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THE INTERACTION BETWEEN ANDREW JOHNSON AND THE PRESS

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Science
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

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December 2004

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the unstable relationship that existed between Andrew Johnson and the press. Information collected throughout this examination can be used to understand the power of the media in regard to Andrew Johnson's presidency. Primary documents were examined to determine how the press reacted to Johnson's policies and actions.

What is perhaps most remarkable about Andrew Johnson's presidency is that he enjoyed almost unprecedented popularity and support during the first months of his term in office. Within months of his inauguration, however, nearly all politicians and members of the press held him in deepest contempt. Johnson and his closest advisors were forced to confront an event unprecedented in the executive branch of the United States. The manner in which Johnson responded to press hostility shaped the nation's opinion of him.

This study attempts to explain why the press displayed such a sudden reversal of opinion. By examining newspapers and magazines throughout the country, the manner in which the Radical Republicans influenced the public's perception of Johnson can be observed. Johnson's ability to lead the nation was ultimately inhibited by his political opponents in Washington, D.C., and the press's eagerness to present him in an unfavorable light.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction 1

Background 1

Methodology 8

Questions 11

CHAPTER TWO

Johnson's Public Image Prior to Assuming the Presidency 13

Johnson's Career in the Senate 13

Johnson Elected Vice President 17

CHAPTER THREE

Johnson's Public Image as President 22

The Press Rallies in Support of Johnson 22

Johnson's Actions Shock the Press 29

Johnson Receives Criticism and Praise 34

Johnson Leaves the White House 43

Johnson Returns to Washington 45

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion 47

Findings 47

Limitations of the Study 57

Future Research 58

WORKS CITED 59

APPENDIX 66

VITA 72

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Background

As the president in office immediately following the Civil War, Andrew Johnson had one of the most important tasks in the history of the United States presidency. Immediately after taking the oath of office, Johnson was faced with the responsibility of reuniting a divided nation. Johnson also was given the responsibility of determining what role the freed slaves would play in the country and establishing the freedoms that African Americans would be given.

From his first day as president, Andrew Johnson found himself in a position that no other man in United States history ever had. After the death of Abraham Lincoln, Johnson became the first man to assume the presidency following the assassination of his predecessor. Though Lincoln was serving his second term as president, Andrew Johnson had just assumed the position of vice president a month earlier. With the assassination of Lincoln, Johnson was thrust into the center of a civil rights dispute that would last over a century.

Johnson's regrettable relationship with the press was one of the most important factors in shaping his career as president. What is most interesting about Johnson's political career is how he repeatedly fell in and out of favor with the press. The press never viewed Johnson with indifference. They tended to

view him as either a noble, patriotic statesman or an undeserving, uncompromising politician.

Johnson's term as president was plagued by frequent disputes with the Radical Republicans who controlled Congress at the time. The Radicals favored strict requirements for southern states reentering the Union. They also were uncompromising in their conviction that total emancipation should occur and that suffrage should be granted to all male freed slaves of legal age. Because the president refused to support suffrage for these men, the Radicals orchestrated a series of attacks, which caused Johnson to lose his composure and to be portrayed by the press as incompetent and undignified. In 1868, when Johnson became the first president to be impeached, the Radicals finally relented in their attacks because he was no longer a threat to their policies.

Albert Castel, author of *The Presidency of Andrew Johnson,* asserts that "more than any of his predecessors Johnson endeavored to reach the people through reporters."[1] Evidence from primary documents, however, shows that rather than addressing his troubles in press interviews, Johnson often chose to focus on other issues that later proved to be of less national concern. In an interview with Charles Halpine, a prominent journalist from the *New York Tribune,* Johnson avoided any mention of African American suffrage or Reconstruction. When Halpine was granted this rare one-on-one interview, he

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[1]Castle, Albert. *The Presidency of Andrew Johnson.* Lawrence, KA: Regents Press, 1979. pp. 118-19.

was under the impression that both subjects would be among their main topics of conversation. Rather than address these issues, Johnson discussed the problem of the national debt and presented various strategies for reducing the deficit. Neither issue was considered to be of interest by the national media. Confronting the issue of black suffrage and Reconstruction, he only said his integrity would "swallow up all" other "minor questions" regarding his ability to lead the nation.[2]

The interaction between Andrew Johnson and the press is at the core of this examination. Since the presidency of George Washington, the interaction between the president and the press has been crucial factor in shaping the country's perception of the leader. How the press covers official presidential addresses has been one of the most obvious factors in determining how a president will be viewed by the citizens of his country. It is important to acknowledge that prior to the twentieth century, presidents were not esteemed to their abilities to deliver a speech, but rather on the content and on the impression that the speech and the president made on the small number of journalists in attendance. The relationship between the president and those members of the media was just as important as the message that he was delivering. Those journalists who witnessed George Washington's first inaugural address noted that he appeared uncomfortable and was trembling when he reached the end of

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[2] Ibid., op. cit., p. 120.

his speech. However, Washington had established a good relationship with the press and had earned their respect. When the reporters submitted articles to their newspapers, they gave him overwhelmingly positive reviews.[3]

Periodicals always have guided fleeting public opinion. Prior to the twentieth century, politicians' voices and messages were constrained by the lack of technology that was available to them. When politicians delivered speeches, it was rare that anyone could hear the speech outside of the room in which the address was delivered. Because of this, politicians had to trust that the media would filter their words in a positive manner. When journalists wrote articles, they were not only shaping the public's opinion of the politician, they were also writing a first draft of history, which ultimately would determine what legacy each president would be given. Because of the press's important role in presenting the president to the people, an enormous amount of tension has always existed between the two parties.[4]

By the twentieth century, newspaper readers commonly submitted letters to the editors of their favorite periodicals. Prior to this time, however, only the elite members of society people had a platform to express their opinions. Reporters, columnists or editors wrote all of the content of most periodicals. The result of this was that the beliefs of many were formed by the opinions of a small

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[3] Butler, Patrick. "Presidential Communications as Viewed by the Media."15 Sept. 2004.
[4] Ibid.

and elite group of individuals. As a result, there was little diversity of opinion in the nation's periodicals.[5]

The role of the periodical in American culture has undergone many transformations since the first issues were distributed. To understand the impact that the articles, editorials, and cartoons published throughout the 1860s had on Americans' general perception of their leader, one must first understand the role that the periodical played in culture. Prior to the Civil War, the mention of politics was considered taboo by most periodicals. The war brought with it a new way of thinking for most Americans, and politics became one of the most popular topics addressed in all periodicals. "Magazines came to reflect more directly than ever before the current thought of the country not only in literature and the arts but in politics, economics, and sociology."[6]

Although smaller publications did have political party affiliations, the most prominent publications were not officially affiliated with a particular party. It is important, however, to note that though major periodicals often identified themselves as independent, their editors and owners were often closely affiliated with major politicians.

Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune,* began his career by writing the campaign papers for many of the Whigs who served in Congress.

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Mott, Frank Luther. *A History of American Magazines.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938. p. 280.

Although the *Tribune* officially stated that the publication was independent, Greeley was widely regarded as the most influential Whig editor in the nation. His alliance with the Radical Republicans was strengthened in the 1860s when many of the Whigs joined the Radical Republicans.[7] The *New York World*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and *Harper's Weekly* have been reported to have some of the strongest affiliations with the Republican party of that time. Each operated under the label of a politically independent publication. Though they did not endorse the Republicans, they openly supported civil reform proposals that were issues important to the Radicals.[8]

There were some periodicals that were firm in their refusal to endorse any party or idea. E.L. Godkin, a Washington, D.C., correspondent for *Nation*, denounced the notion of affiliating oneself with a political party. He regarded the labels of Republican and Democrat as unnatural and restrictive. Despite Godkin's efforts to avoid partisan influence, he and others like him ultimately were manipulated unknowingly by the Radicals' efforts to taint Johnson's image.[9]

The relationship that existed between Johnson and the press can be best described as volatile and unpredictable. During the years he spent in the national spotlight, Johnson was portrayed by the press as everything from a reckless alcoholic to a saint destined to save the nation. The reversal of press's

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[7] Ibid., op. cit, pp. 406-06.
[8] Ibid., op. cit., p. 295.
[9] Ibid., op. cit., p. 282.

opinion occurred suddenly. Because of the political instability of the nation and animosity that remained from the war, Johnson was forced to confront a series of battles for which there was no true way to win. Johnson was simply the victim of one of history's worst political dilemmas from which there was no easy escape.

Johnson's portrayal by the media was the source of many of his problems. If Johnson had lived a century later, he could have relied on live addresses to transmit his messages to the American people. In the 1860s, however, he had to "depend for support on the passing fancies of publishers."[10] Because he was under such relentless attack, he did seek support from the nation's most powerful, but unreliable, newspapers. The Radical Republicans, however, would stop at nothing to achieve their objectives. Radical senators frequently submitted reports false accounts regarding Johnson's actions. Because the reports came from highly respected senators, the editors rarely checked the facts and printed the stories as they were given to them. In time, periodicals began to disregard Johnson's messages at his public appearances and often offered readers accounts that they believed would be more popular.

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[10] Ibid., op. cit., pp. 209.

Methodology

The selection of primary articles was one of the most important components in this study. From the beginning of this study, it was important not to select newspaper and magazine articles at random. Each article was chosen for the region that it represented. Articles from large, influential newspapers of the North with strong party affiliations were selected to represent the information that influenced citizens of the country's largest cities. Significant attention was given to New York City, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, Chicago, and Boston because the country's most influential periodicals were from these locations. Opinions stated by editors and staff writers in these papers were reprinted frequently in other publications throughout the nation. Newspaper articles from cities in the South and smaller, less political cities from the North were equally important to examine.

