

The Reconstruction Years

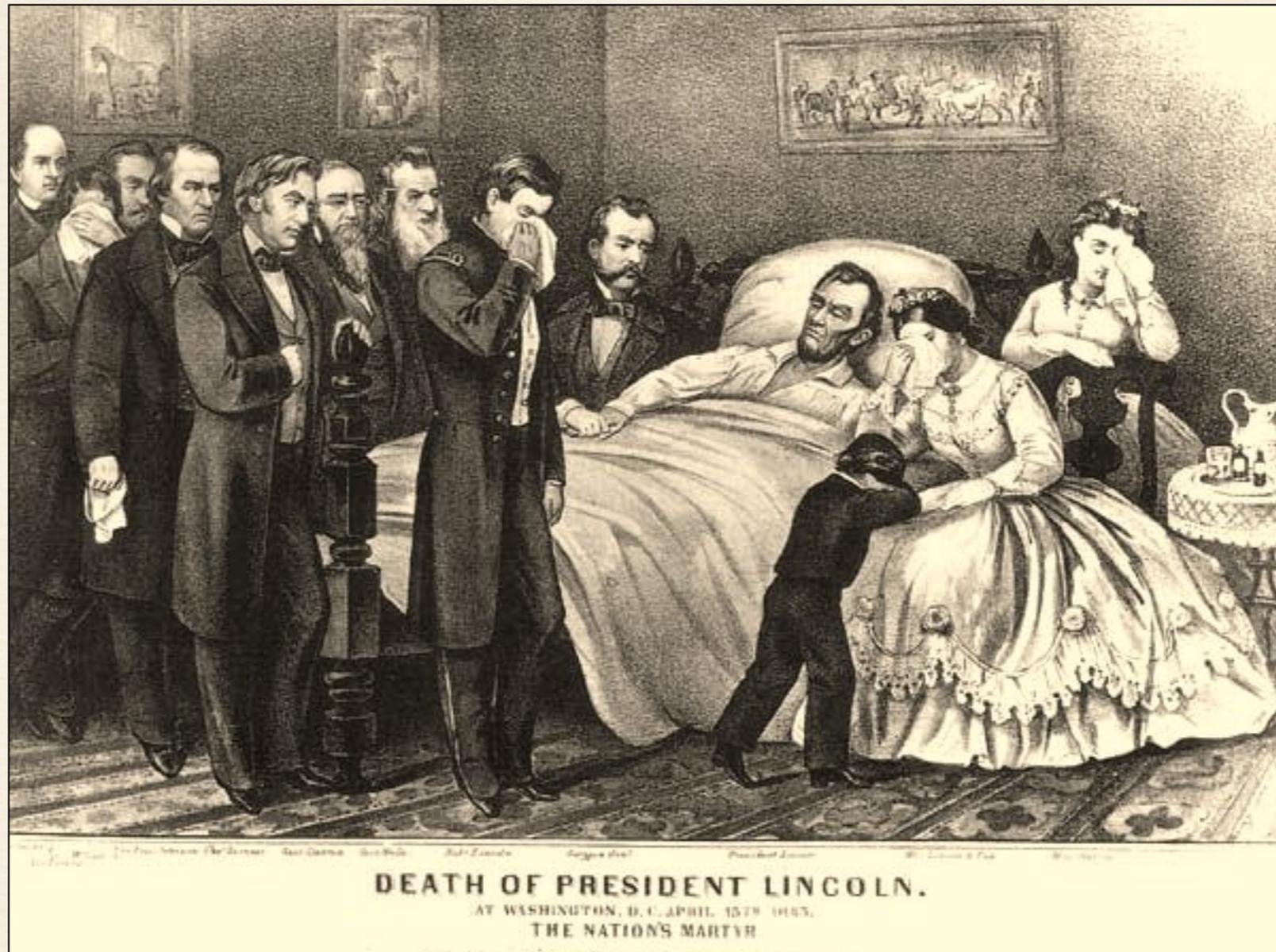
1850-1876



by Joe Burton

The Reconstruction Years

- ❖ In April 1865, President Lincoln was shot and killed.
- ❖ Americans were shocked and grief-stricken.
- ❖ Congress demanded harsh terms as part of the rebuilding of the defeated South...
- ❖ ...which had been all but destroyed during the Civil War.
- ❖ Newly freed slaves were now citizens and enjoyed a first taste (though limited) of political participation...
- ❖ ...but their future was still uncertain.



