

Congressional Reconstruction

Main Ideas

1. Congress took control of reconstruction because freedpeople were being denied their rights.
2. Texas and other southern states wrote new constitutions in order to gain readmission to the Union.

Why It Matters Today

Congress and the president disagreed about how Reconstruction should be handled. Use current events sources to learn about an issue that Congress and the president are debating today.



TEKS: 1A, 5B, 6A, 16B, 18B, 21A, 21B, 21C, 21D, 22A, 22B, 22C, 22D

myNotebook

Use the annotation tools in your eBook to take notes on Congressional Reconstruction in Texas.

Key Terms and People

- Radical Republicans
- Civil Rights Act of 1866
- Fourteenth Amendment
- Reconstruction Acts
- impeach
- Edmund J. Davis
- George T. Ruby
- Union League
- Fifteenth Amendment

The Story Continues

Allen Manning was frustrated. He and other African Americans had finally won their freedom. But many of the same people who controlled Texas before the war were regaining power. He wondered if life would truly become better for black Texans. To Manning, it seemed that many white Texans could not “get over us being free.”



Radical Republicans React

The Black Codes raised new concerns in the U.S. Congress about President Johnson’s Reconstruction plan. In addition, southern states had elected many of the people who had led the rebellion. For example, U.S. senator Oran M. Roberts had served as president of the Texas Secession Convention in 1861. As large-scale landowners took control of the South’s politics, they passed laws that suited them economically and politically. Not only were African Americans denied equal rights but violence against them was occurring throughout the South.

Many **Radical Republicans** believed the U.S. Congress needed to take a greater role in Reconstruction. They thought that loyal southern state governments could be created only with the participation of Unionists and African Americans. As Radical Republicans gained power and influence, they passed the **Civil Rights Act of 1866**. This act gave citizenship to African Americans and guaranteed them basic rights. President Johnson vetoed the act, arguing that it gave too much

power to the federal government. He also rejected the principle of equal rights for African Americans. Congress overrode Johnson's veto. This marked a serious split between Congress and the president. Congress took an additional step to ensure that the act would not be overturned by a later Congress. In the summer of 1866, Republicans proposed the **Fourteenth Amendment** to guarantee citizenship and equal rights to African Americans. The Texas legislature and most other southern states refused to ratify it.

Reading Check Identifying Cause and Effect Who returned to power in the South, and how did this affect the actions of the U.S. Congress?

★ The Reconstruction Acts

The 1866 elections gave the Republicans strong majorities in both houses of the U.S. Congress. Republicans now had enough votes to override any presidential veto. Congress passed a series of **Reconstruction Acts** beginning in March 1867. These acts marked the beginning of Congressional Reconstruction. The new southern state governments were once again declared provisional. Congress divided the South into five military districts, with each placed under the command of an army officer. Southern states would have to do more than Johnson's plan had



Reconstruction in the South

Interpreting Maps The Reconstruction Acts established five separate military districts to control the South.

Places and Regions In which military district was Texas located?



BIOGRAPHY

George T. Ruby (1841–1882) A native of New York, George T. Ruby moved to Texas in 1866 as an educator with the Freedmen's Bureau. He soon became involved in politics. In 1868 Ruby won election to the constitutional convention, where he pushed for equal rights for African Americans. In 1869, Texans elected Ruby to the state senate, where he served on several important committees. There he supported several causes, including bringing African American and white students together in the state's schools. After Reconstruction, Ruby moved to New Orleans, where he edited a newspaper for African Americans until he died of malaria. **How did George T. Ruby contribute to Texas?**

required to rejoin the Union. The states had to write new constitutions guaranteeing rights for African Americans, including suffrage for black men. The states also had to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment.

Texas and Louisiana made up the Fifth Military District, commanded by General Philip Sheridan. In July 1867 Congress gave military commanders wide authority to remove uncooperative southern leaders from office. That month Sheridan removed Governor Throckmorton, calling him “an impediment [obstacle] to Reconstruction.” Sheridan appointed Elisha M. Pease to replace Throckmorton. Pease, a former two-term governor, was respected by most Texans. Over the next few months the military removed hundreds of other state and local officials.