A total of 102 newspaper, magazine articles, and cartoons were examined closely in this study. Forty-one sources were examined from large northern cities. Eighteen articles were found from small northern cities. Thirty-two sources from large southern cities and 11 articles from small southern cities were analyzed. Additional primary sources were also examined, but were excluded from the total because they were not found to be relevant to this study. By examining publications from these areas, a distinction can be observed in the way that newspapers of the North treated Johnson from the way newspapers

from South treated him. A similar distinction also can be detected in the manner in which newspapers in large northern and small northern cities reported on the president.

Among the periodicals that were examined, *Harper's Weekly* was referenced with more frequency than the others because of the prominent role that it played in shaping the political views of the nation. Throughout Johnson's presidency, the circulation of *Harper's Weekly* consistently ranged from 140,000 to 160,000 per publication. Its readership was estimated to be over 500,000 for each issue. The average circulation for other weekly magazines and newspapers at this time was approximately 2,500 per publication. *Harper's* was widely read throughout the North and the South. It was read in large cities as well as small. It was the most prominent political publication of its day.[11] When the weekly magazine was established, the editors acknowledged that their target audience was the "opinion makers of society." The magazine was marketed towards "politicians, clergymen, civic leaders" and other individuals who commanded respect within their community. By targeting the individuals who shaped public opinion, *Harper's* believed their ideas would ultimately reach the largest number of people. *Harper's* audience grew so fond of the magazine that subscribers frequently had their old copies bound in leather to preserve them.[12]

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[11] Ibid., op. cit., p. 10.
[12] Zuckerman, Mary Ellen.. *The Magazine in America.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1991. p. 21.

Additionally, *Harper's* followed Johnson's presidency closely and provided citizens with weekly updates and opinions regarding the president's conduct. Because of this detailed coverage of Johnson and the prominence of the magazine in American culture during this time, *Harper's Weekly* is one of the most important sources to examine in order to determine what information was influencing citizens during this period of time.[13]

The political cartoons that Thomas Nast created for *Harper's Weekly* were also examined in this study. Nast's illustrations were one of the most popular features of *Harper's Weekly*. His cartoons were so influential that Lincoln praised Nast as being one of the military's greatest recruiters during the Civil War.[14]

Background information was gathered from a variety of sources, books, journal articles, online resources, and a variety of archived documents first published during the 1860s. Since Andrew Johnson's impeachment, critics' opinions have changed only slightly regarding the manner in which Johnson dealt with the public. Additionally, historians from both eras have denounced Johnson's policies as being primarily concerned with his own agendas rather than with continuing the agenda of Abraham Lincoln as Johnson vowed he would.

Archived documents collected in Hoskins Library located on the University of Tennessee campus were useful in researching this topic as well.

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[13]Harper, op. cit., p. 10.
[14] Mott, op. cit., p. 474.

This study also includes a careful examination of a variety of other books as well as online sources. One particularly useful source is the *Harper's Weekly* archives website. This site has archived many articles and editorials published by *Harper's Weekly* during this period.

The National Historic Andrew Johnson Museum and Library also was a useful source of information. The museum is located on the campus of Tusculum College in Johnson's hometown of Greeneville, Tennessee. It has many original newspapers from around the country dating from the 1850s until the 1870s. These contain articles commenting on Johnson's policies and actions.

Other points that were considered were whether Johnson offered a careful explanation of his political agenda. Because Johnson essentially inherited his position from Lincoln, the public was reluctant to allow him to make crucial decisions without first explaining his motivation and intentions. Johnson should have understood the necessity of seeking support from the public prior to announcing his presidential plans. Therefore, any failure to explain his intentions should be regarded as an unsuccessful method of interacting with the press.

Questions

This examination attempted to answer several questions regarding the impeachment of Andrew Johnson. During the first months of Johnson's

presidency, members of the press were optimistic and pledged their support to Johnson.[15] They quickly withdrew their support, however, and left Johnson to face a disapproving nation. The primary question that by this examination attempts to answer is what factors caused the press to change its opinions regarding Johnson. How Andrew Johnson responded to the press during his impeachment also is an important question addressed in this thesis. Another important consideration of this study was whether newspapers from the North and the South responded differently to the president's actions and policies.

[15] Castle, op. cit., p. 117.

CHAPER TWO

Johnson's Public Image Prior to Assuming the Presidency

Johnson's Career in the Senate

Throughout Johnson's career, he had a volatile relationship with the press. During his presidency, reports printed in periodicals across the nation were among the most scathing ever printed about any politician at that time.[16] Although his presidency was tarnished with press criticism, he enjoyed the praise of the press during the early years of his political career. Following his election to the U.S. Senate in 1857, he was praised in the *New York Tribune* as being "no common man." Johnson's impressive actions "aroused the admiration of the country."[17]

As admiration for Johnson increased throughout the North during the autumn of 1860, many senators began to address Congress to announce to which side they would be loyal as the Civil War neared. In December, Johnson addressed Congress, announcing to his fellow statesmen, "I . . . love my country. I love the Constitution. I intend to insist upon its guarantees. There, and there alone, I intend to plant myself." He encouraged the other Congressmen in attendance to show themselves to be "men of courage." He said, "This Congress today has in it power to save the Union." He went on to condemn the other

[16] Ibid., p. 117.
[17] Ibid., p. 117.

Southern senators who had not chosen to remain loyal to the Union. He asked, "Shall we shrink from our duty and desert the government as a sinking ship, or shall we stand by it?" He concluded his speech by saying, "I entreat every man throughout the nation who is a patriot to rally around the altar of our common country and swear by our God that the Constitution shall be saved and the Union preserved."[18]

Johnson's speech did little to persuade the other Southern senators. Of the twenty-two senators whose states seceded to join the Confederacy, Johnson was the only senator who remained loyal to the Union.[19] Although Johnson was not successful in persuading the other senators to remain loyal to the Union, his speech did earn the respect of northern politicians. His speech was printed in newspapers throughout the North, and Johnson was hailed as one of the nation's greatest statesmen.[20]

Later that month, Johnson delivered a speech in which he condemned secession. This speech was widely regarded at the time to be one of the greatest achievements of any orator. Critics hailed it as a "grand . . . effort of a Southern

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[18] Gerson, Noel B. *The Trial of Andrew Johnson.* New York: T. Nelson, 1977. p. 29.
[19] Ibid., cit. 35.
[20] "Mr. Johnson's Speech." *Philadelphia Inquirer.* 12 Dec. 1860. final ed.: 4.
"Mr. Johnson's Speech." *Daily Globe.* 12 Dec. 1860. final ed.: 3.
"Senator Johnson's Speech." *Cincinnati Daily Commercial.* 13 Dec. 1860. final ed.: 3.

patriot against Southern treason." His speech that labeled secessionists as traitors was considered "a great historical point" for both Johnson and the nation.[21]

As the tension between the North and the South grew prior to the Civil War, Johnson became a key figure in the battle to persuade states to remain loyal to the Union. The Southern senator began making trips to border states to convince them not to secede from the Union. Although he gained the respect and admiration of the Northern states, many of the citizens of Southern states regarded him as a traitor. Traveling by train throughout much of the South, Johnson was met with many opponents at each train stop. Angry mobs threatened Johnson at gunpoint. The risk was so great, in fact, that Confederate soldiers were assigned to meet Johnson at the train stations and offer him protection if the danger became too serious. The Confederates increased security measures for all venues where Johnson was scheduled to speak in his home state of Tennessee. Because Tennessee was still part of the Union but was home to a large number of Southern sympathizers, the Confederates realized Tennessee might be persuaded to secede. They recognized, however, that if Johnson were murdered in his own state, his fellow Tennesseans would revere him as a martyr. Influenced by his loyalty, the state certainly would remain to the Union.

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[21] Mott, Frank Luther. *A History of American Magazines.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938. p. 213.

Johnson's efforts were ineffective in his own state, but Lincoln credited him with persuading Kentucky and Ohio to remain in the Union.[22]

In 1861, Johnson introduced a resolution into the Senate that would have restored the Union to the state it had existed in prior to the war. Under Johnson's plan, the Constitution would remain unchanged. An identical resolution was introduced to the House at this time. The resolution was met with overwhelming approval in both houses. In the Senate, only Johnson's rival, Charles Sumner, a Radical Republican from Massachusetts, did not vote in favor of the resolution. In the House, only two members, both Radical Republicans, chose to cast their votes against Johnson's resolution. Rather than restore statehood to the seceded states, the Radicals wished to make one large colony of the states that would be ruled by the North.[23]

Following the vote, Johnson delivered an impassioned speech on the Senate floor in which he denounced the Radical Republicans who had voted against his resolution. Johnson began his speech that day with an attempt to unite the politicians, saying, "Let partisan politics be forgotten . . . talk about your country and the Constitution and the Union. Save that; preserve the integrity of the government." He explained that by preserving the government, they would have a platform on which to argue about their partisan differences later. He continued, "Though your flag may have trailed in the dust...though

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[22] Gerson, op. cit., p. 33.
[23] Ibid., pp. 36-37.

the banner of our country may have been sullied, let it be borne onward."[24] Johnson's speech elevated him for the first time in his career into a position of national prominence.

