



State of Tennessee
Department of State
Tennessee State Library and Archives
403 Seventh Avenue North
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0312

JOHNSON, ANDREW
(1808-1875)
PAPERS
1846-1875

Processed by:

Harriet Chappell Owsley
Archival Technical Services

Accession Numbers: 131-139, 193, 575, 702, 998, 1466, 1622, 1967.087

Date Completed: November 15, 1958

Location: I-B-5

Microfilm Accession Number: 1203

MICROFILMED

INTRODUCTION

The papers of Andrew Johnson (1808-1875), Tennessee State Legislator, 1835-1837; Tennessee State Senator, 1841-1843; U.S. Congressman, 1843-1853; Governor of Tennessee, 1853-1857; U.S. Senator, 1857-1862, 1874-1875; Military Governor of Tennessee, 1862-1865; Vice President of the United States, 1865; and President of the United States, 1865-1869; were obtained by gifts and purchases over a period of thirty or forty years.

The materials in this finding aid measure .42 cubic feet. There are no restrictions on the materials. Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the Andrew Johnson Papers may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The papers of Andrew Johnson, composed of approximately 100 items for the period 1846-1875, contain correspondence, clippings, a broadside, two pardons, a proclamation, a memorial pamphlet, and a few other items. There are eight original letters, one photostat and two copies of letters written by Johnson. Four of the original letters were written by Johnson to his daughter, Mary, and are rather significant for the insight into Johnson's character; one letter to an East Tennessee newspaper editor makes some interesting political observations. A letter of December 29, 1836, from Johnson to Hon. George Jones discusses the possibility of Johnson running for the Tennessee Senate against Bradley of Hawkins County, Tennessee. A letter written by Andrew Johnson to E.G. Eastman in 1849 contains his views on issues for the canvass against the Whigs.

In addition to the above mentioned papers there are a few clippings; a broadside containing the "Appeal to the People of Tennessee" by Andrew Johnson when he was made Military Governor in March 1862; a page from *Harper's Weekly* for October 14, 1865; a poem entitled "Andrew Johnson on the Stump or My Policy in the West;" an official proclamation; a speech made at the premier of the picture about Andrew Johnson; a memorial pamphlet; a medal to "Sir Veto", a scrapbook, and a few other items of personal memorabilia.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Andrew Johnson

- 1808 Born December 29 in Raleigh, North Carolina – Son of Jacob and Mary McDonough Johnson. Jacob Johnson was a bank porter and sexton in Raleigh.
- 1811 Jacob Johnson died leaving his family in poverty. Andrew and his brother were apprenticed to a tailor later.
- 1826 Moved to Tennessee with mother and stepfather and finally settled at Greeneville.
- 1827 May 17 married Eliza McCardle, the daughter of a Scottish shoemaker who aided with his studies and encouraged him always. They had five children: Martha, Charles, Mary, Robert and Andrew. He had a tailor shop in Greeneville but continued his studies.
- 1830 Was elected alderman of Greeneville twice and was then chosen Major.
- 1835 Elected to the legislature of Tennessee from Greene and Washington counties.
- 1837 Defeated for reelection.
- 1839 Reelected to legislature.
- 1840 Elector-at-large on the Democratic ticket and canvassed for Van Buren.
- 1841 Elected to the state senate.
- 1843-1853 Elected to Congress as Representative of First District of Tennessee.
- 1853 Elected Governor of Tennessee.
- 1855 Reelected Governor.
- 1857 Elected to United States Senate.
- 1860 December 18, while Secession convention was being held in Charleston, he declared himself for the Union and remained in Congress when other Southern senators withdrew.

- 1862 Appointed by Lincoln military Governor of Tennessee in March.
- 1864 Elected Vice President.
- 1865 April 15 became President after assassination of Lincoln. He had the problem of Reconstruction to face and a fight with Congress.
- 1868 Impeachment proceedings against Johnson were instigated but were not successful.
- 1869 Unsuccessful candidate for U.S. Senate.
- 1872 Unsuccessful candidate for Representative-at-Large to Congress.
- 1874 Elected to U.S. Senate after attack of yellow fever.
- 1875 Died July 31.

CONTAINER LIST

Box 1

1. Clippings and broadsides
2. Correspondence – December 29, 1836 – 1849
3. Correspondence – 4 letters to his daughter, Mary, who later became Mrs. Daniel Stover, dated 1850, 1851, 1873, 1875
4. Correspondence – November 10, 1854
5. Correspondence – Photostat, June 5, 1856
6. Correspondence – typed copy of letter dated January 13, 1860, to John Trimble
7. Correspondence – Constitutional amendment forbidding slavery, April 8, 1864
8. Correspondence – July 10, 1865, Johnson to William Brownlow
9. Memorabilia
10. Speeches and sketches
11. Scrapbook
12. Permission to keep firearms signed to Andrew Johnson issued to Miss Maxwell, 1863
13. “Last Political Conversation of Johnson”

Portfolio

1. Pardon signed by Andrew Johnson to George Pattison, August 31, 1835
2. Pardon signed by Andrew Johnson to Aaron L. Mims, April 7, 1866
3. Commission of Brevet Major to Lewis T. Morris signed by Andrew Johnson, September 10, 1866

ABSTRACTS OF JOHNSON LETTERS

December 29, 1836, Greeneville, Tennessee, Johnson to Hon. George Jones, Fayetteville, Tennessee. Incomplete letter discusses the possibility of Johnson's running for the Tennessee Senate against Bradley of Hawkins County, Tennessee, in accordance with the wishes of his friends. (See folder 2.)

