



Andrew Johnson and His Governors: An Examination of Failed Reconstruction Leadership

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*ANDREW JOHNSON AND HIS GOVERNORS:
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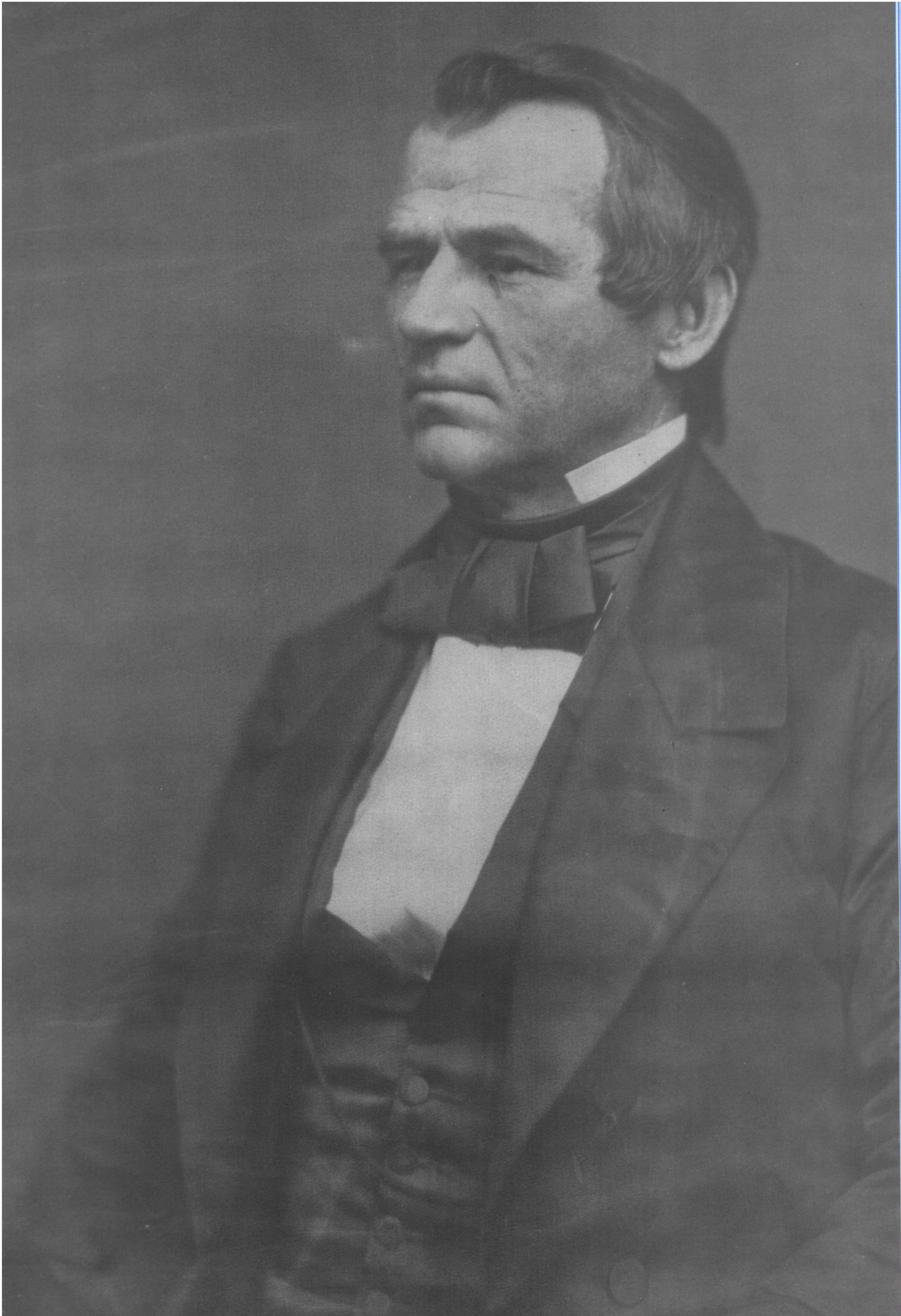
BY RYAN A. SWANSON

Over the course of forty-one days, during the first four months of his presidency, Tennessean Andrew Johnson appointed seven men to be provisional governors in the states of the recently defeated South. He had no choice, Johnson believed, but to act expediently. "The United States shall guarantee to every State in the Union a republican form of government," Johnson nearly preached in his definitive Proclamation of May 29, 1865.¹ He started in North Carolina and then, in June 1865, appointed leaders for Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Texas. Johnson finished the selection process by tapping William Marvin to be Florida's provisional governor on July 14, 1865.²

Andrew Johnson's appointees were sufficiently capable and loyal. While far from progressive, he selected seven men who had proven themselves at some

personal expense to be Unionists. Due to this simple reality—that Johnson had appointed qualified and serviceable provisional governors—Presidential Reconstruction, or 'Restoration' as Johnson called it, stood on relatively firm footing in mid-summer 1865. Possibilities for pragmatic change and compromise still existed, even taking into account Johnson's political conservatism.³ Few observers could have predicted that crippling partisan acrimony was on the near horizon. Under the leadership of Abraham Lincoln, so goes the oft-considered historical hypothetical, political compromises and cagey leadership would have facilitated progress.⁴ Instead as weeks turned into months, Johnson failed to provide consistent and practical guidance to his appointees. This lack of steady direction, rather than the actual men selected for the posts, proved to be especially

Over the course of six weeks in 1865, Andrew Johnson appointed seven provisional governors in the states of the recently defeated South. But his lack of guidance to the appointees would stunt Reconstruction. (Johnson in 1860, Library of Congress)



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stunting to the Reconstruction process.

Broadly speaking this article addresses the pivotal question of *how* Andrew Johnson failed as a Reconstruction president. This question, at present, is more relevant than the near-definitively answered, “*Did* Johnson fail as a Reconstruction president?”⁵ The methodology of this article involves briefly assessing the men that Johnson chose and then considering the press’s reaction to the appointments. The press response matters because it provides a gauge by which to assess the selections initially, as opposed to the reaction that would unfold throughout the rest of 1865. Then, and most importantly, the relationship between Johnson and the provisional governors will be examined. This study, of course, does not attempt to tell the whole story of the Reconstruction era or of Andrew Johnson. Reconstruction involved much more than politics and politicians. But for the sake of lending precision to a topic that has been too often glossed over (Johnson’s specific culpability in the failure of his own Reconstruction plan), this study focuses pointedly on a useful sampling of political activity.

Johnson’s handling of the provisional governors was nuanced. Johnson acted decisively on some issues, but at other times was evasive and aloof. In several instances, he exerted pressure and effectively changed the course of

Reconstruction in a given state. Despite the hyperbole that sometimes dominates discussions of Johnson, he had his successes.⁶ In one key incident, however, Johnson failed adequately to rebut a direct challenge by one of his governors. This failure proved indicative of the leadership shortcomings Johnson would exhibit increasingly during the Reconstruction process.



“Johnson scholars,” never a very large cadre, do not really exist anymore.⁷ Other than in the *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, there has not been a Johnson-focused article published in *The American Historical Review*, *The Journal of American History*, *The Journal of Southern History*, or any other significant historical journal for more than fifteen years.⁸ When historians have included him in their broader Reconstruction analyses, his impeachment and hostile relationship with Congress have drawn most of the attention. Johnson’s relationships with his provisional governors, unfortunately, have rarely registered as indicators to help explain his confusing leadership. Hans Trefousse, in what was for twenty years the definitive scholarly biography of Andrew Johnson, breezed over the provisional governor period. He focused instead on “that interval of

seven short months that Johnson broke with Congress [December 1865 to July 1866]” as the most historically significant period of what he termed Johnson’s “pugnacious” presidency.⁹

Representative of the revisionist school of Reconstruction historiography, Eric McKittrick takes a few passing shots at Johnson’s provisional governors (calling Benjamin Perry “a bigoted legalist,” for example) but only as a means to get to “the really disagreeable things:” the southern legislatures that convened during the fall of 1865.¹⁰ Brooks Simpson in his synthesis of Reconstruction presidents astutely notes that “like Lincoln, Johnson preferred to suggest rather than to impose conditions.”¹¹ Simpson, too, skips past the provisional governors, spending most of his time chronicling how partisan rancor derailed Reconstruction before it got started.¹² Most recently, Paul H. Bergeron provides a largely positive, if brief, assessment of Johnson’s role with the governors. “It must be acknowledged,” Bergeron argued in his 2011 work, “that the president exhibited strong leadership and wielded power quite effectively as he handled the assignment of provisional governors.”¹³ Although she does not deal extensively with the provisional governors in her 2011 biography of Johnson, Annette Gordon-Reed makes almost the opposite judgment. Johnson was playing constitutional games. Johnson embraced,

according to Gordon-Reed, what he saw as his constitutional ability to appoint governors, but then hid behind that same constitutionality in refusing to push those governors towards black suffrage.¹⁴

