RECONSTRUCTION

THE SECOND CIVIL WAR

MONDAY AND TUESDAY, JANUARY 12 AND 13, 2004 AT 9PM
(CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS)
PBS.ORG/AMEX/RECONSTRUCTION

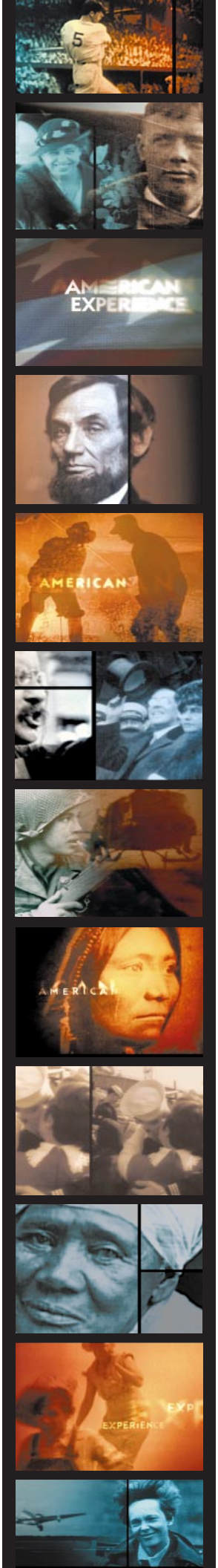
On a misty April evening in 1865, a jubilant crowd packed the White House lawn to hear President Abraham Lincoln's first speech since the end of the Civil War. They expected a stirring celebration of the Union victory—but instead got harsh reality. Even with the South defeated, Lincoln warned, the future would be "fraught with great difficulty." He called the task ahead *reconstruction*—a word that has returned to American headlines nearly a century and a half later, in the aftermath of the war in Iraq.

On Monday and Tuesday, January 12 and 13, 2004, at 9pm on PBS, AMERICAN EXPERIENCE premieres *Reconstruction: The Second Civil War*, a two-part, three-hour series that examines one of the least understood periods in American history. Elizabeth Deane (*The Kennedys, The Rockefellers, Ulysses S. Grant*) is series producer; Llewellyn Smith (*Africans in America, Jubilee Singers: Sacrifice and Glory, Race: The Power of an Illusion*) is producer of Part I; Patricia Garcia-Rios (*Chicago: City of the Century*) is co-producer of Part II. Dion Graham narrates. A comprehensive Web site at **pbs.org/amex/reconstruction** features a behind-the-scenes look at the making of the film, a state-by-state exploration of Reconstruction events and laws, personal accounts from the era, bonus video material, and a teacher's guide.

Even as Lincoln spoke, opposing forces were gathering: Some Americans saw Reconstruction as a chance to build a new nation out of the ashes of war and slavery. Others vowed to wage a new war to protect their way of life, and a racial order they believed ordained by God. "Lincoln saw the problem with agonizing clarity," says Deane. "Bitter enemies, North and South, had to be reconciled. And four million former slaves had to be brought into the life of a nation that had ignored them for centuries. In some ways, it was harder than winning the war."

Three days after delivering his warning, Lincoln was shot dead. Reconstruction would have to go forward without him.

Spanning the momentous years from 1863 to 1877, *Reconstruction* tracks the extraordinary stories of ordinary Americans—Southern and Northern, white and black—as they struggle to shape new lives for themselves in a world turned upside down. "People just cannot imagine how they're going to put the country back together. The war has spiraled beyond the worst imaginings of anyone," notes Edward L. Ayers,



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historian at the University of Virginia and a leading expert in Southern history and the Civil War, in the film. "Over 600,000 people had died in the last four years. The largest slave system in the modern world is in shambles and no one knows what's going to replace it. The very fabric of life has been torn apart for everyone."

Reconstruction's remarkable cast of characters includes Tunis Campbell, a daring former minister who staked out an independent colony for blacks in Georgia's Sea Islands—and declared it off-limits to whites. Frances Butler, the daughter of a Georgia rice baron, struggled to rebuild her family's plantations—and to negotiate labor contracts with the very men and women her family used to own. Marshall Twitchell, a battle-scarred Civil War veteran from Vermont, rose to power in the wild northwest corner of Louisiana with deadly consequences. John Roy Lynch, a former slave from Mississippi, was elected to Congress, where he challenged whites' deepest beliefs about race and class.

The narratives of these and other unknown players are interwoven with the stories of presidents and generals—Andrew Johnson, Ulysses S. Grant, William Tecumseh Sherman—and others whose lives were caught up in the epochal struggles of the era. "An old social order had been destroyed," says Eric Foner, historian at Columbia University and author of *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution*. "Everything was up for grabs."

After four bloody years of civil war, North and South would continue to fight over the meaning of freedom, the meaning of citizenship, and the survival of the nation itself. *Reconstruction* brings to life this turbulent and complex period through original footage shot on location, primarily in the South (Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina), and with the assistance of regional groups and associations—from the First Louisiana Cavalry Regiment, Company E, to the Liberty Greys, Civil War re-enactors based in New England, to South Carolina's Gullah/Geechee Sea Island Coalition, and the Thirty-Second Georgia Artillery, among others.

Reconstruction shows how, in just a few years, a series of stunning events—the Emancipation Proclamation, the Fourteenth Amendment granting ex-slaves citizenship in 1868, the enfranchisement of blacks the following year—reversed centuries-old patterns of race relations in America. People who for generations had been the property of others were now free to run their own lives.

"The whole Southern world was turned upside down," says producer Llewellyn Smith. "And yet, despite these challenges and terrible racial violence in this period, so much was accomplished. Reconstruction brought public schools to the South for the first time. Black Southerners were elected to local and national offices. And the nation committed itself to equality under the law for all Americans, regardless of race, by passing the Fourteenth Amendment. Reconstruction laid the groundwork for the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s, and the foundation for the American society we live in today."

CREDITS

Series producer: Elizabeth Deane
Director of photography: Kyle Kibbe
Camera: Tom Fahey, Steven McCarthy, Boyd Estus
Original music: Tom Phillips
Narrator: Dion Graham

PART ONE
Produced and directed by Llewellyn M. Smith
Telescript by Llewellyn M. Smith
Story by Elizabeth Deane and Patricia Garcia-Rios
Edited by Randall MacLowry

PART TWO
Produced and directed by Elizabeth Deane
Written by Elizabeth Deane and Patricia Garcia-Rios
Co-produced and co-directed by Patricia Garcia-Rios
Edited by Peter Rhodes

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Mark Samels, executive producer
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ACCESSIBILITY
AMERICAN EXPERIENCE is closed captioned for deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers, and described for people who are blind or visually impaired by the Media Access Group at WGBH. The descriptive narration is available on the SAP channel of stereo TVs and VCRs.

ABOUT AMERICAN EXPERIENCE
AMERICAN EXPERIENCE, television's most-watched history series, is a leading producer of historical documentaries, related web sites, and DVDs. The pioneer of quality historical programming for public television audiences, AMERICAN EXPERIENCE has won every prestigious broadcast award and enjoys consistent widespread support from television critics and viewers alike.

ABOUT WGBH BOSTON
WGBH Boston is America's preeminent public broadcasting producer. One-third of PBS's prime-time lineup and companion Web content as well as many public radio favorites are produced by WGBH. The station also is a pioneer in educational multimedia and in access technologies for people with disabilities.

Download press materials and images for
Reconstruction: The Second Civil War
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pbs.org/pressroom and **pressroom.wgbh.org**.

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