Honors US History 11 Summer Assignment

All students enrolled in Honors US History 11 for the 2025-2026 school year are required to complete the following summer assignment. This will introduce key context for our first unit on Reconstruction and help you develop the annotation and analytical reading skills expected in an honors-level course.

Required Text:
McPherson, James M. (2015). The War That Forged a Nation: Why the Civil War Still Matters. New York: Oxford University Press, Incorporated.
Chapter 12: "War and Peace in the Post–Civil War South"

You can find a digital copy attached (which you will then be required to print), or you can get a hard copy by picking one up from Mr. Almeida's room (A216) or Mrs. Carr's room (A110).

Assignment Instructions
Read the chapter "War and Peace in the Post–Civil War South" by James McPherson.
Annotate the chapter as you read. Your annotations should include:

- Key events, main ideas, and significant arguments
- Questions or confusions you have while reading
- Connections to prior knowledge or other historical events
- Personal reactions or reflections
- Any vocabulary or concepts that are unfamiliar

Prepare to Demonstrate Understanding:
The purpose of this assignment is to help you build background knowledge on the post-Civil War South and the challenges the country faced during Reconstruction. This will also serve to develop your skills in close reading, annotation, and historical analysis.

You will be expected to bring your annotated chapter (a hard copy) to class on the first day of school. All students will be expected to demonstrate their understanding of the reading through a text-based discussion within the first week of class.

Questions?
If you have questions about the assignment or have trouble accessing the reading, please email Mr. Almeida (almeidar@lincolnps.org) and Mrs. Carr (carrc@lincolnps.org).

CHAPTER 12

War and Peace in the Post–Civil War South

In his formal acceptance of the Republican presidential nomination in 1868, General Ulysses S. Grant concluded with four words that struck a deep chord with voters: "Let us have peace."[1] For more than twenty years the country had been wracked by conflict over slavery and its aftermath. Historians have described the conflict in Vietnam as America's longest war. But, arguably, the nineteenth-century decades of sectional strife punctuated by a four-year conflict Americans call the Civil War truly represented the nation's longest war. It was certainly its most intense and violent war. In a country with less than one-sixth of the population it contained a century later, the number of American soldier deaths (including Confederates) in the Civil War was thirteen times greater than those in Vietnam. And to this total of 750,000 Civil War dead, one must add hundreds more in the Kansas wars of the 1850s that anticipated the war of 1861–65 and the thousands of deaths in the paramilitary clashes in the South during Reconstruction. The Civil War illustrated the famous aphorism of the Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz that war is the continuation of politics by other means. In 1865 Americans would discover what might be described as a corollary to Clausewitz: Postwar reconstruction was a continuation of war by other (but distressingly similar) means.

Grant's plea for peace in 1868 resonated with such meaning because the country had not known real peace since the outbreak of war

with Mexico in 1846. During congressional debates over the issue of slavery in the territories acquired from Mexico, fistfights broke out on the floor of the House, Senator Jefferson Davis of Mississippi challenged an Illinois congressman to a duel, Senator Henry Foote (also of Mississippi) drew a loaded revolver on the Senate floor, and Congressman Alexander Stephens of Georgia declared that to resist "the dictation of the Northern hordes of Goths and Vandals" the slave states must make "the necessary preparations of men and money, arms and ammunitions, etc., to meet the emergency."[2]

The initial crisis subsided with the Compromise of 1850 but flared up again after passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854. At least two hundred men lost their lives in fighting between proslavery and antislavery forces in Kansas. Congressman Preston Brooks of South Carolina clubbed Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts almost to death with a heavy cane on the floor of the Senate in 1856. Two years later, a congressional debate over the question of admitting Kansas as a slave state under its fraudulent Lecompton Constitution provoked a shoving and pummeling fight between Northern and Southern congressmen in the House. "There were some fifty middle-aged and elderly gentlemen pitching into each other like so many Tipperary savages," wrote a journalist with some amusement, "most of them incapable, from want of wind and muscle, of doing each other any serious harm." But one representative commented that "if any weapons had been on hand it would probably have been a bloody one."[3]

