

HISTORY This Week EP 319: Reconstruction I: Secession on Trial

EPISODE TRANSCRIPT

NOTE: This transcript may contain errors.

Sally Helm: HISTORY This Week. May 10, 1865. I'm Sally Helm.

Jefferson Davis awakes to the sound of gunshots.

He's in a tent in Irwinville, Georgia. His wife is beside him. He went to bed fully dressed. His horse is saddled. His guns are in their holsters. Because Davis is on the run.

For the past few weeks, he's been heading south toward Florida, where his plan is to escape the country—and the consequences of his actions—by boarding a ship and sailing abroad.

Jefferson Davis is the president of the Confederate States of America, which no longer exists. Some say it never did. In fact, this legal distinction will ultimately determine Davis's fate – but that comes later. Right now, the Confederacy has just lost the Civil War. Its government has been dissolved. And Davis is a wanted man. He's not only guilty of leading the South's secession from the union—he's also suspected of conspiring to assassinate President Abraham Lincoln, who was shot and killed just a few weeks ago.

All of which explains the one hundred-thousand-dollar bounty on his head.

While Davis was asleep in that tent in Irwinville Georgia, Federal troops were closing in. A detachment of soldiers had found the camp by 2 am. But the commanding officer decided not to advance on it just yet. He saw that the moon was getting low and that the landscape was plunged in darkness which might allow Davis to escape into the nearby woods and swamps. So, he decides to wait until dawn. And then... he strikes.

Gunshots. Davis is startled awake. He pulls on a waterproof raglan coat to disguise himself. His wife Varina throws her shawl over his head. And Davis runs toward a creek. The Union soldiers will later say that the coat and the scarf were his attempt to disguise himself as a woman ... and that they weren't fooled. They'll say it was his big boots that gave him away. One of them rides up, trains a gun on Davis, and orders him to stop.

For a moment, Davis thinks he might be able to get away by knocking the trooper from his horse and riding off himself. But his wife, runs into the middle of the fray. She stands in front of him and begs the soldier not to fire. And that's the end of it. The soldiers take him into custody. The man who was the face of the Confederacy has finally been captured.

But the problem that he poses to the Union is about to get even worse. Federal officials now have to ask a vexing question: What exactly do we do with this guy?

Today: the trial of Jefferson Davis. As the country pieces itself back together, how should the North respond to these Southern secessionists? Is there a way to punish Davis without turning him into a martyr for his cause?

Sally Helm: On May 22nd, Jefferson Davis arrives at the place of his imprisonment: Fort Monroe. It's not just any Union military base. It's a place known to formerly enslaved southerners as "Freedom's Fortress." Because, throughout the war, Black people seeking their freedom have sought refuge here.

Hilary Green: This is a site of liberation, a site where they were able to live as free people in the middle of a war zone in this expanded refugee camp.

Sally Helm: That's Hilary Green, associate professor of history in the department of gender and race studies at the University of Alabama.

Hilary Green: So, the head of the Confederacy being imprisoned at a site of Black freedom.

Sally Helm: By 1865, the camp near Fort Monroe has become a community with thousands of Black residents, now free. And Jefferson Davis, a symbol of slavery, is thrown into a heavily guarded cell in Freedom's Fortress, banned from seeing the light of day.

Hilary Green: They're going to look at that irony. They're going to celebrate that. They see it as jubilee and the world right and new and right on their side.

Sally Helm: Meanwhile, news of Davis's capture and imprisonment is spreading across the country. Newspapers make a lot of the fact that he was found absconding in women's clothes. *"The Rebel President in Petticoats!"* says the Chicago Tribune. *"A Traitor, a Knave, and a Coward."* Some people express relief that this bloody war is over. But Civil War historian William Blair told us, many people are also asking for vengeance.

William Blair: If you read the correspondence that were going into the White House, you see letter after letter of people saying, you know, my son was killed. We have to make somebody be held accountable for this. We want to see Jefferson Davis hanged as high as Haman, who is a biblical figure. Some wanted to have him put into a cage and trotted through the streets of the north and have people pay to see the embarrassment of Jefferson Davis.

