

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



THE PRESIDENTS
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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) [[1](#)]

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.

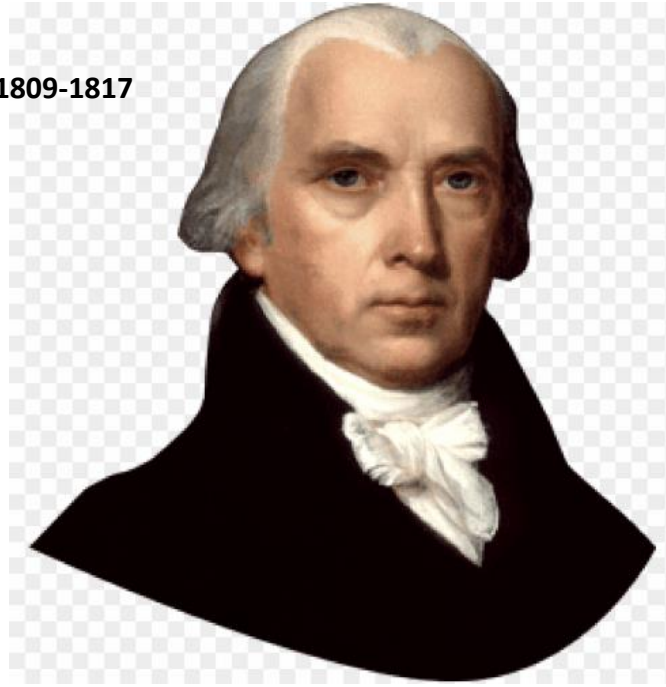
In 1789, Jefferson returned from France and accepted an invitation to serve as Secretary of State for President George Washington. He quickly found himself at odds with Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, clashing on issues such as the national debt, the location of a new and permanent capital 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.

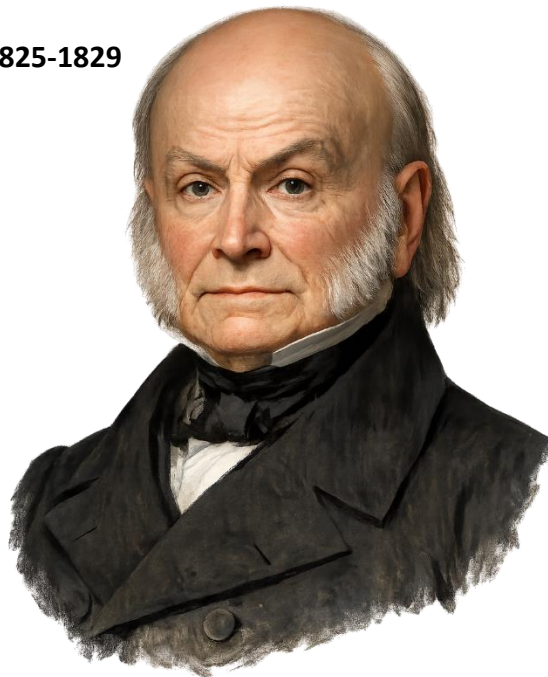
In terms of military, political, administrative, and diplomatic experience, James Monroe was one of the most qualified individuals to ascend to the presidency during the nineteenth century. **He fought in the American Revolution and was wounded at the Battle of Trenton;** served in the legislative bodies 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.

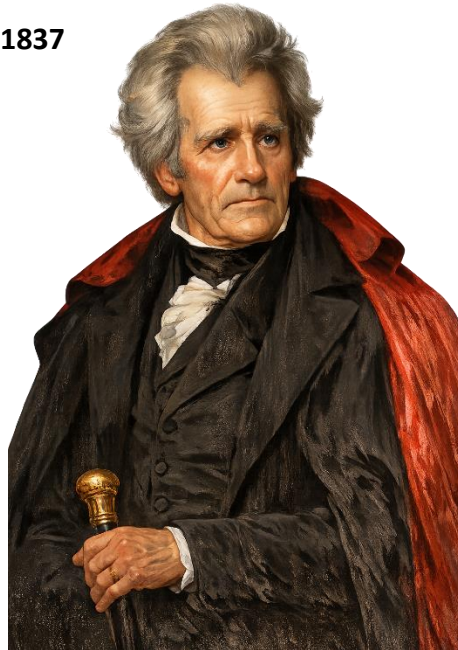
During the Adamses' time abroad, slavery had expanded into most homes and the District was a thriving hub for the domestic slave trade. The Adamses first rented a home, before purchasing a house at 244 F Street, previously occupied by President James Monroe. They were surrounded by enslaved people and 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 gibed 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.

10. JOHN TYLER | 1841-1845



"The Bible is the best of books; it is the book of all books." -John Tyler

"A true Christian is a man who is not only a believer but also a doer of the Word." -John Tyler

"Faith is the foundation upon which we build our lives." -John Tyler

"In times of trial, let your faith be your anchor." -John Tyler

"Prayer is the key that unlocks the door to God's blessings." -John Tyler

"Love thy neighbor as thyself; this is the essence of Christianity." -John Tyler

Born to an affluent family on March 29, 1790, John Tyler spent most of his life in Charles City County, Virginia. He was raised on the Tyler family plantation, Greenway, and lived there until he attended the College of William & Mary, graduating in 1807. He then prepared for a career in law, studying with his father **John Tyler, Sr.**, and **Edmund Randolph**, former United States Attorney General. After marrying Letitia Christian in 1813, John purchased a tract of land in Charles City County and built his own plantation, Woodburn, shortly thereafter.

According to the 1820 census, there were twenty-four enslaved people living at Woodburn with the Tylers, some of whom were inherited from his father's estate. Ten years later, the Tyler household had grown exponentially from three to seven children, ranging in age from fifteen-year-old Mary to newborn Tazewell. The enslaved community had grown as well—twenty-nine individuals, and more than half were under the age of ten.

Throughout the 1820s and 1830s, Tyler held a series of prominent political positions at both the state and national level. While he considered himself a Democrat, he sometimes opposed President Andrew Jackson's policies—specifically whenever the president opted to use executive power at the expense of the states. In 1839, the Whig Party nominated William Henry Harrison for president. Tyler, a Virginian slave owner and lifelong Democrat, was added to the ticket to entice southerners to vote for Harrison—who soundly defeated President Van Buren. “Tippecanoe and Tyler Too” became the oft-repeated slogan of their supporters, but this relationship changed dramatically after the unexpected death of President Harrison on April 4, 1841.

Vice President Tyler took the oath of office with Harrison's cabinet present and assumed all presidential authority immediately, but the new president quickly found himself at odds with leaders in the Whig Party. His veto of legislation that would revive the **Second Bank of the United States** sparked a visceral reaction from both politicians and citizens alike. The Whig Party cast Tyler out and most of his cabinet resigned over this episode; at the same time, his Democratic friends no longer trusted him. Considering the political turmoil that engulfed his presidency—his detractors had also successfully nicknamed him “His Accidency”—it was hardly surprising when neither party selected Tyler to be its presidential nominee in 1848. A few days before leaving office, **Tyler signed legislation to annex Texas—an expansionist policy goal he had pursued since becoming president and probably his most notable achievement.**

In 1842, Tyler suffered the loss of his beloved wife Letitia to a stroke. Over the course of three decades of marriage, the couple had raised eight children. Two years later, the president married Julia Gardiner in New York. After leaving the White House, they retired to Sherwood Plantation in Charles City County, Virginia, where they had seven children together. That is a lot of kids, 15.

On the eve of the Civil War, former President Tyler served as a representative at the Peace Conference of 1861 but ultimately rejected the proposed resolutions. He would go on to serve as an elected representative for the Confederacy, but he did not live to see the end of the war. On January 18, 1862, he died in Richmond, Virginia at age 71. While he had requested a simple burial, political leaders of the Confederacy organized a state funeral for the former president. His remains laid in state in the Hall of Congress in Richmond, covered “with the flag of his country.” Memorial services were held at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, followed by a procession to Hollywood Cemetery.

11. JAMES K. POLK | 1845-1849



"I am a firm believer in the providence of God." -James K. Polk

"The Bible is the best book in the world." -James K. Polk

"Our country is a nation of Christians." -James K. Polk

"I believe in the power of prayer and its importance in our lives." -James K. Polk

"Faith in God is essential for the prosperity of our nation." -James K. Polk

On November 2, 1795, James K. Polk was born in Pineville, North Carolina to Samuel and Jane Polk. The promise of greater economic opportunities and prosperity drew Samuel Polk and his family westward, and they soon settled just south of Nashville, Tennessee. He became a respected community leader, county judge, businessman, and prominent slave owner. Upon his death in 1827, Samuel Polk left behind 8,000 acres of land and fifty-three enslaved people to his wife and ten children.

Although frail as a child, Polk was also intelligent and studious. He graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1818 and returned to Nashville to study law. He soon entered politics and was elected clerk of the Tennessee State Senate, serving until 1822. On January 1, 1824, Polk married Sarah Childress, a woman from one of Tennessee's most well-regarded families. Sarah was very well educated; she often assisted her husband with speech writing and provided policy advice throughout his political career. The couple did not have any children, but they did raise a nephew, Marshall Tate Polk.

James Polk was shaped by his upbringing on the western frontier

In 1823, he was elected to the Tennessee House of Representatives, where he was known for consistently backing the political aspirations of “Old Hickory,” otherwise known as General Andrew Jackson. For this support, Polk gained the nickname “Young Hickory.” In 1825, Polk was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and in 1835, he became **Speaker of the House** where he used his authority to strictly enforce a “**Gag Rule**” barring the discussion of slavery. He served in Congress until 1839 when he was elected governor of Tennessee. As governor, Polk worked to regulate state banks and improve education, before losing his reelection campaign in 1841.

While Polk had a successful career in politics, he also continued to expand his property holdings. To shore up his financial security, he established a plantation called Somerville in southern Tennessee in 1831, becoming an “absentee planter.” Although the plantation enjoyed moderate success, Polk sought additional profits. After Congress passed and President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act in 1830, the military forced the Choctaw Nation off their lands in northern Mississippi—one in a series of forced relocations known as the **Trail of Tears**. Polk joined the rush of speculators to purchase the vacant land. He sold his Tennessee plantation and purchased a new one in Yalobusha County, Mississippi, where Polk’s enslaved workers harvested cotton.

In 1844, Polk set his sights on becoming vice president, expecting former President Martin Van Buren to secure the Democratic Party’s nomination. In a surprising twist, Polk was chosen as the presidential nominee at the convention, largely because of his support for “**Manifest Destiny**” and expanding the United States’ territorial holdings. The “dark horse candidate” faced off against Whig candidate Henry Clay and won, becoming the eleventh president of the United States in 1845.

After successfully renegotiating the Canadian boundary to the 49th parallel with Great Britain, Polk instigated the **Mexican-American War**, a two-year conflict stemming from the 1845 annexation of Texas. In 1846, Polk sent American diplomat John Slidell to secretly negotiate a dispute over Texas’ boundary claims and purchase the territories of New Mexico and California for up to \$30 million. When the Mexican government turned Slidell away, President Polk ordered American troops under General Zachary Taylor to move into and occupy disputed territory, inciting the conflict with Mexico.

