

Leaders of Nations

From Tennessee Masonry

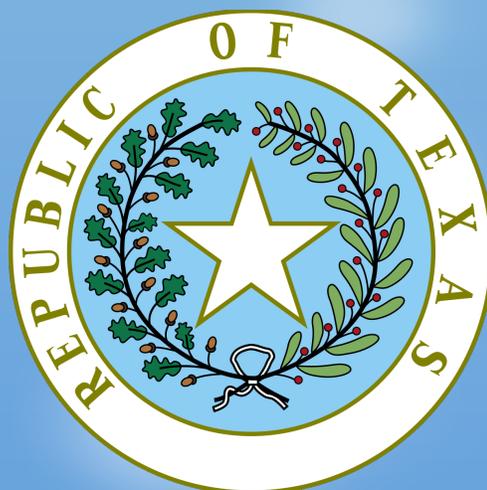
Ralph L. Scott, Jr.

Andrew Jackson
James K. Polk
Andrew Johnson



John Ross

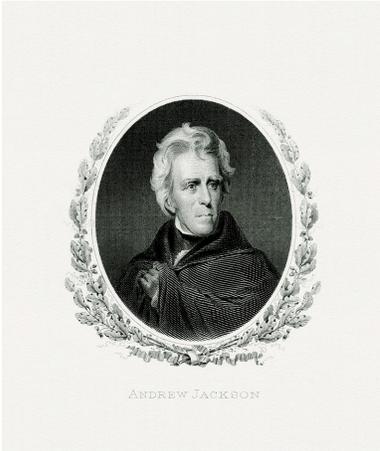
Sam Houston



Andrew Jackson

1767-1845

7th President of the United States 1829-1837



BEP engraved portrait of Jackson as President

Andrew Jackson was born on March 15, 1767, in the Waxhaws region of the Carolinas. His parents were Scots-Irish colonists Andrew and Elizabeth Hutchinson Jackson, Presbyterians who had emigrated from present day Northern Ireland two years earlier. Jackson's father was born in Carrickfergus, County Antrim, in current-day Northern Ireland, around 1738. Jackson's parents lived in the village of Boneybefore, also in County Antrim. His paternal family line originated in Killingswold Grove, Yorkshire, England.

When they immigrated to North America in 1765, Jackson's parents probably landed in Philadelphia. Most likely they traveled overland through the Appalachian Mountains to the Scots-Irish community in the Waxhaws, straddling the border between North and South Carolina. They brought two children from Ireland, Hugh (born 1763) and Robert (born 1764). Jackson's father died in a logging accident while clearing land^[B] in February 1767 at the age of 29, three weeks before his son Andrew was born. Jackson, his mother, and his brothers lived with Jackson's aunt and uncle in the Waxhaws region, and Jackson received schooling from two nearby priests.

Jackson's exact birthplace is unclear because of a lack of knowledge of his mother's actions immediately following her husband's funeral. The area was so remote that the border between North and South Carolina had not been officially surveyed. In 1824, Jackson wrote a letter saying he had been born on the plantation of his uncle James Crawford in Lancaster County, South Carolina. Jackson may have claimed to be a South Carolinian because the state was considering nullification of the Tariff of 1824, which he opposed. In the mid-1850s, second-hand evidence indicated that he might have been born at a different uncle's home in North Carolina. As a young boy, Jackson was easily offended and was considered something of a bully. He was, however, said to have taken a group of younger and weaker boys under his wing and been very kind to them.

Revolutionary War Service

During the Revolutionary War, Jackson's eldest brother, Hugh, died from heat exhaustion after the Battle of Stono Ferry on June 20, 1779. Anti-British sentiment intensified following the brutal Waxhaws Massacre on May 29, 1780. Jackson's mother encouraged him and his elder brother Robert to attend the local militia drills. Soon, they began to help the militia as couriers. They served under Colonel William Richardson Davie at the Battle of Hanging Rock on August 6. The British captured Andrew and Robert in April 1781 while staying at the home of the Crawford family. When Andrew refused to clean the boots of a British officer, the officer slashed at the youth with a sword, leaving him with scars on his left hand and head, as well as an intense hatred for the British. Robert also refused to do as commanded and was struck with the sword. The two brothers were held as prisoners, contracted smallpox, and nearly starved to death in captivity.



Later that year, their mother Elizabeth secured the brothers' release. She then began to walk both boys back to their home in the Waxhaws, a distance of some 40 miles (64 km). Both were in very poor health. Robert, who was far worse, rode on the only horse they had, while Andrew walked behind them. In the final two hours of the journey, a torrential downpour began which worsened the effects of the smallpox. Within two days of arriving back home, Robert was dead and Andrew in mortal danger. After nursing Andrew back to health, Elizabeth volunteered to nurse American prisoners of war on board two British ships in the Charleston harbor, where there had been an outbreak of cholera. In November, she died from the disease and was buried in an unmarked grave. Andrew became an orphan at age 14. He blamed the British personally for the loss of his brothers and mother.

Legal Career and Marriage

After the Revolutionary War, Jackson received a sporadic education in a local Waxhaw school. On bad terms with much of his extended family, he boarded with several different people. In 1781, he worked for a time as a saddle-maker, and eventually taught school. He apparently prospered in neither profession. In 1784, he left the Waxhaws region for Salisbury, North Carolina, where he studied law under attorney Spruce Macay. With the help of various lawyers, he was able to learn enough to qualify for the bar. In September 1787, Jackson was admitted to the North Carolina bar. Shortly thereafter, his friend John McNairy helped him get appointed to a vacant prosecutor position in the Western District of North Carolina, which would later become the state of Tennessee. During his travel west, Jackson bought his first slave and in 1788, having been offended by fellow lawyer Waightstill Avery, fought his first duel. The duel ended with both men firing into the air, having made a secret agreement to do so before the engagement.



Rachel Donelson Robards

Jackson moved to the small frontier town of Nashville in 1788, where he lived as a boarder with Rachel Stockly Donelson, the widow of John Donelson. Here Jackson became acquainted with their daughter, Rachel Donelson Robards. The younger Rachel was in an unhappy marriage with Captain Lewis Robards; he was subject to fits of jealous rage. The two were separated in 1790. According to Jackson, he married Rachel after hearing that Robards had obtained a divorce. Her divorce had not been made final, making Rachel's marriage to Jackson bigamous and therefore invalid. After the divorce was officially completed, Rachel and Jackson remarried in 1794. To complicate matters further, evidence shows that Rachel had been living with Jackson and referred to herself as Mrs. Jackson before the petition for divorce was ever made. It was not uncommon on the frontier for relationships to be formed and dissolved unofficially, as long as they were recognized by the community.

Land Speculation and Early Public Career

In 1794, Jackson formed a partnership with fellow lawyer John Overton, dealing in claims for land reserved by treaty for the Cherokee and Chickasaw. Like many of their contemporaries, they dealt in such claims although the land was in Indian country. Most of the transactions involved grants made under the 'land grab' act of 1783 that briefly opened Indian lands west of the Appalachians within North Carolina to claim by that state's residents. He was one of the three original investors who founded Memphis, Tennessee, in 1819.

After moving to Nashville, Jackson became a protégé of William Blount, a friend of the Donelsons and one of the most powerful men in the territory. Jackson became attorney general in 1791, and he won election as a delegate to the Tennessee constitutional convention in 1796. When Tennessee achieved statehood that year, he was elected its only U.S. Representative. He was a member of the Democratic-Republican Party, the dominant party in Tennessee. As a representative, Jackson staunchly defended the rights of Tennesseans against the Indians. He strongly opposed the Jay Treaty and criticized George Washington for allegedly removing Republicans from public office. Jackson joined several other Republican congressmen in voting against a resolution of thanks for Washington, a vote that would later haunt him when he sought the presidency. In 1797, the state legislature elected him as U.S. Senator. Jackson seldom participated in debate and found the job dissatisfying. He pronounced himself "disgusted with the administration" of President John Adams and resigned the following year without explanation. Upon

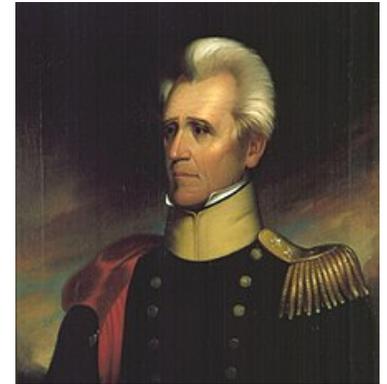
returning home, with strong support from western Tennessee, he was elected to serve as a judge of the Tennessee Supreme Court at an annual salary of \$600. Jackson's service as a judge is generally viewed as a success and earned him a reputation for honesty and good decision making. Jackson resigned the judgeship in 1804. His official reason for resigning was ill health. He had been suffering financially from poor land ventures, and so it is also possible that he wanted to return full-time to his business interests.

After arriving in Tennessee, Jackson won the appointment of judge advocate of the Tennessee militia. In 1802, while serving on the Tennessee Supreme Court, he declared his candidacy for major general, or commander, of the Tennessee militia, a position voted on by the officers. At that time, most free men were members of the militia. The organizations were intended to be called up in case of conflict with Europeans or Indians and resembled large social clubs. Jackson saw it as a way to advance his stature. With strong support from western Tennessee, he tied with John Sevier with seventeen votes. Sevier was a popular Revolutionary War veteran and former governor, the recognized leader of politics in eastern Tennessee. On February 5, Governor Archibald Roane broke the tie in Jackson's favor. Jackson had also presented Roane with evidence of land fraud against Sevier. Subsequently, in 1803, when Sevier announced his intention to regain the governorship, Roane released the evidence. Jackson then published a newspaper article accusing Sevier of fraud and bribery. Sevier insulted Jackson in public, and the two nearly fought a duel over the matter. Despite the charges leveled against Sevier, he defeated Roane and continued to serve as governor until 1809.

War of 1812

Creek Campaign and Treaty

Leading up to 1812, the United States found itself increasingly drawn into international conflict. Formal hostilities with Spain or France never materialized, but tensions with Britain increased for a number of reasons. Among these was the desire of many Americans for more land, particularly British Canada and Florida, the latter still controlled by Spain, Britain's European ally. On June 18, 1812, Congress officially declared war on the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, beginning the War of 1812. Jackson responded enthusiastically, sending a letter to Washington offering 2,500 volunteers. However, the men were not called up for many months. Biographer Robert V. Remini claims that Jackson saw the apparent slight as payback by the Madison administration for his support of Burr and Monroe. Meanwhile, the United States military repeatedly suffered devastating defeats on the battlefield.



Portrait by Ralph E. W. Earl,
c. 1837

On January 10, 1813, Jackson led an army of 2,071 volunteers to New Orleans to defend the region against British and Native American attacks. He had been instructed to serve under General Wilkinson, who commanded Federal forces in New Orleans. Lacking adequate provisions, Wilkinson ordered Jackson to halt in Natchez, then part of the Mississippi Territory, and await further orders. Jackson reluctantly obeyed. The newly appointed Secretary of War, John Armstrong Jr., sent a letter to Jackson dated February 6 ordering him to dismiss his forces and to turn over his supplies to Wilkinson. In reply to Armstrong on March 15, Jackson defended the character and readiness of his men, and promised to turn over his supplies. He also promised, instead of dismissing the troops without provisions in Natchez, to march them back to Nashville. The march was filled with agony. Many of the men had fallen ill. Jackson and his officers turned over their horses to the sick. He paid for provisions for the men out of his own pocket. The soldiers began referring to their commander as "Hickory" because of his toughness, and Jackson became known as "Old Hickory." The army arrived in Nashville within about a month. Jackson's actions earned him respect and praise from the people of Tennessee. Jackson faced financial ruin, until his former aide-de-camp Thomas Benton persuaded Secretary Armstrong to order the army to pay the expenses Jackson had incurred. On June 14, Jackson served as a second in a duel on behalf of his junior officer William Carroll against Jesse Benton, the brother of Thomas. On September 3, Jackson and his top cavalry officer, Brigadier General John Coffee, were involved in a street brawl with the Benton brothers. Jackson was severely wounded by Jesse with a gunshot to the shoulder.

On August 30, 1813, a group of Muscogee (also known as Creek Indians) called the Red Sticks, so named for the color of their war paint, perpetrated the Fort Mims massacre. During the massacre, hundreds of white American settlers and non-Red Stick Creeks were slaughtered. The Red Sticks, led by chiefs Red Eagle and Peter McQueen, had broken away from the rest of the Creek Confederacy, which wanted peace with the United States. They were allied with Tecumseh, a Shawnee chief who had launched Tecumseh's War against the United States, and who was fighting alongside the British. The resulting conflict became known as the Creek War.



General Andrew Jackson as pictured in Harper's Magazine, War with the Creek Indians, 1864

Jackson, with 2,500 men, was ordered to crush the hostile Indians. On October 10, he set out on the expedition, his arm still in a sling from fighting the Bentons. Jackson established Fort Strother as a supply base. On November 3, Coffee defeated a band of Red Sticks at the Battle of Tallushatchee. Coming to the relief of friendly Creeks besieged by Red Sticks, Jackson won another decisive victory at the Battle of Talladega. In the winter, Jackson, encamped at Fort Strother, faced a severe shortage of troops due to the expiration of enlistments and chronic desertions. He sent Coffee with the cavalry (which abandoned him) back to Tennessee to secure more enlistments. Jackson decided to combine his force with that of the Georgia militia, and marched to meet the Georgia troops. From January 22–24, 1814, while on their way, the Tennessee militia and allied Muscogee were attacked by the Red Sticks at the Battles of Emuckfaw and Enotachopo Creek. Jackson's troops repelled the attackers, but outnumbered, were forced to withdraw to Fort Strother.^[84] Jackson, now with over 2,000 troops, marched most of his army south to confront the Red Sticks at a fortress they had constructed at a bend in the Tallapoosa River. On March 27, enjoying an advantage of more than 2 to 1, he engaged them at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. An initial artillery barrage did little damage to the well-constructed fort. A subsequent Infantry charge, in addition to an assault by Coffee's cavalry and diversions caused by the friendly Creeks, overwhelmed the Red Sticks.

The campaign ended three weeks later with Red Eagle's surrender, although some Red Sticks such as McQueen fled to East Florida. On June 8, Jackson accepted a commission as brigadier general in the United States Army, and 10 days later became a major general, in command of the Seventh Military Division. Subsequently, Jackson, with Madison's approval, imposed the Treaty of Fort Jackson. The treaty required the Muscogee, including those who had not joined the Red Sticks, to surrender 23 million acres (8,093,713 ha) of land to the United States. Most of the Creeks bitterly acquiesced. Though in ill health from dysentery, Jackson turned his attention to defeating Spanish and British forces. Jackson accused the Spanish of arming the Red Sticks and of violating the terms of their neutrality by allowing British soldiers into the Floridas. The first charge was true, while the second ignored the fact that it was Jackson's threats to invade Florida, which had caused them to seek British protection. In the November 7 Battle of Pensacola, Jackson defeated British and Spanish forces in a short skirmish. The Spanish surrendered and the British fled. Weeks later, he learned that the British were planning an attack on New Orleans, which sat on the mouth of the Mississippi River and held immense strategic and commercial value. Jackson abandoned Pensacola to the Spanish, placed a force in Mobile, Alabama, to guard against a possible invasion there, and rushed the rest of his force west to defend the city.

The Creeks coined their own name for Jackson, *Jacksa Chula Harjo* or "Jackson, old and fierce."

Battle of New Orleans

After arriving in New Orleans on December 1, 1814, Jackson instituted martial law in the city, as he worried about the loyalty of the city's Creole and Spanish inhabitants. At the same time, he formed an alliance with Jean Lafitte's smugglers, and formed military units consisting of African-Americans and Muscogees, in addition to recruiting volunteers in the city. Jackson received some criticism for paying white and non-white volunteers the same salary. These forces, along with U.S. Army regulars and volunteers from surrounding states, joined with Jackson's force in defending New Orleans. The approaching British force, led by Admiral Alexander Cochrane and later General Edward Pakenham, consisted of over 10,000 soldiers, many of whom had served in the Napoleonic Wars. Jackson had only about 5,000 men, most of whom were inexperienced and poorly trained.

The British arrived on the east bank of the Mississippi River on the morning of December 23. That evening, Jackson attacked the British and temporarily drove them back. On January 8, 1815, the British launched a major frontal assault against Jackson's defenses. An initial artillery barrage by the British did little damage to the well-constructed American defenses. Once the morning fog had cleared, the British launched a frontal assault, and their troops made easy targets for the Americans protected by their parapets. Despite managing to temporarily drive back the American right flank, the overall attack ended in disaster. For the battle on January 8, Jackson admitted to only 71 total casualties. Of these, 13 men were killed, 39 wounded, and 19 missing or captured. The British admitted 2,037 casualties. Of these, 291 men were killed (including Pakenham), 1,262 wounded, and 484 missing or captured.^[100] After the battle, the British retreated from the area, and open hostilities ended shortly thereafter when word spread that the Treaty of Ghent had been signed in Europe that December. Coming in the waning days of the war, Jackson's victory made him a national hero, as the country celebrated the end of what many called the "Second American Revolution" against the British. By a Congressional resolution on February 27, 1815, Jackson was given the Thanks of Congress and awarded a Congressional Gold Medal.^[38]



The Battle of New Orleans, by painter Edward Percy Moran in 1910.

Alexis de Tocqueville ("underwhelmed" by Jackson according to a 2001 commentator) later wrote in *Democracy in America* that Jackson "was raised to the Presidency, and has been maintained there, solely by the recollection of a victory which he gained, twenty years ago, under the walls of New Orleans." Some have claimed that, because the war was already ended by the preliminary signing of the Treaty of Ghent, Jackson's victory at New Orleans was without importance aside from making him a celebrated figure. However, the Spanish, who had sold the Louisiana Territory to France, disputed France's right to sell it to the United States through the Louisiana Purchase in 1803.^[103] In April 1815, Spain, assuming that the British had won at New Orleans, asked for the return of the Louisiana Territory. Spanish representatives claimed to have been assured that they would receive the land back.^[104] Furthermore, Article IX of the Treaty of Ghent stipulated that the United States must return land taken from the Creeks to their original owners, essentially undoing the Treaty of Fort Jackson. Thanks to Jackson's victory at New Orleans, the American government felt that it could safely ignore that provision and it kept the lands that Jackson had acquired.

Enforced Martial Law in New Orleans

Jackson, still not knowing for certain of the treaty's signing, refused to lift martial law in the city. State senator Louis Louaillier had written an anonymous piece in the New Orleans newspaper, challenging Jackson's refusal to release the militia after the British ceded the field of battle. Jackson attempted to find the author and, after Louaillier admitted to having written the piece, he was imprisoned. In March 1815, after U.S. District Court Judge Dominic A. Hall signed a writ of *habeas corpus* on behalf of Louaillier, Jackson ordered Hall's arrest. Jackson did not relent his campaign of suppressing dissent until after ordering the arrest of a Louisiana legislator, a federal judge, and a lawyer, and after the intervention of State Judge Joshua Lewis. Lewis was simultaneously serving under Jackson in the militia, and also had signed a writ of *habeas corpus* against Jackson, his commanding officer, seeking Judge Hall's release.

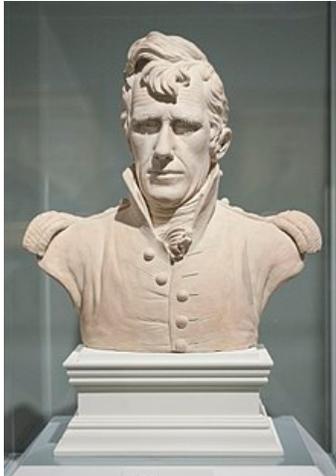
Civilian authorities in New Orleans had reason to fear Jackson—he summarily ordered the execution of six members of the militia who had attempted to leave. Their deaths were not well publicized until the Coffin Handbills were circulated during his 1828 presidential campaign.

First Seminole War

Following the war, Jackson remained in command of troops on the southern border of the U.S. He conducted business from the Hermitage. He signed treaties with the Cherokee and Chickasaw, which

gained for the United States large parts of Tennessee and Kentucky. The treaty with the Chickasaw, finally agreed to later in the year, is commonly known as the Jackson Purchase.

Several Native American tribes, which became known as the Seminole, straddled the border between the U.S. and Florida. The Seminole, in alliance with escaped slaves, frequently raided Georgia settlements before retreating back into Florida. These skirmishes continually escalated, and the conflict is now known as the First Seminole War. In 1816, Jackson led a detachment into Florida, which destroyed the Negro



Terracotta bust of General Jackson by William Rush, 1819

Fort, a community of escaped slaves and their descendants. Jackson was ordered by President Monroe in December 1817 to lead a campaign in Georgia against the Seminole and Creek Indians. Jackson was also charged with preventing Florida from becoming a refuge for runaway slaves, after Spain promised freedom to fugitive slaves. Critics later alleged that Jackson exceeded orders in his Florida actions. His orders from President Monroe were to "terminate the conflict." Jackson believed the best way to do this was to seize Florida from Spain once and for all. Before departing, Jackson wrote to Monroe, "Let it be signified to me through any channel ... that the possession of the Floridas would be desirable to the United States, and in sixty days it will be accomplished."

Jackson invaded Florida on March 15, 1818, capturing Pensacola. He crushed Seminole and Spanish resistance in the region and captured two British agents, Robert Ambrister and Alexander Arbuthnot, who had been working with the Seminole. After a brief trial, Jackson executed both of them, causing a diplomatic incident with the British. Jackson's actions polarized Monroe's cabinet, some of who argued that Jackson had gone against Monroe's orders and violated the Constitution, since the United States had not declared war upon Spain. He was defended by Secretary of State John Quincy Adams. Adams thought that Jackson's conquest of Florida would

force Spain to finally sell the province, and Spain did indeed sell Florida to the United States in the Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819. A congressional investigation exonerated Jackson, but he was deeply angered by the criticism he received, particularly from Speaker of the House Henry Clay. After the ratification of the Adams-Onís Treaty in 1821, Jackson resigned from the army and briefly served as the territorial Governor of Florida before returning to Tennessee.

Election of 1824

In the spring of 1822, Jackson suffered a physical breakdown. His body had two bullets lodged in it, and he had grown exhausted from years of hard military campaigning. He regularly coughed up blood, and his entire body shook. Jackson feared that he was on the brink of death. After several months of rest, he recovered. During his convalescence, Jackson's thoughts increasingly turned to national affairs. He obsessed over rampant corruption in the Monroe administration and grew to detest the Second Bank of the United States, blaming it for causing the Panic of 1819 by contracting credit.

Jackson turned down an offer to run for governor of his home state, but accepted John Overton's plan to have the legislature nominate him for president. On July 22, 1822, he was officially nominated by the Tennessee legislature. Jackson had come to dislike Secretary of the Treasury William H. Crawford, who had been the most vocal critic of Jackson in Monroe's cabinet, and he hoped to prevent Tennessee's electoral votes from going to Crawford. Yet Jackson's nomination garnered a welcoming response even outside of Tennessee, as many Americans appreciated Jackson's attacks on banks. The Panic of 1819 had devastated the fortunes of many, and banks and politicians seen as supportive of banks were particularly unpopular. With his growing political viability, Jackson emerged as one of the five major presidential candidates, along with Crawford, Adams, Clay, and Secretary of War John C. Calhoun. During the Era of Good Feelings, the Federalist Party had faded away, and all five presidential contenders were members of the Democratic-Republican Party. Jackson's campaign promoted him as a defender of the common people, as well as the one candidate who could rise above sectional divisions. On the major issues of the day, most prominently the tariff, Jackson expressed centrist beliefs, and opponents accused him of obfuscating his positions. At the forefront of Jackson's campaign was combatting corruption. Jackson vowed to restore honesty in government and to scale back its excesses.

In 1823, Jackson reluctantly allowed his name to be placed in contention for one of Tennessee's U.S. Senate seats. The move was independently orchestrated by his advisors William Berkeley Lewis and U.S. Senator John Eaton in order to defeat incumbent John Williams, who openly opposed his presidential candidacy. The legislature narrowly elected him. His return, after 24 years, 11 months, 3 days out of office, marks the second longest gap in service to the chamber in history. Although Jackson was reluctant to serve once more in the Senate, he was appointed chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs. Eaton wrote to Rachel that Jackson as a senator was "in harmony and good understanding with every body," including Thomas Hart Benton, now a senator from Missouri, with whom Jackson had fought in 1813. Meanwhile, Jackson himself did little active campaigning for the presidency, as was customary. Eaton updated an already-written biography of him in preparation for the campaign and, along with others, wrote letters to newspapers praising Jackson's record and past conduct.

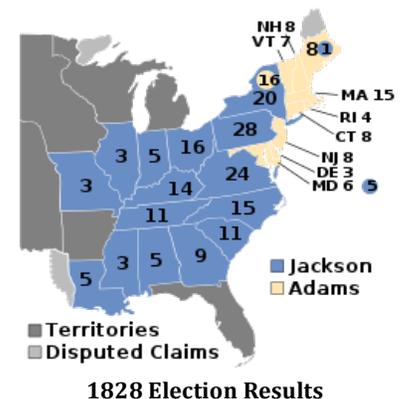
Democratic-Republican presidential nominees had historically been chosen by informal Congressional nominating caucuses, but this method had become unpopular. In 1824, most of the Democratic-Republicans in Congress boycotted the caucus. Those who attended backed Crawford for president and Albert Gallatin for vice president. A Pennsylvania convention nominated Jackson for president a month later, stating that the irregular caucus ignored the "voice of the people" in the "vain hope that the American people might be thus deceived into a belief that he [Crawford] was the regular democratic candidate." Gallatin criticized Jackson as "an honest man and the idol of the worshipers of military glory, but from incapacity, military habits, and habitual disregard of laws and constitutional provisions, altogether unfit for the office." After Jackson won the Pennsylvania nomination, Calhoun dropped out of the presidential race and successfully sought the vice presidency instead.

In the presidential election, Jackson won a plurality of the electoral vote, taking several southern and western states as well as the mid-Atlantic states of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. He was the only candidate to win states outside of his regional base, as Adams dominated New England, Clay took three western states, and Crawford won Virginia and Georgia. Jackson won a plurality of the popular vote, taking 42 percent, although not all states held a popular vote for the presidency. He won 99 electoral votes, more than any other candidate, but still short of 131, which he needed for a true majority. With no candidate having won a majority of the electoral votes, the House of Representatives held a contingent election under the terms of the Twelfth Amendment. The amendment specifies that only the top three electoral vote-winners are eligible to be elected by the House, so Clay was eliminated from contention. Jackson believed that he was likely to win this contingent election, as Crawford and Adams lacked Jackson's national appeal, and Crawford had suffered a debilitating stroke that made many doubt his physical fitness for the presidency. Clay, who as Speaker of the House presided over the election, saw Jackson as a dangerous demagogue who might topple the republic in favor of his own leadership. He threw his support behind Adams, who shared Clay's support for federally funded internal improvements such as roads and canals. With Clay's backing, Adams won the contingent election on the first ballot. Furious supporters of Jackson accused Clay and Adams of having reached a "corrupt bargain" after Adams appointed Clay as his Secretary of State. "So you see," Jackson growled, "the Judas of the West has closed the contract and receive the thirty pieces of silver. [H]is end will be the same." After the election, Jackson resigned his Senate seat and returned to Tennessee.

Election of 1828 and Death of Rachel Jackson

Almost immediately, opposition arose to the Adams presidency. Jackson opposed Adams's plan to involve the U.S. in Panama's quest for independence, writing, "The moment we engage in confederations, or alliances with any nation, we may from that time date the down fall of our republic." Adams damaged his standing in his first annual message to Congress, when he argued that Congress must not give the world the impression "that we are palsied by the will of our constituents."

Jackson was nominated for president by the Tennessee legislature in October 1825, more than three years before the 1828 election. It was the earliest such nomination in presidential history, and it attested to the fact that Jackson's supporters began the 1828 campaign almost as soon as the 1824 campaign ended. Adams's presidency foundered, as



his ambitious agenda faced defeat in a new era of mass politics. Critics led by Jackson attacked Adams's policies as a dangerous expansion of Federal power. New York Senator Martin Van Buren, who had been a prominent supporter of Crawford in 1824, emerged as one of the strongest opponents of Adams's policies, and he settled on Jackson as his preferred candidate in 1828. Vice President Calhoun, who opposed much of Adams's agenda on states' rights grounds, joined Van Buren. Van Buren and other Jackson allies established numerous pro-Jackson newspapers and clubs around the country, while Jackson avoided campaigning but made himself available to visitors at his Hermitage plantation. In the election, Jackson won a commanding 56 percent of the popular vote and 68 percent of the electoral vote. The election marked the definitive end of the one-party Era of Good Feelings, as Jackson's supporters coalesced into the Democratic Party and Adams's followers became known as the National Republicans. In the large Scots-Irish community that was especially numerous in the rural South and Southwest, Jackson was a favorite.

The campaign was heavily personal. As was the custom at the time, neither candidate personally campaigned, but their political followers organized campaign events. Both candidates were rhetorically attacked in the press. Jackson was labeled a slave trader who bought and sold slaves and moved them about in defiance of higher standards of slaveholder behavior. A series of pamphlets known as the Coffin Handbills were published to attack Jackson, one of which revealed his order to execute soldiers at New Orleans. Another accused him of engaging in cannibalism by eating the bodies of American Indians killed in battle, while still another labeled his mother a "common prostitute" and stated that Jackson's father was a "mulatto man."

Rachel Jackson was also a frequent target of attacks, and was widely accused of bigamy, a reference to the controversial situation of her marriage with Jackson. Jackson's campaigners fired back by claiming that while serving as Minister to Russia, Adams had procured a young girl to serve as a prostitute for Emperor Alexander I. They also stated that Adams had a billiard table in the White House and that he had charged the government for it.

Rachel had been under extreme stress during the election, and often struggled while Jackson was away. She began experiencing significant physical stress during the election season. Jackson described her symptoms as "excruciating pain in the left shoulder, arm, and breast." After struggling for three days, Rachel finally died of a heart attack on December 22, 1828, three weeks after her husband's victory in the election (which began on October 31 and ended on December 2) and 10 weeks before Jackson took office as president. A distraught Jackson had to be pulled from her so the undertaker could prepare the body. He felt that the abuse from Adams's supporters had hastened her death and never forgave him. Rachel was buried at the Hermitage on Christmas Eve. "May God Almighty forgive her murderers," Jackson swore at her funeral. "I never can."

Presidency (1829-1837)

Inauguration

Jackson departed from the Hermitage on January 19 and arrived in Washington on February 11. He then set about choosing his cabinet members. Jackson chose Van Buren as expected for Secretary of State, Eaton of Tennessee as Secretary of War, Samuel D. Ingham of Pennsylvania as Secretary of Treasury, John Branch of North Carolina as Secretary of Navy, John M. Berrien of Georgia as Attorney General, and William T. Barry of Kentucky as Postmaster General. Jackson's first choice of cabinet proved to be unsuccessful, full of bitter partisanship and gossip. Jackson blamed Adams in part for what was said about Rachel during the campaign, and refused to meet him after arriving in Washington. Therefore, Adams chose not to attend the inauguration.

On March 4, 1829, Andrew Jackson became the first United States president-elect to take the oath of office on the East Portico of the U.S. Capitol. In his inaugural speech, Jackson promised to respect the sovereign powers of states and the constitutional limits of the presidency. He also promised to pursue "reform" by removing power from "unfaithful or incompetent hands." At the conclusion of the ceremony, Jackson invited the public to the White House, where his supporters held a raucous party. Thousands of spectators overwhelmed the White House staff, and minor damage was caused to fixtures and furnishings. Jackson's populism earned him the nickname "King Mob."