After John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859, which stirred fear, outrage, and retaliation in the South, men began coming armed to the floor of Congress. One of them observed, with some hyperbole, that "the only persons who do not have a revolver and knife are those who have two revolvers." A Southerner reported that a good many slave-state congressmen expected—even wanted—a shootout on the floor of the House; they were "willing to fight the question out, and settle it right there." The governor of South Carolina wrote to one of his state's representatives: "If…you upon consultation decide to make

an issue of force in Washington, write or telegraph me, and I will have a regiment in or near Washington in the shortest possible time."[4]

The war of 1861–65 transferred these conflicts from the political arena to the battlefield. Appomattox and the subsequent surrenders of other Confederate armies ended that battlefield war. But they did not end the cultural and ideological struggle between slavery and freedom in which the military contest was embedded. The Civil War was actually two wars. One of them ended in 1865. Real peace was impossible until the other one ended as well. Some contemporaries recognized this truth. Two months after Appomattox, the Boston lawyer and author (*Two Years before the Mast*), Richard Henry Dana, the federal district attorney for Massachusetts, gave a widely publicized speech in which he declared that "a war is over when its purpose is secured. It is a fatal mistake to hold that this war is over, because the fighting has ceased. This war is not over," and until the North had secured "the fruits of victory" it must continue to hold the South in "the grasp of war."[5]

These phrases, "fruits of victory" and "grasp of war," became part of the public discourse during the year immediately after the end of fighting between the armies. What did they mean? At a minimum, they meant that the victorious North had the power and responsibility to impose terms on which the South would be reincorporated into the Union. Suffering from the shock of defeat, many ex-Confederates were despondent and listless, without the will to resist any terms of reconstruction the North saw fit to impose. "They expect nothing," wrote a Northern journalist, "were prepared for the worst; would have been thankful for anything.... They asked no terms, made no conditions." Even South Carolinians admitted that "the conqueror has the right to make the terms, and we must submit."[6]

The problem was that the conquerors could not agree on what those terms should be. The assassination of Lincoln had removed a firm hand from the helm. At first his successor, Andrew Johnson, seemed to favor draconian terms. Having fought the secessionists on the ground in Tennessee, the new president thundered that "treason is

a crime.... Traitors must be punished and impoverished. Their great plantations must be seized and divided into farms, and sold to honest, industrious men."[7]

This rhetoric seemed to place Johnson at the same end of a spectrum of Northern opinion with Thaddeus Stevens and other Radical Republicans who wanted to overthrow the power of the old Southern ruling class, confiscate their land, and distribute it among freed slaves and Unionist whites. It also meant disfranchising leading ex-Confederates and enfranchising freed slaves. The planter class had brought on secession and war, they believed. The United States would never achieve genuine peace until the planters were shorn of their wealth and replaced by a democratized biracial yeoman class that would constitute the backbone of the New South.

At heart, however, Johnson was a Democrat and a white supremacist, whom the Republicans had placed on the ticket in 1864 to broaden their appeal to War Democrats and border-state Unionists. Johnson's nomination gave Republicans a short-term advantage in helping to win the election but at the cost of disastrous long-term consequences in winning the peace. Not long after declaring that traitors must be punished and impoverished, Johnson began a migration toward the conservative and even Democratic end of the spectrum. From there, he and like-minded Democrats saw Reconstruction as a minimalist process that would establish a mechanism by which former Confederate states could return to the Union with little or no change except for the abolition of slavery. For the proponents of such a policy, the fruits of victory included simply the restoration of the old Union and a grudging admission that slavery was gone with the wind. They could best achieve a real and permanent peace, they believed, by the maximum conciliation of former enemies consistent with the actual outcome of the war.

Between these alternatives of Reconstruction as revolution or as minimum change were the imprecise and shifting ideas held by the majority of the Republican Party. For them, the fruits of victory included an irrevocable repudiation of secession, ratification of the Thirteenth

Amendment, some kind of federal guarantee for the civil rights of former slaves if not their immediate enfranchisement as voters, security and power for Southern white Unionists, and at least temporary political disqualification of leading ex-Confederates. When Johnson moved toward the conservative end of the spectrum in 1865–66, the moderate Republicans moved in countervailing fashion closer to the radical position. This process produced a growing polarization between the president and Congress, which in turn led to Johnson's impeachment in 1868 and his escape from conviction by a single vote in the Senate.