Newspapers across the nation printed his speech on their front page the next day. With his unwavering conviction and simple eloquence, Johnson garnered the praise of people throughout the nation. Military officials later estimated that the Johnson's speech influenced over 100,000 men to join the Union army. Upon receiving news of Johnson's speech, Lincoln referred to Johnson as "one of the Union's greatest assets."[25]

Johnson Elected Vice President

Throughout his career in the Senate, newspapers in the North issued only flattering reviews of Johnson's accomplishments. His reputation was altered dramatically, however, after being chosen by Abraham Lincoln to be his running mate in the election of 1864. Lincoln and his advisors realized the Civil War was drawing to an end and they would be faced the task of reuniting the Southern states with the Union. They also recognized that it would be difficult for Lincoln, a Republican from the North and his current vice president, Hannibal Hamlin, a Republican who was closely affiliated with the Radical Republicans, to garner

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[24] "Senate Rejects Resolution." *Chicago Tribune.* 12 July 1861. final ed.: 2.
"Resolution Rejected in Senate." *Daily Kentucky Yeoman.* 14 July 1861. final ed.: 1.
"Senator Johnson Praises Resolution." *Daily National Intelligencer.* 12 July 1861. final ed.: 1.
[25] Ibid., pp. 36-39.

the respect and support necessary to accomplish Reconstruction from the still bitter Southern states. Lincoln selected Johnson to be his running mate during his second race because as a Democrat from the South, Johnson would be respected in the South when the former Confederate states began to rejoin the Union. Because Johnson was the only Southern senator who had retained his Senate seat and remained loyal to the Union during the war, Lincoln believed he also would receive the respect of the North. The northern Republican and the southern Democrat won the election of 1864, and Johnson was regarded favorably throughout the North and the South. With Johnson's new position, however, came more press scrutiny than ever before.

Johnson's first high profile public appearance came in 1865 on his first day as vice president when he attended Lincoln's second inauguration. When Johnson appeared at this event, he was unmistakably intoxicated. Johnson's speech, which was supposed to last five minutes, lasted twenty. Additionally, he was reported to slur his words frequently. Before transferring outside from the Senate chamber for Lincoln's address, Lincoln told the marshal, "Don't let Johnson speak outside."[26] Prior to this event, Johnson's mention in the press had been limited to his efforts to keep states from seceding during the war and his work to reunite the nation. Though some were skeptical of the southern senator's

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[26] Boller, Paul F., Jr. *Presidential Inaugurations*. New York: Harcourt, Inc., 2001.

abilities, most seemed to have faith in Johnson simply because of Lincoln's endorsement of him.[27]

Following Johnson's embarrassing appearance at the inauguration, publications began to report that he had staggered into the event and seemed oblivious to the events surrounding him during the ceremony.[28] Word of Johnson's state at the event spread throughout most publications in the Union. The *New York World* labeled Johnson "an insolent drunken brute, in comparison with whom Caligula's horse [that was made a senator in Rome] was respectable."[29] The *World* prophetically concluded their report by stating, "To think that one frail life stands between this insolent, clownish creature and the presidency."[30] The *Independent* referred to the event as a "humiliating spectacle" and even suggested that Johnson resign if he would not issue a public apology and vow to never again "use intoxicating liquors" while in office.[31]

The *New York Herald* reported the following day that Johnson's speech might have been considered appropriate at "some hustings in Tennessee, but it certainly was far from being appropriate" at a presidential inauguration. They went on to call his drunken address a "ninety-ninth rate stump speech," and

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[27] Milton, George Fort. *The Age of Hate: Andrew Johnson and the Radicals.* New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1930.

[28] Ibid., pp. 148-50.
[29] Ibid., p. 147.
[30] Tebbel, John and Sarah Miles Watts. *The Press and the Presidency: from George Washington to Ronald Reagan.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1985. p. 206.
[31] Milton, op. cit., pp. 149-50.

noted that senators in attendance "began to . . . sink down in their seats, and look at each other as much as to say, 'Is he crazy, or what is the matter?'" The *Herald* concluded that Johnson "evidently did not shun Bourbon county, Kentucky, on his way" to the Capitol.[32]

The issue that all journalists overlooked was that Johnson was recovering from malaria on the day of the inauguration. When Hamlin offered him whiskey, Johnson accepted hoping it would improve his condition. The alcohol did not help, however. It only worsened his already vulnerable condition.[33]

Johnson's public reputation might have been tarnished permanently if Lincoln had not intervened. Lincoln issued a statement in which he referred to the event as a "bad slip." He said, "I have known Andy for many years" and he "ain't a drunkard."[34] Most historians agree that had Booth's bullet "not propelled him into even greater prominence, this minor incident in Andrew Johnson's life would have been forgotten."[35] The press, however, did not forget this incident. In the years that followed, his enemies in Congress and in the press would refer to this incident as it served their purposes. Lincoln's intervention, however, seemed to have restored the press's confidence in Johnson at least temporarily. Following this incident, no further negative comments could be found about Johnson during his five weeks as vice president. During the weeks

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[32] Tebbel, op. cit., pp. 205.
[33] Boller, op. cit., pp. 208-09.
[34] Milton, op. cit., p. 147.
[35] Gerson, op. cit., p. 55.

that followed the inaugurattion, the press paid little attention to the vice president and focused only on the Lincoln's plan for reuniting the nation.

CHAPTER THREE

Johnson's Public Image as President

The Press Rallies in Support of Johnson

On April 15, 1865, Johnson was sworn in as president following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. The comments of the press were contrasted greatly with those issued just a month earlier. This time, the press praised Johnson as a fresh face in Washington, D.C. Because he was so unlike many other politicians and was a Southerner who had been loyal to the Union, the press seemed to believe that Johnson would be the one individual capable of successfully reuniting the divided nation.[36]

On the morning that Johnson was sworn in as president, he received an unexpected visit from Charles Sumner. Once word reached the Radical Republicans of Lincoln's assassination, the Radicals were certain it was their opportunity to impose stricter regulations on the Southern states and make their reentry into the Union more difficult than the plan that Lincoln had proposed. Sumner was sent to represent his fellow Radicals to advise the new president on the harsh and uncompromising procedures that should be taken against the former rebel states.[37]

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[36] Milton, op. cit., p. 178-80.
[37] Gerson, op. cit., p. 57.

A month later, Johnson issued a proclamation informing the Radicals as well as the nation of how he intended to deal with the issue of Reconstruction. In the first proclamation, he outlined his plan for amnesty for most of the individuals who had taken part in the rebellion. In a second resolution, he summarized his plan for readmitting North Carolina to the Union. He intended for the other states to follow a similar procedure. His plan for Reconstruction was intended to achieve what Johnson had fought for since his days as a senator. It would lead to the restoration of the Union as it had existed prior to the war. The Radicals were enraged after hearing of Johnson's plan and immediately began to call his proposal too lenient. They demanded that stricter standards be created for the states that they referred to as "conquered territory."[38]

Like Lincoln, the Radicals supported total emancipation of all slaves and favored suffrage for all African American males of legal age. They did disagree, however, with Lincoln on the matter of how former Confederate states should be readmitted into the Union. Lincoln chose to believe that the Southern states had never seceded from the Union. Like Lincoln, Johnson's policies for readmitting the southern states were not strict enough to please the Radicals. Because Johnson preferred to leave the issue of African American suffrage to the individual states, he drew strong opposition from the Radicals in Congress.[39]

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[38] "Mr. Johnson's Restoration Proposal." *Piqua Journal.* 7 Dec. 1866. final ed.: 2.
[39] Castle, op. cit., 117.

Once Congress returned from their recess from April until December 1865, pressure was placed on the president to define a clear position in regard to Reconstruction. Johnson's plan consisted of overturning the Confederate states' secessions and canceling the Confederate debt to the Union. Although he had announced the previous year that he intended to disenfranchise the former Confederate leaders, many were elected to new positions of power during regional elections. Rather than declaring the election results void and ordering a new election, Johnson pardoned many of the former Confederate leaders. Adding to the controversy was the fact that many of the newly elected legislatures had enacted "black codes," which severely limited black freedoms by restricting land ownership. Perhaps the most controversial decision, however, came when Johnson disregarded Lincoln's policy by announcing that he would place the decision of African American suffrage in the hands of the state legislatures.[40]

Johnson's plan, which was in such obvious contrast to the Radical's proposal, placed him in one of the tensest conflicts that he had seen in his political career.[41] This initial conflict that ignited between Johnson and the Radical Republicans was a problem that Johnson would be unable to resolve as president. The tension created between Johnson and the Radicals ultimately led to many of the larger problems that he would face during the next four years.

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[40] Gerson, op. cit., 72.
[41] Ibid., p. 61.

Johnson succeeded at winning the favor of the press during the beginning of his term. An examination of statements made by politicians and journalists of the period suggests that Johnson enjoyed popularity during his first months of presidency. Most Congressmen had faith in Johnson's vow that he would use his presidency to carry out the policies outlined by Lincoln before his death. Following Johnson's inauguration as president, Senator Benjamin Wade, a Radical from Ohio, spoke for most of his fellow senators when he endorsed Johnson saying, "We have faith in you. By the gods, there will be no trouble now in running the government!"[42]

Although many newspapers had published scathing accounts of Johnson's actions only a month prior, they seem to have altered their position following the assassination of Lincoln. In a time of national tragedy, they appeared willing to overlook past actions to support the new president. Even Greeley's publication, the *New York Tribune,* which was notorious for taking the side of Radical Republicans, printed that Johnson's first address as president was one that would be met with widespread approval, for there was "little that . . . should provoke dissent." The *Tribune* went on to refer to Johnson as a gentleman who was a respectable and modest leader."[43]

More than anything else, the press seemed to give its support to Johnson on the condition that his disposition did not change. Just after being sworn in,

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[42] Castle, op. cit., p. 20.
[43] Ibid., op. cit., p. 207.

Godkin of *The Nation,* called Johnson's manner of delivering addresses, "frank, dignified, and manly."[44] He further wrote that his hope was that Johnson would maintain his impressive demeanor "in the face of any hostility." Days after Johnson's inauguration as president, William Cullen Bryant of the *New York Evening Post* wrote that he was most impressed by "Johnson's mild policies toward the defeated rebels." He further attacked any politician who would support "vindictive" measures in dealing with the rebel states.[45]

Immediately following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, *Harper's Weekly* pledged its complete support to Johnson. Writers for the publication called any of the questionable decisions that Johnson made mere "errors of judgment," assuring its readers that the president was "true at heart and striving under the most distraught conditions."[46] Even on topics in which the editors of *Harper's Weekly* disagreed with the president, they maintained that Johnson was acting in what he believed to be the nation's best interest.