Sally Helm: Public embarrassment. Banishment. It's all on the table when it comes to these Confederate rebels. There a ton of ideas going around about how to deal with the people that seceded from the union. Including:

William Blair: Should we kill a few?

Hasan Jeffries: Like what, what part of execute is off the table on this?

Sally Helm: That's Hasan Kwame Jeffries—associate professor of history at Ohio State.

Hasan Jeffries: Especially in the US, right? They've been executing people left and right. Enslavers would execute folk, you know, at the drop of a dime.

Sally Helm: It is the beginning of a new period in American history: Reconstruction. And there are many challenging questions. At the heart of them: How to balance the need for accountability with a desire to reunify and rebuild? How to bring both formerly enslaved people and the former Confederates who enslaved them into one nation. So, one of the first and most pressing questions is—how far should the federal government go in punishing the formerly slaveholding South?

President Lincoln ran his reelection campaign on a "National Union Party" ticket. So, for him, the answer was... maybe not that far. Before the war, people had referred to the "United States" as a plural noun. But now, Lincoln is saying, we are singular – we are one. At Lincoln's second inauguration, he gave a famous speech:

Hasan Jeffries: Saying this idea 'with malice towards none and charity towards all,' right? 'We're going to bring the nation together. We're going to heal. Lay down your arms, go home and we'll forget all about it.' Right? Like, okay.

Sally Helm: In fact, Lincoln said it wouldn't be the worst thing if Jefferson Davis left the country and became someone else's headache. As for how Lincoln would have managed the entire, complicated project of Reconstruction, we'll never know.

Hasan Jeffries: He doesn't get a chance to heal because he's assassinated.

Sally Helm: Making Andrew Johnson the new President of the United States. The challenge of Reconstruction now falls to him. And job one for the Johnson Administration will be the trial of Jefferson Davis.

They hire a team of A-list lawyers. Leading up that team is a man named William Evarts. One of the most prominent lawyers in New York. Descended from a founding father. Evarts is a short man, who's known for wearing beaver fur hats, perched on the back of his head. He and the other prosecutors are initially thrilled to take on the Davis case.

Cynthia Nicoletti: They come onto this case thinking, 'Well, this is going to be great. I'm going to get to make my reputation as the guy who put Jefferson Davis in prison. That's going to look good on my resume.'

Sally Helm: Cynthia Nicoletti is a law professor who wrote a book about Davis's trial. And in some ways, it does seem like an open and shut case. Davis was president of those states that seceded from the union. He just spent four years engaged in battle after bloody battle against the US. And treason is defined in the Constitution as the act of levying war against the United States.

Cynthia Nicoletti: It is a hundred percent clear that Jefferson Davis levied war against the United States. Indeed, I would say that was his job as the president of the Confederacy, right? I mean, his job is to get up and levy war every day against the United States.

Sally Helm: So, Evarts and the prosecution will try him for treason. Except it quickly becomes clear that it won't be so simple.

In the summer of 1865, President Johnson's cabinet is debating what crime they should have their lawyers try Davis for and they have two options. Option one is to charge him with treason—which is a civil crime. Treason, they feel, he clearly committed. But it's a problem for them that treason is a *civil* charge. Because some people believe, that means they would have to try Davis in a particular location:

William Blair: Where the crime was committed and before a jury of your peers.

Sally Helm: William Blair again.

William Blair: Well, where are you going to try Jefferson Davis? Where were his crimes committed?

Sally Helm: If they use the place where Davis technically declared and then waged war against the United States, that would be Richmond, Virginia. The capital of the Confederacy.

William Blair: Okay. What about the jury pool? Who is going to be on that jury? In the state of Virginia. At the time, Black people weren't allowed to sit on juries. It was going to be all white people and chances are, former Confederates. That was going to make things very problematic.

Sally Helm: Hard to feel like convicting Davis with that jury is a slam dunk. So, the Cabinet is also looking at option two: trying Davis for war crimes in a military court. Then they don't have to deal with the jury pool in Richmond, Virginia.

