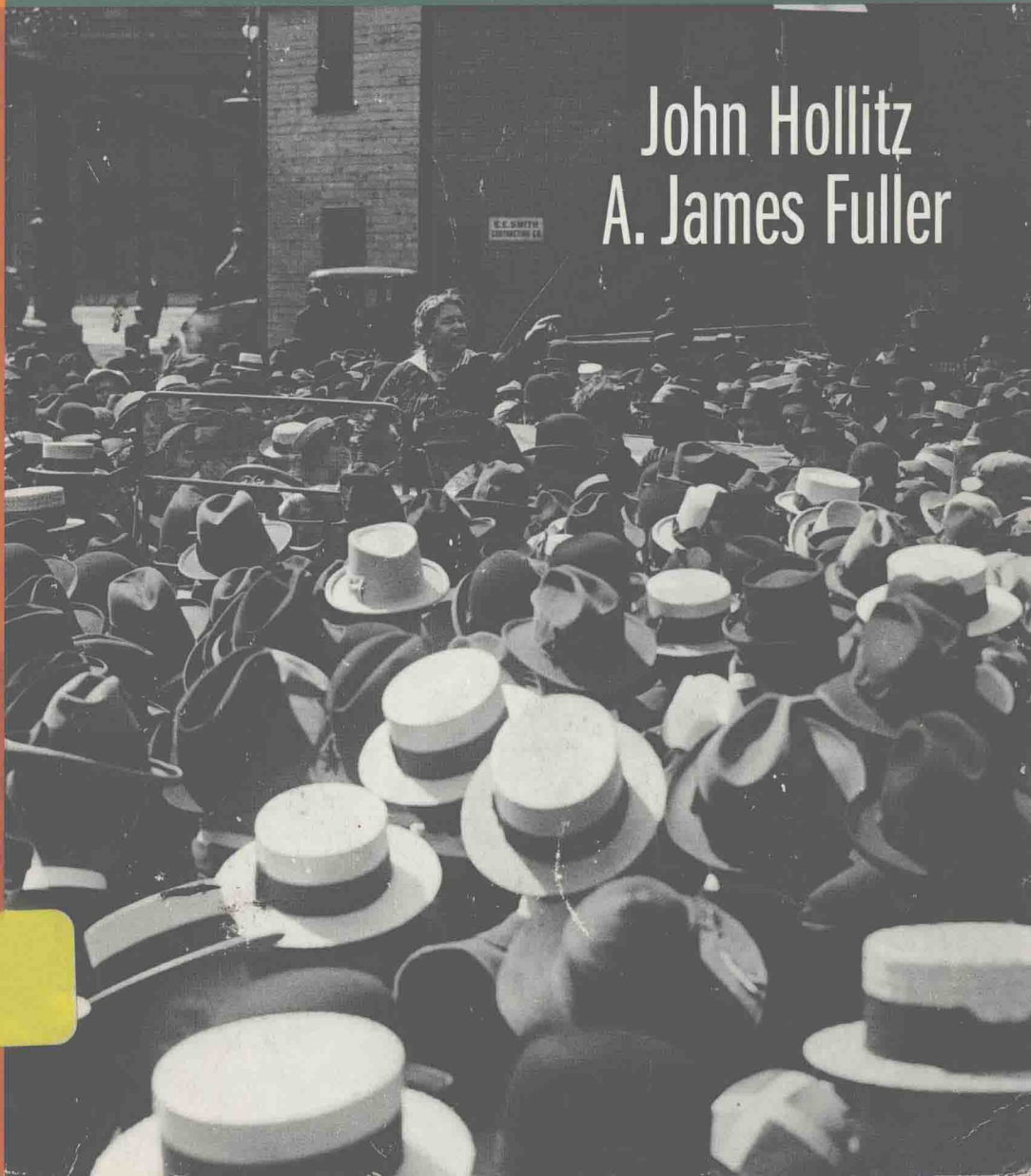
CONTENDING VOICES

Biographical Explorations of the American Past

Volume II: Since 1865



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Biographical Explorations of the American Past

VOLUME II:
SINCE 1865

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Preface

Contending Voices: Biographical Explorations of the American Past uses paired biographies to bring alive the debates and disagreements that have shaped American history. It is based on the assumption that students find history more engaging when they realize that it is full of conflict. Through biography, individual men and women emerge from the tangle of events, dates, and facts that often make history so challenging for students.

