

Power Point Pointers- The Civil War and Reconstruction



First Battle
of Bull Run

The April 1861 Balance Sheet

- The South had a population of nine million people and three million of them were black slaves.
- The North had a population of about 18 million people.
- In 1860 the states in what became the Confederate States of America had only about 18,000 manufacturing establishments employing 110,000 workers.

- The North had over 100,000 factories and shops with 1.3 million employees.
- The North had more than 70 percent of the nation's railroad track and twice as many horses and mules as the Confederacy.
- The Southern economy produced an abundance of food to feed its citizens, draft animals, and armies.
- Cotton seemed to be an essential bargaining agent.
- The South had the important strategic advantage of only having to survive a war in order to win. The North had to conquer.

- The South had more consolidated communication and transportation lines between its core and its armies.
- The North faced the opposite situation. As its armies advanced further into enemy territory, they experienced the problems of constantly lengthening lines of communication.
- Union and Confederate supporters had radical differences in perception. Southerners felt that the South was fighting for its rights and its freedom and the North had a desire to dominate and achieve selfish economic and political ends.

- Northerners felt that Southerners had no right to leave the United States and that they were willing to do anything to perpetuate the evil institution of slavery.
- The South appeared to have superior military talent. The United States Army had lost the best third of its officers with secession, including Robert E. Lee and Joseph E. Johnston.
- Before the North developed and discovered its own talented military leaders, the South enjoyed many military successes.

- Southerners were perceived to be an outdoor people who were better adapted to physical hardship than pale, hollow-chested Yankee clerks from the counting houses and shops of the northern cities.
- The leadership of Abraham Lincoln was a vital northern asset.
- Jefferson Davis was honest, courageous, intelligent, and qualified. He had been Franklin Pierce's secretary of war, and a former United States senator from Mississippi.

- After Fort Sumter the Union and Confederate presidents had to raise an army. Lincoln called 75,000 state militia to join the small regular army for three months to put down the rebellion which he expected to be short lived.
- Between April 17 and May 20, 1861, four more states-Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina seceded and joined the Confederacy. They brought manpower and much agricultural and industrial capacity to the South.

- Like Lincoln, the Confederate Congress believed the war would end by winter, and it accepted many short termed volunteers who soon had to be replaced.
- The fighting in the Civil War was bloody and bitter. Many of the early clashes took place in the strategically important border regions-Kentucky, Missouri, eastern Tennessee, and western Virginia.
- The battle of Bull Run in July 1861, twenty miles from Washington, was the first major military confrontation.

- Confederate forces won the battle of Bull Run and were encouraged and energized by the victory.
- For the next year the tide of war swept back and forth, with Lincoln unable to find a field commander to match Lee.
- The North was not only slow in finding a competent military leader, but it also had a difficult time in developing a clear, overall military strategy.
- Eventually, parts of the Union matched and surpassed the South in exceptional generals and strategy.

- In April 1862 Union forces under General Benjamin F. Butler captured New Orleans and in the summer of 1863 the final Confederate positions fell when Grant, aided by Admiral David Porter's river gunboats took Vicksburg and Port Hudson which cut the Confederacy in two.

- The Confederacy had relied on European need for cotton to win diplomatic recognition and possibly military help from Britain and France.
- But in the end cotton diplomacy proved to be a disappointment because Britain was overstocked with cotton in 1861 and didn't suffer from the lost southern supply.
- The North also had several bargaining chips.
- Britain needed northern grain almost as much as southern cotton.

- The North also could offer the British public the prospect of emancipation of slaves.
- The efforts of sympathetic Britons, the tireless maneuvering of Lincoln's minister to England, Charles Francis Adams, and Union victories on the battlefield combined to shift British opinion away from the Confederacy.

- More than 2.1 million men fought for the Union and 800,000 for the Confederacy. Over half of all northern men of military age eventually fought for the Union and over four-fifths of southern men fought for the Confederacy.
- About 360,000 Union men were killed and about 260,000 Confederates died. Union wounded totaled another 275,000 and Confederate wounded at least 100,000.
- By the middle of 1862 both governments were forced to resort to conscription.

- Conscription did not directly produce many soldiers. In the North only 46,000 men were actually drafted. Many thousands more volunteered instead of being drafted.
- Whatever its failings, conscription was a novel exercise of central government power. Conscription was one of many innovations pointing to enhanced power for the national government and to the physical and social consolidation of the country.

- In early 1863 the Confederate Congress authorized the impressment of slaves for the building of fortifications and for other government work. It also empowered the government to detail soldiers for work in vital war factors. In April 1863 it assumed the authority to take from farmers a tenth of all the major crops they produced.
- By 1865, the Union Congress had imposed internal revenue taxes on hundreds of manufactured items, created a Bureau of Internal Revenue to administer tax laws, and established America's first income tax.

- Both the Union and Confederacy borrowed money through bonds and issued paper money.
- The Union created a national banking system that implemented a uniform paper money system under strict federal control.
- The demands of war enormously swelled the size of the Union government.
- The index of manufacturing for the North alone by 1864 was 13 percent higher than for the whole nation in 1860.