On the issues of Johnson’s appointments and what they can tell us about Reconstruction, Dan T. Carter and Michael Perman, both writing more than twenty years ago, have said the most. Carter argues that Johnson meant to give the governors the autonomy to pick a suitably contrite path on their own. “The president would intervene in southern politics on several occasions in 1865 and 1866,” Carter explains, “but he always preferred that white southerners initiate policies within the guidelines he had outlined.”¹⁵ Johnson admitted as much. “God grant that the Southern people would see their true interest and the welfare of the whole country and act accordingly,” Johnson wrote William Holden in August 1865.¹⁶ Michael Perman takes a similar tack. “In a word,” Perman explains when considering the provisional governors, “Johnson was trying to create harmony.”¹⁷ Perman similarly argues that the states, through the provisional governors, had been given an opportunity to prove themselves. “At the outset,” he notes,

Andrew Johnson wished fervently that the South’s actions in the coming months might prove acceptable



Johnson's first pick as a provisional governor was William H. Holden for North Carolina. Holden served as an editor, and, while a Unionist, he mirrored the president's own nuanced understanding of loyalty. (State Archives of North Carolina)

to Congress.... This could not possibly happen if the President manipulated the Southern Conventions and legislatures, besieged them with Presidential ultimata, and transformed the Provisional Governors into puppets of the Federal Executive. Spontaneity was essential.¹⁸

Beyond the idiosyncrasies of the relatively Spartan coverage of the provisional governor period, Andrew Johnson has summarily confused generations of historians. Hans Trefousse characterized Johnson as a "riddle" and confessed there was much he did not grasp about the seventeenth U.S.

president's actions. "Why Johnson did not see to it that his own program was carried out, is difficult to understand," Trefousse lamented.¹⁹ Eric Foner, in his massive Reconstruction study, dismissively labels Johnson, "something of an enigma."²⁰ Studies of Johnson seem to raise questions as frequently as they illuminate answers. The language of Johnson scholarship, as evidenced by Donald Neiman's assessment of Johnson's role in shaping the Freedmen's Bureau, is necessarily probing and tentative:

*There are indications, however, that Johnson played an even more direct role in shaping Howard's decision.... He probably believed that because [Wager] Swayne's course induced Alabama judges to receive black testimony it would complement his own Reconstruction policy... In addition, Johnson probably thought that if Alabama politicians admitted freedmen to the witness stand, politicians to other states would follow... Consequently it seems likely...*²¹

Johnson's opaqueness, and the fact that he wrote far fewer letters than his predecessors, has forced capable scholars to such conjecture.



Examining Johnson's appointments and his leadership of the provisional governors is a surprisingly overlooked opportunity to evaluate how Johnson led, and consequently how he failed. Tangible case studies can augment more amorphous deductions. At the start, Johnson's provisional governor selections were met with neither sustained protest, nor unequivocal support. Most of the nation's newspapers and politicians reserved judgment. But the Radical Republicans, not surprisingly, grumbled first.²² Using the *Chicago Tribune*, *New York Times*, and *San Francisco Daily Evening Bulletin* as representative samplings of Republican-leaning reactions, one will note that the provisional governors were generally regarded as sufficient. That assessment was beside the point, however. That Johnson was moving, and so quickly, registered as the paramount concern.

Andrew Johnson began June preoccupied with the same issue that had surrounded his administration from the start—Lincoln's death. He would not escape Lincoln's shadow, but he felt compelled to push forward with Reconstruction. Johnson's proclamation of May 29, 1865, set the parameters. Along with his same-day proclamation establishing a policy of amnesty and pardons, he appointed a provisional North Carolina governor to serve the cause of "enabling the loyal people of said state to organize a State Government."²³

The May 29 proclamation clarified Johnson's Reconstruction hierarchy. The occupying armies would support the provisional governments with the goal of quickly amending constitutions and restoring the states' Congressional representations.

Johnson first picked William H. Holden as North Carolina's provisional governor. Holden served as the editor of the Democrat-leaning *North Carolina Standard* from 1842 until 1868. His unionism was a complicated and fluid issue, mirroring the president's own nuanced understanding of loyalty. Holden described himself as "jealous for the so-called rights of the South," but was someone who had signed the North Carolina ordinance of secession only "under the force of unavoidable circumstances."²⁴ The *Chicago Tribune* characterized Holden as "a rebel of acknowledged fidelity to the secession idea" while the *New York Times* praised Holden for exercising common sense and serving as "an example of official discipline and loyal obedience."²⁵

The Holden appointment opened the floodgates. On June 13, Johnson announced that William L. Sharkey would serve as the provisional governor of Mississippi.²⁶ Sharkey, like Holden, had opposed secession in 1861, but ultimately remained loyal to Mississippi. Republicans' concerns about Sharkey centered, in part, on an "extraordinary and revolting" prewar judicial deci-

sion of Sharkey's that sent a widowed freed slave (who had married a white man) and her children back to the slave auction block.²⁷ Some members of the northern press grouched that Sharkey might just be an opportunistic unionist who had struck patronage gold.²⁸

Only a few days later, on June 17, Johnson appointed provisional governors for Texas and Georgia.²⁹ For Texas he summoned Andrew J. Hamilton, a man whose loyalty to the Union rested above reproach. Hamilton had refused to take an oath to the Confederacy. For his Unionism, Hamilton received the command of a volunteer regiment of the Union army and an appointment, in 1862, as the military governor of Texas. The *Chicago Tribune* praised Hamilton for his steady and early commitment to the Union, calling him an "undeviating Union man."³⁰ *Harper's Weekly* touted Hamilton as "one of the Union men of Texas who proved his faith by his works."³¹ The only significant opposition to Hamilton's appointment stemmed from his reputation as a hard drinker. George W. Bridges wrote Johnson on this matter. "For Gods Sake," Bridges complained, "Appoint a Sober man Military Governor of Texas instead of A.J. Hamilton; better known as drunken Jack Hamilton."³²

Hamilton was the most radical of Johnson's provisional governors. His commitment to equality for former slaves went beyond simple rhetoric.

“I shall not waste time or labor in the attempt to soothe those whose hearts are sore because of the extinction of slavery,” Hamilton seethed in his proclamation to Texas. Hamilton warned Texans that they must protect black civil rights. “If in the action of the proposed Convention the negro is characterized or treated as less than a freed man, our Senators and Representatives will seek in vain admission to the Halls of Congress,” Hamilton forecasted correctly.³³ Holden in contrast, in his proclamation, had promised far less to former slaves. “You are now free,” Holden announced simply. “I will see to it, as far as I can, that you have your liberty... But, on the other hand, I will set my face against those of you who are idle and dissipated.”³⁴

James Johnson received the provisional governor’s post in Georgia.³⁵ Johnson had represented Georgia in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1851–1853. The appointment met with opposition from some advocates of black suffrage. One preacher proclaimed that the selection fell “like a flash of lightning from clear sky upon us” and that plans for black education were “ruined.”³⁶ The *Chicago Tribune*, however, argued that James Johnson could be trusted. “Those who have met Governor Johnson are much pleased with his views on the subject of reconstruction in the South. He takes the strongest Union grounds.”³⁷

Lewis E. Parsons took on the provisional governor’s task for Alabama. Appointed on June 21, Parsons had been a leader Alabama’s peace-party during the war.³⁸ Several northern newspapers did note with suspicion a speech made by Parsons in Huntsville the week before his appointment. Parsons at the time had postulated “that the Negroes were not free, as the emancipation proclamation was only a military measure.”³⁹

South Carolina and Florida came last. Johnson placed Benjamin F. Perry, another political conservative, in the role of provisional governor over South Carolina.⁴⁰ Perry, like James Johnson, Holden, Parsons, and Sharkey, had opposed secession, but stayed with his state once the war started. While Perry’s appointment brought criticism from Frederick Douglass (Perry was “sorry not for his crime but for the fact that it did not succeed,” Douglass contended), he had a lengthy record as a Unionist.⁴¹ The *San Francisco Daily Evening Bulletin* focused on this record. The paper pointed out that Perry had opposed South Carolina’s nullification movement in 1832 and “laughed at the idea of South Carolina seceding” in 1850.⁴² Perry also was on record arguing that slavery’s utility to the South had passed, and that since it had caused the war it should be eradicated. Finally on July 13, Johnson completed his flurry of selections by appointing William

Marvin as provisional governor of Florida.⁴³ Marvin had similar credentials to the other governors. During the war he had relocated to Key West, a portion of the state that stayed loyal to the Union.⁴⁴

With the provisional governors in place, the tenor of the press coverage remained respectful and guardedly optimistic.⁴⁵ The selections themselves had not discredited Johnson as an executive leader. The *Daily Evening Bulletin* of San Francisco, among others, concluded that Johnson had done well in his first significant moves. "The President," the *Bulletin* reported on July 18, 1865, "has wisely selected for the office of Provisional governor men who represent the true loyal sentiment of the States they are sent to govern."⁴⁶ A reprieve of "good feelings" and optimism temporarily resurfaced after the long, contentious war and before the impeachment saga.⁴⁷ As late as September 1, 1865, the *New York Times* predicted that the provisional governors as a whole would achieve "satisfactory" results.⁴⁸ The *Times* also went to bat for Governor Perry of South Carolina, perhaps the most criticized of the appointees. "We do not, think there is anything to excite suspicion of the Governor's loyalty, or of the perfect good faith with which he

