

EMESSAY NOTES

March 2020

Impeachment and Brother Andrew Johnson

In the nearly 250 years of United States history, the impeachment of a President has only taken place three times.

The U.S. House of Representatives "impeaches," but removal from office must then be approved by a 2/3 vote in the U.S. Senate. None of the three impeachments by the House were approved by the U.S. Senate. Therefore, all three Presidents continued in office.

The three presidents that were impeached by the U.S. House of Representatives were Andrew Johnson, William Clinton, and Donald Trump.

Andrew Johnson was a Master Mason from Tennessee. He was the Vice President of the United States in April, 1865, when President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. Johnson was immediately elevated to President. The issues for his subsequent impeachment were numerous, but in short, President Johnson's lenient Reconstruction program for the defeated South after the Civil War was opposed by many in Congress.

While in the White House, Brother Johnson was known to attend Lodge and enjoy the fellowship of his brethren. He reportedly attended Lodge rather than his own impeachment trial.

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According to The Old Past Master's Masonic Almanac, Johnson became the first President to become a Scottish Rite Mason, receiving his degrees in the White House on June 20, 1867. He had earlier received the Knight Templar orders.

While President, he participated in at least four Masonic cornerstone ceremonies: the Monument to Stephen A. Douglass in Chicago, September 6, 1866; and Masonic Temples in Baltimore on Nov. 20, 1866; Boston on June 24, 1867, and Washington, DC, on May 20, 1868.

When the cornerstone was laid in Baltimore, someone suggested that a chair be provided for the President on the reviewing platform. Johnson refused, saying, "We all meet on the level," and he remained standing with his brethren.

Brother Johnson was proud of his Masonic membership. When he died, he was buried with full Masonic honors. History may provide one side of Andrew Johnson, but we, as Masons, can see another side of this Masonic Brother.

4 Grand Masters Honor President Ford

Four Grand Masters placed a wreath at the gravesite of former President and Brother Gerald R. Ford on November 23, 2019 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Grand Masters were Most Worshipful Brothers Robert C. Strader, of Wisconsin; Kenneth Roy, of Indiana; Mark Manning, of Michigan, and Keith Newton, of Ohio.

They were attending a Tri-State (Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio) degree exemplification event in Grand Rapids.

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