Davis's *defense* does not want option two to happen. That team is being led by a lawyer named Charles O'Connor. Who might not have the background you'd expect? Here's Cynthia Nicoletti.

Cynthia Nicoletti: O'Connor is one of the foremost lawyers in New York, and you might think, well, why would a northerner want to represent Jefferson Davis?

Sally Helm: Turns out, that northerner is pro-slavery. He thinks the Southern states should not have seceded ... but also thinks the North didn't have the right to force them to stay.

Cynthia Nicoletti: He's enough of somebody who's pretty ornery, to feel bad for Davis but he also, I think, relishes the challenge of, you know, how is it that I can get this person who embodies the Confederate cause off here?

Sally Helm: O'Connor and Evarts have gone up against each other in court before—including in slavery-related cases. And they are polar opposites: where O'Connor is confrontational and gruff, Evarts is polished and confident. O'Connor sees Evarts and the other Harvard-educated prosecutors as smug. Up on their high horses, confident that they're going to add "hanged Jefferson Davis" to their resumes.

Cynthia Nicoletti: So, he, I think relishes the idea that he's going to be able to take them down.

Sally Helm: Remember: *a military trial* will be bad for Jefferson Davis. A *civil trial* will be good for him. In July of 1865, Davis' lawyer Charles O'Connor needs to figure out how to get that civil trial. So O'Connor calls a meeting with Jefferson Davis's allies at the lawyer's home in New York.

Cynthia Nicoletti: Oh, I should mention he didn't live in an apartment. He had like, a big farm, in Manhattan.

Sally Helm: What?

Cynthia Nicoletti: Yes. In upper Manhattan.

Sally Helm: To this New York City farm, O'Connor invites former President Franklin Pierce.

Cynthia Nicoletti: Davis was secretary of war under Pierce in the 1850s. He also invites former attorney general, Jeremiah Black. There may have been others, but you know, it was a secret meeting, right? So, we don't know a ton.

Sally Helm: What we do know is that these three men, and maybe some more, get together to brainstorm.

Cynthia Nicoletti: How do they maneuver? Right. How do we try to stave off something like trial before a military tribunal?

Sally Helm: It may sound weird. But their goal is to focus on treason as Davis's crime. Because it isn't a war crime. So, it would allow for that civil trial in Richmond, Virginia. And a treason trial would also allow them to make a clever and potentially devastating argument. The defense could say that, during the war, Jefferson Davis had been acting as a citizen of his state of Mississippi, and of the Confederacy—not as an American.

Cynthia Nicoletti explains:

Cynthia Nicoletti: I'm an American, right. So, if I were to, you know, go attack Canada, I couldn't be tried for treason because I'm not a Canadian citizen. Right? And so, the theory here is that Davis is going to argue, once his state of Mississippi seceded from the union in January of 1861, that removes his own US citizenship. So, he's incapable of committing treason. So, Davis says, 'oh, I'm the president of another nation,' whereas the U.S. government's position is 'no, you're the head of an illegal band of rebels.'

Sally Helm: In September of 1865, Charles O'Connor starts dropping not-so-subtle hints that this is the argument he's going to make if they take the case to civil court. He even sends a lawyer from his team to tell the government, *that's what he's going to do*.

Cynthia Nicoletti: But not only that, that he's totally confident that he's going to be successful. What he really wants is for the government lawyers to abandon the case, right to make them so frightened of the possibility of trying Davis and getting the wrong outcome, that they'll eventually abandon the idea of prosecuting him.

Sally Helm: It definitely rattles them. Evarts and his prosecutors realize that if they lose, and if Davis walks free by arguing he'd been acting as a citizen of an entirely different nation, then secession wins the day. It would give weight to the claim that the Confederacy itself was not treasonous but legal. And *that* has the power to undermine the entire Union victory.

