

carefully considered those things he dug, and arrived at reasonable and logical explanations and interpretations of them at a time when his contemporaries were indulging in the wildest pipe dreams. Thoughtfully reading the early accounts of Tennessee, he was quick to see the likeness of the things he had dug to those described. He believed correctly, that the Mound Builders were Indians, not a special and mysterious people. They were, he felt, a high point in Indian culture, as the Renaissance was in European culture, but were no more a separate, different group than were the French and Italian authors and artists a different people from their ancestors and descendants. He grasped and early mentioned a kinship with Aztec and Toltec civilizations, shown by similarity in design of pottery, and similarity in the symbols and emblems used on pots and gorgets. Above all, he very accurately estimated the age of the objects which he found, and this has been borne out by Carbon-14 dating in recent years. To the layman, however, the chief virtue is that he was born early enough to escape the jargon and nomenclature of the professional archeologist which make their papers almost impossible to read. In all, Thruston was an intelligent, thoughtful observer, who understood what he saw, and made others understand and appreciate it. Combined with his clear and vigorous writing, these gifts have made him the delight and joy of the amateur, and the envy of the professional.

I shall illustrate a few pieces in particular. Two round trowels are shown on page 141. They were found near the Noel Cemetery, with three others, all in one grave. Another grave yielded a set of eight beautiful flint chisels, and another grave a set of five chisels. Some of these are displayed in the implement case. Thruston argues that this establishes the fact that the Mound Builders had specialized laborers, artisans who plied one trade. This in turn means a system of food raising and distribution that would allow such specialization, and also indicates a completely sedentary people. No nomad could or would lug five heavy trowels about, and no nomad would erect a house needing trowels to smooth its plastered walls.

Other pieces bear out this contention. The delicate little bone spatulae in the first case (page 141) the abundance and variety of pottery, even the sizes of the ceremonial flints in the last case (page 137)—and that is a gorgeous display of native grandeur—all point to a settled and highly cultured race, with traditional forms, probably an established and hierarchial society, and a far from primitive economy.

History of the Biographic Treatment of Andrew Johnson in the Twentieth Century

By CARMEN ANTHONY NOTARO

Andrew Johnson's image has changed three times in sixty years of historical writing in this century. The seventeenth President of the United States was originally depicted as an ignorant, hard-headed Southerner catapulted to this nation's highest office by accident. Johnson's obstinacy in this post resulted fortunately in victory for Congressional reconstruction and in defeat of the presidential program.

Late in the 1920's came a reversal in this thinking. A booming America easily forgave a maligned chief executive. As scholars busily sifted the steady pourings of writings about Reconstruction, a whole spate of Johnsonian biographies appeared. The rags-to-riches story of the tailor-President was finally told in all its democratic splendor. Andrew Johnson was a man of the people. He bravely resisted legislative intrusion, but he was forced to accept parliamentary rule. The subsequent corruption of "Black Reconstruction" governments and the complete breakdown in Negro-white relations in the post-Civil War South only proved that President Johnson was a man of vision.

In 1960, there appeared a third and still different interpretation. No doubt was cast upon Mr. Johnson's integrity! However, upon close analysis, the man was proved apolitical. He was incapable of compromise, for he looked upon give-and-take concessions in terms of abandoning sacred and time-tested principles.

Unfavorable sketches of Andrew Johnson can be traced to general histories written in the first part of the twentieth century.¹ The earliest presidential evaluation here considered was supplied in 1902 by John William Burgess in *Reconstruction and the Constitution, 1866-1876*. The Columbia professor did not doubt the Tennessean's capabilities. However, in extremely dull language, Burgess picked at Johnson's character showing how it affected his official attitude.

¹ The first biography of Andrew Johnson covering his presidency was published in 1901. It was entitled simply *Life of Andrew Johnson*. Although unobtainable, a later biographer dismissed its importance claiming that it was poorly written. See Robert W. Winston, *Andrew Johnson: Plebeian and Patriot* (New York, 1928), 536.

The President was vain, for he was bothered by the neglect shown him by his social superiors. Consequently, he was motivated by revenge towards the upper classes. Such suspicion coupled with an irascible behavior contributed to an uncompromising mind. These facts, said Burgess, were reasons why Johnson lacked the statesmanship to accept suggestions from Congress. As a result, the President pushed his basically "unsound" program.²

In 1903, David Miller De Witt published his *Impeachment and Trial of Andrew Johnson*. Although highly praised by reviewers, the volume proved disappointing. The author promised the utilization of new source material. However, sparse documentation and an absence of a bibliography made the book fail in its essential purpose.