During the first months of his presidency, however, Johnson received only praise and encouragement. The *New York Tribune* praised Johnson as a "self-reliant and an accomplished gentleman," and the *Philadelphia Press* proclaimed Johnson "the most popular man in America."[47] Two days following the assassination of Lincoln, George Childs, president of the *Philadelphia Ledger,*

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[44] Ibid., op. cit., p. 207.
[45] Ibid., op. cit., p. 207.
[46] Harper, J. Henry. *The House of Harper.* New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1912. p. 236.
[47] Milton, op. cit., p. 81.

expressed confidence in Johnson's abilities and promised he would receive the full support of the nation.[48] The press rallied behind Johnson and vowed to support him on the condition that he followed the policies of Lincoln in the Reconstruction.[49] Lincoln had intended not only to unify the nation as quickly as possible, but to also ensure that the recently freed African American men would receive the same liberties and privileges as their white counterparts.[50]

Harper's Weekly was one of the few publications that noted this sudden reversal of opinion among the nation's journalists. Prominent and well-respected political cartoonist Thomas Nast chronicled Johnson's actions throughout his presidency. Although Nast created drawings primarily for *Harper's Weekly*, he also submitted cartoons for the *Illustrated Chicago News.* In one of Nast's first cartoons featuring Johnson, he simply depicted Johnson's image surrounded by a variety of conflicting statements. On one side of the frame, Nast recalled the incident in which a *New York World* reporter stated that he held Caligula's horse in higher esteem than Johnson. On the other side, he printed another comment also by *New York World* in which a reporter said that there was "not one word or act" of Johnson that "could not be defended."[51]

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[48] Ibid., op. cit., p. 180.
[49] "Andrew Johnson." *Daily Morning Chronicle.* 19 May 1865. final ed.: p. 3.
"Political." *Boston Recorder.* 28 Apr. 1865. final ed.: 4.
[50] Ibid., op. cit., p. 233.
[51] "Democracy." *List of Editorials from Harper's Weekly.* November 11, 1865. <http://www.impeach-andrewjohnson.com/ListOfCartoons/Democracy 1864.htm>.

A significant change in the content of *Harper's Weekly* can be observed when editorial writer George William Curtis and cartoonist Thomas Nast first began to conflict over what method should be used for criticizing the president's actions. After seeing some of Nast's scathing political cartoons about Johnson, Curtis sent Nast a letter in which he wrote that many of the cartoons were "hard hits. " Curtis believed that Nast's cartoons were so harsh that he requested that Nast reconsider running the cartoons.[52]

J. Henry Harper, grandson of Fletcher Harper, wrote in his book, *House of Harper*, that the dispute was resolved when the two were allowed by owner Fletcher Harper to publish their views about Johnson and all other political matters as they wished. Fletcher Harper created a policy for the magazine, establishing it as an "independent forum" with a variety of contributors. Harper decided that both men could publish the content that reflected their own beliefs. He said, "It is not necessary that all should agree."[53]

When Johnson vetoed a constitutional amendment that would have granted Congress the power to make any law that would provide citizens of all states "equal protection of life, liberty and property," *Harper's Weekly* published for the first time that its editors disagreed with Johnson on an issue. Careful to show respect for the president, the weekly periodical published a polite account of this event and acknowledged the editors had faith in Johnson's good

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[52] Harper, op. cit., p. 240.
[53] Ibid., op. cit., p. 241.

intentions. The editors closed their account, however, by adding, "While upon this question we wholly differ from him, we differ with no aspersion or suspicion."[54]

Johnson's Actions Shock the Press

It seems that negative comments began to be made about Johnson following a speech in February 1866. In an attempt to disturb the president during an important gathering, Radical Republicans recruited individuals to serve as hecklers in the audience. These hecklers stood in the crowd throughout many speeches and were known to make loud comments regarding the president's speeches. On this occasion, Johnson was discussing the fact that he believed there were individuals in the United States who were "opposed to the fundamental principles of the government and were laboring to destroy" the country.[55] These individuals, he believed, wanted to make requirements for seceded states to rejoin the Union much stricter than he wished. The gaffe that seems to have cost Johnson the respect and approval of the press throughout the remainder of his presidency came when one of the hecklers asked the President to name these individuals. Rather than ignoring the outburst, as those present expected him to do, Johnson turned to the man and provided the names of several Radical Republicans.

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[54] Ibid., op. cit., p. 237.
[55] Milton, op. cit., p. 291.

The press's comments indicate their shock and disapproval of an outburst that they regarded as undignified and not appropriate for a president.[56] The *Independent* referred to Johnson's actions as the "worst speech ever made in the country."[57] The *New York World* labeled the circumstance a complete "disregard for decency."[58] A reporter for the *New York Tribune* wrote that he was "stunned" by the spectacle.[59] Viewing the incident as an opportunity to take advantage of Johnson's past behavior, the *Louisville Courier* of Kentucky printed "Andy . . . has been drunk for a week."[60] The comment made by *Harper's Weekly* seems to best represent the opinions printed in other publications. Of the scandalous event, one reporter wrote, it was "an offense unprecedented in history."[61]

The *Nation*, like all similar publications, praised Johnson during the first days of his presidency, referring to him as "not an unworthy successor to Mr. Lincoln." Following this incident, however, the *Nation* became displeased with Johnson's lack of temperance when delivering official addresses. They labeled many of his speeches "vulgar and indecent."[62]

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[56] "News from Washington." *Philadelphia Record.* 1 Mar. 1866. final ed.: p2.
"The President's Speech." *Daily Globe.* 23 Feb. 1866. final ed.: p. 1.
"The President's Speech." *National Magazine.* Apr. 1866. final ed.
[57] Ibid., op. cit., p. 292.
[58] Ibid., op. cit., p. 293.
[59] "Washington News." *New York Tribune.* 25 Feb. 1866. final ed.: p. 2.
[60] Milton, op. cit., p. 293.
[61] "The President's Speech." Editorial. *Harper's Weekly: Articles relating to Johnson's First Veto.* March 10, 1866. < http://www.impeach-andrewjohnson.com/ 05AJFirst Vetoes/iiia-7.htm>.
[62] Mott, op. cit., p. 340.

Articles published in *Harper's Weekly* following this incident were similarly harsh and scathing in their criticisms of Johnson. The editors of the publication clearly adopted a very unforgiving opinion of the President and denied him any amount of mercy when reporting on his alleged "treasonous" behavior. On one occasion, editorial writer George William Curtis refers to Johnson's political decisions as a "sore disappointment."[63] Other editorials by Curtis merely refer to the politically tenuous situation and express his concern regarding Johnson's abilities to deal with them properly.[64]

From that point, it is difficult to find any positive remarks made about Johnson in the press. When Johnson was not being criticized for being too lenient in his requirements for seceded states or for abusing his authority, he was being referred to as an incompetent commander-in-chief who could not understand the Constitution of the United States.

When Congress returned to session in 1866, the Radical Republicans were determined to stop at nothing to achieve their objectives concerning the issue of Reconstruction. The matter of how Reconstruction would take place was an especially delicate issue for Johnson to confront. He felt compelled to resolve the problem in a manner that would not alienate any group of people. In *Harper's*

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[63] "First Vetoes." *List of Editorials from Harper's Weekly*. March 3, 1866 < http://www. impeach-andrewjohnson.com/05AJFirstVetoes/iiia-4.htm>.
[64] "The Trial of Government." *List of Editorials from Harper's Weekly*. May 26, 1866. <http://www.impeach-andrewjohnson.com/05AJFirstVetoes/iiia-13.htm>.

Weekly's March 10, 1866, issue, the publication offered another subtle criticism of Johnson's policy. Of the matter, the magazine published, "If he had reflected that it was not for him alone to decide . . . the collision [between Johnson and Congress] might have been avoided."[65] *Harper's Weekly* continued to provide its readers with an update each week on Congress's progress in resolving their issues with Johnson. On March 17, despite the magazine's tendency to disagree with the president, the editors emphasized that they would strive to report and discuss the differences of their views "without acrimony."[66]

According to the *Piqua Journal* of Ohio, Johnson believed that Reconstruction could only happen when the former Confederate states had their seats in Congress returned to them. The editors of the *Piqua Journal* agreed that the President's proposition was "not so far wrong" and that "few objections would be made against it." Although Johnson supported allowing former "traitors" to hold office in the United States Congress, citizens of Piqua, Ohio, objected to the notion that the "red-handed rebels" of the war would be allowed to "take an oath to support the Constitution of the United States." They disagreed with the President's belief that most of the former Confederates should be granted a complete pardon for their treasonous actions. "Loyal people of the country," the *Journal* printed, would "think differently." The *Journal* concluded their objection by stating, "No traitor shall sit on the councils of the nation,

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[65] Harper, op. cit., p. 237.
[66] Ibid., op. cit. p. 238.

empowered to make laws for a people who have suffered so much to maintain a Government they so persistently sought to destroy." Of the former traitors who hoped to reclaim their former seats, the *Journal* wrote, "They have no right to ask, nor any reason to expect" it.[67]

As Johnson elaborated on his ideas for Reconstruction, journalists began to observe his plan moving further from the plan that Lincoln had proposed. Writers frequently questioned Johnson's ability to fully understand what they considered to be simple governmental principles that were even "intelligible to the dullest minds."[68] In August 1866, *Harper's Weekly* wrote of Johnson that he either "has an incapacity to comprehend the limits of the executive power, or has determination to disregard them at his pleasure."[69]

