

HST 202: US History W20 (Escobar)

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Legacy of Reconstruction
by [Joe Escobar](#) - Friday, February 21, 2020, 5:26 PM

This thread is for discussions on the Legacy of Reconstruction topic.

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BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post, something that describes the specific question you are addressing. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Legacy of Reconstruction

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The Importance of Birthright Citizenship in the United States
by [Cynara Onyemordi](#) - Sunday, February 23, 2020, 12:35 AM

The United States of America has participated in a variety of wars since its foundation. Some of them are more popular and well known than others but one that has definitely garnered a lot of talk and fame since its conclusion in 1865 has definitely been the Civil War. There’s many good reasons for its notoriety and popularity. It was a war that shaped America into the country that we know it as today and it was the catalyst for what marked the official end of slavery in the US. Many people know these facts and are very interested in not only the period that led up to the civil war but also the war itself. What’s often not talked about though, is what happened directly after the war. Everyone knows before the civil war there were slaves and after the Civil war there was “freedom and equality for all” but what people don’t know is how long it took or what the process of getting up to that point was like. In Eric Foner’s video he touches upon several aspects of today’s American system that were established post civil war. One of these things mentioned was the idea of national birthright citizenship. Prior to the war, slaves were nothing more than property that boosted the economy, but Lincoln’s emancipation proclamation made during the war changed that. Now these slaves were finally recognized as people, people who deserved rights moreover and ones that deserved to be citizens of the country. Thus this idea of birthright citizenship was created. Any black or white person born in the United States was now considered a citizen who deserved life liberty and freedom. This was eventually updated to all people born in the US and soon there were many foreign children who were recognized in the states. While birthright citizenship may seem like a normal practice to people living in America, it is actually something that is seldom done anywhere else. In a business insider article written by Ashley Collman titled “More than 30 other countries recognize birthright citizenship — here's the full list” it lists just 35 countries who have birthright citizenship. That’s approximately 18% of countries that recognize this. In truth, birthright citizenship is an odd practice that the US adopted simply to correct the dreadful mistake of slavery. People-even the current

president- often talk about how this old practice should be thrown out because it invites illegal aliens to have their children born in America, but it's policies like this, ones created in attempt to right the nations past wrongs that are most important. Laws like these help remember who The United States used to be and what it has become.

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Agree with your idea about birthright citizenship.
by [Yibo Zhang](#) - Saturday, February 29, 2020, 5:45 PM

Hi Cynara, I agree with your idea that the birthright citizenship of America has a long-term controversy because of its initial purpose has become different in today's society.

During civil war and reconstruction period, birthright citizenship could be considered as an progressive movement because it was conformed the social situation and environment at that time. On the one hand, we could say that birthright citizenship was a democratic progress for both American and American born foreigners. On the other hand, we could probably say that it was the outcome under political struggles. According to our lecture, we knew that the Civil right Act 1866 has been vetoed by president Johnson. KKK also fought against the Act. In this case, passing of Civil right Act and 14th Amendment really caused some economical and political impacts on south democrats and white supremacisms.

Today, plantation economy has eliminated. Slavery has on longer be an benifical economical style in this world. However, birthright citizenship becomes to a new controversial issue because illegal imigrants has brought some negative effects to American local economy and political environment. Just like you mentioned , " While birthright citizenship may seem like a normal practice to people living in America, it is actually something that is seldom done anywhere else." Although people and government today has started to re-considered this problem, the situation they have now is totally different than it in 160 years ago. Now, I think more people are confused that, if we denied the birthright citizenship, is that means we also denied the achievements we did before?

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Differences of racial nationalism v. civic nationalism
by [Jasmine Foster](#) - Sunday, February 23, 2020, 8:13 PM

Throughout the world today, racial nationalism is prevalent, but changing as technology and communication becomes more common. The idea of civic nationalism was radical at the beginning of the Reconstruction period. To be American, was to be white. This started to change during the Reconstruction period where a biracial culture could emerge where black and white were treated the same under the law. As the United States are recovering from the loss of life from the Civil War, the time to heal and learn begin. By creating a civic nationality, the seeds were places for the American culture today being about equality for its citizens regardless of race.