Secondly, Andrew Johnson's image remained unchanged. Mr. De Witt had faint praise for the ante-Reconstruction Johnson. It was remarkable how the able politician sprang from the lowest of breeds. As President, Johnson acted injudiciously. De Witt declared that after the Washington Birthday speech of 1866 the President became "an outlaw undeserving of quarter." De Witt was particularly harsh on Andrew Johnson as he viewed him "swinging around the circle" in the 1866 Congressional campaign. He accused Johnson of disgracing his high office. He called the President's speeches on the stump "conversations in undress."⁴

The fountainhead of all diatribe directed at Johnson, however, came in the 1904 and 1906 volumes of James Ford Rhodes's *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850*. This time both the man and the presidency suffered.

Like Burgess, Mr. Rhodes was impressed with Johnson's egoism. The Ohio-born historian also expressed amazement at the success of the educationally ill-fitted and socially inferior Tennessee politician. His credentials certainly did not fit his high office. In fact, President Johnson's relations with the Thirty-ninth Congress were testimony to his ineptitude. It was Johnson's "pride of opinion" which prevented a quick and peaceful readmission of the Confederate States into the Union. He "yielded not a jot" to Congress.

² John W. Burgess, *Reconstruction and the Constitution, 1866-1877* (New York, 1902), 31, 221, 230.

³ See *The Independent*, LV (1903), 1812-1813; Edwin Erle Sparks in *The Dial*, XXXV (1903), 59-60; and David Y. Thomas in *American Historical Review*, IX (1903), 188-91.

⁴ David Miller De Witt, *Impeachment and Trial of Andrew Johnson* (New York, 1903), 615, 629, 39, 53-54, 123-25, 241, 255.

thinking his judgment wiser than the "collective wisdom" of that august legislative body. Besides, Johnson's orgies during the fall campaign of 1866 cost him what little support was left in Congress.⁵

A year before Rhodes's 1906 volume appeared, the Library of Congress made available the two hundred and twenty-five volumes comprising the Johnson Manuscripts. This collection failed to temper Rhodes's feelings toward the President.⁶ In fact for a time, the Johnson Papers confirmed the Rhodes-Burgess-De Witt assessment.

While Rhodes scratched the surface of the Johnson Manuscripts, his friend, William A. Dunning, dug deeper. The Columbia scholar uncovered startling facts that Andrew Johnson's important state papers were ghost-written. The historian-diplomat, George Bancroft, penned Johnson's first annual message to the Congress. In fact, the New York historian declared that Cabinet members wrote the remaining three addresses. In addition, non-Cabinet members were largely responsible for important veto messages. Dunning concluded that this only proved Johnson's illiteracy and audacity.⁷

One brave critic, however, challenged Mr. Dunning's findings claiming the so-called "Bancroft message" contained previously recorded Johnsonian ideas. The American diplomat merely acted as an official interpreter of the President's feelings.⁸ Nevertheless, Dunning continued to attack Andrew Johnson's bad taste and judgment.⁹ And, as late as 1916, Johnson was characterized as bigoted, narrow-minded, reticent, and unschooled.¹⁰

But there were signs of growing revisionism. As early as 1888, Hugh McCulloch, Andrew Johnson's Secretary of the Treasury, predicted a more favorable place in history for the persecuted President. It was McCulloch who first cast important doubt on the reports of his boss's reported drunkenness. Rhodes later used the Secretary's first-hand recollections, but apparently ignored the defense contained therein. However, in 1911, credence was given

⁵ James Ford Rhodes, *History of the United States From the Compromise of 1850*, (9 vols.; New York, 1900-28), V, 520, 517, 519, 589-90.

⁶ *Ibid.*, VI, cites the Johnson MSS. only eight times.

⁷ William A. Dunning, "More Light on Andrew Johnson," in *American Historical Review*, XI (1906), 579, 583, 588.

⁸ See Carl Russell Fish, "Communication: President Johnson's First Annual Message," in *ibid.*, 952.

⁹ See "The Impeachment and Trial of President Johnson," in William A. Dunning, *Essays on the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York, 1908), 253.