At the conclusion of the conflict, the United States successfully acquired more than 500,000 square miles of Mexico’s land holdings including present-day California, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico. President Polk publicly supported the expansion of slavery into these territories, while employing enslaved individuals at the White House, including **Henry Carter, Jr. and Elias Polk**. Polk also made secret purchases of thirteen enslaved children through an agent during his presidency. These individuals were sent to work on his Mississippi plantation.

Polk retired after one term, but he did not enjoy the comfortable existence he had arranged at his Nashville home, **Polk Place**. On June 15, 1849, less than four months after leaving office, the former president succumbed to a cholera outbreak in Nashville.

12. ZACHARY TAYLOR | 1849-1850



"I am not a believer in the doctrine of the Trinity." -Zachary Taylor (He blew that one. DH)

"The Bible is the best book in the world." -Zachary Taylor

"I have always been a believer in the Christian faith." -Zachary Taylor

"My faith guides my actions and decisions." -Zachary Taylor

"I trust in God's providence in all matters." -Zachary Taylor

"A good Christian is a good citizen." -Zachary Taylor

Zachary Taylor was born on November 24, 1784 in Virginia, but his family moved shortly thereafter to Louisville, Kentucky. He was raised on a plantation called Springfield, surrounded by enslaved laborers owned by his father Richard. Taylor received a basic education and aspired from a young age to join the military. He enlisted at the age of twenty-two and became an officer in the United States Army in 1808. Two years later he returned to marry Margaret Mackall Smith, and five of their six children were born at Springfield. For the next twenty-five years, Taylor spent most of his time policing the nation's borderlands. He fought many military campaigns against Native Americans and served at garrison posts throughout the country. He also owned and operated plantations in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and Rodney, Mississippi. Hundreds of enslaved men, women, and children labored at the properties to sustain the large Taylor family.

Taylor gained national prominence after he won a series of major military victories during the **Mexican-American War**. Despite being outnumbered by Mexican forces, Taylor's defeat of **General Antonio López de Santa Anna** at the **Battle of Buena Vista** cemented his status as a military hero and prepared him for the American political stage.

Turning away from Whig leader and three-time presidential candidate **Henry Clay**, the party nominated "Old Rough and Ready" for the 1848 presidential election, hoping to imitate the same success it had with William Henry Harrison in 1840. Taylor appealed to northerners as a military leader and avowed nationalist; his status as a slaveowner was attractive to southern voters; and he had avoided controversial issues as a political outsider. Taylor ran against Democratic candidate **Lewis Cass**, who supported self-determination of territories over whether they would support slavery. Whigs who opposed Taylor's candidacy, along with anti-slavery Democrats who rejected Cass's idea of popular sovereignty, decided to form the **Free-Soil Party** to oppose the expansion of slavery into new territories. The party nominated former President Martin Van Buren, who secured just enough votes to undermine Cass and deliver the election to Taylor.

One of the main issues during the Taylor presidency were the lands acquired from the victory in the **Mexican-American War**. Northerners and southerners sharply disagreed over whether the territories wrested from Mexico should be opened to slavery. Although Taylor subscribed to Whig principles of legislative leadership, he did not blindly support Whig leaders in Congress. While he attempted to remain above the political fray, Taylor personally did not support the expansion of slavery.

Still, his political goals and private actions did not always align. Despite his opposition to slavery's expansion, Taylor remained a slave owner for the rest of his life, profiting from the labor of hundreds of enslaved people who lived and worked on his plantations. President Taylor was surrounded by enslaved valets, cooks, and maids in the Executive Mansion. He also continued to manage his Cypress Grove plantation from afar. Though little documentation survives today, some enslaved individuals who likely served at the White House include Charles Porter, Tom, Dicey, Jane, William, and Caroline

Unsatisfied with the ideas proposed by Congress, Taylor urged settlers in New Mexico and California to draft constitutions and apply for statehood, therefore bypassing the territorial stage. If that solution did not work, Taylor was prepared to take decisive action. In February 1850, he held a conference with southern leaders who had threatened secession. Taylor told them that, if necessary to enforce the laws, he would personally lead the army. Persons "taken in rebellion against the Union, he would hang . . . with less reluctance than he had hanged deserters and spies in Mexico."

The debate continued to embroil territorial government officials, abolitionists, and citizens. In 1850, members of Congress labored to negotiate a grand compromise between factions. That Fourth of July, President Taylor participated in ceremonies at the Washington Monument. After the event, Taylor became violently sick. On July 9, 1850, he died of a gastrointestinal illness at the White House. After his death, the forces of compromise triumphed, but the war Taylor had been willing to fight came eleven years later.

13. MILLARD FILLMORE | 1850-1853



“May God save the country, for it is evident that the people will not.” -Millard Fillmore

“God knows that I detest slavery, but it is an existing evil, for which we are not responsible, and we must endure it, till we can get rid of it without destroying the last hope of free government in the world.” -Millard Fillmore

Millard Fillmore became president upon the death of Zachary Taylor in July 1850. Born in upstate Cayuga County, New York on January 7, 1800, Fillmore as a youth endured the privations of frontier life. He worked on his father’s farm, and at 15 was apprenticed to a cloth maker. He attended a local school where he met Abigail Powers, who was 19 years old at the time. They later married in 1826 and had two children.

In 1823 he was admitted to the bar; seven years later he moved his law practice to Buffalo. As an associate of the Whig politician **Thurlow Weed**, Fillmore held state office and for eight years was a member of the House of Representatives. In 1848, while comptroller of New York, he was elected vice president.

Fillmore presided over the Senate during the months of nerve-wracking debates over the **Compromise of 1850**. He made no public comment on the merits of the compromise proposals, but a few days before President Taylor’s death, he intimated to him that if there should be a tie vote on Henry Clay’s omnibus bill, he would vote in favor of it.

Millard Fillmore’s sudden accession to the presidency brought an abrupt political shift in favor of trying to give more ground to the southern advocates of slavery. Taylor’s cabinet resigned, and President Fillmore at once appointed **Daniel Webster** to be secretary of state, thus demonstrating his alliance with the moderate Whigs who favored the Compromise.

When Clay's omnibus bill failed, Senator **Stephen A. Douglas** of Illinois broke the legislation into five separate bills, submitting them in piecemeal fashion. At this critical juncture, Fillmore announced his support of the compromise. On August 6, 1850, he sent a message to Congress recommending that Texas be paid to abandon her claims to part of New Mexico.

Douglas's effective strategy in Congress, combined with Fillmore's pressure from the White House gave impetus to the Compromise movement. The acts passed both chambers of Congress, and were signed by President Fillmore in September 1850. These pieces of legislation admitted California as a "free state"; organized the territorial governments of New Mexico and Utah on the basis of popular sovereignty; established a boundary between Texas and New Mexico; **abolished the slave trade in the nation's capital; and strengthened the Fugitive Slave Act.**

Fillmore believed that his efforts had averted a major crisis and saved the Union. Instead, this sectional truce left most factions unsatisfied. Fillmore's signing of the **Fugitive Slave Act** was also heavily criticized by abolitionists. **By law, the federal government was now required to assist slave owners in recapturing enslaved people, even if they were found in states where slavery was outlawed. There were also harsh penalties for anyone caught assisting or hiding enslaved people.**

As the Whig Party splintered over slavery, Fillmore lost critical support from northern Whigs who opposed the institution. As a result, he lost the 1852 presidential nomination to **General Winfield Scott**. In 1856, he accepted the nomination for president from the **National-American Party** (also known as the Know-Nothing Party.) While he was handily defeated, Fillmore captured more than 20% of the popular vote and won the state of Maryland. With this defeat, Fillmore withdrew from politics and focused more on philanthropic endeavors in Buffalo with his second wife Caroline. **During the Civil War, he supported the Union** and different leaders from both political parties who sought to save it. He suffered a stroke and later died on March 8, 1874.

14. FRANKLIN PIERCE | 1853-1857



"I can express no better hope for my country than that the kind Providence which smiled upon our fathers may enable their children to preserve the blessings they have inherited. ... It must be felt that there is no national security but, in the nation's, humble, acknowledged dependence upon God and His overruling providence." -Franklin Pierce

"With the Union my best and dearest earthly hopes are entwined." -Franklin Pierce

"There's nothing left . . . but to get drunk." -Franklyn Pierce (he must've been getting tired. DH)

Franklin Pierce became president at a time of what seemed on the surface like domestic tranquility. The United States, by virtue of the **Compromise of 1850**, seemed to have weathered its sectional storm. By following the recommendations of southern advisers, Pierce—a New Englander— hoped to prevent another outbreak of that storm. But his policies, far from preserving calm, hastened the disruption of the Union.

Born on November 23, 1804 in Hillsborough, New Hampshire, Pierce attended Bowdoin College. After graduation he studied law, then entered politics. In 1829, he was elected to the New Hampshire legislature; two years later he became its speaker. During the 1830s and 1840s he went to Washington, first as a representative, then as a senator. In 1834, Pierce married Jane Means Appleton, and they had three sons.

Pierce, after serving in the **Mexican-American War**, was proposed by New Hampshire friends for the presidential nomination in 1852. At the Democratic Convention, the delegates agreed easily enough upon a platform pledging undeviating support of the Compromise of 1850 and hostility toward any efforts by the federal government to interfere with slavery. On the 49th ballot, they nominated Pierce, a true dark horse candidate.

Although Pierce only won the popular vote by about 200,000 votes, he received 254 electoral votes to Whig candidate General Winfield Scott's 42. He appealed to southern and northern Democrats, New Englanders, and even southern Whigs. Two months before he took office, his 11-year-old son Benjamin was killed in a horrific train accident—Ben was the third and final son to die young. Grief stricken and childless, Pierce and his wife Jane struggled to cope with these losses throughout his presidency and for the rest of their lives.

In his Inaugural Address he proclaimed an era of peace and prosperity at home, and vigor in relations with other nations. The United States might have to acquire additional possessions for the sake of its own security, he pointed out, and would not be deterred by “any timid forebodings of evil.”

Pierce had only to make gestures toward expansion to excite the wrath of northerners, who accused him of collaborating with southerners to extend slavery into other areas. Therefore he aroused apprehension when he pressured Great Britain to relinquish its special interests along part of the Central American coast, and even more when he tried to persuade Spain to sell Cuba.

But the most violent renewal of national turbulence came from the **Kansas-Nebraska Act**, which repealed the **Missouri Compromise of 1820** and reopened the question of slavery in the West. This measure, the handiwork of Senator Stephen A. Douglas, grew in part out of Douglas's desire to promote a railroad from Chicago to California through Nebraska. Secretary of War **Jefferson Davis**, advocate of a southern transcontinental route, had already persuaded Pierce to send **James Gadsden** to Mexico to buy land for a southern railroad. He purchased the area now comprising southern Arizona and part of southern New Mexico for \$10,000,000.

Douglas's proposal, to organize western territories through which a railroad might run, caused extreme trouble. **Douglas provided in his bills that the residents of the new territories could decide the slavery question for themselves**—otherwise known as **popular sovereignty**. The result was a rush into Kansas, as proslavery and antislavery activists vied for control of the territory. Violence ensued, and “Bleeding Kansas” became a prelude to the Civil War.