Cynthia Nicoletti: They're worried that, you know, what is going to happen in the United States, if we just won a war where we sacrificed 700,000 lives to establish that secession is illegal. What would happen if you get a verdict in a court of law that undermines the verdict of the battlefield? I mean, that is something that keeps these government lawyers up at night.

Sally Helm: That makes option two all the more appealing. Avoid the civil treason trial altogether. Charge Davis with violating the laws of war and try him before a military tribunal. The Cabinet thinks, a jury made up of Union soldiers would *surely* vote to convict the president of the Confederacy.

The prosecutors don't have to look far to see how a military trial would probably unfold in their favor. In the fall of 1865, a military tribunal is trying a Confederate prison guard for war crimes. Historian and author John Reeves said that to some observers, the setting itself seemed to guarantee the outcome.

John Reeves: A lot of Confederates kind of felt like it was a military kangaroo court and there were those who felt that well, they got the verdict that they wanted to get.

Sally Helm: That verdict: guilty. The Confederate prison guard is sentenced to death. He's the first person to meet that fate.

John Reeves: Ultimately, he was executed within sight of the United States Congress. And people were in the trees witnessing it. So, it's a very dramatic scene.

Sally Helm: From his cell in Fort Monroe, Jefferson Davis is following this news. A visitor on Christmas Day 1865 notices that he's been collecting reports about the evidence used at trial. Almost as if he's

The final decision about where Jefferson Davis will be tried rests with the U.S. Attorney General. That winter, in January of 1866, he finally chooses between a civil trial and military tribunal. And he says: we need to try Davis not for war crimes... but for treason. That means a *civil court* in Virginia. It is a major victory for Davis's defense.

At this point, Davis has been behind bars for eight months. And papers across the country are complaining, that's too long. They're criticizing the delays. And some reports say that Davis is being treated poorly in prison – that his cell is damp and hot, and at times he's shackled to the ground. And those inclined to sympathize... are starting to feel sorry for him. Here's Cynthia Nicoletti.

Cynthia Nicoletti: He's chained up for a little while. They hang a US flag on the wall, outside his cell. So, he's forced to look at it. (laughs) He indulges in quite a few ideas of martyrdom.

Christy Coleman: That's one of the things that you got to kind of give Jeff Davis credit for because he immediately seizes upon the necessity to reframe the narrative of the war.

Sally Helm: Christy Coleman is the former president of the American Civil War Museum in Richmond, Virginia. The very seat of Davis' Confederate government. She told us, when Jefferson Davis was in charge of that government, he wasn't actually all that popular.

Christy Coleman: I mean, there are three separate attempts to unseat him as president of the Confederacy, you know, he was viewed by many as a micromanager. He was viewed as sometimes really a testy person.

Sally Helm: But now, Davis sees himself as the man set up to take the fall for the actions of the South. He decides to spin that narrative to make himself a symbol, to become a living martyr for the Confederate cause.

Christy Coleman: While he's languishing at Fort Monroe, after the war, as people were trying to decide what to do with him, he basically scripted his own narrative postwar to the point where he turns himself from a villain to a hero.

Sally Helm: While Davis is sitting behind bars, awaiting trial, President Andrew Johnson and Congress are heatedly debating Reconstruction.

Cynthia Nicoletti: This was very weird when I came across it, that actually, Davis's trial intersected with some of the larger issues going on during Reconstruction.

Sally Helm: Cynthia Nicoletti told us; the outcome of Davis' trial doesn't just have the power to shape people's story about the past. It also has a place in shaping the possibilities of Reconstruction, especially how it might bring about justice for formerly enslaved people.

This is about to create a paradox ... and a problem for the people prosecuting Jefferson Davis. One of the country's most famous and effective abolitionists will soon step forward to say, *I want Jefferson Davis to win.*

[AD BREAK]

Sally Helm: Jefferson Davis, the former president of the Confederacy, is at long last about to be tried on the charge of treason. The nation is riveted. Just about everyone has an opinion about how justice should be done. That includes Congressman Thaddeus Stevens.

Cynthia Nicoletti: Thaddeus Stevens is probably the most radical of the radical Republicans in Congress.