¹⁰ See Clifton Rumery Hall, *Andrew Johnson, Military Governor of Tennessee* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1916), 218.

to McCulloch's reminiscences when Houghton Mifflin published the highly pro-Johnson (anti-Edwin M. Stanton) *Diary of Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy Under Lincoln and Johnson*.

But the most important of this transitional literature was written by the Harvard-trained historian, James Schouler. In a trail-blazing essay for *Bookman* in 1912, Mr. Schouler came to the defense of Johnson. Basing his arguments primarily on Welles's *Diary*, and fresh from researching at the Library of Congress, the New Englander set upon both Dunning and Rhodes.

Schouler agreed with the Navy Secretary that the late President was an effective speech writer on his own. Johnson's eloquent pre-Civil War orations in the Senate were proof. Secondly, he attacked Rhodes's unfair treatment of the man and the President. Arguing from the premise that even great statesmen have faults, the historian defended Johnson's reported intemperance for the President lived in an age when drinkers far outnumbered abstainers. In addition, Schouler reported that he was unable to discover any proof to substantiate the 1866 campaign orgies Rhodes talked about. Finally, James Schouler painted a different picture of Johnson in the atmosphere of official Washington. The President was always available and respectful to all White House callers.¹¹

However, a more elaborate defense of Johnson and his presidency came from Schouler the next year in the seventh volume of his history of the United States. He proclaimed that a vindication of Johnson was long overdue and he promised personally to place the President "upon his just plane of historical merit before the coming age."

James Schouler's account was extremely important for it contained the seeds of future revisionism. Schouler saw no wrong, as Rhodes had, in Andrew Johnson's humble origins. He even compared Johnson's climb from obscurity with Jackson's. He saw the President as a strong chief executive confronted with an obstinate and jealous Congress which, after Lincoln, hoped for a more compliant executive. Therefore, for the first time, the reputation of the Radicals was downgraded.

With this, the first real rehabilitation of Johnson, came the decline in the reputation of others. Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton became a "Judas" who was allowed to play the role of a traitor

¹¹ James Schouler, "President Johnson and Posterity," in *Bookman*, XXXIV (1912), 500-502.

because of the President's patient nature. In addition, General Ulysses S. Grant emerged tarnished from Schouler's history. It was the General who was hard-headed. He refused to inform Johnson of his intentions not to test the Tenure of Office Act in court. It was Grant who begrudged Johnson the privilege of accompanying him during the processional route to his inauguration.

In conclusion, the historian urged future examination of what he thought to be a highly successful Johnson administration. The four years were marked by reform, by an absence of corruption, and by diplomatic victories.¹²

James Schouler was thus the first scholar to research extensively in the collection of the Johnson Papers. Despite the fact that his style was so tedious as to require close security, he deserved to be called the forerunner of the revisionists.

The springboard of full-fledged revisionism, however, came strangely enough from the Supreme Court. On October 25, 1926, in *Myers v. United States*, the high court ruled that Congress could not limit the President's power to remove executive officers. For all purposes, the 1867 Tenure of Office Act was invalid. The Radicals were wrong! Johnson would be righted.

Within four years of the Supreme Court decision, the same number of biographies on the President appeared each proclaiming his vindication. There were also other contributing factors explaining the rehabilitation of Andrew Johnson at this time. The revival of the dormant Ku Klux Klan in the 1920's dramatized the failure of the Radicals to help the Negro. The exoneration of the "great democrat" at this precise moment was not out of place when viewed as an additional expression of that liberal spirit fostered by such historical giants as Charles A. Beard and Vernon Louis Parrington. Finally, the wholesale vindication of the President became a fashion in a decade which spawned many fads.

It was ironic that the initial breakthrough came from the pen of a descendant of one of North Carolina's aristocratic families. In 1928, Judge Robert W. Winston published his *Andrew Johnson: Plebeian and Patriot*. For all intents and purposes, Judge Winston's book was the first authoritative biography of the President. He was the first biographer to use the collection of the Johnson Papers in the nation's capital. The judge also traveled to Tennessee to make use of John-

¹² *History of the United States of America Under the Constitution* (7 vols. New York, 1908-1913), VII, iii; 143; 12; 81-82; 142; 64; 109; 138-39; 132-34.

son's personal letters and scrap books in the possession of his family. In addition, he searched out pertinent material in the libraries and historical societies of six Southern states. Judge Winston also had the benefit of being a contemporary of Andrew Johnson for he had met the retired statesman in his youth.

