

THE R.U.S.H. BIBLE STUDY POLITICS PART FOUR



APOLOGETICS PROJECT

THE PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



1 OF 5

JE SUIS CHARLIE
DAVID HOBARTH

1. GEORGE WASHINGTON | 1789-1797



“And also, that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions, to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly...”

—Washington’s Thanksgiving Proclamation, October 3, 1789

On February 22, 1732, George was born to Augustine and Mary Ball Washington. He spent most of his childhood at Ferry Farm on the Rappahannock River. All of the homes and plantations where Washington lived were maintained by enslaved labor. When George was eleven, his father died and he became a slave owner. As a result, George did not receive a formal education like his older half-brothers. Instead, he helped his mother on the farm and attended a local school in Fredericksburg. For the rest of his life, Washington supplemented his education with reading and self-guided study. George Washington was an autodidact. Unlike many of his founding father peers, he was not versed in any foreign languages and relied on translators to communicate with dignitaries later in life. He was smart, and physically a tough man.

At seventeen-years old, George began work as the surveyor for Culpeper County. This position offered adventure, a steady income, and the opportunity to view and purchase unclaimed land. His surveying experience also instilled in George a firm conviction, even a dream so to speak, in the importance of westward expansion for the future of the colonies, and later the United States.

In 1753, Lieutenant Governor of Virginia Robert Dinwiddie sent twenty-one-year-old Washington, now a Major in the Virginia Regiment, to deliver a message to the French, demanding they abandon the Ohio Valley. Washington later published his account of the trip, giving him an international reputation. A few months later, Washington again marched out west with 150 men to enforce Virginia’s claim. The mission ended in a humiliating surrender at Fort Necessity, followed by Washington’s resignation of his commission. Two years later, Washington again witnessed fighting in the Ohio Country, this time as an aide-de-camp in British General Edward Braddock’s official family. Braddock’s army suffered an overwhelming defeat near the

Monongahela River, but Washington was commended for rallying the survivors in the face of chaos. George learned a lot from these early failed campaigns. One must recall the scripture, "a righteous man falls seven times, and gets back up again."

On January 6, 1758, George married Martha Dandridge Custis, a beautiful and charming widow from Virginia. George acquired significant wealth and a partner for the next four decades through the marriage. Between 1759 and 1775, George served many terms in the Virginia House of Burgesses and devoted himself to improving farming practices at his plantation through the labor of the growing enslaved community.

After supporting the colonies' protests against British tax measures in the 1770s, Washington was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army by Congress in June 1775. For the next eight years, Washington remained with the army, only leaving camp to attend summons by Congress. Under Washington's command, the Continental Army lost more battles than it won, constantly struggling to obtain the necessary food, supplies, and ammunition. But the army persisted—and the colonies' fight for independence could not be extinguished. Washington also served a critical role ensuring that military power remained subordinate to civilian government. He never used his authority to challenge Congress and ended potential military coups within the army's ranks.

When the Treaty of Paris ended the Revolutionary War, Washington resigned his commission to Congress. Washington's relinquishing of power was nearly unprecedented and made him an international hero. He knew early on that term limits were important.

In 1787, Washington was again called to serve when Virginia appointed him as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention. The delegates crafted a Constitution that created a government with significantly more authority and centralized power. They hoped the new government would address the economic, diplomatic, and domestic calamities that had besieged the nation for over a decade under the Articles of Confederation. Unsurprisingly, the delegates trusted Washington with the presidency. **To this day, he is the only president to be unanimously elected.**

On April 16, 1789, George Washington left his home at Mount Vernon to travel to New York City to be inaugurated as the first President of the United States. During Washington's presidency, at least ten enslaved people worked at the president's houses in New York City and Philadelphia: Ona, Hercules, Moll, Giles, Austin, Richmond, Paris, Joe, Christopher Sheels, and William Lee. They tended the horses and carriages in the stables, escorted Washington and his family when they left the house, cooked in the kitchen, did laundry, cleaned the home, cared for the Washingtons' grandchildren, helped the Washingtons dress in the morning, greeted guests, and more.

During Washington's presidency, he established countless precedents that guided his successors, including creating the president's cabinet, asserting executive privilege, and using the veto for the first time. He also expanded executive authority over diplomatic and domestic issues, crafting foreign policy during the Neutrality Crisis in 1793 and subduing the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794.

Perhaps most importantly, Washington again relinquished his power when he retired after two terms in office. This precedent was reinforced by Thomas Jefferson and followed by every successive president until Franklin D. Roosevelt. In 1951, the states ratified the 22nd Amendment, which limits presidents to two terms in office.

