

Andrew Johnson

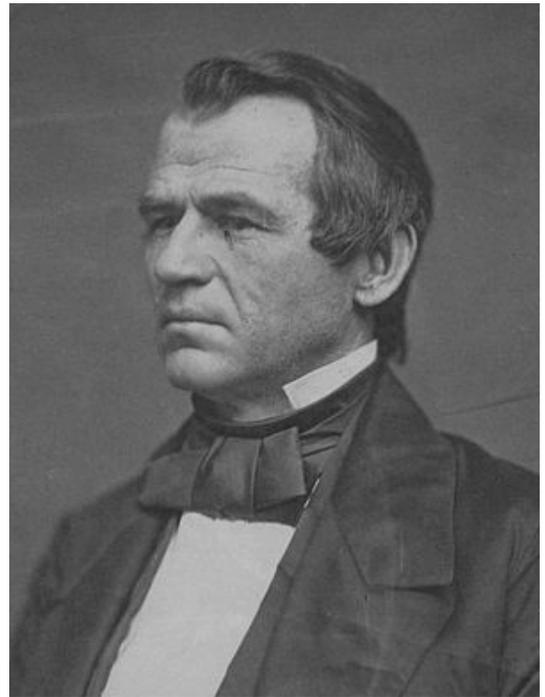
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BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Born in Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1808, Johnson grew up in poverty. He was apprenticed to a tailor as a boy. He opened a tailor shop in Greeneville, Tennessee, married Eliza McCardle, and participated in debates at the local academy.

He was known as an excellent stump speaker, championing the cause of the common man and vilifying the plantation aristocracy. As a Member of the House of Representatives and the Senate in the 1840's through the 1850's, he proposed a homestead bill to provide a free farm for the poor man.

During the secession crisis of the Civil War, Johnson remained in the Senate even after Tennessee seceded, which made him a hero in the North and a traitor in the South. In 1862 President Lincoln appointed him Military Governor of Tennessee. In 1864 the Republicans nominated Johnson, a Southerner and a Democrat, for Vice President.



Andrew Johnson became president following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. In 1868 the House of Representatives brought charges of impeachment against President Johnson. His views on the South and the Confederates had caused controversy, but a movement to impeach him arose when he dismissed Edwin Stanton as Secretary of War without approval by the Senate. They viewed his dismissal as an attack on Reconstruction in the South.

Radical Republicans wanted to impeach Johnson because they believed he was too conciliatory toward the South during Reconstruction. Johnson removed Stanton as Secretary of War; Stanton then claimed Johnson had violated the Tenure of Office Act.

The Constitution requires a two-thirds vote to impeach a president; if one more senator had voted guilty, Johnson would have been impeached. Seven Radical Republicans voted not guilty, including Edmund Ross, who cast the deciding vote. He believed Johnson could dismiss Stanton. That vote cost Ross his political career. The Republicans did not nominate him for re-election to the House.

LESSON written by CICERO Systems
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