Pierce sought a second term in office but Democrats decided to nominate the less controversial James Buchanan. He returned to New Hampshire, leaving his successor to face the growing sectional crisis. During the Civil War, Pierce continued to support the Democratic Party and blamed President Abraham Lincoln for the war. A lifelong drinker, Pierce became a recluse during his final years, dying of cirrhosis on October 8, 1869.

15. JAMES BUCHANAN | 1857-1861



"There is nothing stable but Heaven and the Constitution". -James Buchanan

"Saving knowledge is not a knowledge of the dead letter or outward form of the Gospel, but a knowledge of the truth in "the light, and lustre, and glory of it." -James Buchanan

Tall, stiffly formal in the high stock he wore around his jowls, James Buchanan was the only president who never married. Presiding over a rapidly dividing nation, Buchanan did not quite grasp the political realities of the time. Relying on constitutional doctrines to close the widening rift over slavery, he failed to understand that the North would not accept constitutional arguments which favored the South. Nor did he realize how sectionalism, now called tribalism, had realigned political parties: the Democrats split; the Whigs were destroyed, giving rise to the **Republicans**. Republicanism is the best thing that ever happened to America, but it came at a steep cost that should've been avoided. **The Civil War**. Much like Carter, he was a good Christian, but a horrible president.

Born into a well-to-do Pennsylvania family on April 23, 1791, Buchanan, a graduate of Dickinson College, was gifted as a debater and learned in the law. He was elected five times to the House of Representatives; then, after an interlude as minister to Russia, served for more than a decade in the Senate. He became James K. Polk's secretary of state and Franklin Pierce's minister to Great Britain. Service abroad helped to bring him the Democratic nomination in 1856 because it had removed him from domestic crises and kept his political opinions fairly private.

As president-elect, Buchanan thought the crisis would disappear if he maintained a sectional balance in his appointments and if he could persuade the people to accept constitutional law as

the Supreme Court interpreted it. The Court was considering the legality of restricting slavery in the territories, and two justices hinted to Buchanan what the decision would be.

Thus, in his Inaugural Address the president referred to the territorial question as “happily, a matter of but little practical importance” since the Supreme Court was about to settle it “speedily and finally.” Two days later, Chief Justice Roger B. Taney delivered the **Dred Scott** decision, which ruled that African Americans were not citizens and had no standing to sue for freedom. The court also found the **Missouri Compromise of 1820** unconstitutional, stating that Congress did not have the power to outlaw slavery in the territories. **Bad decision to say the least.**

Buchanan decided to end the troubles in Kansas by urging the admission of the territory as a slave state. This further angered the Republicans and alienated members of his own party. Kansas remained a territory.

When Republicans won a plurality in the House in 1858, every significant bill they passed fell before southern votes in the Senate or a presidential veto. The Democrats, true to their colors, wouldn’t let go of slavery. The federal government reached a stalemate. A year later, abolitionist **John Brown** and his followers seized the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry. Brown, who had killed several proslavery settlers in Kansas, hoped to inspire a slave uprising but was captured, convicted, and executed. Abolitionists viewed him as a freedom fighter and martyr; southerners considered him a murderer and proof that abolitionists would use any means necessary to destroy slavery. Buchanan did nothing.

These events intensified sectional tensions so much that in 1860 the Democratic Party split into northern and southern wings, each nominating its own candidate for the presidency. Consequently, when the Republicans nominated **Abraham Lincoln**, it was almost a foregone conclusion that he would be elected even though his name did not appear on most southern states’ ballots. Rather than accept a Republican administration, the southern “fire-eaters” advocated **secession**.

Buchanan, dismayed and hesitant, denied the legal right of states to secede but held that the federal government legally could not prevent them. He hoped for compromise, but secessionist leaders did not want it.

Then Buchanan took a more militant tack. As several cabinet members resigned, he appointed northerners, and sent the **Star of the West** to carry reinforcements and supplies to **Fort Sumter**. On January 9, 1861, the vessel was fired upon and driven away.

Buchanan refused to act. In March 1861, he retired to his Pennsylvania home Wheatland. In his final years, Buchanan supported the Union cause but critics castigated him for permitting secession. After the war, Buchanan published a book that defended his views of the Constitution and the actions he took toward the South during his presidency. He died on June 1, 1868.

Van Buren, in the R.U.S.H. Bible Study, is considered the worst president in history. His mismanagement of slavery in his day when abolitionist fervor was so high is unforgivable. He could have fixed it. Instead, the result would be civil war. **The deadliest war America would ever fight.**

16. ABRAHAM LINCOLN | 1861-1865



***“I turn, then, and look to the American people and to that God who has never forsaken them.”
Address to the Ohio Legislature on February 13, 1861 (CWAL IV: 204)***

***“And having thus chosen our course, without guile, and with pure purpose, let us renew our
trust in God, and go forward without fear, and with manly hearts.”
Message to Congress in Special Session on July 4, 1861 (CWAL IV:441)***

***“And while it has not pleased the Almighty to bless us with a return of peace, we can but press
on, guided by the best light He gives, trusting that in His own good time, and wise way, all will
yet be well.”
Annual Message to Congress on December 1, 1862 (CWAL V:518)***

Abraham Lincoln warned the South in his first Inaugural Address, “In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you....You have no oath registered in Heaven to destroy the government, while I shall have the most solemn one to ‘Preserve, protect and defend’ it.”

Lincoln considered secession to be illegal, and was willing to use force to defend federal law and the Union. When Confederate batteries fired on Fort Sumter and forced its surrender, he called on the states for 75,000 volunteers. Ultimately, eleven southern states joined the Confederacy and four remained within the Union as Border States. The **Civil War** had begun.

Lincoln made extraordinary efforts to attain knowledge while working on a farm, splitting rails for fences, and keeping store at New Salem, Illinois. He was a captain in the Black Hawk War, spent eight years in the Illinois legislature, and rode the circuit of courts for many years. His law partner said of him, **“His ambition was a little engine that knew no rest.”** He married Mary Todd, and they had four boys, only one of whom lived to maturity.

In 1858, Lincoln ran against **Stephen A. Douglas** of Illinois for senator. He lost the election, but in debating with Douglas he gained a national reputation that won him the Republican nomination for president in 1860.

As president, Lincoln built the Republican Party into a strong national organization and rallied most of the northern Democrats to the Union cause. On January 1, 1863, he issued the **Emancipation Proclamation**, declaring that all enslaved people in states that were still in rebellion would henceforth be free. While the order did not address slavery’s status in the Border States or in southern states already under Union control, the proclamation transformed the meaning of the war and turned the Union forces into an army of liberation. It also permitted African Americans to enlist, and by the end of the war more than **200,000 black soldiers and sailors contributed to this national fight for freedom.**

Lincoln would not let the world forget that the Civil War involved an even larger issue. This he stated most movingly in dedicating the military cemetery at Gettysburg: **“that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”**

Lincoln won reelection in 1864, as Union military triumphs heralded an end to the war. In his planning for peace, the president was flexible and generous, encouraging southerners to lay down their arms and join speedily in reunion.

The spirit that guided him was clear in his Second Inaugural Address, now inscribed on one wall of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.: **“With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive onto finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation’s wounds....”**

On Good Friday, April 14, 1865, Lincoln was assassinated at Ford’s Theatre in Washington by John Wilkes Booth, an actor, who somehow thought he was helping his beloved South. Lincoln died the following morning at Petersen House, and with his death went the possibility of peace with magnanimity. His remains were brought to the White House, and a funeral service was held in the East Room for the slain president.

The Gettysburg Address

(Delivered at the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.)

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth,
on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty,
and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.
Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation,
or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure.

We are met on a great battle-field of that war.

We have come to dedicate a portion of that field,
as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live.

It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow,
this ground.

The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it,
far above our poor power to add or detract.

The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here,
but it can never forget what they did here.

It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who
fought here have thus far so nobly advanced.

It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us,
that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave
the last full measure of devotion, that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have
died in vain—that this nation, under God,
shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people,
by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Abraham Lincoln November 19, 1863.

The Emancipation Proclamation

By the President of the United States of America:

A Proclamation.

Whereas, on the twenty-second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:

"That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

"That the Executive will, on the first day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the States and parts of States, if any, in which the people thereof, respectively, shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and the fact that any State, or the people thereof, shall on that day be, in good faith, represented in the Congress of the United States by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such State shall have participated, shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State, and the people thereof, are not then in rebellion against the United States."

Now, therefore I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-Chief, of the Army and Navy of the United States in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days, from the day first above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States, the following, to wit:

Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, (except the Parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James Ascension, Assumption, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the City of New Orleans) Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia, (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Ann, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth[]), and which excepted parts, are for the present, left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

And by virtue of the power, and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States, and parts of States, are, and henceforward shall be free; and that the Executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defense; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known, that such persons of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the eighty-seventh.

By the President: ABRAHAM LINCOLN
WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.

17. ANDREW JOHNSON | 1865-1869



“Washington, DC is 12 square miles bordered by reality.” — Andrew Johnson

“I realized, there are people out there who can beat me, want to beat me. And unless I continue to innovate and evolve, I am going to learn a painful lesson from someone who has.”

— Andrew Johnson

“The life of a republic lies certainly in the energy, virtue, and intelligence of its citizens.”

— Andrew Johnson

“Who, then, will govern? The answer must be, Man – for we have no angels in the shape of men, as yet, who are willing to take charge of our political affairs.” -Andrew Johnson

“If blacks were given the right to vote, that would place every splay-footed, bandy-shanked, hump-backed, thick-lipped, flat-nosed, woolly-headed, ebon-colored in the country upon an equality with the poor white man.”— Andrew Johnson

“Let them impeach and be damned.” — Andrew Johnson

“This guy was a High I.Q. idiot, but that’s just my opinion.” David Hobrath

Andrew Johnson was born on December 29, 1808 in Raleigh, North Carolina. He grew up in poverty and was apprenticed to a tailor as a boy, but ran away. As an adult, he opened a tailor shop in Greeneville, Tennessee, where he met and married Eliza McCardle. The couple raised five children together, and Eliza supported her husband's aspirations by teaching him essential reading and writing skills that prepared him for a career in politics. He became an adept stump speaker, championing the common man and vilifying the plantation aristocracy. He was elected to the House of Representatives and later the Senate, where he advocated for a homestead bill to provide farmland for white men.

Johnson's new political position brought him increased wealth and social clout. To reflect his newfound status, he purchased an enslaved teenage girl named Dolly and her younger half-brother, Sam. Dolly later gave birth to three children—Liz, Florence, and William—who inherited their mother's enslaved status and also became the property of the Johnson family. The father of Dolly's children is unknown, but it is possible that Andrew Johnson (or one of his sons) may have fathered her children.

After the election of **Republican Party candidate Abraham Lincoln**, southern states began seceding from the Union. By the time Lincoln took the oath of office, seven states had already left the Union, with four more to follow—including Johnson's home state of Tennessee. During the crisis, Johnson remained in the United States Senate after his state seceded, the only southern senator to do so. In recognition of his commitment to the Union, President Lincoln appointed him military governor of Tennessee in 1862. In this position, Johnson began to support emancipation—not because he supported racial equality alone, but also for military expediency. His primary concerns were ending the war quickly and crippling the Confederacy. To prove his new stance (and loyalty to President Lincoln), Johnson freed the enslaved individuals he owned in 1863 and ordered total emancipation in Tennessee the following year. His actions appealed to the different factions and leaders within the Republican Party, including President Lincoln who desired a political ticket that represented unity and a commitment to preserve the Union. As a result, the party nominated Johnson, a southerner and a Democrat, for vice president.

