

# presidents of the *United States of America*

"I was the 17th  
President of the  
United States and  
the first one to be  
impeached."



**Andrew Johnson**



# Become a Presidential Historian By Solving This Puzzle

In this magazine, you'll learn all sorts of facts about Andrew Johnson's life and accomplishments. But there's still one last thing we need to know about him.

President Johnson had a nickname, but we need to find out what it was. You can help us uncover the answer! Hidden in the text are bolded letters. Read this magazine carefully to find them and fill the letters into the blanks below in the order they appear.

Once you've solved this puzzle, you'll be a true PragerU Kids presidential historian!

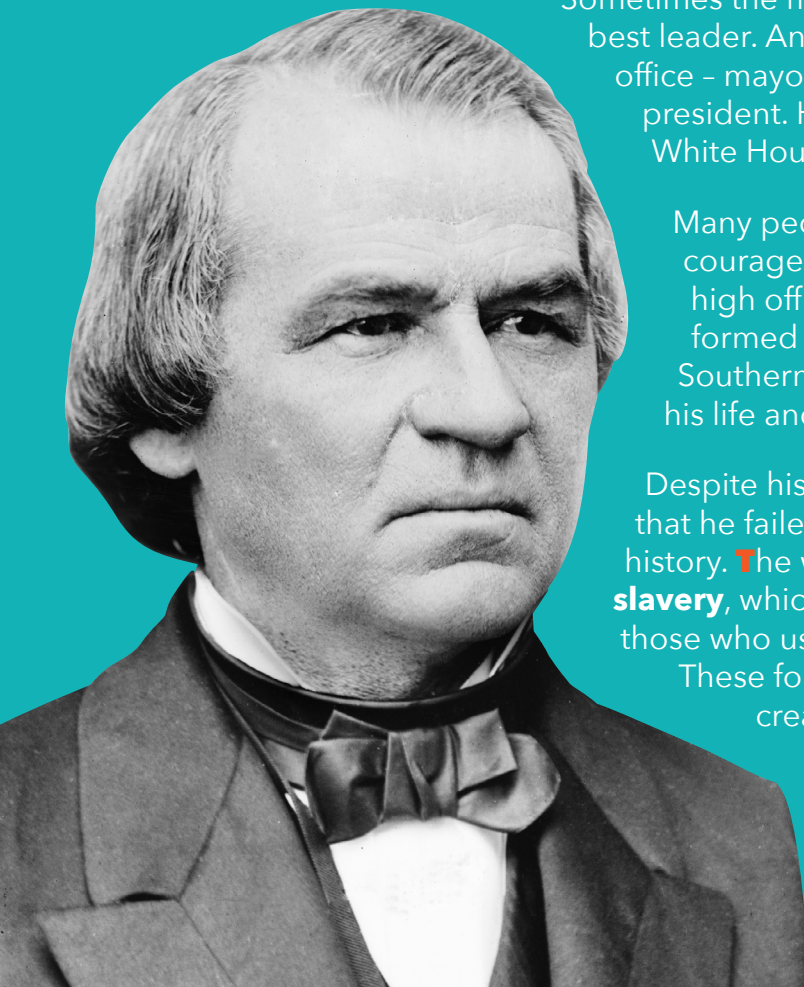
## Meet Andrew Johnson

Sometimes the most experienced person doesn't always make the best leader. Andrew Johnson had served in almost every political office – mayor, congressman, senator, governor, and vice president. He brought all of that experience with him to the White House when he became President in 1865.

Many people believed that Johnson was a determined and courageous man. He had risen from poverty and attained high office. When the South seceded from the Union and formed the **Confederacy**, he refused to join his fellow Southerners. He braved threats from his neighbors against his life and stayed loyal to the **Union** during the **Civil War**.

Despite his experience and his loyalty, most historians believe that he failed to lead America well during a very critical time in history. **T**he war resulted in the end of the evil practice of **slavery**, which freed four million African-Americans. Many of those who used to own slaves were angry that all men were free.

These former slave**h**olders committed acts of violence and created new, **discriminatory** laws that violated black Americans' basic rights. President Johnson did virtually nothing to protect the former enslaved servants. For this and many other reasons, he was the first President in American history to b**e** **impeached**.



