

History 225

Re: Notes on Republican Reconstruction

II. Southern Republicans in Power: Accomplishments:

Despite these disadvantages and internal weaknesses these Republican governments affected virtually every aspect of Southern life.

1. Republican governments established for the first time in Southern history, the principle of state responsibility for public education.

Texas achieved by 1872 a majority enrollment of school aged children--white and black. In Mississippi, Florida, and South Carolina, enrollment grew steadily until 1875 it accounted for about 50% of the children of both races. (More success with urban populations than in the deep rural areas).

Integration issue. The line was generally drawn here. Although in New Orleans the public school system was integrated to a degree (several thousand students were attending integrated classes).

Even where blacks controlled the local school boards there was not much pressure for integration. Separate schools were more important than no schools at all. Moreover, blacks were aware that segregated educational facilities allowed for opportunities for black teachers and were more open to parental control. Their main concern was that separated facilities receive an equal division of school funds. Opportunities for black teachers galvanized many blacks to go into education and find jobs in black schools. (Importance w/ black ministers and black educators as inherent leaders in the black communities when Reconstruction governments were finally toppled).

In addition to public schools, hospitals, penitentiaries, asylums for orphans and the insane were established for the first time or received increased funding.

More humane programs for treatment of criminals were established. Laws widening the grounds for divorce expanding property rights of married women, protecting minors from parental abuse found their way into the statutes.

*Private schools
as testament to
my interest in
to be public
integrated schools*

*of. Democratic
opportunities for
of So. America
wasn't
deep*

Re: Notes w/ A ccomplishments of the Southern Republicans

3. Race relations: Racial discrimination existed in various forms. Many institutions, public and private, excluded blacks altogether; others provided what they called separate but equal facilities; still others offered markedly inferior services.

Any push for social equality produced strain along the seams of the Republican coalition. Carpetbag whites were alarmed at black demands for social equality because it would deter the Republican strategy of wooing southern whites. Scalawags were in agreement w/ blacks on political equality but as southerners they generally opposed any social "leveling."

Blacks nevertheless pushed for an end to discrimination in public facilities. They had some success in states like Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Florida. In all these Reconstruction states laws were passed making it illegal to discriminate in railroads, steamboats, inns, hotels and theatres. A few localities experienced genuine progress toward racial integration. In New Orleans there was a general acceptance of desegregated facilities associated with Mardi Gras.

But in general, civil rights laws on the books remained largely unenforced.

4. Modernization of the South. As in the North, the civil war had stimulated the expansion of national government involvement in the economy. It was one of the ambitions of the Southern Republican govts. to modernize the South in the image of the North. To bring industry, booming towns, a diversified agriculture freed from the grip of plantation dominance, and abundant opportunities for employment by whites and blacks.

The key to this modernization impulse was the development of a modern railroad system in all the South. This was to be accomplished by state-sponsored capitalist development. The results met with far less success than the grandiose plans of the Republicans. The vast costs of these projects increased financial claims upon the state govts. and drained resources from other areas--like education.

3. Delaware was not an official member of S.R. Carolina

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Re: Notes w/ Accomplishments of So. Republicans

These state-aid railroad schemes opened up opportunities for massive corruption.

Point about corruption: During Reconstruction it was biregional, biracial, and bipartisan.

Republicans could claim real accomplishments in economic development. Between 1868 and 1872 Southern rr had been rebuilt and 3,300 additional miles were added to what existed prior to the Civil War (an increase of about 40%). But this rr revolution was largely confined to Georgia, Alabama, Texas, and Arkansas. In other states there was little to show except for sky-rocketing debts.

The whole issue of corruption only served to even weaken further Republican rule in the South and played into the hands of the political opposition.