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Reconstruction and Rights
by [Beth Trower](#) - Sunday, February 23, 2020, 8:31 PM

I want to focus on point three: having the laws doesn't mean they are enforced.

During the Reconstruction era, there were many laws and orders that were passed but weren't enforced. For example, General Sherman directed a military order that we now know as 40 acres and a mule, where each former slave would receive 40 acres and a mule as part of reparations. However, this hardly got enforced: "The expectation of 40 acres and a mule excited freedpeople in 1865, but President Johnson's Amnesty Proclamation and his wholesale issuance of pardons restored most of this property to pardoned ex-Confederates" (online textbook 473).

Another example would be what Professor Foner points out in his lecture: "The Fourteenth Amendment remained part of the Constitution, but it was ignored for many, many decades. Civil rights legislation remained in the statute book, but it was ignored. In other words, just as today in the United States, we have plenty of nice constitutional rights, but some of them are being violated by the federal government with little problem from the courts or popular protest" (Foner Lecture).

A modern-day example would be how Section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment is only somewhat enforced. Section 1 "...defined all native-born or naturalized persons, including blacks, as American citizens and prohibited the states from abridging the "privileges and immunities" of citizens, from depriving "any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law," and from denying to any person "the equal protection of the laws" (online textbook 474).

It seems easy to enforce, except when it isn't. Roe v. Wade is an obvious case here: the ruling states that women have a legal right to an abortion. However, some states keep trying to infringe on that ruling. In May of last year, Alabama and Georgia passed "heartbeat laws" designed to prevent women from having an abortion once a heartbeat is detected. Alabama went significantly further in which they outlawed abortion at *any* stage during a woman's pregnancy, with no exceptions for rape or incest (<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2019/05/alabama-georgia-abortion-bills/589504/>). This blatant infringement on the Supreme Court's ruling was signed into law and is known as the Human Life Protection Act. While the law did get temporarily blocked by a federal judge (<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/29/us/alabama-abortion-ban.html>), it is a simple example of how our rights are infringed upon to this day, whether it's a Supreme Court ruling being defied or if it is a constitutional amendment being ignored.

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Re: Reconstruction and Rights
by [Jasmine Foster](#) - Tuesday, February 25, 2020, 12:27 PM

Hello Beth,

Though you make some interesting points in that laws that are not easily enforced, I think that it would not be fair to say that the Georgia law regarding abortion is about not enforcing the law but rather the state's right to overturn the ruling, which was the case in regards to state's right given in the constitution (10th Amendment) Due the process of the bill that needs to become the law of the state, meaning it takes 2/3 votes of both the house and senate in the state for it to pass, in addition to thousands of eligible voter signatures; meaning a large majority of people in Georgia and Alabama choose this (<https://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/topics/government/article/general-assembly/how-a-law-is-passed-in-the-georgia-general-assembly>). There are exceptions to pregnancies due to rape and incest also for medical emergencies (https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/georgia-governor-signs-heartbeat-bill-giving-the-state-one-of-the-most-restrictive-abortion-laws-in-the-nation/2019/05/07/d53b2f8a-70cf-11e9-8be0-ca575670e91c_story.html) (<https://www.al.com/news/2019/05/alabama-abortion-ban-passes-read-the-bill.html>). Throughout the class, we have been taught about giving the states' rights and freedoms over the federal government which is the basis of the Jeffersonian Republicans and the 10th amendment. During the Reconstruction period, the federal laws that were past were not strictly enforced in the South, because the Southern states were able to pass laws of their own that prevented black people from obtaining those rights, and though I do not agree or condone such behaviors they were within their legal rights under the law to do so, which is why the law and its people needed to change. Long-held prejudices cannot be changed instantly, and the culture of equality for all we have today took many years of change and reform.

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Re: Reconstruction and Rights
by [Beth Trower](#) - Tuesday, February 25, 2020, 11:37 PM

Hi Jasmine,

I didn't take the 10th Amendment into account. Thank you for pointing that out to me.

While I brought the Georgia bill up, my focus was more on the Alabama bill, and how it very much went against the Supreme Court ruling. Back during the Reconstruction era, states' rights were much more of a prevalent issue, given how southern states did everything they can to keep their slavery laws and positions in place.