After retiring from public office, Washington returned to Mount Vernon for a few short years. On December 14, 1799, Washington died of a throat infection. His will included a provision to immediately free William Lee, his enslaved valet who served with him during the American Revolution. He also stipulated that the other 122 enslaved people owned by him receive their freedom upon Martha's passing. While Washington was a slave owner for 56 years, he was the only Founding Father president to free all of the enslaved people he held in bondage. Most stayed with the Washington family after being freed and were supported by yearly pensions. By law at this time freed slaves could be re-enslaved by other colonists and the Washingtons shared their wealth and Martha would free them one year before she died as well.

2. JOHN ADAMS | 1797-1801



“The Declaration of Independence laid the cornerstone of human government upon the first precepts of Christianity.” John Adams

On April 21, 1789, John Adams became the first Vice President of the United States. Over the next twelve years, John and Abigail followed the federal government as it was relocated from New York City to Philadelphia, and finally to Washington, D.C. The constant sojourning in service to their nation was the defining characteristic of the Adamses' lives.

Born on October 30, 1735 in Braintree, Massachusetts, John spent his childhood on the family farm. He attended a day school, Latin school, and then started his studies at Harvard when he was fifteen. After rejecting a career as a minister, John worked as a teacher before studying law. Once he established his legal practice, he married Abigail Smith in 1764. Over the next fifty years, they raised four children, traveled around the world, and forged a remarkable partnership.

In October 1770, Adams gained fame after defending the British soldiers who were charged for

the Boston Massacre. Four years later, Adams attended the First Continental Congress as a delegate from Massachusetts. He quickly emerged as the leader of the pro-independence faction in Congress and nominated George Washington of Virginia to command the Continental Army. In 1776, he served on the committee to prepare the Declaration of Independence, just one of ninety committees on which he worked. These guys weren't lazy.

In 1778, Congress sent Adams to France and then the Netherlands to help secure aid for the war effort. While at The Hague, he obtained a crucial loan and opened the Netherlands to American trade. **Adams**, along with **Benjamin Franklin**, **John Jay**, and **Henry Laurens**, helped negotiate the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Revolutionary War and recognized independence for the new nation. During this time, Adams returned home to Massachusetts just once and only for a few months in 1779. On this visit, Adams authored the Massachusetts state constitution, the longest running state constitution in the nation.

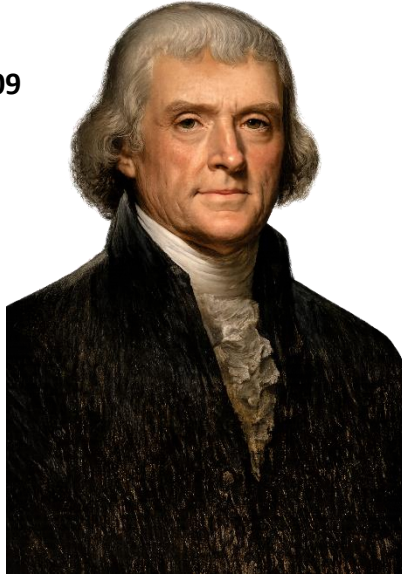
From 1781 to 1788, Adams served in a variety of formal diplomatic posts, including the first United States Minister to Great Britain. After Adams was elected to the Vice Presidency in 1789, he spent the next eight years in obscurity. In his capacity as second-in-command to Washington, he was largely excluded from cabinet deliberations. As President of the Senate, his contributions were shunned and the senators dubbed Adams "His Rotundity." The guy ate good, what can I say?

In 1796 the country elected Adams as the second president. In every city that the Adamses lived and served, they formed an official household, welcomed guests, and hired a staff of servants to maintain the home. Unlike the Virginians that came before and after him, Adams did not own enslaved people. Instead, the Adamses hired white and free African-American workers to provide these services. The Adamses opposed slavery both morally and politically.

One of Adams' first acts as president was an attempt to retain Washington's cabinet secretaries. However, the secretaries took their orders from Alexander Hamilton and worked to undermine Adams' foreign policy agenda and reelection campaign in 1800. Adams's presidency was also marred by the Alien and Sedition Acts, which targeted immigrants and political opponents of the Adams administration. On the other hand, Adams avoided war with France, which was his primary diplomatic objective. The Treaty of Mortefontaine, signed in 1800, came too late to help Adams win reelection, but ended the Quasi-War with France and secured a peaceful trade relationship between the two countries. George Washington was not an easy act to follow.

After Thomas Jefferson won election to the presidency in 1800, Adams returned home to Peacefield, his home in Quincy, Massachusetts. For the next twenty-five years, he maintained a vigorous written correspondence with friends and family, served an elder statesman in Boston, and rejoiced when his eldest son, John Quincy Adams, won the 1824 presidential election. On July 4, 1826, the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, he passed away. Adams' family recalled later that his last words were: "Thomas Jefferson survives." Unbeknownst to Adams, Jefferson had died several hours earlier.

3. THOMAS JEFFERSON | 1801-1809



"I am a real Christian, that is to say, a disciple of the doctrines of Jesus...."