President Lincoln's tragic and unexpected assassination thrust Andrew Johnson into the presidency. He moved into the White House with his family and brought Florence and William as paid workers. But President Johnson's racial prejudices and inability to heal a broken nation quickly became a larger problem. Johnson pardoned all who would take an oath of allegiance to the Constitution of the United States but required Confederate leaders and men of wealth to obtain special presidential pardons. While he pursued reconciliation with southern white citizens, he generally ignored the implementation of "Black Codes" and other racist policies by state legislatures that infringed upon the rights of newly-freed African Americans.

Radical Republicans in Congress lambasted Johnson's approach to Reconstruction. They gained the political support of northerners who were dismayed to see southerners voting many prewar leaders back into office. The Radicals refused to seat any senator or representative from the Confederacy. They also passed the Civil Rights Act of 1866 to protect the rights of formerly enslaved individuals, which **Johnson subsequently vetoed**. This guy couldn't make up his mind.

The Radicals mustered enough votes to pass the legislation over his veto—one of fifteen times that Congress voted to override President Johnson.

A few months later, Congress submitted the 14th Amendment to the states, which specified "**All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside No state shall...deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.**" President Johnson publicly expressed his disapproval of the amendment and encouraged state legislatures to reject it. All former Confederate states, except Tennessee, refused to ratify the amendment. Two violent race riots broke out in Memphis and New Orleans in 1866. Dozens of African Americans were beaten and killed—furthering the argument that the federal government needed to do more to protect African-American citizens.

After the Radical Republicans won an overwhelming victory in congressional elections that fall, they crafted their own Reconstruction plan, placing southern states under martial law and passing other laws to restrict the powers of the president. In February 1868, Johnson moved to dismiss Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton without Senate approval during full session, which violated the Tenure of Office Act. This law had been passed by Radical Republicans a year earlier, vetoed by Johnson, and then overridden by Congress. **Stanton's dismissal triggered impeachment proceedings and the House voted to charge Johnson on eleven articles of impeachment.** The Senate tried Johnson in the spring of 1868 and voted on three of the articles, acquitting him by a single vote each time.

In 1875, Johnson felt vindicated when the citizens of Tennessee elected him to the Senate that had nearly thrown him out of the presidency, but he died a few months later on July 31, 1875 after suffering a stroke.

18. ULYSSES S. GRANT | 1869-1877



"Hold fast to the Bible as the sheet-anchor of your liberties; write its precepts in your hearts, and practice them in your lives. To the influence of this Book we are indebted for all the progress made in true civilization, and to this we must look as our guide in the future."
-Ulysses S Grant

"I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else."
-Ulysses S Grant

On April 27, 1822, Ulysses S. Grant was born in Point Pleasant, Ohio. Grant's father, Jesse, was a tanner and an abolitionist. Grant received an education from several private schools and later attended the United States Military Academy at West Point. After graduating in the middle of his class, Grant was stationed in Missouri where he visited with his former classmate and friend, Fred Dent. During the visit, Grant met Fred's sister, Julia, and fell in love with her. In 1848, they married and would go on to raise four children together.

After the outbreak of the Mexican-American War, Grant fought under General Zachary Taylor before resigning from the military in 1854. Julia, Ulysses, and their children moved back to her father's plantation, White Haven, in Missouri. Grant became a plantation manager, overseeing the enslaved and free laborers while working alongside them. While there are no known documents or letters related to a bill of sale, Grant did emancipate a man named William Jones in 1859. According to the signed manumission, Jones was "purchased by me [Grant] of Frederick Dent." Jones is the only known enslaved individual who was owned by Grant—though his decision

to free William rather than sell him, especially as he struggled financially, suggests that Grant had personal discomfort with slave ownership. Julia, however, had no qualms about using enslaved labor within her household and she considered those owned by her father Frederick Dent as her own.

At the onset of the Civil War, the Grants were living in Illinois after the family suffered more financial setbacks in Missouri. Ulysses was working in his father's leather store in Galena when Governor John Wood appointed him commander of an unruly volunteer regiment. By September 1861, Grant had instilled order and discipline within the unit and was rewarded with a promotion to brigadier general of the volunteer force.

In his new position, Grant captured Fort Henry and attacked Fort Donelson. When the Confederate commander asked for Grant's terms, he replied, "No terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted." The Confederates surrendered, and President Abraham Lincoln promoted Grant to major general of volunteers. A few months later, Grant secured a hard-fought victory at the Battle of Shiloh, one of the bloodiest battles in the Western Theater. The casualties concerned some officials enough to call for Grant's removal. President Lincoln defended Grant by saying, "**I can't spare this man, he fights.**"

Grant then turned his attention to Vicksburg—its location on the banks of the Mississippi River made it a key city for moving troops and supplies. On July 4, 1863, Confederate troops surrendered to Grant after a two-month siege, even though many had considered the fort at Vicksburg impregnable. Grant then followed this success by capturing Chattanooga and its important railroad depot, pushing Confederates back into Georgia. In March 1864, Lincoln appointed Grant general-in-chief. Grant's success can be credited to his military strategies and maneuvers, which made him remarkably different from his predecessors. He engaged the enemy in all theatres, drawing them into the open while exhausting their resources. His tactical planning and pursuit of **General Robert E. Lee's** forces brought the war to a close on April 9, 1865, at Appomattox Court House. With Lincoln's approval, General Grant offered generous terms of surrender that would prevent treason trials and executions.

During the years immediately following the war, General Ulysses S. Grant criticized President Andrew Johnson's Reconstruction plan and aligned himself with Radical Republicans. In the 1868 election, Grant, a military hero and symbol of the Union victory, won in a landslide.

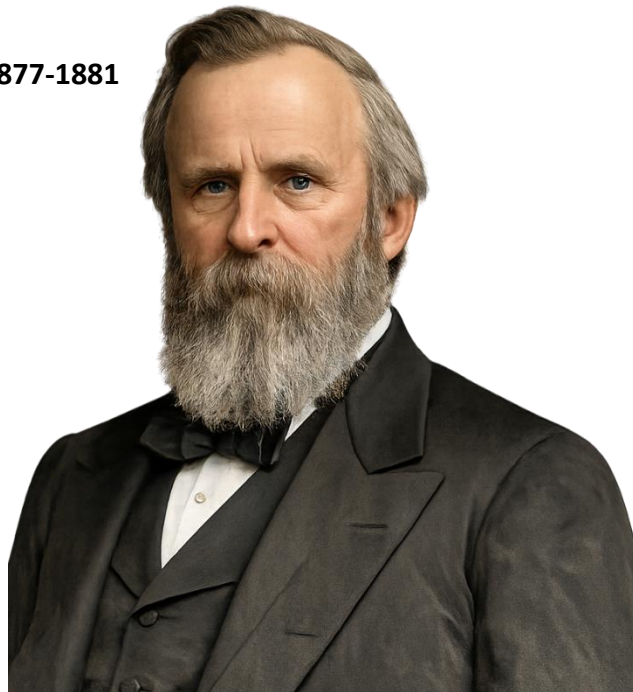
President Grant sent federal troops to the South to enforce civil rights legislation and protect African Americans from civil and political violence. With the assistance of Congress, Grant created the Department of Justice and instructed Attorney General Amos T. Akerman to suppress the newly formed Ku Klux Klan's efforts to disenfranchise and terrorize black communities.

Although personally a man of unquestioned honesty, Grant's reputation suffered from those around him. The president was often seen with two of his friends, speculators Jay Gould and James Fisk. When Grant discovered their scheme to corner the market in gold, he authorized Secretary of the Treasury George Boutwell to sell enough gold to undermine their plans. The speculation had already damaged the American economy, however, and Grant took the blame for his poor judgment in associates. Some Republican reformers seized on the scandal, accused the

administration of corruption, and nominated Horace Greeley for president. The general's allies in the Republican Party were able to fend off these attacks and Grant was reelected with an overwhelming majority of the vote in 1872. However, scandal continued to follow his administration, most notably in 1875 with the discovery of the **Whiskey Ring**. This was an extensive network of distillers, intermediaries, and government officials who engaged in bribery and extortion to avoid federal taxes on liquor. President Grant's private secretary, Orville E. Babcock, was indicted as part of the investigation but later acquitted when Grant testified on his behalf.

After retiring from the presidency, Grant's long history of financial struggles continued. He joined a financial firm, which went bankrupt, and then learned he was suffering from throat cancer in late 1884. He worked furiously to write his memoirs to pay off his debts and provide for his family. These memoirs, completed just before he died on July 23, 1885, earned nearly \$450,000. Grant's autobiography was lauded for its lucid prose and compelling story. Grant argued that the **Mexican-American War** and the expansion of slavery ultimately drove the country toward civil war. It is still regarded as one of the best first-hand accounts of the Civil War.

19. RUTHERFORD B. HAYES | 1877-1881



"The best religion the world has ever known is the religion of the Bible. It builds up all that is good." -Rutherford B Hayes

"Conscience is a revelation to man direct from his Creator." -Rutherford B Hayes

"It is now true that this is God's country, if equal rights—a fair start and an equal chance in the race of life—are everywhere secured to all." -Rutherford B Hayes

Beneficiary of one of the most fiercely disputed and controversial elections in American history, Rutherford B. Hayes brought to the Executive Mansion dignity, honesty, and moderate reform. To the delight of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Lucy Webb Hayes carried out her husband's orders to banish wines and liquors from the White House. The couple, married since 1852, had eight children together.

Born in Ohio in 1822, Hayes was educated at Kenyon College and Harvard Law School. After five years' law practice in Lower Sandusky, he moved to Cincinnati, where he flourished as a young **Whig** lawyer.

He fought in the Civil War, was wounded multiple times, and rose to the rank of brevet major general. While he was still in the army, Cincinnati Republicans ran him for the House of Representatives. He accepted the nomination, but would not campaign, explaining, "an officer fit for duty who at this crisis would abandon his post to electioneer . . . ought to be scalped."

Elected by a heavy majority, Hayes entered Congress in December 1865, troubled by the "Rebel influences . . . ruling the White House." Between 1867 and 1876, he served three terms as governor of Ohio.

Hayes became a viable Republican candidate in 1876, as delegates held him in high regard for his integrity, party loyalty, and war record. He ran against Democratic candidate **Samuel Tilden** of New York, who won the popular vote but disputed results in Louisiana, South Carolina, Florida, and Oregon ensured that neither candidate had a majority of Electoral College votes. Conflicting electors sent votes to Congress, which only added to the confusion.

Months of uncertainty followed. In January 1877 Congress established an Electoral Commission to decide the dispute. The commission, made up of eight Republicans and seven Democrats, determined all the contests in favor of Hayes by eight to seven. The final electoral vote: 185 to 184. Northern Republicans had been promising southern Democrats at least one cabinet post, federal patronage, subsidies for internal improvements, and withdrawal of troops from Louisiana and South Carolina.