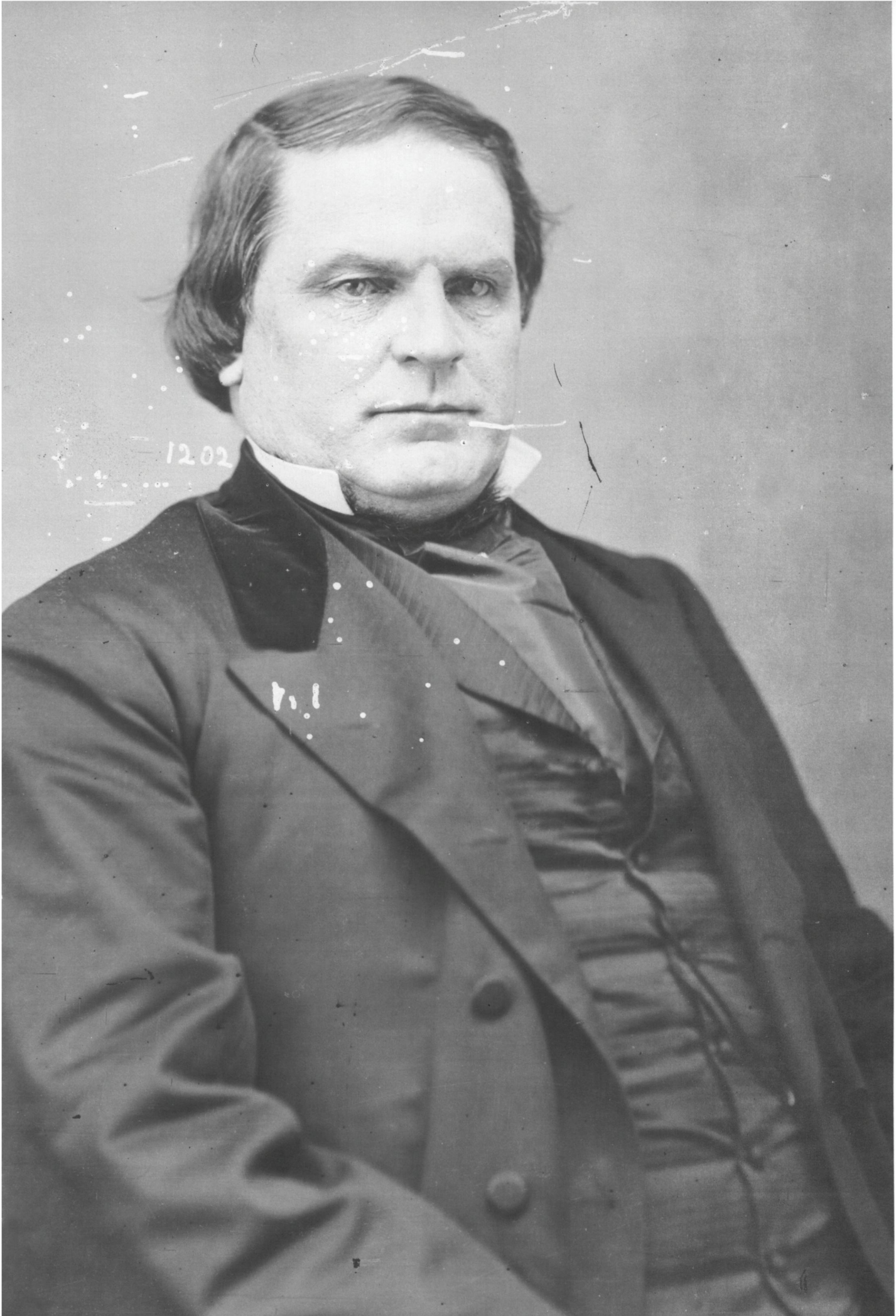
purposes to act in his official capacity," the *Times* concluded.⁴⁹



Johnson's hurried selection process, more than the selections themselves, created uncertainty. Johnson made his choices decisively and independently. In the month before the decisions, however, he had demonstrated nothing to suggest he was ready to move forward quickly and with certainty. Rather, Johnson's actions and statements regarding Reconstruction had been mostly confusing and contradictory. The Radical Republicans even clung to Johnson's pre-presidency declaration that he would be the "Moses" of the newly freed slaves.⁵⁰ They also remembered Johnson's promise to make treason "the highest crime known in the catalogues of crimes."⁵¹ For white Southerners, on the other hand, Johnson's stated conviction that the Southern states "had not gone out of the Union" and that he would not "treat them as inchoate States" resonated as an on-the-record promise that Johnson planned to let the states decide their fates.⁵²

Such crossed signals provided reasons for optimism and concern to almost

Lewis E. Parsons took on the provisional governor's task for Alabama. He had been a leader of the state's peace-party during the war. (Library of Congress)



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all political factions. One might thus assume that Johnson's selections for provisional governors would have been viewed as eminently important. They were not. Instead of focusing on the qualities and significance of the appointees themselves, most politicians and journalists could not get past Johnson's hasty process. They focused primarily on the speed with which he was proceeding. Thaddeus Stevens asked Charles Sumner, for example, whether there was "no way to arrest the insane course of the president in 'reorganization'?" He worried that without intervention the president would "be crowned king" before Congress met.⁵³

Seeking to provide input and to slow Johnson's pace, Carl Schurz set out on a fact-finding tour across the South. Schurz's credentials as abolitionist and Republican-leaning newspaper man stood in stark contrast to the type of men with which Johnson was surrounding himself. Thus President Johnson expressed only minimal support for the endeavor, but Schurz (the future senator for Missouri) sent detailed reports back to the White House anyway. Schurz's broad conclusions after traveling through South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana were that rebellious elements still dominated and that Union military forces must remain in place. Schurz did not criticize Johnson's appointees. Schurz described Governor Johnson of Georgia,

for example, as a "most earnest and thorough going friend of the national cause," and Governor Sharkey of Mississippi a "good, clever old gentleman," who was "probably a first class lawyer."⁵⁴ Schurz did suggest, however, that Sharkey specifically and the other provisional governors generally might be incapable of carrying out "duties so delicate and so responsible as those pertaining to [this] present position."⁵⁵

The Northern press also focused on pace more than personnel. While the *Chicago Tribune* seemed to take pains to give Johnson's appointees the benefit of the doubt, the paper voiced concern that he was starting something that he could not control. Johnson's process, or lack thereof, raised doubts from all sides. "He who opens a crevasse can never control the flood," the paper warned when considering Johnson's spate of appointments.⁵⁶ By the end of July, a correspondent of the *Tribune* stated simply: "It seems to me... that Mr. Johnson is too anxious for the return of these rebel states. There appears to be too much of a hurry about it."⁵⁷ The *New York Times* tactfully editorialized that things were moving "a little too fast," especially in Mississippi.⁵⁸ The *Chicago Tribune* further likened Johnson's rapid Reconstruction to a barreling locomotive. A "smash up," the paper predicted, seemed likely.⁵⁹