# Interesting Facts

- He was the first of three U.S. Presidents (as of 2023) to be impeached - Bill Clinton and Donald Trump being the others.
- He was a member of the Democratic Party.
- He got married at a younger age than any other President (18 years and 139 days).
- His wife helped him learn how to read and write.
- He was the only U.S. senator from a Southern state to not join the Confederacy during the Civil War.
- He was the first President to take office because of the assassination of his predecessor.
- He is the only U.S. President (as of 2023) to serve in the U.S. Senate after leaving the White House.

## Young Andrew

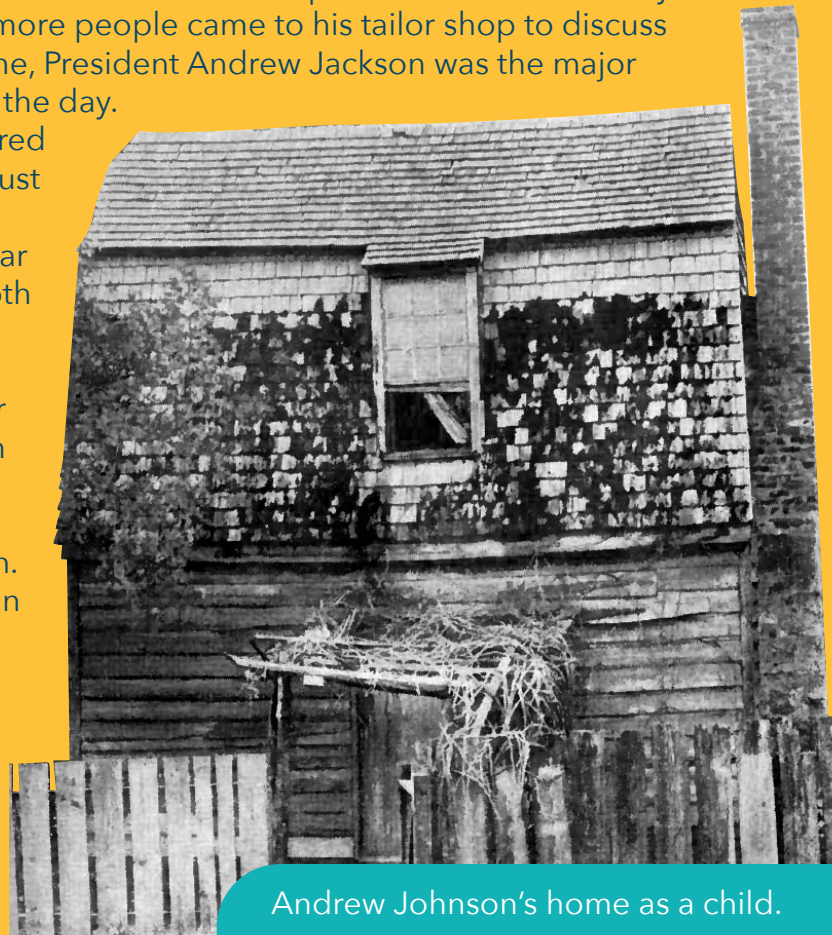
Andrew was born on December 29, 1808 in Raleigh, North Carolina. The Johnson family was very poor. His father worked in a tavern and died of a heart attack when Andrew was just three years old. His mother, Mary, became a weaver to support young Andrew and his older brother, William. Neither of Andrew's parents learned how to read, and Andrew himself never went to school.

When Andrew was 14, he was **apprenticed** as a **tailor**. Although Andrew enjoyed being a tailor, he did not like working for his mentor, so he and his brother ran away. Andrew eventually made it to Greenville, Tennessee where he opened up a tailoring shop of his own. Soon, Andrew had many customers, and his business became a success.

In 1827, when Andrew was 18, he married Eliza McCardle. They had five children. Eliza had a more advanced education than Andrew, so she taught him how to read and write. Learning how to read opened up a new world for Andrew, and he began devouring books.

Johnson also became interested in political issues. He frequently talked with his customers about the important events of the day. Soon, more and more people came to his tailor shop to discuss politics. At the time, President Andrew Jackson was the major political figure of the day.

Johnson considered him a hero - not just because their names were similar and they were both from Tennessee, but also because Jackson stood for the common man against people with political power and wealth. As a common man himself, Johnson felt inspired and supported Jackson's Democratic Party.

