



The Impeachment of Andrew Johnson

Andrew Johnson was the 17th president of the United States, serving from 1865 to 1869. He succeeded Abraham Lincoln after his assassination and became the first president to be impeached by the US Congress. Johnson's impeachment was a highly controversial event, and it had significant implications for the presidency and the country as a whole.

Johnson's impeachment was primarily a result of his opposition to the Radical Republicans' Reconstruction policies. After the Civil War, the Radical Republicans sought to ensure that the newly freed slaves were protected and given full citizenship rights. Johnson, however, was a Southern Democrat who opposed many of the Radical Republicans' proposals.

Johnson's veto of the Civil Rights Act of 1866 was the final straw for the Radical Republicans. The act was designed to protect the newly freed slaves' civil rights, including their right to own property, make contracts, and access the courts. Johnson vetoed the bill, claiming that it was unconstitutional and violated states' rights.

The Radical Republicans responded by passing the Reconstruction Act of 1867, which removed the Southern states' autonomy and placed them under military rule. The act also required the Southern states to draft new constitutions that guaranteed civil rights to all citizens, regardless of race. Johnson opposed this act as well and attempted to block its implementation.

In response to Johnson's opposition to their policies, the Radical Republicans sought to impeach him. They accused him of violating the Tenure of Office Act, which had been passed in 1867. The act required the president to seek Senate approval before removing any federal officials from office. Johnson had removed Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton without Senate approval, leading to his impeachment.

The impeachment trial began on March 30, 1868, and lasted for several months. The House of Representatives served as the prosecution team, and Johnson's defense team consisted of his personal lawyers. The trial was highly contentious, and Johnson narrowly avoided being removed from office. The final vote in the Senate was 35 in favor of conviction and 19 against, one vote short of the two-thirds majority needed to remove him from office.

Despite Johnson's acquittal, the impeachment trial had a significant impact on the presidency and the country as a whole. It established the principle that the president could be held accountable for his actions and that he was not above the law. It also highlighted the tensions between the executive and legislative branches of government and the importance of maintaining a balance of power between them.

In conclusion, Andrew Johnson's impeachment was a controversial event that had significant implications for the presidency and the country. Although he was not removed from office, his impeachment established the principle that the president could be held accountable for his actions and set a precedent for future impeachments. It also highlighted the importance of maintaining a balance of power between the executive and legislative branches of government.

1. Which of the following is true based on the information in the passage?

- a) Andrew Johnson and the Radical Republicans shared similar beliefs.
- b) Andrew Johnson and the Radical Republicans agreed on most policies.
- c) Andrew Johnson and the Radical Republicans disagreed on important policies.
- d) Andrew Johnson set policies to ensure that the rights of African Americans were expanded and protected.

2. Johnson was ultimately impeached because he...

- a) disagreed with Radical Republicans over the 14th Amendment.
- b) failed to consult Congress on the dismissal of his Secretary of War.
- c) implemented policies designed to weaken the South.
- d) agreed to place the Southern states in military districts controlled by the United States Government.

3. Why did Andrew Johnson attempt to veto the Civil Rights Act of 1866?

- a) He believed it was unconstitutional and ignored states' rights.
- b) He felt it was too harsh.
- c) He felt it gave too much leniency to Southern landowners.
- d) He felt it gave too much power to the states.

4. The phrase "final straw" is figurative language in the following sentence. Which is the best meaning?

Johnson's veto of the Civil Rights Act of 1866 was the final straw for the Radical Republicans.

- a) Best possible choice.
- b) The act that brings a compromise.
- c) Something that works that seems impossible.
- d) Something that can no longer be tolerated and causes action.

5. How did the Radical Republicans react to Johnson's veto of the Civil Rights Act of 1866?

- a) They passed the Reconstruction Act of 1867.
- b) They agreed to a compromise.
- c) They agreed to modify the Civil Rights Act of 1866 to get Johnson's approval.
- d) They agreed to impeach Johnson

6. Which of the following WAS NOT part of the Reconstruction Act of 1867?

- a) Southern states were forced to pay heavy fines for their roles in the Civil War.
- b) Southern states were forced to write new state constitutions.
- c) Southern states were placed under military rule.
- d) Southern states were forced to guarantee equal rights to all citizens.

7. If an answer to a question is "It established the principle that the president could be held accountable for his actions and that he was not above the law."

What could be the question?

- a) What were the major principles involved in Johnson's presidency?
- b) What evidence did the House of Representatives use in its impeachment proceedings?
- c) Why was Johnson impeached?
- d) What impact did Johnson's impeachment have on the future of the presidency?

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1. (c)
 2. (b)
 3. (a)
 4. (d)
 5. (a)
 6. (a)
 7. (d)
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