Hayes insisted that his appointments must be made on merit, not political considerations. For his cabinet he chose moderate politicians of high caliber, but outraged some Republicans because one member was an ex-Confederate and another had bolted the party as a Liberal Republican in 1872.

Hayes supported African Americans' right to vote and insisted that southern Democrats recognize and uphold their civil rights. However, once federal troops were removed from Louisiana and South Carolina, Republican resistance crumbled and Democrats reclaimed political power across the South. They disenfranchised Black voters through **literacy tests** and **poll taxes**, using coercion and violence to oppress African Americans.

Many of the leaders of the new South did indeed favor Republican economic policies and approved of Hayes's financial conservatism, but they faced annihilation at the polls if they were to join the party of Reconstruction. Hayes and his Republican successors were persistent in their efforts but could not win over the "solid South."

Hayes had announced in advance that he would serve only one term, and retired to Spiegel Grove, his home in Fremont, Ohio, in 1881. In his later years, he supported **universal education**, improving **prison conditions**, and **assisting veterans with their pensions**. He died on January 17, 1893.

20. JAMES A. GARFIELD | 1881



As the last of the log cabin presidents, James A. Garfield attacked political corruption and won back for the presidency a measure of prestige it had lost during the Reconstruction period. He was born in Cuyahoga County, Ohio, on November 19, 1831. Fatherless at two, he later drove canal boat teams, somehow earning enough money for an education. He graduated from Williams College in Massachusetts in 1856, and he returned to the Western Reserve Eclectic Institute (later Hiram College) in Ohio as a classics professor. Within a year he was made its president. Through his academic pursuits, he met fellow student Lucretia Rudolph, who would become his wife in 1858. The Garfields went on to have seven children together.

Garfield was elected to the Ohio Senate in 1859 as a Republican. During the secession crisis, he advocated coercing the seceding states back into the Union. In 1862, when Union military victories had been few, he successfully led a brigade at Middle Creek, Kentucky, against Confederate troops. At 31, Garfield became a brigadier general, two years later a major general of volunteers.

Meanwhile, in 1862, Ohioans elected him to Congress. President Lincoln persuaded him to resign his commission—it was easier to find major generals than to obtain effective Republicans for Congress. Garfield repeatedly won reelection for 18 years, and became the leading Republican in the House.

At the 1880 Republican convention, Garfield failed to win the presidential nomination for his friend John Sherman. Finally, on the 36th ballot, Garfield himself became the “dark horse” nominee. By a margin of less than 10,000 popular votes, Garfield defeated the Democratic nominee, **General Winfield Scott Hancock**.

As president, Garfield strengthened federal authority over the New York Customs House, stronghold of **Senator Roscoe Conkling**, who was leader of the Stalwart Republicans and dispenser of patronage in New York. When Garfield submitted to the Senate a list of appointments including many of Conkling’s friends, he named Conkling's arch-rival **William H. Robertson** to run the Customs House. Conkling contested the nomination, tried to persuade the Senate to block it, and appealed to the Republican caucus to compel its withdrawal.

But Garfield would not submit: “This . . . will settle the question whether the president is registering clerk of the Senate or the Executive of the United States . . . shall the principal port of entry . . . be under the control of the administration or under the local control of a factional senator.”

Conkling maneuvered to have the Senate confirm Garfield’s uncontested nominations and adjourn without acting on Robertson. Garfield countered by withdrawing all nominations except Robertson’s; the senators would have to confirm him or sacrifice all the appointments of Conkling’s friends.

In a final desperate move, Conkling and his fellow-senator from New York resigned, confident that their legislature would vindicate their stand and re-elect them. Instead, the legislature elected two other men; the Senate confirmed Robertson. Garfield’s victory was complete.

On July 2, 1881, Garfield was shot by a man named Charles Guiteau at the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad Station in Washington, D.C. Guiteau, who believed he had helped Garfield win the presidency, was angry that the president did not give him a consulship abroad.

Mortally wounded, Garfield lay in the White House for weeks. Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone, tried unsuccessfully to find the bullet with an induction-balance electrical device that he had designed. On September 6, Garfield was taken to the New Jersey seaside. For a few days he seemed to be recuperating, but on September 19, 1881, he died from an infection and internal hemorrhage.

21. CHESTER A. ARTHUR | 1881-1885



"Peace without and prosperity within have been vouchsafed to us... [let us] make it fitting that we should rejoice with thankfulness that the Lord in His infinite mercy has most signally favored our country and our people". -Chester A Arthur

"For these manifestations of His favor we owe to Him who holds our destiny in His hands the tribute of our grateful devotion". -Chester A Arthur

"Let us then rest humbly in the hope authorized by the Divine teachings that the united cry of the Nation will be heard on high and answered with blessings". -Chester A Arthur

Dignified, tall, and handsome, Chester A. Arthur looked like a president. The son of a Baptist preacher who had emigrated from Northern Ireland, Arthur was born on October 5, 1829 in Fairfield, Vermont. He graduated from Union College in 1848, taught school, was admitted to the bar, and practiced law in New York City. Early in the Civil War he served as quartermaster general in the New York Volunteers. In 1859, Arthur married Ellen "Nell" Herndon, with whom he had three children.

President Grant in 1871 appointed him collector of the Port of New York. Arthur effectively marshaled the thousand Customs House employees under his supervision on behalf of Roscoe Conkling's Stalwart Republican machine. Honorable in his personal life and his public career, Arthur nevertheless was a firm believer in the spoils system when it was coming under vehement attack from reformers. He insisted upon honest administration of the Customs House, but staffed it with more employees than it needed, retaining them for their merit as party workers rather than as government officials.

In 1878 President Hayes, attempting to reform the Customs House, ousted Arthur. Conkling and his followers tried to win redress by fighting for the renomination of Grant at the 1880 Republican convention. Failing, they reluctantly accepted the nomination of Arthur for the vice presidency.

During his brief tenure as vice president, Arthur stood firmly beside Conkling in his patronage struggle against President Garfield. But when Arthur succeeded to the presidency, he was eager to prove himself above machine politics. Tragically, Nell never saw her husband become president. She died of pneumonia in 1880. Arthur mourned her loss throughout his administration and his sister, Mary, served as his White House hostess.

Avoiding old political friends, he became a man of fashion in his garb and associates, and often was seen with the elite of Washington, New York, and Newport. To the indignation of the Stalwart Republicans, the onetime collector of the Port of New York became, as president, a champion of civil service reform. Public pressure, heightened by the assassination of Garfield, forced an unwieldy Congress to heed the president.

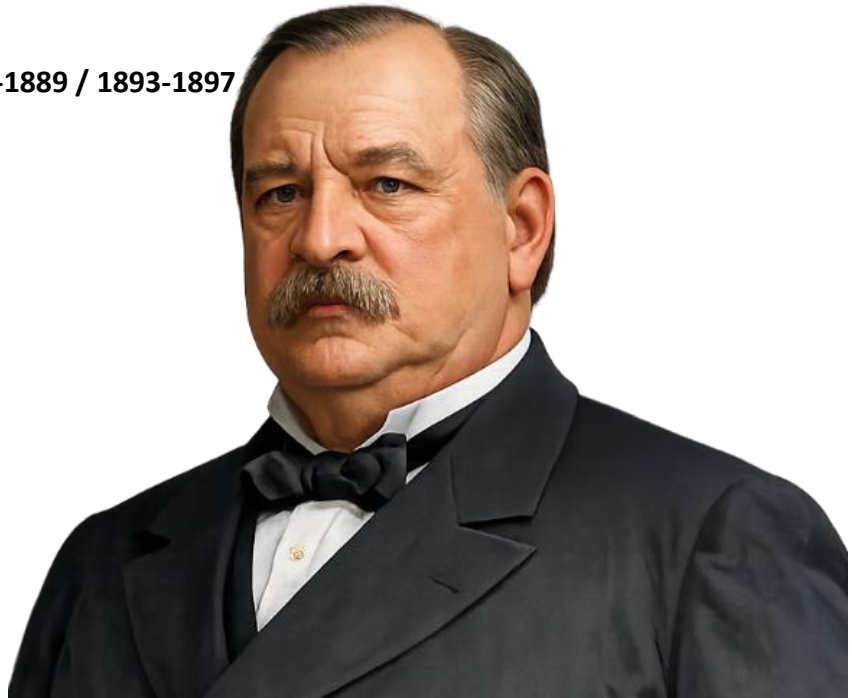
In 1883 Congress passed the **Pendleton Act**, which established a bipartisan Civil Service Commission, forbade levying political assessments against officeholders, and provided for a “classified system” that made certain government positions obtainable only through competitive written examinations. The system protected employees against removal for political reasons.

Acting independently of party dogma, Arthur also tried to lower tariff rates so the government would not be embarrassed by annual surpluses of revenue. Congress raised about as many rates as it trimmed, but Arthur signed the **Tariff Act of 1883**. Aggrieved westerners and southerners looked to the Democratic Party for redress, and the tariff began to emerge as a major political issue between the two parties.

In 1882, Congress passed the **Chinese Exclusion Act**, which set a 10-year moratorium on Chinese immigration. President Arthur vetoed the first version of the bill, which called for banning Chinese laborers for twenty years and denying citizenship to those already in the country. He later signed the second iteration into law, and for the first time the federal government prohibited a specific ethnic group from entering the United States because they were viewed as a threat to the general population.

Arthur demonstrated as president that he was above factions within the Republican Party, if indeed not above the party itself. Perhaps in part his reason was the well-kept secret he had known since a year after he succeeded to the presidency, that he was suffering from Bright's Disease, a fatal kidney disease. He kept himself in the running for the presidential nomination in 1884 in order not to appear fearful of defeat, but was not renominated, and died on November 18, 1886. Publisher Alexander K. McClure recalled, “No man ever entered the presidency so profoundly and widely distrusted, and no one ever retired . . . more generally respected.”

22. GROVER CLEVELAND | 1885-1889 / 1893-1897



"All must admit that the reception of the teachings of Christ results in the purest patriotism, in the most scrupulous fidelity to public trust, and in the best type of citizenship."

-Grover Cleveland

"I know there is a Supreme Being who rules the affairs of men and whose goodness and mercy have always followed the American people, and I know He will not turn from us now if we humbly and reverently seek His powerful aid." -Grover Cleveland

"The citizen is a better business man if he is a Christian gentleman, and surely business is not the less prosperous and successful if conducted on Christian principles..." -Grover Cleveland

"And let us not trust to human effort alone, but humbly acknowledging the power and goodness of Almighty God..." -Grover Cleveland

The first Democrat elected after the Civil War, Grover Cleveland was also the first president to serve non-consecutive terms. One of nine children of Presbyterian minister Richard Falley Cleveland and Ann Neal, Cleveland was born on March 18, 1837 in Caldwell, New Jersey.

He was raised in upstate New York. As a lawyer in Buffalo, he became notable for his intense concentration upon whatever task faced him. At 44, he emerged into a political prominence that carried him to the White House in three years. Running as a reformer, he was elected mayor of Buffalo in 1881, and later, governor of New York. Cleveland won the presidency with the support of Democrats and reform-minded Republicans, the "**Mugwumps**," who disliked his opponent James G. Blaine of Maine.