Following the organization of most survey texts, each chapter examines two individuals who stood on different sides of an important issue. Their stories, combined with a small set of primary sources in each chapter, show students how individuals—from the pre-English settlement of the New World to the presidential election of 2000—influenced their times and were influenced by them. At the same time, the book's biographical approach naturally incorporates political, social, economic, cultural, religious, and diplomatic histories while underscoring the diversity of those who shaped the past. This biographical approach highlights competing perspectives, prompting students to think about issues from multiple viewpoints. The biographical essays that preface the sources were written with these pedagogical goals in mind.

Although students will encounter familiar names in these pages, many of the thirty individuals in each of *Contending Voices*' two volumes rarely appear in survey texts. All of them, however, addressed significant events and issues of their times. In Volume I, sixteenth-century conquistador Hernán Cortés and Dominican priest Bartolomé de Las Casas contest the fate of Native Americans. In the seventeenth century, the pitched battles between Governor William Berkeley and rebel Nathaniel Bacon reveal forces shaping early Virginia. Other chapters illuminate the Great Awakening, the American Revolution, and the ratification of the Constitution. Later, the life-and-death conflict between William Henry Harrison and Tecumseh reflects the larger struggle between whites and Indians sparked by westward expansion in the early nineteenth century. Likewise, abolitionist militant David Walker and antislavery moderate Benjamin Lundy highlight the disagreements among abolitionists over the best way to end slavery, while Catharine Beecher and Fanny Wright square off over the proper place of women in antebellum society. In the same period, chapters pairing union organizer Sarah Bagley with industrialist Nathan Appleton, Governor Juan Bautista Alvarado of Mexican California with merchant Thomas Larkin, and former slave Henry Bibb with abolitionist Mary Ann Shadd focus on the rise of the factory system, manifest destiny, and the challenges confronting free blacks before the Civil War. At midcentury, George Fitzhugh and Hinton Rowan Helper debate slavery's impact on the South and reveal deep fears at the heart of a growing sectional conflict. Still later, antiwar Democrat Clement Vallandigham and radical Republican Benjamin Wade demonstrate the limits of dissent during the Civil War, while black congressman Robert Smalls and white senator Carl Schurz underscore the limits of Reconstruction.

Volume II offers a similar diversity of individuals and topics. In the late nineteenth century, tycoon Jay Gould and union leader Terence Powderly face off in a bloody conflict between capital and labor. In the early twentieth century, the radically different views of home economics pioneer Ellen Richards and anarchist Emma Goldman illuminate both progressive reform and the changing role of women in American society. Antiwar critic Randolph Bourne and war propagandist George Creel further illuminate aspects of progressive reform, as well as the new power of advertising and the effects of World War I on American society. Chapters covering the 1920s pair black nationalist Marcus Garvey with labor leader A. Philip Randolph and back-to-the-land advocate Ralph Borsodi with advertising man Bruce Barton. They highlight competing visions guiding the postwar struggle for racial equality and the era's new consumer economy. During World War II, Japanese-American internee Harry Ueno and internment director Dillon Myer illustrate the issue of Japanese relocation during World War II. Later battles are brought to life in chapters pairing civil rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer with black leader Roy Wilkins, women's rights champion Betty Friedan with feminist Gloria Steinem, and Interior Secretary James Watt with novelist Edward Abbey. They illustrate the challenges confronting the civil rights, women's, and environmental movements and the conflicts dividing them. Finally, "godfather" of neoconservatism, Irving Kristol, and consumer activist Ralph Nader advance competing visions about the regulation of business—views that helped shape policy in the late twentieth century and continue to guide political discussion today.