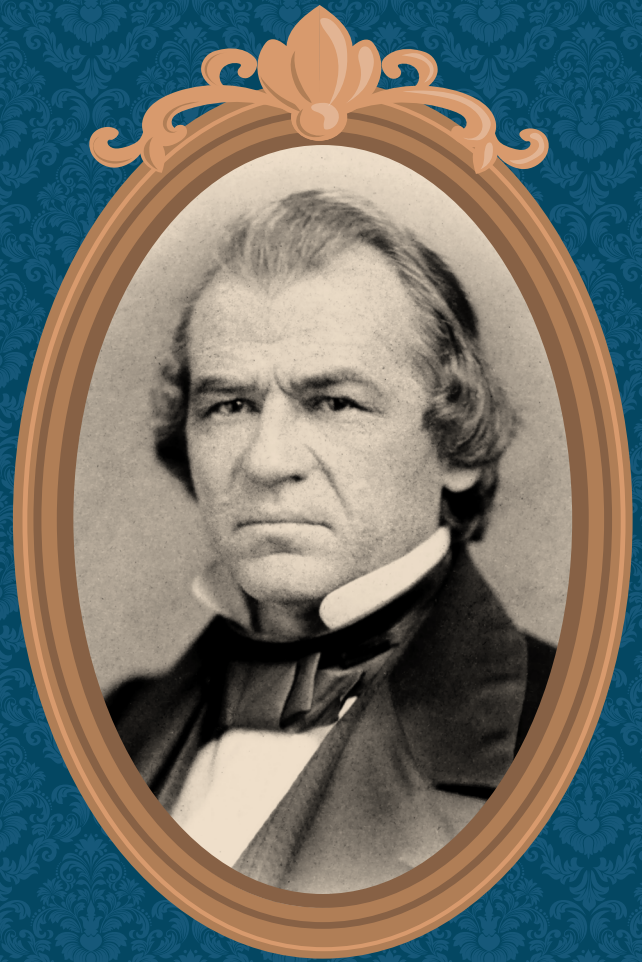


Andrew Johnson's home as a child.

## Rise to Power

Johnson had a passion for politics, but he also discovered he was a good public speaker. His friends believed that these skills would help him succeed in politics. In 1834, he was elected as the Mayor of Greenville.

His long political career had begun, and he would go on to serve in almost every kind of public office in the American government. He was elected to the Tennessee state legislature. Then, in 1843, he moved to Washington, DC to become a member of the U.S. House of Representatives. Later, in 1853, he returned to his state to become Governor of Tennessee. In 1857, after four years as governor, he returned to the nation's capital to serve in the U.S. Senate.



Mayor of Greenville 1834

Tennessee State Legislature 1835

U.S. House of Representatives 1843

Governor of Tennessee 1853

U.S. Senate 1857



# Civil War

Throughout these years, the United States was divided over slavery. The country had acquired new territories and many Southerners wanted them to have slavery. The Northerners, meanwhile, wanted to prevent the spread of slavery. In 1860, Abraham Lincoln was elected President. Since he opposed the expansion of slavery, 11 Southern states **seceded** from the United States. They formed a new country, called the Confederate States of America, or the Confederacy, where people could continue to own slaves.

Johnson's state, Tennessee, was one of those 11 states. As a Tennessee senator, he was under a lot of pressure to support the Confederacy. Johnson was fine with people owning slaves, and he owned slaves himself,

but he also felt it was wrong for the Confederate states to leave the United States. He refused to join the Confederacy and, instead, stayed loyal to the Union. This made a lot of Southerners angry at him and some even threatened to kill him, but his actions made him a hero to those in the North who wanted to save the Union.

The Civil War broke out in April 1861 when the Southern states attacked a Union fort. The war would last until 1865, with the nation losing over 620,000 Americans. Republican President Abraham Lincoln led the Union to victory and pushed for the end of slavery. He was grateful for Johnson's loyalty and, even though they were from opposite parties, Lincoln chose him as his vice president in the 1864 election.

## Quote

*"The people of the United States have made me what I am... the people are everything."  
- March 1865*



# President

When the war ended, Lincoln faced a difficult task: to reunite the country while protecting the rights of newly freed African-Americans. Thus began the era now known as **Reconstruction**. Unfortunately, Lincoln was shot by an assassin, dying on April 15, 1865. On that day, Andrew Johnson became President. Johnson, too, wanted to reunite the country, but he did not have Lincoln's compassion towards African-Americans.