Today though, we see a lot of bills, like the Alabama bill, get blocked or turned over because they're either

deemed unconstitutional or they go too far against the law of the land. You could consider this an infringement on the Tenth Amendment, or you can see this as upholding the Fourteenth Amendment.

In this case, it seems like both. Would this cancel the two out? If our amendments are equal in importance and strength, then how do you pick between two amendments? It's an interesting question that I'm not sure has been answered yet.

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Re: Reconstruction and Rights

by [Jasmine Foster](#) - Thursday, February 27, 2020, 12:43 PM

Hi Beth,
Though the 14th amendment could cancel the 10th amendment, at the beginning of the Reconstruction period there was no 14th amendment, which is why it was so important to pass while the radical Republicans had a majority in Congress. As said in class, after the Civil War states' rights were no longer higher than federal government. So the 14th amendment took priority by defining who citizens were and what their rights were.

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Citizenship

by [Kaleah Holmes](#) - Sunday, February 23, 2020, 10:12 PM

Racial nationalism is when certain races are accepted while others are not. You can not be part of the nation if you are not the specific race. In America this happened between whites, and African Americans. This country was seen as "citizenship was for white people only that was what the supreme court ruled" (04:40 Foner video). Civic nationalism sounds much better. It is more inclusive. Equality is present in this type of nationalism.

This is an important topic during the Reconstruction period. The South had fought to keep African Americans as slaves, and now these people were becoming citizens of their country.

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Re: Citizenship

by [Cynara Onyemordi](#) - Monday, February 24, 2020, 12:09 AM

I completely agree with you in regards to nationalism, it is something that has changed and developed over the years and holistically gotten better. America was by no means founded on equality or immigration as many seem to claim but it is a country with many different cultures and backgrounds and has been for a long time. Without civic nationalism in place, this idea of diversity would have never existed. Black people were barely considered citizens and it's truly a wonder that the idea of nationalism became more based off of values as opposed to race.

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Re: Citizenship

by [Beth Trower](#) - Saturday, February 29, 2020, 10:28 PM

Hi Kaleah,
I definitely agree with you about nationalism. With civic nationalism, people are proud of their values, achievements, and diversity, which is a sharp contrast to racial nationalism, where only the race deemed superior is accepted.

It's taken a long time for our country to get to where we are now, and we are still fighting for civic nationalism, albeit less visibly. Even today, we have areas where racial nationalism thrives. It's sad to see that parts, no matter how small, of America still embrace this mentality after about 143 years. However, the majority of America still believes and abides by civic nationalism, with its roots in the era of Reconstruction. It's good to see our country still reaching and achieving these kind of goals that we've set for ourselves. As the saying

goes, "Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it" (Winston Churchill, but originally from George Santayana), and I believe we are still learning from history, even with all of our mistakes along the way.



If you don't use it, you lose it (#3)

by [John Kowalchik](#) - Wednesday, February 26, 2020, 3:30 PM

The exercising and protection of a particular right guarantees its existence, unenforced and unused laws are meaningless. During reconstruction, there was a constant effort put forth by 'radical democrats' to ensure that the formerly enslaved remained as destitute as possible. This was in spite of efforts by 'radical republicans' to enable this new class of 'freedmen'. Republicans gave the freedmen all the rights of citizens with the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments, and then failed to ensure that they were able to exercise those rights. If you have the right to vote, but are likely to be murdered for exercising it, you are likely to deem your life more valuable than your vote and abstain from the ballot box. Who were these people to turn to? The local governments were openly hostile to the freedmen and I can imagine the local law enforcement's stance on any issue related to the freedmen would be negligible. Even the federal government was hesitant to do anything to enforce its mandates despite having just won the war! There was a tremendous turnout by the freedmen during their first shot at voting because federal troops were present. During the second, when there were no troops present to guarantee the ability of the freedmen to vote, 99% did not, and it was over a century before voting would again be safe for blacks in the south.

