

History 225

Source: Foner, Gettysburg Lecture

Re: Notes w/ Congressional Reconstruction

I. Profile of Black Officeholders During Reconstruction

Idea of Reconstruction as a period of "black domination" is a myth, etc.

Nonetheless, over 1,400 blacks occupied positions of political authority in the South. This was a stunning departure for American government.

At the national level two blacks served in the US Senate Hiram Revels and Blanche K. Bruce of Mississippi.

Fourteen served in the House of Representatives

Blacks held numerous federal positions based on patronage such as postmaster, deputy US marshall, treasury agent, and clerks in federal offices.

The first black governor in US history was not Doug Wilder of Virginia, but P.B.S. Pinchack of Louisiana. He served for 5 weeks as an interim governor.

25 held major state executive posts--Lt. governors, treasurer, superintendent of schools, and secretary of state.

683 served in the lower houses at the state level and 112 in the state senates.

Despite the prominence of these free born elites (many from the North) the majority of black officeholders were former slaves.

No fewer than 64 officers attended college or professional schools either before or during their terms of public service.

34 officials were involved in the abolitionist movement before the Civil War. At least 129 served in the Union Army and/or Navy during the Civil War.

83% of these officeholders were literate. No fewer than 156 officials--about 10%--were victimized by KKK violence: 36 w/ death threats, 45 chased from their homes, and 42 were shot or stabbed or otherwise assaulted.