July 21, 1846, Washington, D.C., Johnson to an unnamed friend in East Tennessee. Marked "private." He makes some interesting political observations. "E. Tennessee is not much known in these parts where favors and offices worth having are to be bestowed. She stands in much higher repute immediately before an election for president than after it is over." He also wrote that the tariff was before the Senate and its fate was doubtful. "The passage of the bill depends upon our Spencer Jarnagin & Wm. H. Haywood of N.C." In this letter he also wrote, "[Peter] Turney has behaved well, and so far he has proved himself as good a democrat as he ever was." He said he had received only two number of "your paper" during the session. This it would seem was written to a newspaper editor in East Tennessee, possibly Heiskell. (See folder 2.)

May 27, 1849, Greeneville, Tennessee, Johnson to Elbert G. Eastman. Contains his views on the issues to be stressed in the canvass and wants Eastman to induce William Trousdale to campaign on same issues. The issues were to be slavery, public lands, and the election of the judiciary by the people. He thought there was nothing to be gained by making issues of the Bank, the tariff, and an independent treasury. (See folder 2.)

December 7, 1850, Washington, D.C., Johnson to his daughter, Mary, who later became Mrs. Daniel Stover. She was in school at Rogersville, Tennessee. This is deduced from the letter in which her father wrote, "I see you have dated your letter Greeneville instead of Rogersville, this little thing shows the force of habit." The letter is full of fatherly advice about how she should conduct herself. He told her to write to her brother, Robert, who was to go to Franklin College. She had evidently complained of the diet of "bacon and cabbage." He told her it would be a good training for better living.

January 18, 1851, Washington, D.C., Johnson to daughter, Mary. Johnson wrote that he had received letters from all four of his children by the same mail. He wrote that "Robert went to Nashville and back with the speed of John Gilpin. I was anxiously looking for a letter from him announcing his arrival at Franklin College, when lo!! here came a letter from Greenville from the young man informing me he had returned home. I suppose with his diploma in his pocket a complete graduate. The excuse is the Cholera was there and after reaching these he all at once came to the

conclusion that he could learn as much at home as he could there, a very fortunate conclusion his mind happened to come to after traveling three hundred miles.”
(See folder 2.)

November 10, 1854, Nashville, Tennessee, Johnson to S.L. Bellsuyden. Johnson would call and see him and he would procure a musket if it was for the proposed purpose.
(See folder 4.)

June 5, 1856, Nashville, Tennessee, Johnson to Hon. W.W. Pepper. Marked “private.”
Regarding the shortcomings of the Tennessee Legislature. (See folder 5.)

January 13, 1860 (1861), Washington, D.C., Johnson to Hon. John Trimble. Marked “private.” Regarding the political situation in Tennessee immediately preceding the Civil War. He thought Tennessee would stand firm and play an important part in bringing back the seceding states instead of being dragged out of the Union or drawn into a Southern Confederacy. He gives his views and calls those people traitors who are trying to bring about secession. (See folder 6.)

April 8, 1864, Nashville, Tennessee, no addressee. Johnson states that he will support a constitutional amendment forbidding slavery. (See folder 7.)

July 10, 1865, Washington, D.C., Johnson to Gov. William Brownlow. Requests that in accordance with laws just passed Brownlow will see that the laws passed by the last Legislature regarding voting are faithfully executed. Gen. Thomas will assist in maintaining civil authority. (See folder 8.)

June 29, 1873, Greeneville, Tennessee, Johnson to daughter, Mary. “I have performed my duty to my God and Country and my family. I have nothing to fear – approaching death to me is the mere shadow of God’s protecting wing – beneath it I almost feel sacred – here I know can no evil come – here I will rest in quiet and peace beyond the shaft – the influence of envy and jealous enemies, where Treason and Traitors in state, back-sliders and hypocrites [*sic*] in church an have no place – Where the great fact will be realized that God is truth and gratitude the highest of men. Adieu – Sic iter ad astra.” Written before leaving on Sunday evening while the cholera was raging in its most violent form. “All seems gloom and despair.” On the back of this letter is written, “From Your Grand Fathers Table as written by himself.”
(See folder 2.)

July 26, 1875, Greeneville, Tennessee, Johnson to daughter, Mary. Johnson wrote in this letter that he would be at the Depot on Wednesday morning and if convenient she could send for him. He wrote that he hoped her mother was better. Johnson died July 31, 1875, at his daughter’s house, only a few days after this letter was written.