Congress also failed to exercise its rights during the republican super majority it enjoyed in 1866. It possessed the power to override any veto issued by the president but failed to pass meaningful enforcement provisions OR punish the confederacy for its treason. Failure to hold anyone responsible in the Confederacy enabled further violence. If there is no consequence for starting a CIVIL WAR, then why should the (former confederates) expect any trouble over something like denying freedmen their newly acquired rights (or lives)? If congress had denied President Johnson the ability to pardon carte blanche anyone he felt like, hung the highest ranking politicians and generals, and provided the freedmen their '40 acres and a mule' our history would be strikingly different. By failing to exercise their right to pass strong veto proof legislation, congress ensured that reconstruction would last decades, and true racial equality over a century.

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Re: If you don't use it, you lose it (#3)

by [Cynara Onyemordi](#) - Wednesday, February 26, 2020, 11:34 PM

I think you have provided a truly interesting take on the reconstruction era. People truly don't know much about what happened during the years after the civil war and what they do know is the big things that happened. The three amendments that were bred into existence. All things considered, the post war era seems like it was a great time, there truly was a lot of progress in those years and black people certainly did gain rights. What people often forget though, is that these Amendments don't solve the societal issues like racism or classism that carry into the modern days.

I like how you highlighted the fact that even the use of rights by black people could get them killed. Sure they were no longer forced to pick cotton but that didn't mean they were suddenly wealthy, that they suddenly had money. Freedmen still had to work for the very same people that enslaved them for years, the only plus side was that now they were getting paid a very minute wage. To say that the years after the civil war were completely negative would be a lie, great advancements were made for black people. However, it's important to highlight and realize that those times were not just sunshine and roses, in fact they were far from it.

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Issue Number 4

by [Nathan Lee](#) - Wednesday, February 26, 2020, 4:24 PM

Our country's history is very ugly and messy. Foner is one hundred percent correct when he says progression in our country isn't consistently upward and positive at all. You can easily find evidence for this statement by broadly looking at the entire section of history we've covered over the course of this term, but I'll stick to just the reconstruction and near it. You ratify the 13th amendment and in the process of readmitting states to the union,

the Black Codes in southern state legislature is a perfect example of moving forward, while also moving backward. Another example that shortly follows this, the 14th and 15th amendments are ratified and within a few years following we have Jim Crow laws in effect. The United States has been fighting the same race war for years. It just got arguably less violent after the civil war. The Klu Klux Klan is another example of a group that brings us backward after we take steps forward as a country. Page 478 in our textbook has a few great examples, the KKK pushed congress into enacting laws to allow them to enforce amendments. The suspension of Habeas Corpus is an interesting one, passing a law that allows you to suspend the rights of citizens in order to allow federal troops to detain citizens with no repercussions. That right there is multiple steps backward in the name of progress. It's almost like a catch-22, we're going to enforce progressive laws and violate our people's rights in order to enforce our progressive laws. Now I'm not saying it was unjust because of the context of the situation, I'm simply just pointing out the irony. The point is, reconstruction is another example of ugly and messy history, and as Foner said, progression isn't constant and pretty like people would like to believe it is.

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Re: Issue Number 4
by [Melissa Johnson](#) - Thursday, February 27, 2020, 10:45 AM

Hi Nathan,

I liked how you said that our history was "very ugly and messy". This is very true. With the civil war, slaves, and more. I feel that if those things didn't happen though, then we wouldn't be the strong country that we are today. I ,also agree that the race war got arguably less violent after the civil war. This happen because of some reasons, one of those reasons was how the north people saw, how the blacks fought with them. some even gave their lives for the war. This opened some of their harden hearts towards how they used to be just slaves worthless, unless working. With "the Klu Klux Klan main purpose was political: to destroy the Republican Party by terrorizing its voters and , if necessary by murdering their leaders." (pg. 486) I would also say that they were defiantly bring us back when we were trying to bring everyone together. I also see the irony in it too. I think you did a good job here. Keep it up.

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Re: Issue Number 4
by [Jarod Doerner](#) - Thursday, February 27, 2020, 5:42 PM

Hi there,

Like you said, our country's history is very ugly and messy. Professor Erik Foner also reminded me how the Black Codes of 1865 made all Freedmen third class citizens. From what our Professor said on Tuesday, "Freedmen were excluded from juries and could not testify on their behalf, couldn't vote (until the 15th Amendment allowed all men to be able to vote), given more severe punishment," and many more (Tuesday Class).