Reforms, Rotation of Offices, and Spoils System

In an effort to purge the government of corruption, Jackson launched presidential investigations into all executive Cabinet offices and departments. He believed appointees should be hired on merit and withdrew many candidates he believed were lax in their handling of monies. He believed that the federal government had been corrupted and that he had received a mandate from the American people to purge such corruption. Jackson's investigations uncovered enormous fraud in the federal government, and numerous officials were removed from office and indicted on corruption. In the first year of Jackson's presidency, his investigations uncovered \$280,000 stolen from the Treasury, and the Department of the Navy was saved \$1 million. He asked Congress to reform embezzlement laws, reduce fraudulent applications for federal pensions, and pass revenue laws to prevent evasion of custom duties, and pass laws to improve government accounting. Jackson's Postmaster General Barry resigned after a Congressional investigation into the postal service revealed mismanagement of mail services, collusion and favoritism in awarding lucrative contracts, as well as failure to audit accounts and supervise contract performances. Jackson replaced Barry with Treasury Auditor and prominent Kitchen Cabinet member Amos Kendall, who went on to implement much needed reforms in the Post Office Department.



**President Andrew Jackson,
New York: Ritchie & Co.
(1860)**

Jackson repeatedly called for the abolition of the Electoral College by constitutional amendment in his annual messages to Congress as president. In his third annual message to Congress, he expressed the view "I have heretofore recommended amendments of the Federal Constitution giving the election of President and Vice-President to the people and limiting the service of the former to a single term. So important do I consider these changes in our fundamental law that I can not, in accordance with my sense of duty, omit to press them upon the consideration of a new Congress."

Although he was unable to implement these goals, Jackson's time in office did see a variety of other reforms. He supported an act in July 1836 that enabled widows of Revolutionary War soldiers who met certain criteria to receive their husband's pensions. In 1836, Jackson established the ten-hour day in national shipyards.

Jackson enforced the Tenure of Office Act, signed by President Monroe in 1820, that limited appointed office tenure and authorized the president to remove and appoint political party associates. Jackson believed that a rotation in office was a democratic reform preventing hereditary office holding and made civil service responsible to the popular will. Jackson

declared that rotation of appointments in political office was "a leading principle in the republican creed." Jackson noted, "In a country where offices are created solely for the benefit of the people no one man has any more intrinsic right to official station than another." Jackson believed that rotating political appointments would prevent the development of a corrupt bureaucracy. The number of federal office holders removed by Jackson were exaggerated by his opponents; Jackson rotated only about 20% of federal office holders during his first term, some for dereliction of duty rather than political purposes. Jackson, nonetheless, used his presidential power to award loyal Democrats by granting them federal office appointments. Jackson's approach incorporated patriotism for country as qualification for holding office. Having appointed a soldier who had lost his leg fighting on the battlefield to postmaster, Jackson stated, "[i]f he lost his leg fighting for his country, that is ... enough for me."

Jackson's theory regarding rotation of office generated what would later be called the spoils system. The political realities of Washington sometimes forced Jackson to make partisan appointments despite his personal reservations. Supervision of bureaus and departments whose operations were outside of Washington (such as the New York Customs House; the Postal Service; the Departments of Navy and War; and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, whose budget had increased enormously in the previous two decades) proved to be difficult. Remini writes that because "friendship, politics, and geography constituted the President's total criteria for appointments, most of his appointments were predictably substandard."

Indian Removal Policy

Throughout his eight years in office, Jackson made about 70 treaties with Native American tribes both in the South and in the Northwest. Jackson's presidency marked a new era in Indian-Anglo American

relations initiating a policy of Indian removal. Jackson himself sometimes participated in the treaty negotiating process with various Indian tribes, though other times he left the negotiations to his subordinates. The southern tribes included the Choctaw, Creek, Chickasaw, Seminole and the Cherokee. The northwest tribes include the Chippewa, Ottawa, and the Potawatomi.

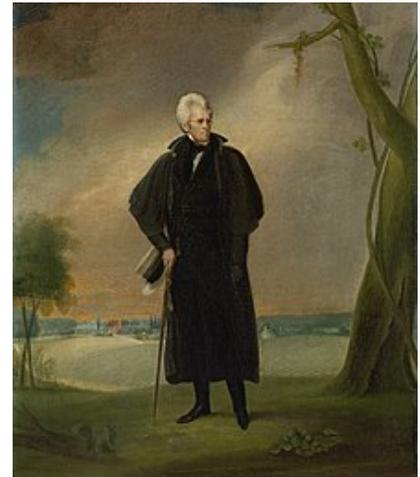
Relations between Indians and Americans increasingly grew tense and sometimes violent as a result of territorial conflicts. Previous presidents had at times supported removal or attempts to "civilize" the Indians, but generally let the problem play itself out with minimal intervention. There had developed a growing popular and political movement to deal with the issue, and out of this policy to relocate certain Indian populations. Jackson, never known for timidity, became an advocate for this relocation policy in what many historians consider the most controversial aspect of his presidency.

In his First Annual Message to Congress, Jackson advocated land west of the Mississippi River be set aside for Indian tribes. On May 26, 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, which Jackson signed into law two days later. The Act authorized the president to negotiate treaties to buy tribal lands in the east in exchange for lands farther west, outside of existing state borders. The act specifically pertained to the Five Civilized Tribes in the South, the conditions being that they could either move west or stay and obey state law, effectively relinquishing their sovereignty.

Jackson, Eaton, and General Coffee negotiated with the Chickasaw, who quickly agreed to move. Jackson put Eaton and Coffee in charge of negotiating with the Choctaw. Lacking Jackson's skills at negotiation, they frequently bribed the chiefs in order to gain their submission. The tactics worked, and the chiefs agreed to move. The removal of the Choctaw took place in the winter of 1831 and 1832, and was wrought with misery and suffering. The Seminole, despite the signing of the Treaty of Payne's Landing in 1832, refused to move. In December 1835, this dispute began the Second Seminole War. The war lasted over six years, finally ending in 1842. Members of the Creek Nation had signed the Treaty of Cusseta in 1832, allowing the Creek to either sell or retain their land. Conflict later erupted between the Creek who remained and the white settlers, leading to a second Creek War.^[188] A common complaint amongst the tribes was that the men who had signed the treaties did not represent the whole tribe.

The state of Georgia became involved in a contentious dispute with the Cherokee, culminating in the 1832 Supreme Court decision in *Worcester v. Georgia*. Chief Justice John Marshall, writing for the court, ruled that Georgia could not forbid whites from entering tribal lands, as it had attempted to do with two missionaries supposedly stirring up resistance amongst the tribe's people. Jackson is frequently attributed the following response: "John Marshall has made his decision, now let him enforce it." The quote, apparently indicating Jackson's dismissive view of the courts, was attributed to Jackson by Horace Greeley, who cited as his source Representative George N. Briggs. Remini argues that Jackson did not say it because, while it "certainly sounds like Jackson...[t]here was nothing for him to enforce." This is because a writ of *habeas corpus* had never been issued for the missionaries. The Court also did not ask federal marshals to carry out the decision, as had become standard.

A group of Cherokees led by John Ridge negotiated the Treaty of New Echota. Ridge was not a widely recognized leader of the Cherokee, and this document was rejected by some as illegitimate. Another faction, led by John Ross, unsuccessfully petitioned to protest the proposed removal. The Cherokee largely considered themselves independent, and not subject to the laws of the United States or Georgia. The treaty was enforced by Jackson's successor, Van Buren. Subsequently, as many as 4,000 out of 18,000 Cherokee died on the "Trail of Tears" in 1838. More than 45,000 American Indians were relocated to the West during Jackson's administration, though a few Cherokees walked back afterwards or migrated to the high Smoky Mountains. The Black Hawk War took place during Jackson's presidency in 1832 after a group of Indians crossed into U.S. territory.



Portrait of Jackson by Earl, 1830

Nullification Crisis

In 1828, Congress had approved the "Tariff of Abominations", which set the tariff at a historically high rate. Southern planters, who sold their cotton on the world market, strongly opposed this tariff, which they saw as favoring northern interests. The South now had to pay more for goods it did not produce locally; and other countries would have more difficulty affording southern cotton. The issue came to a head during Jackson's presidency, resulting in the Nullification Crisis, in which South Carolina threatened disunion.

The South Carolina Exposition and Protest of 1828, secretly written by Calhoun, asserted that their state had the right to "nullify"—declare void—the tariff legislation of 1828. Although Jackson sympathized with the South in the tariff debate, he also vigorously supported a strong union, with effective powers for the central government. Jackson attempted to face down Calhoun over the issue, which developed into a bitter rivalry between the two men. One incident came at the April 13, 1830, Jefferson Day dinner, involving after-dinner toasts. Robert Hayne began by toasting to "The Union of the States, and the Sovereignty of the States." Jackson then rose, and in a booming voice added "Our federal Union: It must be preserved!" – a clear challenge to Calhoun. Calhoun clarified his position by responding "The Union: Next to our Liberty, the most dear!"



**Tennessee Gentleman,
portrait of Jackson, c. 1831,
from the collection of The
Hermitage**

In May 1830, Jackson discovered that Calhoun had asked President Monroe to censure Jackson for his invasion of Spanish Florida in 1818 while Calhoun was serving as Secretary of War. Calhoun's and Jackson's relationship deteriorated further. By February 1831, the break between Calhoun and Jackson was final. Responding to inaccurate press reports about the feud, Calhoun had published letters between him and Jackson detailing the conflict in the *United States Telegraph*. Jackson and Calhoun began an angry correspondence, which lasted until Jackson stopped it in July. The *Telegraph*, edited by Duff Green, initially supported Jackson. After it sided with Calhoun on nullification, Jackson needed a new organ for the administration. He enlisted the help of longtime supporter Francis Preston Blair, who in November 1830 established a newspaper known as the *Washington Globe*, which from then on served as the primary mouthpiece of the Democratic Party.

Jackson supported a revision to tariff rates known as the Tariff of 1832. It was designed to placate the nullifiers by lowering tariff rates. Written by Treasury Secretary Louis McLane, the bill lowered duties from 45% to 27%. In May, Representative John Quincy Adams introduced a slightly revised version of the bill, which Jackson accepted. It passed Congress on July 9 and was signed by the president on July 14. The bill failed to satisfy extremists on either side. On November 24, the South Carolina legislature nullified both the Tariff of 1832 and the Tariff of 1828. In response, Jackson sent U.S. Navy warships to Charleston harbor, and threatened to hang any man who worked to support nullification or secession. On December 28, 1832, Calhoun resigned as vice president, after having been elected to the U.S. Senate. This was part of a strategy whereby Calhoun, with less than three months remaining on his vice presidential term, would replace Robert Y. Hayne in the Senate, and he would then become governor of South Carolina. Hayne had often struggled to defend nullification on the floor of the Senate, especially against fierce criticism from Senator Daniel Webster of Massachusetts.

Also that December, Jackson issued a resounding proclamation against the "nullifiers," stating that he considered "the power to annul a law of the United States, assumed by one State, incompatible with the existence of the Union, contradicted expressly by the letter of the Constitution, unauthorized by its spirit, inconsistent with every principle on which it was founded, and destructive of the great object for which it was formed." South Carolina, the president declared, stood on "the brink of insurrection and treason," and he appealed to the people of the state to reassert their allegiance to that Union for which their ancestors had fought. Jackson also denied the right of secession: "The Constitution ... forms a government not a league ... To say that any State may at pleasure secede from the Union is to say that the United States are not a nation." Jackson tended to personalize the controversy, frequently characterizing nullification as a conspiracy between disappointed and bitter men whose ambitions had been thwarted.

Jackson asked Congress to pass a "Force Bill" explicitly authorizing the use of military force to enforce the tariff. It was introduced by Senator Felix Grundy of Tennessee, and was quickly attacked by Calhoun as

"military despotism." At the same time, Calhoun and Clay began to work on a new compromise tariff. A bill sponsored by the administration had been introduced by Representative Gulian C. Verplanck of New York, but it lowered rates more sharply than Clay and other protectionists desired. Clay managed to get Calhoun to agree to a bill with higher rates in exchange for Clay's opposition to Jackson's military threats and, perhaps, with the hope that he could win some Southern votes in his next bid for the presidency. The Compromise Tariff passed on March 1, 1833. The Force Bill passed the same day. Calhoun, Clay, and several others marched out of the chamber in opposition, the only dissenting vote coming from John Tyler of Virginia. Webster, who argued that it essentially surrendered to South Carolina's demands, opposed the new tariff. Jackson, despite his anger over the scrapping of the Verplanck bill and the new alliance between Clay and Calhoun, saw it as an efficient way to end the crisis. He signed both bills on March 2, starting with the Force Bill. The South Carolina Convention then met and rescinded its nullification ordinance, but in a final show of defiance, nullified the Force Bill. On May 1, Jackson wrote, "the tariff was only the pretext, and disunion and southern confederacy the real object. The next pretext will be the negro, or slavery question."

Foreign Affairs

Addressing the subject of foreign affairs in his First Annual Address to Congress, Jackson declared it to be his "settled purpose to ask nothing that is not clearly right and to submit to nothing that is wrong."

When Jackson took office, spoliation claims, or compensation demands for the capture of American ships and sailors, dating from the Napoleonic era, caused strained relations between the U.S. and French governments. The French Navy had captured and sent American ships to Spanish ports while holding their crews captive forcing them to labor without any charges or judicial rules. According to Secretary of State Martin Van Buren, relations between the U.S. and France were "hopeless." Jackson's Minister to France, William C. Rives, through diplomacy was able to convince the French government to sign a reparations treaty on July 4, 1831, that would award the U.S. \$25,000,000 (\$5,000,000) in damages. The French government became delinquent in payment due to internal financial and political difficulties. The French king Louis Philippe I and his ministers blamed the French Chamber of Deputies. By 1834, the non-payment of reparations by the French government drew Jackson's ire and he became impatient. In his December 1834 State of the Union address, Jackson sternly reprimanded the French government for non-payment, stating the federal government was "wholly disappointed" by the French, and demanded Congress authorize trade reprisals against France. Feeling insulted by Jackson's words, the French people began pressuring their government not to pay the indemnity until Jackson had apologized for his remarks. In his December 1835 State of the Union Address, Jackson refused to apologize, stating he had a good opinion of the French people and his intentions were peaceful. Jackson described in lengthy and minute detail the history of events surrounding the treaty and his belief that the French government was purposely stalling payment. The French accepted Jackson's statements as sincere and in February 1836, reparations were paid.

In addition to France, the Jackson administration successfully settled spoliation claims with Denmark, Portugal, and Spain. Jackson's state department was active and successful at making trade agreements with Russia, Spain, Turkey, Great Britain, and Siam. Under the treaty of Great Britain, American trade was reopened in the West Indies. The trade agreement with Siam was America's first treaty between the United States and an Asiatic country. As a result, American exports increased 75% while imports increased 250%.

Jackson's attempt to purchase Texas from Mexico for \$5,000,000 failed. The chargé d'affaires in Mexico, Colonel Anthony Butler, suggested that the U.S. take Texas over militarily, but Jackson refused. Butler was later replaced toward the end of Jackson's presidency. In 1835, the Texas Revolution began when pro-slavery American settlers in Texas fought the Mexican government for Texan independence. By May 1836, they had routed the Mexican military, establishing an independent Republic of Texas. The new Texas government legalized slavery and demanded recognition from President Jackson and annexation into the United States. Jackson was hesitant in recognizing Texas, unconvinced that the new republic could maintain independence from Mexico, and not wanting to make Texas an anti-slavery issue during the 1836 election. The strategy worked; the Democratic Party and national loyalties were held intact, and Van Buren was elected president. Jackson formally recognized the Republic of Texas, nominating Alcée Louis la Branche as chargé d'affaires on the last full day of his presidency, March 3, 1837.

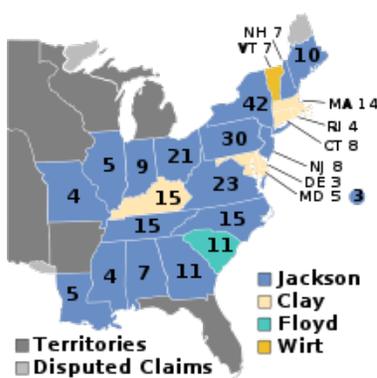
Jackson failed in his efforts to open trade with China and Japan and was unsuccessful at thwarting Great Britain's presence and power in South America.

Bank Veto and Election of 1832

The 1832 presidential election demonstrated the rapid development and organization of political parties during this time period. The Democratic Party's first national convention, held in Baltimore, nominated Jackson's choice for vice president, Van Buren. The National Republican Party, who had held their first convention in Baltimore earlier in December 1831, nominated Henry Clay, now a senator from Kentucky, and John Sergeant of Pennsylvania. The Anti-Masonic Party emerged by capitalizing on opposition to Freemasonry, which existed primarily in New England, after the disappearance and possible murder of William Morgan. The party, which had earlier held its convention also in Baltimore in September 1831, nominated William Wirt of Maryland and Amos Ellmaker of Pennsylvania. Clay was, like Jackson, a Mason, and so some anti-Jacksonians who would have supported the National Republican Party supported Wirt instead.

In 1816, the Second Bank of the United States was chartered by President James Madison to restore the United States economy devastated by the War of 1812. Monroe had appointed Nicholas Biddle as the Bank's executive. Jackson believed that the Bank was a fundamentally corrupt monopoly. Foreigners mostly held its stock, he insisted, and it exerted an unfair amount of control over the political system. Jackson used the issue to promote his democratic values, believing the Bank was being run exclusively for the wealthy. Jackson stated the Bank made "the rich richer and the potent more powerful." He accused it of making loans with the intent of influencing elections. In his address to Congress in 1830, Jackson called for a substitute for the Bank that would have no private stockholders and no ability to lend or purchase land. Its only power would be to issue bills of exchange. The address touched off fiery debate in the Senate. Thomas Hart Benton, now a strong supporter of the president despite the brawl years earlier, gave a speech excoriating the Bank and calling for debate on its re-charter. Webster led a motion to narrowly defeat the resolution. Shortly afterward, the *Globe* announced that Jackson would stand for reelection.

Despite his misgivings about the Bank, Jackson supported a plan proposed in late 1831 by his moderately pro-Bank Treasury Secretary Louis McLane, who was secretly working with Biddle, to re-charter a reformed version of the Bank in a way that would free up funds which would in turn be used to strengthen the military or pay off the nation's debt. This would be done, in part, through the sale of government stock in the Bank. Over the objections of Attorney General Roger B. Taney, an irreconcilable opponent of the Bank, he allowed McLane to publish a Treasury Report, which essentially recommended re-chartering the Bank.



Election Results of 1832

Clay hoped to make the Bank an issue in the election, so as to accuse Jackson of going beyond his powers if he vetoed a re-charter bill. He and Webster urged Biddle to immediately apply for re-charter rather than wait to reach a compromise with the administration. Biddle received advice to the contrary from moderate Democrats such as McLane and William Lewis, who argued that Biddle should wait because Jackson would likely veto the re-charter bill. On January 6, 1832, Biddle submitted to Congress a renewal of the Bank's charter without any of the proposed reforms. The submission came four years before the original 20-year charter was to end. Biddle's re-charter bill passed the Senate on June 11 and the House on July 3, 1832. Jackson determined to veto it. Many moderate Democrats, including McLane, were appalled by the perceived arrogance of the bill and supported his decision. When Van Buren met Jackson on July 4, Jackson declared, "The Bank, Mr. Van Buren, is trying to kill me. But I will kill it." Jackson vetoed the bill on July 10. The veto message was crafted primarily by Taney, Kendall, and Jackson's

nephew and advisor Andrew Jackson Donelson. It attacked the Bank as an agent of inequality that supported only the wealthy. The veto was considered "one of the strongest and most controversial" presidential statements and "a brilliant political manifesto." The National Republican Party immediately made Jackson's veto of the Bank a political issue. Jackson's political opponents castigated the veto as "the very slang of the leveller and demagogue," claiming Jackson was using class warfare to gain support from the common man.

At Biddle's direction, the Bank poured thousands of dollars into a campaign to defeat Jackson, seemingly confirming Jackson's view that it interfered in the political process.^[235] Jackson successfully portrayed his veto as a defense of the common man against governmental tyranny. Clay proved to be no match for Jackson's ability to resonate with the people and the Democratic Party's strong political networks. Democratic newspapers, parades, barbecues, and rallies increased Jackson's popularity. Jackson himself made numerous public appearances on his return trip from Tennessee to Washington, D.C. He won the election by a landslide, receiving 54 percent of the popular vote and 219 electoral votes. Clay received 37 percent of the popular vote and 49 electoral votes. Wirt received only eight percent of the popular vote and seven electoral votes while the Anti-Masonic Party eventually declined. Jackson believed the solid victory was a popular mandate for his veto of the Bank's re-charter and his continued warfare on the Bank's control over the national economy.

Removal of Deposits and Censure

In 1833, Jackson attempted to begin removing federal deposits from the bank, whose money-lending functions were taken over by the legions of local and state banks that materialized across America, thus drastically increasing credit and speculation. Jackson's moves were greatly controversial. He removed McLane from the Treasury Department, having him serve instead as Secretary of State, replacing Edward Livingston. He replaced McLane with William J. Duane. In September, he fired Duane for refusing to remove the deposits. Signaling his intent to continue battling the Bank, he replaced Duane with Taney. Under Taney, the deposits began to be removed. They were placed in a variety of state banks, which were friendly to the administration's policies, known to critics as pet banks. Biddle responded by stockpiling the Bank's reserves and contracting credit, thus causing interest rates to rise and bringing about a financial panic. The moves were intended to force Jackson into a compromise. "Nothing but the evidence of suffering abroad will produce any effect in Congress," he wrote. At first, Biddle's strategy was successful, putting enormous pressure on Jackson. But Jackson handled the situation well. When people came to him complaining, he referred them to Biddle, saying that he was the man who had "all the money." Jackson's approach worked. Biddle's strategy backfired, increasing anti-Bank sentiment.

In 1834, those who disagreed with Jackson's expansion of executive power united and formed the Whig Party, calling Jackson "King Andrew I," and named their party after the English Whigs who opposed seventeenth century British monarchy. A movement emerged among Whigs in the Senate to censure Jackson. The censure was a political maneuver spearheaded by Clay, which served only to perpetuate the animosity between him and Jackson. Jackson called Clay "reckless and as full of fury as a drunken man in a brothel." On March 28, the Senate voted to censure Jackson 26–20. It also rejected Taney as Treasury Secretary. The House however, led by Ways and Means Committee chairman James K. Polk, declared on April 4 that the Bank "ought not to be re-chartered" and that the depositions "ought not to be restored." It voted to continue allowing pet banks to be places of deposit and voted even more overwhelmingly to investigate whether the Bank had deliberately instigated the panic. Jackson called the passage of these resolutions a "glorious triumph." It essentially sealed the Bank's demise. The Democrats later suffered a temporary setback. Polk ran for Speaker of the House to replace Andrew Stevenson. After Southerners discovered his connection to Van Buren, he was defeated by fellow-Tennessean John Bell, a Democrat-turned-Whig who opposed Jackson's removal policy.

Payment of U. S. National Debt

The national economy following the withdrawal of the remaining funds from the Bank was booming and the federal government through duty revenues and sale of public lands was able to pay all bills. On January 1, 1835, Jackson paid off the entire national debt, the only time in U.S. history that has been accomplished. The objective had been reached in part through Jackson's reforms aimed at eliminating the misuse of funds and through his vetoes of legislation, which he deemed extravagant. In December 1835, Polk defeated Bell in a rematch and was elected Speaker. Finally, on January 16, 1837, when the Jacksonians had a majority in the Senate, Jackson supporters expunged the censure after years of effort. Benton led the expunction movement, ironically.

In 1836, in response to increased land speculation, Jackson issued the Specie Circular, an executive order that required buyers of government lands to pay in "specie" (gold or silver coins). The result was high demand for specie, which many banks could not meet in exchange for their notes, contributing to the Panic

of 1837. The White House Van Buren biography notes, "Basically the trouble was the 19th-century cyclical economy of 'boom and bust,' which was following its regular pattern, but Jackson's financial measures contributed to the crash. His destruction of the Second Bank of the United States had removed restrictions upon the inflationary practices of some state banks; wild speculation in lands, based on easy bank credit, had swept the West. To end this speculation, Jackson in 1836 had issued a Specie Circular ..."

Attack and Assassination Attempt

The first recorded physical attack on a U.S. president was directed at Jackson. He had ordered the dismissal of Robert B. Randolph from the navy for embezzlement. On May 6, 1833, Jackson sailed on USS *Cygnet* to Fredericksburg, Virginia, where he was to lay the cornerstone on a monument near the grave of Mary Ball Washington, George Washington's mother. During a stopover near Alexandria, Randolph appeared and struck the president. He fled the scene chased by several members of Jackson's party, including the writer Washington Irving. Jackson declined to press charges.



Richard Lawrence's attempt on Jackson's life, as depicted in an 1835 etching.

On January 30, 1835, what is believed to be the first attempt to kill a sitting president of the United States occurred just outside the United States Capitol. When Jackson was leaving through the East Portico after the funeral of South Carolina Representative Warren R. Davis, Richard Lawrence, an unemployed house painter from England, aimed a pistol at Jackson, which misfired. Lawrence then pulled out a second pistol, which also misfired. Historians believe the humid weather contributed to the double misfiring. Jackson, infuriated, attacked Lawrence with his cane. Others present, including Davy Crockett, restrained and disarmed Lawrence.

Lawrence offered a variety of explanations for the attempted shooting. He blamed Jackson for the loss of his job. He claimed that with the president dead, "money would be more plenty," (a reference to Jackson's struggle with the Bank of the United States) and that he "could not rise until the President fell." Finally, Lawrence told his interrogators that he was a deposed English king—specifically, Richard III, dead since 1485—and that Jackson was his clerk. He was deemed insane and was institutionalized.^[264]

Afterwards, the pistols were tested and retested. Each time they performed perfectly. Many believed that Jackson had been protected by the same Providence that also protected their young nation. The incident became a part of Jacksonian mythos. Jackson initially suspected that a number of his political enemies might have orchestrated the attempt on his life. His suspicions were never proven.

Anti Slavery Tracts

During the summer of 1835, Northern abolitionists began sending anti-slavery tracts through the postal system into the South. Pro-slavery Southerners demanded that the postal service ban distribution of the materials, which were deemed "incendiary," and some began to riot. Jackson wanted sectional peace, and desired to placate Southerners ahead of the 1836 election. He fiercely disliked the abolitionists, whom he believed were, by instituting sectional jealousies, attempting to destroy the Union. Jackson also did not want to condone open insurrection. He supported the solution of Postmaster General Amos Kendall, which gave Southern postmasters discretionary powers to either send or detain the anti-slavery tracts. That December, Jackson called on Congress to prohibit the circulation through the South of "incendiary publications intended to instigate the slaves to insurrection."

U. S. Exploring Expedition

Jackson initially opposed any federal exploratory scientific expeditions during his first term in office. The last scientific federally funded expeditions took place from 1817 to 1823, led by Stephen H. Harriman on the Red River of the North. Jackson's predecessor, President Adams, attempted to launch a scientific oceanic exploration in 1828, but Congress was unwilling to fund the effort. When Jackson assumed office in 1829 he pocketed Adams' expedition plans. Eventually, wanting to establish his presidential legacy, similar

to Jefferson and the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Jackson sponsored scientific exploration during his second term. On May 18, 1836, Jackson signed a law creating and funding the oceanic United States Exploring Expedition. Jackson put Secretary of the Navy Mahlon Dickerson in charge, to assemble suitable ships, officers, and scientific staff for the expedition; with a planned launch before Jackson's term of office expired. Dickerson proved unfit for the task, preparations stalled and the expedition was not launched until 1838, during the presidency of Van Buren. One brig ship, USS *Porpoise*, later used in the expedition; having been commissioned by Secretary Dickerson in May 1836, circumnavigated the world and explored and mapped the Southern Ocean, confirming the existence of the continent of Antarctica.

Panic of 1837

In spite of economic success following Jackson's vetoes and war against the Bank, reckless speculation in land and railroads eventually caused the Panic of 1837. Contributing factors included Jackson's veto of the Second National Bank renewal charter in 1832 and subsequent transfer of federal monies to state banks in 1833 that caused western banks to relax their lending standards. Two other Jacksonian acts in 1836 contributed to the Panic of 1837: the Specie Circular, which mandated western lands only be purchased by money backed by gold and silver, and the Deposit and Distribution Act, which transferred federal monies from eastern to western state banks and in turn led to a speculation frenzy by banks. Jackson's Specie Circular, albeit designed to reduce speculation and stabilize the economy, left many investors unable to afford to pay loans in gold and silver. The same year there was a downturn in Great Britain's economy that stopped investment in the United States. As a result, the U.S. economy went into a depression, banks became insolvent, the national debt (previously paid off) increased, business failures rose, cotton prices dropped, and unemployment dramatically increased. The depression that followed lasted for four years until 1841, when the economy began to rebound.

Judicial Appointments

Jackson appointed six justices to the Supreme Court. Most were undistinguished. His first appointee, John McLean, had been nominated in Barry's place after Barry had agreed to become postmaster general. McLean "turned Whig and forever schemed to win" the presidency. His next two appointees—Henry Baldwin and James Moore Wayne—disagreed with Jackson on some points but were poorly regarded even by Jackson's enemies. In reward for his services, Jackson nominated Taney to the Court to fill a vacancy in January 1835, but the nomination failed to win Senate approval. Chief Justice Marshall died in 1835, leaving two vacancies on the court. Jackson nominated Taney for Chief Justice and Philip Pendleton Barbour for Associate Justice. The new Senate confirmed both. Taney served as Chief Justice until 1864, presiding over a court that upheld many of the precedents set by the Marshall Court. He was generally regarded as a good and respectable judge, but his opinion in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* largely overshadows his career. On the last full day of his presidency, Jackson nominated John Catron, who was confirmed.

States Admitted to the Union

Two new states were admitted into the Union during Jackson's presidency: Arkansas (June 15, 1836) and Michigan (January 26, 1837). Both states increased Democratic power in Congress and helped Van Buren win the presidency in 1836. This was in keeping with the tradition that new states would support the party, which had done the most to admit them.

Personal Life

Family

Jackson had three adopted sons: Theodore, an Indian about whom little is known, Andrew Jackson Jr., the son of Rachel's brother Severn Donelson, and Lyncoya, a Creek Indian orphan adopted by Jackson after the Battle of Tallushatchee. Lyncoya died of tuberculosis on July 1, 1828, at the age of sixteen.

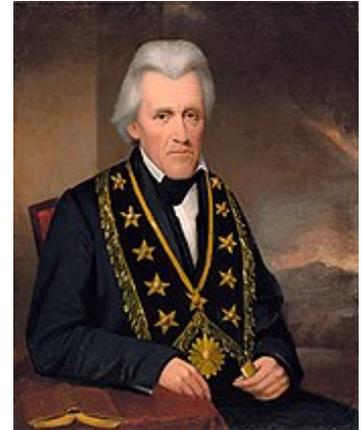
The Jacksons also acted as guardians for eight other children. John Samuel Donelson, Daniel Smith Donelson, and Andrew Jackson Donelson were the sons of Rachel's brother Samuel Donelson, who died in 1804. Andrew Jackson Hutchings was Rachel's orphaned grandnephew. Caroline Butler, Eliza Butler,

Edward Butler, and Anthony Butler were the orphaned children of Edward Butler, a family friend. They came to live with the Jacksons after the death of their father.