Winston stated that his purpose was to give Andrew Johnson a "fair deal."¹³ To secure this goal, he made ample use of burgeoning collections of Civil War recollections and reminiscences. His documentation was evidence of his intense research. His style, at its worst, suffered from over-use of classical phraseology. Notwithstanding such a minor fault, all reviewers agreed that Winston made a distinct contribution to American biography.¹⁴

The biographer actually elaborated on James Schouler's outline. For example, he found it feasible, in view of his theme, to enlarge upon Schouler's comparison of Andrew Johnson and Andrew Jackson. He added mileage to the myth by the disclosure that Jackson had once fully supported his fellow Tennessean for Congress. Representative Johnson's rapport with his constituents had branded him already the "second Andy Jackson." He was the "Moses of the mechanic," the mouthpiece of the artisan. Writing seventeen years later, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. could label Johnson a Jacksonian declaring that the Tennessee politician's presidency had represented a last futile effort on the part of the Jacksonians to recapture their power from the industrialists.

What of Winston's views concerning Johnson in Washington? Did the politician lose his common touch? Vice-president Johnson's infamous inaugural speech, in which he declared people higher than any congress or president, only testified to the man's honesty and consistency. As President, Johnson was a model chief executive. He put in a long hard day. He refused all gifts. He was, as always, for economy in government. In every amnesty case (even Mrs. Surratt's, so says Winston) he used his powers wisely.

As the popularity of Andrew Johnson thus soared, the reputation of the Radicals and their program continued its downward trend. Winston obviously agreed with Schouler that Johnson was a strong executive. But he went much further than his predecessor. In proving this thesis, he gave credence to a necessary concomitant. Winston

¹³ Robert W. Winston, *Andrew Johnson: Plebeian and Patriot* (New York, 1928), xvi.

¹⁴ See *New York Times Book Review*, March 18, 1928, 3; *Boston Evening Transcript*, March 24, 1928; and *New Republic*, LV (1928), 206.

popularized the belief that the Radicals were *highly consolidated* in opposition to Lincoln's policies of Reconstruction *prior* to the President's death. It was essential to his theme that his subject bask in Lincoln's memory. For if Abraham Lincoln could have lived, the Great Emancipator also would have resisted Congressional demands.

Presupposing an acceptance of these premises, the next logical step was an evaluation of Johnson's program. Winston vigorously defended the President's civil rights position. Attesting to the lack of political and social advancement for the Negro in his own day, the Southern historian proclaimed that Johnson was justified in opposing a forced reconstruction. If the South could have been allowed to regulate its own affairs (indeed as Johnson himself desired), then the kindly Negro-white relationship of pre-Civil War days would have continued to exist.

In addition, Judge Winston labeled false the idea (reported by Rhodes) that Johnson broke a promise with the moderate Republicans when he vetoed the Civil Rights Bill. At no time, said the historian, did Johnson commit himself to such a course. In concluding, the biographer called the Radical's overriding veto of this piece of legislation revolutionary and insincere. It was epochal, for it was the first time the Congress overruled the executive on a strictly Constitutional question. It was insincere, for "Thad Stevens and his Directory" cared nothing for the Negro.¹⁵

Another important biography on Andrew Johnson followed quickly the next year. Entitled *Andrew Johnson: A Study in Courage*, it was the longest of all the Johnsonian biographies. The author, Lloyd Paul Stryker, utilized untouched newspaper accounts and church sermons in an effort to gauge the temper of the age. The style was the finest to date, but it was heavily laced with quotations. Its contents revealed that perhaps the pinnacle of revisionism had been reached.

First, unlike Winston, Stryker resorted to open attacks on the historians of the first period. For example, when referring to Rhodes's biting comments concerning Johnson's humble origins, Stryker retorted: "It would require a strong palate for snobbery to enjoy that paragraph."

Secondly, Stryker gave undue respectability to the theory of a pre-Johnson Radical conspiracy. He believed the Radical Congressmen were well organized, hopeful, and determined long before 1865.

¹⁵ Winston, *Johnson*, 29, 260, 244, 265-70, 298-99, 273, 337, 515-19, 348-49, 318.

