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## Reconstruction: American Redemption?

### I. Introduction

#### A. 1898 Coup in Wilmington, North Carolina

1. Part of 1898 election in North Carolina during which Democrats gained control of statewide offices by feeding fears of “negro rule” and by threatening violence to Republican voters.
2. In Wilmington, a newspaper owned by black men was destroyed, the (white) Republican officials were overthrown, and leading African Americans were banished.
3. 1900: New voting rules largely end black voting in North Carolina

B. In this episode, we are going to explore how in the last three decades of the nineteenth-century, many—but not all—white Americans, most of whom were Christians, defined citizenship as belonging to white people and defined the country as, in its essence, a white, Christian nation.

### II. Post Civil-War Possibilities

#### A. Post-war question: What will be the status of African Americans?

1. Thirteenth Amendment ends slavery.
2. However, not clear that black people will be allowed to be equal citizens.
  - a) Black Codes passed in many southern states
3. Some people, black and white, argued that the nation should become truly interracial: Gilbert Haven, Sara Stanley, Linda Slaughter

#### B. Radical Reconstruction (1867-1872)

1. Demanded universal male suffrage and ratification of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment
2. Passed 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment
3. Over 2,000 black people held public office; others exercised right to vote.

### III. Religion of the Lost Cause

#### A. 1877: End of Reconstruction (radical and otherwise)

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B. “Redemption” and Religion of the Lost Cause: belief that slave-holding South was godly society that God wanted white Southerners to recreate. That would entail “redemption” from black and northern rule and the reinstatement of white supremacy.

1. Made visible in statues: Julian Carr speech ties statues and white supremacy.

2. African Americans lost political rights and protections.

3. Lynchings were used to enforce submission

- a) Ida B. Wells showed that the ostensible reason for lynchings—rape—was often untrue and was also hypocritical.

C. Northern Reactions: white Northerners largely let the white South do as it wanted.

1. Reconciliation of white North and white South seen as more important than rights (or lives) of black people.

#### IV. Conclusion

A. Lucius Hosley: Black people in danger if they are respectable. Black people were not denied rights because they were uneducated or “unrespectable.” They were denied rights because they were black.

B. The country reunified after the Civil War, but on the basis of injustice for black people.