The widower Jackson invited Rachel's niece Emily Donelson to serve as hostess at the White House. Emily was married to Andrew Jackson Donelson, who acted as Jackson's private secretary and in 1856 ran for vice president on the American Party ticket. The relationship between the president and Emily became strained during the Petticoat affair, and the two became estranged for over a year. They eventually reconciled and she resumed her duties as White House hostess. Sarah Yorke Jackson, the wife of Andrew Jackson Jr., became co-hostess of the White House in 1834. It was the only time in history when two women simultaneously acted as unofficial First Lady. Sarah took over all hostess duties after Emily died from tuberculosis in 1836. Jackson used Rip Raps as a retreat.

Freemasonry

Jackson was initiated at Harmony Lodge No. 1 (probably) in Tennessee. He was elected Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee in 1822 and 1823, being spontaneously elected from the floor without previously serving as a Grand Warden. There is no record that Andrew Jackson ever served as an elected Master or Warden in a Lodge. During the 1832 presidential election, Jackson faced opposition from the Anti-Masonic Party. He was the only U.S. president to have served as Grand Master of a state's Grand Lodge until Harry S. Truman in 1945.

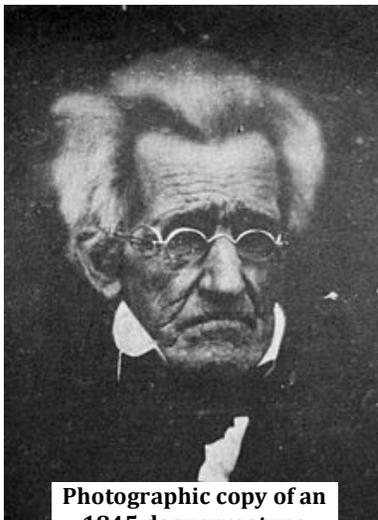


Jackson as Grand Master 1822

Later Life and Death

In 1837, after serving two terms as president, Jackson was replaced by his chosen successor Martin Van Buren and retired to the Hermitage. He immediately began putting it in order as his adopted son, Andrew Jackson, Jr. had poorly managed it in his absence. Although he suffered ill health, Jackson remained highly influential in both national and state politics. He was a firm advocate of the federal union of the states and rejected any talk of secession, insisting, "I will die with the Union." Blamed for causing the Panic of 1837, he was unpopular in his early retirement. Jackson continued to denounce the "perfidy and treachery" of banks and urged his successor, Van Buren, to repudiate the Specie Circular as president.

As a solution to the panic, he supported an Independent Treasury system, which was designed to hold the money balances of the government in the form of gold or silver and would be restricted from printing paper money so as to prevent further inflation. A coalition of conservative Democrats and Whigs opposed the bill, and it was not passed until 1840. During the delay, no effective remedy had been implemented for the depression. Van Buren grew deeply unpopular. A unified Whig Party nominated popular war hero William Henry Harrison and former Jacksonian John Tyler in the 1840 presidential election. The Whigs' campaign style in many ways mimicked that of the Democrats when Jackson ran. They depicted Van Buren as an aristocrat who did not care for the concerns of ordinary Americans, while glorifying Harrison's military record and portraying him as a man of the people. Jackson campaigned heavily for Van Buren in Tennessee. He favored the nomination of Polk for vice president at the 1840 Democratic National Convention over controversial incumbent Richard Mentor Johnson. No nominee was chosen, and the party chose to leave the decision up to individual state electors.



Photographic copy of an 1845 daguerreotype

Harrison won the election, and the Whigs captured majorities in both houses of Congress. "The democracy of the United States has been shamefully beaten," Jackson wrote to Van Buren. "but I trust, not conquered." Harrison died only a month into his term, and was replaced by Tyler. Jackson was encouraged because Tyler had a strong independent streak and was not bound by party lines. Sure enough, Tyler quickly incurred the wrath of the Whigs in 1841 when he vetoed two Whig-

sponsored bills to establish a new national bank, bringing satisfaction to Jackson and other Democrats. After the second veto, Tyler's entire cabinet, with the exception of Daniel Webster, resigned.

Jackson strongly favored the annexation of Texas, a feat he had been unable to accomplish during his own presidency. While Jackson still feared that annexation would stir up anti-slavery sentiment, his belief that the British would use Texas as a base to threaten the United States overrode his other concerns. He also insisted that Texas was part of the Louisiana Purchase and therefore rightfully belonged to the United States. At the request of Senator Robert J. Walker of Mississippi, acting on behalf of the Tyler administration, which also supported annexation, Jackson wrote several letters to Texas president Sam Houston, urging him to wait for the Senate to approve annexation and lecturing him on how much being a part of the United States would benefit Texas. Initially prior to the 1844 election, Jackson again supported Van Buren for president and Polk for vice president. A treaty of annexation was signed by Tyler on April 12, 1844, and submitted to the Senate. When a letter from Secretary of State Calhoun to British Ambassador Richard Pakenham linking annexation to slavery was made public, anti-annexation sentiment exploded in the North and the bill failed to be ratified. Van Buren decided to write the "Hamlet letter," opposing annexation. This effectively extinguished any support that Van Buren might previously have enjoyed in the South. The Whig nominee, Henry Clay, also opposed annexation, and Jackson recognized the need for the Democrats to nominate a candidate who supported it and could therefore gain the support of the South. If the plan failed, Jackson warned, Texas would not join the Union and would potentially fall victim to a Mexican invasion supported by the British.



The tomb of Andrew and Rachel Jackson located at The Hermitage

Jackson met with Polk, Robert Armstrong, and Andrew Jackson Donelson in his study. He then pointed directly at a startled Polk, telling him that, as a man from the southwest and a supporter of annexation, he would be the perfect candidate. Polk called the scheme "utterly abortive," but agreed to go along with it. At the 1844 Democratic National Convention, Polk emerged as the party's nominee after Van Buren failed to win the required two-thirds majority of delegates. George M. Dallas was selected for vice president. Jackson convinced Tyler to drop his plans of running for re-election as an independent by promising, as Tyler requested, to welcome the President and his allies back into the Democratic Party and by instructing Blair to stop criticizing the President.^[299] Polk won the election, defeating Clay. A bill of annexation was passed by Congress in February and signed by Tyler on March 1.

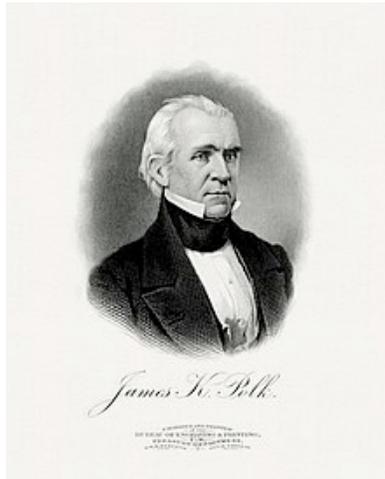
Jackson's age and illness eventually overcame him. On June 8, 1845, family and friends surrounded him at his deathbed. Jackson, startled by their sobbing, said, "What is the matter with my dear children? Have I alarmed you? Oh, do not cry. Be good children and we will all meet in Heaven." He died immediately after at the age of 78 of chronic dropsy and heart failure. According to a newspaper account from the Boon Lick Times, "[he] fainted whilst being removed from his chair to the bed ... but he subsequently revived ... Gen. Jackson died at the Hermitage at 6 p.m. on Sunday the 8th

instant. ... When the messenger finally came, the old soldier, patriot and Christian was looking out for his approach. He is gone, but his memory lives, and will continue to live." In his will, Jackson left his entire estate to Andrew Jackson Jr. except for specifically enumerated items that were left to various friends and family members.

James K. Polk

1795-1849

11th President of the United States 1845-1849



President Polk, BEP engraved portrait

James Knox Polk was born on November 2, 1795, in a log cabin in Pineville, North Carolina. He was the first of 10 children born into a family of farmers. His mother Jane named him after her father, James Knox. His father Samuel Polk was a farmer, slaveholder, and surveyor of Scots-Irish descent. The Polks had immigrated to America in the late 1600s, settling initially on the Eastern Shore of Maryland but later moving to south-central Pennsylvania and then to the Carolina hill country.

The Knox and Polk families were Presbyterian. While Polk's mother remained a devout Presbyterian, his father, whose own father Ezekiel Polk was a deist, rejected dogmatic Presbyterianism. He refused to declare his belief in Christianity at his son's baptism, and the minister refused to baptize young James. Nevertheless, James' mother "stamped her rigid orthodoxy on James, instilling lifelong Calvinistic traits of self-discipline, hard work, piety, individualism, and a belief in the imperfection of human nature", according to James A. Rawley's *American National Biography* article.

In 1803, Ezekiel Polk led four of his adult children and their families to the Duck River area in what is now Maury County, Tennessee; Samuel Polk and his family followed in 1806. The Polk clan dominated politics in Maury County and in the new town of Columbia. Samuel became a county judge, and the guests at his home included Andrew Jackson, who had already served as a judge and in Congress. James learned from the political talk around the dinner table; both Samuel and Ezekiel were strong supporters of President Thomas Jefferson and opponents of the Federalist Party.

Polk suffered from frail health as a child, a particular disadvantage in a frontier society. His father took him to see prominent Philadelphia physician Dr. Philip Syng Physick for urinary stones. The journey was broken off by James's severe pain, and Dr. Ephraim McDowell of Danville, Kentucky, operated to remove them. No anesthetic was available except brandy. The operation was successful, but it might have left James impotent or sterile, as he had no children. He recovered quickly, and became more robust. His father offered to bring him into one of his businesses, but he wanted an education and enrolled at a Presbyterian academy in 1813. He became a member of the Zion Church near his home in 1813, and enrolled in the Zion Church Academy. He then entered Bradley Academy in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, where he proved a promising student.

In January 1816, Polk was admitted into the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill as a second-semester sophomore. The Polk family had connections with the university, then a small school of about 80 students; Samuel was its land agent in Tennessee and his cousin William Polk was a trustee. Polk's roommate was William Dunn Moseley, who became the first Governor of Florida. Polk joined the Dialectic Society where he took part in debates, became its president, and learned the art of oratory. In one address, he warned that some American leaders were flirting with monarchical ideals, singling out Alexander Hamilton, a foe of Jefferson. Polk graduated with honors in May 1818.

After graduation, Polk returned to Nashville, Tennessee to study law under renowned trial attorney Felix Grundy, who became his first mentor. On September 20, 1819, he was elected clerk of the Tennessee State Senate, which then sat in Murfreesboro and to which Grundy had been elected. He was re-elected clerk in 1821 without opposition, and continued to serve until 1822. In June 1820, he was admitted to the Tennessee bar, and his first case was to defend his father against a public fighting charge; he secured his

release for a one-dollar fine. He opened an office in Maury County and was successful as a lawyer, due largely to the many cases arising from the Panic of 1819, a severe depression. His law practice subsidized his political career.

Early Political Career

Tennessee State Legislator

By the time the legislature adjourned its session in September 1822, Polk was determined to be a candidate for the Tennessee House of Representatives. The election was in August 1823, almost a year away, allowing him ample time for campaigning. Already involved locally as a member of the Masons, he was commissioned in the Tennessee militia as a captain in the cavalry regiment of the 5th Brigade. He was later appointed a colonel on the staff of Governor William Carroll, and was afterwards often referred to as "Colonel". Although many of the voters were members of the Polk clan, the young politician campaigned energetically. People liked Polk's oratory, which earned him the nickname "Napoleon of the Stump." At the polls, where Polk provided alcoholic refreshments for his voters, he defeated incumbent William Yancey.

Beginning in early 1822, Polk courted Sarah Childress—they were engaged the following year and married on January 1, 1824 in Murfreesboro. Educated far better than most women of her time, especially in frontier Tennessee, Sarah Polk was from one of the state's most prominent families. During James's political career Sarah assisted her husband with his speeches, gave him advice on policy matters, and played an active role in his campaigns. Rawley noted that Sarah Polk's grace, intelligence and charming conversation helped compensate for her husband's often-austere manner.

Polk's first mentor was Grundy, but in the legislature, Polk came increasingly to oppose him on such matters as land reform, and came to support the policies of Andrew Jackson, by then a military hero for his victory at the Battle of New Orleans (1815). Jackson was a family friend to both the Polks and the Childresses—there is evidence Sarah Polk and her siblings called him "Uncle Andrew"—and James Polk quickly came to support his presidential ambitions for 1824. When the Tennessee Legislature deadlocked on whom to elect as U.S. senator in 1823 (until 1913, legislators, not the people, elected senators), Jackson's name was placed in nomination. Polk broke from his usual allies, casting his vote as a member of the state House of Representatives for the general in Jackson's victory. This boosted Jackson's presidential chances by giving him recent political experience to match his military accomplishments. This began an alliance that would continue until Jackson's death early in Polk's presidency. Polk, through much of his political career, was known as "Young Hickory", based on the nickname for Jackson, "Old Hickory". Polk's political career was as dependent on Jackson as his nickname implied.

In the 1824 United States presidential election, Jackson got the most electoral votes (he also led in the popular vote) but as he did not receive a majority in the Electoral College, the election was thrown into the U.S. House of Representatives, which chose Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, who had received the second-most of each. Polk, like other Jackson supporters, believed that Speaker of the House Henry Clay had traded his support as fourth-place finisher (the House may only choose from among the top three) to Adams in a Corrupt Bargain in exchange for being the new Secretary of State. Polk had in August 1824 declared his candidacy for the following year's election to the House of Representatives from Tennessee's 6th congressional district. The district stretched from Maury County south to the Alabama line, and extensive electioneering was expected of the five candidates. Polk campaigned so vigorously that Sarah began to worry about his health. During the campaign, Polk's opponents said that at the age of 29 Polk was too young for the responsibility of a seat in the House, but he won the election with 3,669 votes out of 10,440 and took his seat in Congress later that year.

Jackson Disciple

When Polk arrived in Washington, D.C. for Congress' regular session in December 1825, he roomed in Benjamin Burch's boarding house with other Tennessee representatives, including Sam Houston. Polk made his first major speech on March 13, 1826, in which he said that the Electoral College should be abolished and that the president should be elected by popular vote. Remaining bitter at the alleged Corrupt Bargain between Adams and Clay, Polk became a vocal critic of the administration, frequently voting against its policies. Sarah Polk remained at home in Columbia during her husband's first year in Congress,

but accompanied him to Washington beginning in December 1826; she assisted him with his correspondence, and came to hear James's speeches.



The house where Polk spent his young adult life before his presidency, in Columbia, Tennessee, is his only private residence still standing. It is now known as the James K. Polk Home.

Polk won re-election in 1827 and continued to oppose the Adams administration. He remained in close touch with Jackson, and when Jackson ran for president in 1828, Polk was a corresponding advisor on his campaign. Following Jackson's victory over Adams, Polk became one of the new President's most prominent and loyal supporters in the House. Working on Jackson's behalf, Polk successfully opposed federally-funded "internal improvements" such as a proposed Buffalo-to-New Orleans road, and he was pleased by Jackson's Maysville Road veto in May 1830, when Jackson blocked a bill to finance a road extension entirely within one state, Kentucky, deeming it unconstitutional. Jackson opponents alleged that the veto message, which strongly complained about Congress' penchant for passing pork barrel projects, was written by Polk, but he denied this, stating that the message was entirely the President's.

Polk served as Jackson's most prominent House ally in the "Bank War" that developed over Jackson's opposition to the re-authorization of the Second Bank of the United States. The Second Bank, headed by Nicholas Biddle of Philadelphia, not only held federal dollars, but also controlled much of the credit in the United States, as it could present currency issued by local banks for redemption in gold or silver. Some Westerners, including Jackson, opposed the Second Bank, deeming it a monopoly acting in the interest of Easterners. Polk, as a member of the House Ways and Means Committee, conducted investigations of the Second Bank, and though the committee voted for a bill to renew the bank's charter (scheduled to expire in 1836), Polk issued a strong minority report condemning the bank. The bill passed Congress in 1832, but Jackson vetoed it and Congress failed to override the veto. Jackson's action was highly controversial in Washington, but had considerable public support, and he won easy re-election in 1832.

Like many Southerners, Polk favored low tariffs on imported goods, and initially sympathized with John C. Calhoun's opposition to the Tariff of Abominations during the Nullification Crisis of 1832–1833, but came over to Jackson's side as Calhoun moved towards advocating secession. Thereafter, Polk remained loyal to Jackson as the President sought to assert federal authority. Polk condemned secession and supported the Force Bill against South Carolina, which had claimed the authority to nullify federal tariffs. The matter was settled by Congress passing a compromise tariff.

Ways and Means Chair and Speaker of the House

In December 1833, after being elected to a fifth consecutive term, Polk, with Jackson's backing, became the chairman of Ways and Means, a powerful position in the House. In that position, Polk supported Jackson's withdrawal of federal funds from the Second Bank. Polk's committee issued a report questioning the Second Bank's finances, and another supporting Jackson's actions against it. In April 1834, the Ways and Means Committee reported a bill to regulate state deposit banks, which, when passed, enabled Jackson to deposit funds in pet banks, and Polk got legislation passed to allow the sale of the government's stock in the Second Bank.

In June 1834, Speaker of the House Andrew Stevenson resigned from Congress to become Minister to the United Kingdom.^[41] With Jackson's support, Polk ran for Speaker against fellow Tennessean John Bell, Calhoun disciple Richard Henry Wilde, and Joel Barlow Sutherland of Pennsylvania. After ten ballots, Bell, who had the support of many opponents of the administration, defeated Polk. Jackson called in political debts to try to get Polk elected Speaker at the start of the next Congress in December 1835, assuring Polk in a letter he meant him to burn that New England would support him for Speaker. They were successful; Polk defeated Bell to take the Speakership.

According to Thomas M. Leonard in his book on Polk, "by 1836, while serving as Speaker of the House of Representatives, Polk approached the zenith of his congressional career. He was at the center of Jacksonian Democracy on the House floor, and, with the help of his wife, he ingratiated himself into

Washington's social circles."^[44] The prestige of the Speakership caused them to abandon life in a Washington boarding house for their own residence on Pennsylvania Avenue.^[44] In the 1836 presidential election, Vice President Martin Van Buren, Jackson's chosen successor, defeated multiple Whig candidates, including Tennessee Senator Hugh Lawson White. Greater Whig strength in Tennessee helped White carry his state, though Polk's home district went for Van Buren.^[45] Ninety percent of Tennessee voters had supported Jackson in 1832, but many in the state disliked the destruction of the Second Bank, or were unwilling to support Van Buren.

As Speaker, Polk worked for the policies of Jackson and later Van Buren. Polk appointed committees with Democratic chairs and majorities, including the New York radical C. C. Cambreleng as the new Ways and Means chair, although he tried to maintain the Speaker's traditional nonpartisan appearance. The two major issues during Polk's speakership were slavery and, after the Panic of 1837, the economy. Polk firmly enforced the "gag rule", by which the House of Representatives would not accept or debate citizen petitions regarding slavery. This ignited fierce protests from John Quincy Adams, who was by then a congressman from Massachusetts and an abolitionist. Instead of finding a way to silence Adams, Polk frequently engaged in useless shouting matches, leading Jackson to conclude that the Speaker should have shown better leadership. Van Buren and Polk faced pressure to rescind the Specie Circular, Jackson's 1836 order that payment for government lands be in gold and silver. Some believed this had led to the crash by causing a lack of confidence in paper currency issued by banks. Despite such arguments, with support from Polk and his cabinet, Van Buren chose to back the Specie Circular. Polk and Van Buren attempted to establish an Independent Treasury system that would allow the government to oversee its own deposits (rather than using pet banks), but the bill was defeated in the House. It eventually passed in 1840.

Using his thorough grasp of the House's rules, Polk attempted to bring greater order to its proceedings. Unlike many of his peers, he never challenged anyone to a duel no matter how much they insulted his honor. The economic downturn cost the Democrats seats, so that when he faced re-election as Speaker in December 1837, he won by only 13 votes, and he foresaw defeat in 1839. Polk by then had presidential ambitions, but was well aware that no Speaker had ever become president (Polk is still the only one to have held both offices). After seven terms in the House, two as Speaker, he announced that he would not seek re-election, choosing instead to run for Governor of Tennessee in the 1839 election.

Governor of Tennessee

In 1835, the Democrats had lost the governorship of Tennessee for the first time in their history, and Polk decided to return home to help the party.^[54] Polk returned to a Tennessee afire for White and Whiggism; the state had changed greatly in its political loyalties since the days of Jacksonian domination. Polk undertook his first statewide campaign, against the Whig incumbent, Newton Cannon, who sought a third two-year term as governor. The fact that Polk was the one called upon to "redeem" Tennessee from the Whigs tacitly acknowledged him as head of the state Democratic Party.

Polk campaigned on national issues, whereas Cannon stressed matters local to Tennessee. After being bested by Polk in the early debates, the governor retreated to Nashville, by then the state capital, alleging important official business. Polk made speeches across the state, seeking to become known more widely than in his native Middle Tennessee. When Cannon came back on the campaign trail in the final days, Polk pursued him, hastening the length of the state to be able to debate the governor again. On Election Day, August 1, 1839, Polk defeated Cannon, 54,102 to 51,396, as the Democrats recaptured the state legislature and won back three congressional seats in Tennessee.

Tennessee's governor had limited power—there was no gubernatorial veto, and the small size of the state government limited any political patronage. But Polk saw the office as a springboard for his national ambitions, seeking to be nominated as Van Buren's vice presidential running mate at the 1840 Democratic National Convention in Baltimore in May. Polk hoped to be the replacement if Vice President Richard Mentor Johnson was dumped from the ticket; Johnson was disliked by many Southern whites for fathering two daughters by a biracial mistress, and attempting to introduce them into white society. Johnson was from Kentucky, so Polk's Tennessee residence would keep the New Yorker Van Buren's ticket balanced. The convention chose to endorse no one for vice president, stating that a choice would be made once the popular vote was cast. Three weeks after the convention, recognizing that Johnson was too popular in the party to be ousted, Polk withdrew his name. The Whig presidential candidate, General William Henry Harrison, conducted a rollicking campaign with the motto "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too", easily winning both the national vote and that in Tennessee. Polk campaigned in vain for Van Buren and was embarrassed by

the outcome; Jackson, who had returned to his home, the Hermitage, near Nashville, was horrified at the prospect of a Whig administration. Harrison's death after a month in office in 1841 left the presidency to Vice President John Tyler, who soon broke with the Whigs.

Polk's three major programs during his governorship; regulating state banks, implementing state internal improvements, and improving education all failed to win the approval of the legislature. His only major success as governor was his politicking to secure the replacement of Tennessee's two Whig U.S. senators with Democrats. Polk's tenure was hindered by the continuing nationwide economic crisis that had followed the Panic of 1837 and which had caused Van Buren to lose the 1840 election.

Encouraged by the success of Harrison's campaign, the Whigs ran a freshman legislator from frontier Wilson County, James C. Jones against Polk in 1841. "Lean Jimmy" had proven one of their most effective gadflies against Polk, and his lighthearted tone at campaign debates was very effective against the serious Polk. The two debated the length of Tennessee, and Jones's support of distribution to the states of surplus federal revenues, and of a national bank, struck a chord with Tennessee voters. On election day in August 1841, Polk was defeated by 3,000 votes, the first time he had been beaten at the polls. Polk returned to Columbia and the practice of law, and prepared for a rematch against Jones in 1843, but though the new governor took less of a joking tone, it made little difference to the outcome, as Polk was beaten again, this time by 3,833 votes. In the wake of his second statewide defeat in three years, Polk faced an uncertain political future.

Election of 1844

Democratic Nomination

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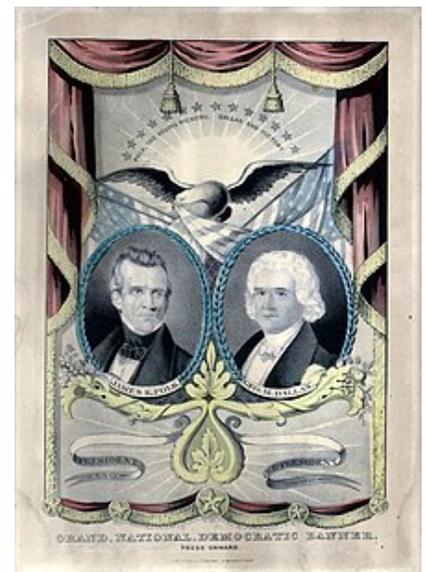
General Election

Rumors of Polk's nomination reached Nashville on June 4, much to Jackson's delight; they were substantiated later that day. The dispatches were sent on to Columbia, arriving the same day, and letters and newspapers describing what had happened at Baltimore were in Polk's hands by June 6. He accepted his nomination by letter dated June 12, alleging that he had never sought the office, and stating his intent to serve only one term. Wright was embittered by what he called the "foul plot" against Van Buren, and demanded assurances that Polk had played no part; it was only after Polk professed that he had remained loyal to Van Buren that Wright supported his campaign. Following the custom of the time that presidential candidates avoid electioneering or appearing to seek the office, Polk remained in Columbia and made no speeches. He engaged in an extensive correspondence with Democratic Party officials as he managed his campaign. Polk made his views known in his acceptance letter and through responses to questions sent by citizens that were printed in newspapers, often by arrangement.

A potential pitfall for Polk's campaign was the issue of whether the tariff should be for revenue only, or with the intent to protect American industry. Polk finessed the tariff issue in a published letter. Recalling that he had long stated that tariffs should only be sufficient to finance government operations, he maintained that stance, but wrote that within that limitation, government could and should offer "fair and just protection" to American interests, including manufacturers. He refused to expand on this stance, acceptable to most Democrats, despite the Whigs pointing out that he had committed himself to nothing. In September, a delegation of Whigs from nearby Giles County came to Columbia, armed with specific questions on Polk's views regarding the current tariff, the Whig-passed Tariff of 1842, and with the stated intent of remaining in Columbia until they got answers. Polk took several days to respond, and chose to stand by his earlier statement, provoking an outcry in the Whig papers.

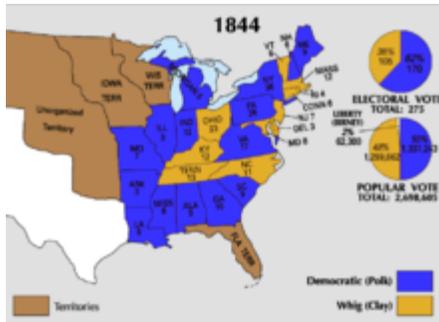
Another concern was the third-party candidacy of President Tyler, which might split the Democratic vote. Tyler had been nominated by a group of loyal officeholders. Under no illusions he could win, he believed he could rally states' rights supporters and populists to hold the balance of power in the election. Only Jackson had the stature to resolve the situation, which he did with two letters to friends in the Cabinet, that he knew would be shown to Tyler, stating that the President's supporters would be welcomed back into the Democratic fold. Jackson wrote that once Tyler withdrew, many Democrats would embrace him for his pro-annexation stance. The former president also used his influence to stop Francis Preston Blair and his *Globe* newspaper, the semi-official organ of the Democratic Party, from attacking Tyler. These proved enough; Tyler withdrew from the race in August.

Party troubles were a third concern. Polk and Calhoun made peace when a former South Carolina congressman, Francis Pickens visited Tennessee and came to Columbia for two days and to the Hermitage for sessions with the increasingly ill Jackson. Calhoun wanted the *Globe* dissolved, and that Polk would act



1844 campaign banner for the Polk/Dallas ticket, produced by Nathaniel Currier

against the 1842 tariff and promote Texas annexation. Reassured on these points, Calhoun became a strong supporter.



Results of the 1844 presidential election

Polk was aided regarding Texas when Clay, realizing his anti-annexation letter had cost him support, attempted in two subsequent letters to clarify his position. These angered both sides, which attacked Clay as insincere. Texas also threatened to divide the Democrats sectionally, but Polk managed to appease most Southern party leaders without antagonizing Northern ones. As the election drew closer, it became clear that most of the country favored the annexation of Texas, and some Southern Whig leaders supported Polk's campaign due to Clay's anti-annexation stance.

The campaign was vitriolic; both major party candidates were accused of various acts of malfeasance; Polk was accused of being both a duelist and a coward. The most damaging smear was the Roorback forgery; in late August an item appeared in an abolitionist newspaper, part of a book detailing fictional travels

through the South of a Baron von Roorback, an imaginary German nobleman. The *Ithaca Chronicle* printed it without labeling it as fiction, and inserted a sentence alleging that the traveler had seen forty slaves who had been sold by Polk after being branded with his initials. The item was withdrawn by the *Chronicle* when challenged by the Democrats, but it was widely reprinted. Borneman suggested that the forgery backfired on Polk's opponents as it served to remind voters that Clay too was a slaveholder, John Eisenhower, in his journal article on the election, stated that the smear came too late to be effectively rebutted, and likely cost Polk Ohio. Southern newspapers, on the other hand, went far in defending Polk, one Nashville newspaper alleging that his slaves preferred their bondage to freedom. Polk himself implied to newspaper correspondents that the only slaves he owned had either been inherited or had been purchased from relatives in financial distress; this paternalistic image was also painted by surrogates like Gideon Pillow. This was not true, though not known at the time; by then he had bought over thirty slaves, both from relatives and others, mainly for the purpose of procuring labor for his Mississippi cotton plantation.

There was no uniform election day in 1844; states voted between November 1 and 12. Polk won the election with 49.5% of the popular vote and 170 of the 275 electoral votes.^[108] Becoming the first president elected despite losing his state of residence (Tennessee), Polk also lost his birth state, North Carolina. However, he won Pennsylvania and New York, where Clay lost votes to the antislavery Liberty Party candidate James G. Birney, who got more votes in New York than Polk's margin of victory. Had Clay won New York, he would have been elected president.

Presidency (1845-1849)

With a slender victory in the popular vote, but with a greater victory in the Electoral College (170–105), Polk proceeded to implement his campaign promises. He presided over a country whose population had doubled every twenty years since the American Revolution and which had reached demographic parity with Great Britain.^[109] Polk's tenure saw continued technological improvements, including the continued expansion of railroads and increased use of the telegraph.^[109] These improved communications and growing demographics increasingly made the United States into a strong military power, while also stoking expansionism. However, sectional divisions remained and became worse during his tenure.

Polk set four clearly defined goals for his administration:

- Reestablish the Independent Treasury System—the Whigs had abolished the one created under Van Buren.
- Reduce tariffs.
- Acquire some or all of the Oregon Country.
- Acquire California and its harbors from Mexico.

While his domestic aims represented continuity with past Democratic policies, successful completion of Polk's foreign policy goals would represent the first major American territorial gains since the Adams–Onís Treaty of 1819.

Transition, Inauguration and Appointments

After being informed of his victory on November 15, 1844, Polk turned his attention to forming a geographically balanced Cabinet. He consulted Jackson and one or two other close allies, and decided that the large states of New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia should have representation in the six-member Cabinet, as should his home state of Tennessee. At a time when an incoming president might retain some or all of his predecessor's department heads, Polk wanted an entirely fresh Cabinet, but this proved delicate. Tyler's final Secretary of State was Calhoun, leader of a considerable faction of the Democratic Party, but, when approached by emissaries, he did not take offense and was willing to step down.



James and Sarah Polk on the portico of the White House alongside Secretary of State James Buchanan, and former first lady Dolley Madison.

Polk did not want his Cabinet to contain presidential hopefuls, though he chose to nominate James Buchanan of Pennsylvania, whose ambition for the presidency was well known, as Secretary of State. Tennessee's Cave Johnson, a close friend and ally of Polk, was nominated for the position of Postmaster General, with George Bancroft, the historian who had played a crucial role in Polk's nomination, as Navy Secretary. Polk's choices met with the approval of Andrew Jackson, whom Polk met with in January 1845 for the last time, as Jackson died that June.

