

Andrew Johnson

Andrew Johnson
National Historic Site
Tennessee

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Andrew Johnson Tailor Shop and Early Home
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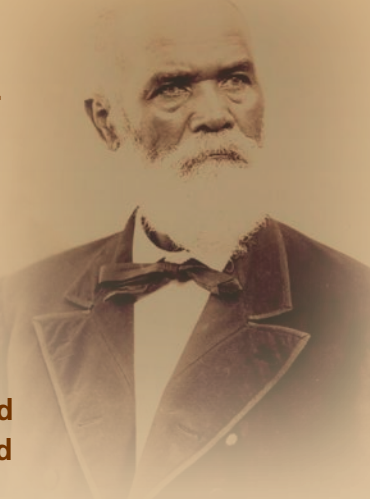
The White House, north side, ca. 1865
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



Andrew Johnson Homestead

On August 8, 1871, Sam Johnson (*right*), as officer of the day, led a parade down Main Street in Greeneville, Tennessee. According to the *Knoxville Chronicle*, a brass band played from a four-horse wagon, followed by people in wagons, buggies, and carriages, mounted on horseback, and on foot. At the Sabbath School, children joined the parade. They carried an American flag. The entire group continued for several miles to Tusculum College, where Andrew Johnson, former president of the United States (*left*), delivered an address.

In 1842 Andrew Johnson purchased and enslaved Sam. On August 8, 1863, while serving as military governor of Tennessee, he freed Sam and his family, and his other enslaved people. He became a supporter of the 13th Amendment to the US Constitution, which prohibited slavery. He encouraged Tennessee legislators to add the provision to the revised state constitution. Yet, when he succeeded to the presidency after Abraham Lincoln's assassination, Andrew Johnson opposed Congress' plan to give unconditional voting rights and citizenship to formerly enslaved men. His conflicting, prejudicial beliefs and politics remain a source of controversy and debate today.



Sam Johnson

FROM POVERTY TO PRESIDENT

Andrew Johnson was born into poverty in 1808. Apprenticed to a tailor after his father's death, he ran away in 1824. He traveled the South, honing his tailoring and public speaking skills. Urged to run for political office to give a voice to the "common man," he was elected a city alderman in Greeneville, Tennessee, in 1829.

Johnson's 40 years in politics included serving as mayor of Greeneville (1834, 1837), Tennessee state representative (1835–37, 1839–41) and state senator (1841–43), US representative for Tennessee (1843–53), governor of Tennessee (1853–57), and US senator (1857–62, 1875). President Abraham Lincoln appointed him military governor of Tennessee in 1862. The National Union Party nominated him as Lincoln's running mate in 1864. After Lincoln's assassination Johnson became the 17th president. He completed his term in 1869.

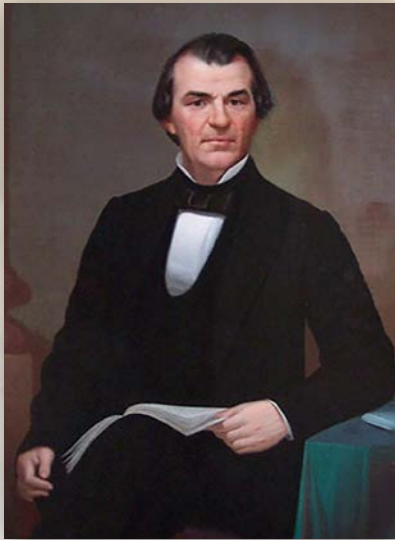


Grand National Union party banner, 1864
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

PRO-UNION SOUTHERN DEMOCRAT

A decade before Andrew Johnson joined in 1839, the Democratic Party formed around ideals of limited federal government, states' rights, and a farm-based culture and economy (agrarianism). By the 1850s the party also advocated westward expansion, including removal of Native Americans from their ancestral lands and the extension of slavery. By 1860 it had become the party of slavery. The Republican Party formed in opposition.

Although a Southern Democrat who maintained he was for "a white man's government," Andrew Johnson was strongly pro-Union. He railed against secession on the Senate floor, calling his peers to swear by "all that is sacred and holy, that the Constitution shall be saved, and the Union preserved." He became the only Southern senator to remain in Congress even after his state seceded. This stance earned him celebrity in Northern—mostly Republican—states and led to his roles in Lincoln's administration.



