

Collector's Journal

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2011 Andrew Johnson Presidential Dollar

Seventeenth in the Presidential Dollars Collection

The Andrew Johnson Dollar was the first of four Presidential Dollars issued in 2011. It was also the 17th coin in the overall series because Johnson was the 17th President. The coin was released by the United States Mint on February 17, 2011.

The Presidential Dollars series started in 2007 with a coin honoring George Washington, the first President. Each year, four coins are issued in the order in which the Presidents served. As a result, the Andrew Johnson Dollar started the fifth year of the series; the series will continue until at least 2016.

Each Presidential Dollar is issued for only about 13 weeks before the next coin is introduced. When the coin's issue period is over, it can never be made again. The coins are struck for circulation at the U.S. Mints in Philadelphia and Denver. Coins from Philadelphia bear a small "P" mint mark as part of the edge lettering, while those from Denver have a small "D."

The design for the Andrew Johnson Dollar was based on various images taken of Johnson at the height of his political career in Washington, D.C. He often posed for formal photographs, including many by the Mathew Brady studio. Brady was one of the foremost photographers of his era and was especially renowned for his haunting and dramatic images of the Civil War. On the coin, Johnson is shown in a formal suit and bow tie.

The reverse of the Andrew Johnson Dollar is the same as every other coin in the Presidential Dollars series: the Statue of Liberty. Unlike all Dollar coins issued for circulation since the first Morgan Silver Dollar in 1878, the Presidential Dollars do not feature the word "Liberty." Instead, the Statue of Liberty fulfills the legal requirement all U.S. coins must feature the word "Liberty" or an image emblematic of Liberty.



Andrew Johnson

Andrew Johnson was born on December 29, 1808, in Raleigh, North Carolina. Despite growing up in severe poverty and being unable to read and write until his adult years, he rose to become a powerful politician. He assumed the Presidency following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, and he was the first President to be impeached.

Johnson was an apprentice tailor before turning to politics. He was popular because he was a champion of the common man. After serving in the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate, he was selected by the Republican party as Lincoln's Vice Presidential candidate in the 1864 election – even though he was a lifelong Democrat. He was Vice President for only six weeks following his March 4, 1865, inauguration before becoming President.

As President, Johnson seldom agreed with Congress. The major areas of dispute included Reconstruction policies in former Confederate states and details about the abolition of slavery. Congress attempted to restrict Johnson's powers, and in 1868 it impeached him over his dismissal of a cabinet member. He was acquitted by one vote. In the 1868 Presidential election, neither the Republicans or the Democrats nominated him as their candidate. He returned to politics in 1875, however, as a U.S. Senator from Tennessee. He was the only former President to serve in the Senate. He died on July 31, 1875, shortly after taking his seat.

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