Sally Helm: The most radical member of the party of Lincoln and emancipation. Thaddeus Stevens is famously and devoutly anti-slavery. Yet he declares that he wants Jefferson Davis to prevail at trial. It would mean the court had legally labeled the Confederacy a foreign country. And that's the precedent that Thaddeus Stevens is after. Because he believes he can use it to even the balance of power in the South.

Cynthia Nicoletti: He wants to have all of this power in the hands of the federal government to remake the south, to really alter race relations and the entire social structure of white supremacy.

Sally Helm: To Thaddeus Stevens, Jefferson Davis is a small fish. Especially compared to the really big fish that Stevens is after; empowering the federal government to take the land of former slaveholders and hand it over to the people they'd enslaved.

Cynthia Nicoletti: And the primary legal theory that would have allowed a really thoroughgoing remaking of the American outh is this idea that the union has at its disposal the law of conquest.

Sally Helm: The law of conquest. If one country defeats another, it can do what it wants with its land.

That is why Thaddeus Stevens wants the court to affirm that, yes, the Confederacy was its own country. Jefferson Davis isn't guilty of treason against the United States because, while the war was going on, Davis was not a US citizen.

Stevens believes, once the court finds that the Confederacy was its own country ... the law of conquest will apply. The US government can then remove land from the hands of defeated Southern enslavers and place it into the hands of the newly freed. – It's the idea of "forty acres and a mule."

Stevens reasons that, for all that to happen, Jefferson Davis must walk free.

Cynthia Nicoletti: There's a through line, right? Which is what Stevens is picking up on.

Sally Helm: Thaddeus Stevens actually writes to Davis in prison twice, offering to help defend him. But Davis declines. He sees what Stevens is up to. Davis will later explain his decision: "That would have been an excellent argument for me, but not for my people."

For his part, Jefferson Davis has two goals: To not be hanged. And to undermine Reconstruction by obscuring the true reason for the Civil War. Davis and his fellow Confederates start peddling a romanticized fiction that they will call the "Lost Cause". They falsely claim the Civil War was about defending states' rights... not profiting from the enslavement of people that Jefferson Davis once described as "the servile race."

Christy Coleman: The "Lost Cause" said, the south didn't go to war to keep their slaves. Short answer. And it was a lie.

Sally Helm: Christy Coleman from the American Civil War Museum.

Christy Coleman: It's right there in its constitution, in several places, that any state that becomes a part of the Confederacy is in fact, a slave state and they can never change that position. Every single article of secession stated the political and social aims of this war for the south. And that was to establish for the first time on the planet, a republic government with, at its core, the idea that white people were superior and that, those of particularly as they refer to them as the "Negro race", that their natural state is enslavement. That is how they were building a government.

Sally Helm: The Lost Cause narrative starts picking up steam, especially in the states of the former Confederacy.

Christy Coleman: What it immediately gives them is an out. It says I didn't fight for the subjugation of another human being, even though I did, but I guess the world sees that as morally reprehensible now, so I guess I have to change it, right? Number two, it gives a nobleness to this idea of states and sovereignty.

Sally Helm: Some news reports portray Jefferson Davis as the embodiment of *the Lost Cause* ... and the victim of shabby treatment at Fort Monroe. All of which helps his *personal* cause.

Bill Blair: And it just started to turn the tide in favor of him becoming more sympathetic that here he was, being the martyr for the cause.

Sally Helm: It's now May of 1867.

Two years since the day that Jefferson Davis put his wife's shawl over his head and tried to escape from those Union soldiers. The American public is losing its patience. Sympathy for Jefferson Davis is growing. And it appears that prosecutor William Evarts is stuck. If he loses the case, it will make Thaddeus Stevens happy...but it will infuriate those Americans who bled and died for the Union in the belief that the Confederacy was *not* legitimate – that it was *not* a real country.

Evarts is also starting to sense that the presiding judge, Salmon P. Chase, is not exactly bent on justice. Chase, at this time, is Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court. And Cynthia Nicoletti told us that he's also mulling a run for president. And doesn't want this treason trial to complicate that ambition.

