The period after the Civil War in the United States was marked by several famous incidents involving violations of the public trust. Some of these incidents took place in the North, even in the White House. They were among the worst examples of dishonesty and poor government ever to take place in American
history. So, the record of reconstruction in the South was mixed. Many southerners believe, even today, that reconstruction was a bitter time of defeat. But others now say this period after the Civil War was a necessary step in creating a different kind of South from the one which had existed before. Historians do agree that reconstruction changed the United States in several important ways. One of the most important changes was in the Constitution. Even before the Civil War had concluded, Northern politicians were busy making Reconstruction plans for the Confederate States. Reconstruction—the process by which seceded states were to re-enter back into the Union—was a difficult process for the United States for two reasons. Firstly, civil rights had to be secured for the emancipated slaves, against Southern protest; and secondly, the Union needed to be reunited as quickly as possible, with as little “punishment” to the Southern states as possible. Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson made great strides to reunite the Union as quickly as possible. The Civil War was fought by civilians hastily recruited in large numbers and commanded by officers who had been trained in both the regular army and the state militia. Many of the high-ranking commanders on both sides were graduates of the United States Military Academy at West Point and as young men had served in the Mexican War. The number of men that served in the Federal armies was reported by the Commissioner of Pensions in 1903 as 2,213,363. The number of enlistments, based on the reports of the Provost Marshal General, was 2,898,304; this was believed to include militia and short-