".... The doctrines of Jesus are simple and tend all to the happiness of man..."

--Letter to Charles Thomson, 1816)

Thomas Jefferson was born on April 13, 1743 in Albemarle County, Virginia to Jane and Peter Jefferson. His father was a Virginia planter, surveyor, and slave owner. At age fourteen, Jefferson's father died, and Thomas inherited some thirty enslaved individuals. Jefferson fully embraced the lifestyle of an affluent member of the planter class, and over the course of his lifetime he owned over 600 enslaved people—the most of any American president.

In addition to building and managing his Monticello plantation, Jefferson pursued careers in law and public service. After receiving an education at the College of William & Mary, Jefferson studied law in Williamsburg. By 1769, he was serving in the Virginia House of Burgesses and three years later married Martha Wayles Skelton. They would have six children together, though only two survived to adulthood.

As tensions grew between the American colonies and Great Britain, Jefferson was elected to the Continental Congress. In 1776, he completed one of his greatest career achievements—**The Declaration of Independence**. As the primary author of this founding document, Jefferson drew upon Enlightenment ideals and the writings of John Locke, Montesquieu, and George Mason to formulate its most famous line: ***"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."***

After the outbreak of the American Revolution, Jefferson was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates, where he worked tirelessly to revise state laws and draft Virginia's state constitution. In 1786, he proudly authored a bill establishing religious freedom. Jefferson was also elected twice as Governor of Virginia for two one-year terms in 1779 and 1780.

Around the same time, Jefferson authored a treatise on the history, politics, geography, law, culture, and economics of Virginia. Published in 1785, *Notes on the State of Virginia* included Jefferson's views on slavery. He argued for the gradual emancipation of the state's enslaved population, while also perpetuating racial prejudices about the inferiority of African Americans.

After his wife's death in 1782, Jefferson joined Benjamin Franklin and John Adams as U.S. Minister to France. He brought along his daughters, Martha (known as Patsy) and Mary (known as Maria or Polly), and two enslaved individuals from Monticello—a brother and sister named James and Sally Hemings. Both Sally and James leveraged better positions for themselves in France, as that country had already abolished slavery. Since they were technically free, Jefferson was willing to negotiate in order to bring them back to the United States. James eventually bargained for his freedom, while Sally, who entered into a sexual relationship with Jefferson, negotiated privileges for herself and her family before agreeing to return to Monticello. Jefferson fathered at least six of Sally's children, four of whom survived to adulthood and were later freed by the former president.

In 1789, Jefferson returned from France and accepted an invitation to serve as Secretary of State for President George Washington. He quickly found himself at odds with Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, clashing on issues such as the national debt, the location of a new and permanent capital city, and America's diplomatic relationship with France. Eventually, Jefferson left Washington's cabinet in 1793, but his rivalry with Hamilton reflected a broader political conflict, as two separate parties formed—the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans. Jefferson soon emerged as a leader of the Democratic-Republicans, receiving enough Electoral College votes in 1796 to become vice president under John Adams, as at this time the President didn't yet pick his vice president. Four years later, Jefferson defeated Adams and Aaron Burr, assuming the presidency on March 4, 1801.

During Jefferson's presidency, he focused on reducing the national debt by cutting military budgets and minimizing expenditures. He also fought to keep the United States out of the Napoleonic wars raging across Europe, opting to enact an unpopular embargo that closed American ports and crippled foreign trade—consequences that were felt by American merchants, businesses, and industries. As president, Jefferson also acquired 828,000 square miles of land west of the Mississippi River from France for \$15 million. This land deal, known as the **Louisiana Purchase**, doubled the size of the United States, while setting up the fledgling nation for westward expansion throughout the nineteenth century.

Jefferson's White House reflected his prior diplomatic experience. Preferring white laborers, he hired a French chef and butler, as well as several other white domestic workers. Jefferson also brought three enslaved teenagers from Monticello to train in the art of French cooking and hired out several enslaved individuals from local Washington slave owners.

After leaving the presidency in 1809, Jefferson retired to Monticello and spent his remaining years tending to the daily operation of his plantation, planning the University of Virginia, and hosting his friends and other esteemed guests. He died on July 4, 1826 at the age of eighty-three, fifty years to the day the Declaration of Independence was adopted.

4. JAMES MADISON | 1809-1817



“Cursed be all that learning that is contrary to the cross of Christ.” James Madison

The oldest of twelve children, James Madison was born on March 16, 1751 to James and Nelly Madison. James Sr. was a slave owner and planter. In the early 1760s, he constructed a new home in Orange County, Virginia, and the family moved into the plantation estate, Montpelier.