Cynthia Nicoletti: He considers it politically risky.

Sally Helm: Cause he worries that he's going to alienate like, voters who might vote for him, former Confederates?

Cynthia Nicoletti: Well, so he's going to alienate somebody, right?

John Reeves: Andrew Johnson blamed Salmon Chase. He said, you know, look, this guy just had no heart to do it.

Sally Helm: In May 1867, Davis's defense lawyer, Charles O'Connor, arranges for him to be released on a one hundred-thousand-dollar bail. That day, the scene at the courthouse is like a Confederate reunion. O'Connor describes the crowd's reaction on seeing Davis walk out:

Cynthia Nicoletti: He said something like, 'poor Davis was almost killed with caresses from people outside the courtroom. There were grown men weeping when they saw him leave.'

Sally Helm: At this point, William Evarts and his prosecutors are almost out of time to bring their case.

Cynthia Nicoletti: They're running up against the statute of limitations and they have to draft, themselves, an indictment.

Sally Helm: And meanwhile, in the summer of 1868, Chief Justice Chase approaches the defense team. He invites one of the minor lawyers over for tea.

Cynthia Nicoletti: And says to them, ‘Hey, have you read section three of the 14th amendment?’

Sally Helm: The most famous part of the 14th amendment is a clause in section ONE, which says that citizens of the US deserve equal protection under the laws. Section three isn't as well known today. Because it doesn't apply anymore.

Section three says, *former Confederates, like Jefferson Davis, can't hold public office*. And Chase suggests:

Cynthia Nicoletti: That constitutes a full punishment for treason.

Sally Helm: Full punishment. Full stop. A punishment that has already been applied. Therefore, Chase tells lawyer, the court can't try Jefferson Davis for treason again.

Cynthia Nicoletti: It's certainly an unlikely argument.

Sally Helm: Unlikely, and yet perfect for the defense team. They present the argument in court and say, the charges against Jefferson Davis must be dropped. Justice Chase is inclined to agree. But before the matter can be settled, President Andrew Johnson takes things into his own hands. He issues a pardon, granting all former Confederates, including Davis, amnesty.

Cynthia Nicoletti: So, it does end with a whimper rather than a bang.

Sally Helm: This so-called trial-of-the-century ends ... on a technicality. Jefferson Davis walks free.

That year, he'll be offered a new gig: president of a life insurance company in Memphis, Tennessee. It comes with a starting salary of \$250,000 in today's money. Davis will dabble in a few business ventures over the next decade and retire in his home state of Mississippi—never admitting to any wrongdoing.

Cynthia Nicoletti: For many people, the inability of the United States government to punish something that is so clearly treason, demonstrates how weak we are as a nation. What does it say if you know, the greatest act of treason in American history can't be branded as such?

Sally Helm: In his old age, Davis turns his attention to writing memoirs and books about the war. Manifestos of the Lost Cause of the Confederacy. And Davis's military commander, Confederate General Robert E. Lee, is never even arrested. He becomes president of Washington College—now called Washington and Lee. He's a great fundraiser for the school, given his popularity in the South. Historian Hasan Kwame Jeffries described what happens next:

Hasan Jeffries: The Klan rises and Robbie Lee's, you know, is chilling, right. I mean, president of college or whatever he's doing. I mean, he's okay. There's nothing happening. Right? And yet

African Americans are being massacred, in Mississippi, in Louisiana. And this will continue as a pattern through the turn of the 20th century.

Sally Helm: Jeffries believes that the failure to punish Confederate leaders like Davis and Lee raises their stature. It also gives greater credence, in the minds of some, to their revisionist histories of the Civil War. And it makes it harder to compensate formerly enslaved people.

Hasan Jeffries: Those who had engaged in acts of rebellion against the government are not only allowed to keep their lives, but they're allowed to keep their land and property.

Cynthia Nicoletti: One of the big problems that I think faces us today, that comes out of the Civil War is, the fact that there was no punishment, really limits the ability of the United States to do much of anything in sort of altering property arrangements in the American South.