President Johnson tried to block Congressional Reconstruction, prompting the House to **impeach** him. To impeach is to bring charges of wrongdoing against a public official. Johnson avoided being removed from office by one vote in the Senate, but his power had been broken. Ulysses S. Grant, who was more supportive of Congressional Reconstruction, won the 1868 presidential election.

Reading Check Finding the Main Idea What was the significance for Texas of the Republicans' success in the 1866 elections?



The Texas Republican Party

Congressional Reconstruction led to the development of the Texas Republican Party in 1867. In general, the party was made up mostly of Unionists and African Americans as well as many Mexican Americans. Republicans had a strong turnout in the February 1868 election for delegates to the state's constitutional convention. More than 80 percent of black men voted, while former high-ranking Confederate officials and most prewar officeholders could not vote. As a result, 78 of the 90 original delegates were Republicans and 9 were African Americans. Only a few delegates were former Confederates.

When the delegates met in Austin on June 1, 1868, the Republicans split into two factions. One group hoped to put Radical Republicans, including African Americans, in control of the state government. **Edmund J. Davis** and **George T. Ruby** led this faction. Ruby was a black delegate and a leader of the **Union League** in Texas. The league urged African Americans to support the Republican Party. One league pamphlet noted that Democrats would “not allow your children to be educated nor [allow] you to discuss your rights.” Former governor Andrew J. Hamilton led the second faction. These moderate Republicans favored few changes from the past.

Reading Check Identifying Points of View Why did African American leaders in Texas try to rally support for the Republican Party?

The Constitution of 1869

The Constitutional Convention of 1868–69 was controlled largely by Radical Republicans. The delegates finished their work on the constitution in February 1869. The new Texas constitution gave equal rights to African Americans, including the right to vote. That same year the U.S. Congress proposed the **Fifteenth Amendment**, which gave suffrage to African American men.

In contrast to past constitutions, the new constitution gave the governor the power to appoint many state officials and judges. The governor's term of office was lengthened from two to four years, and the legislature was to meet every year. The constitution also made important changes in public education. The sale of public lands and a tax of one dollar per voter was to fund schools. In addition, one fourth of state revenue was to be set aside for schools. For the first time, attendance at school was required by law.

Texas voters approved the constitution by a wide margin. In the same election, Edmund J. Davis defeated Andrew J. Hamilton in a close race for governor. The Radical Republicans in the U.S. Congress now had a supporter in the Texas governor's office. Republicans also controlled the newly elected Texas legislature, which quickly ratified the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. This paved the way for Texas to be restored to the Union. In March 1870 President Grant signed an act of Congress admitting Texas senators and representatives. The next month, control of Texas was returned to the state government.

Reading Check Contrasting How did the rights of African Americans differ under the Texas constitutions of 1866 and 1869?

Citizenship and You

Your Vote Counts

Black Texans first registered to vote in 1867. About 98 percent of black men registered to vote that year. Later amendments to the U.S. Constitution gave the right to vote to women and younger people. More Texans have the power to vote today than at any time in the state's history.

What was one way African Americans fulfilled their civic responsibilities?

Section 2 Review

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ONLINE QUIZ

1. Define and explain:

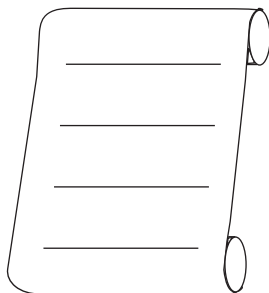
- impeach

2. Identify and explain the historical significance of:

- Radical Republicans
- Civil Rights Act of 1866
- Fourteenth Amendment
- Reconstruction Acts
- Edmund J. Davis
- George T. Ruby
- Union League
- Fifteenth Amendment

3. Summarizing

Copy the graphic organizer below. Use it to list four major provisions of the Constitution of 1869.



4. Finding the Main Idea

- Why did the Radical Republicans take control of Reconstruction away from President Johnson?
- What did southern states have to do to be readmitted to the Union under Congressional Reconstruction?

5. Writing and Critical Thinking

Making Generalizations and Predictions

Imagine that you are a newspaper editor in 1869. Write an editorial discussing how the new constitution and military control of the state will affect Texans. Consider the following:

- who had the right to vote
- the military's role in Texas

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