Tyler's last Navy Secretary, John Y. Mason of Virginia, Polk's friend since college days and a longtime political ally, was not on the original list. As Cabinet choices were affected by factional politics and President Tyler's drive to resolve the Texas issue before leaving office, Polk at the last minute chose him as Attorney General. Polk

also chose Mississippi Senator Walker as Secretary of the Treasury and New York's William Marcy as Secretary of War. All gained Senate confirmation after Polk took office. The members worked well together, and few replacements were necessary. One reshuffle was required in 1846 when Bancroft, who wanted a diplomatic posting, became U.S. minister to Britain.

As Polk put together his Cabinet, President Tyler sought to complete the annexation of Texas. While the Senate had defeated an earlier treaty that would annex the republic, Tyler urged Congress to pass a joint resolution, relying on its constitutional power to admit states. There were disagreements about the terms under which Texas would be admitted and Polk became involved in negotiations to break the impasse. With Polk's help, the annexation resolution narrowly cleared the Senate. Tyler was unsure whether to sign the resolution or leave it for Polk, and sent Calhoun to consult with the President-elect, who declined to give any advice. On his final evening in office, March 3, 1845, Tyler offered annexation to Texas according to the terms of the resolution.

Even before his inauguration, Polk wrote to Cave Johnson, "I intend to be *myself* President of the U.S." He would gain a reputation as a hard worker, spending ten to twelve hours at his desk, and rarely leaving Washington. Polk wrote, "No President who performs his duty faithfully and conscientiously can have any leisure. I prefer to supervise the whole operations of the government myself rather than entrust the public business to subordinates, and this makes my duties very great." When he took office on March 4, 1845, Polk, at 49, became the youngest president to that point. Polk's inauguration was the first inaugural ceremony to be reported by telegraph, and first to be shown in a

newspaper illustration (in *The Illustrated London News*).

In his inaugural address, delivered in a steady rain, Polk made clear his support for Texas annexation by referring to the 28 states of the U.S., thus including Texas. He proclaimed his fidelity to Jackson's principles by quoting his famous toast, "Every lover of his country must shudder at the thought of the possibility of its dissolution and will be ready to adopt the patriotic sentiment, 'Our Federal Union—it



The inauguration of James K. Polk, as shown in the *Illustrated London News*, April 19, 1845

must be preserved.” He stated his opposition to a national bank, and repeated that the tariff could include incidental protection. Although he did not mention slavery specifically, he alluded to it, decrying those who would tear down an institution protected by the Constitution.

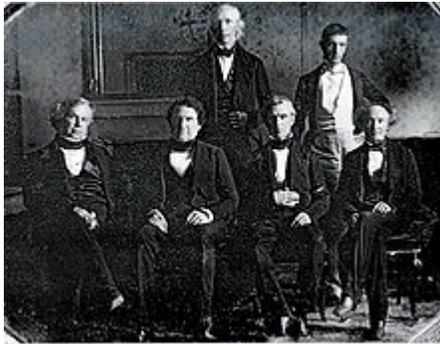
Polk devoted the second half of his speech to foreign affairs, and specifically to expansion. He applauded the annexation of Texas, warning that Texas was no affair of any other nation, and certainly none of Mexico's. He spoke of the Oregon Country, and of the many who were migrating, pledging to safeguard America's rights there, and to protect the settlers.

As well as appointing Cabinet officers to advise him, Polk made his sister's son, J. Knox Walker, his personal secretary, an especially important position because, other than his slaves, Polk had no staff at the White House. Walker, who lived at the White House with his growing family (two children were born to him while living there), performed his duties competently through his uncle's presidency. Other Polk relatives visited at the White House, some for extended periods.

Foreign Policy

Partition of Oregon Country

Britain derived its claim to the Oregon Country from the voyages of Captains James Cook and George Vancouver, the Americans from the explorations of the Lewis and Clark expedition and from the discovery of the Columbia River by the American sea captain, Robert Gray. By treaty, Russia had waived any claim south of the southern border of Alaska, which it possessed until 1867, and Spain, which claimed the Pacific Coast to the 42nd parallel, ceded any claims it might have north of that to the United States under the Adams–Onís Treaty of 1819. This was just before Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821. Claims of the indigenous peoples of the region to their traditional lands were not a factor.



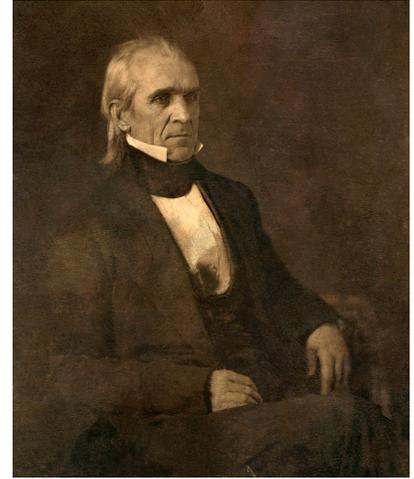
Polk and his cabinet in the White House dining room, 1846.

Rather than war over the distant and low-population territory, the United States and Britain had negotiated. Since the signing of the Treaty of 1818, the Oregon Country had been under the joint occupation and control of the United Kingdom and the United States. Previous U.S. administrations had offered to divide the region along the 49th parallel, which was not acceptable to Britain, as it had commercial interests along the Columbia River. Britain's preferred partition was unacceptable to Polk, as it would have awarded Puget Sound and all lands north of the Columbia River to Britain, and Britain was unwilling to accept the 49th parallel extended to the Pacific, as it meant the entire opening to Puget Sound would be in American hands, isolating its settlements along the Fraser River.

Edward Everett, President Tyler's ambassador to Great Britain, had informally proposed dividing the territory at the 49th parallel with the strategic Vancouver Island granted to the British, thus allowing an opening to the Pacific. But when the new British minister in Washington, Richard Pakenham arrived in 1844 prepared to follow up, he found that many Americans desired the entire territory. Oregon had not been a major issue in the 1844 election. However, the heavy influx of settlers, mostly American, to the Oregon Country in 1845, and the rising spirit of expansionism in the United States as Texas and Oregon seized the public's eye, made a treaty with Britain more urgent. Many Democrats believed that the United States should span from coast to coast, a philosophy described as Manifest Destiny.

Though both sides sought an acceptable compromise, each also saw the territory as an important geopolitical asset that would play a large part in determining the dominant power in North America. In his inaugural address, Polk announced that he viewed the U.S. claim to the land as "clear and unquestionable", provoking threats of war from British leaders should Polk attempt to take control of the entire territory. Polk had refrained in his address from asserting a claim to the entire territory, which extended north to 54 degrees, 40 minutes north latitude, although the Democratic Party platform called for such a claim. Despite Polk's hawkish rhetoric, he viewed war over Oregon as unwise, and Polk and Buchanan began negotiations with the British. Like his predecessors, Polk again proposed a division along the 49th parallel, which was immediately rejected by Pakenham. Secretary of State Buchanan was wary of a two-front war with Mexico

and Britain, but Polk was willing to risk war with both countries in pursuit of a favorable settlement. In his annual message to Congress in December 1845, Polk requested approval of giving Britain a one-year notice (as required in the Treaty of 1818) of his intention to terminate the joint occupancy of Oregon. In that message, he quoted from the Monroe Doctrine to denote America's intention of keeping European powers out, the first significant use of it since its origin in 1823. After much debate, Congress eventually passed the resolution in April 1846, attaching its hope that the dispute would be settled amicably.



James K. Polk

When the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Aberdeen, learned of the proposal rejected by Pakenham, Aberdeen asked the United States to re-open negotiations, but Polk was unwilling unless a proposal was made by the British. With Britain moving towards free trade with the repeal of the Corn Laws, good trade relations with the United States were more important to Aberdeen than a distant territory. In February 1846, Polk allowed Buchanan to inform Louis McLane, the American ambassador to Britain, that Polk's administration would look favorably on a British proposal to divide the continent at the 49th parallel. In June 1846, Pakenham presented an offer to the Polk administration, calling for a boundary line at the 49th parallel, with the exception that Britain would retain all of Vancouver Island, and there would be limited navigation rights for British subjects on the Columbia River until the expiration of the charter of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1859. Polk and most of his Cabinet were prepared to accept the proposal, but Buchanan, in a reversal, urged that the United States seek control of all of the Oregon Territory. Polk deemed Buchanan's about-face linked to his presidential ambitions.

After winning the reluctant approval of Buchanan, and choosing to have the Senate weigh in (favorably) on the draft treaty, Polk submitted the full treaty to the Senate for ratification. The Senate ratified the Oregon Treaty in a 41–14 vote, with opposition from diehards who sought the full territory. Polk's willingness to risk war with Britain had frightened many, but his tough negotiation tactics may have gained the United States concessions from the British (particularly regarding the Columbia River) that a more conciliatory president might not have won.

Annexation of Texas

The annexation resolution signed by Tyler gave the president the choice of asking Texas to approve annexation, or reopening negotiations; Tyler immediately sent a messenger to the U.S. representative in Texas, Andrew Jackson Donelson, choosing the former option. Thus, Polk's first major decision in office was whether to recall Tyler's courier to Texas.

Though it was within Polk's power to recall the messenger, he chose to allow him to continue, with the hope that Texas would accept the offer. He also sent Congressman Archibald Yell of Arkansas, who was a Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee, as his personal emissary, taking his private assurance that the United States would defend Texas, and would fix its southern border at the Rio Grande, as claimed by Texas, rather than at the Nueces River, as claimed by Mexico. Polk retained Donelson in his post, and the diplomat sought to convince Texas' leaders to accept annexation under the terms proposed by the Tyler administration. Though public sentiment in Texas favored annexation, some leaders, including President Anson Jones, hoped negotiation would bring better terms. Britain had offered to work a deal whereby Texas would gain Mexican recognition in exchange for a pledge never to annex itself to another country, but after consideration, the influential former president, Sam Houston, rejected it, as did the Texas Congress.

In July 1845, a convention ratified annexation, and thereafter voters approved it. In December 1845, Polk signed a resolution annexing Texas, and it became the 28th state. Mexico had broken diplomatic relations with the United States on passage of the joint resolution in March 1845; annexation increased tensions with that nation, which had never recognized Texan independence.

Mexican-American War

Road to War

Following the Texan ratification of annexation in 1845, both Mexicans and Americans saw conflict as a likely possibility. Polk began preparations for a potential war with Mexico over Texas, sending an army there, led by Brigadier General Zachary Taylor. Taylor and Commodore David Conner of the U.S. Navy, commanding American ships off the Mexican coast, were both ordered to avoid provoking a war, while preparing for conflict, and to respond to any Mexican aggression. Sending the U.S. Army there was a provocative act. Although Polk had the military prepare for war, he did not believe it would come to that; he thought Mexico would give in under duress, which proved to be a significant miscalculation.

Polk hoped that a show of force by the U.S. military under Taylor and Conner could avert war and lead to negotiations with the Mexican government. In late 1845, Polk sent diplomat John Slidell to Mexico to purchase New Mexico and California for \$30 million, as well as securing Mexico's agreement to a Rio Grande border. Slidell arrived in Mexico City in December 1845. Mexican President José Joaquín de Herrera was unwilling to receive him because of the hostility of the public towards the United States. Slidell's ambassadorial credentials were refused by a Mexican council of government, and Herrera soon thereafter was deposed by a military coup led by General Mariano Paredes, a hard-liner who pledged to take back Texas from the United States.^[157] Dispatches from Slidell and from the U.S. consul in Mexico City, John Black, made clear their views that U.S. aims for territorial expansion could not be accomplished without war.

Taylor's instructions were to repel any incursion by Mexico north of the Rio Grande, when the Texas boundary line had been de facto at the Nueces River. Initially, his army did not advance further than Corpus Christi, at the mouth of the Nueces. On January 13, 1846, Polk ordered Taylor to proceed to the Rio Grande, though it took him time to prepare for the march. Polk was convinced that sending Taylor to the Nueces Strip would provoke war; even if it did not, he was prepared to have Congress declare it.

Slidell returned to Washington in May 1846 and gave his opinion that negotiations with the Mexican government were unlikely to be successful. Polk regarded the treatment of his diplomat as an insult and an "ample cause of war", and he prepared to ask Congress to declare it. Meanwhile, in late March, General Taylor had reached the Rio Grande, and his army camped across the river from Matamoros, Tamaulipas. In April, after Mexican general Pedro de Ampudia demanded that Taylor return to the Nueces River, Taylor began a blockade of Matamoros. A skirmish on the northern side of the Rio Grande on April 25 ended in the death or capture of dozens of American soldiers, and became known as the Thornton Affair. Word did not reach Washington until May 9, and Polk immediately convened the Cabinet and obtained their approval of his plan to send a war message to Congress on the ground that Mexico had, as Polk put it in his message, "shed American blood on the American soil". Polk's message was crafted to present the war as a just and necessary defense of the country against a neighbor that had long troubled the United States.



War news from Mexico

The House overwhelmingly approved a resolution declaring war and authorizing the president to accept 50,000 volunteers into the military.^[165] Some of those voting in favor were unconvinced that the U.S. had just cause to go to war, but feared to be deemed unpatriotic. In the Senate, war opponents led by Calhoun also questioned Polk's version of events. Nonetheless, the House resolution passed the Senate in a 40–2 vote, with Calhoun abstaining, marking the beginning of the Mexican–American War.

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Course of the War

After the initial skirmishes, Taylor and much of his army marched away from the river to secure the supply line, leaving a makeshift base, Fort Texas. On the way back to the Rio Grande, Mexican forces under General Mariano Arista attempted to block Taylor's way as other troops laid siege to Fort Texas, forcing the U.S. Army general to the attack if he hoped to relieve the fort. In the Battle of Palo Alto, the first major

engagement of the war, Taylor's troops forced Arista's from the field, suffering only four dead to hundreds for the Mexicans. The next day, Taylor led the army to victory in the Battle of Resaca de la Palma, putting the Mexican Army to rout. The early successes boosted support for the war, which despite the lopsided votes in Congress had deeply divided the nation.^[169] Many Northern Whigs opposed the war, as did others; they felt Polk had used patriotism to manipulate the nation into fighting a war the goal of which was to give slavery room to expand.

Polk distrusted the two senior officers, Major General Winfield Scott and Taylor, as both were Whigs, and would have replaced them with Democrats, but felt Congress would not approve it. He offered Scott the position of top commander in the war, which the general accepted. Polk and Scott already knew and disliked each other: the President made the appointment despite the fact that Scott had sought his party's presidential nomination for the 1840 election. Polk came to believe that Scott was too slow in getting himself and his army away from Washington and to the Rio Grande, and was outraged to learn Scott was



Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, 1847

using his influence in Congress to defeat the administration's plan to expand the number of generals. The news of Taylor's victory at Resaca de la Palma arrived then, and Polk decided to have Taylor take command in the field, and Scott to remain in Washington. Polk also ordered Commodore Conner to allow Antonio López de Santa Anna to return to Mexico from his exile in Havana, thinking that he would negotiate a treaty ceding territory to the U.S. for a price. Polk sent representatives to Cuba for talks with Santa Anna.

Polk sent an army expedition led by Stephen W. Kearny towards Santa Fe, to territory beyond the original claims in Texas. In 1845, Polk, fearful of French or British intervention, had sent Lieutenant Archibald H. Gillespie to California with orders to foment a pro-American rebellion that could be used to justify annexation of the territory.^[175] After meeting with Gillespie, Army captain John C. Frémont led settlers in northern California to overthrow the Mexican garrison in Sonoma in what became known as the Bear Flag Revolt. In August 1846, American forces under Kearny captured Santa Fe, capital of the province of New Mexico, without firing a shot. Almost

simultaneously, Commodore Robert F. Stockton landed in Los Angeles and proclaimed the capture of California. After American forces put down a revolt, the United States held effective control of New Mexico and California. Nevertheless, the Western theater of the war would prove to be a political headache for Polk, since a dispute between Frémont and Kearny led to a break between Polk and the powerful Missouri senator (and father-in-law of Frémont), Thomas Hart Benton.

The initial public euphoria over the victories at the start of the war slowly dissipated. In August 1846, Polk asked Congress to appropriate \$2 million as a down payment for the potential purchase of Mexican lands. Polk's request ignited opposition, as he had never before made public his desire to annex parts of Mexico (aside from lands claimed by Texas). It was unclear whether such newly acquired lands would be slave or free, and there was fierce and acrimonious sectional debate. A freshman Democratic Congressman, David Wilmot of Pennsylvania, previously a firm supporter of Polk's administration, offered an amendment to the bill, the Wilmot Proviso, which would ban slavery in any land acquired using the money. The appropriation bill, with the Wilmot Proviso attached, passed the House, but died in the Senate. This discord cost Polk's party, with Democrats losing control of the House in the 1846 elections. In early 1847, though, Polk was successful in passing a bill raising further regiments, and he also finally won approval for the appropriation.

To try to bring the war to a quick end, in July 1846 Polk considered supporting a potential coup led by the exiled Mexican former president, General Antonio López de Santa Anna, with the hope that Santa Anna would sell parts of California.^[184] Santa Anna was in exile in Cuba, still a colony of Spain. Polk sent an envoy to have secret talks with Santa Anna. The U.S. Consul in Havana, R.B. Campbell, began seeking a way to engage with Santa Anna. A U.S. citizen of Spanish birth, Col. Alejandro José Atocha, knew Santa Anna and acted initially as an intermediary. Polk noted his contacts with Atocha in his diary, which said that Santa Anna was interested in concluding a treaty with the U.S. gaining territory while Mexico received payment that would include settling its debts. Polk decided that Atocha was untrustworthy and sent his own representative, Alexander Slidell Mackenzie, (a relative of John Slidell) to meet with Santa Anna. Mackenzie told Santa Anna that Polk wished to see him in power and that if they came to an agreement that the U.S.

naval blockade would be lifted briefly to allow Santa Anna to return to Mexico. Polk requested \$2 million from Congress to be used to negotiate a treaty with Mexico or payment to Mexico before a treaty was signed. The blockade was indeed briefly lifted and Santa Anna returned to Mexico, not to head a government that would negotiate a treaty with the U.S., but rather to organize a military defense of his homeland. Santa Anna gloated over Polk's naïveté,^[185] Polk had been "snookered" by Santa Anna.^[186] Instead of coming to a negotiated settlement with the U.S., Santa Anna mounted a defense of Mexico and fought to the bitter end. "His actions would prolong the war for at least a year, and more than any other single person, it was Santa Anna who denied Polk's dream of short war."

This caused Polk to harden his position on Mexico, and he ordered an American landing at Veracruz, the most important Mexican port on the Gulf of Mexico. From there, troops were to march through Mexico's heartland to Mexico City, which it was hoped would end the war.^[189] Continuing to advance in northeast Mexico, Taylor defeated a Mexican army led by Ampudia in the September 1846 Battle of Monterrey, but allowed Ampudia's forces to withdraw from the town, much to Polk's consternation. Polk believed Taylor had not aggressively pursued the enemy, and offered command of the Veracruz expedition to Scott.

The lack of trust Polk had in Taylor was returned by the Whig general, who feared the partisan president was trying to destroy him. Accordingly, Taylor disobeyed orders to remain near Monterrey. In March 1847, Polk learned that Taylor had continued to march south, capturing the northern Mexican town of Saltillo. Continuing beyond Saltillo, Taylor's army fought a larger Mexican force, led by Santa Anna, in the Battle of Buena Vista. Initial reports gave the victory to Mexico, with great rejoicing, but Santa Anna retreated. Mexican casualties were five times that of the Americans, and the victory made Taylor even more of a military hero in the American public's eyes, though Polk preferred to credit the bravery of the soldiers rather than the Whig general.

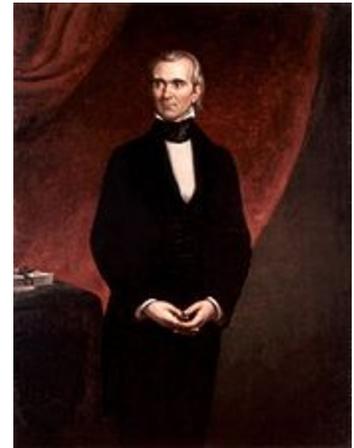
The U.S. changed the course of the war with its invasion of Mexico's heartland through Veracruz and ultimately the capture of Mexico City, following hard fighting. In March 1847, Scott landed in Veracruz, and quickly won control of the city. The Mexicans expected that yellow fever and other tropical diseases would weaken the U.S. forces. With the capture of Veracruz, Polk dispatched Nicholas Trist, Buchanan's chief clerk, to accompany Scott's army and negotiate a peace treaty with Mexican leaders. Trist was instructed to seek the cession of Alta California, New Mexico, and Baja California, recognition of the Rio Grande as the southern border of Texas, and U.S. access across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Trist was authorized to make a payment of up to \$30 million in exchange for these concessions.

In August 1847, as he advanced towards Mexico City, Scott defeated Santa Anna at the Battle of Contreras and the Battle of Churubusco. With the Americans at the gates of Mexico City, Trist negotiated with commissioners, but the Mexicans were willing to give up little. Scott prepared to take Mexico City, which he did in mid-September. In the United States, a heated political debate emerged regarding how much of Mexico the United States should seek to annex, Whigs such as Henry Clay arguing that the United States should only seek to settle the Texas border question, and some expansionists arguing for the annexation of all of Mexico. War opponents were also active; Whig Congressman Abraham Lincoln of Illinois introduced the "exact spot" resolutions, calling on Polk to state exactly where American blood had been shed on American soil to start the war, but the House refused to consider them.

Peace: The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo

Frustrated by a lack of progress in negotiations, Polk ordered Trist to return to Washington, but the diplomat, when the notice of recall arrived in mid-November 1847, ignored the order, deciding to remain and writing a lengthy letter to Polk the following month to justify his decision. Polk considered having Butler, designated as Scott's replacement, forcibly remove him from Mexico City. Though outraged by Trist's defiance, Polk decided to allow him some time to negotiate a treaty.

Throughout January 1848, Trist regularly met with officials in Mexico City, though at the request of the Mexicans, the treaty signing took place in Guadalupe Hidalgo, a small town near Mexico City. Trist was



Polk's official White House portrait, by George Peter Alexander Healy, 1858

willing to allow Mexico to keep Baja California, as his instructions allowed, but successfully haggled for the inclusion of the important harbor of San Diego in a cession of Alta California. Provisions included the Rio Grande border and a \$15 million payment to Mexico. On February 2, 1848, Trist and the Mexican delegation signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Polk received the document on February 19, and, after the Cabinet met on the 20th, decided he had no choice but to accept it. If he turned it down, with the House by then controlled by the Whigs, there was no assurance Congress would vote funding to continue the war. Both Buchanan and Walker dissented, wanting more land from Mexico, a position with which the President was sympathetic, though he considered Buchanan's view motivated by his ambition.

Some senators opposed the treaty because they wanted to take no Mexican territory; others hesitated because of the irregular nature of Trist's negotiations. Polk waited in suspense for two weeks as the Senate considered it, sometimes hearing that it would likely be defeated, and that Buchanan and Walker were working against it. He was relieved when the two Cabinet officers lobbied on behalf of the treaty. On March 10, the Senate ratified the treaty in a 38–14 vote, on a vote that cut across partisan and geographic lines. The Senate made some modifications to the treaty before ratification, and Polk worried that the Mexican government would reject them. On June 7, Polk learned that Mexico had ratified the treaty. Polk declared the treaty in effect as of July 4, 1848, thus ending the war. With the acquisition of California, Polk had accomplished all four of his major presidential goals.^[208] With the exception of the territory acquired by the 1853 Gadsden Purchase, the territorial acquisitions under Polk established the modern borders of the Contiguous United States.

Postwar and the Territories

Polk had been anxious to establish a territorial government for Oregon once the treaty was effective in 1846, but the matter became embroiled in the arguments over slavery, though few thought Oregon suitable for that institution. A bill to establish an Oregon territorial government passed the House after being amended to bar slavery; the bill died in the Senate when opponents ran out the clock on the congressional session. A resurrected bill, still barring slavery, again passed the House in January 1847 but it was not considered by the Senate before Congress adjourned in March. By the time Congress met again in December, California and New Mexico were in U.S. hands, and Polk in his annual message urged the establishment of territorial governments in all three. The Missouri Compromise had settled the issue of the geographic reach of slavery within the Louisiana Purchase territories by prohibiting slavery in states north of 36°30' latitude, and Polk sought to extend this line into the newly acquired territory. If extended to the Pacific, this would have made slavery illegal in San Francisco, but allowed it in Monterey and Los Angeles. A plan to accomplish the extension was defeated in the House by a bipartisan alliance of Northerners. As the last congressional session before the 1848 election came to a close, Polk signed the lone territorial bill passed by Congress, which established the Territory of Oregon and prohibited slavery in it.

When Congress reconvened in December 1848, Polk asked it in his annual message to establish territorial governments in California and New Mexico, a task made especially urgent by the onset of the California Gold Rush. The divisive issue of slavery blocked any such legislation, though congressional action continued until the final hours of Polk's term. When the bill was amended to have the laws of Mexico apply to the southwest territories until Congress changed them (thus effectively banning slavery), Polk made it clear that he would veto it, considering it the Wilmot Proviso in another guise. It was not until the Compromise of 1850 that the matter of the territories was resolved.

Other Initiatives

Polk's ambassador to the Republic of New Granada, Benjamin Alden Bidlack, negotiated the Mallarino–Bidlack Treaty. Though Bidlack had initially only sought to remove tariffs on American goods, Bidlack and New Granadan Foreign Minister Manuel María Mallarino negotiated a broader agreement that deepened military and trade ties between the two countries. The treaty also allowed for the construction of the Panama Railway. In an era of slow overland travel, the treaty gave the United States a route for a quicker journey between its eastern and western coasts. In exchange, Bidlack agreed to have the United States guarantee New Granada's sovereignty over the Isthmus of Panama. The treaty won ratification in both countries in 1848. The agreement helped to establish a stronger American influence in the region, as the Polk administration sought to ensure that Great Britain would not dominate Central America. The

United States would use the rights granted under the Mallarino-Bidlack Treaty as a justification for its military interventions in Latin America through the remainder of the 19th century.

In mid-1848, President Polk authorized his ambassador to Spain, Romulus Mitchell Saunders, to negotiate the purchase of Cuba and offer Spain up to \$100 million, a large sum at the time for one territory, equal to \$2.96 billion in present-day terms. Cuba was close to the United States and had slavery, so the idea appealed to Southerners but was unwelcome in the North. However, Spain was still making profits in Cuba (notably in sugar, molasses, rum and tobacco), and thus the Spanish government rejected Saunders's overtures. Though Polk was eager to acquire Cuba, he refused to support the filibuster expedition of Narciso López, who sought to invade and take over the island as a prelude to annexation.

Domestic Policy

Fiscal Policy

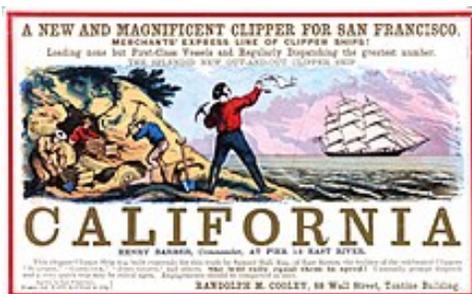
In his inaugural address, Polk called upon Congress to re-establish the Independent Treasury System under which government funds were held in the Treasury and not in banks or other financial institutions. President Van Buren had previously established a similar system, but it had been abolished during the Tyler administration. Polk made clear his opposition to a national bank in his inaugural address, and in his first annual message to Congress in December 1845, he called for the government to keep its funds itself. Congress was slow to act; the House passed a bill in April 1846 and the Senate in August, both without a single Whig vote. Polk signed the Independent Treasury Act into law on August 6, 1846. The act provided that the public revenues were to be retained in the Treasury building and in sub-treasuries in various cities, separate from private or state banks.^[225] The system would remain in place until the passage of the Federal Reserve Act in 1913.

Polk's other major domestic initiative was the lowering of the tariff. Polk directed Secretary of the Treasury Robert Walker to draft a new and lower tariff, which Polk submitted to Congress. After intense lobbying by both sides, the bills passed the House and, in a close vote that required Vice President Dallas to break a tie, the Senate in July 1846. Dallas, although from protectionist Pennsylvania, voted for the bill, having decided his best political prospects lay in supporting the administration. Polk signed the Walker Tariff into law, substantially reducing the rates that had been set by the Tariff of 1842. The reduction of tariffs in the United States and the repeal of the Corn Laws in Great Britain led to a boom in Anglo-American trade.

Development of the Country

Congress passed the Rivers and Harbors Bill in 1846 to provide \$500,000 to improve port facilities, but Polk vetoed it. Polk believed that the bill was unconstitutional because it unfairly favored particular areas, including ports that had no foreign trade. Polk considered internal improvements to be matters for the states, and feared that passing the bill would encourage legislators to compete for favors for their home district—a type of corruption that he felt would spell doom to the virtue of the republic. In this regard he followed his hero Jackson, who had vetoed the Maysville Road Bill in 1830 on similar grounds.

Opposed by conviction to Federal funding for internal improvements, Polk stood strongly against all such bills. Congress, in 1847, passed another internal improvements bill; he pocket vetoed it and sent Congress a full veto message when it met in December. Similar bills continued to advance in Congress in 1848,



The California Gold Rush began under Polk.

though none reached his desk. When he came to the Capitol to sign bills on March 3, 1849, the last day of the congressional session and his final full day in office, he feared that an internal improvements bill would pass Congress, and he brought with him a draft veto message. The bill did not pass, so it was not needed, but feeling the draft had been ably written, he had it preserved among his papers.

Authoritative word of the discovery of gold in California did not arrive in Washington until after the 1848 election, by which time Polk was a lame duck. Polk's political adversaries had claimed California was too far away to be useful, and was not worth the price paid to Mexico. The President was delighted by the news,

seeing it as validation of his stance on expansion, and referred to the discovery several times in his final annual message to Congress that December. Shortly thereafter, actual samples of the California gold arrived, and Polk sent a special message to Congress on the subject. The message, confirming less authoritative reports, caused large numbers of people to move to California, both from the U.S. and abroad, thus helping to spark the California Gold Rush.

One of Polk's last acts as President was to sign the bill creating the Department of the Interior (March 3, 1849). This was the first new cabinet position created since the early days of the Republic. Polk had misgivings about the federal government usurping power over public lands from the states. Nevertheless, the delivery of the legislation on his last full day in office gave him no time to find constitutional grounds for a veto, or to draft a sufficient veto message, so he signed the bill.

Judicial Appointments

The 1844 death of Justice Henry Baldwin left a vacant place on the Supreme Court, but Tyler had been unable to get the Senate to confirm a nominee. At the time, it was the custom to have geographic balance on the Supreme Court, and Baldwin had been from Pennsylvania. Polk's efforts to fill Baldwin's seat became embroiled in Pennsylvania politics and the efforts of factional leaders to secure the lucrative post of Collector of Customs for the Port of Philadelphia. As Polk attempted to find his way through the minefield of Pennsylvania politics, a second position on the high court became vacant with the death, in September 1845, of Justice Joseph Story; his replacement was expected to come from his native New England. Because Story's death had occurred while the Senate was not in session, Polk was able to make a recess appointment, choosing Senator Levi Woodbury of New Hampshire, and when the Senate reconvened in December 1845, Woodbury was confirmed. Polk's initial nominee for Baldwin's seat, George W. Woodward, was rejected by the Senate in January 1846, in large part due to the opposition of Buchanan and Pennsylvania Senator Simon Cameron.