Although James Madison was often ill as a child, he was also naturally inquisitive and studious. He pursued an education at the College of New Jersey, later known as Princeton University, and graduated in 1771. Madison returned to Virginia and was elected to the Virginia legislature in 1776, where he befriended Thomas Jefferson. When Jefferson was elected Governor of Virginia in 1779, Madison worked closely with him on the Governor’s Council. In 1780, Madison was called upon to represent Virginia in the Continental Congress, making him the youngest delegate at twenty-nine years old. In 1783, Madison returned to the Virginia state legislature, where he worked to pass the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom in 1786, a document originally penned by Jefferson.

As the national government struggled to operate under the Articles of Confederation, Congress called for a Constitutional Convention in 1787. Ahead of the convention, Madison spent months in his library drafting a document now referred to as the **Virginia Plan**. The Virginia Plan laid the foundation for the United States Constitution, proposing a centralized government consisting of

three branches, where each branch would provide checks and balances so that no branch could become too powerful. Over the next several months, Madison played a central role convincing the delegates to create a new government with more authority and centralized power rather than simply revising the Articles of Confederation.

After the delegates completed the Constitution, they submitted it to the states for ratification. As the state legislatures deliberated, Madison worked with **Alexander Hamilton** and **John Jay** to author a series of letters defending the Constitution. These letters, known as the **Federalist Papers**, were published in newspapers throughout the country. On June 21, 1788, New Hampshire became the ninth state to ratify the Constitution, securing enough votes to become the law of the land.

In 1789, Madison was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, where he served four terms and fought to secure the passage of the Bill of Rights. In 1794, James Madison married a Quaker widow named Dolley Payne Todd. Three years later, he left Congress and returned to Montpelier with his wife. In February 1801, James Madison inherited the estate and over 100 enslaved individuals upon his father's death.

After the election of 1800, President Thomas Jefferson named Madison secretary of state. In this position, Madison supported the expansion of the United States with the Louisiana Purchase, opposed the seizure of American ships as Great Britain and France warred with one another, and backed the widely unpopular 1807 Embargo Act, which restricted trade with other nations.

In 1808, Madison was elected as the fourth President of the United States. He brought several enslaved individuals to the White House from Montpelier and hired out additional enslaved people to help run the presidential household. As White House hostess, **First Lady Dolley Madison** helped develop a social season in the fledgling capital city. Her Wednesday Drawing Rooms were lively occasions, and they brought together members of different political parties at the White House.

During his presidency, Madison faced mounting tensions between the United States and Great Britain. British forces continued to harass American ships, as well as seize cargo and impress American sailors into the Royal Navy. The "War Hawks" in Congress pressed Madison to consider military action. **On June 18, 1812, the United States declared war on Great Britain.**

The War of 1812 continued into Madison's second term, as the underprepared United States attempted to defeat the British. On August 24, 1814, in retaliation for the American burning of York, the British entered Washington, D.C. and set fire to the White House, Capitol Building, the Treasury, and other government buildings. Four months later a peace agreement was brokered, and the war officially came to an end with the ratification of the Treaty of Ghent in February 1815.

After serving two terms, Madison retired to Montpelier in 1817. In his final years, Madison continued to rely upon enslaved labor to run his plantation. He also became an active member of the American Colonization Society, an organization that advocated for removing African

Americans from the United States and sending them to a settlement colony in Africa. Madison served as the Society's president for three years before he passed away at Montpelier in 1836. **He is most remembered as the father of the U.S. Constitution.**

5. JAMES MONROE | 1817-1825



Considered the last “Founding Father” president, James Monroe was born on April 28, 1758 into an affluent, slave-owning family in Westmoreland County, Virginia. His parents, Spence and Elizabeth Monroe, had aspirations for their eldest son, sending him to nearby Campbelltown Academy. James’ childhood changed dramatically when both of his parents passed away within two years of each other. Joseph Jones, who became a paternal surrogate for the Monroe children, encouraged James to continue his education by attending the College of William & Mary. Monroe enrolled but later left to enlist in the Continental Army’s Third Virginia Infantry Regiment. After the war, Monroe married Elizabeth Kortright in 1786; the couple had three children together.