In the spring and summer of 1865, Johnson issued proclamations of amnesty and reconstruction that offered pardons and restoration of property—except slaves—to most ex-Confederates who were willing to take an oath of allegiance to the United States. The president exempted several classes of high-ranking Confederate civil and military officers and wealthy Southerners. However, these exempted individuals could apply for individual pardons. Johnson thereupon pardoned them in large numbers—more than thirteen thousand. Once pardoned, they could proceed to join with amnestied whites and those who had never supported the Confederacy to adopt new state constitutions and elect new governors, legislatures, congressmen, and senators.

Freed slaves remained excluded from this process. In fact, several of the new state governments enacted "Black Codes" that codified explicit second-class citizenship for freedpeople. Johnson's restoration of property to amnestied and pardoned ex-Confederates also drove tens of thousands of freedmen off land they had farmed for themselves that year. Moreover, the president vetoed a Freedmen's Bureau bill that would have given the Bureau authority to place freedmen on abandoned land in the former Confederacy.

Under the new state governments, voters elected hundreds of ex-Confederate officials to state offices, along with no fewer than nine Confederate congressmen, seven Confederate state officials, four generals, four colonels, and Confederate vice president Alexander H. Stephens to the

U.S. Congress. To angry Republicans it appeared that the rebels, unable to capture Washington in war, were about to do so in peace. They were determined not to let this happen. In December 1865 the *Chicago Tribune* expressed a growing sentiment in the North. Its editorial focused in particular on the Mississippi Black Code but, by implication, addressed the growing defiance of Southern whites in general. "We tell the white men of Mississippi," thundered the *Tribune*, "that the men of the North will convert the state of Mississippi into a frog pond before they will allow such laws to disgrace one foot of the soil in which the bones of our soldiers sleep and over which the flag of freedom waves."[8]

For the next two years a bitter struggle in Washington made a mockery of the hopes for peace that had blossomed at Appomattox. With their three-quarters majority in Congress, Republicans refused to admit the representatives and senators elected by the Southern states. Congress passed a civil rights bill and a Freedmen's Bureau bill over Johnson's vetoes and adopted the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which Johnson counseled Southern state legislatures to reject.

In the midterm elections of 1866, Northern voters resoundingly repudiated a conservative coalition that Johnson's supporters had cobbled together. The Republicans maintained their three-quarters majority in both houses of Congress. They proceeded in 1867 to enact a series of laws over Johnson's vetoes that mandated new state constitutions in the South providing for universal manhood suffrage and for temporary disfranchisement and political disqualification of many ex-Confederates. New Republican-controlled state governments came into existence in 1868 and 1869, which created public school systems in the South and enacted other progressive social legislation. They also ratified the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments that banned racial discrimination in civil and voting rights.

President Johnson tried to hinder every step of this process by executive obstruction, which is why the House impeached him and the Senate almost convicted him in 1868. The most pernicious effect of Johnson's obstructionism was to encourage growing white resistance

in the South. By the fall of 1865 the immediate postwar passivity of Southern whites was metamorphosing into defiance. After all, the president of the United States appeared to be on their side. In September 1865 a leading Alabama politician scoffed at Republican insistence on guarantees of Southern white loyalty and good behavior. "It is you, proud and exultant Radical, who should give guarantees, guarantees that you will not again…deny any portion of the people their rights." Two months later Wade Hampton, one of the South's richest antebellum planters and a Confederate cavalry commander, commented that "it is our duty to support the President of the United States so long as he manifests a disposition to support all our rights as a sovereign State."[9]

This sounded like 1860 all over again. Many Southern whites agreed with South Carolina's Thomas Pickney Lowndes, who wrote several years later that "for us the war is not ended. We had met the enemy in the field and lost our fight, but now we were threatened with a servile war, a war in which the negro savage backed by the U.S. and the intelligent white scoundrel as his leader was our enemy."[10]