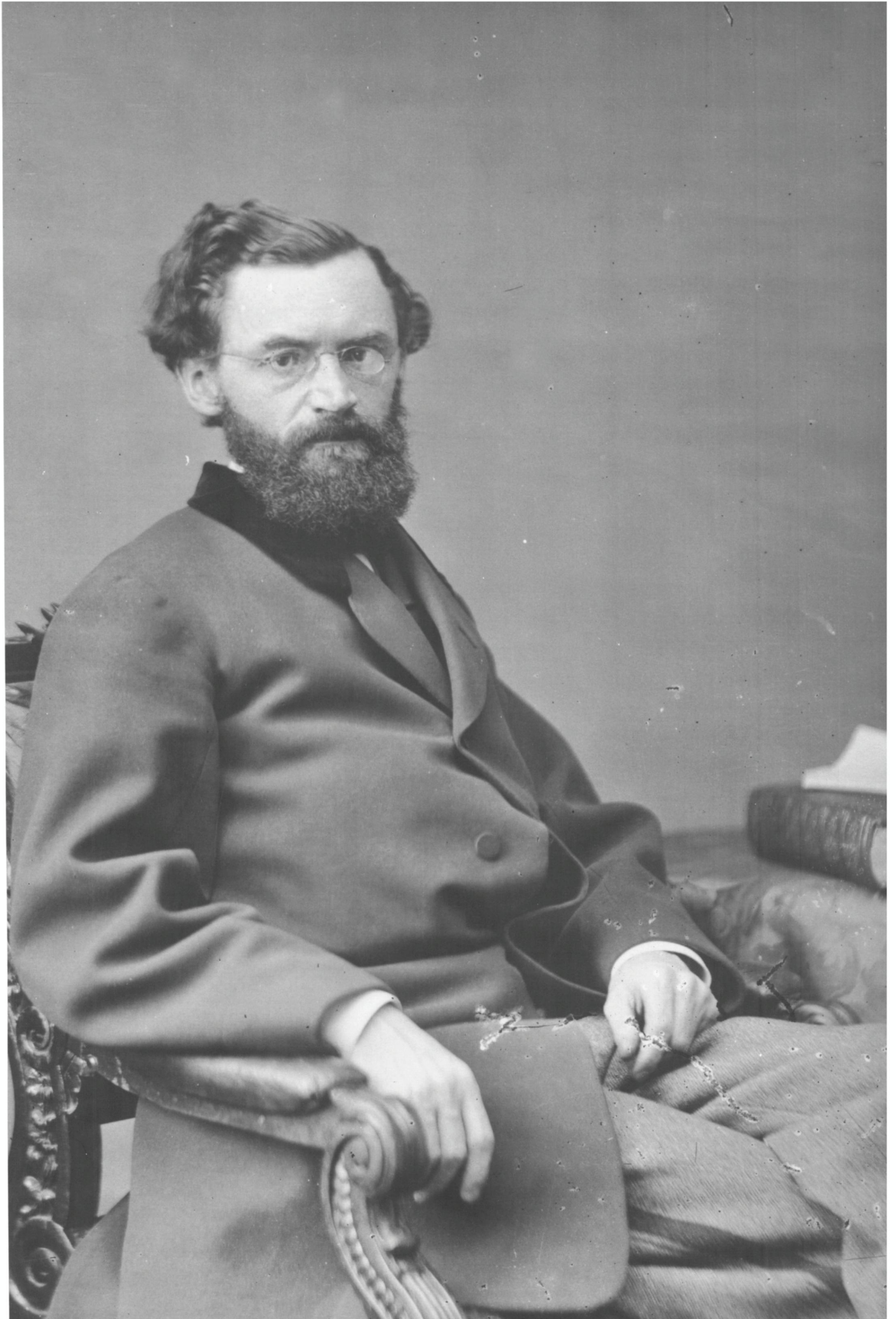


Johnson did provide his governors with instructions and guidance between June and December 1865—just not enough, and not directly enough. After issuing his proclamation of May 29, he met personally with several of his appointees. These meetings began the complicated president-provisional governor relationships. Benjamin Perry and William Holden both recalled their Washington discussions with Johnson as pleasant and informative. “In all of my interviews with President Johnson, I was much pleased,” Perry reminisced, “I was particularly struck with his kindness and generosity towards the South. This I did not expect.”⁶⁰ When analyzing Johnson’s relationships with his provisional governors, four statements prove most informative. First, he issued his “Circular to the Provisional Governors” addressing the issue of patronage and loyalty. Second, he sent a letter to William Sharkey advocating limited black suffrage. Complementing this letter, he made several statements vaguely supporting black suffrage. Third, Johnson demanded that all Confederate debt be repudiated. Fourth, he ignored suggestions to remove black regiments from the South. By examining these statements, it becomes clear that Johnson made some astute moves.

He understood the political situation and the partisan gamesmanship of the moment. It also becomes evident, however, that Johnson’s failure to be responsive, direct, and authoritative stunted presidential reconstruction.

The provisional governors served as conduits to the president on many issues. Pardons and patronage, however, dominated the governors’ agendas. It was a “very heavy task indeed,” Holden recalled. Hundreds of visitors lined up daily to see the provisional governors in their respective state capitals.⁶¹ Johnson warned his governors, through Attorney General James Speed, to exercise caution even in the midst of the voluminous quantity of the amnesty requests.⁶² The process was to be judicious. Coupled with the pardoning task, the provisional governors were consumed by the responsibilities of filling vacant government offices. By August 1865 controversy had arisen on this front.⁶³ The Northern press grew agitated over the fact that Governor Sharkey, among others, seemed to be selecting and allowing non-union men to assume important government posts. In Vicksburg, for example, a July 1865 election had yielded a Board of Councilmen, Mayor, and “Collector,” “none of whom were ever suspected of being Union Men.”⁶⁴

North Carolina, led by William Holden, produced similar results. With pressure mounting, Johnson offered his first significant advice to his gover-



Seeking to provide input and slow Johnson, General Carl Schurz set out on a fact-finding tour across the South. He did not criticize Johnson's appointees, but did comment on their capabilities. (Library of Congress)

nors since placing them in their posts a month earlier. He sent out a "Circular to Provisional Governors." In the terse message, Johnson shared the intelligence that he had been receiving. The information—that "the Provisional governors are giving a decided preference to those who have participated in the Rebellion"—surely concerned him.⁶⁵ His approach to dealing with this first sign of trouble, however, was measured. He prodded his governors towards a higher standard and reminded his men that they had his support. "While I place no reliance in such statements," Johnson warned, "I feel it due to you to advise you of the extended circulation they have gained and to impress upon you the importance of encouraging and strengthening to the fullest extent the men of your State who have never faltered in their Allegiance to the Government." As a solution to the problem—or perhaps the problem in perception as he might have viewed it—Johnson directed the governors to make known their Union commitments. "Every opportunity should be made available to have this known & understood as your Policy and determination," Johnson extolled.⁶⁶

Johnson did not provide a clearer criterion for future appointments, but

he did request that the governors reply to the circular. This action was one of the few mandated by the administration that demanded accountability from the provisional governors. The directive worked. Each of the governors wrote back immediately to Johnson, explaining their situations. All seven claimed that they had sought Unionist candidates. Excuses as to why some objectionable candidates had prevailed varied slightly. Parsons explained that he could not find enough Union men.⁶⁷ Sharkey admitted, "Perhaps in a few unimportant instances parties objectionable in this respect may have been accidentally appointed, but never from design."⁶⁸ Perry of South Carolina, not surprisingly, provided the most elaborate excuse. Perry lectured the administration on his commitment to distinguishing between "true Union men" and "those pretended Union men whose latent unionism, was only brought to light and made known by the hope of office."⁶⁹

After weighing in on appointments, circumstances next prompted Johnson to act on the issue of black suffrage. Again he waited for a negative impetus to intervene. To Johnson, black suffrage mattered little. By including a clause in the Holden Proclamation asserting

that voters must meet pre-war voting standards, Johnson had already taken a preemptory stand against black suffrage.⁷⁰ He reiterated this position, that the governments of the South should be controlled by “the white population alone,” to Governor Perry and others during the summer of 1865.⁷¹

By June, the debate over “Negro Suffrage” had intensified. The *Chicago Tribune*, *New York Times*, and *San Francisco Daily Evening Bulletin* each gave voice to Radical Republicans who demanded that black suffrage be included as part of the process to readmit Southern states. The *New York Times* published a letter from Senator Charles Sumner. In it Sumner took the offensive. “It is impossible to suppose,” Sumner predicted, “that Congress will sanction any governments in the rebel States which are not founded on the ‘consent of the governed’... Of course by the ‘governed’ is meant all the loyal citizens without distinction of color. Anything else is a mockery.”⁷² Johnson did not miss this warning from the influential congressman.

Most Republicans, northerners, and Americans generally opposed black suffrage.⁷³ Radical Republicans, however, created political pressure that belied their scant numbers. Frederick Douglass, Salmon Chase, and Carl Schurz joined Sumner in adding black suffrage to the list of Reconstruction non-negotiables. “Slavery is not abolished until the black

man has the ballot,” Douglass stated unequivocally.⁷⁴ “President Johnson makes a great mistake in refusing to recognize the colored citizens as part of the people,” Chase lamented. “It is a moral, political, and financial mistake.”⁷⁵ “In the right to vote,” Schurz argued, “we would find the best permanent protection against oppressive class-legislation, as well as against individual persecution.”⁷⁶ The message to Johnson on suffrage became increasingly strident as the weeks passed.

Johnson felt the political pressure and responded. With state conventions looming in September 1865, Johnson sent out his most explicit advice regarding black suffrage. Addressed to Mississippi’s Sharkey, the communication was meant for the entire group of governors:

If you could extend the elective franchise to all persons of color who can read the constitution of the United States in English and write their names, and to all persons of color who own real estate valued at not less than two-hundred and fifty dollars and pay taxes thereon, you would completely disarm the adversary and set an example the other States will follow.⁷⁷

Johnson also assessed the politics involved. “This you can do with perfect safety... and as a consequence

the Radicals, who are wild upon the negro franchise, will be foiled in their attempts to keep Southern States from renewing the relations to the Union by not accepting their Senators and Representatives.”⁷⁸

Johnson’s advice was at once passive and perceptive. He recognized that his Reconstruction plan would fail when Congress came back to session if certain factions of the Republican Party were not mollified. A compromise had to be struck. Sharkey, however, did not arrive at the same conclusion. Sharkey ignored Johnson’s advice to push for limited black suffrage. Thus Johnson faced a critical decision. And at this juncture, his passivity reigned. He did nothing, even as he recognized that the suffrage issue might unravel his plans. Or to be more precise, Johnson did not do nearly enough about a subordinate ignoring the president’s advice. Instead of issuing more direct instructions (as he would do regarding the Confederate debt), Johnson tried another, still indirect, approach to changing Sharkey’s mind and to convince the other governors to consider compromising on suffrage. Johnson went to the press. He discussed the issue with an acquaintance, George Stearns, undoubtedly knowing that his opinions would find their way to the papers. The *Chicago Tribune*, among others, picked up on Johnson’s suffrage comments. “I should try to introduce the negro suffrage gradually,” Johnson

had explained to Stearns. “First those who had served in the army; those who could read and write and perhaps a proper qualification for others, say \$200 or \$250.”⁷⁹ None of the governors seemed to listen.

Certainly one cannot dismiss the ideological underpinnings that kept Johnson from acting in a direct and forceful manner in supporting suffrage. Johnson was, as historians have chronicled, a Southerner, a strict-constructionist, and a fairly typical nineteenth century racist.⁸⁰ As such, he did not support the introduction of expansive black suffrage. Nor did he believe that the Constitution allowed the president to push for such change. But Johnson did recognize that his Reconstruction plan hinged on some movement on the suffrage issue. There seemed to be room for compromise. Johnson had expressed his own openness to limited suffrage, even if it was only to placate his political opponents. Benjamin Perry also reported that he too had been initially planning to support suffrage for “intelligent property owners amongst the freedmen.” Without more significant orders from Johnson though, Perry eventually abandoned the idea.⁸¹ In failing to broker some sort of compromise on suffrage, Johnson increased the odds that his Reconstruction plan would be wiped away when Congress reconvened.