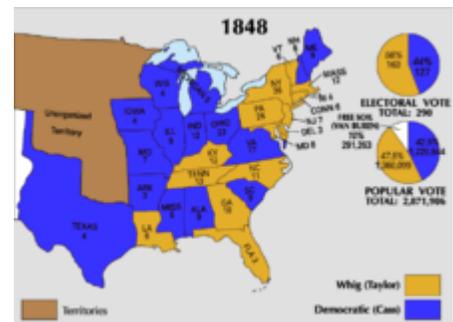
Despite Polk's anger at Buchanan, he eventually offered the Secretary of State the seat, but Buchanan, after some indecision, turned it down. Polk subsequently nominated Robert Cooper Grier of Pittsburgh, who won confirmation. Justice Woodbury died in 1851, but Grier served until 1870 and in the slavery case of *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857) wrote an opinion stating that slaves were property and could not sue.

Polk appointed eight other federal judges, one to the United States Circuit Court of the District of Columbia, and seven to various United States district courts.

Election of 1848

Honoring his pledge to serve only one term, Polk declined to seek re-election. At the 1848 Democratic National Convention, Lewis Cass led on every ballot, though it was not until the fourth that he attained a two-thirds vote. William Butler, who had replaced Winfield Scott as the commanding general in Mexico City, won the vice presidential nomination. The 1848 Whig National Convention nominated Zachary Taylor for president and former congressman Millard Fillmore of New York for vice president.

New York Democrats remained bitter because of what they deemed shabby treatment of Van Buren in 1844, and the former president had drifted from the party in the years since. Many of Van Buren's faction of the party, the Barnburners, were younger men who strongly opposed the spread of slavery, a position with which, by 1848, Van Buren agreed. Senator Cass was a strong expansionist, and slavery might find new fields under him; accordingly the Barnburners bolted the Democratic National Convention upon his nomination, and, in June, joined by anti-slavery Democrats from other states, they held a convention, nominating Van Buren for president. Polk was surprised and disappointed by his former ally's political conversion, and worried about the divisiveness of a sectional party devoted to abolition. Polk did not give speeches for Cass, remaining at his desk at the White House. He did remove some Van Buren supporters from federal office during the campaign.



Results of the 1848 presidential election

In the election, Taylor won 47.3% of the popular vote and a majority of the electoral vote. Cass won 42.5% of the vote, while Van Buren finished with 10.1% of the popular vote, much of his support coming from northern Democrats. Polk was disappointed by the outcome as he had a low opinion of Taylor, seeing the general as someone with poor judgment and few opinions on important public matters. Nevertheless, Polk observed tradition and welcomed President-elect Taylor to Washington, hosting him at a gala White House dinner. Polk departed the White House on March 3, leaving behind him a clean desk, though he worked from his hotel or the Capitol on last-minute appointments and bill signings. He attended Taylor's inauguration on March 5 (March 4, the presidential inauguration day until 1937, fell on a Sunday, and thus the ceremony was postponed a day), and though he was unimpressed with the new President, wished him the best.

Freemasonry

Polk was made a Mason in Columbia Lodge 31 on September 4, 1820, was Junior Warden in 1821 and was active until his public duties called him to other fields. He received the Mark Masters Degree in Cumberland Chapter 1 at Nashville, January 17, 1825. At a stated meeting on the same date his petition for the Past, Most Excellent and Royal Arch Degrees was read and ordered to lie over for one month. At the next stated meeting of the Chapter, February 21, he was permitted to withdraw his petition, obviously for the purpose of placing it with LaFayette Chapter 4, which had just been chartered in Columbia. He received his Past Masters Degree, April 5, Most Excellent Masters, April 22 and the Royal Arch Degree, April 24, 1825 in LaFayette Chapter, and was Captain of the Host pro tem in that Chapter, September 8, 1825.

Post-Presidency and Death

Polk's time in the White House took its toll on his health. Full of enthusiasm and vigor when he entered office, Polk left the presidency exhausted by his years of public service. He left Washington on March 6 for a pre-arranged triumphal tour of the South, to end in Nashville. Polk had two years previously arranged to buy a house there, afterwards dubbed Polk Place, which had once belonged to his mentor, Felix Grundy.



Polk Place, briefly James Polk's home and long that of his widow.

James and Sarah Polk progressed down the Atlantic coast, and then westward through the Deep South. He was enthusiastically received and banqueted. By the time the Polks reached Alabama, he was suffering from a bad cold, and soon became concerned by reports of cholera—a passenger on Polk's riverboat died of it, and it was rumored to be common in New Orleans, but it was too late to change plans. Worried about his health, he would have departed the city quickly, but was overwhelmed by Louisiana hospitality. Several passengers on the riverboat up the Mississippi died of the disease, and Polk felt so ill that he went ashore for four days, staying in a hotel. A doctor assured him he did not have cholera, and Polk made the final leg, arriving in Nashville on April 2 to a huge reception.

After a visit to James's mother in Columbia, the Polks settled into Polk Place. The exhausted former president seemed to gain new life, but in early June, he fell ill again, by most accounts of cholera. Attended by several doctors, he lingered for several days, and chose to be baptized into the Methodist Church, which he had long admired, though his mother arrived from Columbia with her Presbyterian clergyman, and his wife was also a devout Presbyterian. On the afternoon of Friday, June 15, Polk died at his Polk Place home in Nashville, Tennessee at the age of 53.^[256] According to traditional accounts, his last words before he died were "I love you, Sarah, for all eternity, I love you", spoken to Sarah Polk. Borneman noted that whether or not they were spoken, there was nothing in Polk's life, which would make the sentiment false.

Polk's funeral was held at the McKendree Methodist Church in Nashville. Following his death, Sarah Polk lived at Polk Place for 42 years and died on August 14, 1891 at the age of 87. Their house, Polk Place, was demolished in 1901, a decade after Sarah's death.

Burials

Polk's rest has been twice interrupted. After his death, he was buried in what is now Nashville City Cemetery, due to a legal requirement related to his infectious disease death. Polk was then moved to a tomb on the grounds of Polk Place (as specified in his will) in 1850.

Then, in 1893, the bodies of James and Sarah Polk were relocated to their current resting place on the grounds of the Tennessee State Capitol in Nashville. In March 2017, the Tennessee Senate approved a resolution considered a "first step" toward relocating the Polks' remains to the family home in Columbia. Such a move

would require approval by state lawmakers, the courts, and the Tennessee Historical Commission. A year later, a renewed plan to reinter Polk was defeated by Tennessee lawmakers before being taken up again and approved, and allowed to go through by the non-signature of Tennessee governor Bill Haslam. The state's Capitol Commission heard arguments over the issue in November 2018, during which the THC reiterated its opposition to the tomb relocation, and a vote was delayed indefinitely.

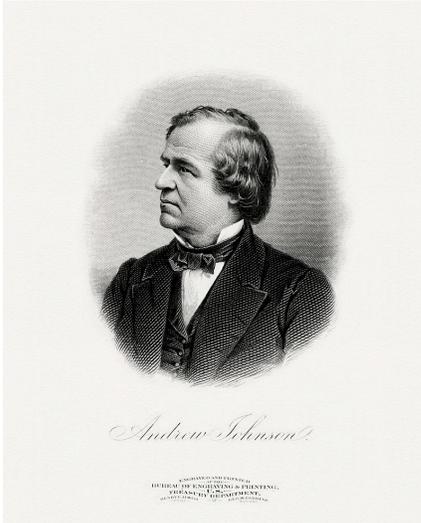


James K. Polk's tomb lies on the grounds of the Tennessee State Capitol.

Andrew Johnson

1808-1875

17th President of the United States 1865-1869



BEP engraved portrait of Johnson as President

Andrew Johnson was born in Raleigh, North Carolina, on December 29, 1808, to Jacob Johnson (1778–1812) and Mary ("Polly") McDonough (1783–1856), a laundress. He was of English, Scots-Irish, and Irish ancestry.^[3] He had a brother William, four years his senior, and an older sister Elizabeth, who died in childhood. Johnson's birth in a two-room shack was a political asset in the mid-19th century, and he would frequently remind voters of his humble origins. Jacob Johnson was a poor man, as had been his father, William Johnson, but he became town constable of Raleigh before marrying and starting a family. Both Jacob and Mary were illiterate, and had worked as tavern servants, while Johnson never attended school and grew up in poverty. Jacob died of an apparent heart attack while ringing the town bell, shortly after rescuing three drowning men, when his son Andrew was three. Polly Johnson worked as a washerwoman and became the sole support of her family. Her occupation was then looked down on, as it often took her

into other homes unaccompanied. Since Andrew did not resemble either of his siblings, there are rumors that he may have been fathered by another man. Polly Johnson eventually remarried to a man named Turner Doughtry, who was as poor as she was.

Johnson's mother apprenticed her son William to a tailor, James Selby. Andrew also became an apprentice in Selby's shop at age ten and was legally bound to serve until his 21st birthday. Johnson lived with his mother for part of his service, and one of Selby's employees taught him rudimentary literacy skills. His education was augmented by citizens who would come to Selby's shop to read to the tailors as they worked. Even before he became an apprentice, Johnson came to listen. The readings caused a lifelong love of learning, and one of his biographers, Annette Gordon-Reed, suggests that Johnson, later a gifted public speaker, learned the art as he threaded needles and cut cloth.

Johnson was not happy at James Selby's, and after about five years, both he and his brother ran away. Selby responded by placing a reward for their return: "Ten Dollars Reward. Ran away from the subscriber, two apprentice boys, legally bound, named William and Andrew Johnson ... [payment] to any person who will deliver said apprentices to me in Raleigh, or I will give the above reward for Andrew Johnson alone." The brothers went to Carthage, North Carolina, where Andrew Johnson worked as a tailor for several months. Fearing he would be arrested and returned to Raleigh, Johnson moved to Laurens, South Carolina. He found work quickly, met his first love, Mary Wood, and made her a quilt as a gift. However,

she rejected his marriage proposal. He returned to Raleigh, hoping to buy out his apprenticeship, but could not come to terms with Selby. Unable to stay in Raleigh, where he risked being apprehended for abandoning Selby, he decided to move west.



Johnson's childhood home, located at the Mordecai Historic Park in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Move to Tennessee

Johnson left North Carolina for Tennessee, traveling mostly on foot. After a brief period in Knoxville, he moved to Mooresville, Alabama. He then worked as a tailor in Columbia, Tennessee, but was called back to Raleigh by his mother and stepfather, who saw limited opportunities there and who wished to emigrate west. Johnson and his party traveled through the Blue Ridge Mountains to Greeneville, Tennessee. Andrew Johnson fell in love with the town at first sight, and when he became prosperous purchased the land where he had first camped and planted a tree in commemoration.



Eliza McCardle Johnson

In Greeneville, Johnson established a successful tailoring business in the front of his home. In 1827, at the age of 18, he married 16-year-old Eliza McCardle, the daughter of a local shoemaker. The pair was married by Justice of the Peace Mordecai Lincoln, first cousin of Thomas Lincoln, whose son would become president. The Johnsons were married for almost 50 years and had five children: Martha (1828), Charles (1830), Mary (1832), Robert (1834), and Andrew Jr. (1852). Though she suffered from tuberculosis, Eliza supported her husband's endeavors. She taught him mathematics skills and tutored him to improve his writing. Shy and retiring by nature, Eliza Johnson usually remained in Greeneville during Johnson's political rise. She was not often seen during her husband's presidency; their daughter Martha usually served as official hostess.

Johnson's tailoring business prospered during the early years of the marriage, enabling him to hire help and giving him the funds to invest profitably in real estate. He later boasted of his talents as a tailor, "my work never ripped or gave way." He was a voracious reader. Books about famous orators aroused his interest in political dialogue, and he had private debates on the issues of the day with customers who held opposing views. He also took part in debates at Greeneville College.

Johnson's Slaves

In 1843, Johnson purchased his first slave, Dolly, who was 14 years old at the time. Soon after, he purchased Dolly's half-brother Sam. Dolly had three children—Liz, Florence and William. In 1857, Andrew Johnson purchased Henry, who was 13 at the time and would later accompany the Johnson family to the White House. Sam Johnson and his wife Margaret had nine children. Sam became a commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau and was known for being a proud man who negotiated the nature of his work with the Johnson family. Notably, he received some monetary compensation for his labors and negotiated with Andrew Johnson to receive a tract of land that Andrew Johnson deeded to him in 1867. Ultimately, Johnson owned at least ten slaves. He was said to have had a compassionate and familial relationship toward them.

Andrew Johnson's slaves were freed on August 8, 1863. A year later, all of Tennessee's slaves were freed. As a sign of appreciation, Andrew Johnson was given a watch by the newly emancipated slaves inscribed with "...for his untiring energy in the cause of Freedom."

Political Rise

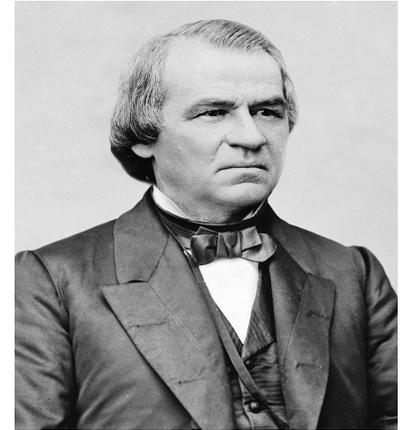
Tennessee Politician

Johnson helped organize a mechanics' (working men's) ticket in the 1829 Greeneville municipal election. He was elected town alderman, along with his friends Blackston McDannel and Mordecai Lincoln. Following the 1831 Nat Turner slave rebellion, a state convention was called to pass a new constitution, including provisions to disenfranchise free people of color. The convention also wanted to reform real estate tax rates, and provide ways of funding improvements to Tennessee's infrastructure. The constitution was submitted for a public vote, and Johnson spoke widely for its adoption; the successful campaign provided him with statewide exposure. On January 4, 1834, his fellow aldermen elected him mayor of Greeneville.

In 1835, Johnson made a bid for election to the "floater" seat which Greene County shared with neighboring Washington County in the Tennessee House of Representatives. According to his biographer, Hans L. Trefousse, Johnson "demolished" the opposition in debate and won the election with

almost a two to one margin. During his Greeneville days, Johnson joined the Tennessee Militia as a member of the 90th Regiment. He attained the rank of colonel, though while an enrolled member, Johnson was fined for an unknown offense.^[29] Afterwards, he was often addressed or referred to by his rank.

In his first term in the legislature, which met in the state capital of Nashville, Johnson did not consistently vote with either the Democratic or the newly formed Whig Party, though he revered President Andrew Jackson, a Democrat and fellow Tennessean. The major parties were still determining their core values and policy proposals, with the party system in a state of flux. The Whig Party had organized in opposition to Jackson, fearing the concentration of power in the Executive Branch of the government; Johnson differed from the Whigs as he opposed more than minimal government spending and spoke against aid for the railroads, while his constituents hoped for improvements in transportation. After Brookins Campbell and the Whigs defeated Johnson for reelection in 1837, Johnson would not lose another race for thirty years. In 1839, he sought to regain his seat, initially as a Whig, but when another candidate sought the Whig nomination, he ran as a Democrat and was elected. From that time he supported the Democratic party and built a powerful political machine in Greene County. Johnson became a strong advocate of the Democratic Party, noted for his oratory, and in an era when public speaking both informed the public and entertained it, people flocked to hear him.



Andrew Johnson

In 1840, Johnson was selected as a presidential elector for Tennessee, giving him more statewide publicity. Although Democratic President Martin Van Buren was defeated by former Ohio senator William Henry Harrison, Johnson was instrumental in keeping Tennessee and Greene County in the Democratic column. He was elected to the Tennessee Senate in 1841, where he served a two-year term. He had achieved financial success in his tailoring business, but sold it to concentrate on politics. He had also acquired additional real estate, including a larger home and a farm (where his mother and stepfather took residence), and among his assets numbered eight or nine slaves.

United States Representative (1843-1853)

Having served in both houses of the state legislature, Johnson saw election to Congress as the next step in his political career. He engaged in a number of political maneuvers to gain Democratic support, including the displacement of the Whig postmaster in Greeneville, and defeated Jonesborough lawyer John A. Aiken by 5,495 votes to 4,892. In Washington, he joined a new Democratic majority in the House of Representatives. Johnson advocated for the interests of the poor, maintained an anti-abolitionist stance, argued for only limited spending by the government and opposed protective tariffs. With Eliza remaining in Greeneville, Congressman Johnson shunned social functions in favor of study in the Library of Congress. Although a fellow Tennessee Democrat, James K. Polk, was elected president in 1844, and Johnson had campaigned for him, the two men had difficult relations, and President Polk refused some of his patronage suggestions.

Johnson believed, as did many Southern Democrats, that the Constitution protected private property, including slaves, and thus prohibited the federal and state governments from abolishing slavery. He won a second term in 1845 against William G. Brownlow, presenting himself as the defender of the poor against the aristocracy. In his second term, Johnson supported the Polk administration's decision to fight the Mexican War, seen by some Northerners as an attempt to gain territory to expand slavery westward, and opposed the Wilmot Proviso, a proposal to ban slavery in any territory gained from Mexico. He introduced for the first time his Homestead Bill, to grant 160 acres (65 ha) to people willing to settle the land and gain title to it. This issue was especially important to Johnson because of his own humble beginnings.

In the presidential election of 1848, the Democrats split over the slavery issue, and abolitionists formed the Free Soil Party, with former president Van Buren as their nominee. Johnson supported the Democratic candidate, former Michigan senator Lewis Cass. With the party split, Whig nominee General Zachary Taylor was easily victorious, and carried Tennessee. Johnson's relations with Polk remained poor; the President recorded of his final New Year's reception in 1849 that:

Among the visitors I observed in the crowd today was Hon. Andrew Johnson of the Ho. Repts. [House of Representatives] Though he represents a Democratic District in Tennessee (my own State) this is the first time I have seen him during the present session of Congress. Professing to be a Democrat, he has been politically, if not personally hostile to me during my whole term. He is very vindictive and perverse in his temper and conduct. If he had the manliness and independence to declare his opposition openly, he knows he could not be elected by his constituents. I am not aware that I have ever given him cause for offense.

Johnson, due to national interest in new railroad construction and in response to the need for better transportation in his own district, also supported government assistance for the East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad.

In his campaign for a fourth term, Johnson concentrated on three issues: slavery, homesteads and judicial elections. He defeated his opponent, Nathaniel G. Taylor, in August 1849, with a greater margin of victory than in previous campaigns. When the House convened in December, the party division caused by the Free Soil Party precluded the formation of the majority needed to elect a Speaker. Johnson proposed adoption of a rule allowing election of a Speaker by a plurality; some weeks later others took up a similar proposal, and Democrat Howell Cobb was elected.

Once the Speaker election had concluded and Congress was ready to conduct legislative business, the issue of slavery took center stage. Northerners sought to admit California, a free state, to the Union. Kentucky's Henry Clay introduced in the Senate a series of resolutions, the Compromise of 1850, to admit California and pass legislation sought by each side. Johnson voted for all the provisions except for the abolition of slavery in the nation's capital. He pressed resolutions for constitutional amendments to provide for popular election of senators (then elected by state legislatures) and of the president (chosen by the Electoral College), and limiting

the tenure of federal judges to 12 years. These were all defeated.

A group of Democrats nominated Landon Carter Haynes to oppose Johnson as he sought a fifth term; the Whigs were so pleased with the internecine battle among the Democrats in the general election that they did not nominate a candidate of their own. The campaign included fierce debates: Johnson's main issue was the passage of the Homestead Bill; Haynes contended it would facilitate abolition. Johnson won the election by more than 1600 votes. Though he was not enamored of the party's presidential nominee in 1852, former New Hampshire senator Franklin Pierce, Johnson campaigned for him. Pierce was elected, but he failed to carry Tennessee. In 1852, Johnson managed to get the House to pass his Homestead Bill, but it failed in the Senate. The Whigs had gained control of the Tennessee legislature, and, under the leadership of Gustavus Henry, redrew the boundaries of Johnson's First District to make it a safe seat for their party. The *Nashville Union* termed this "Henry-mandering"; lamented Johnson, "I have no political future."



The Andrew Johnson House, built in 1851 in Greeneville, Tennessee

Governor of Tennessee (1853-1857)

If Johnson considered retiring from politics upon deciding not to seek reelection, he soon changed his mind. His political friends began to maneuver to get him the nomination for governor. The Democratic convention unanimously named him, though some party members were not happy at his selection. The Whigs had won the past two gubernatorial elections, and still controlled the legislature. That party nominated Henry, making the "Henry-mandering" of the First District an immediate issue.^[56] The two men debated in county seats the length of Tennessee before the meetings were called off two weeks before the August 1853 election due to illness in Henry's family. Johnson won the election by 63,413 votes to 61,163; some votes for him were cast in return for his promise to support Whig Nathaniel Taylor for his old seat in Congress.

Tennessee's governor had little power: Johnson could propose legislation but not veto it, and most appointments were made by the Whig-controlled legislature. Nevertheless, the office was a "bully pulpit" that allowed him to publicize himself and his political views. He succeeded in getting the appointments he wanted in return for his endorsement of John Bell, a Whig, for one of the state's U.S. Senate seats. In his first biennial speech, Johnson urged simplification of the state judicial system, abolition of the Bank of



Attribution: William Brown Cooper, Sitter: Andrew Johnson, Date: 1856

Tennessee, and establishment of an agency to provide uniformity in weights and measures; the last was passed. Johnson was critical of the Tennessee common school system and suggested funding be increased via taxes, either statewide or county by county—a mixture of the two was passed. Reforms carried out during Johnson's time as governor included the foundation of the State's public library (making books available to all) and its first public school system, and the initiation of regular state fairs to benefit craftsmen and farmers.

Although the Whig Party was on its final decline nationally, it remained strong in Tennessee, and the outlook for Democrats there in 1855 was poor. Feeling that reelection as governor was necessary to give him a chance at the higher offices he sought, Johnson agreed to make the run. Meredith P. Gentry received the Whig nomination. A series of more than a dozen vitriolic debates ensued. The issues in the campaign were slavery, the prohibition of alcohol, and the nativist positions of the Know Nothing Party. Johnson favored the first, but opposed the others. Gentry was more equivocal on the alcohol question, and had gained the support of the Know Nothings, a group Johnson portrayed as a secret society.^[63] Johnson was unexpectedly victorious, albeit with a narrower margin than in 1853.

When the presidential election of 1856 approached, Johnson hoped to be nominated; some Tennessee county conventions designated him a "favorite son". His position that the best interests of the Union were served by slavery in some areas made him a practical compromise candidate for president. He was never a major contender; the nomination fell to former Pennsylvania senator James Buchanan. Though he was not impressed by either, Johnson campaigned for Buchanan and his running mate, John C. Breckinridge, who were elected.

Johnson decided not to seek a third term as governor, with an eye towards election to the U.S. Senate. In 1857, while returning from Washington, his train derailed, causing serious damage to his right arm. This injury would trouble him in the years to come.

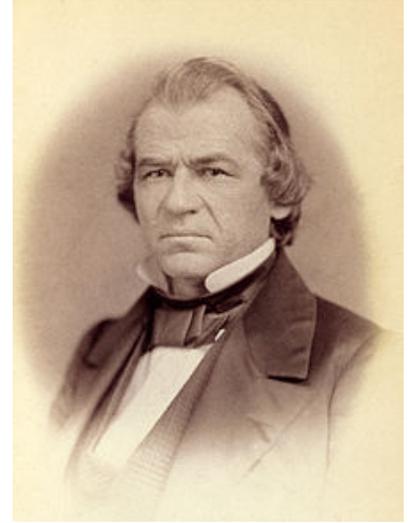
United States Senator

Homestead Bill Advocate

The victors in the 1857 state legislative campaign would, once they convened in October, elect a United States Senator. Former Whig governor William B. Campbell wrote to his uncle, "The great anxiety of the Whigs is to elect a majority in the legislature so as to defeat Andrew Johnson for senator. Should the Democrats have the majority, he will certainly be their choice, and there is no man living to whom the Americans^[c] and Whigs have as much antipathy as Johnson." The governor spoke widely in the campaign, and his party won the gubernatorial race and control of the legislature. Johnson's final address as governor gave him the chance to influence his electors, and he made proposals popular among Democrats. Two days later the legislature elected him to the Senate. The opposition was appalled, with the Richmond *Whig* newspaper referring to him as "the vilest radical and most unscrupulous demagogue in the Union".

Johnson gained high office due to his proven record as a man popular among the small farmers and self-employed tradesmen who made up much of Tennessee's electorate. He called them the "plebeians"; he was less popular among the planters and lawyers who led the state Democratic Party, but none could match him as a vote getter. After his death, one Tennessee voter wrote of him, "Johnson was always the same to everyone ... the honors heaped upon him did not make him forget to be kind to the humblest citizen." Always seen in impeccably tailored clothing, he cut an impressive figure, and had the stamina to endure lengthy campaigns with daily travel over bad roads leading to another speech or debate. Mostly denied the party's machinery, he relied on a network of friends, advisers, and contacts. One friend, Hugh Douglas, stated in a letter to him, "you have been in the way of our would be great men for a long time. At heart many of us never wanted you to be Governor only none of the rest of us Could have been elected at the time and we only wanted to use you. Then we did not want you to go to the Senate but *the people would send you.*"

The new senator took his seat when Congress convened in December 1857 (the term of his predecessor, James C. Jones, had expired in March). He came to Washington as usual without his wife and family; Eliza would visit Washington only once during Johnson's first time as senator, in 1860. Johnson immediately set about introducing the Homestead Bill in the Senate, but as most senators who supported it were Northern (many associated with the newly founded Republican Party), the matter became caught up in suspicions over the slavery issue. Southern senators felt that those who took advantage of the provisions of the Homestead Bill were more likely to be Northern non-slaveholders. The issue of slavery had been complicated by the Supreme Court's ruling earlier in the year in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* that slavery could not be prohibited in the territories. Johnson, a slaveholding senator from a Southern state, made a major speech in the Senate the following May in an attempt to convince his colleagues that the Homestead Bill and slavery were not incompatible. Nevertheless, Southern opposition was key to defeating the legislation, 30–22. In 1859, it failed on a procedural vote when Vice President Breckinridge broke a tie against the bill, and in 1860, a watered-down version passed both houses, only to be vetoed by Buchanan at the urging of Southerners. Johnson continued his opposition to spending, chairing a committee to control it.

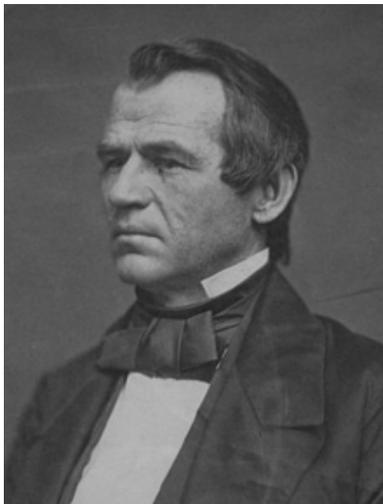


Senator Johnson, 1859

He argued against funding to build infrastructure in Washington, D.C., stating that it was unfair to expect state citizens to pay for the city's streets, even if it was the seat of government. He opposed spending money for troops to put down the revolt by the Mormons in Utah Territory, arguing for temporary volunteers as the United States should not have a standing army.

Secession Crisis

In October 1859, abolitionist John Brown and sympathizers raided the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia (today West Virginia). Tensions in Washington between pro- and anti-slavery forces increased greatly. Johnson gave a major speech in the Senate in December, decrying Northerners who would endanger the Union by seeking to outlaw slavery. The Tennessee senator stated that "all men are created equal" from the Declaration of Independence did not apply to African Americans, since the Constitution of Illinois contained that phrase—and that document barred voting by African Americans. Johnson, by this time, was a wealthy man who owned a few household slaves,^[79] 14 slaves, according to the 1860 Federal Census.



Johnson in 1860

Johnson hoped that he would be a compromise candidate for the presidential nomination as the Democratic Party tore itself apart over the slavery question. Busy with the Homestead Bill during the 1860 Democratic National Convention in Charleston, South Carolina, he sent two of his sons and his chief political adviser to represent his interests in the backroom deal making. The convention deadlocked, with no candidate able to gain the required two-thirds vote, but the sides were too far apart to consider Johnson as a compromise. The party split, with Northerners backing Illinois Senator Stephen Douglas while Southerners, including Johnson, supported Vice President Breckinridge for president. With former Tennessee senator John Bell running a fourth-party candidacy and further dividing the vote, the Republican Party elected its first president, former Illinois representative Abraham Lincoln. The election of Lincoln, known to be against the spread of slavery, was unacceptable to many in the South. Although secession from the Union had not been an issue in the campaign, talk of it began in the Southern states.

Johnson took to the Senate floor after the election, giving a speech well received in the North, "I will not give up this government ... No; I intend to stand by it ... and I invite every man who is a patriot to ... rally around the altar of our common country ... and swear by our God, and all that is sacred and holy, that the

Constitution shall be saved, and the Union preserved." As Southern senators announced they would resign if their states seceded, he reminded Mississippi Senator Jefferson Davis that if Southerners would only hold to their seats, the Democrats would control the Senate, and could defend the South's interests against any infringement by Lincoln. Gordon-Reed points out that while Johnson's belief in an indissoluble Union was sincere, he had alienated Southern leaders, including Davis, who would soon be the president of the Confederate States of America, formed by the seceding states. If the Tennessean had backed the Confederacy, he would have had small influence in its government.

Johnson returned home when his state took up the issue of secession. His successor as governor, Isham G. Harris, and the legislature organized a referendum on whether to have a constitutional convention to authorize secession; when that failed, they put the question of leaving the Union to a popular vote. Despite threats on Johnson's life, and actual assaults, he campaigned against both questions, sometimes speaking with a gun on the lectern before him. Although Johnson's eastern region of Tennessee was largely against secession, the second referendum passed, and in June 1861, Tennessee joined the Confederacy. Believing he would be killed if he stayed, Johnson fled through the Cumberland Gap, where his party was in fact shot at. He left his wife and family in Greeneville.

As the only member from a seceded state to remain in the Senate and the most prominent Southern Unionist, Johnson had Lincoln's ear in the early months of the war. With most of Tennessee in Confederate hands, Johnson spent congressional recesses in Kentucky and Ohio, trying in vain to convince any Union commander who would listen to conduct an operation into East Tennessee.

Military Governor of Tennessee

Johnson's first tenure in the Senate came to a conclusion in March 1862 when Lincoln appointed him military governor of Tennessee. Much of the central and western portions of that seceded state had been recovered. Although some argued that civil government should simply resume once the Confederates were defeated in an area, Lincoln chose to use his power as commander in chief to appoint military governors over Union-controlled Southern regions. The Senate quickly confirmed Johnson's nomination along with the rank of brigadier general. In response, the Confederates confiscated his land and his slaves, and turned his home into a military hospital. Later in 1862, after his departure from the Senate and in the absence of most Southern legislators, the Homestead Bill was finally enacted. Along with legislation for land-grant colleges and for the transcontinental railroad, the Homestead Bill has been credited with opening the American West to settlement.

As military governor, Johnson sought to eliminate rebel influence in the state. He demanded loyalty oaths from public officials, and shut down all newspapers owned by Confederate sympathizers. Much of eastern Tennessee remained in Confederate hands, and the ebb and flow of war during 1862 sometimes brought Confederate control again close to Nashville. However, the Confederates allowed his wife and family to pass through the lines to join him. Johnson undertook the defense of Nashville as well as he could, though the city was continually harassed by cavalry raids led by General Nathan Bedford Forrest. Relief from Union regulars did not come until General William S. Rosecrans defeated the Confederates at Murfreesboro in early 1863. Much of eastern Tennessee was captured later that year.

When Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863, declaring freedom for all slaves in Confederate-held areas, he exempted Tennessee at Johnson's request. The proclamation increased the debate over what should become of the slaves after the war, as not all Unionists supported abolition. Johnson finally decided that slavery had to end. He wrote, "If the institution of slavery ... seeks to overthrow it [the Government], then the Government has a clear right to destroy it." He reluctantly supported efforts to enlist former slaves into the Union Army, feeling that African Americans should perform menial tasks to release white Americans to do the fighting. Nevertheless, he succeeded in recruiting 20,000 black soldiers to serve the Union.

Vice President (1865)

In 1860, Lincoln's running mate had been Maine Senator Hannibal Hamlin. Vice President Hamlin had served competently, was in good health, and was willing to run again. Nevertheless, Johnson emerged as running mate for Lincoln's reelection bid in 1864.

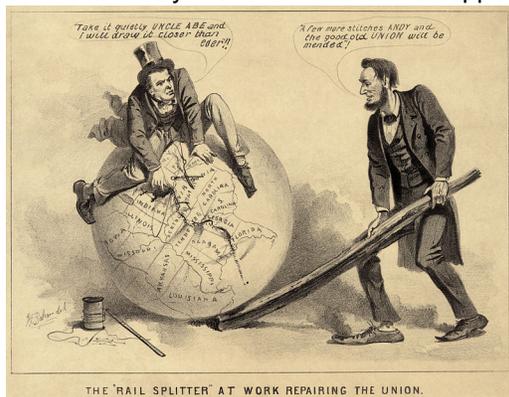
Lincoln considered several War Democrats for the ticket in 1864, and sent an agent to sound out General Benjamin Butler as a possible running mate. In May 1864, the President dispatched General Daniel Sickles to Nashville on a fact-finding mission. Although Sickles denied he was there either to investigate or interview the military governor, Johnson biographer Hans L. Trefousse believes Sickles's trip was connected to Johnson's subsequent nomination for vice president. According to historian Albert Castel in his account of Johnson's presidency, Lincoln was impressed by Johnson's administration of Tennessee. Gordon-Reed points out that while the Lincoln-Hamlin ticket might have been considered geographically balanced in 1860, "having Johnson, the *southern* War Democrat, on the ticket sent the right message about the folly of secession and the continuing capacity for union within the country." Another factor was the desire of Secretary of State William Seward to frustrate the vice-presidential candidacy of his fellow New Yorker, former senator Daniel S. Dickinson, a War Democrat, as Seward would probably have had to yield his place if another New Yorker became vice president. Johnson, once he was told by reporters the likely purpose of Sickles' visit, was active on his own behalf, giving speeches and having his political friends work behind the scenes to boost his candidacy.



Poster for the Lincoln and Johnson ticket by Currier and Ives

To sound a theme of unity, Lincoln in 1864 ran under the banner of the National Union Party, rather than the Republicans. At the party's convention in Baltimore in June, Lincoln was easily nominated, although there had been some talk of replacing him with a Cabinet officer or one of the more successful generals. After the convention backed Lincoln, former Secretary of War Simon Cameron offered a resolution to nominate Hamlin, but it was defeated. Johnson was nominated for vice president by C.M. Allen of Indiana with an Iowa delegate as seconder. On the first ballot, Johnson led with 200 votes to 150 for Hamlin and 108 for Dickinson. On the second ballot, Kentucky switched to vote for Johnson, beginning a stampede. Johnson was named on the second ballot with 491 votes to Hamlin's 17 and eight for Dickinson; the nomination was made unanimous. Lincoln expressed pleasure at the result, "Andy Johnson, I think, is a good man." When word reached Nashville, a crowd assembled and the military governor obliged with a speech contending his selection as a Southerner meant that the rebel states had not actually left the Union.

Although it was unusual at the time for a national candidate to actively campaign, Johnson gave a number of speeches in Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana. He also sought to boost his chances in Tennessee while reestablishing civil government by making the loyalty oath even more restrictive, in that voters would now have to swear they opposed making a settlement with the Confederacy. The Democratic candidate for president, George McClellan, hoped to avoid additional bloodshed by negotiation, and so the stricter loyalty oath effectively disenfranchised his supporters. Lincoln declined to override Johnson, and their ticket took the state by 25,000 votes. Congress refused to count Tennessee's electoral votes, but Lincoln and Johnson did not need them, having won in most states that had voted, and easily secured the election.



1865 cartoon showing Lincoln and Johnson using their talents as rail-splitter and tailor to repair the Union.

Now Vice President-elect, Johnson was anxious to complete the work of reestablishing civilian government in Tennessee, although the timetable for the election of a new governor did not allow it to take place until after Inauguration Day, March 4. He hoped to remain in Nashville to complete his task, but was told by Lincoln's advisers that he could not stay, but would be sworn in with Lincoln. In these months, Union troops finished the retaking of eastern Tennessee, including Greeneville. Just

before his departure, the voters of Tennessee ratified a new constitution, abolishing slavery, on February 22, 1865. One of Johnson's final acts as military governor was to certify the results.

Johnson traveled to Washington to be sworn in, although according to Gordon-Reed, "in light of what happened on March 4, 1865, it might have been better if Johnson had stayed in Nashville." He may have

been ill; Castel cited typhoid fever, though Gordon-Reed notes that there is no independent evidence for that diagnosis. On the evening of March 3, Johnson attended a party in his honor; he drank heavily. Hung over the following morning at the Capitol, he asked Vice President Hamlin for some whiskey. Hamlin produced a bottle, and Johnson took two stiff drinks, stating "I need all the strength for the occasion I can have." In the Senate Chamber, Johnson delivered a rambling address as Lincoln, the Congress, and dignitaries looked on. Almost incoherent at times, he finally meandered to a halt, whereupon Hamlin hastily swore him in as vice president. Lincoln, who had watched sadly during the debacle, then went to his own swearing-in outside the Capitol, and delivered his acclaimed Second Inaugural Address.

In the weeks after the inauguration, Johnson only presided over the Senate briefly, and hid from public ridicule at the Maryland home of a friend, Francis Preston Blair. When he did return to Washington, it was with the intent of leaving for Tennessee to reestablish his family in Greeneville. Instead, he remained after word came that General Ulysses S. Grant had captured the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia, presaging the end of the war. Lincoln stated, in response to criticism of Johnson's behavior, that "I have known Andy Johnson for many years; he made a bad slip the other day, but you need not be scared; Andy ain't a drunkard."

Presidency (1865-1869)

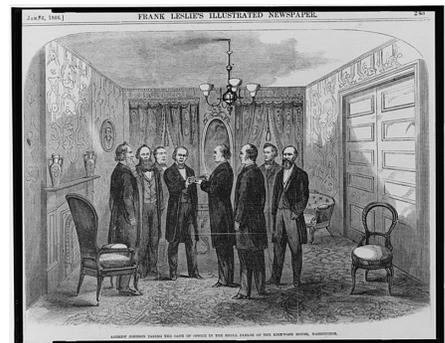
Accession

On the afternoon of April 14, 1865, Lincoln and Johnson met for the first time since the inauguration. Trefousse states that Johnson wanted to "induce Lincoln not to be too lenient with traitors"; Gordon-Reed agrees.

That night, President Lincoln was shot and mortally wounded by John Wilkes Booth, a Confederate sympathizer. The shooting of the President was part of a conspiracy to assassinate Lincoln, Johnson, and Seward the same night. Seward barely survived his wounds, while Johnson escaped attack as his would-be assassin, George Atzerodt, got drunk instead of killing the vice president. Leonard J. Farwell, a fellow boarder at the Kirkwood House, awoke Johnson with news of Lincoln's shooting at Ford's Theatre. Johnson rushed to the President's deathbed, where he remained a short time, on his return promising, "They shall suffer for this. They shall suffer for this." Lincoln died at 7:22 am the next morning; Johnson's swearing-in occurred between 10 and 11 am with Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase presiding in the presence of most of the Cabinet. Johnson's demeanor was described by the newspapers as "solemn and dignified". Some Cabinet members had last seen Johnson, apparently drunk, at the inauguration. At noon, Johnson conducted his first Cabinet meeting in the Treasury Secretary's office, and asked all members to remain in their positions.

The events of the assassination resulted in speculation, then and subsequently, concerning Johnson and what the conspirators might have intended for him. In the vain hope of having his life spared after his capture, Atzerodt spoke much about the conspiracy, but did not say anything to indicate that the plotted assassination of Johnson was merely a ruse. Conspiracy theorists point to the fact that on the day of the assassination, Booth came to the Kirkwood House and left one of his cards with Johnson's private secretary, William A. Browning. The message on it was: "Don't wish to disturb you. Are you at home? J. Wilkes Booth."

Johnson presided with dignity over Lincoln's funeral ceremonies in Washington, before his predecessor's body was sent home to Springfield, Illinois, for interment.^[119] Shortly after Lincoln's death, Union General William T. Sherman reported he had, without consulting Washington, reached an armistice agreement with Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston for the surrender of Confederate forces in North Carolina in exchange for the existing state government remaining in power, with private property rights (slaves) to be respected. This did not even grant freedom to those in slavery. This was not acceptable to Johnson or the Cabinet, who sent word for Sherman to secure the surrender without making political deals, which he did. Further, Johnson placed a \$100,000 bounty (equivalent to \$1.67 million in 2019) on



Contemporary woodcut of Johnson being sworn in by Chief Justice Chase as cabinet members look on, April 15, 1865.

Confederate President Davis, then a fugitive, which gave Johnson the reputation of a man who would be tough on the South. More controversially, he permitted the execution of Mary Surratt for her part in Lincoln's assassination. Surratt was executed with three others, including Atzerodt, on July 7, 1865.

Reconstruction

Background

Upon taking office, Johnson faced the question of what to do with the Confederacy. President Lincoln had authorized loyalist governments in Virginia, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Tennessee as the Union came to control large parts of those states and advocated a ten percent plan that would allow elections after ten percent of the voters in any state took an oath of future loyalty to the Union. Congress considered this too lenient; its own plan, requiring a majority of voters to take the loyalty oath, passed both houses in 1864, but Lincoln pocket vetoed it.

Johnson had three goals in Reconstruction. He sought a speedy restoration of the states, on the grounds that they had never truly left the Union, and thus should again be recognized once loyal citizens formed a government. To Johnson, African-American suffrage was a delay and a distraction; it had always been a state responsibility to decide who should vote. Second, political power in the Southern states should pass from the planter class to his beloved "plebeians". Johnson feared that the freedmen, many of whom were still economically bound to their former masters, might vote at their direction. Johnson's third priority was election in his own right in 1868, a feat no one who had succeeded a deceased president had managed to accomplish, attempting to secure a Democratic anti-Congressional Reconstruction coalition in the South.

The Republicans had formed a number of factions. The Radical Republicans sought voting and other civil rights for African Americans. They believed that the freedmen could be induced to vote Republican in gratitude for emancipation, and that black votes could keep the Republicans in power and Southern Democrats, including former rebels, out of influence. They believed that top Confederates should be punished. The Moderate Republicans sought to keep the Democrats out of power at a national level, and prevent former rebels from resuming power. They were not as enthusiastic about the idea of African-American suffrage as their Radical colleagues, either because of their own local political concerns, or because they believed that the freedman would be likely to cast his vote badly. Northern Democrats favored the unconditional restoration of the Southern states. They did not support African-American suffrage, which might threaten Democratic control in the South.

Presidential Reconstruction

Johnson was initially left to devise a Reconstruction policy without legislative intervention, as Congress was not due to meet again until December 1865. Radical Republicans told the President that the Southern states were economically in a state of chaos and urged him to use his leverage to insist on rights for freedmen as a condition of restoration to the Union. But Johnson, with the support of other officials including Seward, insisted that the franchise was a state, not a federal matter. The Cabinet was divided on the issue.

Johnson's first Reconstruction actions were two proclamations, with the unanimous backing of his Cabinet, on May 29. One recognized the Virginia government led by provisional Governor Francis Pickens. The second provided amnesty for all ex-rebels except those holding property valued at \$20,000 or more; it also appointed a temporary governor for North Carolina and authorized elections. Neither of these proclamations included provisions regarding black suffrage or freedmen's rights. The President ordered constitutional conventions in other former rebel states.

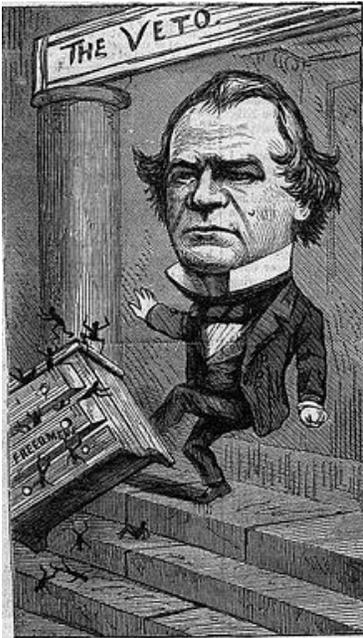
As Southern states began the process of forming governments, Johnson's policies received considerable public support in the North, which he took as unconditional backing for quick reinstatement of the South. While he received such support from the white South, he underestimated the determination of Northerners to ensure that the war had not been fought for nothing. It was important, in Northern public opinion, that the South acknowledge its defeat, that slavery be ended, and that the lot of African Americans be improved. Voting rights were less important—after all, only a handful of Northern states (mostly in New England) gave African-American men the right to vote on the same basis as whites, and in late 1865, Connecticut, Wisconsin, and Minnesota voted down African-American suffrage proposals by large margins. Northern public opinion tolerated Johnson's inaction on black suffrage as an experiment, to be allowed if it quickened

Southern acceptance of defeat. Instead, white Southerners felt emboldened. A number of Southern states passed Black Codes, binding African-American laborers to farms on annual contracts they could not quit, and allowing law enforcement at whim to arrest them for vagrancy and rent out their labor. Most Southerners elected to Congress were former Confederates, with the most prominent being Georgia Senator-designate and former Confederate vice president Alexander Stephens. Congress assembled in early December 1865; Johnson's conciliatory annual message to them was well received. Nevertheless, Congress refused to seat the Southern legislators and established a committee to recommend appropriate Reconstruction legislation.

Northerners were outraged at the idea of unrepentant Confederate leaders, such as Stephens, rejoining the federal government at a time when emotional wounds from the war remained raw. They saw the Black Codes placing African Americans in a position barely above slavery. Republicans also feared that restoration of the Southern states would return the Democrats to power. In addition, according to David O. Stewart in his book on Johnson's impeachment, "the violence and poverty that oppressed the South would galvanize the opposition to Johnson".

Break with the Republicans: 1866

Congress was reluctant to confront the President, and initially only sought to fine-tune Johnson's policies towards the South. According to Trefousse, "If there was a time when Johnson could have come to an agreement with the moderates of the Republican Party, it was the period following the return of Congress". The President was unhappy about the provocative actions of the Southern states, and about the continued control by the antebellum elite there, but made no statement publicly, believing that Southerners had a right to act as they did, even if it was unwise to do so. By late January 1866, he was convinced that winning a showdown with the Radical Republicans was necessary to his political plans – both for the success of Reconstruction and for reelection in 1868. He would have preferred that the conflict arise over the legislative efforts to enfranchise African Americans in the District of Columbia, a proposal that had been defeated overwhelmingly in an all-white referendum. A bill to accomplish this passed the House of Representatives, but to Johnson's disappointment, stalled in the Senate before he could veto it.



Thomas Nast cartoon of Johnson disposing of the Freedman's Bureau as African Americans go flying.

Illinois Senator Lyman Trumbull, leader of the Moderate Republicans and Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, was anxious to reach an understanding with the President. He ushered through Congress a bill extending the Freedmen's Bureau beyond its scheduled abolition in 1867, and the first Civil Rights Bill, to grant citizenship to the freedmen. Trumbull met several times with Johnson and was convinced the President would sign the measures (Johnson rarely contradicted visitors, often fooling those who met with him into thinking he was in accord). In fact, the President opposed both bills as infringements on state sovereignty. Additionally, both of Trumbull's bills were unpopular among white Southerners, whom Johnson hoped to include in his new party. Johnson vetoed the Freedman's Bureau bill on February 18, 1866, to the delight of white Southerners and the puzzled anger of Republican legislators. He considered himself vindicated when a move to override his veto failed in the Senate the following day.^[133] Johnson believed that the Radicals would now be isolated and defeated and that the moderate Republicans would form behind him; he did not understand that Moderates also wanted to see African Americans treated fairly.

On February 22, 1866, Washington's Birthday, Johnson gave an impromptu speech to supporters who had marched to the White House and called for an address in honor of the first president. In his hour-long speech, he instead referred to himself over 200 times. More damagingly, he also spoke of "men ... still opposed to the Union" to whom he could not extend the hand of friendship he gave to the South. When called upon by the crowd to say who they were, Johnson named Pennsylvania Congressman Thaddeus Stevens, Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner, and abolitionist Wendell Phillips, and accused them of plotting his assassination.

Republicans viewed the address as a declaration of war, while one Democratic ally estimated Johnson's speech cost the party 200,000 votes in the 1866 congressional midterm elections.

Although strongly urged by moderates to sign the Civil Rights Act of 1866, Johnson broke decisively with them by vetoing it on March 27. In his veto message, he objected to the measure because it conferred citizenship on the freedmen at a time when 11 out of 36 states were unrepresented in the Congress, and that it discriminated in favor of African Americans and against whites. Within three weeks, Congress had overridden his veto, the first time that had been done on a major bill in American history. The veto, often seen as a key mistake of Johnson's presidency, convinced moderates there was no hope of working with him. Historian Eric Foner, in his volume on Reconstruction, views it as "the most disastrous miscalculation of his political career". According to Stewart, the veto was "for many his defining blunder, setting a tone of perpetual confrontation with Congress that prevailed for the rest of his presidency".

Congress also proposed the Fourteenth Amendment to the states. Written by Trumbull and others, it was sent for ratification by state legislatures in a process in which the president plays no part, though Johnson opposed it. The amendment was designed to put the key provisions of the Civil Rights Act into the Constitution, but also went further. The amendment extended citizenship to every person born in the United States (except Indians on reservations), penalized states that did not give the vote to freedmen, and most importantly, created new federal civil rights that could be protected by federal courts. It also guaranteed that the federal debt would be paid and forbade repayment of Confederate war debts. Further, it disqualified many former Confederates from office, although the disability could be removed — by Congress, not the president.^[142] Both houses passed the Freedmen's Bureau Act a second time, and again the President vetoed it; this time, the veto was overridden. By the summer of 1866, when Congress finally adjourned, Johnson's method of restoring states to the Union by executive fiat, without safeguards for the freedmen, was in deep trouble. His home state of Tennessee ratified the Fourteenth Amendment despite the President's opposition. When Tennessee did so, Congress immediately seated its proposed delegation, embarrassing Johnson.

Efforts to compromise failed, and a political war ensued between the united Republicans on one side, and on the other, Johnson and his Northern and Southern allies in the Democratic Party. He called a convention of the National Union Party. Republicans had returned to using their previous identifier; Johnson intended to use the discarded name to unite his supporters and gain election to a full term, in 1868. The battleground was the election of 1866; Southern states were not allowed to vote. Johnson campaigned vigorously, undertaking a public speaking tour, known as the "Swing Around the Circle". The trip, including speeches in Chicago, St. Louis, Indianapolis, and Columbus, proved politically disastrous, with the President making controversial comparisons between himself and Christ, and engaging in arguments with hecklers. These exchanges were attacked as beneath the dignity of the presidency. The Republicans won by a landslide, increasing their two-thirds majority in Congress, and made plans to control Reconstruction. Johnson blamed the Democrats for giving only lukewarm support to the National Union movement.

Radical Reconstruction

Even with the Republican victory in November 1866, Johnson considered himself in a strong position. The Fourteenth Amendment had been ratified by none of the Southern or border states except Tennessee, and had been rejected in Kentucky, Delaware, and Maryland. As the amendment required ratification by three-quarters of the states to become part of the Constitution, he believed the deadlock would be broken in his favor, leading to his election in 1868. Once it reconvened in December 1866, an energized Congress began passing legislation, often over a presidential veto; this included the District of Columbia voting bill. Congress admitted Nebraska to the Union over a veto, and the Republicans gained two senators and a state that promptly ratified the amendment. Johnson's veto of a bill for statehood for Colorado Territory was sustained; enough senators agreed that a district with a population of 30,000 was not yet worthy of statehood to win the day.

In January 1867, Congressman Stevens introduced legislation to dissolve the Southern state governments and reconstitute them into five military districts, under martial law. The states would begin again by holding constitutional conventions. African Americans could vote for or become delegates; former Confederates could not. In the legislative process, Congress added to the bill that restoration to the Union would follow the state's ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment, and completion of the process of adding it to the Constitution. Johnson and the Southerners attempted a compromise, whereby the South would agree to a modified version of the amendment without the disqualification of former Confederates, and for limited black

suffrage. The Republicans insisted on the full language of the amendment, and the deal fell through. Although Johnson could have pocket vetoed the First Reconstruction Act as it was presented to him less than ten days before the end of the Thirty-Ninth Congress, he chose to veto it directly on March 2, 1867; Congress overruled him the same day. Also on March 2, Congress passed the Tenure of Office Act over the President's veto, in response to statements during the Swing Around the Circle that he planned to fire Cabinet secretaries who did not agree with him. This bill, requiring Senate approval for the firing of Cabinet members during the tenure of the president who appointed them and for one month afterwards, was immediately controversial, with some senators doubting that it was constitutional or that its terms applied to Johnson, whose key Cabinet officers were Lincoln holdovers.

Impeachment

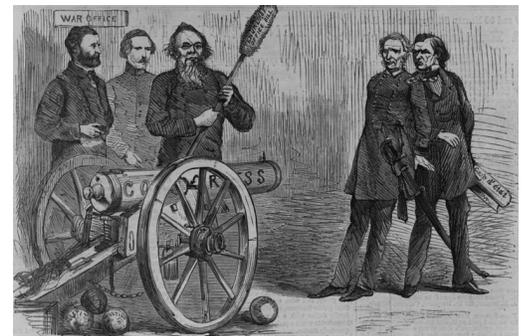
Secretary of War Edwin Stanton was an able and hard-working man, but difficult to deal with. Johnson both admired and was exasperated by his War Secretary, who, in combination with General of the Army Grant, worked to undermine the president's Southern policy from within his own administration. Johnson considered firing Stanton, but respected him for his wartime service as secretary. Stanton, for his part, feared allowing Johnson to appoint his successor and refused to resign, despite his public disagreements with his president.

The new Congress met for a few weeks in March 1867, then adjourned, leaving the House Committee on the Judiciary behind, charged with reporting back to the full House whether there were grounds for Johnson to be impeached. This committee duly met, examined the President's bank accounts, and summoned members of the Cabinet to testify. When a federal court released former Confederate president Davis on bail on May 13 (he had been captured shortly after the war), the committee investigated whether the President had impeded the prosecution. It learned that Johnson was eager to

have Davis tried. A bipartisan majority of the committee voted down impeachment charges; the committee adjourned on June 3.

Later in June, Johnson and Stanton battled over the question of whether the military officers placed in command of the South could override the civil authorities. The President had Attorney General Henry Stanbery issue an opinion backing his position that they could not. Johnson sought to pin down Stanton either as for, and thus endorsing Johnson's position, or against, showing himself to be opposed to his president and the rest of the Cabinet. Stanton evaded the point in meetings and written communications. When Congress reconvened in July, it passed a Reconstruction Act against Johnson's position, waited for his veto, overruled it, and went home. In addition to clarifying the powers of the generals, the legislation also deprived the President of control over the Army in the South. With Congress in recess until November, Johnson decided to fire Stanton and relieve one of the military commanders, General Philip Sheridan, who had dismissed the governor of Texas and installed a replacement with little popular support. Johnson was initially deterred by a strong objection from Grant, but on August 5, the President demanded Stanton's resignation; the secretary refused to quit with Congress out of session. Johnson then suspended him pending the next meeting of Congress as permitted under the Tenure of Office Act; Grant agreed to serve as temporary replacement while continuing to lead the Army.

Grant, under protest, followed Johnson's order transferring Sheridan and another of the district commanders, Daniel Sickles, who had angered Johnson by firmly following Congress's plan. The President also issued a proclamation pardoning most Confederates, exempting those who held office under the Confederacy, or who had served in federal office before the war but had breached their oaths. Although Republicans expressed anger with his actions, the 1867 elections generally went Democratic. No seats in Congress were directly elected in the polling, but the Democrats took control of the Ohio General Assembly, allowing them to defeat for reelection one of Johnson's strongest opponents, Senator Benjamin Wade. Voters in Ohio, Connecticut, and Minnesota turned down propositions to grant African Americans the vote.



"The Situation," a Harper's Weekly editorial cartoon, shows Secretary of War Stanton aiming a cannon labeled "Congress" to defeat Johnson. The rammer is "Tenure of Office Bill" and cannonballs on the floor are "Justice."

The adverse results momentarily put a stop to Republican calls to impeach Johnson, who was elated by the elections. Nevertheless, once Congress met in November, the Judiciary Committee reversed itself and passed a resolution of impeachment against Johnson. After much debate about whether anything the President had done was a high crime or misdemeanor, the standard under the Constitution, the resolution was defeated by the House of Representatives on December 7, 1867, by a vote of 57 in favor to 108 opposed.

Johnson notified Congress of Stanton's suspension and Grant's interim appointment. In January 1868, the Senate disapproved of his action, and reinstated Stanton, contending the President had violated the Tenure of Office Act. Grant stepped aside over Johnson's objection, causing a complete break between them. Johnson then dismissed Stanton and appointed Lorenzo Thomas to replace him. Stanton refused to leave his office, and on February 24, 1868, the House impeached the President for intentionally violating the Tenure of Office Act, by a vote of 128 to 47. The House subsequently adopted eleven articles of impeachment, for the most part alleging that he had violated the Tenure of Office Act, and had questioned the legitimacy of Congress.

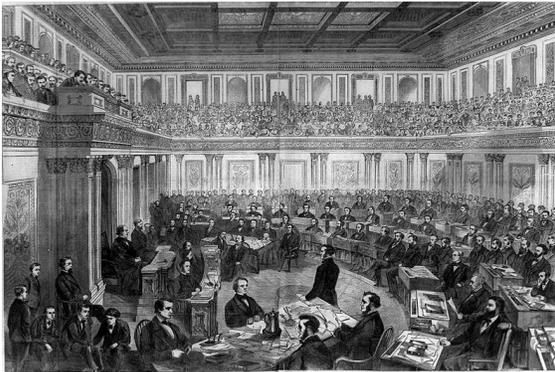


Illustration of Johnson's impeachment trial in the United States Senate, by Theodore R. Davis, published in Harper's Weekly

On March 5, 1868, the impeachment trial began in the Senate and lasted almost three months; Congressmen George S. Boutwell, Benjamin Butler and Thaddeus Stevens acted as managers for the House, or prosecutors, and William M. Evarts, Benjamin R. Curtis and former Attorney General Stanbery were Johnson's counsel; Chief Justice Chase served as presiding judge.

The defense relied on the provision of the Tenure of Office Act that made it applicable only to appointees of the current administration. Since Lincoln had appointed Stanton, the defense maintained Johnson had not violated the act, and also argued that the President had the right to test the constitutionality of an act of Congress. Johnson's counsel insisted that he make no appearance at the trial, nor publicly comment about the proceedings, and except for a pair of interviews in April, he complied.

Johnson maneuvered to gain an acquittal; for example, he pledged to Iowa Senator James W. Grimes that he would not interfere with Congress's Reconstruction efforts. Grimes reported to a group of Moderates, many of whom voted for acquittal, that he believed the President would keep his word. Johnson also promised to install the respected John Schofield as War Secretary. Kansas Senator Edmund G. Ross received assurances that the new, Radical-influenced constitutions ratified in South Carolina and Arkansas would be transmitted to the Congress without delay, an action that would give him and other senators political cover to vote for acquittal.

One reason senators were reluctant to remove the President was that his successor would have been Ohio Senator Wade, the president *pro tempore* of the Senate. Wade, a lame duck who left office in early 1869, was a Radical who supported such measures as women's suffrage, placing him beyond the pale politically in much of the nation. Additionally, a President Wade was seen as an obstacle to Grant's ambitions.

With the deal making, Johnson was confident of the result in advance of the verdict, and in the days leading up to the ballot, newspapers reported that Stevens and his Radicals had given up. On May 16, the Senate voted on the 11th article of impeachment, accusing Johnson of firing Stanton in violation of the Tenure of Office of Act once the Senate had overturned his suspension. Thirty-five senators voted "guilty" and 19 "not guilty", thus falling short by a single vote of the two-thirds majority required for conviction under the Constitution. Seven Republicans—Senators Grimes, Ross, Trumbull, William Pitt Fessenden, Joseph S. Fowler, John B. Henderson, and Peter G. Van Winkle—voted to acquit the President. With Stevens bitterly disappointed at the result, the Senate then adjourned for the Republican National Convention; Grant was nominated for president. The Senate returned on May 26 and voted on the second and third articles, with identical 35–19 results. Faced with those results, Johnson's opponents gave up and dismissed proceedings. Stanton "relinquished" his office on May 26, and the Senate subsequently confirmed Schofield. When Johnson re-nominated Stanbery to return to his position as Attorney General after his service as a defense manager, the Senate refused to confirm him.

Allegations were made at the time and again later that bribery dictated the outcome of the trial. Even when it was in progress, Representative Butler began an investigation, held contentious hearings, and issued a report, unendorsed by any other congressman. Butler focused on a New York-based "Astor House Group", supposedly led by political boss and editor Thurlow Weed. This organization was said to have raised large sums of money from whiskey interests through Cincinnati lawyer Charles Woolley to bribe senators to acquit Johnson. Butler went so far as to imprison Woolley in the Capitol building when he refused to answer questions, but failed to prove bribery.

Foreign Policy

Soon after taking office as president, Johnson reached an accord with Secretary of State William H. Seward that there would be no change in foreign policy. In practice, this meant that Seward would continue to run things as he had under Lincoln. Seward and Lincoln had been rivals for the nomination in 1860; the victor hoped that Seward would succeed him as president in 1869. At the time of Johnson's accession, the French had intervened in Mexico, sending troops there. While many politicians had indulged in saber rattling over the Mexican matter, Seward preferred quiet diplomacy, warning the French through diplomatic channels that their presence in Mexico was not acceptable. Although the President preferred a more aggressive approach, Seward persuaded him to follow his lead. In April 1866, the French government informed Seward that its troops would be brought home in stages, to conclude by November 1867.

Seward was an expansionist, and sought opportunities to gain territory for the United States. By 1867, the Russian government saw its North American colony (today Alaska) as a financial liability, and feared losing control as American settlement reached there. It instructed its minister in Washington, Baron Eduard de Stoeckl, to negotiate a sale. De Stoeckl did so deftly, getting Seward to raise his offer from \$5 million (coincidentally, the minimum that Russia had instructed de Stoeckl to accept) to \$7 million, and then getting \$200,000 added by raising various objections.^[173] This sum of \$7.2 million is equivalent to \$132 million in present-day terms. On March 30, 1867, de Stoeckl and Seward signed the treaty, working quickly as the Senate was about to adjourn. Johnson and Seward took the signed document to the President's Room in the Capitol, only to be told there was no time to deal with the matter before adjournment. The President summoned the Senate into session to meet on April 1; that body approved the treaty, 37–2. Emboldened by his success in Alaska, Seward sought acquisitions elsewhere. His only success was staking an American claim to uninhabited Wake Island in the Pacific, which would be officially claimed by the U.S. in 1898. He came close with the Danish West Indies as Denmark agreed to sell and the local population approved the transfer in a plebiscite, but the Senate never voted on the treaty and it expired.