When Democrats in Southern states passed laws that violated the rights of black people, such as preventing them from voting or arresting them even if they hadn't committed a crime, Johnson refused to act. When the U.S. Congress passed the Civil Rights bill in 1866 to protect the

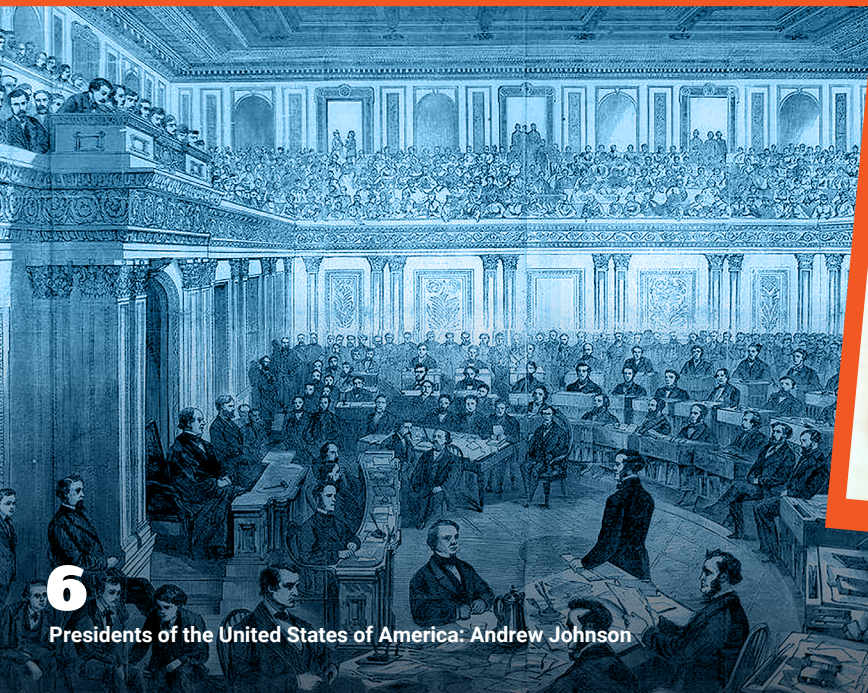
African-Americans, Johnson **vetoed** it. Soon, an organization called the **Ku Klux Klan** rose up and committed acts of violence and murder against black people across the South. Again, Johnson refused to do anything to stop it.

The Republicans in Congress wanted to protect African-Americans and were mad at Johnson's policies. They tried to restrict his power and passed a law controlling who could serve in his administration. Johnson fought back, which led the Republicans to impeach him in 1868. Although Johnson survived impeachment and remained in office, his days in the White House were numbered. He had made too many enemies on both sides. The Democrats refused to select him as their candidate in the 1868 election.

## Quote

*"Your President is now the Tribune of the people, and, thank God, I am, and intend to assert the power which the people have placed in me."  
- April 1866*