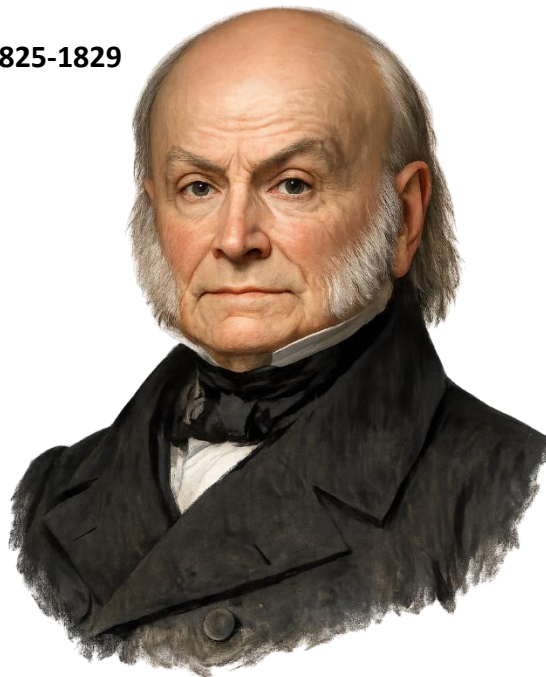
In terms of military, political, administrative, and diplomatic experience, James Monroe was one of the most qualified individuals to ascend to the presidency during the nineteenth century. **He fought in the American Revolution and was wounded at the Battle of Trenton;** served in the legislative bodies of the Virginia General Assembly and the United States Senate, as well as Governor of Virginia; held diplomatic posts across Europe for different administrations; and served as Secretary of State and Secretary of War (briefly acting in both capacities) during the James Madison administration. He also studied law with Thomas Jefferson—in fact, because of his relationship with Jefferson, Monroe purchased land adjacent to Monticello in Albemarle County, calling it Highland. This plantation was one of several properties that Monroe owned during his lifetime—along with over 200 enslaved people who provided the labor to sustain the family, their guests, and the comforts they enjoyed. Some of these individuals accompanied the Monroes to Washington as well, and later the White House.

In 1803, President Jefferson entrusted Monroe and Robert Livingston to acquire territory from France and secure access to the Mississippi River and the port of New Orleans. The men exceeded all expectations, acquiring New Orleans and some 828,000 square miles west of the Mississippi for \$15 million. The **Louisiana Purchase** opened up new opportunities for settlers—often at the

expense of brutal Native Americans—and it also created a volatile mix of expansionism and slavery. As the country expanded westward, the issue of permitting slavery in new territories would continue to threaten a fragile Union. The **Missouri Compromise of 1820**, signed by President Monroe, temporarily defused the situation.

After the War of 1812, the United States experienced the “Era of Good Feelings”—relative political peace, economic growth, and nationalist fervor. President Monroe invigorated this spirit with goodwill tours throughout the country and ensuring that the public buildings at Washington—including the President’s House—were restored after they were destroyed by the British. Working with Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, Monroe professed American sovereignty from European nations while asserting a national right of influence over the western hemisphere. This idea, later called the “**Monroe Doctrine**,” shaped the next century of international relations between the United States and the world, influencing American presidents and policymakers who sought to make the country a global power.

6. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS | 1825-1829



"My hopes of a future life are all founded upon the Gospel of Christ and I cannot cavil or quibble away... the whole tenor of His conduct by which He sometimes positively asserted and at others countenances His disciples in asserting that He was God." -John Quincy Adams

"The highest glory of the American Revolution was this: it connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity." -John Quincy Adams

On July 11, 1767, John Quincy Adams was born in Braintree, Massachusetts to Abigail and John Adams. Over the course of his lifetime, Adams witnessed the American Revolution, the evolution of the new nation, and the crawl toward civil war—almost his entire life was devoted to public service. While he is remembered as vocal opponent of slavery, the reality was more complicated.

Adams began his diplomatic training at ten years old, when he traveled to Europe with his father. In 1781, he made his way east to Russia to serve as secretary and translator for diplomat Francis Dana. Two years later, he returned to Paris, this time as his father's official secretary during negotiations to end the Revolutionary War. While in Europe, he attended school and gained fluency in French, Dutch, and German. When he returned home in 1785, he quickly completed his training at Harvard and graduated two years later.

Adams spent years working as a lawyer before President George Washington appointed him U.S. Minister to Holland. He followed that diplomatic appointment with another in Prussia during his father's presidency. Before traveling to Prussia, Adams married Louisa Catherine Johnson, the daughter of the first U.S. Consul to Great Britain. John Quincy and Louisa Catherine had four children together.

When Thomas Jefferson defeated John Adams in the presidential election of 1800, Adams resigned and returned home to run for a seat in the Massachusetts legislature. In 1803, he was appointed to the U.S. Senate, where he bucked party lines, sided with Jefferson, and supported the Louisiana Purchase. In return for his allegiance to the Democratic-Republican Party, President James Madison appointed Adams as the first official U.S. Minister to Russia. While abroad, he negotiated the **Treaty of Ghent**, which ended the War of 1812, and served as the U.S. minister to Great Britain.

When the Adamses returned to Washington, D.C. in 1817, John Quincy Adams served as secretary of state for President James Monroe. He authored the Monroe Doctrine, which declared the United States' intention to resist European intervention in Latin America. He worked to acquire Florida for the United States and improve Anglo-American relations by settling the border dispute in Oregon Country. He was one of the most accomplished and successful secretaries of state in American history.