While Johnson provided rather toothless guidance on suffrage,

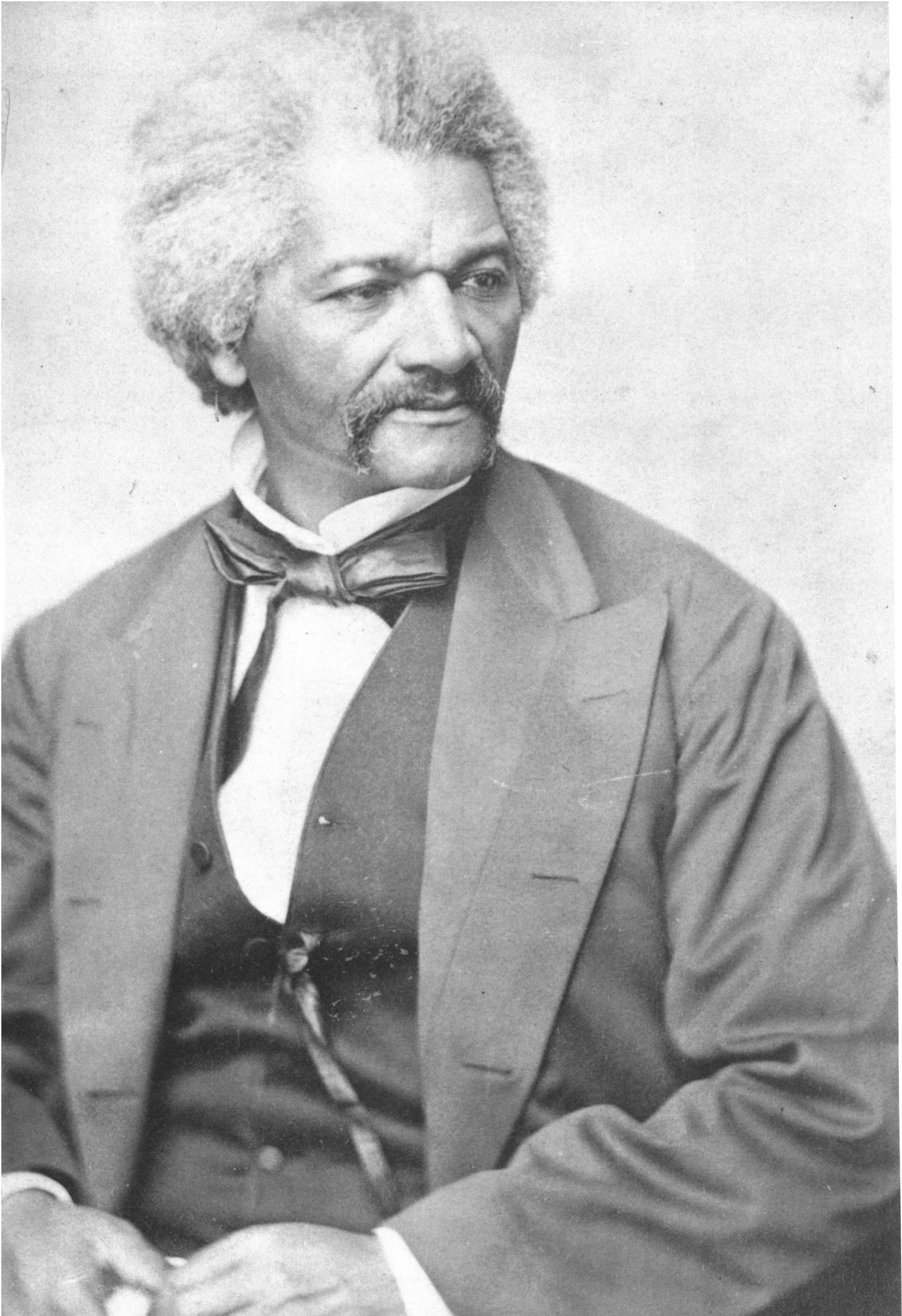
Frederick Douglass was among those working to add black suffrage to the list of Reconstruction non-negotiables that Johnson's provisional governors must pursue. (Library of Congress)

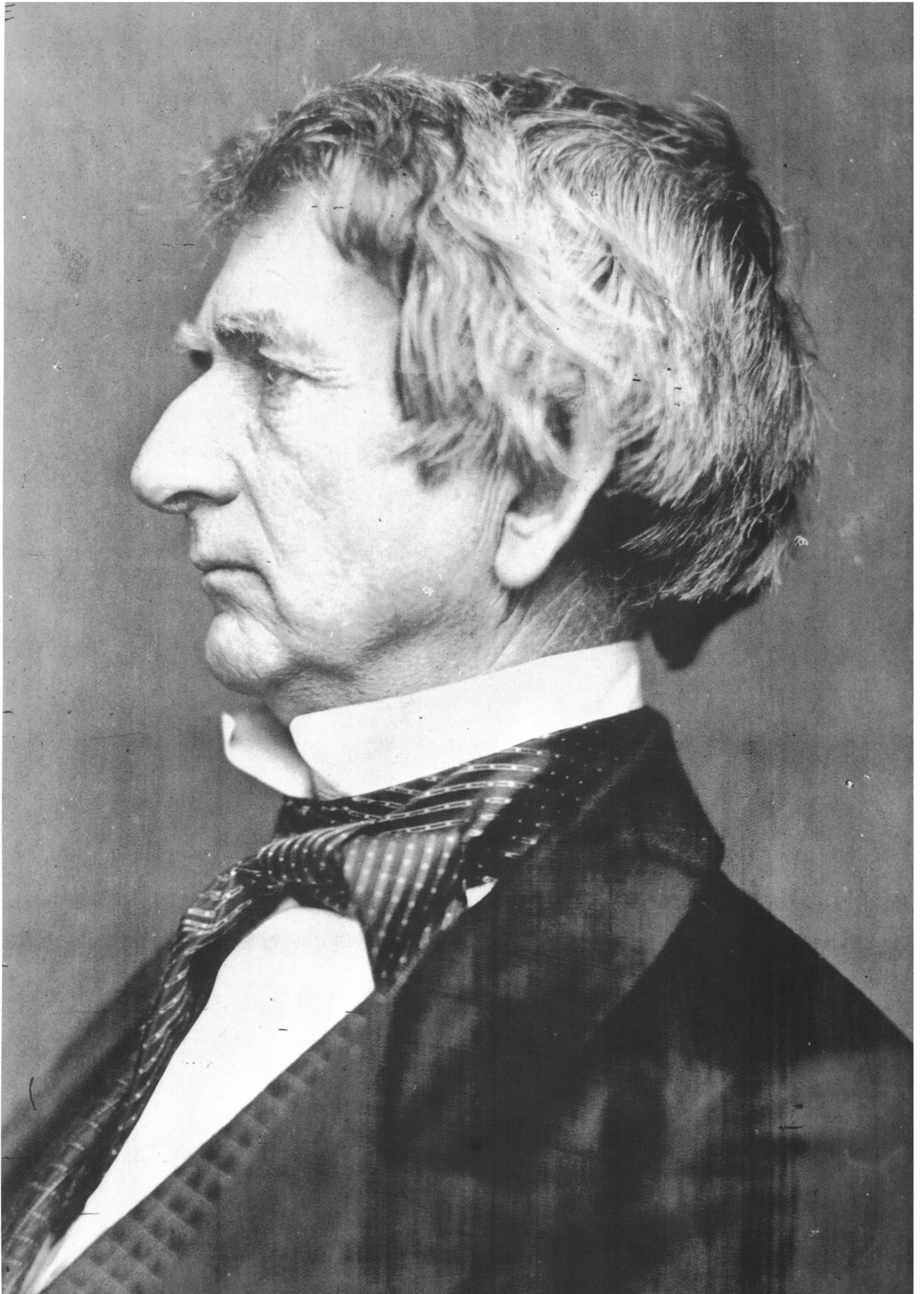
he aggressively addressed the task of repudiating the Confederate debt. As Michael Perman has pointed out, Johnson's stance on that debt surfaced gradually in the month after the initial terms of May 29 had been laid out.⁸² Both the symbolism and the economics of Confederate debt repudiation mattered. Had the obligations owed by the Confederacy simply been repaid like any other debt, the secession movement would have received an after-the-fact validation.⁸³ The federal government, already having borne the cost of the war to defeat secession, would have paid back wealthy Southerners who funded the war effort. Johnson, always resentful of the South's rich, pledged not to allow this to happen. The debt became his line the sand.

