

NOTICE ALL THE BOLD SPECIFIC DETAILS

NOTICE THE ITALICIZED ANALYSIS

As the Civil War was ending, Abraham Lincoln put laws in place to “reconstruct” the Union by regaining the Southern states. Southerners were forced to accept the Amendments made to the Constitution before being accepted. Many controversies between the North and the South led to the South chipping away at the supremacy of the federal government in laws that were established during this **Radical Reconstruction**, and both southern state governments and a lack of federal enforcement due to changing federal views were to blame.

The clash between the new federal supremacy and the South’s desire for state’s rights led to the degradation of the laws put in place by the federal government. Part of being accepted into the Union after the war was accepting the facts that slaves were free and equal people. Naturally, this was difficult for Southerners to accept, and in places like Louisiana restrictive “**black codes**” were put in place to restrict their freedom and keep them like slaves, through laws like the fine-and-labor-punishable crime of broadly-defined vagrancy, leaving jobs before the termination of a contract resulting in the loss of all previously earned wages, and more racist laws. This led Congress to create the Civil Rights bill, which made all people born in America full citizens with full rights, and empowered the **Freedmen’s Bureau** to aid freed African Americans. They passed the Fourteenth Amendment soon after, declaring all blacks citizens, but Southern governments soon chipped away at the power of these rulings. Division amongst Republicans in the South between African Americans, **carpetbaggers** who looked for personal gain and to reform the “unprogressive” South, and **scalawags** who wanted to make the South as successful as the North and looked to the Party to solve the issues after the war led to their failure to solidify, their forced compromise to segregation in order to protect black rights, and to violent terrorist action against Reconstruction leaders, supporters, and blacks by the Ku Klux Klan. **Conservative Democrats** were able to “redeem” more and more Southern states because of this, and were able through legislation to undermine the action of the federal government to protect blacks by obstructing their right to vote, stronger control on plantation labor, social service cuts, and more.

The federal government’s failure to remain firm and their need to appeal to everyone in order to make progress led to the South being able to chip away at the federal government’s supremacy established during Radical Reconstruction. When Congress passed the **Fifteenth Amendment**, it stated that suffrage would not be denied to people due to race (blacks), but failed to specify any other conditions that someone could be denied suffrage for, because moderate Republicans feared not leaving any loopholes open would not get **three-quarters of the states** to ratify the Amendment. This led to many newly Democratic states to put in place property requirements and poll taxes, restricting African-American suffrage. The federal government also evicted thousands of slaves while pulling out of wartime experiments of

breaking up plantations and leasing land to families, leaving many slaves betrayed and without a home, showing a lack of enforcement of their plan to protect the newly freed slaves.

Frederick Douglass resented the government for not providing land or care for the freed slaves, who were now free but had no means of surviving or taking care of themselves. This showed a failure of the government to enforce the laws that they had put in place to help the blacks survive in a new world. **Booker T. Washington** wished that the government could have implemented laws to educate blacks or give them property and a fair, equal test to see how they would do with these allowances, as it would have prevented the mistakes on the side of blacks during Reconstruction in government and in voting, demonstrating the federal government's failure to provide for and educate their citizens on the duties now relinquished upon them. **Several Supreme Court rulings** also showed a lack of federal enforcement of their laws and their meanings. In one case of a group of butchers suing the state for giving one butcher a monopoly of the business in the city, they interpreted the Fourteenth Amendment to mean that it only protected the national citizenship rights of slaves, even though it was supposed to prevent states, including their regulatory powers, from invading the citizenship rights of all people. In other cases the Court restricted the civil rights of blacks by saying that the Fourteenth Amendment only covered the protection of blacks' civil rights against state discrimination, not by people of groups, limiting Congress' power to enforce **the Ku Klux Klan Act**, which made their actions of violently going against someone's rights a federal crime. They additionally declared **the Civil Rights Act unconstitutional**, by saying that the **14th Amendment** only gave them the power to prevent discrimination by states and not individuals, ending the federal government's attempts to stand for black rights. In the **election of 1876, the two rival nominees, Samuel J. Tilden and Rutherford B. Hayes**, ran into an electoral stalemate over 20 electoral votes that were ultimately given to Hayes. Democrats were angry at this decision and threatened to block his inauguration, and the Republicans were forced to make a compromise that he would give more money to Southern improvements and have a Southerner in his cabinet, but their compromise to follow "home rule" with the South (noninterference) meant a stop in their protection and support of many people that they had formed their party and put laws in place to protect, freed men in particular, and thus furthered their lack of enforcement through this compromise.

The actions of southern state governments and a lack of federal enforcement were the reasons why the South was able to ignore and twist laws that were established during Reconstruction, chipping away at the supremacy of the federal government. The federal government's need to compromise to get their way and their failure to enforce both their laws and their true intentions led to the South being able to manipulate them and degrade their power. The newly freed African American, who was in the beginning so fought for and protected, was left ultimately in the same position at the end of Reconstruction- in the South, under the restrictive control of the rich whites.