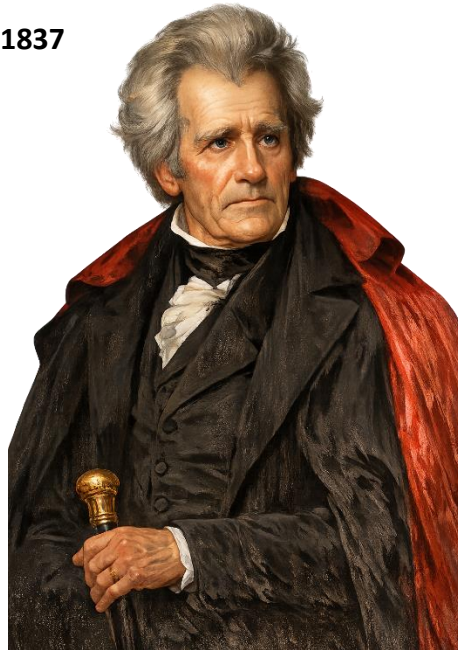
During the Adamses' time abroad, slavery had expanded into most homes and the District was a thriving hub for the domestic slave trade. The Adamses first rented a home, before purchasing a house at 244 F Street, previously occupied by President James Monroe. They were surrounded by enslaved people and the slave trade. They lived one block from the Washington jail that served as a prison and slave pen; their close friends and neighbors owned enslaved people; and they attended parties and diplomatic events hosted by many prominent slave-owning families, including the Tayloe's and Calhoun's—parties made possible by enslaved labor. All this fueled his already established disdain for slavery.

In 1824, Adams won a bitter election over Andrew Jackson. As president, Adams advocated for internal improvements, such as a national road and a network of canals. Most of his proposals were ahead of his time and rejected by Congress. While the Adamses lived in the White House, Louisa Catherine's niece and nephew lived with them, and they brought two enslaved people, Holzey and Rachel Clark, that they had inherited from their father. While Adams opposed slavery as a political and deeply held spiritual conviction, he allowed it as at the time freed slaves could be re-enslaved by anyone in the district he lived in.

In 1828, Jackson defeated Adams' reelection, but his retirement from public life was short-lived. Two years later, he ran for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives and spent the next two decades railing against slavery, the power of the "slaveocracy," and the gag-rule that stifled debate on the issue in Congress. Because of his age and personal history of service, southerners could not threaten him with physical violence, like they did to other northern congressmen—which Adams knew and enjoyed immensely as he exploited this privileged position. In 1841, he argued in front of the Supreme Court in the United States v. Amistad case and won the release of enslaved African captives.

On February 21, 1848, John Quincy Adams suffered a stroke while sitting at his desk on the floor of the House of Representatives. He was moved to the Speaker's Room in the Capitol Building, when he fell into a coma. He died two days later on February 23, 1848.

7. ANDREW JACKSON | 1829-1837



"The Bible is the rock on which this Republic rests." -Andrew Jackson

"I am a firm believer in the Christian religion." -Andrew Jackson

"I have always been a believer in the power of prayer." -Andrew Jackson

Andrew Jackson was born on March 15, 1767 near Lancaster, South Carolina, to a family of Scotch-Irish immigrants. His father, Andrew, passed away just a few weeks before his son's birth. All three Jackson boys—Hugh, Robert, and Andrew—were raised by their mother Elizabeth. The family settled in the Waxhaws near the North and South Carolina border, where they joined a large community of Scots-Irish farmers. At age thirteen, Andrew joined his older brothers in the fight against the British as the Revolutionary War raged in the Carolinas. Both Hugh and Robert died as a result of the conflict, and Andrew was left with a scar on his head from a British officer's sword and a deep hatred for Redcoats.

After the war, Jackson moved to North Carolina where he studied law with several prominent lawyers. As white settlers pushed westward, new territories and opportunities emerged for Jackson. He served as a district attorney and later practiced law throughout Tennessee before settling in Nashville. In 1802, he was elected General of the Tennessee Militia, serving in different theaters as needed. In 1812, President James Madison commissioned him **Major General** of U.S. Volunteers and he led military campaigns against the Creek Nation. With their defeat, Jackson imposed treaties on the Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Cherokees, securing millions of acres of land for settlers. He was later called upon to wage war against the Seminoles. Jackson's interpretation of his orders resulted in an invasion of Spanish Florida, and in 1819 Spain ceded the territory to the United States.

Despite winning the popular vote in 1824, Jackson lost the election in the House of Representatives as supporters of Henry Clay voted for John Quincy Adams. Jackson, who advocated for the common man and denounced corruption in government, ran again in 1828. The campaign was particularly ugly, as Adams' supporters accused Jackson of executing troops unlawfully, illegally invading Florida, and engaging in innumerable brawls and duels. They also dragged Jackson's wife, Rachel, into the fray, labeling her a bigamist. Despite these attacks, Jackson defeated Adams—but Rachel died at The Hermitage before he left for Washington. Jackson believed the campaign contributed to her death and he never forgave his political enemies. Although they never had children, they treated Rachel's nephews, Andrew Jackson Jr. and Andrew Jackson Donelson, like sons. Their daughters-in-law, Sarah Yorke Jackson and Emily Donelson, also served as White House hostesses during Jackson's presidency.