Sally Helm: That's what abolitionists like Thaddeus Stevens actually wanted. *That*, they thought, was the real prize. They were even willing to *support Jefferson Davis's legal case* to get that outcome. Instead, they get the worst of both worlds: Jefferson Davis goes unpunished for his treason...and there's little redistribution of land and property in the South. Those outcomes are going to snarl Reconstruction...and make it even harder to turn the page on the Civil War.

Next week, on "Reconstruction..."

While Davis's case is still in progress, chief prosecutor William Evarts is dragged into another high-profile matter. The impeachment of President Andrew Johnson.

Cynthia Nicoletti: Evarts worked on the Johnson case all night and then in the wee hours of the morning, he's working on the Davis case.

William Blair: The momentum for prosecuting traitors, just got swallowed up or overshadowed by the political issues between him and Congress.

Sally Helm: President Johnson is at odds with his own government about how Reconstruction should be run.

Manisha Sinha: It's like, why did we fight for four years, if slavery is going to come back in another guise?

Sally Helm: So, Congress turns to a never-before-used part of the constitution: the presidential impeachment clause.

David Stewart: The overriding issue is should this person be president? You know, do we want to get rid of this guy?

Sally Helm: Listen to part two of "Reconstruction" in the HISTORY This Week feed, next week.

CREDITS:

Sally Helm: Thanks for listening to History This Week. For more moments throughout history that are also worth watching, check your local TV listings to find out what's on the History Channel today.

The “Reconstruction” miniseries was reported and produced by Julia Press. Julia is actually here with me in the studio. Hello, Julia!

Julia Press: Hey Sally! I have so many people to thank who helped me make this miniseries possible. It was story edited by Mary Knauf and Jim O’Grady and sound designed by Brian Flood.

Sally Helm: Our senior producer is Ben Dickstein. HISTORY This Week is also produced by Julie Magruder, Morgan Givens, and me, Sally Helm.

Julia Press: Our associate producer is Emma Fredericks. Our supervising producer is McCamey Lynn, and our executive producer is Jessie Katz.

Sally Helm: Julia, you talked to a ton of people in putting this series together. Really tons of interviews, tons of work behind the scenes.

Julia Press: Yes, and I’m really grateful for all of the experts who spent time talking to me, and I want to give a special thanks to all of the guests who you heard from on today’s episode.

William Blair: emeritus professor of history from Penn State University and emeritus director of the Richards Civil War Era Center.

Sally Helm: Christy Coleman: executive director of the Jamestown Yorktown foundation and former president of the American Civil War Museum.

Julia Press: Hilary Green: associate professor of history in the department of gender and race studies at the University of Alabama, and the author of *Educational Reconstruction: African American Schools in the Urban South, 1865-1890*.

Sally Helm: Hasan Kwame Jeffries: associate professor of history at Ohio State University and editor of *Understanding and Teaching the Civil Rights Movement*.

Julia Press: Cynthia Nicoletti: professor of law at the University of Virginia and the author of *Secession on Trial: The Treason Prosecution of Jefferson Davis*.

Sally Helm: And John Reeves: author of *The Lost Indictment of Robert E. Lee: The Forgotten Case Against an American Icon*.

Julia Press: You can find links to their work, along with other sources that we consulted and suggested further reading on our website: History.com/RECONSTRUCTION.

I also want to thank Edward Ayers, David Blight, Heather Cox Richardson, Adam Domby, William Sturkey and Zebulon Miletsky, whose ideas were really informative in shaping this series.

Sally Helm: And thanks to you, producer Julia Press. Listeners, I hope that gives you a sense of all the amazing work that our producers are putting in behind the scenes on this series and every episode that we do. And we will be back next week with another episode in our series “Reconstruction.”

Julia Press: And in the meantime, if you want to get in touch, shoot us an email at our email address, HistoryThisWeek@History.com, or you can leave us a voicemail at 212-351-0410.

Sally Helm: Thank you for listening and we’ll see you next week.