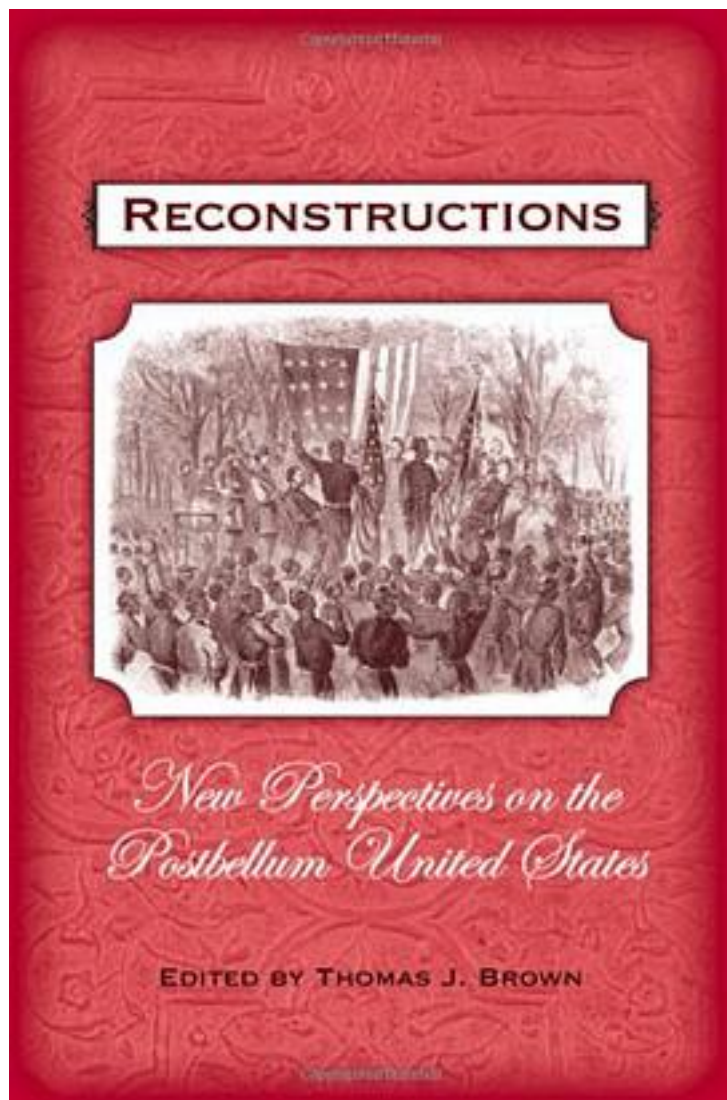


Reconstructions



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The pivotal era of Reconstruction has inspired an outstanding historical literature. In the half-century after W.E.B. DuBois published *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935), a host of thoughtful and energetic authors helped to dismantle racist stereotypes about the aftermath of emancipation and Union victory in the Civil War. The resolution of long-running interpretive debates shifted the issues at stake in Reconstruction scholarship, but the topic has remained a vital venue for original exploration of the American past. In *Reconstructions: New Perspectives on the Postbellum United States*, eight rising historians survey the latest generation of work and point to promising directions for future research. They show that the field is opening out to address a wider range of adjustments to the experiences and effects of Civil War. Increased interest in cultural history now enriches understandings traditionally centered on social and political history. Attention to gender has joined a focus on labor as a powerful strategy for analyzing negotiations over private and public authority. The contributors suggest that Reconstruction historiography might further thrive by strengthening connections to such subjects as western history, legal history, and diplomatic history, and by redefining the chronological boundaries of the postwar period. The essays provide more than a variety of attractive vantage points for fresh examination of a major phase of American history. By identifying the most exciting recent approaches to a theme previously studied so ably, the collection illuminates the creative process in scholarly historical literature.

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目录:

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