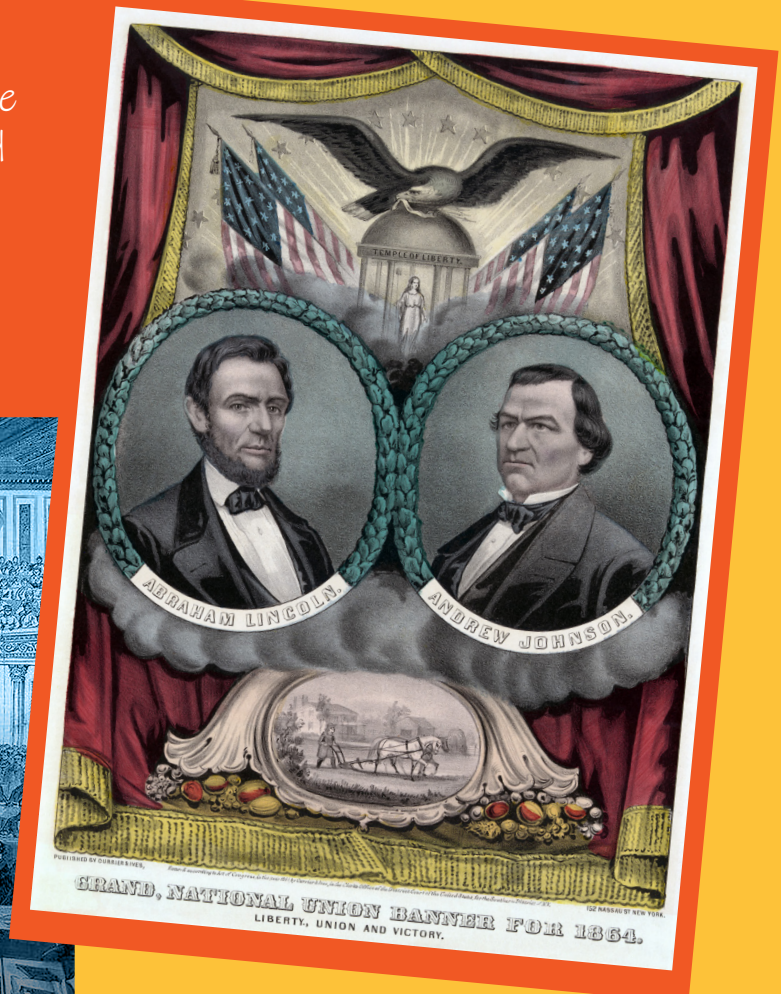
Impeachment trial in 1868



6

Presidents of the United States of America: Andrew Johnson

Lincoln-Johnson campaign poster



# Almost Assassinated

Andrew Johnson became President when John Wilkes Booth assassinated his predecessor, Abraham Lincoln. However, Johnson himself almost fell victim to assassination, too. Booth organized a group of conspirators to kill Lincoln and other members of the government. They hoped that, in doing so, they could revive the Southern cause and continue the Civil War.

One of Booth's co-conspirators, George Atzerodt, followed Johnson to his hotel the same night Lincoln was shot and could have attacked him. Fortunately for Johnson, Atzerodt got nervous and left the hotel.



## Alaska

During Johnson's presidency, the United States acquired the territory of Alaska. Johnson's secretary of state, William Seward, negotiated the purchase of Alaska from the Russian Empire for \$7.2 million. Although some mocked the purchase as "Seward's Folly" and "Seward's Icebox," the deal added half a million square miles to the United States.

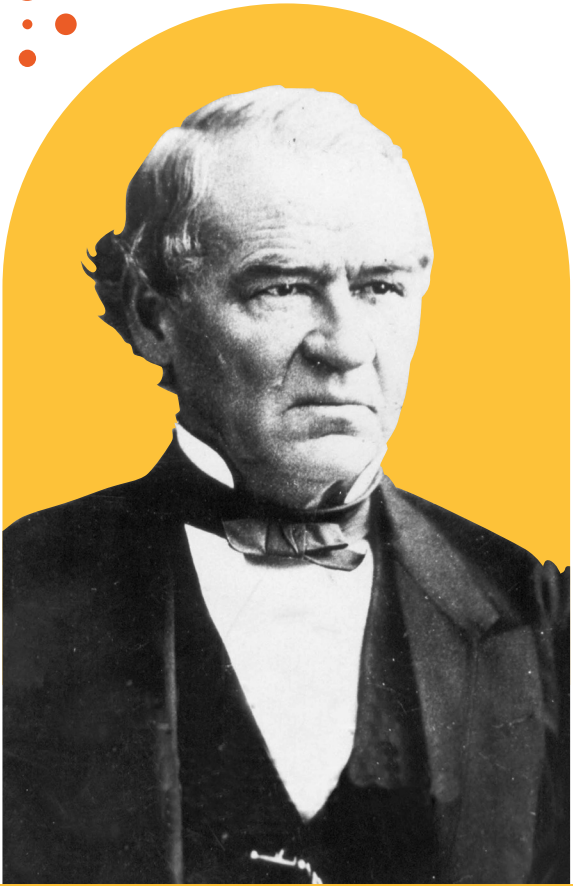
The Alaska territory eventually became a state in 1959 and is currently the largest state in the Union. Historians consider it one of the few successes in Johnson's administration.

## Retirement

Johnson left the presidency in 1869, succeeded by the victorious Civil War general Ulysses S. Grant. He felt embittered by the impeachment and wanted to restore his reputation. He felt the best way to do that was to win public office again. In 1875, he succeeded, elected once again as a senator from Tennessee. Just months after he took office, however, he suffered a stroke and died on July 31, 1875 in Elizabethton, Tennessee at the age of 66.