The progress and freedom in the United States has always been on the hot seat for many. In some areas, it's still happening today. Reconstruction, like many others like it, was both good and bad. For some, it helped the United States, but others didn't see that. There is an irony with this situation, sadly, it's only going to continue.

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Re: Issue Number 4
by [Beth Trower](#) - Thursday, February 27, 2020, 11:05 PM

Hi Nathan,

I do agree that our history is ugly and messy. You pointed out some great examples to support it, and I wanted to add some examples of my own.

I feel that the election of President Andrew Johnson is a good example of taking a step forward, only to realize it's two steps backwards. Radical Republicans chose Johnson because he didn't support the Confederacy and his anger towards ""stuck-up aristocrats"" (online textbook 470). They felt that "Johnson seemed to promise the type of reconstruction they favored—one that would deny political power to ex-Confederates and would enfranchise blacks" (online textbook 470).

However, his election turned out to be the exact opposite that the Radical Republicans wanted. They prepared to move forward with their progressive bills, only to be blindsided by Johnson's refusal to cooperate, and instead passing his proclamation regarding amnesty for ex-Confederate soldiers. "Only white men who had received amnesty and taken an oath of allegiance could vote. Similar proclamations soon followed for other former Confederate states. Johnson's policy was clear: He would exclude both blacks and upper-class whites from the reconstruction process" (online textbook 470).

Another example is the Civil Rights Act of 1875 being overturned by the Supreme Court: "Meanwhile, in another ruling, *Civil Rights Cases* (1883), the Court declared unconstitutional a civil rights law passed by Congress in 1875. That law banned racial discrimination in all forms of public transportation and public accommodations" (online textbook 489).

These are just two examples to add to, as you said, our very ugly and messy history when it comes to being progressive. This pattern upholds when looking at our modern-day history, and I think the pattern will continue to play out as time goes by.

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Re: Issue Number 4
by [Nathan Lee](#) - Friday, February 28, 2020, 3:16 PM

After Joe's lecture on Thursday, I felt it would be an ample opportunity to add on to my post on Issue Number 4. When I watching the civil war amendments video in the Week 8 video section on the class page, I saw that Tennessee didn't ratify the 15th amendment until 1997. I thought to myself "I wonder how many states didn't ratify the 15th amendment right away?" To my surprise, 6 states; Delaware, Oregon, California, Maryland, Kentucky, and Tennessee didn't ratify the 15th amendment until after 1900. (Wikipedia) For more context, Reconstruction ended after the election of 1876, so it took between 24 and 121 years for these 6 states to finally get on board. In the grand scheme of things, I can't help but add this to the column of steps forward and steps backward in our history. Another thing worth mentioning is the "Grandfather Clause" and voter literacy tests that Joe talked about in class. Those fall right into the post-war discrimination column. Combine those with the Black Codes, and voter intimidation tactics and I would say you could make a compelling argument that Southern Democrats actually treated African Americans worse immediately after the civil war than when they were enslaved. We just fought this massive war only to treat newly freed citizens as less than citizens, if that isn't a step backward in the name of progress, then what is?

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Progress and Freedom in American is not always positive
by [Melissa Johnson](#) - Wednesday, February 26, 2020, 5:11 PM

The period that follow the Civil War was, which was the Reconstruction, a very turbulent time in our history. I think that if President Lincoln was not assassinated, it would not been so turbulent, but we will never know. Out of the ashes of Reconstruction was something that was to be a sleeping giant for 100 years. Professor Foner from the video talks about Americas progress and that it is not straight up but rather up and down with rights being given and sometimes right being taken away. Thomas Wentworth Higginson said this "revolutions may go backwards". Which is some ways it did but as Professor Foner talks about in the video, it laid the ground work for 100 years later for Blacks and Whites to come together. The constitution was in place it just needed to be enforced. So as you can see American, gets to what is right but it is not always in a straight line.

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Question 4.
by [Yibo Zhang](#) - Wednesday, February 26, 2020, 9:10 PM

According to the video, what professor Foner mean about "Progress and freedom in U.S. History does not move forward in a positive and upward trajectory" is because the civil rights problem still exsisted after reconstruction and civil war. We could probably not say that every place in American does not move forward, but it can be seen from the histroy of reconstruction that civil rights of imigrants and African-American was getting worse. Although

the civil rights of black people was supported by some significant policies and treaties (Emancipation Proclamation,black codes and 14th Amendment), they were still be treated unequally. Just like Foner said in the video, "citizenship was not by brith, it was by race." (5:08).

