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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

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

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**Re: Legacy of Reconstruction**

by Harold Butler - Saturday, February 21, 2015, 11:27 AM

On the topic of destruction of slavery, I feel according to facts that the idea of freedom came with A heavy price and sacrifice considering that my ancestors fought in wars as pawns but we're valiant but still after the war faced the same problems and poverty and treatment as before... They fought in wars to come home to shine shoes...

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**Birtright citizenship and illegal immigrants:**

by Delaney Crook - Sunday, February 22, 2015, 11:56 AM

Professor Foner makes the claim that birthright citizenship defined in the 19th century applies to illegal immigration issues today. Prior to the civil war just because a person was born the in United States it did not automatically make them a citizen. In today's era, if an illegal immigrant has a child born in the United States, the child is automatically an U.S citizen, even though their parents are not citizens and are, in fact, illegal immigrants. The issues of slavery and the abolition of slavery led to the laws and change in the constitution of birthright citizenship, because there were freed slaves who were born in the United States, and their ancestors were born here, but they were still not considered citizens. This is a far cry from what we consider citizens in today's society. Because of the issues during Reconstruction and the 19th century, our laws that define a U.S citizen are completely changed and different from that time period. This concept is a result of the civil war, and did not exist before the civil war. The Dred Scott decision led to the law that

citizenship was based on race, not on birth place or any other factor. They believed that America was a place for white people only. In today's society we, as America, are considered to have civic nationalism, rather than ethnic nationalism, which states that any one can become a citizen of the United States, no matter what ethnicity or nationality they are. This was not true for more than the first half-century of our country. Ethnic nationalism in the 19th century was bounded by racism during this time. The civil war led to this change from ethnic nationalism to civic nationalism and has completely changed our laws and constitution regarding citizenship.

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Re: Birthright citizenship and illegal immigrants:

by [Adam Graves](#) - Friday, February 27, 2015, 3:57 PM

Although I agree almost all that you state in your post, I do feel like even after the civil war and the 13th and 14th amendments were passed freedman didn't get all equality that whites did. Words on paper make a historical impact, but without enforcement and allowing states to establish Black Codes; made slaves wonder what the war was about, and if their civil rights were going to be enforced or ever equal to white American's. I think the idea of civic nationalism came in the mid 20th century. With all that said, good post and made some excellent points, and well written.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Re: Legacy of Reconstruction

by [Colt Eubank](#) - Sunday, February 22, 2015, 7:54 PM

I believe the Professor makes a very good point about the reconstruction era and its paving the way for the Civil Rights Movement. He says that the Constitution didn't have to be redone or rewritten it simply had to be enforced. All the writing for equal rights was already in our constitution. People who were United States citizens who were not white already had the same rights as white people, but this was being ignored. All it needed was to be enforced by the courts for people to actually be given there rights as set forth by the Constitution of the United States.

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The uniqueness of birthright citizenship

by [Kai Seltman](#) - Monday, February 23, 2015, 9:37 PM

The video of Professor Foner's speech concerning the Reconstruction Period following the Civil War was enlightening in several regards, but what I found most intriguing was his explication on birthright citizenship as compared to ethnic citizenship. I was not previously aware that America has 'birthright citizenship'- that being born in the United States of America automatically grants one citizenship, even if one's parents are undocumented immigrants (illegal aliens.) I feel that this is a distinctive aspect of the US. In my home country Japan, it would be unthinkable for a person born in Japan to be acknowledged as a Japanese citizen if neither parents are Japanese, especially if the parents are undocumented immigrants. I believe it is the same for most other foreign countries. (That is not to say I am in disfavor of the ruling; on the contrary, I feel it to be fair and egalitarian.) I learnt from the video and the textbook that this unique American legislation is a result of an unique American predicament. After the civil war and the emancipation of millions of slaves that followed it, America was faced with the question of how to handle the situation. As African Americans were forcibly brought to the States to be slaves, now that slavery was abolished, both the Southern ex-confederates and the ex-slaves themselves had to adjust to a sudden and radical change in the white-black relationship dynamic. As a 'solution', Congress passed the 14th Amendment, which

states that "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." Although this was a revolutionary notion that would be ignored for a good part of its history (a 'sleeping giant' in Charles Sumner's words), it laid the groundwork for the birthright citizenship legislation that was reintroduced a century later and prevails in the US to this day.