The 1884 presidential contest was a no-holds-barred fight. The Democratic Party portrayed Blaine as an immoral and corrupt politician while stressing Cleveland's appeal as an honest civil servant. At the same time, Republicans accused him of avoiding military service during the Civil War, and called him "the hangman of Buffalo" for personally hanging two criminals while serving as sheriff. The most serious allegation against Cleveland revolved around his relationship with Maria Halpin. She accused Cleveland of assaulting and impregnating her in 1874. He never denied paternity and arranged for Maria to be institutionalized against her will so that he could take custody of the child, whom he named Oscar Folsom Cleveland. During the 1884 election, Democratic Party strategists insisted that Maria had slept with several men, including Cleveland's deceased law partner, Oscar Folsom, and that Cleveland only claimed the child to protect Folsom's marriage. However, there is no evidence to suggest Halpin ever had a relationship with Folsom. Nonetheless, the revelation did not sink Cleveland's chances and he narrowly defeated Blaine. The campaign also inspired the famous ditty:

"Ma! Ma! Where's my pa! Gone to the White House, Ha! Ha! Ha!"

Cleveland did not care for the extravagance of the Washington social scene; he asked his sister, Rose, to accompany him to the White House to serve as its hostess early on in his administration. He also began courting Frances Folsom, the young daughter of Oscar Folsom, and the two married on June 2, 1886 in the Blue Room of the White House. The couple had five children together.

Cleveland vigorously pursued a policy barring special favors to any economic group. Vetoing a bill to appropriate \$10,000 to distribute seed grain among drought-stricken farmers in Texas, he wrote: "federal aid in such cases encourages the expectation of paternal care on the part of the government and weakens the sturdiness of our national character."

He also vetoed many private pension bills to Civil War veterans whose claims were fraudulent. When Congress, pressured by the Grand Army of the Republic, passed a bill granting pensions for disabilities not caused by military service, Cleveland vetoed that as well. Until the administration of Franklin Roosevelt, **Cleveland issued more vetoes than any other president in history.**

He angered the railroads by ordering an investigation of western lands they held by government grant. He forced them to return 81,000,000 acres. He also signed the **Interstate Commerce Act**, the first law attempting federal regulation of the railroads.

In December 1887 he called on Congress to reduce high protective tariffs. Told that he had given Republicans an effective issue for the campaign of 1888, he retorted,

"What is the use of being elected or reelected unless you stand for something?"

But Cleveland was defeated in 1888; although he won a larger popular majority than the Republican candidate Benjamin Harrison, he received fewer Electoral College votes.

Elected again in 1892, Cleveland faced an acute economic depression. He dealt directly with the Treasury crisis rather than with business failures, farm mortgage foreclosures, and unemployment. He obtained repeal of the mildly inflationary **Sherman Silver Purchase Act** and, with the aid of Wall Street, replenished the Treasury's gold reserves.

When railroad strikers in Chicago violated an injunction, Cleveland sent federal troops to enforce it. **“If it takes the entire army and navy of the United States to deliver a post card in Chicago,”** he thundered, **“that card will be delivered.”** 150,000 railroad workers across the country supported the **Pullman Strike**. The arrival of the military sparked violence between troops and workers, resulting in dozens of deaths and millions of dollars in damage.

Some citizens appreciated Cleveland’s blunt treatment of the railroad strikers, but his aggressive approach drove many workers and labor activists from the Democratic Party. His policies to combat the country’s economic woes were generally unpopular, and as a result he declined to run for another term. After leaving the White House, Cleveland lived in retirement in Princeton, New Jersey. He died on June 24, 1908.

23. BENJAMIN HARRISON | 1889-1893



Prayer steadies one when he is walking in slippery places - even if things asked for are not given.” -Benjamin Harrison

“God forbid that the day should ever come when, in the American mind, the thought of man as a consumer shall submerge the old American thought of man as a creature of God, endowed with unalienable rights.” -Benjamin Harrison

“We Americans have no commission from God to police the world.” -Benjamin Harrison

“If you take out of your statutes, your constitution, your family life all that is taken from the Sacred Book, what would there be left to bind society together?” -Benjamin Harrison

Nominated for president on the eighth ballot at the 1888 Republican convention, Benjamin Harrison conducted one of the first **"front-porch" campaigns**, delivering short speeches to delegates that visited him in Indianapolis. As he was only 5 feet, 6 inches tall, Democrats called him "Little Ben"; Republicans replied he was big enough to wear the hat of his grandfather, "Old Tippecanoe."

Born on August 20, 1833 on a farm by the Ohio River west of Cincinnati, Harrison attended Miami University in Ohio and read law in Cincinnati. He moved to Indianapolis, where he practiced law and campaigned for the Republican Party. He married Caroline Lavinia Scott in 1853 and they had two children together. After the Civil War — he served in the 70th Regiment of Indiana Volunteers and rose to the rank of brigadier general — Harrison became a pillar of Indianapolis, enhancing his reputation as a brilliant lawyer.

The Democrats defeated him for governor of Ohio in 1876 by ridiculing him as "Kid Gloves" Harrison. In the 1880s, he represented Indiana in the United States Senate, where he advocated for protective tariffs, conservation of western lands, and pensions for Civil War veterans. He also opposed supporting legislation to exclude Chinese immigrants from entering the United States.

In the 1888 presidential election, Harrison received about 90,000 fewer popular votes than Cleveland, but carried the Electoral College 233 to 168. Although Harrison had made no political bargains, his supporters had given innumerable pledges upon his behalf.

Harrison was proud of the vigorous foreign policy that he helped shape. The first **Pan-American Conference** met in Washington in 1889, establishing an information center that later became the **Pan-American Union**. Harrison also negotiated a series of trade agreements, believing that reciprocity between friendly nations would generate economic growth and foster diplomatic relations. At the end of his administration, Harrison submitted to the Senate a treaty to annex Hawaii; to his disappointment, President Cleveland later withdrew it.

Substantial appropriation bills were signed by Harrison for internal improvements, naval expansion, and subsidies for steamship lines. **For the first time except in war, Congress appropriated a billion dollars.** When critics attacked the "billion-dollar Congress," Speaker **Thomas B. Reed** replied, "This is a billion-dollar country." President Harrison also signed the **Sherman Anti-Trust Act** "to protect trade and commerce against unlawful restraints and monopolies," the first federal act attempting to regulate trusts.

The most perplexing domestic problem Harrison faced was the tariff issue. The high tariff rates in effect had created a surplus of money in the Treasury. Low-tariff advocates argued that the surplus was hurting business. Republican leaders in Congress successfully met the challenge. Representative William McKinley and Senator Nelson Aldrich framed a still higher tariff bill; some rates were intentionally prohibitive. Harrison tried to make the tariff more acceptable by writing in reciprocity provisions. To cope with the Treasury surplus, the tariff was removed from imported raw sugar; sugar growers within the United States were given two cents a pound bounty on their production.

Harrison endorsed two bills designed to protect civil rights for African Americans, and vigorously enforced the **15th Amendment—the right to vote**. He also appointed **Frederick Douglass** to serve as the U.S. Minister to Haiti, and relied on his counsel frequently.

Long before the end of Harrison's term, the Treasury surplus had evaporated, and prosperity seemed about to disappear as well. Congressional elections in 1890 went stingingly against the Republicans, and party leaders began to distance themselves from President Harrison although he had cooperated with Congress on party legislation. Nevertheless, his party renominated him in 1892, but he was defeated by Grover Cleveland. Just two weeks before the 1892 election, First Lady Caroline Harrison died of tuberculosis. For the remainder of his term, their daughter, Mary, served as White House hostess. After leaving office, Harrison returned to Indianapolis, and later married his deceased wife's niece, Mary Dimmick, in 1896. He died on March 13, 1901.

24. GROVER CLEVELAND

25. WILLIAM MCKINLEY | 1897-1901



"The future is ours to win or lose, and we must win it for Christ." -William McKinley

"Our faith is the foundation of our strength and the source of our hope." -William McKinley

"Let us trust in God and do our duty." -William McKinley

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." -William McKinley

"In times of trial, we must look to the Lord for guidance and strength." -William McKinley

"A nation that forgets God will be forsaken by Him." -William McKinley

At the 1896 Republican convention, in time of depression, the wealthy Cleveland businessman Marcus Alonzo Hanna ensured the nomination of his friend William McKinley as the “the advance agent of prosperity.” The Democrats, advocating the “free and unlimited coinage of both silver and gold”, which would have mildly inflated the currency, nominated **William Jennings Bryan**. While Hanna amassed large contributions from eastern Republicans frightened by Bryan’s views on silver, McKinley met delegations on his front porch in Canton, Ohio. He won a decisive victory over the Democratic candidate.

Born on January 29, 1843 in Niles, Ohio, McKinley briefly attended Allegheny College, and was teaching in a country school when the Civil War broke out. Enlisting as a private in the Union Army, he rose through the ranks to brevet major, serving on Colonel Rutherford B. Hayes' staff. After the war, he studied law, opened an office in Canton, Ohio, and married Ida Saxton, daughter of a local banker. The couple had two daughters, Katherine and Ida, but neither reached adulthood.

At age 34, McKinley began his first of seven terms in the House of Representatives. His attractive personality, exemplary character, and quick intelligence enabled him to rise rapidly. He was appointed to the powerful **House Ways and Means Committee**. Robert M. La Follette Sr., who served with him, recalled that he generally “represented the newer view,” and “on the great new questions . . . was generally on the side of the public and against private interests.” During his 14 years in the House, he became the leading Republican tariff expert, lending his name to the legislation enacted in 1890. The next year he was elected governor of Ohio, serving two terms.

When McKinley became president, **the Panic of 1893** had almost run its course and with it the extreme agitation over silver. Deferring action on the money question, he called Congress into special session to enact the highest tariff in history.

In the business-friendly atmosphere of the McKinley administration, industries and companies developed at an unprecedented pace. Newspapers caricatured McKinley as a little boy led around by “Nursie” Hanna, the representative of the trusts. However, McKinley was not controlled by Hanna; he condemned the trusts as “dangerous conspiracies against the public good.”

Foreign policy came to dominate McKinley's first term in office. Spain's repressive rule over Cuba resulted in rebellion, followed by a brutal campaign to cease hostilities on the island. American businesses and individuals lobbied for the United States to intervene, as they not only had investments in Cuba but also visions for something more. McKinley later sent the USS Maine to protect American interests; on February 15, 1898, there was an explosion aboard the ship that killed 266 crew members. With no other diplomatic recourse, McKinley asked Congress to declare war, which it did on April 25, 1898. In about 100 days' time, the United States defeated Spain.

The Paris Peace Treaty was signed on December 10, 1898. The United States received Guam and Puerto Rico, paid \$20 million for the Philippine Islands, and promised to support an independent Cuba while occupying it for the time being. Earlier that year, Congress had also voted to support the annexation of the Kingdom of Hawai'i. All of these measures were supported by McKinley, now considered the architect of the modern American empire. While these actions enhanced American clout on the international stage and offered new opportunities for trade and economic

development, not all populations were grateful for the American efforts. In the Philippines, nationalist leader **Emilio Aguinaldo** revolted against the Americans for three years, arguing that they were colonizers just like the Spanish. The conflict resulted in the deaths of more than 5,000 Americans and hundreds of thousands of Filipinos, who died from fighting, famine, or disease.

