already stated the very things that they were fighting for. So even though the Reconstruction period still left many in the country at odds, and many more without the rights that our defining document (The Constitution) legally gave them, it did eventually do what was intended back in 1866. It's no secret that we did not "Begin perfect and have been getting better ever since", but we have slowly caught up to our laws' foresight and compassion for the rights of all citizens of this country.

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Eric Foner video



by [Maggie Van Wey-Wells](#) - Saturday, February 28, 2015, 4:25 PM

When Eric Foner addresses the civil rights movement in the sixties he explains that our constitution needed to be enforced because people were ignoring the 14th amendment. During that time we had laws which protected black peoples rights but we did not carry out them out. It took a century for black people to receive equal treatment even though the 14th Amendment was added to the constitution during the Reconstruction time period. Eric Foner emphasizes on the fact that America has had revolutions for civil rights but it isn't a straight line, we are very up and down with our progress. I completely agree with his statements. I believe that civil rights even today aren't completely equal between races and gender. We still are in need of progress when it comes to how as individuals we view and treat others. We have issues in Ferguson where black people are feeling threatened by cops and feel that their is an over use of power. Discrimination still exists though the law calls for equality. A right which took years and years of war in our own country to be able to have. Though not everyone on the side of the union wanted this and didn't agree with everything they were fighting for we still lost so many men and caused a huge horrible war just so we could have equality for our citizens and I don't think we remember how hard it was to be where we are at today. Individuals still have a mindset which is unhealthy when it comes to how they view other people.

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Immigration Issues

by [Maggie Van Wey-Wells](#) - Saturday, February 28, 2015, 10:06 PM

I definitely agree with Eric Foner when it comes to birthright citizenship and how it still applies to illegal immigration today. The 14th Amendment gives individuals the right to citizenship when they're born here which can be rather complicated for illegal immigrants. If a family moves here illegally and has a child here their child is legally allowed to be a citizen but the parents are not. This can be really hard especially if there is an issue like the family getting caught for illegally living here. The child is allowed to stay but the parents aren't which is awfully sad.

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Progress and Freedom, one step forward two steps back

by [Erik Fischer](#) - Saturday, February 28, 2015, 10:54 PM

I agree with Professor Foner that progress and freedom in this country is not a linear progression. This has been demonstrated several times just within the institution of slavery. When slavery was first introduced in this country the slaves were often released after a period of servitude and the idea of lifetime slavery didn't exist. Then slaves were slaves for life but they weren't prohibited from reading, writing, or public gatherings and they were allowed free time after the crops were harvested. Then the Nat Turner rebellion effectively took all of this away in its aftermath. Then the slaves are released but the freedmen are forced into crooked labor contracts and the Black Codes make life often times worse than slavery. If that wasn't bad enough many were killed by southern whites for not remaining in their subservient roles. All of this seems like a regression rather than progression, certainly it did not "start out perfect and get better".

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Laws only matter if they are enforced.

by [Erik Fischer](#) - Saturday, February 28, 2015, 11:39 PM

Even though this is a serious topic there are many funny examples of how this is true. According to Dumblaws.com it is against the law to show a movie on Sunday here in Eugene, however the theater is open and operates on Sundays so the law is broken

every weekend and no one suffers any consequences. Also illegal in Oregon, bathing without "suitable clothing" and as I have never heard of anyone getting in trouble for not wearing clothes in the bath this law also doesn't matter. These law may as well not exist. Kind in the same way that the 14th amendment was ignored by Whites in their treatment of blacks until 1960's. If there is no punishment for disregarding the rights of others then some will ignore the laws to protect those rights.

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