He also contended that Abraham Lincoln fully comprehended this Radical opposition. Such a stand had a double affect.

Johnson as never before was cast in the role of a martyr, for he experienced what was intended originally for Lincoln. In addition, the Radical leaders, especially Thaddeus Stevens, emerged in bad light. The dictator of the House Republicans was pictured as a malicious politician, a master of foul play, in contrast to the charitable and sportsmanlike President.¹⁶ As a result of this interpretation, one 1929 reviewer called the author "an angry partisan."¹⁷

Finally, Stryker introduced a new aspect alluded to first by Schouler but later ignored by Winston. Addressing himself to the writers of the first period, Stryker claimed that Johnson's early biographers were reluctant to praise the President because this would have meant a condemnation of the Grant administration and "Black Reconstruction." Those historians, said the biographer, dared not write that chapter in America's criminal annals. As a result, Stryker concluded with a scathing attack on President Grant. "Artists, if not historians," he said, "must lament that Grant could not have died on the day of Appomattox." For after that, the rest of his career was anti-climatic.¹⁸

The next two biographies can be considered together for each concentrated on the turbulent post-Civil War period rather than on their subject.

The first one, *The Tragic Era: The Revolution After Lincoln*, was published in 1929 by newspaperman Claude G. Bowers. It was a careless but nevertheless important contribution. Immediately hailed a popular history, some of the book's deficiencies were possibly due to the fact that it was aimed at public consumption.

Bowers, in testimony of the unique milieu of the times he wrote in, often resorted to Freudian explanations for the behavior of certain post-Civil War statesmen. The readers were relieved, to be sure, to hear that Johnson was "clean minded." However, and this is noteworthy, such psychopathic scrutiny resulted in a changed portrait for the Radical Thaddeus Stevens. The bald-headed Congressman was pictured as an "inveterate gambler" secretly carrying on an illicit affair with his mulatto housekeeper. This led Johnson's biogra-

¹⁶ Lloyd Paul Stryker, *Andrew Johnson: A Study in Courage* (New York, 1929), III, 205, 139, 135, 275.

¹⁷ N. W. Stephenson, in *American Historical Review*, XXXV (1929), 240.

¹⁸ Stryker, *Johnson*, 242, 797, 491.

pher to declare unjustly that this explained why the Pennsylvania lawyer was no longer fit for any constructive work.

Finally, Mr. Bowers increased speculation concerning the existence of a pre-Johnson Radical plot declaring that the Radicals hated President Lincoln intensively.¹⁹

The second biography which also concentrated on the *zeitgeist* was George Fort Milton's *The Age of Hate: Andrew Johnson and the Radicals* (1930). In the very early days of revision, this journalist turned historian had written an essay praising the Tennessee politician's "progressive bent."²⁰ He continued to labor this point in his book.

Milton's biography was the most scholarly life of the President so far. His bibliography contained an impressive list of manuscript collections. His research was as thorough as Winston's.

This biography was important for it offered the most comprehensive treatment of Andrew Johnson's early life and career. Secondly, it was the least partisan when considered in the light of the two books which preceded it. A promising historian, Howard K. Beale, remarked that he was impressed with the book's "unusual impartiality."²¹ Furthermore, where other biographers excused the President for his laxity in firing Stanton, Milton proved that Johnson did maneuver peacefully in an attempt to remove the War Secretary through frequent publications of the minutes of the Cabinet meetings. Finally, Milton's biography contained interesting pen portraits of two post-Civil War Statesmen, Carl Schurz and Ulysses S. Grant. Schurz, the German émigré who personally surveyed the war-torn South for President Johnson in 1865, was labeled a conspirator by the biographer. In addition, General Grant, who was briefly Johnson's ad interim Secretary of War, was depicted as highly pompous in his temporary post.²²

The last important work in the current season of revision was Howard K. Beale's *The Critical Year: A Study of Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction* (1930). Originally a doctoral dissertation, it was in finished form as early as 1924. Professor Beale noted in a 1958 edition that it was a "phenomenon of historiography" in that at the same point in time other historians were writing independently on

¹⁹ Bowers, *Tragic Era*, v, 44, 77, 83, 134.

²⁰ George Fort Milton, "Canonization of a Maligned President," in *The Independent*, CXXI (1928), 200.

²¹ Howard K. Beale, in *American Historical Review*, XXXVI (1931), 838.