White Southerners acted on this premise. Violent acts spread throughout the South, ranging from midnight assassinations of black and white Republicans to full-scale riots in Memphis and New Orleans in 1866 that killed forty-six and thirty-seven blacks, respectively. A shadowy organization with the ominous sounding name of Ku Klux Klan carried out many of these actions. Similar secret societies arose in other states. Louisiana experienced the worst of the violence. Hundreds of victims of guerrilla attacks met their deaths in that state in the three years between Appomattox and Grant's nomination for president.[11]

Paramilitary groups composed mostly of Confederate veterans killed hundreds more in other states. Federal occupation troops were too few and spread too thinly to prevent most of the killings. Little wonder that people longed for surcease from constant strife and crisis. "Let us have peace," echoed many newspapers when they published Grant's acceptance letter. If anyone could win the peace, they hoped, it was the man who had won the war.

But there would be no peace. It was not for lack of trying. In several Southern states, Republican governors organized militia companies to suppress the violence. In Tennessee, Arkansas, and other places, they had some success. But positive results were exceptional. In many areas, county sheriffs organized posses, but they were often outgunned by counter-Reconstruction guerrillas. The sheriff of Fayette County, Alabama, put his finger on another problem. "When I gather my posse," he testified, "I could depend on them; but as soon as I get home, I meet my wife crying, saying that they have been there shooting into the house. When we scatter to our houses, we do not know at what time we are to be shot down; and living with our lives in our hands in this way, we have become disheartened."[12]

If the militia or sheriffs did manage to apprehend Klansmen, what then? Even in Republican counties it proved difficult to impanel a jury that would convict. Although militia or federal troops might be able to protect witnesses and jurors during trials, they could not prevent retaliation on a dark night months later. And sometimes the intimidation occurred during the trial itself. To cite just one example, the district attorney in northern Mississippi saw a case fall apart when five key witnesses were murdered. The example was not lost on witnesses elsewhere.

North Carolina's Governor William W. Holden came to grief because of his attempts to stamp out the Klan. County sheriffs and civil courts proved helpless to contain a rising tide of terror that swept over the state in early 1870. The legislature authorized Holden to proclaim a state of insurrection but refused him the power to declare martial law or to suspend the writ of habeas corpus. Knowing that nothing short of these measures would do the job, Holden in effect declared martial law by executive order. The militia arrested scores of Klansmen, while dozens of others turned state's evidence in hope of light or suspended sentences. In response to the mounting pressure, Holden dropped his plan to try offenders in military courts. As usual, the civil courts failed to convict any of those arrested. After the Democrats won control of the legislature (with the aid of Klan violence) in 1870, they impeached

and convicted Holden in March 1871 for having illegally declared martial law. He was the first governor in American history to be removed from office by impeachment.[13]

As the death toll from Klan violence mounted during 1870, Southern Republicans desperately petitioned the Grant administration for help. Rigorous legislation to enforce the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments became major items of congressional business. A stumbling block to such legislation was the federal system, under which the states had jurisdiction over the crimes of murder, assault, arson, and the like. In the view of moderate Republicans, the prosecution of such crimes by federal officials would stretch the Constitution to the breaking point. Nevertheless, the clauses of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, giving Congress power to enforce their provisions by appropriate legislation, seemed to provide constitutional sanction for a departure from tradition.

Missouri's Senator Carl Schurz, a refugee from the revolutions of 1848 in Germany, a founder of the Republican Party, and a major general in the Union army during the Civil War, eloquently supported an enforcement law. In a Senate speech he scorned the incessant harping by Democrats on what they euphoniously called "self government and . . . State sovereignty. . . . In the name of liberty [they] assert the right of one man, under State law, to deprive another man of his freedom. [But] the great constitutional revolution" accomplished by the war had brought in its wake "the vindication of individual rights by the National power. The revolution found the rights of the individual at the mercy of the States . . . and placed them under the shield of national protection." And how did the Democrats respond? asked Schurz rhetorically. "As they once asserted that true liberty implied the right of one man to hold another man as his slave, they will tell you now that they are no longer true freemen in their States because . . . they can no longer deprive other men of their rights."[14]