Later that month, Johnson set out on a speaking tour through Missouri, Illinois, and Michigan. By the time he had arrived in Ypsilanti, Michigan, the Radicals were once again determined to force Johnson to address their carefully planted hecklers. In July 1866, the *New York Tribune* began to refer to the president as "Judas Johnson" because they believed he had chosen to disregard most of Lincoln's plans for Reconstruction. The editors wrote that they did not believe that Johnson, as a president who had not been elected, had the power

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[67] "Mr. Johnson's Restoration Proposal." *Piqua Journal.* 6 Dec. 1866. final ed.: 2.
[68] Curtis, George William. "Making Treason Odious." *Harper's Weekly.* June 2, 1866. <http://www.impeach-andrewjohnson.com/05AJFirstVetoes/iiia-13a.htm>.
[69] "The Case Stated." *List of Editorials from Harper's Weekly.* August 4, 1866. <http://www.impeach-andrewjohnson.com/05AJFirstVetoes/iiia-16.htm>.

choose his own plan for Reconstruction and labeled him a traitor for abandoning the policy established by his predecessor.[70] Addressing the *Tribune's* reference to him as "Judas Johnson," the president asked, "If I have played Judas, who has been my Christ?" He asked, "Was it Thad Stevens? Was it Wendell Phillips? Was it Charles Sumner?" On cue, one of the hecklers from the audience shouted, "Why not hang Thad Stevens and Wendell Phillips?" Forsaking all presidential decorum once again, Johnson replied, "Yes, why not hang them?" The press was once again shocked by Johnson's lack of decorum. Publications throughout the nation accused the president of delivering his speech while intoxicated.[71] The president's nickname "Judas Johnson" was replaced the next morning when the *Tribune* labeled him "Drunken Tailor."[72]

Johnson Receives Criticism and Praise

On December 3, 1867, Johnson delivered a speech in Washington in which he laid down his final plans for Reconstruction. Newspapers throughout the country, from Boston to Savannah, reprinted his speech. In his speech, Johnson was emphatic when speaking of his position and regretful when speaking of his conflict with many of the other politicians in Washington. "On this momentous question" concerning Reconstruction, "I have had the misfortune to differ from

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[70] "The Plan for Reconstruction." *The New York Tribune.* 21 July 1866. final ed.: p. 1.
[71] "The President's Tour." *Chicago Tribune.* 29 Aug. 1866. final ed.: p. 1.
"The President's Folly." *New York Times.* 30 Aug. 1866. final ed.: p. 1.
"Andrew Johnson." Cincinnati Daily Commercial. 30 Aug. 1866. final ed.: p. 1.
[72] Tebbel, op. cit., p. 291.

Congress." He stated that he had expressed his beliefs "without reserve" and emphasized that his convictions were "not only unchanged, but strengthened by subsequent events and further reflection." Johnson went on to explain that the "subsequent events" that had reinforced his beliefs was the opposition that he had faced from members of Congress as well as unusually opinionated members of the press.[73] Throughout the lengthy speech, Johnson's tone remained diplomatic and resolute. Johnson's speech was printed in its entirety in papers both large and small, from the North and the South. Although all the periodicals agreed that Johnson's speech was one of the most important of his presidency, they disagreed on the quality of his message.

In Connecticut, the *Bridgeport Evening Farmer* wrote that Johnson's speech was delivered with "manly dignity" which the *Evening Farmer* believed would "secure for it a respectful hearing." They praised the speech as a "remarkable State paper" that reflected a "patriotic desire to promote the welfare of all people." It was essentially a "plea for . . . law, justice, and right." The only reference that *Evening Farmer* made to Johnson's previous speech was to note that his second speech was not as offensively long and that it had been delivered with more respect and less defensiveness than the previous address.[74]

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[73] "The President's Speech." *Philadelphia Inquirer.* 4 Dec. 1867. final ed.: p. 1.
"The President's Speech." *Charleston Mercury.* 5 Dec. 1867. final ed.: p. 1.
"Mr. Johnson's Address." *American and Commercial Advertiser.* 6 Dec. 1867. final ed.: p. 1.
"The President's Speech." *Atlanta Constitution.* 6 Dec. 1867. final ed.: p. 1.

[74] "On the President's Speech." *Bridgeport Evening Farmer.* 5 Dec. 1867. final ed.: 2.

The *Atlantic Monthly* published an editorial noting that Andrew Johnson was "insincere as well as stubborn, cunning as well as unreasonable, vain as well as ill-tempered, greedy of popularity as well as arbitrary in disposition, veering in his mind as well as fixed in his will." The author remarked that Johnson seemed to believe he could act in the role of a monarch and he could abuse the Constitution at his will. The author ended his criticism of Johnson by writing that he combined "in his character the seemingly opposite qualities of demagogue and autocrat."[75]

The *Chicago Tribune* printed an observation that was only two paragraphs in length. It commented on Johnson's December 3, 1867, speech saying, "Both houses were considerably annoyed" by Johnson's demeanor and his speech, and would, therefore, not consider the appeals that the President had made.[76]

Like most other periodicals based in large cities, the *New York Evening Post* took advantage of every opportunity presented to criticize Johnson's policies. The publication was careful, however, to praise Johnson when he had earned it. The editors judged his speech as being genuinely eloquent and authoritative. Though the authors did approve of Johnson's speechwriting techniques, they did not give the content of his speech the same praise. They said, "Few of our Presidents have handled the pen with such vigor . . . but we wish that his

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[75] "The Conspiracy in Washington." *Atlantic Monthly.* Jan. 1868. final ed.: 112.
[76] "The Address Before Congress." *Chicago Tribune.* 4 Dec. 1867. final ed.: 2.
"The Address Before Congress." *Cincinnati Daily Commercial.* 5 Dec. 1867. final ed.: 4.

judgment of affairs were as precise and just as they are in composition." Listening to Johnson defend the position he held about the Reconstruction, the *Evening Post* accused Johnson's plan as being too lenient. They referred to the tone of his speech as "uncompromisingly bitter and dictatorial."[77]

Residents of New York City would have had a difficult time finding any positive comments about Andrew Johnson following his December 3 speech. The *New York Tribune* accused Johnson of being the reason the nation remained occupied by differences. Of Johnson's speech, the *Tribune* wrote, "At the moment when all patriots are hoping for a cessation of a political and quasi sectional strife . . . Mr. Johnson hurls a fresh firebrand into the face of the country." Rather than uniting the country, as the *Tribune* believed was his responsibility, they accused him of summoning into "a new activity and acrimony all the feuds and hates which good men had hoped were quieted."[78]

The *New York Times* declared "Its spirit far too bitter and hostile" and its "tone . . . too decidedly one of stern rebuke and denunciation, to permit the hope that it will contribute to anything to the pacification of the country."[79]

The only New York City publication that seems to have not criticized Johnson's speech was the *New York Herald.* The *Herald* wrote that the "impartial

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[77] "Andrew Johnson's Speech." *New York Evening Post.* 5 Dec. 1867. final ed.: 2.
[78] "The President's Speech." *New York Tribune.* 4 Dec. 1867. final ed.: 1.
"The President's Speech." *Daily Morning Chronicle.* 5 Dec. 1867. final ed.: 1.
"The President's Speech." *Daily Missouri Republican.* 4 Dec. 1867. final ed.: 1.
[79] "The President's Speech." *New York Times.* 5 Dec. 1865. final ed. 1.

reader . . . will find in it not much to condemn, but many things to approve." In contrast to the other publications of New York City, they judged the speech to be tactful and respectable, saying its "general tone is that of a calm and dispassionate State paper."[80] Farther north, the editors of the *Albany Argus* seemed to agree with the *Herald,* printing that they regarded Johnson's speech as "thoroughly sound."[81]

Not all small cities were eager to rally patriotically around their president. The *Daily Whig* of Troy, New York, wrote, "The President wished to provoke Congress to intemperate criticism." These papers seemed to take comfort in knowing that it would be impossible for Johnson to receive his party's nomination to run for another term in office. Their tone seemed celebratory when they wrote, "Mr. Johnson will be out of the way in a few months and he is powerless now."[82]

Farther from the large, political cities, newspaper editors seemed to represent Johnson's speech in a more favorable light. The *Lynchburg Daily News* in Virginia printed that Johnson's speech displayed "great merit and statesmanship." In the paper's opinion, the most objectionable feature of the President's message was its length. According to the report in the *Lynchburg Daily News,* Johnson urged Congress to "obey the voice of the people" rather

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[80] "The President's Speech." *New York Herald.* 5 Dec. 1867. final ed. 2.
[81] "Mr. Johnson's Speech." *Albany Argus.* 5 Dec. 1867. final ed.: 1-2.
[82] "On the President's Speech." *Daily Whig.* 5 Dec. 1867. final ed.: 2.

than wasting their time attacking him. The *Lynchburg Daily News* reported that Johnson said, he "must take the high responsibilities of his office, and save the life of the nation at all hazards." The editors noted that Johnson's speech "marks its author an acute statesman, who means to resist all infractions of the Constitution and to maintain unimpaired the liberties of the country which have been entrusted to his hands."[83]

In the South, the sentiment was identical in nearly every city. The *Daily Sentinel* in Raleigh, North Carolina praised the speech, saying, "It is a splendid exhibition of moral intrepidity and patriotic courage." The editors commended the "nature of the appeal and of the argument" because it was "addressed to the people." Because of its sensible and logical nature, the *Sentinel* said it should not be expected to "reach the sense of Congress." According to the *Sentinel*, people have chosen to endorse Johnson's speech, rather than take the side of the Radical Republicans in Congress. "Hence their fury," the *Sentinel* wrote.[84]

Southern cities were not alone in their praise of the President. Smaller cities in the North that were removed from the harsh political styles of larger cities remained loyal to their leader and praised his public addresses. In Paoli, Indiana, the *American Eagle* said of Johnson's speech: "In taste and temper it is faultless . . . in the assertion or conviction it is fearless." The *American Eagle* did not fail to notice that it was in a clear minority by defending the President.

