



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

**MILITARY GOVERNOR ANDREW JOHNSON**  
**(1808-1875)**  
**1862-1865**

**GP 20**

*Processed by:*

Elbert Watson  
Archival Technical Services

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## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Official Papers of Military Governor Andrew Johnson contain several important documents which provide one with an insight into conditions existing in Tennessee while the Civil War was still raging. One of the most intriguing letters came from Isaac T. Reneau who, on March 21, 1862, wrote Johnson a detailed account of some of the recent activities of the noted Confederate guerilla, Champ Ferguson. Ghastly details of Ferguson's bushwhacking work were described, one being that of the death of "a man by the name of Frogg, who was on his own bed, and quit sick, he first shot him in the mouth, and then through the brain, the last shot Ferguson said, was to make him die easy". Identifying himself as a "preacher of the gospel". Reneau pleaded with Johnson to bring Ferguson to justice.

The subject of guerilla warfare is mentioned prominently throughout the correspondence, particularly in 1864. Lt. Colonel M. L. Patterson told of "Guerilla Bands of Bushwhackers, Murders, Robbers (sic), and Plunders existing all along the mountains on the south side of East Tennessee". J. P. Mitchell, surgeon, 12<sup>th</sup> Tennessee Cavalry, U.S., witnessed "suffering families—from East Tennessee who were driven from their homes and families by the enemy of our country, secreting themselves in the mountains..and now here they are suffering as I never supposed any American citizen would have to suffer". Other documents reveal that the guerilla activity spread into the Middle and West Tennessee, causing considerable consternation on the part of Federal officials there.

Dr. R.B.C. Howell, a prominent Nashville Baptist minister of the period, provides one of the most provocative documents, in which he cites reasons why he could not, in good conscience take the oath of allegiance to the United States as instructed by Governor Johnson. One of the most respected men of that era, Dr. Howell was meticulous to carefully, yet forthrightly, explain his position. He closed by expressing willingness to "take the consequences". Later he spent a short period of time in prison, but this is not brought out in the papers.

Those who admire General Nathan Bedford Forrest will be interested in a letter on April 29, 1864, by Fielding Hurst, Colonel, 6<sup>th</sup> Tennessee Cavalry, bewailing the "devastation and destruction" being wrought in West Tennessee and other "Rebels (who) are allowed to float at large, sacking, burning, and plundering". Hurst offered the services of his regiment to alleviate the suffering of loyal Unionists in that area.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

### **Andrew Johnson**

(Democrat)

Born into poverty in North Carolina in 1808, Johnson had no formal education. He taught himself to read and learned the tailor's trade. He came to Tennessee in 1826 and set up a tailor's shop. He served as alderman, mayor, member of the state house, member of the state senate, member of Congress, vice president under Abraham Lincoln, president upon Lincoln's death and member of the U. S. Senate. As military governor he paved the way for Tennessee to rejoin the Union after the Civil War and pushed for the first tax for public education. As president of the United States he was impeached for his lenient Reconstruction policies and escaped conviction by one vote. He died in 1875.

Source: *Tennessee Blue Book*, 1999-2000, p. 475.

## CONTAINER LIST

### BOX 1

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| 1. Correspondence – Governor Andrew Johnson                           | 1862-1865 |
| 2. Correspondence – General-Blackwell-Wolfe                           | 1862      |
| 3. Correspondence – General-Cliffe-Rosecrans                          | 1863      |
| 4. Military Correspondence  | 1864      |
| 5. Correspondence – General-Anderson-McKee                            | 1865      |
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| 9. Circular Administrative Correspondence                             | 1864      |
| 10. George M. Adams to Mrs. A. Johnson Re: death of<br>Andrew Johnson |           |
| 11. Index Cards A-W   |           |

### BOX 2

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| 1. Requests for Commissions, Appointments, etc. Ber-Wil | 1862 |
| 2. Requests for Commissions, Appointments, etc. Agn-You | 1863 |
| 3. Requests for Commissions, Appointments, etc. Bin-You | 1864 |
| 4. Requests for Commissions, Appointments, etc. Col-Whe | 1865 |
| 5. Requisitions – Mor-Sch                               | 1862 |
| 6. Petitions for Clemency – Bla-Wen                     | 1862 |
| 7. Petitions for Clemency – Bar-Win                     | 1863 |
| 8. Petitions for Clemency – Afa-Wis                     | 1864 |
| 9. Petitions for Clemency – Cam-Sul                     | 1865 |

## NAME INDEX

This index contains names of persons holding influential positions during the period. In some instances, however, correspondence is included because the content is important enough to warrant attention in the index. The figures in the parenthesis immediately following each name denote the total number of letters in the folder from that person. The identification of the writer and the site from where the letters were written are included whenever possible.

### **Box 1, Folder 2, 1862**

Dr. R.B.C. Howell (1) Baptist minister, Nashville, Tennessee.

Isaac F. Reneau (1) Minister, Tompkinsville, Kentucky.

### **Box 1, Folder 3, 1863**

Major General W.S. Rosecrans (1) Stevenson, Alabama.

### **Box 1, Folder 4, 1864**

Fielding Hurst (1) Colonel, 6<sup>th</sup> Tennessee Cavalry, Memphis, Tennessee.