

Reconstruction

12/21

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Social Studies 8

Reconstruction failed miserably because of all the flaws in every plan they tried. Black Codes, loopholes, and assassinations. The Civil Rights Act was deemed unconstitutional, and therefore these things were allowed and accepted by the wider society.

In the Reconstruction Act of 1867, there was an outline of what it was supposed to be an outline of what Reconstruction was supposed to be like. It established a few rules and guidelines as well as new government powers.

It also stated that the rebel states of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, Florida, Texas, and Arkansas, are to be turned into military districts and made subject to military authority of the United States.

The loophole in the 13th amendment allowed both slavery to continue and launched a type of discrimination that hadn't been seen before. One of the things stated in the 1867 Reconstruction Act is that "no cruel or unusual punishments" were to be initiated upon a prisoner. That was completely looked over. More black people were being imprisoned and the punishments were most certainly cruel and unusual. They allowed what was essentially slavery. It was unpaid work in the public streets.

Lincoln formed The Freedmen's Bureau on March 3rd 1865, he was then assassinated April 15th of that same year. Just six weeks after it was formed officially. The Freedmen's Bureau was meant to provide food, shelter, clothes, land, and medical service to the 4 million freedmen entering the country. It was supposed to run “during the present war of rebellion, and for one year thereafter”, it ended up running for another year after.

Black Codes, something used to act like there was equal rights and freedom to the freedmen, but in reality, there were all these rules and regulations.

“No freedman shall be permitted too rent or keep a house within the limits of the town (opelousas) under any circumstances, and any once thus offending shall be ejected and compelled too find an employer, or leave the town within 24 hours. The lessor or furnisher of the house leased or kept as above shall pay a fine of ten dollars for each offense”

This specific Black Code stopped freedmen from buying or renting a house, which means they must live with their employer who at times was their former owner as a slave, which usually meant harsher conditions for the employed especially if their employer is their former slave owner.

“No public meetings or congregations of freedmen, shall be allowed in the limits of Town of Opelousas, under any circumstances or for any purpose, without the permission of the Mayor or President of the Board. This prohibition is not intended however, too prevent freedmen from attending the usual Church services conducted by established ministers of religion. Every freedman violating this law shall be imprisoned and made too work five days on the public streets.”

Any sort of meetings between freedmen was completely banned, unless it was for religious activities. So unless it was completely underground and silent, and you didn't get caught, there was no discussion of rebellion or fighting back. I'm sure if they caught you doing something of that sort, the punishment would be much greater than five days work on the public streets.