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[83] "The President's Speech." *Lynchburg Daily News.* 5 Dec. 1867. final ed.: 2.
[84] "Report on the President's Speech." *Daily Sentinel.* 6 Dec. 1867. final ed.: 2.

However, the editors argued, "When the ambitions of unprincipled men and the passions engendered by them, have collapsed and subsided, almost every sentiment and sentence in this message will command general and warm approval."[85]

Because an overwhelming number of Radical Republicans were members of Congress, Johnson was an obvious target for their hostility. The Radicals had a specific plan for reuniting the nation and for granting new freedoms to black men. Their plan conflicted with Johnson's on nearly every point. Johnson was the greatest obstacle preventing the Radicals from achieving their goals.

Impeachment charges were brought against Johnson on February 24, 1868, for violating the Tenure of Office Act by firing Secretary of War Edwin Stanton three days earlier. Passed in March 1867, the act forbade a president from removing any official from office without the consent of the Senate if the Senate had approved of that individual taking office. During Johnson's administration, this act protected the Radical Republicans who served in the president's cabinet who had been appointed by Lincoln. Although Johnson officially dismissed Stanton, who was found later to be conspiring with the Radicals, Stanton refused to leave his office until after Congress's attempt to remove Johnson from office had failed. Although violating the Tenure of Office Act almost cost Johnson the

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[85] "On the President's Speech." *American Eagle*. 12 Dec. 1867. final ed.: 2.

presidency, it was repealed in 1887 and ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1926.[86]

When impeachment charges were brought against Johnson, the *New York Tribune* reported that Johnson had "dragged the robes of his office through the purlieus and filth of treason." The *Tribune* did not stop with its criticism of Johnson. The editors continued to denounce the entire Johnson administration, printing that the administration was comprised of "the worst men that ever crawled like filthy reptiles at the footstool of power."[87]

By the spring of 1868, Johnson's actions were being harshly criticized by politicians, the press, and cartoonists. One of the cartoons Nast created for *Harper's Weekly* during this time reflected the widespread conviction that Johnson was either unfamiliar with the Constitution or had chosen to disregard it. In the cartoon, he shows Johnson climbing to the top of a tall bookshelf to retrieve a book labeled *Constitution of U.S.* In the next frame, Johnson is lying on ground, crushed beneath the weight of the book. In the caption, Nast observes, "The little boy who would persist in handling books above his capacity . . . And this was the disastrous result."[88]

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[86] Dunn, Charles. *The Scarlet Thread of Scandal.* New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000. pp. 59-60.
[87] "Impeachment Charges." *New York Tribune.* 25 Feb. 1868. final ed.: 1.
[88] Nast, Thomas. "The Little Boy Who Would Persist in Handling Books Above His Capacity." *Harper's Weekly.* 21 Mar. 1868. <http://www.impeach-andrewjohnson.com/ListOfCartoons/ThisLittleBoyWouldPersist.htm.>

In an unsigned cartoon believed to have been drawn in late 1868, titled "Uncle Sam's Circus," the artist showed Andrew Johnson being forced to jump through a hoop at the circus while a lively band comprised of the committee formed to hear his impeachment played a tune. This cartoon offers many layers of satire. The hoop that Johnson is shown jumping through is labeled "The Tenure of Office Bill," which was the violation that led to his impeachment. Secretary of State William Seward, an individual who was receiving criticism for his purchase of Alaska during this time, is to the side of the stage dressed as the circus clown. The impeachment committee, which presided over the trial, is shown playing the tune for the festivities. Judge J. L. Black, one of the original members of the committee who resigned just after the trial began, and Attorney General Henry Stanberry, another member of the committee, are shown holding a circus hoop as Johnson jumps through it, illustrating the tedious nature of the Senate proceedings. Behind the circus curtain, is General Ulysses Grant. His presence in this cartoon is representative of several things. The artist implies that Grant was waiting in the wings preparing to take charge of the nation when Johnson's term was over. He also seems to be hiding backstage, just behind the impeachment committee, controlling it.[89]

The Senate voted on the articles of impeachment on May 16 and May 26, 1868. Conviction required a two-thirds voted. Johnson was acquitted on each

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[89] "Uncle Sam's Circus." Andrew Johnson National Historic Library and Museum. 1868.

count by a vote of 35 to 19. The Senate was one vote short of removing him from office. Upon hearing that Johnson had not been convicted during his impeachment trial, the *Nation* printed that it found "failure to convict regrettable."[90]

The *Nation* seems to have been alone in its criticism of the president that day. Most other publications simply reported the facts of vote.[91] Once the Radical Republicans were certain that the president no longer had the power to influence national policies, their attacks on him as well as the press's attacks on him ended. Johnson noted the lack of criticism and observed, "There's no use wasting ammunition on dead ducks."[92]

Johnson Leaves the White House

Johnson left the White House with the inauguration of Grant in March 1869. Much had changed in the months since the impeachment vote. The nation and to a large extent the press had begun to display their respect and affection for the former president. On March 12, 1869, at a Baltimore reception for former President Johnson just after leaving office, he was greeted by thousands of individuals from several states who had come to wish him well as he returned to

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[90] Mott, op. cit., p. 340.

[91] "Johnson Acquitted." *Southern Banner.* 29 May 1868. final ed.: 1.
"On the Senate Vote." *Charleston Mercury.* 28 May 1868. final ed.: 1.
"On the Senate Vote." *Chicago Times.* 27 May 1868. final ed.: 1.
"The Senate Vote." Cincinnati Daily Commercial. 27 May 1868. final ed.: 1.
"The Senate Vote." *The Sun.* 27 May 1868. final ed.: 1.

[92] "On the Senate Vote." *Daily Whig.* 29 May 1868. final ed.: 1.

private life. The *Sun* reported the event was "one of the most hearty and enthusiastic tributes to a public man that has taken place in this city for a long time" and the article ended with the author wishing Johnson well as he retired from public life.[93]

Even after his presidential term had expired, Johnson was not capable of escaping all of the political criticisms that had plagued him. The week he left office, Nast expressed his relief by parodying the famous painting by J. L. Gerome entitled "The Political Death of the Bogus Caesar," in which Julius Caesar lies dead in the Roman Senate surrounded by senators. In Nast's version, he depicted Johnson lying dead, surrounded by American senators dressed as Romans. Nast's triumphant caption read, "Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead! Rue hence, proclaim it, cry it in the streets."[94]

Just one month later when Johnson returned to his home in Tennessee, Nast drew another cartoon commemorating the occasion. The title of the piece was "Home at Last." Nast depicted Johnson knocking on a door marked with a skull and cross bones. The sign above read, "Hell." In the caption, Johnson said, "All right Lucifer; it's me."[95]

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[93] "Reception Held for Johnson." *The Sun*. 12 Mar. 1869. final ed.: 1-2.
[94] Nast, Thomas. "The Political Death of the Bogus Caesar." *Harper's Weekly*. 13 Mar. 1869. <http://www.impeach-andrewjohnson.com/ListOfCartoons/ThePoliticalDeathOfBogus Caesar.htm>.
[95] Nast, Thomas. "Home at Last." *Harper's Weekly*. 24 Apr. 1869. <http://www.impeach-andrew johnson.com/ListOfCartoons/ HomeAtLast.htm>.

Johnson Returns to Washington

After leaving the White House, Johnson discovered a new way to use the press to his advantage. When he ran for Senate in 1870, he presented himself to the press not as a victim, but as a champion who would triumph over the scandals that had plagued him just years before. He told the *New York Tribune*, "slander upon slander . . . has made its way through the press." He continued to explain that he would not allow the fabrications of creative journalists to prevent him influencing the nation.[96] He lost his race in 1870, but ran again in 1874 and was elected by his fellow Tennesseans to return to the nation's capital.

By the time he once again won a seat in the U.S. Senate in 1875, he had once again become one of the most popular politicians in the nation.[97] The stories of Johnson's life as an ambitious tailor and as a courageous statesman seemed to overshadow his failed presidency. The *St. Louis Republican* called his election into the Senate, "The most magnificent personal triumph which the history of American politics can show."[98] Still employed by *Harper's Weekly*, Thomas Nast drew his final cartoon of Johnson as he returned to Congress. This

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[96] "On Andrew Johnson's Run for Senate." *New York Tribune*. 26 Oct. 1870. final ed.: 3.
[97] Milton, op. cit., p. 269.
[98] "Mr. Johnson Returns to the Senate." *St. Louis Republican*. 27 Feb. 1875. final ed.: 4.

time, Nast depicted Johnson boldly entering the Senate with his fellow senators bowing respectfully to him.[99]

The *Nation* declared that the Senator's "personal integrity was beyond question."[100] They further remarked that "his respect for the law and the Constitution made his administration a remarkable contrast" to many of the other politicians of his day.[101] Radical and Conservative publications throughout the nation praised Johnson's election to the Senate and honored to his undefeatable resolve.[102] Johnson died just months following his impressive return to power. His last speech in which he attacked the corrupt policies and administration of Grant was printed posthumously in newspapers throughout the nation, proving that Johnson had learned, in the end, how to build a respectful and beneficial relationship with the press.[103]

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[99] Nast, Thomas. "The Whirligig of Time." *Harper's Weekly*. 20 Feb. 1875. <http://www.impeach-andrewjohnson.com/ListOfCartoons/The WhirligigOfTime.htm>.
[100] Milton, op. cit., p. 269.
[101] Ibid., op. cit., p. 269.
[102] "Andrew Johnson's Credentials Presented." *New York Times*. 21 Feb. 1875. final ed.: 2.
"Forty-Fourth Congress." *New York Tribune*. 18 Mar. 1875. final ed.: 4
"Senator Johnson's Speech." *Tennessee Patriot*. 22 Jun. 1875. final ed.: 2.
[103] Milton, op. cit., p. 269.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion

Findings

Historians offer differing opinions concerning Johnson and his policies. Some believe his troubles arose because of his political actions. Others believe it was his relationship with the press that led him to ruin, and a select group believe it was not Johnson himself, but the uncertainty of the time, that caused the leader to be rejected by the nation. One thing that is certain is that Johnson's troubles were to an extent caused by the opposition he faced from the Radical Republicans in Congress.

