Effects of the Civil War and Reconstruction

Political, Economic, and Social Impact
Southern Resentment

- Confederate general Robert E. Lee urged the South to accept defeat and unite as a nation after the war ended at Appomattox.
- However, the war and Reconstruction resulted in Southern resentment toward the North and the freed slaves which ultimately led to the political, economic, and social control of the South by whites.
The impact of President Lincoln’s beliefs:

- Lincoln’s view that the United States was one nation indivisible had prevailed.
- Lincoln believed that since secession was illegal, Confederate governments in the Southern states were illegitimate and the states had never really left the Union.
The impact of President Lincoln’s beliefs

Lincoln believed that Reconstruction was a matter of quickly restoring state governments that were loyal to the Union in the Southern states.

Lincoln also believed that once the war was over, to reunify the nation, the federal government should not punish the South but act “with malice towards none, with charity for all...to bind up the nation’s wounds...”
Radical Reconstruction

- The assassination of Lincoln just a few days after Lee's surrender at Appomattox enabled Radical Republicans to influence the process of Reconstruction in a manner much more punitive towards the Confederate states.

John Wilkes Booth fired the "last shot" of the Civil War as Lincoln attended a show.
Radical Reconstruction

The states that seceded were not allowed back into the Union immediately, but were put under military occupation. Congress believed that they had the authority to govern the South, as the Constitution gives it the power to govern conquered territories.
Radical Reconstruction

- Radical Republicans also believed in aggressively guaranteeing voting and other civil rights to African Americans.
- They clashed repeatedly with Lincoln’s successor as President, Andrew Johnson, over the issue of civil rights for freed slaves, eventually impeaching him, but failing to remove him from office.

Andrew Johnson became the first President to be impeached by the House of Representatives. He was not removed from office, as the Senate failed to convict him by the required 2/3 vote.
Civil War Amendments

- **13th Amendment**: Slavery was abolished permanently in the United States.
- **14th Amendment**: States were prohibited from denying equal rights under the law to any American.
- **15th Amendment**: Voting rights were guaranteed regardless of “race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”
The Reconstruction period ended following the extremely close presidential election of 1876. In return for support for electoral college votes from Southern Democrats, the Republicans agreed to end the military occupation of the South.
Reconstruction Ends

- This is known as the Compromise of 1877 and made Rutherford B. Hayes the President of the United States.
- The South returned to “home rule” dominated by the Democratic Party for nearly 100 years!

President Hayes was chosen by the House of Representatives, as there was no winner of the electoral college.
impact on the Northern economy

- The war resulted in economic prosperity and westward expansion.
- Federal subsidies of railroads encouraged the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad soon after the war ended. This intensified the movement of settlers into the states between the Mississippi River and the Pacific Ocean.
impact on the Northern economy

- The North and Midwest emerged with strong and growing industrial economies, laying the foundation for the sweeping industrialization of the nation (other than the South) in the next half-century.
- The United States emerged as a global economic power at the beginning of the 20th century.
Impact on the Southern Economy

- Economic distress.
- The Southern states were left embittered and devastated by the war.
- Farms, railroads, and factories had been destroyed throughout the South.
- The economic system of slave labor plantations was destroyed.
Impact on the Southern Economy

- The South would remain a backward, agriculture-based economy and the poorest section of the nation for many decades afterward.
- Plantations were replaced by tenant farming and share-cropping; creating a cycle of poverty.
- The cities of Richmond and Atlanta were left in ruins.
Political Effect on the South:

- The doctrine of states rights was weakened by the emergence of a strong national government.
- Lincoln’s view of an indivisible nation was realized.
- States’ Rights defenders found a home in the Democratic Party, which dominated the South for the next century (the “Solid South”).
The Compromise of 1877 enabled former Confederates to regain power in the South (Redemption).

This opened the door to the “Jim Crow Era” and began a long period in which African Americans in the South were denied the full rights of American citizenship.

The economic and political gains of former slaves were temporary.