- Despite the war generated patriotism, dissent flourished in both the Union and Confederacy.
- Repression was stronger in the North which prided itself on its intellectual freedom than in the South with its tradition of intolerance.
- Dissent in the North ranged from mild disagreement with Republican policies to violent opposition that bordered on treason.
- Lincoln had to consider how much dissent was permissible in a nation threatened with dissolution. He was strongly committed to free speech but he felt his first responsibility was to preserve the Union.

- By July 1862 President Abraham Lincoln had decided that a proclamation of emancipation was “absolutely essential for the salvation of the Union.”
- Lincoln had to postpone his Proclamation until the Union had scored a decisive military victory. On September 22, 1862, after Lee’s defeat at Antietam, Lincoln issued a preliminary emancipation proclamation.
- The proclamation said that on January 1, 1863, in every part of the South then still in rebellion, all slaves would be “thenceforward and forever free.”

- On New Year's Day 1863, the final Emancipation Proclamation took effect.
- Technically it affected only the places where federal law could not be enforced, namely the Confederacy. It didn't say anything about slavery in the border states. It did favorably affect the Union's standing abroad.

- The Battle of Gettysburg, fought from July 1-3rd, 1863, was an important turning point in the Civil War. The Union Army won the battle, but both sides were exhausted. Meade and his Union Army were so exhausted that it didn't counterattack and allowed Lee's army to retreat safely to Virginia.
- Lee's defeat at Gettysburg coincided with Grant's capture of Vicksburg.
- In the fall of 1863, Grant and General George H. Thomas won the battles of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge and pushed the Confederates out of Tennessee.

- Lincoln was pessimistic about his chances of reelection in 1864. But then that summer, the Union won major military victories in Georgia, Alabama, and the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia. Lincoln won the electoral college by 212 to 21 and won a popular majority of 400,000 votes.
- In April 1865, Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union General Ulysses Grant at Appomattox, Virginia.
- On April 14, 1865, President Lincoln was assassinated at Ford's Theater in Washington D.C. by John Wilkes Booth.

- The Civil War joined the country into a more coherent social and economic whole.
- It created a transcontinental railroad, a national banking system, and new national currency.
- It trained thousands of men to manage large scale operations and mass movements of people and goods. These talents would be applied to private enterprise and help create modern big business.
- The War helped to universalize liberal capitalist values and society.

- The Civil War ended for all time the threat of secession.
- The Civil War destroyed slavery, but left a legacy of racism.

Reconstruction

- Of the South's white male population of 2.5 million in 1860, a quarter of a million or ten percent of men died of battle wounds or disease.
- Many survivors were physically maimed or worn out emotionally.
- The South's economic institutions were shattered and its labor system was in ruins.
- No one knew what would replace slavery.

- After losing the Civil War, white Southerners were apprehensive, angry, and disappointed.
- Now the North would dominate the South with the arrogance of victory.
- Northerners couldn't forget the sacrifices and losses that they too had suffered putting down what they considered the illegal and unwarranted rebellion,
- The American people faced a gigantic task of physical, political, and psychological restoration.

- Radical Republicans believed that the defeated South must be made to recognize its errors and forced to acknowledge that now it could not longer decide its own fate. They wanted to give blacks the vote.
- Northern conservatives believed that white southerners should be free to determine their own fate. They believed that blacks were ill equipped to exercise the rights of citizens.
- Southern Conservatives believed that the “lost cause” was lost, but still a just and honorable one. They believed that blacks must not be permitted to exercise political power.

- Southern Unionists had rejected secession and often been persecuted by the Confederacy.
- Southern Freedmen believed that they deserved all the rights and privileges of free people as expressed in the Declaration of Independence.
- Lincoln favored a reconstruction plan that would not require too many hurdles to the readmission of the Southern states to the Union, impose severe punishment on white southerners, or require unrealistic changes of heart. He was adamant on one point: any plan had to guarantee that the South would accept that slavery had ended.

- Lincoln's Ten Percent Plan offered full pardon and full restoration of all rights to white southerners who pledged loyalty to the Union and accepted the abolition of slavery.
- When loyal southerners in any rebel state equaled at least ten percent of the number of votes in the 1860 election, this group could convene and establish a new state government to supersede the old.
- The state governments that met these conditions would be entitled to admission to the Union and to representation in Congress.

- The assassination of President Abraham Lincoln profoundly altered the course of political reconstruction.
- During the first eight months in office of president Andrew Johnson, Congress was not in session so he had a free hand in formulating Reconstruction policy during this time.
- Johnson formally announced his Reconstruction plan in two proclamations issued on May 29, 1865. The first offered pardon and amnesty to participants in the rebellion who pledged loyalty to the Union and support for the end of slavery.

- The second proclamation established provisional governors and empowered them to call conventions to amend state constitutions to in order to form a “republican form of government.” Johnson made it clear that he expected the conventions to accept the abolition of slavery and pledge not to repay any public debts incurred in the Confederate cause.
- He also asked them to consider giving voting rights to a limited number of blacks.