Most historians view Johnson as being inexcusably defiant when opponents suggested he compromise on the issue of Reconstruction. Many of Johnson's contemporaries criticized the President as being unwilling to compromise. Fellow Democrat Samuel Cox reported that when he proposed a compromise on the issue of Reconstruction, Johnson grew as "ugly as the devil."[104] Most sources indicate that the manner in which Johnson responded to reproach shaped the press's opinion of him as much as his positions on issues of race and Reconstruction.[105]

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[104] Trefousse, Hans L. Impeachment of a President: Andrew Johnson, the Blacks, and Reconstruction. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1975. p. 67.

[105] "The President's Speech." *New York Tribune.* 4 Dec. 1867. final ed.: 1.
"The President's Speech." *Daily Morning Chronicle.* 5 Dec. 1867. final ed.: 1.

Johnson's racial and Reconstruction policies may also be blamed for causing him to lose the support of both the Democrats and the Radical Republicans. The question that must be answered is why Johnson's political strategy failed to work. Lincoln had intended the issue of suffrage to be dealt with by allowing the federal government to grant suffrage to all former male slaves. By giving this responsibility to states, Johnson relieved himself of the responsibility of deciding how the issue of African American suffrage should be handled, and therefore, was able to avoid being identified as a supporter or an opponent of the movement. Because he believed he would retain the support of the majority of citizens in this decision, Johnson felt secure in placing his Reconstruction plan into effect. In doing this, Johnson ultimately sealed his political fate, for most individuals did not believe a president who had not been elected should have made such a crucial decision without consulting Congress.[106]

By not following the policy that Lincoln had outlined before his death, Johnson denied the one request that newspaper editors made when he took office. Editors of publications pledged their support to Johnson on the condition that he would follow Lincoln's policies.[107] Rather than taking an active role in ensuring African American suffrage and imposing strict regulations for states to rejoin the Union, Johnson chose to avoid making a controversial decision.

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[106] "The President's Speech." *Harper's Weekly.* 10 Mar. 1866. <http://www.impeach-andrewjohnson.com/05AJFirstVetoes/iiia-7.htm>.

[107] "From Washington." *American Commercial and Advisor.* 9 Mar. 1867. final ed.: 2.
"Minor Topics." *New York Times.* 25 May 1867. final ed.: 4.

Although Johnson avoided decisions that he feared would anger certain segments of the population, his refusal to state his position caused him to lose the respect and support of much of the press. Johnson's refusal to declare a position in this battle could have been related to the fact that he was a Tennessean. Though he remained loyal to the Union during the war, Johnson retained his pre-war popularity in his home state and was elected to represent Tennessee in the Senate after he left the White House. It seems possible that Johnson could have shown leniency to the South because of sympathy that he felt for his home.

One of Johnson's greatest weaknesses was that reporters had difficulty determining, in the early days of his presidency, precisely what Johnson's policy was in regard to Reconstruction. On every occasion when he would comment on his plan for Reconstruction, his plan "lacked specifics" causing publications of a variety of political leanings to praise it.[108] Even before Johnson had fallen out of favor with the press, newspapers occasionally noted that his addresses and plans seemed vague and did not include as many details as they would have liked.[109]

Examining Johnson's earliest speeches, it is clear that Johnson did little more than vow to remain true to the Constitution and promise to reunite the nation as quickly as possible and end any hostilities that existed. Although he

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[108] Sefton, James E. *Andrew Johnson and the Uses of Constitutional Power.* Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1980. p. 121.

[109] "News from Washington." *The Constitution.* 28 Aug. 1865. final ed.: 4.
"No Title." *Charleston Mercury.* 18 Jan. 1866. final ed.: 1.

made great promises to his country, he never laid out a specific plan in his speeches until pressure was placed on him by Congress.[110] It seems that journalists initially were impressed and inspired by his vision of a post-Reconstruction America. However, once they realized his actual plan contradicted Lincoln's proposal, they quickly changed their opinion of Johnson and lost respect for him. In 1867, the *Chicago Tribune* wrote following one of Johnson's speeches, "The President should have exerted himself to define a position." Because he neglected to clearly state his policies, the *Tribune* concluded that his speech would be widely read and would not have an "influence on the masses."[111] A writer for the *Alton Daily Telegraph* in Illinois wrote in 1868, "No man who has a . . . particle of self-respect . . . can long remain in the confidence of service of Andrew Johnson."[112]

Upon first examination, it seems that Johnson's impeachment scandal would have been the event that turned the press against him and caused him to lose the respect of the nation. Surprisingly though, by the time at which Johnson was impeached, the influential northern press disliked him so much and berated him so frequently that the impeachment made no noticeable difference in the scathing comments. Press comments were just as harsh and as frequent as they

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[110] "The President's Speech." *Daily Chronicle and Sentinel.* 27 Jun. 1865. final ed.: 1-2.
"Mr. Johnson's Speech." *Clinton Dispatch.* 21 Oct. 1865. final ed.: 1.
"Mr. Johnson's Speech." *The American.* 30 Jan. 1866. final ed.: 1-2.

[111] "The Senate Speech." *Chicago Tribune.* 4 Dec. 1867. final ed.: 2.

[112] "Reconstruction Policies Explained." *Alton Daily Telegraph.* August 1868. <http://www.newspaper archive.com/members/hitzone.aspx?currentimage=20>.

had been before there were even rumors of impeachment charges. An interesting point to note is that the Radicals' attempts to sabotage Johnson were unnecessary once Johnson had been impeached and no longer had the power to influence Reconstruction. As a result, the Radicals turned their attention to preparing Grant to assume the presidency and the newspapers' criticism of Johnson decreased significantly. Although newspapers did not praise the president for any of his actions, very few negative remarks could be found following the impeachment vote.

By examining the differences in reports published in the North and South, it seems periodicals in the South regarded Johnson with more respect and appreciation for his policies than the periodicals in the North. Many of the reporters from northern states were especially scathing in their criticisms of Johnson and his various policies. Political reports from southern states, however, seemed to ignore the issue of Johnson's competency to serve as leader of the nation. Instead their reports focused primarily on the Reconstruction regulations that had to be met in order for states to rejoin the Union. While the North criticized Johnson for making requirements for southern states too lenient during the Reconstruction, southern states were obviously pleased by the measures the president was taking and printed favorable reports of him. On most occasions, southern newspapers seemed to report only on the facts of an event with little

opinion included. When opinion was included concerning Johnson, it was unwaveringly favorable.

An interesting trend, however, is that neither side presented specific reasons to explain why they agreed or disagreed with the president. In fact, the only time the press offered a reason for their disapproval was when Johnson responded to his hecklers. Aside from these instances, the press tended to merely state their approval or disapproval without justifiable cause.

Not all northern newspapers disapproved of the role that Johnson was playing in the changing nation. Many newspapers remained supportive of Johnson's policies and praised his speeches for their tone and tastefulness. It seems that smaller publications removed from large, politically active cities displayed more loyalty and respect for the president regardless of the position that he had taken.

Because the press held such strong opinions regarding the president, it seems their words would have influenced the perception of its readers. Reports printed in newspapers and magazines were the only means by which citizens could hear about issues concerning their president. The reports offered by these periodicals during this time must have had an enormous impact on the public's perception of their leader. Because the North was reluctant to acknowledge the former Confederate states were once again part of the Union, reports printed in southern newspapers would have had little impact on the rest of the nation.

Northern newspapers, on the other hand, tended to extend influence over many regions of the country. Articles originally printed in the *Chicago Tribune*, the *New York Tribune*, and the *Daily Globe* of Washington, D.C. were frequently reprinted in other smaller cities' newspapers. Because of this, it seems likely that these publications would have been able to extend their influence to other regions of the country easily.

Another factor that one might argue could have lead newspaper editors and publishers to be so condemning of Johnson and to overlook facts that would have reflected favorably on him was their concern for maintaining their circulation rates. Prior to the Civil War, the circulation of newspapers was relatively low.[113] During the war, however, newspaper circulation surged to never before seen highs.[114] Periodicals began stationing field reporters throughout the states near battlegrounds, hoping to catch a glimpse of the dramatic action. Immediately following the end of the war, the president was assassinated. These events provided periodicals with shocking and gripping issues to discuss. Newspapers and magazines required high rates of production in order to survive. If these publications had printed the facts of Johnson's actions without harsh opinions, readers might have lost interest since they had become accustomed to more dramatic news accounts. It seems possible to

[113] Mott, op. cit., p. 9.
[114] Ibid., op. cit., pp. 10-11.

suggest that periodicals did not hesitate to publish scathing reviews of Johnson's policies in order to maintain their record-setting rates of publication.

Another problem that plagued Johnson's presidency was the manner in which he acted when the press was present. Many of Johnson's difficulties as president ultimately arose because of the poor impression that he made with the press on various occasions. On his first day as vice president, he appeared at the inauguration intoxicated. Despite the fact that he was suffering from malaria, he should have understood the impact that whiskey would have had on his condition. Because departing vice president Hamlin, who had close ties with the Radicals, offered him the drink, one must question whether the Radicals' sabotage of Johnson could have begun on the day that he replaced one of their own. By arriving intoxicated that day, Johnson gave the press an excellent opportunity to criticize any decision that he made in the future and even gave the press a justification for presenting him as an alcoholic. Although Lincoln was able to redeem Johnson in the eyes of the press following his inauguration spectacle, there was no one to redeem him once he had assumed the presidency.