While Jackson was not very vocal about slavery, he was a prominent slave owner for most of his life. He brought enslaved people from The Hermitage to work at the White House, and he continued to purchase enslaved people while he was President of the United States. Jackson respected the right of individuals to own property and had no moral qualms when it came to profiting from slavery. At the same time, he viewed pro-slavery fanatics and abolitionists negatively, blaming both groups for instigating sectional discord. His support of the **"Gag Rule"** and the suppression of abolitionist literature reflected his acceptance of slavery and general opposition to anything he perceived as a threat to the Union. This same mentality guided his reaction to the **Nullification Crisis** in 1832—as Jackson was eager and willing to force South Carolina to comply with federal law over the tariffs.

Jackson vowed to make government work for the common man, chastising officials and institutions that threatened republican ideals. He attacked the political patronage system, arguing that appointments should be based on merit — though he himself tended to reward his supporters with offices and positions in the government. He vetoed the renewal of the charter for the Second Bank of the United States, rebuking it as a government-backed monopoly that only favored the wealthy. He also signed the Indian Removal Act in 1830—and forced dozens of unfair treaties on Native-American peoples. President Jackson maintained that removal was the best solution for all parties, as it would preserve Indian cultures, prevent unwanted assimilation, and limit violence between white settlers and Native Americans. Best intentions aside, this devastating relocation resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of indigenous peoples as they were forcibly pushed westward by the military. After the presidency, Jackson returned to Tennessee and spent his remaining years organizing his papers, as well as managing his plantation and its enslaved workforce. On June 8, 1845, he died at The Hermitage.

8. MARTIN VAN BUREN | 1837-1841



"Faith in God is essential for the prosperity of our nation." -Martin Van Buren

"A good government is one that is based on the principles of justice and righteousness." -Martin Van Buren

Martin Van Buren was born in the rural town of Kinderhook, New York, on December 5, 1782. His father, Abraham, owned a successful inn and small farm. The Van Buren tavern served as a hub of social activity for the town, and the constant coming and goings of travelers between New York City and the state capital of Albany brought young Martin into contact with all sorts of people—both free and enslaved. In 1807, Martin married Hannah Hoes and the two had five children, but Hannah tragically died in 1819, long before Van Buren ascended to the presidency.

Van Buren studied law and quickly became immersed in New York politics. He rose rapidly through the ranks of the Democratic-Republican Party and became the leader of the Bucktail faction. In 1821, the state legislature elected Van Buren to represent New York in the United States Senate, where he served until, he resigned to become the Governor of New York. He held this office briefly before accepting the position of Secretary of State for President Andrew Jackson.

Van Buren's political ascent continued when he sided with President Jackson, Secretary of War John Eaton, and Eaton's wife Margaret during the scandalous **Petticoat affair**. As the president's relationship with Vice President John C. Calhoun deteriorated, Jackson asked Van Buren to serve as the U.S. Minister to the United Kingdom. During Van Buren's confirmation hearing in the Senate, Vice President Calhoun delivered the decisive nay vote, confident that it would destroy Van Buren's career and sabotage his political ambitions. Instead, the episode brought Van Buren closer to Jackson and elevated his reputation among Democrats. President Jackson asked him to join the 1832 ticket as his vice president, and after Jackson's re-election, Van Buren became one of the president's closest advisors and confidantes. When Jackson decided not to run for a third term, Vice President Van Buren was the natural choice to succeed him.

Van Buren's strong support of Jackson's agenda—along with his northern roots—gave him broader appeal to the electorate, and he defeated a crowded field of candidates in 1836. He became the first president to use the term “slavery” in an inaugural address, affirming his support for the institution. As president, Van Buren continued many of his predecessor's policies—including the forcible removal of thousands of Native Americans from their lands. His administration's involvement in the *United States v. Amistad* case on behalf of the Spanish government was viewed as a defense of slavery, though it lost the case at the United States Supreme Court. He did draw a sharp contrast to Jackson on the issue of Texas, as Van Buren believed annexation of a territory that permitted slavery would incite political discord and likely instigate a war with Mexico.

During his time in the White House, President Van Buren relied upon free and enslaved African Americans to operate and maintain the President's House. This mix of staff was not unusual, as many of his predecessors had done the same; and Van Buren himself had previously used both free and enslaved labor at Decatur House while he served as secretary of state. However, more attention was paid to his household expenditures rather than who was working in his house. **The Panic of 1837** was one of the worst economic depressions in the young country's history. As a result, critics accused the president of living lavishly while ordinary Americans struggled to make ends meet. This perception—and the running of a popular war hero in William Henry Harrison—contributed to Van Buren's defeat in his reelection campaign.

