



TUSCULUM COLLEGE



President Andrew Johnson Museum & Library



During the 1861 secession debates, Greene County was mostly Unionist, but Tusculum College students were divided. Before the June secession vote, then-U.S. Sen. Johnson spoke in Greeneville in support of the Union. Afterward, secessionist students burned Johnson in effigy and raised a Confederate flag over Old College. Confronted by a professor loyal to the Union, a student helped lower the flag, for which his classmates called him “Benedict Arnold.” The administration suspended classes and students went home.

The college suffered during the war as both Federal and Confederate forces camped in and around the building. In July 1865, college trustees reported: “The late war has left Tusculum College in a deplorable condition—its enclosures are broken down, its library much wasted and



The campus community turned out for this 1875 photo, including students sitting in the windows.
Courtesy Tusculum College Archives

abused and its chemical and philosophical apparatus broken and destroyed.” Another local institution, Greenville College, suffered so much that its campus was sold for a mere

\$700 after the war and its library was sent to Old College. In 1868, the two schools merged as Greenville and Tusculum College, using the rooms and facilities at Old College.



Andrew Johnson, ca. 1860 — *Courtesy Library of Congress*

The oldest college in Tennessee, Tusculum College is a significant part of the state’s Civil War occupation story. This is the only building remaining from that era, Old College, built in 1841. Greeneville resident Andrew Johnson donated to the building’s construction. He served as Tennessee’s military governor during the war and as President of the United States after President Abraham Lincoln’s assassination in April 1865. The Old College, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, now houses the President Andrew Johnson Museum and Library.