In 1900, McKinley again campaigned against Bryan. While Bryan inveighed against imperialism, McKinley quietly stood for "the full dinner pail." His second term, which had begun auspiciously, came to a tragic end in September 1901. He was standing in a receiving line at the Buffalo Pan-American Exposition when an anarchist **Leon Czolgosz** shot him twice. He died eight days later on September 14, 1901.

26. THEODORE ROOSEVELT | 1901-1909



"A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education."

-Theodore Roosevelt

"Remember that the preaching does not count if it is not backed up by practice... you prove by your deeds that yours is not a lip-loyalty merely; that you show in actual practice the faith that is in you."-Theodore Roosevelt

"To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society."

-Theodore Roosevelt

"I enter a most earnest plea that in our hurried and rather bustling life of today we do not lose the hold that our forefathers had on the Bible... No educated man can afford to be ignorant of the Bible, and no uneducated man can afford to be ignorant of the Bible."

-Theodore Roosevelt

Some of his other sayings..he was famous for his one-liners.....

"The best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing."

"Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure."

"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles."

"A man who is good enough to shed his blood for his country is good enough to be given a square deal afterwards."

"The only man who never makes a mistake is the man who never does anything."

With the assassination of President McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, age 42, became the youngest president in the nation's history. He brought new excitement and power to the presidency, as he briskly led Congress and the American public toward progressive reforms and an aggressive foreign policy.

He took the view that the president as a "steward of the people" should take whatever action necessary for the public good unless expressly forbidden by law or the Constitution. "I did not usurp power," he wrote in 1913, "but I did greatly broaden the use of executive power."

Roosevelt's youth differed sharply from that of the log cabin presidents. He was born on October 27, 1858 in New York City into a wealthy family, but he too struggled—with asthma and other health ailments—and in his triumph became an advocate of the strenuous life.

In 1884, his first wife Alice Lee Roosevelt and his mother Martha died on the same day and only two days after the birth of his daughter, Alice. Roosevelt spent much of the next two years on his properties in the Dakota Badlands. There he mastered his sorrow as he lived in the saddle, driving cattle, hunting big game—he even chased outlaws as a local sheriff. Feeling reinvigorated, Roosevelt returned from the West and began courting his childhood friend Edith Carow. The couple married in London in December 1886. They raised six children together, including Alice.

During the Spanish-American War, Roosevelt resigned his position as assistant secretary of the Navy to command the U.S. Volunteer Cavalry, more famously known as the **Rough Riders**. Roosevelt led his company's charge up Kettle Hill during the Battle of **San Juan**, and his military exploits brought him considerable attention, elevating his profile within the Republican Party. In 1898, he ran for governor of New York and won; he then was asked to join the 1900 Republican ticket as a vice-president under President William McKinley.

As president, Roosevelt held the ideal that the government should be the great arbiter of the conflicting economic forces in the nation, especially between capital and labor, guaranteeing justice to each and dispensing favors to none.

Roosevelt emerged spectacularly as a “trust buster” by forcing the dissolution of a great railroad combination in the Northwest. Other antitrust suits under the **Sherman Act** followed, and his willingness to take on corporations and monopolies enhanced his popularity with the American public.

Roosevelt also steered the United States more into world politics. He liked to quote a favorite proverb,

“Speak softly and carry a big stick.”

Aware of the strategic need for a shortcut between the Atlantic and Pacific for American vessels, **Roosevelt facilitated the construction of the Panama Canal** by sending naval ships to support the Panamanians' independence movement. Once Columbia recognized Panama's independence, the new government gave the U.S. control of the canal for \$10 million and a yearly payment. Additionally, **the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine prevented the establishment of foreign bases in the Caribbean and arrogated the sole right of intervention in Latin America to the United States.**

He won the Nobel Peace Prize for mediating the **Russo-Japanese War**, the first American president to receive this honor.

Roosevelt also believed that a powerful navy was key to maintaining peace. In 1907, he sent the “Great White Fleet” around the world to demonstrate U.S. naval power and gain valuable experience on the open seas.

Some of Theodore Roosevelt's most enduring achievements were in conservation. He added enormously to the national forests in the West, reserved lands for public use, and fostered great irrigation projects.

He crusaded endlessly on matters big and small, exciting audiences with his high-pitched voice, jutting jaw, and pounding fist. **“The life of strenuous endeavor”** was a must for those around him, as he romped with his five younger children and led ambassadors on hikes through Rock Creek Park in Washington, D.C.

Leaving the presidency in 1909, Roosevelt went on an African safari, then jumped back into politics. In 1912 he ran for president on the Progressive Party ticket. To reporters he once remarked that he felt as fit as a “bull moose,” the nickname of his new party.

While campaigning in Milwaukee, he was shot in the chest by a fanatic. Roosevelt soon recovered, but his words at that time remained applicable at the time of his death on January 6, 1919:

“No man has had a happier life than I have led; a happier life in every way.”

This guy was an impressive man. DH

27. WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT | 1909-1913



This guy was a life-long Unitarian. A Unitarian is a person who belongs to a religious tradition emphasizing the belief that God is a single, unified entity. This is in direct contrast to the traditional Christian doctrine of the Trinity (which views God as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). He was wrong. But here are some of his quotes.

"I know this, and I know it from actual experience in the Orient, that the progress of modern Christian civilization has largely depended on the earnest hard work of the Christian missions of every denomination." -William Howard Taft

"I am a Unitarian. I believe in God. I do not believe in the divinity of Christ, and there are many postulates of the orthodox creed to which I cannot subscribe."
-William Howard Taft (Letter to Yale University, 1899)

"I love judges, and I love courts. They are my ideals, that typify on earth what we shall meet hereafter in heaven under a just God." -William Howard Taft

Distinguished jurist, effective administrator, but poor politician, William Howard Taft spent four uncomfortable years in the White House. Jovial and conscientious, he was caught in the intense battles between progressives and conservatives, and got scant credit for the achievements of his administration. Sound familiar?

Born in 1857, the son of a distinguished judge, he graduated from Yale, and returned to Cincinnati to study and practice law. He rose in politics through Republican judiciary appointments, through his own competence and availability.

But Taft much preferred law to politics. He was appointed a federal circuit judge at 34. He aspired to be a member of the Supreme Court, but his wife, Helen Herron Taft, held other ambitions for him.

His route to the White House came through administrative posts. President McKinley sent him to the Philippines in 1900 as chief civil administrator and he was soon appointed Governor General. He improved the economy, built roads and schools, and increased participation in government.

President Roosevelt made him secretary of war in 1904, and by 1907 had decided that Taft should be his successor. The Republican convention nominated him the next year.

Taft disliked the campaign, but pledged his fealty to the Roosevelt program, popular in the West, while his brother Charles reassured eastern Republicans. **William Jennings Bryan**, running on the Democratic ticket for a third time, complained that he was forced to oppose two candidates, a western progressive Taft and an eastern conservative Taft. Progressives were pleased with Taft's election, while conservatives were delighted to be rid of Roosevelt.

Taft recognized that his techniques would differ from those of his predecessor. Unlike Roosevelt, Taft did not believe in the stretching of presidential powers. He once commented that Roosevelt

“ought more often to have admitted the legal way of reaching the same ends.”

Taft alienated many liberal Republicans, who later formed the Progressive Party, by defending the **Payne-Aldrich Act**, which unexpectedly continued high tariff rates. A trade agreement with Canada, which Taft pushed through Congress, would have pleased eastern advocates of a low tariff, but the Canadians rejected it. He further antagonized progressives by upholding his secretary of the interior, accused of failing to carry out Roosevelt's conservation policies.

In the angry progressive onslaught against him, little attention was paid to the fact that his administration **initiated 80 antitrust suits** and that Congress submitted to the states amendments for a federal income tax and the direct election of senators. A postal savings system was established, and the **Interstate Commerce Commission** was directed to set railroad rates.

In 1912, when the Republicans renominated Taft, Roosevelt bolted the party to lead the Progressive Party, thus guaranteeing the election of Woodrow Wilson.

Taft, free of the presidency, served as professor of law at Yale until President Harding made him chief justice of the United States in 1921, a position he held until just before his death in 1930. To Taft, the Supreme Court appointment was his greatest honor; he wrote:

"I don't remember that I ever was president." -William Howard Taft

28. WOODROW WILSON | 1913-1921



Like Theodore Roosevelt before him, Woodrow Wilson regarded himself as the personal representative of the people. "No one but the president," he said, "seems to be expected . . . to look out for the general interests of the country." He developed a program of progressive reform and asserted international leadership in building a new world order. In 1917 he proclaimed American entrance into World War I a crusade to make the world "safe for democracy."

Wilson had seen the frightfulness of war. He was born in Virginia on December 28, 1856, the son of a Presbyterian minister who was a pastor in Augusta, Georgia during the Civil War, and a professor during Reconstruction in Columbia, South Carolina.

After graduation from Princeton (then the College of New Jersey) and the University of Virginia Law School, Wilson earned his doctorate at Johns Hopkins University and entered upon an academic career. In 1885 he married Ellen Louise Axson.

Wilson advanced rapidly as a young professor of political science and became president of Princeton in 1902.

His growing national reputation led some conservative Democrats to consider him presidential timber. First, they persuaded him to run for governor of New Jersey in 1910. In the campaign he asserted his independence of the conservatives and of the machine that had nominated him, endorsing a progressive platform, which he pursued as governor.

He was nominated for president at the 1912 Democratic Convention and campaigned on a program called the New Freedom, which included tariff reductions, banking reform, and strengthened anti-trust legislation. In a three-way election against President Taft and Former President Roosevelt, he received a plurality of the popular vote, but an overwhelming majority of the electoral votes.

Wilson maneuvered through Congress three major pieces of legislation. The first was a lower tariff, the **Underwood Act**; attached to the measure was a **graduated federal income tax**. The passage of the **Federal Reserve Act** provided the nation with the more elastic money supply it badly needed. In 1914 antitrust legislation established a **Federal Trade Commission** to prohibit unfair business practices.

Another burst of new laws followed in 1916. One prohibited child labor; another limited railroad workers to an eight-hour day. By virtue of this legislation and the slogan "he kept us out of war," Wilson narrowly won reelection.

But after the election Wilson concluded that America could not remain neutral in the World War.

On April 2, 1917, he asked Congress for a declaration of war on Germany.

