

The North wanted a swift end to the war, and their number of soldiers and ability to manufacture weaponry far outweighed that of the South. Efforts on the part of the South to secure international support failed with few exceptions. England and France gave little help to the South. Although Confederate General Lee felt encouraged by early victories, by the time he surrendered to the North at Appomattox, Virginia, on April 9, 1865, the South had run out of money and men to fight a war.

From 1865 to 1867, the first period of Reconstruction that followed the war failed to secure basic civil rights for the freed slaves in the South. A Civil Rights act passed, along with new amendments to the Constitution, in an effort to protect equal rights and citizenship for all men born in the United States. Later, the Fourteenth Amendment made it illegal for any state to deprive any citizen of "equal protection" under U.S. law.

In 1867, a new effort at Reconstruction divided southern states into five military districts for a period of ten years. This period was called Congressional Reconstruction because it was based on acts passed by Congress.

By 1870, all the Confederate states had been readmitted into the Union. Most were then controlled by Republican governments, which had been set up in the southern districts in order to prevent Confederates from regaining their lost power in the South.

However, by 1873, a series of Supreme Court decisions restricted the use of Reconstruction laws and the constitutional amendments. And by 1876, only three of the southern states were still under Republican rule.

When Republican Rutherford B. Hayes became president, the post-Civil War period called Reconstruction ended.

Exercise

1. What was one main difference between the North and the South? _____

2. What was the issue that finally led the southern states to secede? _____

3. Why would the South have tried to get financial support from France and England?

4. In your own words, describe how the period of Reconstruction during the 1860s failed completely.