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14th Amendment and Civil Rights Act:

by [Delaney Crook](#) - Thursday, February 26, 2015, 12:58 PM

Today's lecture reminded me of some important aspects of the idea that passing laws or "having rights" is not the same as enforcing laws or exercising rights. This was proven with the Civil Right Act of 1866 and the 14th Amendment. The Civil Rights Act was initially vetoed by Andrew Johnson, then Congress passed it over his veto. But, the Act had to be made an amendment in order for the enforcement of the laws and to be able to exercise the rights. Once it was made an amendment it was able to state: equal protection of the laws; shall not deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law. It also stated national citizenship for all persons born or naturalized in the United States. Because this Act was made an amendment, we were able to enforce this, but passing of the law in itself was not able to enforce the law or exercise the rights.

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Re: 14th Amendment and Civil Rights Act:

by [Cody Garrison](#) - Saturday, February 28, 2015, 2:25 PM

Andrew Johnson was so wrapped up in his beliefs that he didn't want to let African Americans gain control. To me I believe that Andrew Johnson had an insidious agenda the whole time he was in office. Thank goodness for the congress making the Civil Rights act into the 14th amendment. I feel that the amendment did make it more noticeable that America was heading in the right direction but still needed more to help Americans be free and have the rights the deserve. With Andrew Johnson's power and the hardcore Southern democrats it seemed almost impossible for any race to become apart of.

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eternal vigilance is the price of human decency

by [Adam Graves](#) - Thursday, February 26, 2015, 3:49 PM

Eric Foner's speech on the reconstruction period had some very good points, and how they still apply today. Progress you would assume would've continued in an upward and positive manner following the civil war. The thought that he claimed most people didn't fully understand this time period I believe to be true. Although the end of the war did have its effects on society, specifically the passing of the 13th amendment. It did not make these newly freedman equal in any rights. One example of a hitting a peak of freedom only to be followed up with the enforcement of Black codes to suppress their civil liberties of the freedman. During that time as Foner stated and I believe the thought of every democrat during that time "citizenship was for white people" proving that ethnic nationalism was still very strong and would be almost a century later before the notion of civic nationalism becoming more of a dominant view, as well as provoke the enforcement of the civil rights of Americans.

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Birthright Citizenship and the American Dream

by [Haley Anderson](#) - Saturday, February 28, 2015, 11:45 AM



19th century reconstruction has a direct correlation to how immigration is dealt with today. Unlike many countries we are considered civic nationalists due to the fact that anyone can become a citizen whereas other countries are ethnic nationalists because they have a more strict ideal of who can become a citizen. The United States has the law that if a baby is born in the United States they are automatically a citizen of the United States, even if their parents came here illegally. Originally the United States had this Ethnic nationalism but due to its extreme ties with race and how only white people could become citizens even though they had been in the U.S. just as long as black people, the law was changed to anyone being born in the United States becoming a citizen.

I think that in this change to civic nationalism we have created a very inclusive society and country that helps people who were not doing so well, have a prosperous life here, and isn't that exactly what the original American dream was? The idea that anyone can come here, become a citizen, and begin a life that is prosperous and comfortable. Whether that is the case for everyone is debatable, but it is the ideals of the reconstruction that really encouraged America's reputation in that aspect.

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The mobility of progress

by [Courtney Tullock](#) - Saturday, February 28, 2015, 7:43 PM

The Reconstruction period might have been a backwards revolution but it did lay down the foundation for the Civil Rights Movement. Even though I can't call the time period a success, it is only because the laws were not upheld. There were people trying to do the right thing by the freed slaves hence the existence of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments but that could only go so far. It was up to the citizens to uphold the laws and the courts to punish those who did not. Their failure to do those things is disappointing. However, I keep in mind that America was and still is a really young country and progress is not an easy thing to achieve with so many conflicting ideas about what the country should represent. I concur with Foner in the fact that progress is not always moving in an upward trajectory but its learning from mistakes which makes progress possible. Its what makes our History and especially the Reconstruction so vital to learn.

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