While permitting easy access to often unfamiliar topics, *Contending Voices* is also designed to build students' critical thinking skills. Each chapter begins with a brief essay providing an introduction to the lives and ideas of the two individuals who held conflicting views on an important issue. The essay does not offer a complete accounting of the subjects' lives—an impossible task—but focuses instead on aspects that illuminate the chapter's main topic. Each essay begins with a short vignette designed to capture the reader's attention and includes a running glossary, which defines terms that may be unfamiliar to many survey students. A set of four to six primary sources illustrating and amplifying the chapter's central themes follows each essay. These sources demonstrate the variety of evidence historians use to understand the past and reflect another premise behind this book—that the best way for students to learn history is to explore it themselves. Their explorations are assisted by a brief set of Questions to Consider following the primary sources. In addition, references to the primary sources appear in the essays, helping to integrate the primary and secondary material. A brief introduction to each primary source also aids student analysis. Finally, a brief Further Reading section at the end of each chapter contains both biographical and general works that will help interested students explore each topic further.

Many people made valuable contributions to these volumes. DeAnna Beachley, Michael Green, and Charles Okeke, colleagues at the Community College of Southern Nevada (CCSN), offered useful suggestions and encouragement. Susana Contreras de Finch generously gave of her time with computer assistance, for which I am deeply indebted. As usual, CCSN Interlibrary Loan librarian Marion Martin provided invaluable and unfailingly pleasant help. CCSN administrative

assistants Venus Ramirez and Michele Sanders cheerfully and efficiently typed portions of the manuscript. Stanley Kutler of the University of Wisconsin more than once generously offered his wise counsel. Larry Harshman of the University of Nebraska lent support and a sympathetic ear from afar. I owe thanks to many people at Houghton Mifflin as well. Michael Kerns guided the development of this book with a keen eye and sound suggestions. He was a pleasure to work with, and his efforts undoubtedly made the final result far better. Colleen Shanley Kyle nurtured this project in its initial stages and helped refine its approach, while Mary Dougherty saw it through to completion. Jean Woy backed it and smoothed bumps along the way. Florence Kilgo efficiently handled the production stage, and Barbara Jatkola skillfully copyedited the manuscript.

Numerous colleagues around the country read and reviewed some or all of the chapters. I was repeatedly impressed by their commitment to this project. Their insights and suggestions improved this book immeasurably, and I am grateful for them. They included Alfred Hunt, Purchase College, State University of New York; Teresa Kaminski, University of Wisconsin—Stevens Point; Arlene Lazarowitz, California State University, Long Beach; Stephen Middleton, North Carolina State University; Fred Nielsen, University of Nebraska at Omaha; Virginia Noelke, Angelo State University; Clifford H. Scott, Indiana University—Purdue University Fort Wayne; and Tommy Stringer, Navarro College.

Once again, my biggest debt is to Patty. She endured far more than a reasonable husband ever could expect. Without her support, this book would not have been completed, and to her, therefore, it is dedicated.

—J.H.

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Race and Redemption in the Reconstructed South: Robert Smalls and Carl Schurz

Robert Smalls

Carl Schurz

In the predawn hours of May 13, 1862, the small Confederate ship *Planter* made its way out of Charleston Harbor. As it steamed toward the ships blockading the South Carolina port, Union lookouts strained their eyes, then they prepared to sound the alarm to open fire on the small vessel. Suddenly, one lookout spotted a white flag flying on the boat, and the Union ships held their fire. As the *Planter* came alongside, Union naval officers were shocked. No whites were on board. Instead, they saw only black men, women, and children, who were dancing, singing, and shouting for joy. When the Union officer boarded, a well-dressed black man stepped forward to address him. "Good morning, sir! I've brought you some of the old United States guns, sir!" Indeed he had. An armed Confederate vessel, the *Planter* contained a cargo of unmounted cannon and sixteen slaves who had captured the boat and escaped to freedom. The man who had organized the capture was the ship's pilot, a twenty-three-year-old slave named Robert Smalls.

About three months later in Virginia, a thirty-three-year-old German immigrant named Carl Schurz met Confederate forces at the Second Battle of Bull Run. In the First Battle of Bull Run a year earlier, Union forces had been routed.

The second battle ended the same way. Brigadier General Schurz, however, performed with distinction. After the battle, he was promoted to major general and given command of a division composed mostly of German Americans. The next year, Schurz and his troops made a gallant stand on Cemetery Ridge at the Battle of Gettysburg. Still later, he saw action against Confederate forces in Tennessee.