Another treaty that fared badly was the Johnson-Clarendon convention, negotiated in settlement of the *Alabama* Claims, for damages to American shipping from British-built Confederate raiders. Negotiated by the United States Minister to Britain, former Maryland senator Reverdy Johnson, in late 1868, it was ignored by the Senate during the remainder of the President's term. The treaty was rejected after he left office, and the Grant administration later negotiated considerably better terms from Britain.

Judicial Appointments

Johnson appointed nine Article III federal judges during his presidency, all to United States district courts; he did not appoint a justice to serve on the Supreme Court. In April 1866, he nominated Henry Stanbery to fill the vacancy left with the death of John Catron, but Congress eliminated the seat to prevent the appointment, and to ensure that he did not get to make any appointments eliminated the next vacancy as well, providing that the court would shrink by one justice when one next departed from office. Johnson appointed his Greeneville crony, Samuel Milligan, to the United States Court of Claims, where he served from 1868 until his death in 1874.

Reforms Initiated

In June 1866, Johnson signed the Southern Homestead Act into law, believing that the legislation would assist poor whites. Around 28,000 land claims were successfully patented, although few former slaves benefitted from the law, fraud was rampant, and much of the best land was off-limits, reserved for grants to veterans or railroads. In June 1868, Johnson signed an eight-hour law passed by Congress that established an eight-hour workday for laborers and mechanics employed by the Federal Government. Although Johnson told members of a Workingmen's party delegation in Baltimore that he could not directly

commit himself to an eight-hour day, he nevertheless told the same delegation that he greatly favored the "shortest number of hours consistent with the interests of all". According to Richard F. Selcer, however, the good intentions behind the law were "immediately frustrated" as wages were cut by 20%.

Completion of Term

Johnson sought nomination by the 1868 Democratic National Convention in New York in July 1868. He remained very popular among Southern whites, and boosted that popularity by issuing, just before the convention, a pardon ending the possibility of criminal proceedings against any Confederate not already indicted, meaning that only Davis and a few others still might face trial. On the first ballot, Johnson was second to former Ohio representative George H. Pendleton, who had been his Democratic opponent for vice president in 1864. Johnson's support was mostly from the South, and fell away as the ballots passed. On the 22nd ballot, former New York governor Horatio Seymour was nominated, and the President received only four votes, all from Tennessee.

The conflict with Congress continued. Johnson sent Congress proposals for amendments to limit the president to a single six-year term and make the president and the Senate directly elected, and for term limits for judges. Congress took no action on them. When the President was slow to officially report ratifications of the Fourteenth Amendment by the new Southern legislatures, Congress passed a bill, again over his veto, requiring him to do so within ten days of receipt. He still delayed as much as he could, but was required, in July 1868, to report the ratifications making the amendment part of the Constitution.

Seymour's operatives sought Johnson's support, but he long remained silent on the presidential campaign. It was not until October, with the vote already having taken place in some states, that he mentioned Seymour at all, and he never endorsed him. Nevertheless, Johnson regretted Grant's victory, in part because of their animus from the Stanton affair. In his annual message to Congress in December, Johnson urged the repeal of the Tenure of Office Act and told legislators that had they admitted their Southern colleagues in 1865, all would have been well. He celebrated his 60th birthday in late December with a party for several hundred children, though not including those of President-elect Grant, who did not allow his to go.

On Christmas Day 1868, Johnson issued a final amnesty, this one covering everyone, including Davis. He also issued, in his final months in office, pardons for crimes, including one for Dr. Samuel Mudd, controversially convicted of involvement in the Lincoln assassination (he had set Booth's broken leg) and imprisoned in Fort Jefferson on Florida's Dry Tortugas.

On March 3, the President hosted a large public reception at the White House on his final full day in office. Grant had made it known that he was unwilling to ride in the same carriage as Johnson, as was customary, and Johnson refused to go to the inauguration at all. Despite an effort by Seward to prompt a change of mind, he spent the morning of March 4 finishing last-minute business, and then shortly after noon rode from the White House to the home of a friend.

Post Presidency and Return to the Senate

After leaving the presidency, Johnson remained for some weeks in Washington, then returned to Greeneville for the first time in eight years. He was honored with large public celebrations along the way, especially in Tennessee, where cities hostile to him during the war hung out welcome banners. He had arranged to purchase a large farm near Greeneville to live on after his presidency.

Some expected Johnson to run for Governor of Tennessee or for the Senate again, while others thought that he would become a railroad executive. Johnson found Greeneville boring, and his private life was embittered by the suicide of his son Robert in 1869. Seeking vindication for himself, and revenge against his political enemies, he launched a Senate bid soon after returning home. Tennessee had gone Republican, but court rulings restoring the vote to some whites and the violence of the Ku Klux Klan kept down the African-American vote, leading to a Democratic victory in the legislative elections in August 1869. Johnson was seen as a likely victor in the Senate election, although hated by Radical Republicans, and also by some Democrats because of his wartime activities. Although he was at one point within a single vote of victory in the legislature's balloting, the Republicans eventually elected Henry Cooper over Johnson,

54–51. In 1872, there was a special election for an at-large congressional seat for Tennessee; Johnson initially sought the Democratic nomination, but when he saw that it would go to former Confederate general Benjamin F. Cheatham, decided to run as an independent. The former president was defeated, finishing third, but the split in the Democratic Party defeated Cheatham in favor of an old Johnson Unionist ally, Horace Maynard.

In 1873, Johnson contracted cholera during an epidemic but recovered; that year he lost about \$73,000, when the First National Bank of Washington went under, though he was eventually repaid much of the sum. He began looking towards the next Senate election, to take place in the legislature in early 1875. Johnson began to woo the farmers' Grange movement; with his Jeffersonian leanings, he easily gained their support. He spoke throughout the state in his final campaign tour. Few African Americans outside the large towns were now able to vote as Reconstruction faded in Tennessee, setting a pattern that would be repeated in the other Southern states; the white domination would last almost a century. In the Tennessee legislative elections in August, the Democrats elected 92 legislators to the Republicans' eight, and Johnson went to Nashville for the legislative session. When the balloting for the Senate seat began on January 20, 1875, he led with 30 votes, but did not have the required majority as three former Confederate generals, one former colonel, and a former Democratic congressman split the vote with him. Johnson's opponents tried to agree on a single candidate who might gain majority support and defeat him, but failed, and he was elected on January 26 on the 54th ballot, with a margin of a single vote. Nashville erupted in rejoicing; remarked Johnson, "Thank God for the vindication."

Johnson's comeback garnered national attention, with the *St. Louis Republican* calling it, "the most magnificent personal triumph which the history of American politics can show". At his swearing-in in the Senate on March 5, 1875, he was greeted with flowers and sworn in with his predecessor as vice president, Hamlin, by that office's current incumbent, Henry Wilson, who as senator had voted for his ousting. Many Republicans ignored Senator Johnson, though some, such as Ohio's John Sherman (who had voted for conviction), shook his hand. Johnson remains the only former president to serve in the Senate. He spoke only once in the short session, on March 22 lambasting President Grant for his use of federal troops in support of Louisiana's Reconstruction government. The former president asked, "How far off is military despotism?" and concluded his speech, "may God bless this people and God save the Constitution."

Freemasonry

Johnson was made a Mason in Greeneville Lodge 119 in 1851. He was known to be a Knight Templar, but where he received the Capitular and Templar Degrees is not known. His portrait, a photograph, arrayed in full Templar uniform hangs in the Asylum of Nashville Commandery 1, but he was never a member of that Commandery, although erroneously reported as such by Judge Lobingier (History of the Supreme Council A.A.S.R.) and others, who confused him with one Andrew Johnston, a farmer of Franklin Chapter 2, who was knighted in that Commandery, July 26, 1859, the same date as claimed for President Andrew Johnson. He received the Scottish Rite Degrees at the White House, June 20, 1867, communicated by Azariah T. C. Pierson, 33°, S.G.I.G. of Minnesota and Grand Prior of the Supreme Council, and Benjamin Brown French, 33° of Washington, D.C. who was a Past Grand Master of the Grand Encampment, Knights Templar of the United States, and Lieutenant Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite for the Southern Jurisdiction.

Death

Johnson returned home after the special session concluded. In late July 1875, convinced some of his opponents were defaming him in the Ohio gubernatorial race, he decided to travel there to give speeches. He began the trip on July 28, and broke the journey at his daughter Mary's farm near Elizabethton, where his daughter Martha was also staying. That evening he suffered a stroke, but refused medical treatment until the next day, when he did not improve and two doctors were sent for from Elizabethton. He seemed to respond to their ministrations, but suffered another stroke on the evening of July 30, and



The grave of Andrew Johnson

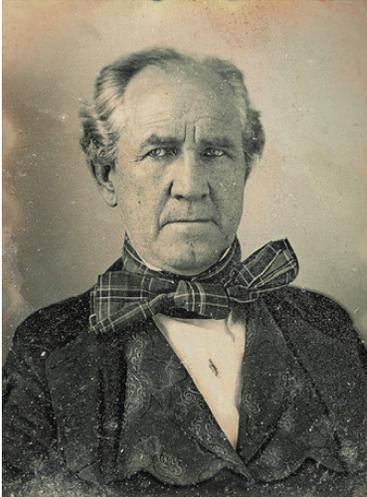
died early the following morning at the age of 66. President Grant had the "painful duty" of announcing the death of the only surviving past president. Northern newspapers, in their obituaries, tended to focus on Johnson's loyalty during the war, while Southern ones paid tribute to his actions as president. Johnson's funeral was held on August 3 in Greeneville. He was buried with his body wrapped in an American flag and a copy of the U.S. Constitution placed under his head, according to his wishes. His Masonic funeral was attended by the Masonic Lodges of Greeneville, Knoxville and Jonesborough, the Templar service being conducted by Cour de Lion Commandery of Knoxville, with Nathan S. Woodward as Commander and Henry H. Ingersoll, both of whom were later Grand Masters. The burial ground was dedicated as the Andrew Johnson National Cemetery in 1906, and with his home and tailor's shop, is part of the Andrew Johnson National Historic Site.

Sam Houston

1793-1863

1st & 3rd President of the Republic of Texas

1836-1838 & 1841-1844



Samuel Houston

Houston was born in Rockbridge County, Virginia, on March 2, 1793, to Samuel Houston and Elizabeth Paxton. Both of Houston's parents were descended from Scottish and Irish immigrants who had settled in British North America in the 1730s. Houston's father was descended from Ulster Scots people; he could trace his ancestry to Sir Hugh de Paduinan, a Norman knight. By 1793, the elder Samuel Houston owned a large farm and slaves and served as a colonel in the Virginia militia.

Houston's uncle, the Presbyterian Rev. Samuel Houston, was an elected member of the "lost" State of Franklin then in the western frontier of North Carolina, who advocated for the passage of his proposed "A Declaration of Rights or Form of Government on the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Frankland" at the convention that was assembled in Greeneville, Tennessee on November 14, 1785. Rev. Houston returned to Rockbridge County, Virginia after the assembled State of Franklin convention rejected his constitutional proposal.

Houston had five brothers and three sisters as well as dozens of cousins who lived in the surrounding area. According to biographer John Hoyt Williams, Houston was not close with his siblings or his parents, and he rarely spoke of them in his later life. Houston did take an interest in his father's library, reading works by classical authors like Virgil as well as more recent works by authors such as Jedidiah Morse.

Houston's father was not a good manager and got into debt, in part because of his militia service. He planned to sell the farm and move west to Tennessee, where land was less expensive, but he died in 1806. Houston's mother followed through on those plans and settled the family near Maryville, Tennessee, the seat of Blount County, Tennessee. At this time, Tennessee was on the American frontier, and even larger towns like Nashville were vigilant against Native American raids. Houston disliked farming and working in the family store, and at the age of 16, he left his family to live with a Cherokee tribe led by Ahuludegi (also spelled Oolooteka). Houston formed a close relationship with Ahuludegi and learned the Cherokee language, becoming known as Raven. He left the tribe to return to Maryville in 1812, and he was hired at age 19 for a term as the schoolmaster of a one-room schoolhouse.



Sam Houston Birthplace Marker in Rockbridge County, Virginia

War of 1812 and Aftermath

In 1812, Houston enlisted in the United States Army, which then was engaged in the War of 1812 against Britain and Britain's Native American allies. He quickly impressed the commander of the 39th Infantry Regiment, Thomas Hart Benton, and by the end of 1813, Houston had risen to the rank of the third lieutenant. In early 1814, the 39th Infantry Regiment became a part of the force commanded by General Andrew Jackson, who was charged with putting an end to raids by a faction of the Muscogee (or

"Creek") tribe in the Old Southwest. Houston was wounded badly in the Battle of Horseshoe Bend, the decisive battle in the Creek War. Although army doctors expected him to die of his wounds, Houston survived and convalesced in Maryville and other locations. While many other officers lost their positions after the end of the War of 1812 due to military cutbacks, Houston retained his commission with the help of Congressman John Rhea. During that time he was promoted to the rank of second lieutenant.

In early 1817, Houston was assigned to a clerical position in Nashville, serving under the adjutant general for the army's Southern Division. Later in the year, Jackson appointed Houston as a sub-agent to handle the removal of Cherokee from East Tennessee. In February 1818, he received a strong reprimand from Secretary of War John C. Calhoun after he wore Native American dress to a meeting between Calhoun and Cherokee leaders, beginning an enmity that lasted until Calhoun's death in 1850. Angry over the incident with Calhoun and an investigation into his activities, Houston resigned from the army in 1818. He continued to act as a government liaison with the Cherokee, and in 1818, he helped some of the Cherokee resettle in Arkansas Territory.

Early Political Career

After leaving government service, Houston began an apprenticeship with Judge James Trimble in Nashville. He quickly won admission to the state bar and opened a legal practice in Lebanon, Tennessee. With the aid of Governor Joseph McMinn, Houston won election as the district attorney for Nashville in 1819. He was also appointed as a major general of the Tennessee militia. Like his mentors, Houston was a member of the Democratic-Republican Party, which dominated state and national politics in the decade following the War of 1812.¹ Tennessee gained three seats in the United States House of Representatives after the 1820 United States Census, and, with the support of Jackson and McMinn, Houston ran unopposed in the 1823 election for Tennessee's 9th congressional district. In his first major speech in Congress, Houston advocated for the recognition of Greece, which was fighting a war of independence against the Ottoman Empire.

Houston strongly supported Jackson's candidacy in the 1824 presidential election, which saw four major candidates, all from the Democratic-Republican Party, run for president. As no candidate won a majority of the vote, the House of Representatives held a contingent election, which was won by John Quincy Adams.^[19] Supporters of Jackson eventually coalesced into the Democratic Party, and those who favored Adams became known as National Republicans. With Jackson's backing, Houston won election as governor of Tennessee in 1827. Governor Houston advocated the construction of internal improvements such as canals, and sought to lower the price of land for homesteaders living on public domain. He also aided Jackson's successful campaign in the 1828 presidential election.

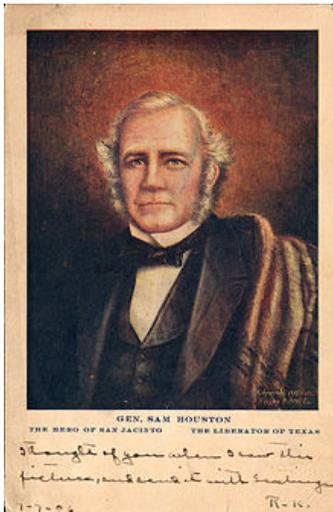
In January 1829, Houston married Eliza Allen, the daughter of wealthy plantation owner John Allen of Gallatin, Tennessee. The marriage quickly fell apart possibly because Eliza loved another man. In April 1829, following the collapse of his marriage, Houston resigned as governor of Tennessee. Shortly after leaving office, he traveled to Arkansas Territory to rejoin the Cherokee.

Political Exile and Controversy

Houston was reunited with Ahuludegi's group of Cherokee in mid-1829. Because of Houston's experience in government and his connections with President Jackson, several local Native American tribes asked Houston to mediate disputes and communicate their needs to the Jackson administration. In late 1829, the Cherokee accorded Houston tribal membership and dispatched him to Washington to negotiate several issues. In anticipation of the removal of the remaining Cherokee east of the Mississippi River, Houston made an unsuccessful bid to supply rations to the Native Americans during their journey. When Houston returned to Washington in 1832, Congressman William Stanbery alleged that Houston had placed a fraudulent bid in 1830 in collusion with the Jackson administration. On April 13, 1832, after Stanbery refused to answer Houston's letters regarding the incident, Houston beat Stanbery with a cane. After the beating, the House of Representatives brought Houston to trial. By a vote of 106 to 89, the House convicted Houston, and Speaker of the House Andrew Stevenson formally reprimanded Houston. A federal court also required Houston to pay \$500 in damages.

Texas Revolution

In mid-1832, Houston's friends, William H. Wharton and John Austin Wharton, wrote to convince him to travel to the Mexican possession of Texas, where unrest among the American settlers was growing. The Mexican government had invited Americans to settle the sparsely populated region of Texas, but many of the settlers, including the Whartons, disliked Mexican rule. Houston crossed into Texas in December 1832, and shortly thereafter, he was granted land in Texas. Houston was elected to represent Nacogdoches, Texas at the Convention of 1833, which was called to petition Mexico for statehood (at the time, Texas was part of the state of Coahuila y Tejas). Houston strongly supported statehood, and he chaired a committee that drew a proposed state constitution. After the convention, Texan leader Stephen F. Austin petitioned the Mexican government for statehood, but he was unable to come to an agreement with President Valentín Gómez Farías. In 1834, Antonio López de Santa Anna assumed the presidency, took on new powers, and arrested Austin. In October 1835, the Texas Revolution broke out with the Battle of Gonzales, a skirmish between Texan forces and the Mexican Army. Shortly after the battle, Houston was elected to the Consultation, a congregation of Texas leaders.



General Sam Houston
(postcard, circa 1905)

Along with Austin and others, Houston helped organize the Consultation into a provisional government for Texas. In November, Houston joined with most other delegates in voting for a measure that demanded Texas statehood and the restoration of the 1824 Constitution of Mexico. The Consultation appointed Houston as a major general and the highest-ranking officer of the Texian Army, though the appointment did not give him effective control of the militia units that constituted the Texian Army. Houston helped organize the Convention of 1836, where the Republic of Texas declared independence from Mexico, and appointed him as Commander-in-Chief of the Texas Army. Shortly after the declaration, the convention received a plea for assistance from William B. Travis, who commanded Texan forces under siege by Santa Anna at the Alamo. The convention confirmed Houston's command of the Texian Army and dispatched him to lead a relief of Travis's force, but the Alamo fell before Houston could organize his forces at Gonzales, Texas. Seeking to intimidate Texan forces into surrender, the Mexican army killed every defender at the Alamo; news of the defeat outraged many Texans and caused desertions in Houston's ranks. Commanding a force of about 350 men that numerically was inferior to that of Santa Anna, Houston retreated east across the Colorado River.

Though the provisional government, as well as many of his own subordinates, urged him to attack the Mexican army, Houston continued the retreat east, informing his soldiers that they constituted "the only army in Texas now present ... There are but a few of us, and if we are beaten, the fate of Texas is sealed." Santa Anna divided his forces and finally caught up to Houston in mid-April 1836. Santa Anna's force of about 1,350 soldiers trapped Houston's force of 783 men in a marsh; rather than pressing the attack, Santa Anna ordered his soldiers to make camp. On the April 21, Houston ordered an attack on the Mexican army, beginning the Battle of San Jacinto. The Texans quickly routed Santa Anna's force, though Houston's horse was shot out under him and his ankle was shattered by a stray bullet. In the aftermath of the Battle of San Jacinto, a detachment of Texans captured Santa Anna. Santa Anna was forced to sign the Treaty of Velasco, granting Texas its independence. Houston stayed briefly for negotiations, then returned to the United States for treatment of his ankle wound.

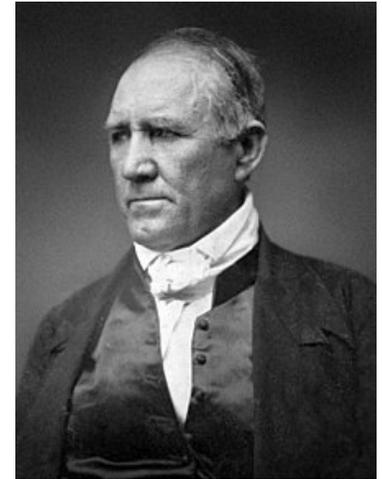
President of Texas

Victory in the Battle of San Jacinto made Houston a hero to many Texans, and he won the 1836 Texas presidential election, defeating Stephen F. Austin and former governor Henry Smith. Houston took office on October 22, 1836 after interim president David G. Burnet resigned. During the presidential election, the voters of Texas overwhelmingly indicated their desire for Texas to be annexed by the United States. Houston, meanwhile, faced the challenge of assembling a new government, putting the country's finances in order, and handling relations with Mexico. He selected Thomas Jefferson Rusk as secretary of war, Smith as secretary of the treasury, Samuel Rhoads Fisher as secretary of the navy, James Collinworth as attorney general, and Austin as secretary of state.^{[43][b]} Houston sought normalized relations with Mexico,

and despite some resistance from the legislature, arranged the release of Santa Anna. Concerned about upsetting the balance between slave states and free states, U.S. President Andrew Jackson refused to push for the annexation of Texas, but in his last official act in office he granted Texas diplomatic recognition. With the United States unwilling to annex Texas, Houston began courting British support; as part of this effort, he urged the end of the importation of slaves into Texas.

In early 1837, the government moved to a new capital, the city of Houston, named for the country's first president. In 1838, Houston frequently clashed with Congress over issues such as a treaty with the Cherokee and a land-office act and was forced to put down the Córdoba Rebellion, a plot to allow Mexico to reclaim Texas with aid from the Kickapoo Indians.^[7] The Texas constitution barred presidents from seeking a second term, so Houston did not stand for re-election in the 1838 election and left office in late 1838. He was succeeded by Mirabeau B. Lamar, who, along with Burnet, led a faction of Texas politicians opposed to Houston. The Lamar administration removed many of Houston's appointees, launched a war against the Cherokee, and established a new capital at Austin, Texas. Meanwhile, Houston opened a legal practice and co-founded a land company with the intent of developing the town of Sabine City. In 1839, he was elected to represent San Augustine County in the Texas House of Representatives.

Houston defeated Burnet in the 1841 Texas presidential election, winning a large majority of the vote. Houston appointed Anson Jones as secretary of state, Asa Brigham as secretary of the treasury, George Washington Hockley as secretary of war, and George Whitfield Terrell as attorney general. The republic faced a difficult financial situation; at one point, Houston commandeered an American brig used to transport Texas soldiers because the government could not afford to pay the brig's captain. The Santa Fe Expedition and other initiatives pursued by Lamar had stirred tensions with Mexico, and rumors frequently raised fears that Santa Anna would launch an invasion of Texas. Houston continued to curry favor with Britain and France, partly in the hope that British and French influence in Texas would encourage the United States to annex Texas. The Tyler administration made the annexation of Texas its chief foreign policy priority, and in April 1844, Texas and the United States signed an annexation treaty. Annexation did not have sufficient support in Congress and the United States Senate rejected the treaty in June.



Sam Houston

Henry Clay and Martin Van Buren, the respective front-runners for the Whig and Democratic nominations in the 1844 presidential election, both opposed the annexation of Texas. However, Van Buren's opposition to annexation damaged his candidacy, and he was defeated by James K. Polk, an acolyte of Jackson and an old friend of Houston, at the 1844 Democratic National Convention. Polk defeated Clay in the general election, giving backers of annexation an electoral mandate. Meanwhile, Houston's term ended in December 1844, and he was succeeded by Anson Jones, his secretary of state. In the waning days of his own presidency, Tyler used Polk's victory to convince Congress to approve of the annexation of Texas. Seeking Texas's immediate acceptance of annexation, Tyler made Texas a generous offer that allowed the state to retain control of its public lands, though it would be required to keep its public debt. A Texas convention approved of the offer of annexation in July 1845, and Texas officially became the 28th U.S. state on December 29, 1845.

U. S. Senator

Mexican-American War and Aftermath (1846-1853)

In February 1846, the Texas legislature elected Houston and Thomas Jefferson Rusk as Texas's two inaugural U.S. senators. Houston chose to align with the Democratic Party, which contained many of his old political allies, including President Polk. As a former president of Texas, Houston is the most recent former foreign head of state to serve in the U.S. Congress. He was the first person to serve as the governor of a state and then be elected to the U.S. Senate by another state. In 2018, Mitt Romney became the second. William W. Bibb accomplished the same feat in reverse order.

Breaking with the Senate tradition that held that freshman senators were not to address the Senate, Houston strongly advocated in early 1846 for the annexation of Oregon Country. In the Oregon Treaty,

reached later in 1846, Britain and the United States agreed to split Oregon Country. Meanwhile, Polk ordered General Zachary Taylor to lead a U.S. army to the Rio Grande, which had been set as the Texas-Mexico border under the Treaty of Velasco; Mexico claimed the Nueces River constituted the true border. After a skirmish between Taylor's unit and the Mexican army, the Mexican-American War broke out in April 1846. Houston initially supported Polk's prosecution of the war, but differences between the two men emerged in 1847. After two years of fighting, the United States defeated Mexico and, through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, acquired the Mexican Cession. Mexico also agreed to recognize the Rio Grande as the border between Mexico and Texas.

After the war, disputes over the extension of slavery into the territories raised sectional tensions. Unlike most of his Southern colleagues, Houston voted for the Oregon Bill of 1848, which organized Oregon Territory as a free territory. Defending his vote to create a territory that excluded slavery, Houston stated "I would be the last man to wish to do anything injurious to the South, but I do not think that on all occasions we are justified in agitating [slavery]." He criticized both Northern abolitionists and Democratic followers of Calhoun as extremists who sought to undermine the union. He supported the Compromise of 1850, a sectional compromise on slavery on the territories. Under the compromise, California was admitted as a free state, the slave trade was prohibited in the District of Columbia, a more stringent fugitive slave law was passed, and Utah Territory and New Mexico Territory were established. Texas gave up some of its claims on New Mexico, but it retained El Paso, Texas, and the United States assumed Texas's large public debt. Houston sought the Democratic nomination in the 1852 presidential election, but he was unable to consolidate support outside of his home state. The 1852 Democratic National Convention ultimately nominated Franklin Pierce, a compromise nominee, who went on to win the election.

Pierce and Buchanan Administrations (1853-1859)

In 1854, Senator Stephen A. Douglas led the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which organized Kansas Territory and Nebraska Territory. The act also repealed the Missouri Compromise, an act that had banned slavery in territories north of parallel 36°30' north. Houston voted against the act, in part because he believed that Native Americans would lose much of their land as a result of the act. He also perceived that it would lead to increased sectional tensions over slavery. Houston's opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Act led to his departure from the Democratic Party. In 1855, Houston began to be associated publicly with the American Party, the political wing of the nativist and unionist Know



Houston in 1859

Nothing movement. The Whig Party had collapsed after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and the Know Nothings and the anti-slavery Republican Party had both emerged as major political movements. Houston's affiliation with the party stemmed in part from his fear of the growing influence of Catholic voters; though he opposed barring Catholics from holding office, he wanted to extend the naturalization period for immigrants to 21 years. He was attracted to the Know Nothing's support for a Native American state as well the party's unionist stance.

Houston sought the presidential nomination at the Know Nothing party's 1856 national convention, but the party nominated former President Millard Fillmore. Houston was disappointed by Fillmore's selection as well as the party platform, which did not rebuke the Kansas-Nebraska Act, but he eventually decided to support Fillmore's candidacy. Despite Houston's renewed support, the American Party split over slavery, and Democrat James Buchanan won the 1856 presidential election. The American Party collapsed after the election, and Houston did not affiliate with a

national political party for the remainder of his tenure in the senate. In the 1857 Texas gubernatorial election, Texas Democrats nominated Hardin Richard Runnels, who supported the Kansas-

Nebraska Act and attacked Houston's record. In response, Houston announced his own candidacy for governor, but Runnels defeated him by a decisive margin. After the gubernatorial election, the Texas legislature denied Houston re-election in the senate; Houston rejected calls to resign immediately and served until the end of his term in early 1859.

Governor of Texas

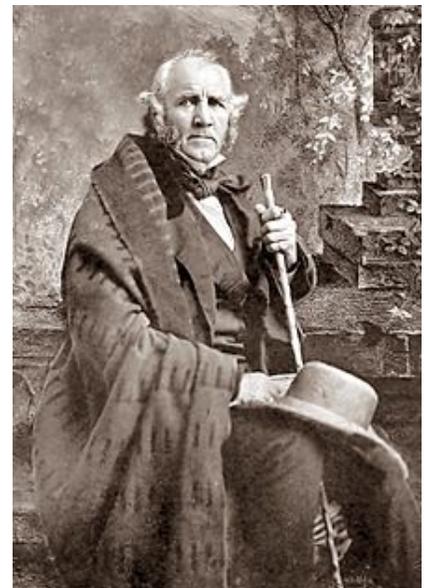
Houston ran against Runnels in the 1859 gubernatorial election. Capitalizing on Runnels's unpopularity over state issues such as Native American raids, Houston won the election and took office in December 1859. In the 1860 presidential election, Houston and John Bell were the two major contenders for the presidential nomination of the newly-formed Constitutional Union Party, which consisted largely of Southern unionists. Houston narrowly trailed Bell on the first ballot of the 1860 Constitutional Union Convention, but Bell clinched the nomination on the second ballot.^[80] Nonetheless, some of Houston's Texan supporters nominated him for president in April 1860. Other backers attempted to launch a nationwide campaign, but in August 1860, Houston announced that he would not be a candidate for president. He refused to endorse any of the remaining presidential candidates. In late 1860, Houston campaigned across his home state, calling on Texans to resist those who advocated for secession if Republican nominee Abraham Lincoln won the 1860 election.

After Lincoln won the November 1860 presidential election, several Southern states seceded from the United States and formed the Confederate States of America. A Texas political convention voted to secede from the United States on February 1, 1861, and Houston proclaimed that Texas was once again an independent republic, but he refused to recognize that same convention's authority to join Texas to the Confederacy. After Houston refused to swear an oath of loyalty to the Confederacy, the legislature declared the governorship vacant. Houston did not recognize the validity of his removal, but he did not attempt to use force to remain in office, and he refused aid from the federal government to prevent his removal. His successor, Edward Clark, was sworn in on March 18. In an undelivered speech, Houston wrote:

Fellow-Citizens, in the name of your rights and liberties, which I believe have been trampled upon, I refuse to take this oath. In the name of the nationality of Texas, which has been betrayed by the Convention, I refuse to take this oath. In the name of the Constitution of Texas, I refuse to take this oath. In the name of my own conscience and manhood, which this Convention would degrade by dragging me before it, to pander to the malice of my enemies, I refuse to take this oath. I deny the power of this Convention to speak for Texas. ... I protest. ... against all the acts and doings of this convention and I declare them null and void.

On April 19, 1861, he told a crowd:

Let me tell you what is coming. After the sacrifice of countless millions of treasure and hundreds of thousands of lives, you may win Southern independence if God be not against you, but I doubt it. I tell you that, while I believe with you in the doctrine of states rights, the North is determined to preserve this Union. They are not a fiery, impulsive people as you are, for they live in colder climates. But when they begin to move in a given direction, they move with the steady momentum and perseverance of a mighty avalanche; and what I fear is, they will overwhelm the South.