A Dying Lincoln...

...is attended by his eldest son Robert (far left); the Surgeon General; his youngest son "Tad;" his wife Mary Todd Lincoln; and actress Clara Harris (far right), who was with the Lincolns at Ford's theatre.

Lincoln's Assassination

- ❖ On the night of April 14, 1865, just five days after Lee's surrender at Appomattox...
- ❖ ...President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated while attending a play at *Ford's Theater* in Washington D.C.
- ❖ The assassin, actor John Wilkes Booth...
- ❖ ...thought that he was striking a blow for the Confederacy.
- ❖ Booth was tracked down and killed.
- ❖ Several co-conspirators were arrested...
- ❖ ...convicted...
- ❖ ...and executed as well.



SURRAT.



BOOTH.



HAROLD.

War Department, Washington, April 20, 1865.



\$100,000 REWARD!

THE MURDERER

Of our late beloved President, Abraham Lincoln,
IS STILL AT LARGE.

\$50,000 REWARD

Will be paid by this Department for his apprehension, in addition to any reward offered by Municipal Authorities or State Executives.

\$25,000 REWARD

Will be paid for the apprehension of JOHN H. SURRAT, one of Booth's Accomplices.

\$25,000 REWARD

Will be paid for the apprehension of David C. Harold, another of Booth's accomplices.

LIBERAL REWARDS will be paid for any information that shall conduce to the arrest of either of the above-named criminals, or their accomplices.

All persons harboring or secreting the said persons, or either of them, or aiding or assisting their concealment or escape, will be treated as accomplices in the murder of the President and the attempted assassination of the Secretary of State, and shall be subject to trial before a Military Commission and the punishment of DEATH.

Let the stain of innocent blood be removed from the land by the arrest and punishment of the murderers.

All good citizens are exhorted to aid public justice on this occasion. Every man should consider his own conscience charged with this solemn duty, and rest neither night nor day until it be accomplished.

EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War.

DESCRIPTIONS.—BOOTH is Five Feet 7 or 8 inches high, slender build, high forehead, black hair, black eyes, and wore a heavy black moustache, which there is some reason to believe has been shaved off.

JOHN H. SURRAT is about 5 feet, 9 inches. Hair rather thin and dark; eyes rather light; no beard. Would weigh 145 or 150 pounds. Complexion rather pale and clear, with color in his cheeks. Wore light clothes of fine quality. Shoulders square; cheek bones rather prominent; chin narrow; ears projecting at the top; forehead rather low and square, but broad. Part of his hair on the right side; neck rather long. His lips are firmly set. A slim man.

DAVID C. HAROLD is five feet six inches high, hair dark, eyes dark, eyebrows rather heavy, full face, nose short, hand short and fleshy, feet small, instep high, round bodied, naturally quick and active, slightly closes his eyes when looking at a person.

NOTICE.—In addition to the above, State and other authorities have offered rewards amounting to almost one hundred thousand dollars, making an aggregate of about **TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS.**

A Wanted Poster...

...for John H. Surrat, John Wilkes Booth, and David C. Harold offers rewards for the capture of Booth and the conspirators who were thought to have helped him kill the president.



