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*The Battle of Expectations and Realities in Post-Civil War America*

After the American Civil War, there was a difference between what folks expected to be the outcome and what actually happened during Reconstruction. By scanning and observing original documents from that time, we get a better understanding of what the American society hoped for and what it was really like. The documents, and the book “American Yawp,” truly help us see the difference between these hopes and real experiences. This essay will surely examine these sources to explore and study how people’s expectations didn’t always match with reality, using the idea of “yawp” to better understand the passionate discussions during this time of change.

The Civil War was fought over slavery and more important the future of the United States. Documents like the contract between A.T. Oliver and Cummins, and a letter from Capt. Soule and Henry Bram, show the true hopes for fairness and the idea of freedom. These collections often show a positive outlook for a society where past slaves and their children could experience the freedoms and economic chances all Americans were supposed to have. The book “American Yawp” describes yawp as a fiercely and forceful way of speaking, it is very fitting for the hopes people had at the time.

The truth was very different, especially as shown by the “Mississippi Black Codes” and other letters to military leaders. These documents show the blockades that were created to limit the freedoms of African Americans. The Black Codes were laws that severely blocked and limited African Americans’ freedom, this kept their social and economic system very similar to slavery as well. The difference that stood out though is what people hoped for compared to what actually happened led to a large disappointment among freed people and their supporters.

Who tells the story in these documents also has a great effect on our understanding of the historical time. The bunch of stories told by former slaves, military officials, and lawmakers give a more detailed position of the political and social environment. For example, letters from African Americans to military officials do not only ask for help, they focus more so on explaining to them the rights they were promised and what was being denied. These stories are very personal and have become more valid to make the history more complete, really showing the personal risks and dangers involved. After the insights added from these sources to “American Yawp,” my updated main point is that Americans at this time really faced a reality that destroyed their hopes, especially African Americans. The desperate calls for help from African Americans were silenced by the unfair laws and practices that followed. Therefore, the story and evolution of reconstruction is not only about regaining freedom but also understanding all that was lost.

The original documents from the era of Reconstruction are crucial for understanding the difference in the freedoms people expected and the actual political and social positions that took place after the Civil War. The idea and concept of “yawp.” Which

suggests forceful and loud passion, really does capture the spirit and fight at the time very well, a fight that wasn't just for freedom but also survival. This analysis not only confirms but also deeply builds our understanding of how the hopes of early Americans were greatly different than their real lives.