Andrew Johnson, painted by Samuel Shaver, ca. 1860

Sam and Dolly Johnson

Andrew Johnson purchased Sam (age 12) in November 1842, and Sam's half-sister Dolly (age 19) two months later. Will Johnson, Dolly's enslaved son, would comment in 1937, "...we were mighty well off then, but any man would rather be free than be a slave." On August 8, 1863, Johnson freed his enslaved people, who chose to work for the family as paid servants.

After the Civil War, Sam lobbied for the education of emancipated youth in Greeneville. Johnson confided to Sam that he wished to be buried atop Signal Hill (now Andrew Johnson National Cemetery). Dolly opened a bakery in the former president's old tailor shop.



Dolly Johnson and the president's grandson, Andrew Johnson Stover, ca. 1863

Presidency and Impeachment

President Johnson differed with Congress on how to interpret the US Constitution and maintain limits on federal authority during Reconstruction. Johnson based his lenient amnesty plan for restoring the Southern states on Lincoln's wartime Ten Percent plan, but it allowed former Confederate leaders to return to power. Congress drafted several plans for Reconstruction with strict readmission requirements for the former Confederate states and extensive legislation to aid the formerly enslaved.

The political battle came to a head when Johnson fired Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, a cabinet member appointed under Lincoln. The House impeached Johnson for violating the Tenure of Office Act. The Senate acquitted him by a single vote. The Supreme Court ruled the act unconstitutional in 1926.



Impeachment trial of Andrew Johnson, 1868
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Timeline



1808: Andrew Johnson is born on Dec. 29 in Raleigh, North Carolina, to Jacob and Mary Johnson. At age 8 he is apprenticed to a tailor. In 1824 he runs away and a reward of \$10 is offered for his return.

1826: Johnson arrives in Greeneville, Tennessee.

1827: Johnson marries Eliza McCordle on May 17. Eliza furthers his education in the early days of their marriage. They will have five children: Martha, Charles, Mary, Robert, and Andrew Johnson Jr.

1830: Johnson buys the tailor shop at public auction for \$51 and, according to tradition, has it rolled on logs to its present location.

1842–43: Johnson buys two enslaved people, Sam and Dolly.

1853–57: After rising through political ranks, Johnson serves as governor of Tennessee. He establishes the state's first public school system and supports the creation of a state agriculture bureau, state fairs, and the Grange. A state library is started.

1857: Johnson introduces a Homestead Bill in the US Senate (he first introduced it in the House in 1846). The Homestead Act passed in 1862 provided 160 acres of public land in the West at no cost to those who lived on it for five years and made improvements.

1860: On Dec. 18–19 Johnson delivers an anti-secession

speech to Congress. He is hailed as a hero.

1861: The Civil War begins on April 12. Following a second vote on secession, Tennessee secedes on June 8. Johnson is loyal to the Union and keeps his seat in the US Senate.

1862–64: Johnson serves as military governor of Tennessee. He sets up a provisional state government. He frees his enslaved people on Aug. 8, 1863. On Oct. 22, 1864, he declares freedom for all people enslaved in the state.

1864: The National Union Party nominates incumbent President Abraham Lincoln, a Republican, and Johnson, a Southern Democrat, to the national ticket. They win the election.

1865: General Lee surrenders at Appomattox on April 9.

Lincoln is assassinated on April 14. Johnson is sworn in as president on April 15. He begins to restore the Southern states to the Union in May.

Many Southern state lawmakers pass “Black Codes” to limit freedoms of formerly enslaved people.

Johnson supports the 13th Amendment, which abolishes slavery. It is ratified on Dec. 6.

1866: Johnson vetoes the Freedmen’s Bureau and Civil Rights Bills. Congress overrides the president’s vetos. Both are passed into law.

In Memphis and New Orleans, White police and mobs attack

freedmen and their communities. Johnson’s inaction on the events spurs passage of the Military Reconstruction Acts.

Johnson signs the Army Reorganization Act, which allows Black men to serve in the US Army.

Tennessee, the last state to secede, is the first state to be readmitted by Congress.

To bolster political support in the mid-term elections, Johnson embarks on his “Swing Around the Circle” tour on Aug. 28. The tour fails. Republicans sweep the elections.

1867: Congress passes the Tenure of Office Bill on Feb. 18 to limit the president’s ability to remove appointed officials without Congressional

approval. Johnson vetoes the bill in March, but it is passed into law.