In May 1870 Congress passed an enforcement act that made interference with voting rights a federal offense and defined as a felony any

attempt by one or more persons to deprive another person of his civil or political rights. Mindful of opposition charges of military dictatorship and "Caesarism," Grant initially did little to enforce this law. Klan violence continued to increase. Grant and his new attorney general, Amos Akerman, finally decided to take off the velvet glove that had cloaked the iron fist. Congress helped by passing an even stronger law at a special session in April 1871, popularly known as the Ku Klux Act. This law empowered the president to use the army to enforce the 1870 law, declare martial law, suspend the writ of habeas corpus in areas that he declared to be in a state of insurrection, and purge suspected Klansmen from juries by an oath backed with stiff penalties for perjury.

Under these laws the Grant administration cracked down on the Klan. Government detectives infiltrated the order and gathered evidence of its activities. In 1871 a congressional committee conducted an investigation of the Klan that produced twelve thick volumes of testimony documenting its outrages. The president sent cavalry to the South to supplement the federal infantry to cope with the fast-riding Klansmen.

Grant also suspended the writ of habeas corpus in nine counties of South Carolina. There and elsewhere, federal marshals aided by soldiers arrested thousands of Klansmen. Hundreds of others fled their homes to escape arrest. Federal grand juries handed down more than three thousand indictments. Several hundred defendants pleaded guilty in return for suspended sentences. The Justice Department (established in 1870) dropped charges against nearly two thousand others in order to clear clogged court dockets for trials of major offenders. Approximately six hundred of these were convicted and 250 acquitted. Of those convicted, most received fines or light jail sentences, but sixty-five were imprisoned for sentences of up to five (in a few cases, ten) years in the federal penitentiary at Albany, New York.[15]

The government's main purpose in this crackdown was to destroy the Klan and restore a semblance of law and order in the South rather than to secure mass convictions. Thus the courts granted clemency to many convicted defendants and Grant used his pardoning power

liberally. By 1875 all the imprisoned men had served out their sentences or received pardons. The government's vigorous actions in 1871–72 did bring at least a temporary peace to large parts of the former Confederacy. As a consequence, blacks voted in solid numbers, and the 1872 election was the fairest and most democratic presidential election in the South until 1968.

This experience confirmed a reality that had existed since 1865: While counter-Reconstruction guerrillas assaulted unarmed white and black Republicans, teachers in freedpeople's schools, sheriffs' posses, and state militias, they carefully avoided conflict with federal troops. Yet the success of federal enforcement in 1871–72 contained seeds of future failure. Southern whites and Northern Democrats hurled charges of "bayonet rule" against the Grant administration. Southern Democrats learned that the Klan's tactics of terrorism—midnight assassinations and whippings by disguised vigilantes operating in secret organizations—were likely to bring down the heavy hand of federal retaliation. They did not forswear violence, but openly formed organizations that they described as "social clubs"—which just happened to be armed to the teeth. Professing to organize only for self-defense against black militias, "carpetbagger corruption," and other bugbears of Southern white propaganda, they named themselves White Leagues (Louisiana), White Liners or Rifle Clubs (Mississippi), or Red Shirts (South Carolina). They were, in fact, paramilitary organizations that functioned as armed auxiliaries of the Democratic Party in Southern states in their drive to "redeem" the South from "black and tan Negro-Carpetbag rule."

Most of the paramilitaries, like those who had constituted Klan personnel, were Confederate veterans. A careful study of the White League in New Orleans analyzes the membership of this order and finds that 88 percent of its officers "can be positively identified as Confederate veterans who served in Louisiana during the Civil War."[16] But they were not eager to reprise the war of 1861–65, so they too were careful to avoid conflict with the dwindling number of federal troops

stationed in the South and to portray their increasingly murderous attacks on blacks and Republicans as purely defensive.