By the time the Civil War was over, Robert Smalls and Carl Schurz had served the Union well. That was not all they had in common, though. Both men were committed Republicans. Both would go into politics after the war and serve in Congress—Smalls as a representative from South Carolina and Schurz as a senator from Missouri. Both men also would support their party's efforts to reconstruct the South and guarantee political equality to the freedmen. But before the period known as Reconstruction was over, they had split over what to do with the South and the freedmen. One would hold fast to his hopes for the former slaves; the other would retreat from his commitment to them. Smalls and Schurz were only two of the millions of Americans who contributed in one way or another to the Union victory in the Civil War. Like so many of their countrymen, they did not necessarily agree about the meaning of that victory. For that reason, the stories of these two Union veterans may help us understand why Reconstruction turned out as it did.

"The Smartest *Cullud* Man"

Robert Smalls had something in common with Carl Schurz and with the leader of his own Republican Party, Abraham Lincoln. Like Lincoln, Smalls had arisen from utter obscurity. He was born in 1839 in Beaufort, South Carolina, to a slave woman who served as a domestic servant. His father was an unknown white man, although many believed that he was John McKee, his mother's master. John McKee died when Robert was six, and his son Henry sent Smalls to live with relatives in Charleston when was twelve. He lived in the home of his master's sister-in-law, working as a waiter, a lamplighter, and a stevedore. Smalls was "hired out," meaning that he worked for wages. He kept some of his pay for himself and sent the rest to his master. This situation gave the young slave relative autonomy. He may even have had enough freedom to pursue an education during his years in the city. Smalls apparently taught himself to read and for a few months possibly attended a school run by one of Charleston's many black societies. Formed in violation of the South Carolina law that prohibited more than four slaves to assemble at one time, such societies often provided education and other services to the African-American community.

In 1858, Smalls married Hannah Jones, a hotel maid who was also a slave. He was nineteen; she was thirty-one. Smalls said he married Hannah because he wanted "to have a wife to prevent me from running around—to have somebody to do for me and to keep me." Slaves, of course, were not allowed to marry legally, but Smalls made a deal with his master. He would pay McKee fifteen dollars a month so that he could marry Hannah. Smalls made a similar deal with Hannah's master, paying him five dollars a month. This allowed the two slaves to keep enough money to support themselves and even have children. Smalls later agreed to purchase his wife and daughter for eight hundred dol-

lars. When he fled the city in 1862, he had seven hundred dollars, having never paid any of the agreed-upon amount to his wife's owner. How he accumulated this sum and managed to keep his household running is difficult to imagine. His own wages as a deck hand in 1861 amounted to only sixteen dollars a month, and Hannah probably made no more than ten dollars a month as a maid, assuming that she continued to work after their marriage.

Somehow the little family managed to make it, probably due to Smalls's abilities as a trader. His position as a deck hand on the *Planter* allowed him even greater autonomy than his job on the docks. Traveling on the river and coastal steamer, Smalls was able to make regular visits to friends and associates in a wider area. He traded goods within the slave community and probably with whites as well. As a sailor, Smalls acquired valuable skills. He learned to handle the ship and eventually became a wheelman. (Actually, he was a pilot, a title white southerners refused to give blacks.) When the Civil War offered him the opportunity to escape bondage, his skills, education, and position served him well. Smalls carefully planned the escape of his family and friends. One night when the ship's three white officers were on shore, he pulled off his plan in dramatic fashion.

The theft of the *Planter* brought not only freedom but also an economic windfall. The northern press jumped on the story of Smalls's heroic action. *Harper's Weekly,* for instance, ran a picture of Smalls and an article on the "plucky Africans." One New York newspaper commented that few events during the Civil War "produced a heartier chuckle of satisfaction" than the theft of the *Planter.* The "fellow" behind the feat, it observed, "is no Small man." Given such favorable reaction, Smalls and his fellow hijackers were awarded a bounty by Congress for liberating the *Planter.* As leader of the party, Smalls got the largest share, fifteen hundred dollars. He continued to work as a pilot on the *Planter,* which was now operating as a troop transport for the Union. The ship shuttled men and supplies between the Sea Islands* off South Carolina and mainland areas occupied by Union forces. In addition, he piloted other ships, including some engaged in unsuccessful attacks on Charleston.