²² George Fort Milton, *The Age of Hate: Andrew Johnson and the Radicals* (New York, 1930), 87, 330-31, 241, 458.

what was seen later as a "group rehabilitation" of the President.

Beale's volume was doubly significant. As regards general historiography, the book represented the interest on the part of an historian, living during the Great Depression, to view events through an economic spyglass. Specifically, Beale offered a new theory concerning the 1866 Congressional election. He argued that during the off year campaign, President Johnson made a "most fatal error" in underestimating certain perennial and, in some cases, more recent economic issues dividing the country at this time. The issues of Negro suffrage and legislative versus executive reconstruction were Radical "claptrap" and propaganda. The real issues were economic in origin.

The extreme Republicans feared a renewed alignment of Southern planters and Western farmers and therefore they pushed civil rights. In doing so, they clouded the real problems, thus preventing a rapprochement of sections. Johnson *could* have easily awakened this dormant alliance by campaigning on certain economic issues. He could have cried louder for economy, in an age of extravagance in government. The 1866 Congress just had voted itself a sixty-six per-cent increase in salary! A reduction in the high Civil War tax rates (still in effect) would have received warm support in the West and South. Great blocks of votes in these same sections could have been secured by promising the continuance of inflation and by closing the new national banks created to handle the distribution of Civil War greenbacks. Finally, the author claimed that if Johnson could have mustered supposedly growing popular sentiment against big business and monopoly, the election would have been his. The pro-business, pro-Eastern Radicals therefore emerged as different culprits in Beale's pages.²³

Beale's thesis waited thirty years before it came under full attack, as will be seen shortly. Nevertheless, the durability of Professor Beale's work must be noted. Clear organization, an attractive style, and evidence of heavy research were several reasons for its long respectability.²⁴

By 1937, a Civil War historian, James G. Randall, could blame the failure of a sound reconstruction policy mainly on the vindictiveness of the Radicals. However in 1961, when Princeton professor

²³ Howard K. Beale, *The Critical Year: A Study of Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction* (New York, 1930), x; 8, 225, 148, 172, 227-30, 237, 247.

²⁴ See Charles Lingley's review in *American Historical Review*, XXXVI (1930), 171-73.

David Donald (Randall's favorite student) revised Randall's history, the guilt was not that clearly defined.²⁵

The reason for the obvious omission was due to the publication, a year earlier, of the latest monograph on Andrew Johnson written by Eric L. McKittrick. The contents of his *Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction* revealed that there had been a shift away from the revisionist camp.

Mr. McKittrick's first adventure in serious historical writing was immediately well received by the historical profession. It was hailed as creative, provocative, and "a work of major importance." One critic noted that it was apparent that Andrew Johnson was "about to enter another cycle of interpretation."²⁶

The volume contained the fullest bibliography of all books written on the President. The Columbia University scholar relied heavily on a combination of contemporary newspapers and periodicals, although his use of manuscripts was impressive. It is interesting to note that James Ford Rhodes's fifty-year old Reconstruction history found an honored place in the bibliography. In fact, McKittrick praised the scholarship of the Clevelander in the body of his text.

A new Johnson emerged from McKittrick's pages, for he was exposed to sociological and psychological terminology for the first time. "War hatred, symbolic requirements, security concept, symbolic satisfaction, insider, outsider, mass manipulation" were a few examples.

What of the historian's thesis? McKittrick studied the short span from May 29, 1865, the day on which President Johnson issued two proclamations marking the beginning of executive restoration, to March 2, 1867, the date on which Congressional acts were passed signaling the period of legislative and military reconstruction. His purpose was to show how Andrew Johnson, during this almost two-year interim, threw away his responsibility as President and as leader of a political party by failing to compromise with Congress on a coordinate or moderate program of reconstruction. The author accomplished his intention in this manner.

²⁵ Two biographies written after 1937 deserved no more than a passing reference. Each belonged clearly to the second period, and both volumes contributed little to what was said already. See Margaret Shaw Royall, *Andrew Johnson—Presidential Scapegoat: A Biographical Re-evaluation* (New York, 1958), and Milton Lomask, *Andrew Johnson: President on Trial* (New York, 1960).

²⁶ See T. Harry William's review in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XLVII (1960), 519, and Bernard A. Weisberger's review in *American Historical Review*, LXVI (1961), 758.