Sam Houston in 1861

Personal Life

In January 1829 Houston, then Governor of Tennessee, married 19-year-old Eliza Allen. The marriage lasted 11 weeks. Neither Houston nor Eliza ever gave a reason for their separation, but Eliza refused to sanction divorce. Subsequently, he resigned his governorship and went to live with his Cherokee family for three years. In the summer of 1830, Houston married Tiana Rogers (sometimes called Diana), daughter of Chief John "Hellfire" Rogers (1740–1833), a Scots-Irish trader, and Jennie Due (1764–1806), a sister of Chief John Jolly, in a Cherokee ceremony. The ceremony was modest since it was Tiana's second marriage; she was widowed with two children from her previous marriage: Gabriel, born 1819, and Joanna, born 1822. She and Houston first met when she was ten years old, and he was stunned to see how beautiful she was when he returned to her village years later. The two lived together for several years.

Tennessee society disapproved of the marriage because under civil law, he was still legally married to Eliza Allen Houston. After declining to accompany Houston to Texas in 1832, Tiana later remarried. She died in 1838 of pneumonia. Will Rogers was her nephew, three generations removed.

In 1837, after becoming President of the Republic of Texas, he was able to acquire, from a district court judge, a divorce from Eliza Allen.



Margaret Lea Houston

In 1839, he purchased a horse that became one of the foundation sires of the American Quarter Horse breed named Copperbottom. He owned the horse until its death in 1860.

On May 9, 1840, Houston, aged 47, married for a third time. His bride was 21-year-old Margaret Moffette Lea of Marion, Alabama, the daughter of planters. They had eight children. Margaret acted as a tempering influence on her much older husband and convinced him to stop drinking. Although the Houstons had numerous houses, they kept only one continuously: Cedar Point (1840–1863) on Trinity Bay.

In 1833, Houston was baptized into the Catholic faith in order to qualify under the existing Mexican law for property ownership in Coahuila y Tejas. The sacrament was held in the living room of the Adolphus Sterne House in Nacogdoches, Texas. By 1854, Margaret had spent 14 years trying to convert Houston to the Baptist church. With the assistance of George Washington Baines, she convinced Houston to convert, and he agreed to adult baptism. Spectators from neighboring communities came to Independence, Texas, to

witness the event. On November 19, 1854, Houston was baptized by Rev. Rufus C. Burleson by immersion in Little Rocky Creek, two miles southeast of Independence.

Retirement and Death

After leaving office, Houston returned to his home in Galveston. He later settled in Huntsville, Texas, where he lived in a structure known as the Steamboat House. In the midst of the Civil War, Houston was shunned by many Texas leaders, though he continued to correspond with Confederate officer Ashbel Smith and Texas governor Francis Lubbock. His son, Sam Houston, Jr., served in the Confederate army during the Civil War, but returned home after being wounded at the Battle of Shiloh. Houston's health suffered a precipitous decline in April 1863, and he died on July 26, 1863, at 70 years of age .

The inscription on Houston's tomb reads:

A Brave Soldier. A Fearless Statesman.
A Great Orator—A Pure Patriot.
A Faithful Friend, A Loyal Citizen.
A Devoted Husband and Father.
A Consistent Christian—An Honest Man.



Houston's grave in Huntsville, Texas

John Ross

1790-1866

Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation



John Ross

John Ross (Cherokee: ႠፀፃႠፀ, romanized: *guwisguwi*), (meaning in Cherokee: "Mysterious Little White Bird"), was the Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation from 1828–1866, serving longer in this position than any other person. Described as the Moses of his people,^[1] Ross influenced the Indian nation through such tumultuous events as the relocation to Indian Territory and the American Civil War.

John Ross was the son of a Cherokee mother and a Scottish father. His mother and maternal grandmother were of mixed Scots-Cherokee ancestry, since his maternal grandfather was another Scottish immigrant. At the time among the matrilineal Cherokee, anyone born of a Cherokee mother was counted as a Cherokee, and a member of her clan. As a result, young John (in modern times counted as one-eighth Cherokee by blood quantum) grew up bilingual and bicultural, an experience that served him well when his parents decided to send him to schools that served other mixed-race Cherokee.

After graduation, he was appointed an Indian agent in 1811. During the War of 1812, he served as adjutant of a Cherokee regiment under the command of Andrew Jackson. After the Red Stick War ended, Ross demonstrated his business acumen by starting a tobacco plantation in Tennessee. In 1816, he built a warehouse and trading post on the Tennessee River north of the mouth of Chattanooga Creek, and started a ferry service that carried passengers from the south side of the river (Cherokee Nation) to the north side (USA). His businesses served as the start of a community known as Ross's Landing on the Tennessee River (now modern-day Chattanooga, Tennessee). Concurrently, John Ross developed a keen interest in Cherokee politics, attracting the attention of the Cherokee elders, especially Principal Chiefs Pathkiller and Charles R. Hicks, who, along with Major Ridge, became his political mentors.

Ross first went to Washington, D.C. in 1816 as part of a Cherokee delegation to negotiate issues of national boundaries, land ownership and white encroachment. As the only delegate fluent in English, Ross became the principal negotiator, despite his relative youth. When he returned to the Cherokee Nation in 1817, he was elected to the National Council. He became council president in the following year. The majority of the council were men like Ross, who were wealthy, educated, English-speaking and of mixed blood. Even the traditionalist full-blood Cherokee perceived that he had the skills necessary to contest the whites' demands that the Cherokee cede their land and move beyond the Mississippi River. In this position, Ross's first action was to reject an offer of \$200,000 from the US Indian agent made for the Cherokee to voluntarily relocate. Thereafter Ross made more trips to Washington, even as white demands intensified. In 1824, Ross boldly petitioned Congress for redress of Cherokee grievances, making the Cherokee the first tribe ever to do so. Along the way, Ross built political support in the US capital for the Cherokee cause.

Both Pathkiller and Charles R. Hicks died in January 1827. Hicks's brother, William, was appointed interim chief. Ross and Major Ridge shared responsibilities for the affairs of the tribe. William Hicks did not impress the Cherokee as a leader. They elected Ross as permanent principal chief in October 1828, a position he held until his death.

The problem of removal split the Cherokee Nation politically. Ross, backed by the vast majority, tried repeatedly to stop white political powers from forcing the tribe to move. They became known as the National Party. Others, who came to believe that further resistance would be futile, wanted to seek the best settlement they could get. They formed the "Treaty Party" or "Ridge Party," led by Major Ridge. The much

smaller Treaty Party negotiated with the US and signed the Treaty of New Echota on December 29, 1835, requiring the Cherokee to leave by 1838. Neither Chief Ross nor the council ever approved it, nevertheless the US government regarded the treaty as valid. Chief Ross and tens of thousands of traditional Cherokee people objected, and voted to not comply with an invalid treaty, which had been supported by a few hundred mostly assimilated Cherokee. To enforce the treaty, the US government ordered their Army to move those who did not depart by 1838 in an action known ever after as the "Trail of Tears." Some Cherokee remained in the wilderness to evade the army, and this remnant became the ancestors of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. About one-fourth of the Cherokee who were forced to move died along the trail as they walked. The dead included Chief Ross's wife, Quatie.

Ross tried unsuccessfully to restore political unity after the arrival in Indian Territory. Unknown people assassinated the leaders of the Treaty Party, except for Stand Watie, who escaped and became Ross's most implacable foe. Soon, the issue of slavery refueled the old division. The Treaty Party morphed into the "Southern Party," while the National Party largely became the "Union Party." Ross initially counseled neutrality, believing that joining in the "white man's war" would be disastrous for the future unity of their tribe. After Union Forces abandoned their forts in Indian Territory, Ross reversed himself and signed a treaty with the Confederacy. He later fled to Union-held Kansas and Stand Watie became the de facto chief. The Confederates lost the war, Watie became the last Confederate general to surrender, and Ross returned to his post as principal chief. Confronted with negotiating the Reconstruction Treaty with the United States, he made yet another trip to Washington, where he died on August 1, 1866.

Early Life

Ross (also known by his Cherokee name, *Guwisguwi*) was born in Turkeytown (in modern day Alabama), near the head of the Coosa River, to Mollie (née McDonald) immigrant Scots trader. His siblings who survived to adulthood included Jane Ross Coodey (1787 - 1844), Elizabeth Grace Ross (1789 - 1876), Lewis Ross (1796 - 1870), Andrew 'Tlo-s-ta-ma' Ross (1798 - 1840), Margaret Ross Hicks (1803 - 1862) and Maria Ross Mulkey (1806 - 1838)

Genealogy

Because his mother and grandmother were mixed-race Cherokee, under the matrilineal tradition, Ross belonged to her Bird Clan. His great-grandmother Ghigooie, a full-blood Cherokee, had married William Shorey, a Scottish interpreter. Their daughter, Anna, married John McDonald, a Scots trader.

Childhood and Education

Ross spent his childhood with his parents in near Lookout Mountain. Educated in English by white men in a frontier American environment, Ross spoke the Cherokee language poorly, but his bi-cultural background later allowed him to represent the Cherokee to the United States government. Many full-blood Cherokee



House built in early 19th century by John McDonald, maternal grandfather of John Ross. Now called the "John Ross House," it was occupied by Ross's daughter and her husband, Nicholas Scales. It is located in Rossville, Georgia.

and her husband Daniel Ross, an



THE HOUSE WHERE HELP CAME

Here, at his headquarters, holding the Federal line of retreat at Rossville Gap (the Confederate objective in the battle), General Gordon Granger held with increasing anxiety the remnants of the conflict, three miles away, growing more and more ominous. Finally, in disobedience of orders, he set in motion his three brigades to the relief of Thomas, pushing forward two of them under Stockham. These arrived upon the field early in the afternoon, the most critical period of the battle, as Longstreet changed orders on Thomas' right and rear. Seizing a battle-flag, Stockham (at the order of General Granger) led his command in a counter-charge which saved the Army of the Cumberland. This old home at Rossville was built by John Ross, a chief of the Cherokee Indians, and he lived in it till 1835, giving his name to the hamlet. Half-breed descendants of the Cherokees who had intermarried with both whites and Negroes were numerous in the vicinity of Chickamauga, and many of them fought with their white neighbors on the Confederate side.

The John Ross House during the US Civil War

frequented his father's trading company, so he encountered tribal members on many levels. As a child, Ross participated in tribal events, such as the Green Corn Festival.

The elder Ross insisted that John also receive a rigorous classical education. After being educated at home, Ross pursued higher studies with the Reverend Gideon Blackburn, who established two schools in southeast Tennessee for Cherokee children. Classes were in English and students were mostly of mixed race, like Ross. The young Ross finished his education at an academy in South West Point, near Kingston, Tennessee.

Anglo Metis Background of the Cherokee Moses

Ross's life resembled prominent Anglo-Métis in the northern United States and Canada. Scots and English fur traders in North America were typically men of social status and financial standing who married high-ranking Native American women. Both sides believed these were strategic alliances, helping the Native Americans and the traders. They educated their children in bi-cultural and multilingual environments. The mixed-race children often married and rose to positions of stature in society, both in political and economic terms.



John Ross Home, Rossville, Georgia. The House was built in 1797 by John McDonald, grandfather of John Ross, and was Ross's home until he left on the "Trail of Tears."

Family Life

John Ross survived two wives and had several children. He married Elizabeth "Quatie" Brown Henley (1791-1839) in 1812 or 1813. She was a Cherokee, born in 1791 and a widow with one child. Her previous husband, Robert Henley, may have died during the War of 1812. Quatie Ross died in 1839 in Arkansas on the Trail of Tears as discussed below, but was survived by their children James McDonald Ross (1814 - 1864), William Allen Ross (1817 - 1891), Jane Ross Meigs-Nave (1821 - 1894), Silas Dean Ross (1829 - 1872) and George Washington Ross (1830 - 1870). John Ross remarried in 1844, to Mary Stapler (1826-1865) whom he survived by less than a year. Their surviving children were Annie Brian Ross Dobson (1845 - 1876) and John Ross Jr. (1847 - 1905), although John Ross Sr. would be succeeded as chief by his nephew John P. Ross.

Careers

Indian Agent

At the age of twenty, having completed his education and with bilingual skills, Ross received an appointment as US Indian agent to the western Cherokee and sent to their territory (in present-day Arkansas). During the War of 1812, he served as an adjutant in a Cherokee regiment. He fought under General Andrew Jackson at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend against the British-allied Upper Creek warriors, known as the Red Sticks.

Businessman and Founder of Chattanooga

Ross began a series of business ventures that made him among the wealthiest of all Cherokee. He derived the majority of his wealth from cultivating 170 acres (0.69 km²) tobacco in Tennessee worked by twenty slaves.

In 1816 he founded Ross's Landing, served by a ferry crossing. After the Cherokee were removed to Oklahoma in the 1830s, American settlers changed the name of Ross's Landing to Chattanooga. In addition, Ross established a trading firm and warehouse. In total, he earned upwards of \$1,000 a year (\$15.1 thousand in today's terms). In 1827 Ross moved to Rome, Georgia, to be closer to New Echota, the Cherokee capital. In Rome, Ross established a ferry along the headwaters of the Coosa River close to the home of Major Ridge, an older wealthy and influential Cherokee leader. By December 1836, Ross's

properties were appraised at \$23,665 (\$550,964 today). He was then one of the five wealthiest men in the Cherokee Nation.

Political Apprenticeship

Between 1811 to 1827 Ross learned how to conduct negotiations with the United States and the skills required to run a national government. After 1814, Ross's political career as a Cherokee legislator and diplomat progressed with the support of individuals such as the Principal Chief Pathkiller, Assistant Principal Chief Charles R. Hicks, and Casey Holmes, an elder statesman of the Cherokee Nation, as well as the women elders of his clan.



A young John Ross

By 1813, as relations with the United States became more complex, older, uneducated chiefs such as Pathkiller could not effectively defend Cherokee interests. Ross's ascent showed Cherokee leaders recognized the importance of educated, English-speaking leaders. Both Pathkiller and Hicks trained Ross, who served as their clerk and worked on all financial and political matters of the nation. They also steeped him in Cherokee tradition. In a series of letters to Ross, Hicks outlined known Cherokee traditions.

In 1816, the chief's council named Ross to his first delegation to American leaders in Washington D.C. The delegation of 1816 was directed to resolve sensitive issues, including national boundaries, land ownership, and white encroachment on Cherokee land. Only Ross was fluent in English, making him a central figure, although Cherokee society traditionally favored older leaders.

In November 1817, the Cherokee formed the National Council. Ross was elected to the thirteen-member body, where each man served two-year terms. The National Council was created to consolidate Cherokee political authority after General then President Andrew Jackson made two treaties with small cliques of Cherokee representing minority factions. Membership in the National Council placed Ross among the Cherokee ruling elite. The majority of the men were wealthy, mixed-race and English-speaking, although most Cherokee still spoke only Cherokee.

President of the National Committee

In November 1818, just before the General Council meeting with the U.S. Indian agent Joseph McMinn assigned to deal with the Cherokee, Ross became president of the National Committee, a position he would hold through 1827. The Council selected Ross for that leadership position because they believed he had the diplomatic skills necessary to rebuff American requests to cede Cherokee lands. He soon refused McMinn's offer of \$200,000 US, conditioned upon the Cherokee voluntarily removing themselves beyond the Mississippi.

In 1819, the Council sent Ross to Washington, D.C.. He assumed a larger leadership role. The delegation proposed to clarify the provisions of the Treaty of 1817—both to limit the ceded lands and clarify Cherokee right to the remaining lands. Secretary of War John C. Calhoun pressed Ross to cede large tracts of land in Tennessee and Georgia. Although he refused, the US government pressure continued and intensified. In October 1822, Calhoun requested that the Cherokee relinquish their land claimed by Georgia, in fulfillment of the United States' obligation under the Compact of 1802. Before responding to Calhoun's proposition, Ross first ascertained the sentiment of the Cherokee people. They were unanimously opposed to further cession of land.

In January 1824, Ross traveled to Washington to defend the Cherokee possession of their land. Calhoun offered two solutions to the Cherokee delegation: either relinquish title to their lands and remove west, or accept denationalization and become citizens of the United States. Rather than accept Calhoun's ultimatum, Ross directly petitioned Congress for the Cherokee cause on April 15, 1824. This fundamentally altered the traditional relationship between an Indian nation and the US government.

Never before had an Indian nation petitioned Congress with grievances. In Ross's correspondence, what had previously been the tone of petitions by submissive Indians was replaced by assertive defenders. Ross was able to argue subtle points about legal responsibilities as well as whites. Some in Washington recognized the change. Future president John Quincy Adams wrote, "[T]here was less Indian oratory, and more of the common style of white discourse, than in the same chief's speech on their first introduction." Adams specifically noted Ross as "the writer of the delegation" and remarked that "they [had] sustained a written controversy against the Georgia delegation with greate[sic] advantage." Georgia's delegation inadvertently acknowledged Ross's skill: an editorial published in *The Georgia Journal* charged that "the Cherokee delegation's letters were fraudulent" because "too refined to have been written or dictated by an Indian".

Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation

In January 1827, Pathkiller, the Cherokee's principal chief and last hereditary chief, and, two weeks later, Charles R. Hicks, Ross's mentor, both died. Ross, as president of the National Committee and Major Ridge, as speaker of the National Council, were responsible for the affairs of the tribe. In a letter dated February 23, 1827, to Colonel Hugh Montgomery, the Cherokee agent, Ross wrote that with the death of Hicks, he had assumed responsibility for all public business of The Nation. Charles Hicks' brother William served briefly as interim chief until a permanent chief could be elected. Although he believed he was the natural heir to his brother's position, William Hicks had not impressed the tribe with his abilities. A majority of the people knew that during the year Ross, not Hicks, had taken care of all of the mundane business of the tribe. On October 17, 1828 the Cherokee elected John Ross as principal chief.

The Cherokee Council passed a series of laws creating a bicameral national government. In 1822 they created the Cherokee Supreme Court, capping the creation of a three-branch government. In May 1827, Ross was elected to the twenty-four member constitutional committee. It drafted a constitution calling for a principal chief, a council of the principal chiefs, and a National Committee, which together would form the General Council of the Cherokee Nation, a constitutional republic. Although the constitution was ratified in October 1827, it did not take effect until October 1828, at which point Ross was elected principal chief. He was repeatedly reelected and held this position until his death in 1866. He was very popular, among both full bloods, which comprised three-fourths of the population, and mixed-bloods.

The Cherokee had created a constitutional republic with delegated authority capable of formulating a clear, long-range policy to protect national rights.

Supreme Court Litigation

Ross found support in Congress from individuals in the National Republican Party, such as senators Henry Clay, Theodore Frelinghuysen, and Daniel Webster and representatives Ambrose Spencer and David (Davy) Crockett. Despite this support, in April 1829, John H. Eaton, Secretary of War (1829–1831), informed Ross that President Jackson would support the right of Georgia to extend her laws over the Cherokee people.

On December 8, 1829, President Andrew Jackson made a speech announcing his intention to pass a bill through Congress by the following spring requiring Indian tribes living in the Southeastern states to move west of the Mississippi.

On December 19, 1829, the Georgia legislature, enacted a series of laws which confiscated a large section of Cherokee land, nullified Cherokee law within the confiscated area, banned further meetings of the Cherokee government in Georgia, declared contracts between Indians and whites null and void unless witnessed by two whites, disallowed Indians from testifying against a white person in court and forbade Cherokee to dig for gold on their own lands. The laws were made effective June 1, 1830. These were calculated to force the Cherokee to move.

In May 1830, Congress endorsed Jackson's policy of removal by passing the Indian Removal Act. Jackson signed the Act on May 23. It authorized the president to set aside lands west of the Mississippi to exchange for the lands of the Indian nations in the Southeast. In the summer of 1830, Jackson urged the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw and Creek to sign individual treaties accepting removal from their homelands. The

Cherokee refused to attend a meeting in Nashville that Jackson proposed. The other tribes signed off on Jackson's terms.

When Ross and the Cherokee delegation failed in their efforts to protect Cherokee lands through dealings with the executive branch and Congress, Ross took the radical step of defending Cherokee rights through the U.S. courts. In June 1830, at the urging of Senator Webster and Senator Frelinghuysen, the Cherokee delegation selected William Wirt, US Attorney General in the Monroe and Adams administrations, to defend Cherokee rights before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Wirt argued two cases on behalf of the Cherokee: *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* and *Worcester v. Georgia*. In *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, Chief Justice John Marshall acknowledged that the Cherokee were a sovereign nation, stating, "[T]he Cherokees as a state, as a distinct political society, separated from others, capable of managing its own affairs and governing itself, has, in the opinion of a majority of the judges, been completely successful." But he did not compel President Jackson to take action that would defend the Cherokee from Georgia's laws, because he did not find that the U.S. Supreme Court had original jurisdiction over a case in which a tribe was a party.



John Ross in suit with top hat.

In 1832, the Supreme Court further defined the relation of the federal government and the Cherokee Nation. In *Worcester v. Georgia*, the Court found that Georgia could not extend its laws to the Cherokee Nation because that was a power of the federal government. Marshall stated that "the acts of Georgia are repugnant to the Constitution, laws and treaties of the United States. They interfere forcibly with the relations established between the United States and the Cherokee nation, the regulation of which, according to the settled principles of our Constitution, are committed exclusively to the government of the Union." The Cherokee were considered sovereign enough to legally resist the government of Georgia, and they were encouraged to do so.

The court maintained that the Cherokee Nation was dependent on the federal government, much like a protectorate state, but still a sovereign entity. But the dispute was made moot when federal legislation in the form of the Indian Removal Act exercised the federal government's legal power to handle the whole affair. The series of decisions embarrassed Jackson politically, as Whigs attempted to use the issue in the 1832 election. They largely supported his earlier opinion that the "Indian Question" was one that was best handled by the federal government, and not local authorities.

Meanwhile, the Cherokee Nation had encountered financial hard times. The U. S. government had stopped paying the agreed-upon \$6,000 annuity for previous land cessions, Georgia had effectively cut off any income from the gold fields in Cherokee lands, and the Cherokee Nation's application for a federal government loan was rejected in February, 1831. With great difficulty (and private donations) Ross was able to pay the Cherokee Nation's legal bills.

Ridge Party Opposition

In a meeting in May 1832, Supreme Court Justice John McLean spoke with the Cherokee delegation to offer his views on their situation. McLean's advice was to "remove and become a Territory with a patent in fee simple to the nation for all its lands and a delegate in Congress, but reserving to itself the entire right of legislation and selection of all officers." He agreed to send Ross a letter explaining his views. Ross was furious, believing that this was a form of treachery.

McLean's advice precipitated a split within the Cherokee leadership as John Ridge and Elias Boudinot began to doubt Ross's leadership. John Ridge introduced a resolution at the national council meeting in October, 1832 to send a delegation to Washington to discuss a removal treaty with President Jackson. The council rejected Ridge's proposal and instead selected Joseph Vann, John Baldrige, Richard Taylor and John Ross to represent the Cherokee.^[31] In February 1833, Ridge wrote Ross advocating that the delegation dispatched to Washington that month should begin removal negotiations with Jackson. Ridge and Ross did not have irreconcilable worldviews; neither believed that the Cherokee could fend off

Georgian usurpation of Cherokee land. However, Ridge was furious that Ross had refused to consider Jackson's offer to pay the Cherokee \$3,000,000 for all their lands in Georgia, Alabama and Tennessee.

In this environment, Ross led a delegation to Washington in March 1834 to try to negotiate alternatives to removal. Ross made several proposals; however, the Cherokee Nation may not have approved any of Ross's plans, nor was there reasonable expectation that Jackson would settle for any agreement short of removal. These offers, coupled with the lengthy cross-continental trip, indicated that Ross's strategy was to prolong negotiations on removal indefinitely. There was the possibility that the next President might be more favorably inclined.

Ross's strategy was flawed because it was susceptible to the United States' making a treaty with a minority faction. On May 29, 1834, Ross received word from John H. Eaton that a new delegation, including Major Ridge, John Ridge, Elias Boudinot, and Ross's younger brother Andrew, collectively called the "Ridge Party" or "Treaty Party", had arrived in Washington with the goal of signing a treaty of removal. The two sides attempted reconciliation, but by October 1834 still had not come to an agreement. In January 1835 the factions were again in Washington. Pressured by the presence of the Ridge Party, Ross agreed on February 25, 1835, to exchange all Cherokee lands east of the Mississippi for land west of the Mississippi and 20 million dollars. He made it contingent on the General Council's accepting the terms.

Treaty of New Echota and Trail of Tears

Secretary of War Lewis Cass believed this was yet another ploy to delay action on removal for an additional year, and threatened to sign the treaty with John Ridge. On November 7, 1835, Ross and his guest, John Howard Payne, were arrested by the Georgia guard at Ross' home in Flint Springs in Bradley County, Tennessee and taken to Spring Place, Georgia, where they were imprisoned.^[33] On December 29, 1835, the Treaty Party signed the Treaty of New Echota with the U.S. Most Cherokee thought the signatories unauthorized. However, Ross could not stop its enforcement. Under orders from President Martin Van Buren, General Winfield Scott and 7,000 Federal troops forced removal of Cherokee who did not immigrate to the Indian Territory by 1838. This forced removal came to be known as the Trail of Tears. Accepting

defeat, Ross convinced General Scott to allow him to supervise much of the removal process.



Historical marker at the location of Ross's home in Bradley County, Tennessee.

Returning to his home at Head of Coosa late at night, Ross saw a man he did not recognize at his house. He told the man to feed his horse and put him away for the night. Instead, the stranger followed him to the door, identified himself as Stephen Carter and told Ross that he now owned the property and had papers to prove it. Ross then learned agents of Georgia had given Carter possession of the house earlier in the week, after evicting his family. Dispossessed by Georgia (and Carter), Ross was now homeless. The next day, Ross found that family members had given his wife Quatie refuge. Quatie was among the many Cherokee who died en route. According to one of the soldiers escorting the group, she had given her coat to a child that was crying because of the cold. A few days later, she died of pneumonia near Little Rock on the Arkansas River.

Because selling common lands was a capital crime under Cherokee law, treaty opponents assassinated Boudinot, Major Ridge and John Ridge after the migration to Indian Territory. Stand Watie, Boudinot's brother, was also attacked but he survived. The assassins were never publicly identified nor tried in court. General Matthew Arbuckle, commander of Fort Gibson,

claimed he knew their identities but never tried to arrest them. Some Cherokee, particularly those tied to the pro-treaty party, claimed that Chief John Ross knew about the assassinations beforehand. Many years later, Chief Ross's son Allen, wrote that this was not so. Allen's letter, is said to be in the possession of the Oklahoma State Historical Society.^[38] Afterward, there were years of violence between the two factions.

Given the controversy over the struggle over territory and Ross's personal wealth, a vocal minority of Cherokee and a generation of political leaders in Washington considered Ross to be dictatorial, greedy, and

an "aristocratic leader [who] sought to defraud" the Cherokee Nation.^[39] Ross also had influential supporters in Washington, including Thomas L. McKenney, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs (1824–1830). He described Ross as the father of the Cherokee Nation, a Moses who "led...his people in their exodus from the land of their nativity to a new country, and from the savage state to that of civilization."

Remarriage

John Ross was introduced to the Stapler family of Brandywine Springs, Delaware by Thomas McKenney in 1841. Ross had many common interests with John Stapler, a merchant and widower. His eldest daughter, Sarah, cared for her younger siblings and befriended Ross. However, her younger sister, Mary Brian Stapler, developed a real love for Ross and initiated a romantic attachment in May 1844. As the time came for Ross to return to the Indian Territory, their mutual love ripened. They married in Philadelphia on September 2, 1844.

American Civil War

The Civil War divided the Cherokee people. At first the majority supported the Confederacy, which protected their slaveholdings. Fearing that joining the Confederacy would void the earlier Cherokee treaties with the United States, Ross tried to persuade his people to remain neutral in the conflict, but eventually most chose sides. Full-bloods tended to favor maintaining relations with the United States. This group included over two thousand members of a traditionalist and abolitionist society, the Keetoowah Society. Members of this group were called "Pins" by non-members because they wore an emblem of crossed pins on their shirts.

Ross advocated that the Cherokee Nation remain neutral. It was a losing argument. At a general assembly on August 21, 1861, Ross ended his speech by announcing that in the interests of tribal and inter-Indian unity it was time to agree on an alliance with the Confederate States of America.^[44] Many of the well-armed mixed bloods, especially the wealthy led by Stand Watie, supported the Confederacy. Traditionalists and Cherokee who opposed the institution of slavery remained loyal to the Union. However, the majority of Cherokee may not have understood the nature of the new treaty.

After Ross departed to meet with President Lincoln in Washington, traditionalist Cherokee helped maneuver the selection of Ross supporter Thomas Pegg as Acting Principal Chief. Three or four of Ross's own sons fought for the Union. However, Ross's nephew by marriage, John Drew, had organized and served as Colonel of the 1st Cherokee Mounted Rifles in the Confederate Army. Most of Drew's regiment would later twice desert rather than follow Confederate orders to kill other Indians. Many leaders of the northern faction, still led by Ross, went to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas for the duration of the war.

By 1863, the flight of many Cherokee voters to refuge in Kansas and Texas provided the pro-Confederate Treaty Party an opportunity to elect Stand Watie as principal chief without them. Pro-Union National Council members declared the election invalid. Watie that fall raided Ross's home, Rose Cottage. The home was looted and burned. Ross lost all his belongings. Ross's daughter Jane and her husband, Andrew Nave, were living at Rose Cottage at the time. Nave was shot and killed. Only the prior intervention of Watie's wife seems to have prevented the killing of additional Ross relatives.^[51] Ross's oldest son, James, who had gone to Park Hill searching for supplies, was captured and sent to prison in the Confederacy, where he died. Ross remained in exile. However, within a week of the burning, the National Council convened and restored Ross as principal chief.

Ross took his wife Mary and the children to Philadelphia so she could see her family. Ross returned to Washington, where he had an inconclusive meeting with President Lincoln and other supporters.^[50] When he returned for Mary in 1865, he found her gravely ill with what was diagnosed as "lung congestion" (likely tuberculosis). She could not travel, so he remained with her for more than a month. Mary died of her illness on July 20, 1865. She was buried in her native Delaware. Ross returned to Indian Territory after her funeral.^[53]

After the war, the two factions of the Cherokee tried to negotiate separately with the US government Southern Treaty Commission. The commissioner of Indian Affairs, Dennis N. Cooley, was

persuaded to believe allegations by Stand Watie and Elias Cornelius Boudinot that Ross was a dictator who did not truly represent the Cherokee people. Even though his health was worsening, Ross left Park Hill, where he was staying with his niece, on November 9, 1865, to meet with President Andrew Johnson. Johnson instructed Cooley to reopen negotiations with the Cherokee and to meet only with the pro-Union faction, headed by John Ross. Ross died on August 1, 1866 in Washington, D.C. while still negotiating a final treaty with the federal government. However, Ross had by then persuaded Johnson to reject a particularly harsh treaty version favored by Cooley.

Death

Initially, Ross was buried beside his second wife Mary in Wilmington and Brandywine Cemetery in Wilmington, Delaware. A few months later, the Cherokee Nation returned his remains to the Ross Cemetery at Park Hill, Indian Territory (now Cherokee County, Oklahoma) for interment.

John Ross's great-great granddaughter, Mary G. Ross (August 9, 1908 – April 29, 2008) was the first Native American female engineer. She helped propel the world into an era of space travel while becoming one of the nation's most prominent women scientists of the space age.



John Ross's grave in Park Hill, Oklahoma