At the same time, Smalls worked to improve the condition of fellow blacks. In Union-occupied Beaufort, he engaged in fundraising to assist freedmen with education and employment. He also traveled to New York during the war to raise awareness of the condition of the growing ranks of free blacks in the South. He had been sent north by freedmen in Beaufort County who were eager to help themselves rather than wait for charity or government assistance. Such efforts were widespread throughout the postwar South, but African Americans in Beaufort County became organized—and politicized—several years before those in most other areas. A highly concentrated black population, early occupation by Union forces, and a large number of black soldiers and white teachers and missionaries contributed to their efforts. Already in 1864, blacks in the area

**Sea Islands:* Low-lying islands off the coast of South Carolina and Georgia. Occupied early in the war by Union forces, the islands were home to a large number of blacks who worked on the rice plantations there.

had expressed their political preferences by organizing a delegation to the Republican convention in Baltimore. Although the delegates could not secure official representation at the convention, they made it clear that they were ready to "fight for the Union [and] die for it" and that they also wanted the right to "vote for it."

Unfortunately, that right was not immediately forthcoming, even when the Civil War ended. When Andrew Johnson became president after Lincoln's assassination in April 1865, he promoted a Reconstruction plan that excluded blacks from politics. Committed to white rule in the South, Johnson wanted a policy that would bring the rebellious states back into the Union without a fundamental restructuring of southern society. Under his Reconstruction plan, white Southerners—often former Confederates—quickly reorganized state governments. By early 1866, southern state legislatures elected under the president's plan had passed Black Codes. These laws severely limited the rights of African Americans to own property, assemble, move about freely, and vote. Often they prevented interracial marriage and upheld labor contracts that favored white landowners. The Black Codes in South Carolina legalized harsh labor practices regarding blacks and placed severe restrictions on freedmen. At a convention in late 1865, South Carolina blacks protested the new laws. In an address to the state's whites, the convention demanded that blacks "be governed by the same laws that control other men." **[See Source 1.]**

For several years after the war, Smalls was more concerned with improving his own position than getting involved in politics. Even before the end of the war, he returned to Beaufort and opened a store. He did well enough to purchase his former master's house by paying the back taxes on it. In 1867, he purchased an eight-room building at a government tax sale and deeded it "to the Colored children" of Beaufort as a school. These actions are a measure of his status in the community. One observer, capturing the dialect of Sea Island blacks, noted that Smalls was "regarded by all the other negroes as immensely rich, and decidedly 'the smartest *cullud* man in Souf Car'lina.'" Widely known, well-off, obviously intelligent, and self-possessed, Smalls was a natural leader in his community. His emergence as a prominent black politician during Reconstruction was almost inevitable.

"Their Minds Were Fully Made Up"

When Carl Schurz was born in Prussia (now Germany) in 1829, few would have predicted that he would have an impact on a former slave like Robert Smalls. Certainly, his early circumstances were far removed from Smalls's oppressive world. Schurz's father was a teacher and businessman with minor connections to the local nobility. Carl was educated at schools in the nearby city of Cologne, then went on to the University of Bonn. He entered the university in the fall of 1847, just in time to become embroiled in the Revolutions of 1848, uprisings against the monarchies and oppressive regimes that controlled much of Europe. Some of the rebels hoped to create nations based on republican principles and free-market economies; others advocated socialism. Along with other revolutionaries, Schurz wrote articles, organized workers, and made rousing speeches

in support of revolution. After a failed attempt to capture an arsenal, he barely escaped arrest. Forced to hide in attics and crawl through sewers, he fled to France. Later, he returned to Germany, bribed a prison guard, and assisted one of his jailed professors in a dramatic escape. By the time he made his way to England, he was a famous man. For the next few years, he made his living as a journalist and teacher in England and France. In 1852, he married the daughter of a wealthy Hamburg cane merchant and moved to the United States, where he hoped to write a history of his adopted country that would appeal to both Americans and Europeans.

Schurz and his wife settled in Philadelphia, where he wrote and lectured. His wife's inheritance also gave him the freedom to travel. As he journeyed across the northern United States, he had an opportunity to learn about his new country. He also found a more suitable home in the upper Midwest, where many other Germans had migrated in the early nineteenth century. In 1856, Schurz and a growing family moved to Watertown, Wisconsin, where, he went into real estate, dabbled in other businesses, bought a farm, and continued to write. His real calling, however, was politics. Before long, he joined the Republican Party, largely because of his opposition to the expansion of slavery. As a young revolutionary fighting European despotism, Schurz was a fervent opponent of an institution that violated the principles of political equality. Although many Republicans were staunchly anti-immigrant, Schurz believed that the new party offered possibilities for the German immigrant community to gain political power. Energetic, charismatic, famous, and bilingual, Schurz was the perfect leader to build Republican strength in an important ethnic community. He could use his background to counter the appeal the Democrats had for many German Americans and then forge them into a powerful Republican bloc.

