

The Impeachment of Andrew Johnson – II

Lead: Andrew Johnson remains the only American President tried by the Senate after impeachment. His troubles may have been due to who he was and from where he came.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: Born in North Carolina, as a teenager Andrew Johnson moved across the mountains to Greenville, Tennessee and there established a successful tailoring business and a career in politics. He was elected a U.S. Senator in 1857. Johnson was a

product of the powerful historic divisions in Tennessee politics. It is a long way from the scrabble farms near Johnson City in the east Tennessee Appalachian foothills to the plantations around Memphis overlooking the Mississippi River. For years the slave-owning planters in the west had dominated Tennessee politics. In the east farms were smaller, slaves were fewer, and the planter class was bitterly resented. When the west led the state into the Confederacy, eastern Tennesseans remained largely loyal to the Union. Andrew Johnson, faithful to his eastern Tennessee roots, was the only Southern senator to remain in Washington after 1861.

He was rewarded for his loyalty by important committee assignments. When Federal armies put down the rebellion in Tennessee he returned home to become Military Governor. In 1864 he became vice-President with Abraham Lincoln running on the ticket of the National Union Party, the fusion slate of Democrats and Republicans who supported the war effort. The problem was that Johnson was loyal to the Union but not at all opposed to the institution of slavery. Many Republicans thought the war was being fought to rid the nation of slavery. Abraham Lincoln, the victorious war leader, was probably the only man who could have united these opposing views, but his assassination brought into the White

House Andrew Johnson, a courageous man, but one who could not heal the nation's vicious divisions. Next time: Saved from disgrace by a single vote.

**At the University of Richmond,
this is Dan Roberts.**

Resources

Benedict, Michael Les. *The Impeachment of Andrew Johnson*. New York, NY: Norton and Company, 1973.

Kennedy, John F. *Profiles in Courage*. New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1964.

Riddleberger, Patrick W. *1866: The Critical Year Revisited*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University, 1979.