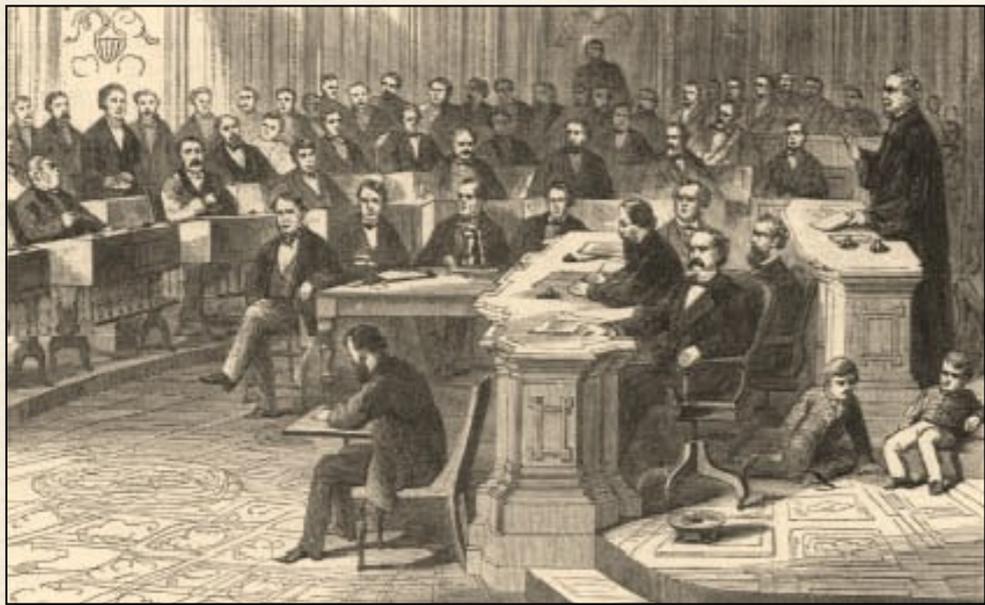
Lincolns Funeral Car...

...was drawn by 16 gray horses wearing ostrich plumes and black cloth trimmed in silver. After the funeral, Lincoln's body was taken by a personal train car (below) from Washington D.C., to his home state of Illinois. He was mourned all along the way.



Reconstruction Becomes Radical

- ❖ Six weeks before his death...
- ❖ ...President Lincoln urged Americans to *“bind up the nation’s wounds”* ...
- ❖ ...in his second inaugural address.
- ❖ He wanted to make it easy for the defeated South to rejoin the United States...
- ❖ ...and he wanted government to help the former slaves adjust to their new lives.
- ❖ Lincoln’s successor...
- ❖ ...President Andrew Johnson...
- ❖ ...had also hoped for a lenient policy...
- ❖ ...but he struggled with Congress as a plan was drawn up.
- ❖ The Republican Congress...
- ❖ ...wanted harsher terms terms for the South...
- ❖ ...they got their way and the South was divided into five Military Districts...
- ❖ ...with a Northern Army officer overseeing the creation of new state governments.
- ❖ Many former Confederate Troops were upset by this plan because they felt the military occupation was humiliating the South.



President Johnson Is Impeached...

...because he decided to challenge the power of Congress to carry out the plan for Reconstruction. One branch of Congress, the House of Representatives, responded by voting to impeach him... placing him on trial before the Senate. Removal of the president failed by a single vote.



A Carpetbag...

...was popular luggage of the day made of rug and leather ... was carried by Northerners who went South after the war. It gave them their name..

African American Reconstruction...

...of former slaves, now called *Freedmen*, faced an uncertain future. The *13th Amendment*, ending slavery, had been passed late in the war and was ratified in 1865.

The *14th Amendment*, ratified in 1868, guaranteed citizenship to African Americans; the *15th Amendment*, ratified in 1870, protected their right to vote.

These Constitutional amendments insured that state governments could not limit or remove those rights. Still, freed blacks had few skills, no land, or money... and most could not even read or write.

Some used their knowledge of farming to become "*Tenant Farmers*" ... paying a landowner in cash or crops to use his land.

Others without money became *Sharecroppers* and borrowed money for food, tools, and other needs, they repaid the land owner with a share of the crop. *Sharecropping created a permanent cycle of debt and poverty.*

The "*Freedmen's Bureau*," a government agency, was formed to help freedmen and poor whites. The Bureau encouraged blacks to vote and helped to elect some blacks to office. It also opened more than 4,000 schools.

NOTICE TO FREEDMEN.