The most notorious confrontation occurred in 1873 at Colfax on the Red River in the plantation country of western Louisiana. Colfax was the parish seat of Grant Parish, whose population was almost equally divided between whites and blacks. Disputed elections had left rival claimants for control of both the parish and state governments. Simmering warfare between the White League and black militia came to a head in Colfax on Easter Sunday in 1873. Claiming that "Negro rule" in the parish had produced corruption, pillage, and rape, the White League vowed to reassert white rule. Occupation of the courthouse by armed blacks provoked whites into a frenzy. On April 13 nearly three hundred armed whites rode into Colfax pulling a cannon on a farm wagon. Using tactics learned as Confederate soldiers, they attacked the courthouse from three directions. After shooting down in cold blood several blacks trying to escape, they set the building on fire, burning several men alive and killing the rest as they came out to surrender. At least seventy-one blacks (by some accounts as many as three hundred) and three whites were killed—two of the latter by shots fired from their own side. Federal troops steaming upriver from New Orleans arrived in time only to count the dead.

A federal grand jury indicted seventy-two whites under the Enforcement Act of 1870 for violating black civil rights. Only nine came to trial, and three were convicted. These three went free in 1876 when the Supreme Court ruled (*U.S. v. Cruikshank*) that the enforcement act was unconstitutional because the Fourteenth Amendment prohibited only states, not individuals, from violating civil rights. "The power of Congress . . . to legislate for the enforcement of such a guarantee," declared the Court, "does not extend to the passage of laws for the suppression of ordinary crime within the states. . . . That duty was originally assumed by the States; and it still remains there."[17] The Court failed to specify what recourse victims might have if a state did not or could not suppress such crimes.

In Louisiana and Mississippi, White Leaguers and White Liners carried on their campaigns of intimidation and murder with little regard for courts, either federal or state. Federal troops were too few or too late to protect most targets of violence. Tensions rose in 1874 as elections approached. The White League in the Red River Parish southwest of Shreveport forced six white Republicans to resign their offices on pain of death—and then brutally murdered them after they had resigned.[18]

"For many former Confederates, this was a glorious time," writes Nicholas Lemann in his history of these events. "After years of defeat and loss of power and control, it looked as if they might be winning again." They "were taking their homeland back from what they saw as a formidable misalliance of the federal government and the Negro. The drama of it was so powerful that killing defenseless people registered in their minds as acts of bravery, and refusal to obey laws that protected other people's rights registered as acts of high principle."[19]

Two weeks after the Red River Parish murders, New Orleans on September 14 became the scene of a battle between the White League on one side and the police and state militia on the other. The commander of the state forces, which included both white and black units, was none other than former Confederate general James Longstreet, who had become a Republican after the war and was now fighting against men who had once served under him. Longstreet's little army killed twenty-one White Leaguers and wounded nineteen but suffered eleven killed and sixty wounded—including Longstreet—in the course of being routed by the White Leaguers.

The White League installed its own claimant to the governorship (from the disputed election of 1872), but President Grant then stepped in and put an end to the exercise. Three regiments of U.S. infantry and a battery of artillery arrived in New Orleans (then the capital), supported by a flotilla of gunboats anchored in the river with a full complement of marines. "New Orleans became host to the largest garrison of federal troops in the United States," writes the historian James Hogue, "and

assumed the appearance of an occupied city, much as it had during the Civil War."[20] The soldiers ensured a fair election in the city. Grant also sent part of the 7th Cavalry (George Armstrong Custer's regiment) to patrol the turbulent Red River parishes.

In addition, Grant ordered to Louisiana his top field commander, General Philip H. Sheridan. This hotheaded fighter had pulled no punches in his Civil War career, nor did he now. "I think the terrorism now existing in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Arkansas could be entirely removed, and confidence and fair dealing be established, by the arrest and trial of ringleaders of the armed White Leagues," Sheridan wired the secretary of war in a dispatch that was widely published in the press. "If Congress would pass a bill declaring them banditti, they could be tried by a military commission." The "ringleaders of this banditti, who murdered men here on the 14th of September, and also more recently at Vicksburg, Miss., should, in justice to law and order . . . be punished." If "the President would issue a proclamation declaring them banditti, no further action need to be taken except that which would devolve on me."[21]

We shall never know if Sheridan's approach would have worked, for it was never tried. His banditti dispatch provoked a firestorm of condemnation in the North as well as in the South. Instead of bringing peace, Grant's Southern policy seemed to be causing ever more turmoil. Many Northerners adopted a "plague on both your houses" attitude toward the White Leagues and the "Negro-Carpetbag" state governments. Withdraw the federal troops, they argued, and let the Southern people work out their own problems, even if that meant a solid South for the white-supremacy Democratic Party and curtailment of black civil and political rights.