In the following years, Schurz worked tirelessly for the Republican Party. He attempted unsuccessfully to become Wisconsin's lieutenant governor and even its governor. In 1860, he led the Wisconsin delegation at the Republican National Convention and quickly threw his support to Abraham Lincoln. After Lincoln won the Republican nomination, the party elected Schurz to the Republican National Committee in hopes that he would be able to secure the German-American vote. Schurz helped deliver enough German-American votes to be awarded a post as minister to Spain in 1861. Watching the war from Europe, he decided that emancipating the slaves might be the only way to keep the European powers out of the war. Thus he lent his voice to the cause of the Radical Republicans,* who urged Lincoln to free the slaves and transform the conflict from a war for the Union into one for freedom.

It was a natural position for Schurz. As a revolutionary, he had fought tyranny and oppression in Europe. He had joined the Republican Party because of the Democrats' support of slavery. Now his belief in liberty and equality led

**Radical Republicans:* Those Republicans who wanted the abolition of slavery, an extension of citizenship to former slaves, and punishment of Confederate leaders. After the war, the Radicals believed that Reconstruction could not be achieved without a restructuring of southern society.

him to give up his diplomatic post and return to the United States to fight. He was commissioned as a brigadier general just in time to see action at the Second Battle of Bull Run in August 1862. Rewarded for his performance with a command over a largely German-American division, Schurz saw action in many major campaigns, including Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, and Chattanooga. He frequently squabbled with his commanders, though, and was later removed from action at the front. In fact, Schurz was constantly politicking. In the fall of 1864, he campaigned for Lincoln's reelection, and at the end of the war, he looked forward to helping Lincoln carry out his Reconstruction policy. After Lincoln's assassination, Schurz hoped for a close relationship with Andrew Johnson. When the new president's Reconstruction plan resulted in new southern state governments committed to white supremacy, Schurz joined with other Republicans intent on bringing about radical changes in southern society and politics. Led by politicians such as Benjamin Wade of Ohio and Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania, the Radical Republicans called for legislation that would enfranchise the freedmen, distribute to them land confiscated from former Confederates, and establish legal and social equality for blacks.

Schurz played a critical role in helping the Radicals seize control of Reconstruction policy. As white southerners began to organize new governments by the summer of 1865, Schurz took an inspection tour of the South. He reported that Johnson's policies allowed former Confederates to keep their hold on power and that the new governments were passing Black Codes severely limiting the freedom of blacks. Although the Thirteenth Amendment had abolished slavery in 1865, a new labor system had arisen that made African Americans slaves in all but name. Moreover, white supremacists were using violence to keep down those who opposed the new governments. Schurz's report presented ample evidence of the attitudes of many white southerners toward blacks. The slightest resistance on the part of freedmen to white control was merely proof in whites' minds that blacks were unfit for freedom. One Georgia planter came to that conclusion because "one of his negroes had . . . impudently refused to submit to a whipping." Schurz came away from his contact with white southerners convinced that in most cases "their minds were fully made up" about the failure of the South's new free labor system. **[See Source 2.]**

"This . . . Untutored Multitude"

Published later in 1865, Schurz's report fed the growing alarm of many northerners about the new southern state governments. It also helped rally the Radical Republicans to action. In 1866, the Fourteenth Amendment was passed in Congress and submitted to the states for ratification. The amendment extended citizenship to African Americans, barred former Confederates from holding office and penalized states that did not allow blacks to vote by reducing their representation in Congress. All but one of the former Confederate states rejected the amendment (although it was ratified in 1868). The governor of South Carolina expressed the sentiment of many southern whites when he declared that blacks were "steeped in ignorance, crime, and vice" and should not be allowed to vote. This resistance to the wishes of Congress further angered many northerners, who now believed that Johnson and the southern politicians were over-