It seems like the problem of civil rights should be solved or improved after revolution and reconstruction. Howeverer, more problems and contradictions came out. Even half century past, American people were still argue about this issue. That's why we might say that "Progress and freedom in U.S. History does not move forward in a positive and upward trajectory." We did make some progresses, but they were tough and winding.

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Progress and Freedom in United States History

by [Jarod Doerner](#) - Thursday, February 27, 2020, 4:06 PM

I chose to talk about the progress and freedom in United States History and how it's not going forward in a positive and upward trajectory. I first want to address what Professor Eric Foner said about this subject. Foner said, "Our history is a much more complicated, much more interesting story of ups and downs of progress and retrogression --- of rights that are gain and rights that are sometimes taken away to be fought for another day" (Video 8:50 - 9:05). In a way, he is saying that United States history is not positive, nor negative. It's a machine that goes forward in mud, only to have to go backwards to find another way to get going forward.

The progress and freedom in the United States has always been on the hot seat for many. In some areas, it's still happening today. The 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments were, at the time, a good start to progress. It wouldn't be until the Civil Rights Act of 1964 where after one hundred years after those three amendments were passed, the people of the United States were now equal.

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The Reconstruction Era: Progress or Regress

by [Cynara Onyemordi](#) - Thursday, February 27, 2020, 10:41 PM

In Eric Foner's video, he mentions this idea that contrary to what many people like to believe "Progress and freedom in U.S. History does not move forward in a positive and upward trajectory" and sadly, I have to agree. American's love to be patriotic and paint the country to be an extremely progressive place that welcomes the system of life, liberty and freedom for all. Truthfully this is just not the case. In fact, it took the USA an extra thirty years to abolish slavery in direct contrast to Canada, its neighbor up north. Even after slavery was abolished, the USA wasn't a country that welcomed black people or even immigrants for that matter, with open arms. How was the country to move forward or make any significant changes when not even the president supported the abolitionist movement. Ironically, President Andrew Johnson "provided a blanket amnesty" (pg 471)for the majority of the confederates, the very same people who sought to keep black people impoverished and in chains. He even encouraged the creation of Black Codes. This "quasi slavery" (pg 473)plagued the American people for years and made it next to impossible for there to be any chance of improvement in the treatment of blacks. This notion that America has been a welcoming place full of love and potential is nothing but a falsity. Moreover, the post war era of the 1860's was one of America's worst times as a country, things got worse for black people before they even came close to getting better.

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Brithright citizenship.

by [Melissa Johnson](#) - Friday, February 28, 2020, 8:04 AM

Birthright citizenship happened during in the 19th century. Brithright citizenship is where if a women comes to america, or already living in america and has a baby, that kid is right then a citizen. Brithright citizenship came from the 14 Amendment. Mr. Escobar said the only reason for the 14 Amendment was to help the slaves become citizens. With illegal immigration issues today people will come over just so that there soon tobe kid would be an American. This applies to to everyone, even unto a terrorist. Which you can see is a problem. This is not what the 14 Amendment was for. It was to help the blacks gain citizenship and for them to be equal.

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Birthright Citizenship

by [Lauren Meyer](#) - Saturday, February 29, 2020, 12:15 PM

The time of reconstruction stated by professor Foner is one of the least recognized concepts of history, yet is has so much significance to today's time. Without reconstruction we wouldn't have the society or the rights we have today. The post civil war changed everything. Foner talks about birthright citizenship and how it applies to us today. He talks about our modern day immigration issues and how easy the united states makes it to have birthright citizenship. Yet we are one of the only countries that does this. And it's because of the post civil war reconstruction period. He asks the question why is it this way, why do we let the child born of an illegal immigrant be equal to every other citizen against the law, just because they were born on American soil. The laws and the 14th amendment led us to birthright citizenship. This was to help abolish slavery in the way that free blacks have ancestors here and were born here, but they were not considered citizens. On the eve of the civil war no black person could be a citizen of the United States, regardless of birth place. The supreme court ruled in the Dred Scott decision that only the white man could be a citizen. Citizenship was defined by race. That is why the 14th amendment and birthright citizenship is in place. We no longer define by race, and with this act we took one step forward to abolishing slavery.