In 1844, Van Buren was poised to reclaim leadership of the Democratic Party, but his opposition to the annexation of Texas ultimately hurt him with southern delegates and those that favored westward expansion. Van Buren made one more attempt to return to the White House in 1848 as the presidential candidate for the Free Soil Party—a party that was formed to oppose the expansion of slavery into the western territories. Major General Zachary Taylor ultimately won the 1848 election, and Van Buren never ran for political office again. The former president lived out the rest of his life at Lindenwald, where he died on July 24, 1862.

9. WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON | 1841



"The only way to have a friend is to be one." -William Henry Harrison

"I am a firm believer in the Christian faith and its principles." -William Henry Harrison

"Our country is too great to be divided by sectarian differences." -William Henry Harrison

"The Bible is the best book for guidance in all matters." -William Henry Harrison

"Let us be united in our love for God and our fellow man." -William Henry Harrison

"Faith is the foundation upon which our nation stands." -William Henry Harrison

"Give him a barrel of hard cider and settle a pension of two thousand a year on him, and my word for it," a Democratic newspaper foolishly giped about William Henry Harrison "he will sit ...by the side of a 'sea coal' fire, and study moral philosophy." **The Whigs**, seizing on this political misstep, in 1840 presented their candidate Harrison as a simple frontiersman, living in a log cabin and drinking cider, in sharp contrast to an aristocratic champagne sipping Van Buren.

Harrison was in fact a scion of the Virginia planter aristocracy. He was born on February 9, 1773 at Berkeley Plantation to one of Virginia's wealthiest slave owning families. He studied classics and history at Hampden-Sydney College, then began the study of medicine. Then in 1791, Harrison obtained a commission as ensign in the First Infantry of the Regular Army, and headed to the Northwest, where he spent much of his life. In 1795, Harrison married Anna Tuthill Symmes. They would go on to have ten children together.

As Native American peoples continued to resist displacement, Harrison served as aide-de-camp to General **"Mad Anthony" Wayne** at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, which opened most of the Ohio area to settlement. After resigning from the army in 1798, he became secretary of the Northwest Territory, was its first delegate to Congress, and helped obtain legislation dividing the

Territory into the Northwest and Indiana Territories. In 1801 he became governor of the Indiana Territory, serving 12 years.

Harrison's primary task as governor was to secure more land for settlers. He negotiated treaties for millions of acres in exchange for relatively small amounts of money. When Native Americans refused to accept these agreements, or attacked encroaching settlements, Harrison responded with military force.

The threat against settlers became serious in 1809. Eager to repel invading settlers, an eloquent and energetic Shawnee chief, **Tecumseh**, with his religious brother, the Prophet, began to strengthen a Native American confederation to prevent further encroachment. In 1811 Harrison received permission to attack the confederacy.

While Tecumseh was away seeking more allies, Harrison led about a thousand men toward "Prophetstown." Both sides agreed to a ceasefire until Tecumseh's return. The next morning, November 7, 1811, the Native American warriors attacked his camp on Tippecanoe River. After heavy fighting, Harrison repulsed them, but suffered 190 dead and wounded in the **Battle of Tippecanoe**. After driving the warriors from the field, Harrison and his men then burned "Prophetstown." Violence continued to escalate into the spring of 1812 as Tecumseh and his remaining Native allies carried out raids against white settlements.

During the **War of 1812**, Harrison won more military laurels when he was given the command of the army in the Northwest with the rank of **brigadier general**. At the **Battle of the Thames**, north of Lake Erie, on October 5, 1813, he defeated the combined British and Native American forces. Tecumseh was killed in the battle, scattering his allies and destroying the delicate Native American alliance he had forged. The Native Americans scattered, never again to offer serious resistance in what was then called the Northwest.

Throughout his lifetime, Harrison offered contradictory views on slavery. As a slave owner, he opposed the idea of Congress restricting slavery in new territories. As his political career took off, he carefully avoided condemning slavery and instead professed the belief that the states themselves should decide its fate. He was nominated by the **Whig Party** in 1840 and won the election by less than 150,000 votes; however he captured the **Electoral College** in a landslide, 234 to 60, with strong support from the western and southern states.

When he arrived in Washington in February 1841, Harrison let Massachusetts Senator Daniel Webster edit his Inaugural Address, ornate with classical allusions. According to one recollection, Webster obtained some deletions, boasting in a jolly fashion that he had killed "seventeen Roman proconsuls as dead as smelts, every one of them."

Webster had reason to be pleased, for while Harrison was nationalistic in his outlook, he emphasized in his Inaugural Address that he would be obedient to the will of the people as expressed through Congress. But before he had been in office a month, he became severely ill. On April 4, 1841, he died at the White House—the first president to die in office—and with him died the Whig program.

D DREAM
CITY CHURCH

