The journal of the Joint Committee of Fifteen on Reconstruction, 39th Congress, 1865-1867

Kendrick Benjamin Burks
THE JOURNAL OF THE
JOINT COMMITTEE OF FIFTEEN
ON RECONSTRUCTION

39TH CONGRESS, 1865–1867

BY

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by

Benj. B. Kendrick
To

My Father and Mother

Wm. T. and Lavicie M. Kendrick

To whose influence is due my first interest in the history of the Reconstruction Period
PREFATORY NOTE

The primary object of this volume is to make available to students of American history and constitutional law an important document, hitherto not easily accessible. This document is the journal of the joint committee of fifteen on reconstruction (39th Congress, 1865-67). Though it relates principally to the genesis of the fourteenth amendment, it throws some light on the five or six less significant matters with which the committee was concerned. Since there is only one printed copy of the journal known to be extant, its value as an historical source would seem to justify its being reprinted. Therefore, with the exception of a brief introductory chapter, it occupies all of Part I of this book.

In this introductory chapter, there will be found (1) a short account of how the journal came into existence; (2) the story of how the manuscript copy of the journal was discovered; (3) a discussion of the influence which it had on the Supreme Court in determining that tribunal's interpretation of the civil rights clause of the fourteenth amendment. Though no one of these matters bears a very intimate relation to the rest of this volume, yet it seems that each is of sufficient interest to merit the space given it.

In Part II, the first two chapters deal with the origin and personnel of the committee, while in the remaining six I have endeavored to give a history of the measures that were evolved by the committee, together with an interpretation of these measures and an analysis of the motives of the men who championed or opposed them.
PREFATORY NOTE

In the preparation of my manuscript, I have been greatly assisted by my kinsman, Mr. Thomas Shields, to whom I wish to acknowledge my appreciation. My colleagues, Professors C. A. Beard and R. L. Schuyler, have kindly given me the benefit of their criticism in regard to the introductory chapter. To Professor Wm. A. Dunning, at whose instance this work was begun, and who has read all the manuscript and made many helpful suggestions, I desire to express my indebtedness and gratitude.

Benj. B. Kendrick.

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