Throughout the summer and fall of 1865, Johnson wrote directly to governors James Johnson, William Holden, and Benjamin Perry about abolishing the debt. Johnson's guidance on the issue was uncharacteristically firm. When Holden communicated that the North Carolina convention had become embroiled in a "bitter discussion of the state debt," Johnson wasted little time in responding: "Every dollar of the debt created to aid the rebellion against the United States should be repudiated,

finally and forever."⁸⁴ Johnson's directness paid dividends. Holden reported almost immediately that the president's influence had "a happy effect"—North Carolina's legislature had "promptly repudiated every dollar of the rebel debt."⁸⁵ This was a Johnson victory, although many historians have not acknowledged it as such.⁸⁶ Johnson, in his own way, had facilitated the result he sought. When James Johnson of Georgia had a similar question about the Confederate debt—"We need some aid to repeal the war debt. Send me word on the subject. What should the convention do?"—the president again directed a quick response through Secretary of State Seward. Governor Johnson and Georgia fell in line.⁸⁷

Johnson was two-for-two on enforcing his debt policy, before the troublesome Benjamin Perry acted out. When South Carolina's convention came together in October, Perry actually argued against Johnson's advice: "Whatever may be the state of our finances, I am sure South Carolina will never sully her honor by any act of repudiation."⁸⁸ Perry's statement prompted a quick reply from the Johnson administration. South Carolina must repudiate the debt and approve the pending amendment to the Constitution abolishing slavery,





came the message. Perry was not persuaded. In response to escalating pressure from the White House, Perry simply minimized the issue, saying that the debt was “very inconsiderable.” He also declared Johnson was being impractical. Perry postulated that the war debt could not be separated from more general financial obligations.⁸⁹

With the South Carolina convention nearing the end of its business, still nothing had been done about the debt. Seward applied further pressure. The president, Seward, warned in a communication dated November 6, 1865, did not accept Perry’s excuses. “He is not entirely satisfied with the explanation,” Seward explained. Two weeks later, Johnson again made clear that Confederate debt would be a significant stumbling block in South Carolina’s reentry to the Union. Even in correcting Perry, though, Johnson treaded lightly. “South Carolina herself would not care to come again into the councils of the Union encumbered and clogged with debts,” read the November communication.⁹⁰

In a startlingly defiant move, Benjamin Perry allowed the South Carolina convention to adjourn in late November without repudiating

the Confederate debt. Perry had heard Johnson’s advice and ignored it. The scatter shot rationale that Perry gave for ignoring the president’s near-directive on debt included, among other reasons, Seward’s last telegram not arriving in time. “Your telegram of the 20th instant,” he wrote,

was not received in due time, owing to my absence from Columbia. The Convention having been dissolved, it is impracticable to enact any organic law in regard to the war debt. That debt is very small, as the expenditures of South Carolina were reimbursed by the confederate government. The debt is so mixed up with the ordinary expenses of the State that it cannot be separated. In South Carolina all were guilty of aiding the rebellion, and no one can complain of being taxed to pay the trifling debt incurred by his own assent in perfect good faith. The Convention did all that the President advised to be done, and I thought it wrong to keep a revolutionary body in existence and advised their immediate dissolution, which was done. There is now no power in the Legislature to repudiate the debt if it were pos-

Johnson tasked Secretary of State William Seward to deal with South Carolina Governor Benjamin Perry’s defiant failure to get the legislature to repudiate the state’s Confederate war debt. (Seward, Library of Congress)

sible to separate it from the other debts of the States. Even then it would fall on widows and orphans whose estates were invested in it for safety.⁹¹

In the space of just eight sentences, Perry admitted to leaving his post in Columbia and disbanding the Convention before receiving final word from the president on the debt issue. Perry also claimed, either out of delusion or deception, that South Carolina had nevertheless done everything the president had asked. He further defended his disobedience of the president's debt order by claiming it was too small, too "mixed up with the ordinary expenses," too shared by all South Carolinians, and too vital to widows and orphans to repudiate.

In response to Perry's overt defiance, Andrew Johnson conjured up only an impotent reply. He tasked Seward with responding to Perry's November 27 communication. Seward began by acknowledging that Perry's objections were "of a serious nature." Seward then meekly requested that South Carolina's permanent legislature take up the repudiation issue in the coming months. "The President cannot refrain from awaiting with interest an official expression upon that subject from the Legislature," Seward concluded.⁹² Johnson would have to wait indefinitely. South Carolina's legislature effec-

tively tabled the debt issue by relegating it to investigation by a special committee. It would not be until Congressional Reconstruction got under way in earnest that South Carolina would give up its Confederate obligations. In the case of Perry and South Carolina, Johnson had tried to stick to his standard of encouraging and advising the provisional governor. When that governor, a Johnson subordinate and appointee, ignored him, however, the president did nothing in response.

In hindsight, the nature of Johnson's relationship with Benjamin Perry may have taken its fundamental turn during the first weeks that the two men worked together. Perry had been prepared, before he took the post as provisional governor, to "enforce rules and regulations which might be odious to the people." Perry had assumed the president would be passing down directives, at least some of the time. But looking back years later, Perry remembered almost immediately discovering that the relationship would be nearly the opposite—"unlimited discretion in pardoning" and broad jurisdiction to act as he saw fit.⁹³ From their earliest interactions in Washington, D.C., Perry acted first and asked for the president's approval second, if at all. Perry issued his initial proclamation as provisional governor with such haste that Johnson "seemed surprised, and replied that I had been very expeditious," Perry recalled.



Johnson's interactions with his provisional governors demonstrated his failure as a presidential leader. Among them (left to right) were Andrew Hamilton, James Johnson, William Marvin, Benjamin Perry, and William Sharkey. (Texas State Preservation Board, Georgia Capitol Museum, Florida Department of State, South Caroliniana Library, and Mississippi Department of Archives and History)

Johnson was forced to ask his fresh appointee what had been said in the proclamation.⁹⁴ This initial failure by Johnson to seize the upper hand in this relationship probably contributed to the tendency of South Carolina's leadership to fight the President's Reconstruction plans decision-by-decision.

The Johnson-Perry relationship represented the worst of Johnson's leadership. He had more success with his other appointees. William Marvin (Florida) and James Johnson (Georgia), for example, both complied when Johnson directed that they promote a more strenuous pardon-to-voting process. Both Marvin and Johnson suggested that those citizens who had taken the loyalty oath, been recommended by the gover-

nor for pardon, and submitted a pardon application, should "properly presume that such a pardon has been granted." Of the lenient process, Seward concluded bluntly, "Not entirely approved."⁹⁵ Marvin and Johnson quickly remedied their procedures.⁹⁶

Looking at Andrew Johnson's relationships more broadly, a pattern of Johnson failing to respond to or even acknowledge communications from his provisional governors emerges. Why Johnson took this approach of aloofness is a question that can be added to the list of queries tabulated by Johnson historians. At times, one might credit Johnson's lack of responsiveness as a purposeful message in itself. In the case of complaints about black troops, for

example, Johnson's choice not to engage seems like a logical manner by which to handle the provisional governors. Black soldiers would not be universally removed from their Southern posts. The increasingly wary Congressional Republicans would seize upon such a move, Johnson knew, as a sign that the South was not ready to reenter the Union. Thus when Governor Perry of South Carolina, and others, complained repeatedly to Johnson and Seward about the "atrocious conduct" of black troops in their states, Johnson's silence effectively handled the situation.⁹⁷

If Hamilton was Johnson's strongest Union man and Perry the most difficult to deal with, Lewis Parsons, the provisional governor of Alabama, might have been Johnson's most neglected appointee. Parsons sought Johnson's advice numerous times without receiving a response. When the Alabama constitutional convention met in September 1865, Parsons reported almost daily to Johnson. He also raised a key civil rights question. "There is a considerable difference in opinion... touching how the right of the negro to testify shall be disposed of," Parsons explained.

Some of the members think it should be inserted in the Constitution itself, and with these I agree, while others think, it should be made obligatory on the Legislature to pass all laws necessary to secure to the freedmen

the protection of law to life, liberty, and property. The special object of this communication is to request your Excellency to inform me by telegraph *immediately*, if you regard it indispensable to the interests of the people of Alabama that such a clause should be inserted.⁹⁸

Parsons wanted timely direction on a vital civil rights issue. Johnson gave him none. Here Johnson again avoided an opportunity, in this case even when asked, to shape the South's future.⁹⁹ It was a puzzling choice, but one with clear ramifications. Parsons reported a few days later that absent the president's input, the Alabama convention had decided against constitutionally protecting black testimony.¹⁰⁰

Parsons might well have developed a complex due to Johnson's slights. Shortly after receiving nothing on the testimony question, he asked for the president to weigh in on suspending an Alabama preacher for disloyalty.¹⁰¹ Johnson again failed to respond. This was not unusual behavior for him. In assessing the communication (or lack thereof) between Johnson and his provisional governors, a faintly tragic pattern of confusion on the part of the governors becomes apparent. The governors repeatedly question if Johnson is getting their messages at all. Parsons, after sending several unacknowledged letters and telegraph messages, dispatched a

message to the White House simply asking if his messages had arrived. "Please answer," he wrote desperately a month later.¹⁰² Holden closed similarly in a July message: "Please answer so that I may know this has been received."¹⁰³ Even Benjamin Perry, who received more than his share of the president's attention, wondered why his queries and reports went unaddressed. "My Dear Sir," he wrote in September 1865, "I have sent you dispatches almost daily of the action of the Convention but have not heard whether they have been received."¹⁰⁴

Johnson, of course, had a tremendous workload. But his lack of responses to specific questions from his provisional governors reveals more than the fact that the president was busy. He seemed to foster boundaries between himself and the provisional governors. William Holden, for one, picked up on Johnson's aloofness. In June, Holden wrote a rambling letter to the president, touching on state funding, pardons, and the upcoming constitutional convention. Holden concluded his report by making clear that he understood that Johnson did not desire to have constant contact: "I cannot ask you to write me, for I know you are incessantly and most laboriously engaged, but," Holden continued, "if you see that I am making mistakes or taking the wrong path, admonish me."¹⁰⁵ Even for the provisional governors open to it, Johnson

never provided clear and consistent directions.