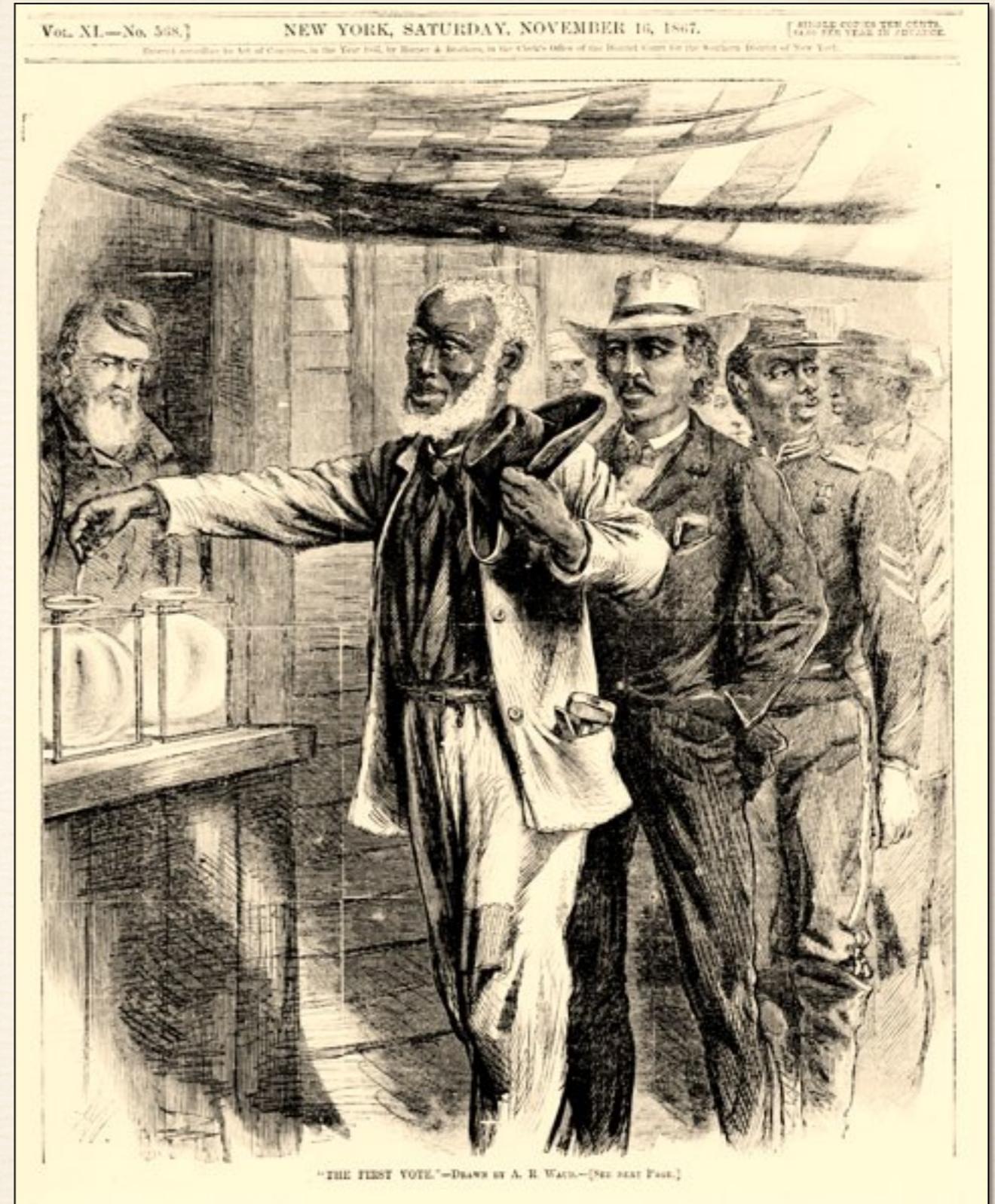
**Office of Ass't Superintendant of Freedmen,
Shreveport, La., Dec. 16th, 1865.**

All Freedmen at or near Shreveport, La., who have no employment or means of support, are hereby ordered to report at this office without delay, for the purpose of being aided in finding employment. Those who are able without the aid of this office to contract their services for the coming year, for a fair and valuable consideration, are admonished that it is for their best interest to do so at once, and have their contracts approved by the proper officer or agent. Do not delay with the vain hope that the Government will give you land and other property. In the event that you do not regard this advice in time, you will reap disappointment.

**L. HARRIGAN,
Capt. & Asst. Supt. of Freedmen.**

A Harper's Weekly Cover...

...of African Americans voting for the first time.





The White Backlash...

...was caused by many Southern whites who were bitter about the rights Reconstruction gave to blacks; they wanted to restore “*White Supremacy*.”

Some joined secret societies such as the *Ku Klux Klan*, which spread terror. KKK members dressed in hooded robes, set fires to barns and homes, and murdered black people and sympathetic whites.

Because of this intimidation, which existed in the North also, black participation in elections declined for the rest of the century.

