

History 225

Re: Outline for Presidential Reconstruction

I. Reconstruction--Setting of the Problem

A. Evolving War Aims of the North

Democratic Society Emerges from total War

II. Johnson--Background

A. Plebian origins

B. Johnson's political beliefs

III. Johnson's Reconstrcution Program

IV. Reconstruction--Confederate style

A. Composition of Johnson Govts.

B. Mood of the South--Defiant Optimism

C. Conditions of Blacks

V. Assessment of Presidential Reconstruction

History 225

Re: Outline/Notes w/ Presidential Reconstruction

## I. Reconstruction--Setting of the Problem

### A. Evolving War Aims of the North

- (1) Restoration of the Union
- (2) Emancipation of slaves
- (3) Equality for former freedmen. Needs to be defined . . .

### B. Democratic Society Emerges from total War

1. Public attitude in North: swung between "war hatred" and a desire to return to the noramity of peace.

a. Addendum notes on reaction to Lincoln's assassination

2. Civil War was perhaps the most democratic of our wars. Consensus or support for the war could not be coerced it had to be carefully cultivated and won from the people. Best illustrated in the direct relationship between battlefield victories and losses and public elections. The way Lincoln palyed off the public mood and timed his actions like the emancipation proclamation when he thought the time was ripe.

The is was the best reported war in our history.

The war casualties not only were extremely high but their impact was frequently devastating on northern communities. Has to do with the recruitment policy of the Union. A telltale illustration of the democratic feature of this war was the re-enlistment picture in 1864. By 1864 the Union army was made up of veterans who had enlisted in 1861 and whose three-year terms were running out. There was no power in the world that they could have been coerced to remain under arms if they wanted to pack it in. Had the majority of these men decided to stack arms the whole Union war effort in 1864 would be in jeopardy of collapsing. But in 1864 some 3/4s of them did re-enlist Tha was 136,000 men. In part, we can call this a dramatic ratification of the war and its principles.

The roll call of the dead. The war took 620,000 from North and South out of a population of 30,000,000. Northern war dead totalled about 350,000 out of a northern population of 20,000,000.

History 225

Page two

Re: Outline/Notes for Presidential Reconstruction

In relative terms the Union casulaty rate was 6 to 7 times greater than a comparable percentage of American dead in World War II.

What did the North expect from this commitment? There was a loose consensus that the war should meet certain requirements, certain compensating symbols of assurance from the defeated South. Symbols of a Union victory:

a) Signs of repentence on the South's part. The North did not ask for blood sacrifices. But there was a feeling that southern architects of secession and the Confederacy's war leaders be ostracized from office for a time and prevented from participating in postwar politics.

b) Southern Unionist should be rewarded for their loyalty to the Union;

c) That southern blacks be accorded full protection for their newly won freedom. . .

History 225  
Page three

Re: Outline/Notes w/ Presidential Reconstruction

## II. Johnson--Background

A. Plebian origins--Johnson was from the poor white class of the South. His mother was a seamstress and his father was the town drunk. Story is that his father came home from the tavern one night and was so drunk that he fell in a duck pond and drowned.

Johnson did not learn read until he was in his twenties.

Hence his so-called small "d" democratic allegiances. He identified with the "honest yeoman" of the South and despised the jumped up and snobbish "slavocrats."

His attachment to the yeoman farmers, the Jeffersonian noble yeoman seen in his attachment to tax-supported public education and his support for the Homestead act in the 1850s.

Johnson's political career was nothing short of extraordinary: he entered Tennessee politics in 1828 as a candidate for alderman; he was elected may<sup>r</sup> of Greenville; became a member of both houses of the state legislature; then governor of the state; he served ten years in Congress; then two terms in the US Senate; finally was asked to join Lincoln's Union ticket in 1864 as V.P. candidate.

He was never defeated in any of his many races for public office.

His political career, however, was characterized by being an "outsider." He was never a loyal party man in Tennessee politics. He was usually running against the party "line," but was always elected. He was true to this pattern in national politics. While he served as the Democratic senator from Tennessee in the 1850s he was usually out of step with the national party leadership. He rarely, if ever, had support from the President of his party. He was never a member of the southern "high command" in the Senate in the 1850s. He supported the Homestead Bill which was a Republican issue in the 1850s. He was the only southern senator to openly oppose secession.

He was a political "outsider" by choice and as a result of his views. He had no sense of party regularity. But he was always successful in his political bid for office.