Johnson signs legislation to create the first Department of Education. He also signs the founding charter for Howard University, a Black college in Washington, DC.

Alaska is transferred to the United States on Oct. 18. The nation pays \$7.2 million for the territory, roughly two cents per acre.

1868: Johnson fires Secretary of War Edwin Stanton on Feb. 21, violating the Tenure of Office Act. The House impeaches him three days later. His Senate trial begins on March 5. In votes on May 16 and 26, he is acquitted by one-vote margins. Despite his

opposition, the 14th Amendment is ratified on July 9. It defines citizenship and provides due process and equal protection under the law regardless of race, except for Native Americans.

Johnson proclaims a Treaty of Peace on August 12. It recognizes Navajo sovereignty and allows Navajo people to return to their homeland.

1865: Johnson and his family return to Greeneville in March after a seven-year absence.

1875: Johnson is elected a US senator. He is the only former US president to return to the Senate.

Johnson suffers a stroke while visiting his daughter in Carter County, Tennessee. He dies on July 31. He is buried on Aug. 3 in Greeneville, with his head resting on a copy of the US Constitution and his body wrapped in an American flag.

VISITING GREENEVILLE

Welcome to the Andrew Johnson National Historic Site. It tells the 17th president’s story through his two homes, tailor shop, and burial site.

Visitor Center
101 N. College St.
Greeneville, TN 37743
423-638-3551
www.nps.gov/anjo

Park Headquarters and Andrew Johnson National Cemetery
121 Monument Ave.
Greeneville, TN 37743
423-639-3711

General Information
The national historic site is open most days from 9 am to 4 pm. Planning to visit? Call the visitor center or check the park website for seasonal closures and updates.

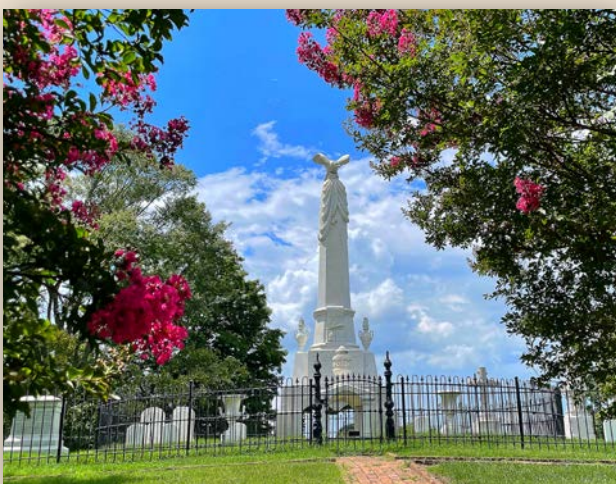
The Andrew Johnson Homestead is open by scheduled tour only. Tickets must be obtained in person at the visitor center. The homestead grounds are open until dusk.

Andrew Johnson National Cemetery is open daily, sunrise to sunset. Observe regulations for seasonal floral displays. Recreational vehicles, buses, and trucks pulling trailers are not allowed on Cemetery Road.

Firearms are not permitted in park buildings.

Accessibility
We strive to make facilities, services, and programs accessible to all. For information go to the visitor center, ask a ranger, call, or check the park website.

Andrew Johnson National Historic Site is one of over 400 parks in the National Park System. To learn more, visit www.nps.gov.



THE VISITOR CENTER AND MEMORIAL BUILDING
For a general orientation, begin here. You’ll find a film, restrooms, sales area, and tickets for tours of the Andrew Johnson Homestead. The 1920s building also houses a presidential museum and Johnson’s tailor shop.

THE EARLY HOME is where Andrew and Eliza Johnson lived while they expanded their family. Johnson’s status grew as he began his forays into politics, and he purchased his first enslaved people. Self-guiding exhibits tell the story of his early life.

THE ANDREW JOHNSON HOMESTEAD is the residence Johnson owned for 24 years, before, during, and after his presidency. The house chronicles the family’s daily life. Johnson’s descendants maintained the homestead over three generations.

THE ANDREW JOHNSON NATIONAL CEMETERY, where Andrew Johnson was buried on August 3, 1875, has commanding views of the mountains. In life, Johnson found the summit a place of introspection and peace. Now known as Monument Hill, this veterans’ cemetery still evokes feelings of respect and honor.