"People are becoming tired of . . . abstract questions, in which the overwhelming majority of them have no direct interest," declared the leading Republican newspaper in Washington in 1874. "The Negro question, with all its complications, and the reconstruction of the Southern States, with all its interminable embroilments, have lost

much of the power they once wielded." A Republican politician commented even more bluntly the following year that "the truth is that our people are tired of this worn out cry of 'Southern outrages'!!! Hard times and heavy taxes make them wish the 'nigger,' 'everlasting nigger,' were in _____ or Africa."[22]

Benefiting from this sentiment as well as from an anti-Republican backlash caused by the economic depression that followed the Panic of 1873, Democrats gained control of the House of Representatives and several Northern governorships for the first time in almost two decades. And the Supreme Court was already sending signals that it might strip the 1870–71 enforcement laws of their teeth.

Despite the presence of federal troops in Louisiana, the election of state legislators in 1874 produced a new round of disputed results. Democrats appeared to have won a majority in the lower house. But the Republican "returning board" threw out the results in several parishes on the grounds of intimidation. The board certified the election of fifty-three Republicans and fifty-three Democrats, with five cases undecided and referred to the lower house itself. When this body convened on January 4, 1875, Democrats carried out a well-planned maneuver to seat the five Democratic claimants before the befuddled Republicans could organize to prevent that action. In response, the Republican governor asked federal troops to eject the five Democrats who had no election certificates. Soldiers marched into the House and escorted the Democrats out.

This affair caused an uproar in Congress as well as in the country. Even a good many Republicans condemned the unprecedented military invasion of the legislature. Carl Schurz, who had spoken so powerfully for federal enforcement of Reconstruction five years earlier, with troops if necessary, had changed his tune by 1875. "Our system of republican government is in danger," he proclaimed in a Senate speech. "Every American who truly loves his liberty will recognize the cause of his own rights and liberties in the cause of Constitutional government in Louisiana." The "insidious advance of irresponsible power" had drawn sustenance

from the argument that it was "by federal bayonets only that the colored man may be safe." Schurz conceded that "brute force" might make "every colored man safe, not only in the exercise of his franchise but in everything else.... You might have made the national government so strong that, right or wrong, nobody could resist it." That is "an effective method to keep peace and order.... It is employed with singular success in Russia." But "what has in the meantime become of the liberties and rights of all of us," asked this Forty-Eighter who had left Germany to escape just such tyranny. "If this can be done to Louisiana ... how long will it be before it can be done in Massachusetts and in Ohio? How long before the constitutional rights of all the states and the self-government of all the people may be trampled under foot? ... How long before a soldier may stalk into the National House of Representatives, and, pointing to the Speaker's mace, say, 'Take away that bauble'?"[23]

A compromise kept the Republican administration in Louisiana afloat for two more years. In 1875 the focus of attention shifted to neighboring Mississippi, where legislative elections took place that year. Of all the Reconstruction state governments, Mississippi's was one of the most honest and efficient. And of all the "carpetbaggers," Governor Adelbert Ames was one of the most able, effective, and idealistic. Few carpetbaggers fit the nefarious stereotype of the genre, and Ames fit it least of all. Having graduated near the top of his class at West Point in 1861, this native of Maine fought in most of the battles of the Eastern theater in the Civil War, was awarded the Medal of Honor, and achieved promotion to brevet major general in the regular U.S. Army in 1865 at the age of twenty-nine. After commanding the military district of Mississippi and Arkansas and shepherding those states back into the Union, Ames was elected senator from Mississippi in 1870 and governor in 1873. His experiences in the Civil War and afterward produced a deep and genuine commitment to education and equal justice for the freedpeople.

To most whites in Mississippi, it mattered little that the state government under Ames was relatively honest and efficient by the standards of

the time. It was not *their* government. Whites owned most of the property and thus paid most of the taxes. They resented the portion of those taxes that went to black schools. The black majority sustained Republican county and state governments for which few whites had voted. In 1875 the White Line rifle clubs determined, as they expressed it, to "carry the elections peacefully if we can, forcibly if we must." Their strategy became known as the Mississippi Plan.