Johnson's interactions with governors Hamilton, Holden, Johnson, Marvin, Parsons, Perry, and Sharkey demonstrate how he failed as a presidential leader. Johnson did not provide enough specific direction and he did not push back forcefully when challenged. Interestingly enough, he foresaw potential problems, but he did not act to aggressively mitigate them. On the question of why Johnson acted as he did, concrete answers remain illusive. He clearly had reservations about utilizing presidential persuasion. He was also sympathetic towards poor white Southerners and mostly disinterested in the plight of the freedmen. These considerations have been well chronicled. Beyond these oft-discussed factors, however, one additional caveat might be noted. Johnson, during this crucial period, faced a personal health crisis that exacerbated his tendency towards passivity and inaction.

Johnson became ill at almost the same time he became president. By June 27, Johnson's struggle with kidney stones and fatigue had forced the president to stop taking visitors.¹⁰⁶ Johnson would see no one, nor hold cabinet meetings

for a period lasting almost two weeks in July. The period of rest was necessary for Johnson's personal health, yet contributed to the declining robustness of the Reconstruction process.¹⁰⁷ Gideon Welles described Johnson's appearance during the summer of 1865 as "pale and languid." He also chronicled the cast of important politicians who waited impatiently to see the president.¹⁰⁸ Johnson partially recovered in mid-July, only to be hit with another bout of illness beginning on August 1.¹⁰⁹

The national press picked up on Johnson's continuing health problems. The *New York Times* urged Johnson to withdraw from active government until his health rebounded. Without a vice president the nation could not risk losing another president, even if the jury remained out on Johnson. "President Johnson has put into operation a plan that is generally acquiesced in," the *Times* reported hopefully. "The first duty of President Johnson to the country is to—take care of his health."¹¹⁰ Johnson's already languid pace of communications with the governors slowed down further. When it took Johnson two weeks to review a crucial draft of the proclamation sent by William Holden, he begged off, explaining, "It would have received earlier attention but for my indisposition."¹¹¹

Noting Johnson's health problems provides just another measure of context to a story of failure. Johnson failed as a

Reconstruction leader. Historians have rightfully counted Johnson among the least successful of American presidents. But the nature and causes of Johnson's failure deserve reconsideration. Johnson did not fail because he was oblivious to political or partisan realities. He did not struggle because the men whom he selected to serve as provisional governors lacked competency. Johnson was not even preordained to miss the mark because he was a rather typical nineteenth century racist. Rather Andrew Johnson's failure, as evidenced by a close look at his dealings with the provisional governors, was one of flawed processes and stunting passivity.

Johnson allowed his Restoration plan to be snowed under by men like Benjamin Perry. When Perry ignored Johnson's suggestions, the president did not change his leadership style. Johnson would not, or could not, take a more direct approach. He either said nothing or else spoke passively when strong commands were necessary. As a result, Johnson lost control of his own plan. And after the failings of Johnson's provisional governor system, the momentum of the early post-war period abated. The United States Congress, rather than focusing on the work of Reconstruction, plunged into the partisan acrimony of impeachment. Reconstruction, always a Herculean task, became even more complicated.

1. Paul H. Bergeron, ed., "Proclamation Establishing Government for North Carolina," 29 May 1865, *Papers of Andrew Johnson* (PAJ hereafter), Vol. 8, 136.

2. Four of the Confederate states had a different experience. The already recognized governments of Arkansas, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Virginia remained unaffected by Johnson's May proclamation. These states continued on the course set by Lincoln, reaffirmed by Johnson.

3. For a sampling of the works considering Johnson's political ideology see, James E. Sefton, *Andrew Johnson and the Uses of Constitutional Power* (Boston, 1980); LaWanda Cox and John H. Cox, *Politics, Principle, and Prejudice 1865–1866* (New York, 1963); and Michael Perman, *Reunion Without Compromise: The South and Reconstruction, 1862–1879* (New York, 1973).

4. Historians have spent considerable time wondering, what Abraham Lincoln would have done had he, not Johnson, presided over Reconstruction. Many of Johnson's contemporaries wondered the same thing. The *Chicago Tribune* on 29 June 1865, as Johnson made his appointments for provisional governors, printed a collection of opinions on whether Lincoln's ideas still reigned. "Unfortunately for the country," the *Tribune* lamented in the coverage, "events had not so ripened during the lifetime of Mr. Lincoln, that he had not the opportunity to decide, as President Johnson has done who should and who should not vote in forming provisional government in eight purely rebel states."

5. The Dunning school has been so roundly corrected that I will not spend much time here debating whether Johnson was a success or not. For a sampling of the Dunning school's aggressive defense of Johnson's leadership see, Claude G. Bowers, *The Tragic Era; The Revolution after Lincoln* (Cambridge, 1929) and William Dunning, *Essays on the Civil War and*

Reconstruction and Related Topics (New York, 1898).

6. *Washington Post*, 3 December 2006. In this editorial, Eric Foner considers Johnson, George W. Bush, and James K. Polk in the nebulous game of determining America's "Worst President."

7. Paul H. Bergeron, the longtime editor of the Andrew Johnson Papers at the University of Tennessee, is the most obvious exception to this generalization. Bergeron's *Andrew Johnson's Civil War and Reconstruction* (Knoxville, 2011) provides a valuable reassessment of Johnson.

8. Matt Speiser's "The Ticket's Other Half: How and Why Andrew Johnson Received the 1864 Vice Presidential Nomination" and William E. Hardy's "Reconstructing Andrew Johnson: The Influence of Laissez-Faire Constitutionalism on President Johnson's Restoration Policy" appeared in the Spring 2006 *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, while Robert B. Jones and Mark E. Byrnes's "'Rebels never forgive': Former President Andrew Johnson and the Senate Election of 1869" appeared in the Fall 2007 *THQ*. Michael Les Benedict published "From Our Archives: A New Look at the Impeachment of Andrew Johnson," in the *Political Science Quarterly* in 1998. To find another history journal featuring an article with Johnson's name in the title, one must go back to the 1990 *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*. Michael Les Benedict, "From Our Archives: A New Look at the Impeachment of Andrew Johnson," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 113, 3 (Autumn 1998), 493–511; Richard B. McCaslin, "Reconstructing a Frontier Oligarchy: Andrew Johnson's Amnesty Proclamation and Arkansas," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 49, 4 (Winter 1990), 313–329.

9. Hans Trefousse, *Andrew Johnson: A Biography* (New York, 1989), 234.

10. Eric L. McKittrick, *Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction* (New York, 1960), 177.
11. Brooks D. Simpson, *The Reconstruction Presidents* (Lawrence, Kan., 1998), 79.
12. For a sampling of the popular and academic histories recently released dealing (at least tangentially) with Johnson and Reconstruction, see: Thomas R. Brown (ed), *Reconstructions: New Perspectives on the Postbellum United States* (New York, 2006); Michael W. Fitzgerald, *Splendid Failure: Postwar Reconstruction in the American South* (Chicago, 2007); Howard Means, *The Avenger Takes His Place: Andrew Johnson and the 45 Days that Changed the Nation* (New York, 2006); David O. Stewart, *Impeached: The Trial of President Andrew Johnson and the Fight for Lincoln's Legacy* (New York, 2009); and Hans L. Trefousse, *Impeachment of a President: Andrew Johnson, the Blacks, and Reconstruction* (New York, 1999).
13. Bergeron, *Andrew Johnson's Civil War and Reconstruction*, 77–78.
14. Annette Gordon-Reed, *Andrew Johnson* (New York, 2011), 101–102.
15. Dan T. Carter, *When the War Was Over: The Failure of Self-Reconstruction in the South, 1865–1867* (Baton Rouge, 1985), 25.
16. Andrew Johnson to William Holden, 27 August 1865, PAJ, Vol. 8, 662.
17. Michael Perman, *Reunion without Compromise: The South and Reconstruction* (London, 1973), 66.
18. *Ibid.*, 69.
19. Trefousse, *Andrew Johnson*, 229, 235. Dan Carter expressed similar confusion, stating, “Whatever the motivation underlying Johnson’s unwillingness to adopt a coercive policy toward the South, his decisions inevitably made white southerners less concerned over the necessity of pacifying the uneasy northerners.” See, Carter, *When the War Was Over*, 31.
20. Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York, 1988), 191, 177.
21. Donald G. Nieman, “Andrew Johnson, The Freedmen’s Bureau, and the Problem of Equal Rights, 1865–1866,” *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 44, 3 (August 1978), 408. The italics, for emphasis, are my own.
22. Trefousse, *Andrew Johnson*, 219.
23. Andrew Johnson, *Proclamation Establishing Government for North Carolina*, 29 May 1865, PAJ, Vol. 8, 136.
24. W. W. Holden, *Memoirs of W. W. Holden* (Durham, N.C., 1911), 11, 52.
25. *The Chicago Tribune*, 17 June 1865; *The New York Times*, 23 June 1865. The article also addressed the need for deliberateness: “We again entreat,” the writer nearly begged, “that this haste in the work of reorganization be abandoned.”
26. Edward McPherson, *The Political History of the United States of America during the Period of Reconstruction, April 15, 1865–July 15, 1870*, Republication of 1871 edition (New York, 1972), 19.
27. The case involved a white man who transported a female slave to Cincinnati, executed a deed of manumission, returned to Mississippi with his now former slave, and then married her. The two had several children and “lived together affectionately for many years.” Upon the husband’s death, however, Sharkey sided with the brothers of the white man who claimed all property that had been acquired by the interracial couple. The long manumitted slave (the former wife) and her children were sent back into slavery. See, *Chicago Tribune*, 18 June 1865; Truman Woodruff to Andrew Johnson, 20 June 1865, PAJ, Vol. 8, 266.
28. *Chicago Tribune*, 17 June 1865.
29. McPherson, *Political History*, 20, 28.
30. *The Chicago Tribune*, 19 June 1865.
31. *Harper’s Weekly*, 26 August 1865.
32. George W. Bridges to Andrew Johnson, 31 May 1865, PAJ, Vol. 8, 150.
33. *Chicago Tribune*, 9 August 1865.
34. *Chicago Tribune*, 23 June 1865.