McKittrick attacked the one piece of logic that he believed essential to revisionist thinking. He claimed that the revisionists had salvaged the President as a political being *per se* at the expense of obscuring the direction Congressional reconstruction originally assumed. This was wrong! McKittrick did not deny Johnson's moral rehabilitation. It was justified! He questioned the interpretation that Johnson's more favorable biographers gave to the early Reconstruction period in order to restore the President's *political* reputation.

The Radicals of 1867 were simply not the Radicals of 1863 or 1865. The theory that a determined group of extremists existed before Lincoln's death was unsound. Such an idea smacked of "retroactive solidarity," for there was no Radical program, plan, or unity before 1865. In fact, there were "surprisingly few" opponents of the Johnson administration in the summer of 1865, and criticism from this quarter hardly ever took the form of an open attack on the person of the President. His enemies of 1867 simply did not exist in 1865!

If one desired to explain any political or social shortcomings during the two-year period in question, he had better look to the President. Andrew Johnson was the radical! He was the "outsider"! His amazing struggle to the top had left him with an obsession. He had imagined himself thus besieged by forces. Earlier, it had been the aristocracy, now, it was the Radicals. Johnson searched out his worn principles of equal rights between classes and local self-rule, but they could not be applied to the concrete political reality of 1865 and 1866. Obviously at this late stage in life, Johnson could not assume the role of a compromiser because then he would have to sacrifice the principles he believed to be right. As a result, Johnson thus failed to respond to the moderate feeling emanating from his own party. Surprisingly, the power behind the Republican party was not Thaddeus Stevens. The real head of the organization was Senator William Pitt Fessenden of Maine, a moderate. But since the President was incapable of understanding political bargaining, Senator Fessenden was unable to secure a rapprochement between the executive and the legislative branches on the all important civil rights issue. Therefore, by the fall campaign of 1866, Andrew Johnson had lost touch with his party and with his constituents. The major issue in the Congressional election was not Johnson's loyalty or policy. Neither was it economic as Beale claimed. McKittrick was unable to

gauge any large sentiment in favor of inflation or against big business. "We cannot make," said the author, "a Populist of Andrew Johnson twenty years too soon." The real issue was civil rights. The President misjudged his party's wishes as well as the national mood.²⁷

This newest estimate of Johnson was heavily supported in a scholarly article which appeared in December, 1961. John H. and La Wanda Cox, following closely the trail blazed fifty-five years earlier by William A. Dunning, studied drafts of Johnson's message vetoing the Freedmen's Bureau Bill as written originally by Secretary of State William H. Seward, and the President's personal staff. The husband-wife team noticed changes made in successive drafts of the message. Hence they pictured Johnson as the jealous overseer and shrewd editor of the various texts of this Congressional veto as it finally evolved. As proof of Johnson's vigilance, they pointed to one important addition not found in the earlier drafts. In the revised statement, Johnson castigated Congress for not acknowledging the plight of the underprivileged *white* citizenry of the country. According to Mr. and Mrs. Cox, this rebuke was a "deliberate appeal to race prejudice." They imply, moreover, that the original statement is further evidence of Andrew Johnson's lack of "political acumen" in dealing with his Congressional opponents.²⁸

Historians, many of whom are engrossed today in the struggle for civil rights, have therefore rejected the first Reconstruction President as a political incompetent unwilling to give enough on civil rights. It is impossible to say, of course, what will be the enduring interpretation of Johnson's career. It may be that the present interpretation will prevail. On the other hand, it may be that with the passage of time and a diminished involvement of historians in the civil rights struggle the picture of Johnson will either change again or will return to something nearer the Winston-Milton-Stryker view. Johnson's biographers are no more consistent than were his constituents in their appraisal of his career and accomplishments.

²⁷ Eric L. McKittrick, *Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction* (Chicago, 1960), *passim*.

²⁸ John H. and La Wanda Cox, "Andrew Johnson and His Ghost Writers: An Analysis of the Freedmen's Bureau and Civil Rights Veto Messages," in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XLVIII (1961), 467-70; 479. See also their *Politics, Principle, and Prejudice, 1865-1866: Dilemma of Reconstruction America* (New York, 1963).

For the most recent endorsement of McKittrick's thesis (other than the Coxes'), see Eugene H. Roseboom's review in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, L (1963), 318-19.