## Quote

*"I have been contending against traitors and treason and secession, and the dissolution of the Union."  
- April 1866*



## Legacy

Andrew Johnson's story might have been one of the greatest in American history. He overcame poverty and a lack of education to reach America's highest office. He served in more government positions than almost anyone else in American history. Many Americans thought he was a brave man who was not afraid of standing up for what he believed was right, even when it was unpopular.

These qualities, however, weren't enough to make him a good leader. As President, Johnson stubbornly refused to work with Congress to bring the country together after the Civil War, which earned him many enemies. It is no coincidence that he was the first U.S. President to be impeached. Even worse, he believed that white people alone should enjoy freedom and equality in America. It is very unfortunate that he became President during such an important time for black people in America. By failing to protect their rights, Johnson ensured that African-Americans would suffer from unjust laws long past his own lifetime.

## Fill in the Blank

President Johnson was born in \_\_\_\_\_. He worked as a \_\_\_\_\_. Johnson's \_\_\_\_\_ taught him to read and write. He became interested in politics and was elected as \_\_\_\_\_ of Greenville in \_\_\_\_\_. Then he became the Governor of \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_. Four years later, he was elected to the U.S. \_\_\_\_\_.

In 1861, the \_\_\_\_\_ War began. There were two sides: the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. President Lincoln led the \_\_\_\_\_ Army to a victory and pushed for an end to \_\_\_\_\_.

After the war, Lincoln was \_\_\_\_\_ on April 15, \_\_\_\_\_ and Johnson became President. He was \_\_\_\_\_ in 1868. After his presidency, he became a Senator from \_\_\_\_\_, but died months later at the age of \_\_\_\_\_.



# USA Puzzle



Do you think you can put together a map of the United States of America?  
Cut out the 48 mainland states and try to put them together. If you need help, check the map on page 10.  
Bonus: Can you label every state?



# Glossary

**Confederacy:** The country created by the 11 Southern states when they seceded from the United States from 1860 to 1861.

**Union:** The United States government during the Civil War that fought to prevent the Confederate states from seceding.

**Civil War:** The conflict in the United States from 1861 to 1865 between the Union government and the Confederacy, which wanted to break away from the Union and start a new, independent country.

**Slavery:** A system where people are allowed to own other people and make them work without paying them.

**Discriminatory:** Treating someone differently and unfairly from everyone else, often because of their race, age, or sex.

**Impeach:** To charge a public official with wrongdoing or misconduct, with the goal of removing them from office.

**Apprentice:** A person who is learning a trade from someone else with more experience.

**Tailor:** A person who makes clothes.

**Secede:** To leave an organization or government.

**Reconstruction:** The period in American history after the American Civil War ended in 1865 until the late 1870s. The goal of Reconstruction was to rebuild the country, bring the former Confederate states back into the United States, and to assist the newly freed African-Americans in becoming U.S. citizens. Many historians believed that this period failed in its goals, since African-Americans continued to suffer under unjust laws.

**Veto:** When a president rejects a bill by Congress so it doesn't become a law.

**Ku Klux Klan:** A group that began organizing soon after the American Civil War in the 1860s that believed in white supremacy and attacked and killed African-Americans.

# Sources

Cohen, Jared. *Accidental Presidents: Eight Men Who Changed America*. Simon & Schuster, 2019.

Gordon-Reed, Annette. *Andrew Johnson: The American Presidents Series: The 17th President, 1865-1869*. Times Books, 2011.

Means, Howard. *The Avenger Takes His Place: Andrew Johnson and the 45 Days That Changed the Nation*. Harcourt, 2006.

**Images:** Getty Images, WikiCommons, FreePix

## Answers:

### JOHNSON'S NICKNAME: THE TENNESSEE TAILOR

President Johnson was born in North Carolina. He worked as a tailor.

Johnson's wife taught him to read and write. He became interested in politics and was elected as Mayor of Greenville in 1834. Then he became the Governor of Tennessee in 1853. Four years later, he was elected to the U.S. Senate.

In 1861, the Civil War began. There were two sides: the Union and Confederate. President Lincoln led the Union Army to a victory and pushed for an end to slavery.

After the war, Lincoln was assassinated on April 15, 1865 and Johnson became President. He was impeached in 1868. After his presidency, he became a Senator from Tennessee, but died months later at the age of 66.