35. McPherson, *Political History*, 20.
36. Jonathon Cory, Jr. to Andrew Johnson, 24 June 1865, PAJ, Vol. 8, 278–279.
37. *Chicago Tribune*, 22 June 1865.
38. Michael Les Benedict, *The Fruits of Victory: Alternatives in Restoring the Union, 1865–1877* (New York, 1986), 15.
39. *Chicago Tribune*, 31 July 1865.
40. McPherson, *Political History*, 22.
41. John W. Blassingame and John R. McKivigan, eds., *The Frederick Douglass Papers* (New Haven, 1977), 592.
42. *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 4 August 1865.
43. McPherson, *Political History*, 24.
44. Les Benedict, *The Fruits of Victory*, 15.
45. Finding patterns connecting Johnson's provisional governors is seemingly easy. All the governors were, as Dan Carter has asserted, "at least minimally acceptable to the majority of white citizens of their respective states." The governors were also an educated group—five lawyers and two newspaper men. Five were born in the South, two in New York. All had professed their loyalty to the Union leading up to the Civil War. Once the war began, however, only Andrew Hamilton of Texas and William Marvin of Florida had actually relocated in protest. In terms of partisanship, four of the men were pre-war Democrats, as Andrew Johnson had been. James Johnson (Georgia) had been a Know Nothing, William Sharkey (Mississippi) a Whig, and Lewis Parsons (Alabama) a Democrat-Know Nothing-Whig party jumper. Carter, *When the War Was Over*, 26. *Chicago Tribune*, 13 July 1865.
46. *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 18 July 1865.
47. Foner, *Reconstruction*, 216.
48. *New York Times*, 1 September 1865.
49. *New York Times*, 20 July 1865.
50. Speech, "Moses of the Colored Men," 24 October 1864, PAJ, Vol. 7, 252–253.
51. Speech, "Remarks on the Fall of Richmond," 3 April 1865, PAJ, Vol. 7, 543–545.
52. "Interview with John A. Logan," 31 May 1865, PAJ, Vol. 8, 154.
53. Thaddeus Stevens to Charles Sumner, 14 June 1865, *Charles Sumner, His Complete Works* (New York, 1969), 348.
54. Carl Schurz to Andrew Johnson, 13 August 1865, *Advice after Appomattox*, 89–96; Carl Schurz to Andrew Johnson, 29 August 1865, *Advice after Appomattox*, 106–114.
55. Carl Schurz to Andrew Johnson, *Advice after Appomattox*, 106–114.
56. *Chicago Tribune*, 15 June 1865.
57. *Chicago Tribune*, 26 July 1865.
58. *New York Times*, 5 September 1865.
59. *Chicago Tribune*, 8 September 1865.
60. Benjamin Perry, *Reminiscences of Public Men with Speeches and Addresses* (Greenville, S.C., 1889), 249.
61. Holden, *Memoirs of W.W. Holden*, 57.
62. Jonathan Truman Dorris, *Pardon and Amnesty under Lincoln and Johnson: The Restoration of the Confederates to Their Rights and Privileges, 1861–1898* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1953), 190–191.
63. Bergeron, *Andrew Johnson's Civil War and Reconstruction*, 79.
64. *Chicago Tribune*, 26 July 1865
65. "Circular to Provisional governors," 22 August 1865, PAJ, Vol. 8, 639.
66. Ibid.
67. Lewis E. Parson to Andrew Johnson, 24 August 1865, PAJ, Vol. 8, 648.
68. William L. Sharkey to Andrew Johnson, 25 August 1865, PAJ, Vol. 8, 653.
69. Benjamin F. Perry to Andrew Johnson, 29 August 1865, PAJ, Vol. 8, 669–670.
70. *Daily Evening Bulletin*, 24 June 1865.
71. Perry, *Reminiscences*, 240.
72. *New York Times*, 25 July 1865; *New York Times*, 3 June 1865.

73. Leslie Schwalm, *Emancipation's Diaspora: Race and Reconstruction in the Upper Mid-West* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2009), 176–177.
74. *The Frederick Douglass Papers*, 83.
75. John Niven, ed., *The Salmon P. Chase Papers* (Kent, Ohio, 1998), 55.
76. Walter Fleming, *Documentary History of Reconstruction* (New York, 1966), 89.
77. Andrew Johnson to William L. Sharkey, 15 August 1865, PAJ, Vol. 8, 599–600.
78. Ibid.
79. *Chicago Tribune*, 26 October 1865.
80. Beyond those studies already mentioned, for further analysis of Johnson's political and personal characteristics see, Hans L. Trefousse, *Impeachment of a President: Andrew Johnson, the Blacks, and Reconstruction* (Knoxville, 1975); Albert Castel, *The Presidency of Andrew Johnson* (Lawrence, 1979); and Patrick W. Riddleberger, *1866: The Critical Year Revisited* (Carbondale, 1979).
81. Perry, *Reminiscences*, 274.
82. Perman, *Reunion without Compromise*, 74–76.
83. Garrett Epps, *Democracy Reborn: The Fourteenth Amendment and the Fight for Equal Rights in Post-Civil War America* (New York, 2006), 80–82.
84. William Holden to Andrew Johnson, 17 October 1865, PAJ, Vol. 9, 255; Andrew Johnson to William Holden, 18 October 1865, PAJ, Vol. 9, 255–256.
85. William Holden to Andrew Johnson, 20 October 1865, PAJ, Vol. 9, 260–261.
86. Hans Trefousse gave Johnson little credit for persuading Holden to change course on the debt issue. "Holden saw to it that the president's wishes were carried out, but his wire hardly constituted real pressure." See Trefousse, *Andrew Johnson*, 230.
87. McPherson, *Political History*, 21.
88. *Columbia Phoenix*, 27 October 1865.
89. Benjamin Perry to Andrew Johnson, 1 November 1865, PAJ, Vol. 9, 324–325.
90. McPherson, *Political History*, 23.
91. Benjamin Perry to William Seward, 27 November 1865 in McPherson's *Political History*, 23.
92. William Seward to Benjamin Perry, 30 November 1865 in McPherson's *Political History*, 23–24.
93. Perry, *Reminiscences*, 245.
94. Ibid., 248.
95. William Seward to William Marvin, 12 September 1865 in McPherson, *Political History*, 25.
96. Andrew Johnson to James Johnson, 9 September 1865, PAJ, Vol. 9, 54–55.
97. Benjamin Perry to Andrew Johnson, 23 September 1865, PAJ, Vol. 9, 124.
98. Lewis Parsons to Andrew Johnson, 13 September 1865, PAJ, Vol. 9, 63–63.
99. David Nieman, "Andrew Johnson, the Freedmen's Bureau, and the Problem of Equal Rights," 404; Andrew Johnson to William Sharkey, 17 November 1865, PAJ, Vol. 9, 400–401.
100. Lewis Parsons to Andrew Johnson, 28 September 1865, PAJ, Vol. 9, 147.
101. Lewis Parsons to Andrew Johnson, September 29, 1865, PAJ, Vol. 9, 150–151.
102. Lewis Parsons to Andrew Johnson, 2 December 1865, PAJ, Vol. 9, 455; Andrew Johnson to Lewis Parsons, 3 October 1865, PAJ, Vol. 9, 182.
103. William Holden to Andrew Johnson, 17 July 1865, PAJ, Vol. 8, 420.
104. Benjamin Perry to Andrew Johnson, 23 September 1865, PAJ, Vol. 9, 124.
105. William Holden to Andrew Johnson, June 26, 1865, PAJ, Vol. 8, 294.
106. Edward Winslow to Andrew Johnson, 3 June 1865, PAJ, Vol. 8, 326.
107. Rose McDermott, *Presidential Leadership, Illness, and Decision Making* (New York, 2007), 11.

108. Gideon Welles, *Diary of Gideon Welles: Secretary of the Navy under Lincoln and Johnson* (New York, 1911) vol. II, 324–329.

109. PAJ, Vol. 8, xlvi.

110. *New York Times*, 15 August 1865.

111. Andrew Johnson to William Holden, 7 August 1865, PAJ, Vol. 8, 541.