Although the Radicals were working to make Johnson appear incompetent and undeserving of his position, it seems unlikely that their efforts would have succeeded had Johnson not lost his composure and responded to his hecklers in the manner that the Radicals had hoped. When Johnson responded to his hecklers, the press was shocked. They saw the president behaving in what

they considered a most unsuitable fashion. Because Lincoln was no longer present to step forward as an indisputable character witness, Johnson was subject to attacks by the press and new charges that he had been drinking. After such a shocking display, Johnson was unable to redeem himself in the eyes of the media. The influential, northern press seized the opportunity to condemn every policy that Johnson proposed.

Johnson's official speeches were crucial in defining the relationship that he maintained with the press during his time in office. If Johnson could not respond to his hecklers in a rational and calculated manner, the press expected him to ignore their comments all together. If Johnson had behaved as the press expected, it seems the public would have regarded him as a remarkable leader who undoubtedly would have inspired a sense of trust and authority in the citizens of his country. Although Johnson projected an image of a confident and diplomatic leader in most of his speeches, his reputation was destroyed when some of his responses caused the public to raise questions regarding his ability to lead the nation. If Johnson had succeeded in winning the respect of the nation, his Reconstruction policies might have not been met with such strong disapproval. He might have been able to foster a civil relationship with the Radicals in Congress and both sides might have been more willing to compromise, and therefore, would have been able to accomplish more during the critical first four years of Reconstruction.

The Radical Republicans must have resented the fact that a Democratic president had inherited the responsibility of overseeing Reconstruction. They planned attacks on Johnson that would cause the nation to question his character. The Radicals seemed to have had good intentions. They wanted to guarantee freedoms for the former slaves and ensure that the states that had abandoned the Union would be punished properly. Their goal was to prevent Johnson from enacting his plan for Reconstruction, so they would be able to enact their own. By removing Johnson from power, however, they left the nation with problems that could not be solved until his term in office had expired. It seems probable that this lack of leadership during such a critical stage would have reinforced hostilities between the North and the South and between former slaves and former slaveholders.

Because of the instability of the nation, anyone would have been challenged to find a way to mend the nation's hostilities. Johnson's task was made even more difficult by Radical attempts to damage his character. When Johnson attacked his hecklers he was playing into an elaborately staged sequence of events in which the Radicals hoped to remove any credibility that the president had. Once Johnson was free from the pressures of the presidency, his true merits could be seen once again, and he was met with respect and reverence when he returned to the Senate.

Limitations of the Study

One of the greatest limitations in researching this topic was the availability of primary resources. Although some newspapers and magazines archive articles from this time period on their websites, many newspapers from this period no longer exist. As a result, the study was largely limited to original documents that had been preserved by the National Historic Museum and Library in Greeneville, Tennessee. This museum and library is the home of the national Andrew Johnson Collection and contains a variety of original newspapers, magazines, and cartoons from the period that mention Johnson. Many of the newspapers that were archived were also in poor condition. Large pieces of the pages on which the articles were printed were missing. Some articles were stained and made it impossible to read the text. Because of the poor condition of these newspapers, many could not be examined.

Newspapers would often begin printing an opinion of Johnson and would promise to continue the discussion in the following day's edition. The National Historic Museum and Library usually did not have a copy of the following day's newspaper. This made it impossible to determine what conclusion the newspaper would reach regarding Johnson's actions.

Future Research

It would be worthwhile to examine the manner in which Lincoln was treated by the Radicals and how they responded to his Reconstruction policies. Following Lincoln's first nomination to represent the Republican Party, many Republican-affiliated newspapers disapproved of the choice.[115] It would be interesting to determine if this opinion changed after he was elected. When Grant ran for president in 1868, he defeated his Democratic opponent Horatio Seymour easily. It would be of interest, however, to determine if the Radicals disliked Seymour as much as Johnson and if they made any efforts to prevent him from winning the election.

Another way in which this study could be expanded that would give additional support to the assumptions made would be by examining more newspapers than this study included. Visits could be made to a variety of cities to explore the libraries and determine if additional newspapers have been archived that would provide further insight into how consistent the media was in berating Andrew Johnson.

[115] Mott, op. cit., p. 136.

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APPENDIX

TIMELINE OF JOHNSON'S CAREER

1830-33	Mayor of Greeneville
1835-37, 39-41	State representative
1841-43	State senator
1843-53	Congressman
1853-57	Governor of Tennessee
1857-62	U.S. senator
November 1860	Johnson encourages Congress to preserve the Union.
December 1860	The *Philadelphia Inquirer* calls Johnson the "nation's greatest statesman." The New York Tribune says Johnson has "aroused the admiration of the country." Author John Savage writes the speech is a "grand . . . effort of a Southern patriot against Southern treason."
1860-61	Johnson travels through Southern states promoting loyalty to the Union.
June 8, 1861	Only Southerner to retain his seat in the Senate
July 1861	Johnson introduces a resolution to the Senate to restore the Union. The Radicals oppose the resolution. Johnson denounces the Radicals on the Senate floor. Lincoln refers to Johnson as "one of the nation's greatest assets."
March 1862	Johnson is appointed military governor of Tennessee.
November 8, 1864	Lincoln and Johnson elected
March 4, 1865	Lincoln's second inauguration. Johnson arrives intoxicated.

March 5, 1865	The *New York World* calls Johnson an "insolent drunken brute."
	The *New York Herald* prints Johnson "evidently did not shun Bourbon county."
March 1865	Lincoln assures the nation that Johnson does not have a drinking problem.
April 15, 1865	Johnson is sworn in as president. Sumner visits Johnson to discuss a stricter Reconstruction plan.
April 1865	Senator pledges support to Johnson. "We have faith in you . . . There will be no trouble now in running the government."
	The *Philadelphia Ledger* pledges its full support to Johnson.
April-December 1865	Congress not in session
May 29, 1865	Johnson issues the Amnesty Proclamation. The Radicals call the proclamation "too lenient."
	The *Philadelphia Press* names Johnson the "most popular man in America."
	The *New York Tribune* writes Johnson is a "self-reliant and accomplished gentleman."
February 1866	Johnson attacks Radicals in speech.
	The *Independent* refers to Johnson's address as the "worst speech ever made in this country."
	The *Louisville Courier* prints "Andy . . . has been drunk for a week."
	Harper's Weekly calls the incident "an offense unprecedented in American history."

July 1866	The *New York Tribune* nicknames the president "Judas Johnson" for betraying the Reconstruction plan established by Lincoln.
August 1866	Johnson attacks Thaddeus Stevens and Wendell Phillips in a speech. The *New York Tribune* renames Johnson "Drunken Tailor." *Harper's Weekly* writes that Johnson has a "determination to disregard" the limits of his power "at his will."
March 2, 1867	Congress passes First Reconstruction Act despite Johnson's veto. Congress passed the Tenure of Office Act.
August 1867	Johnson suspends Stanton. The *Atlantic Monthly* calls Johnson "insincere as well as stubborn . . . greedy of popularity as well as arbitrary in disposition."
December 3, 1867	Johnson delivers a speech outlining his plan for Reconstruction. Johnson is emphatic in his policies and regretful of his relationship with Congress.
December 4, 1867	The *New York Tribune* writes, "Mr. Johnson hurls a fresh firebrand into the face of the country." The *Chicago Times* believes the speech would "exert no small influence on the masses." They note, "The president should have exerted himself to define a position." The *Chicago Tribune* writes "both houses were considerably annoyed" by Johnson's speech.

	The *Bridgeport Evening Farmer* praises Johnson for his "manly dignity" and declares the speech is a "remarkable state paper."
December 5, 1867	The *New York Evening Post* accuses Johnson of being "uncompromisingly bitter and dictatorial."
	The *New York Times* calls the speech "too bitter and hostile."
	The *Albany Argus* writes Johnson's speech is "thoroughly sound."
	The *Lynchburg Daily News* remarks Johnson's speech was filled with "great merit and statesmanship."
December 6, 1867	The *Journal* of Piqua, Ohio, says that "few objections would be made against" Johnson's speech.
	The *Daily Sentinel* of Raleigh prints, "It is a splendid exhibition of moral intrepidity and patriotic courage."
December 12, 1867	The *American Eagle* in Paoli, Illinois, writes, "In taste and tempter it is faultless."
December 13, 1867	The first attempt to impeach Johnson fails.
February 21, 1868	Johnson fires Edwin Stanton.
February 24, 1868	The second attempt to impeach Johnson is successful.
February 25, 1868	The *New York Tribune* writes that Johnson's administration is comprised of the "worst men

	that ever crawled like filthy reptiles at the footstools of power."
March 21, 1868	Nast draws cartoon in which Johnson is crushed beneath a book labeled "Constitution." The caption refers to Johnson as "the little boy who would persist in handling books above his capacity."
May 16, 1868	First article of impeachment vote (35 to 19)
May 26, 1868	Second and third articles vote (35 to 19), Johnson acquitted
May 27, 1868	The *Nation* writes the "failure to convict is regrettable."
April 24, 1869	Nast draws a cartoon called "Home at Last." Johnson is knocking on a door marked with a skull and cross bones. The sign above reads, "Hell." In the caption, Johnson says, "All right Lucifer; it's me."
February 20, 1875	Nast depicts Johnson boldly entering the Senate with his fellow senators bowing respectfully to him.
February 27, 1875	The *St. Louis Republican* calls Johnson's election into the Senate, "The most magnificent personal triumph which the history of American politics can show."

VITA

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