Part of this plan involved economic coercion of black sharecroppers and laborers, who were informed that if they voted Republican they could expect no more work. But violence, threatened and actual, was the main component of the Mississippi Plan. White Liners discovered that their best tactic was the "riot." When Republicans held a political rally, several White Liners would attend with concealed weapons, and others would lurk nearby in reserve. Someone would provoke a shoving or heckling incident. Someone else would fire a shot—always attributed to a Republican—whereupon all hell would break loose. When the shooting finally stopped, black and Republican casualties usually outnumbered White Liner casualties by about twenty to one. Then the White Liners would ride out into the country and shoot any black man they suspected of political activism—and sometimes his family as well. Several years later, one White Liner candidly confessed that "the question which presented itself then to the people of Hinds County was whether or not the negroes, under the reconstruction laws, should rule the county.... Throughout the countryside for several days the negro leaders, some white and some black, were hunted down and killed, until the negro population which had dominated the white people for so many years was whipped."[24]

The only way to counter this force was by equal or greater force. Ames was reluctant to mobilize the black militia—who in any case would be outnumbered and out-gunned—because it would play into the hands of white propagandists who spouted endlessly about savage Africans murdering white men and raping their women. The solution seemed to be federal troops. Ames sent an urgent message to Washington

requesting military support. Grant meant to comply. He instructed his attorney general to prepare a proclamation ordering lawless persons to cease and desist—a necessary prelude to sending troops—but also urged Ames "to strengthen his position by exhausting his own resources in restoring order before he receives govt. aid."[25]

The new attorney general, a conservative Republican, goaded Ames more than Grant intended. "The whole public are tired out with these annual autumnal outbreaks in the South," wrote the nation's chief law enforcement officer, "and the great majority are now ready to condemn any interference on the part of the government.... Preserve the peace by the forces in your own state, and let the country see that the citizens of Mississippi, who are...largely Republican, have the courage to fight for their rights."[26] No troops came.

Ames did mobilize a few companies of black militia, even though he recognized that to use them in combat against the heavily armed Confederate veterans in the rifle clubs "precipitates a war of races and one to be felt over the entire South."[27] To avoid such a result, Ames negotiated an agreement with Democratic leaders whereby the latter promised peace in return for disarming the militia. "No matter if they are going to carry the State," commented Ames wearily, "let them carry it, and let us be at peace and have no more killing."[28] Not surprisingly, however, violence and intimidation continued under this "peace agreement," and on election day black voters were conspicuous by their absence from the polls. In five counties with large black majorities, Republicans polled twelve, seven, four, two, and zero votes. In this way a Republican majority of thirty thousand at the previous election became a Democratic majority of thirty thousand in 1875.

The Mississippi Plan worked so well that other Southern states carried out their own versions of it in the national election of 1876. The last Republican state governments in the South collapsed when the new president, Rutherford B. Hayes, withdrew all federal troops in 1877. The Democrats had "redeemed" the South, which remained solid for their party and for white supremacy for almost a century.

"Reconstruction, which had wound up producing a lower-intensity continuation of the Civil War, was over," writes a historian of the era. "The South had won."[29]

This did not mean, however, that the loser of the Civil War had garnered the fruits of victory after all. In the war of 1861–65 the North had prevailed and unequivocally achieved the principal goals of that war: preservation of the United States as one nation, indivisible, with liberty for all. A third goal, justice for all, was achieved on paper with the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. Moreover, it had come tantalizingly close to success on the ground for a few brief years. In the end, justice was sacrificed for the unjust peace ushered in by "redemption" of the South, a peace marred by disfranchisement, Jim Crow, poverty, and lynching. Yet the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments remained in the Constitution. Exactly eighty years after Hayes withdrew federal troops from the South, another Republican president—who also happened to be a famous general—sent them back, to Little Rock, to begin the painful process of winning the final fruits of victory in the larger conflict of which the war of 1861–65 had formed only a part.