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ebb and flow

by [John Kowalchik](#) - Saturday, February 29, 2020, 9:58 PM

I think that the post war 1860s-70s is a perfect example of the concept of progress going back and forth, although in this case it clearly ended on a regress that held for nearly 100 years. When the army was present and the political will existed to use it, the south was relatively restrained in its overt attempts to oppress the recently freed slaves. While having physical security provided by armed federal troops, freedmen were able to build schools and churches, vote, rent land etc. But when they were not, chaos reigned. It was a constant ebb and flow of progress and regress: starting out being enslaved. Then progress by being freed, but only as second class citizens so a bit of a regress. Then full citizenship, and even some elected officials. From slaves to senators in less than 10 years! But then the regress: becoming unofficial second class citizens. Being denied their very lives with impunity. After the rapid gains, rapid losses were the standard for nearly 100 years until citizen in name only may have been the appropriate title.

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Reconstructions Long-Lasting Impact

by [Alexander Brown](#) - Saturday, February 29, 2020, 10:09 PM

Eric Foner's claim that during Reconstruction, "progress and freedom in U.S History does not move forward in a positive and upward trajectory" has been a theme throughout the entire lifespan of the United States, not just during the Reconstruction period. We can see this throughout the 1950's as segregation became more and more radical due to the Jim Crow Laws that were made in 1877 at the end of Reconstruction. Although there have been many times throughout history that freedom has not moved forward, there have also been more recent cases of regression in freedom. At one point in time, the freedom to marry anyone no matter their gender was widely disputed by the American people and Government until 2015 in which the Supreme Court decided to turn down all state bans of same sex marriage. There has always been some sort of negation of freedom in the United States ever since its birth in 1776. The real way to solve this problem as the people of this great country is to help eliminate any attack on our own rights and freedoms or the freedoms of our fellow citizens.

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Re: Reconstructions Long-Lasting Impact

by [Jasmine Foster](#) - Saturday, February 29, 2020, 11:45 PM

Hi Alexander,

I found it interesting how you ended with "eliminate any attack," my question is that how and who would decide what is an attack and what is to help the common good? During the Reconstruction period, the KKK believed that the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments were a "violation" of their rights and freedom and their solution was violence and death (Class Lecture 2/27). We get the luxury of being able to stop and analyze what is right and wrong in history based on what we have been taught and influenced throughout our lives, but how would that change if we were raised differently. Would you and I be in the majority or minority? What would be the right decision? We have learned that equal rights and freedoms for all races and genders because of people like Thaddeus Steven, who was a radical in his time. The thought of being equal with another because of the pigmentation of the skin was not a common view but rather had the most vocal advocates. Even today we see that race and gender are being discriminated throughout the world. So, the solution is not so black and white because of morality, reason, and human nature itself. So, though the Reconstruction period helped clarify the definition of 'men', that the Declaration of Independence states that all men (women, regardless of race), elimination of "attacks" comes after identifying and finding a solution. Which has yet to be decided, and what we do and say have consequences but only time can tell if we were right in our convictions.

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Re: Reconstructions Long-Lasting Impact
by [Jarod Doerner](#) - Saturday, February 29, 2020, 11:45 PM

Hi there,

In your opinion, how could we all help the United States eliminate any attack on our own rights and freedoms or the freedoms of our fellow citizens? Would we have to all come together and figure it out? I suppose what you are asking is very hard to do, not impossible, but just extremely hard to actually achieve.

Freedom for Blacks was never the best. Professor Eric Foner reminded me about how the Black Codes of 1865 made all Freedmen third class citizens. From what our Professor said on Tuesday, "Freedmen were excluded from juries and could not testify on their behalf, couldn't vote (until the 15th Amendment allowed all men to be able to vote), given more severe punishment," and many more (Tuesday Class).

The progress and freedom in the United States has always been rough for everyone. It wouldn't be until the Civil Rights Act of 1964 where after one hundred years after the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments were passed, the people of the United States would now be equal.

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