- President Johnson ended up supporting the rights of southern planters and other elite although he disliked them personally. None of the Johnson appointed governors and their states allowed blacks to vote.
- The new state governors and state legislatures supported former Confederates, which outraged many northerners.
- Several state legislatures refused to ratify the 13th Amendment that placed the abolition of slavery on a secure Constitutional foundation.
- Each of these legislatures enacted a set of laws called the Black Codes to govern race relations.

- These Black Codes did give freedmen some rights. They legalized marriages between blacks, including former slave marriages. They permitted ex slaves to buy, own, sell, and transfer property. They gave freedmen the right to appear, plead and testify in court cases involving fellow blacks.
- But the Codes sought to relegate the ex slaves to permanent second class legal, economic, and political status.
- Under the Black Codes, freed slaves could not offer their labor on the market without restrictions.

- Although there was some northern outrage, a majority of all northern white voters opposed letting blacks vote and this reality inevitably tempered the radical ardor of Republican politicians in districts where elections were closely contested.
- By the time the 39th Congress assembled on December 4, 1865, the Republican majority was determined to take over the process of southern reconstruction to ensure that the ex-Confederates would not firmly reestablish themselves.

- President Johnson refused to sign two bills vital to the Republicans. The first was a bill to extend the Freedmen's Bureau and broaden its authority. The other was the Civil Rights bill of 1865 which declared all persons born in the United States including blacks, but not Indians, citizens, and specified their rights regardless of race.
- Congress couldn't muster the 2/3 majority needed to pass the Freedmen's Bureau bill, but it did manage to override the Civil Rights veto.
- The fight over the Freedmen's Bureau destroyed the moderate Republican hope that Johnson could be trusted with Reconstruction.

- The Fourteenth Amendment was not ratified until well into 1867. Among other things, it stated that no state could deprive any citizen the equal protection of the laws,
- By December 1866, President Johnson had lost all Republican support and the Radicals felt it was time to replace all the Johnson state governments with a system that would finally express the will of the Union's most progressive forces.
- The First Reconstruction Act swept aside the existing state regimes in the former Confederacy and divided the South into five military districts.

- Each district would be under a general who was empowered to use troops to protect life and property.
- The military commanders would supervise the choice of delegates to state conventions that would write new constitutions and establish new state governments.
- All adult males regardless of race would be eligible to vote, except those excluded for participating in the rebellion.
- After the states had met these and other conditions and had ratified the Fourteenth Amendment, they would be admitted to the Union.

- The Radical Republicans were so determined to stop President Johnson, that in January 1868, they attempted to impeach him. The moderates stopped the movement in committee, but then Johnson played into their hands. He suspended Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, a Radical inherited from Lincoln, from office.
- On February 24, 1868, the House formally voted to impeach President Johnson by a strict party vote of 126-47.
- His trial before the Senate lasted for six weeks.

- On May 18, 1868, Johnson was acquitted by one Senate vote.
- Ulysses Grant was elected president in 1868 in a close election, and by the time he was inaugurated in March 1869, the governments organized under the congressional reconstruction acts composed of white and black Republicans and decidedly Radical in temper, had been admitted to the Union.
- The Fourteen Amendment had been incorporated into the Constitution.
- In a narrow legal sense, Reconstruction was now complete.

- In actual fact, the situation in the newly restored states remained uncertain and tense.
- On the whole the Radical dominated southern state governments were remarkably effective and reasonably honest.
- They were also more democratic and egalitarian than were the prewar southern state regimes.
- While the politicians fought over the political future of the southern states, important economic and social changes were taking place in the South.

- Most of its damaged railroads were rebuilt by capital from the Northern and British investors.
- Industry also recovered.
- For a time after Appomattox, southern blacks worked for cash contracts that the Freedmen's Bureau supervised, but in the months following the war cash was scarce. Thousands of blacks and southern whites were funneled into the sharecropping system.
- After 1867 the southern states became arenas for ferocious struggles between the political forces of the new era and those of the old.

- For a time the Radical governments held on to political office and instituted their reforms, but in the end they couldn't match the experience, self confidence, and ruthlessness of the defenders of the old south who hoped to "redeem" the South from "Black Republicanism."
- The Ku Klux Klan was a major weapon of the "redeemers."
- At its height in the late 1860s, the Klan's outrages went virtually unchecked.

- After the 1870 and 1871 Congress passed three bills declaring Klan tactics illegal, the Klan declined, but southern conservatives were still determined to take control of the south away from the Radicals.
- By the middle of the 1870s, many Republicans had concluded that abandoning blacks and their friends in the South was better than continuing to uphold the unscrupulous element in their own party. They also suffered from fatigue and racism.

- The 1876 presidential election marked the end of Reconstruction. Democrat Samuel J. Tilden of New York ran against Republican Rutherford B. Hayes. The election was so close that the results were immediately challenged and the election was thrown into the House of Representatives.
- For four months the election was up in the air as politicians struggled to settle it before the March 1877 inauguration day.
- The Democrats made a deal with the Republicans that was called the “Compromise of 1877,” and Hayes was declared president.

- Southerners traded electoral votes for the removal of federal troops from the South and soon after the inauguration of Hayes, the last federal troops were withdrawn from the South.
- The redeemers quickly moved in. Reconstruction was over.