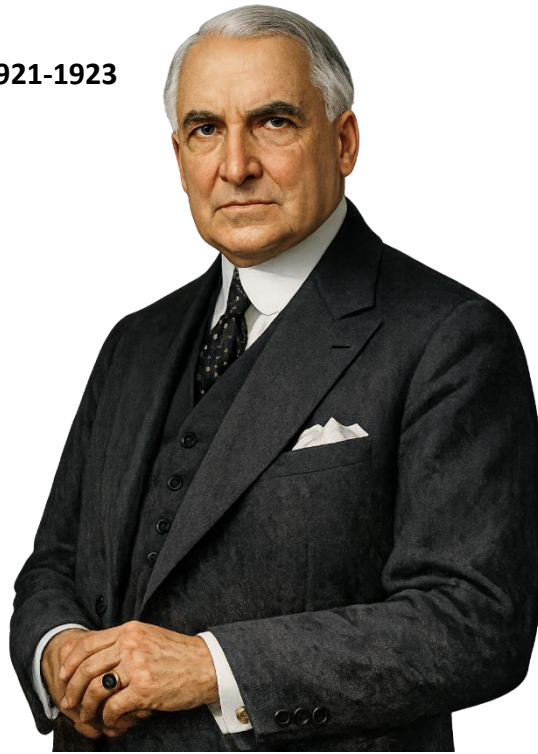
Massive American effort slowly tipped the balance in favor of the Allies. Wilson went before Congress in January 1918 to enunciate American war aims—the Fourteen Points, the last of which would establish "a general association of nations . . . affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike."

After the Germans signed the Armistice in November 1918, Wilson went to Paris to try to build an enduring peace. He later presented to the Senate the **Versailles Treaty**, containing the **Covenant of the League of Nations**, and asked, "Dare we reject it and break the heart of the world?"

But the election of 1918 had shifted the balance in Congress to the Republicans. By seven votes, the Versailles Treaty failed in the Senate.

The president, against the warnings of his doctors, had made a national tour to mobilize public sentiment for the treaty. Exhausted, he suffered a stroke in October 1919 and nearly died. He was tenderly nursed by his second wife, Edith Bolling Galt, who kept away most visitors and made a number of key decisions herself. After leaving office, Wilson lived in Washington, D.C., until his death on February 3, 1924.

29. WARREN G. HARDING | 1921-1923



“I am not fit for this office and never should have been here.” — Warren G. Harding

“Inherent rights are from God, and the tragedies of the world originate in their attempted denial.” — Warren Gamaliel Harding

“We must have a citizenship less concerned about what the government can do for it and more anxious about what it can do for the nation.” — Warren G. Harding

“Our most dangerous tendency is to expect too much of government, and at the same time do for it too little.”

Before his nomination, Warren G. Harding declared, “America’s present need is not heroics, but healing; not nostrums, but normalcy; not revolution, but restoration; not agitation, but adjustment; not surgery, but serenity; not the dramatic, but the dispassionate; not the experiment, but equipoise; not submergence in internationality, but sustainment in triumphant nationality.”

A Democratic leader (and Woodrow Wilson’s son-in-law), William Gibbs McAdoo, called Harding’s speeches “an army of pompous phrases moving across the landscape in search of an idea.” That’s kinda funny. Their very murkiness was effective, since Harding’s pronouncements remained unclear on the League of Nations, in contrast to the impassioned crusade of the Democratic ticket, Governor James M. Cox of Ohio and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Thirty-one distinguished Republicans had signed a manifesto assuring voters that a vote for Harding was a vote for the League. But Harding interpreted his election as a mandate to stay out of the League of Nations.

Harding was born near Marion, Ohio in 1865. He maintained a lifelong connection to the town, purchasing and operating The Marion Daily Star newspaper from 1884 until 1923. He married Florence Kling De Wolfe on July 8, 1891 and the couple settled in Marion where they were active community members. In addition to operating the newspaper, Harding was a trustee of the Trinity Baptist Church and a leader in fraternal organizations and charitable enterprises. During Harding's presidential run he launched a "front porch campaign," showcasing his hometown and demonstrating that he was a man of the people.

Harding's undeviating Republicanism and vibrant speaking voice, plus his willingness to let the machine bosses set policies, led him far in Ohio politics. He served in the state Senate and as lieutenant governor, and successfully ran for governor. He delivered the nominating address for President Taft at the 1912 Republican Convention. In 1914 he was elected to the Senate, which he found "a very pleasant place."

An Ohio crony, Harry Daugherty, promoted Harding for the 1920 Republican nomination because, he later explained, "He looked like a president." At the 1920 Republican convention when the principal candidates deadlocked, the party turned to Harding. He won the presidential election by 60 percent of the popular vote.

Republicans in Congress easily got the president's signature on their bills. They eliminated wartime controls and slashed taxes, established a federal budget system, restored the high protective tariff, and imposed tight limitations upon immigration.

By 1923 the postwar depression seemed to be giving way to a new surge of prosperity, and newspapers hailed Harding as a wise statesman carrying out his campaign promise

—"Less government in business and more business in government."

Behind the facade, not all of Harding's administration was so impressive. Harding's secretary of the interior, **Albert Bacon Fall**, participated in the secret leasing of federal oil reserves, resulting in the **Teapot Dome Scandal**. When the incident came to light, Congress directed Harding to cancel the oil leases. Word began to reach the president that some of his friends were using their official positions for their own enrichment. Alarmed, he complained,

"My...friends...they're the ones that keep me walking the floors nights!"

Although Harding was not directly implicated in the scandal, looking wan and depressed, he journeyed westward in the summer of 1923, taking with him his upright secretary of commerce, **Herbert Hoover**. "If you knew of a great scandal in our administration," he asked Hoover, "would you for the good of the country and the party expose it publicly or would you bury it?" Hoover urged publishing it, but Harding feared the political repercussions.

Harding did not live to find out how the public would react to the Teapot Dome scandals of his administration. In August 1923, he died in San Francisco. He suffered a fatal cardiovascular event, likely a heart attack.

30. CALVIN COOLIDGE | 1923-1929



"It is only when men begin to worship that they begin to grow." -Calvin Coolidge

"We cannot do everything at once, but we can do something at once." -Calvin Coolidge

"The strength of a nation derives from the integrity of the home." -Calvin Coolidge

"If you see ten troubles coming down the road, you can be sure that nine will run into the ditch before they reach you." -Calvin Coolidge

"The American Revolution represented the informed and mature convictions of a great mass of independent, liberty-loving, God-fearing people who knew their rights, and possessed the courage to dare to maintain them." -Calvin Coolidge

At 2:30 on the morning of August 3, 1923, while visiting in Vermont, Calvin Coolidge received word that Warren G. Harding was dead and he was president. By the light of a kerosene lamp, his father, who was a notary public, administered the oath of office as Coolidge placed his hand on the family Bible. Coolidge was "distinguished for character more than for heroic achievement," wrote one Democratic admirer, Alfred E. Smith. "His great task was to restore the dignity and prestige of the presidency when it had reached the lowest ebb in our history ...in a time of extravagance and waste...."

Born in Plymouth, Vermont, on July 4, 1872, Coolidge was the son of a village storekeeper. He graduated from Amherst College with honors, and entered law and politics in Northampton, Massachusetts. Slowly, methodically, he went up the political ladder from councilman in Northampton to governor of Massachusetts, as a Republican. En route he became thoroughly conservative.

As president, Coolidge demonstrated his determination to preserve the old moral and economic precepts amid the material prosperity which many Americans were enjoying. He refused to use federal economic power to check the growing boom or to ameliorate the depressed condition of agriculture and certain industries. His first message to Congress in December 1923 called for isolation in foreign policy, and for tax cuts, economy, and limited aid to farmers.

He rapidly became popular. In 1924, as the beneficiary of what was becoming known as "Coolidge prosperity," he received more than 54 percent of the popular vote. In his Inaugural Address he asserted that the country had achieved "a state of contentment seldom before seen," and pledged himself to maintain the status quo. In subsequent years he twice vetoed farm relief bills, and killed a plan to produce cheap federal electric power on the Tennessee River.

The political genius of President Coolidge, Walter Lippmann pointed out in 1926, was his talent for effectively doing nothing: "This active inactivity suits the mood and certain of the needs of the country admirably. It suits all the business interests which want to be let alone... And it suits all those who have become convinced that government in this country has become dangerously complicated and top-heavy..."

Although Coolidge was known popularly as "Silent Cal," he was one of the most accessible presidents to date. He once explained to the financier Bernard Baruch why he often sat silently through interviews: "Well, Baruch, many times I say only 'yes' or 'no' to people. Even that is too much. It winds them up for twenty minutes more." Nonetheless, Coolidge understood the growing importance of the media, and allowed himself to be photographed frequently, often while greeting delegations to the White House.

Both his dry Yankee wit and his frugality with words became legendary. His wife, Grace Goodhue Coolidge, recounted that a young woman sitting next to Coolidge at a dinner party confided to him she had bet she could get at least three words of conversation from him. Without looking at her he quietly retorted, "You lose." In 1928, while vacationing in the Black Hills of South Dakota, he issued the most famous of his laconic statements: "I do not choose to run for president in 1928."

Despite his popularity, Coolidge's time in the White House was touched by tragedy. On July 7, 1924, the president's son, Calvin Jr., died at Walter Reed Hospital of blood poisoning. Calvin Jr. sustained a small blister on his toe while playing tennis on the White House Grounds with his older brother. An infection soon appeared, and he was hospitalized after developing a fever. President Coolidge was deeply affected by the loss of his son and mourned throughout the remainder of his time in office.

By the time the disaster of the Great Depression hit the country, Coolidge was in retirement. Before his death in January 1933, he confided to an old friend, "I feel I no longer fit in with these times."

31. HERBERT HOOVER | 1929-1933



“I believe not only that religious faith will be victorious, but that it is vital to humankind that it shall be. We may differ in form and particulars in our religious faith. Those are matters that are sacred to each of our inner sanctuaries. It is our privilege to decline to argue them. Their real demonstration is the lives that we live” -Herbert Hoover

“I come of Quaker stock. My ancestors were persecuted for their beliefs. Here they sought and found religious freedom. By blood and conviction I stand for religious tolerance both in act and in spirit.”-Herbert Hoover

***“The whole inspiration of our civilization springs from the teachings of Christ and the lessons of the prophets. To read the Bible for these fundamentals is a necessity of American life.”
-Herbert Hoover***

“Honest differences of views and honest debate are not disunity. They are the vital process of policy making among free men.” -Herbert Hoover

Son of a Quaker blacksmith, Herbert Clark Hoover brought to the presidency a luminous reputation as an engineer, administrator, and humanitarian. Born in West Branch, Iowa on August 10, 1874, Hoover grew up in Newberg, Oregon with his uncle after the deaths of his parents.

He married his Stanford sweetheart, Lou Henry, and they went to China, where he worked for a private corporation as China’s leading engineer. In June 1900 the **Boxer Rebellion** caught the Hoovers in Tientsin. For almost a month the settlement was under heavy fire. While his wife worked in the hospitals, Hoover directed the building of barricades.

One week before Hoover celebrated his 40th birthday in London, Germany declared war on France, and the American Consul General asked his help in getting stranded tourists home. In six weeks his committee helped 120,000 Americans return to the United States. Next Hoover turned to a far more difficult task, to feed Belgium, which had been overrun by the German army.

After the United States entered the war, President Wilson appointed Hoover head of the U.S. Food Administration. He succeeded in cutting consumption of foods needed overseas and avoided rationing at home, yet kept the Allies fed.

After the Armistice, Hoover, a member of the **Supreme Economic Council** and head of the **American Relief Administration**, organized shipments of food for millions of starving people in Central Europe. He extended aid to famine-stricken Soviet Russia in 1921. When a critic inquired if he was not thus helping Bolshevism, Hoover retorted, "Twenty million people are starving. Whatever their politics, they shall be fed!"

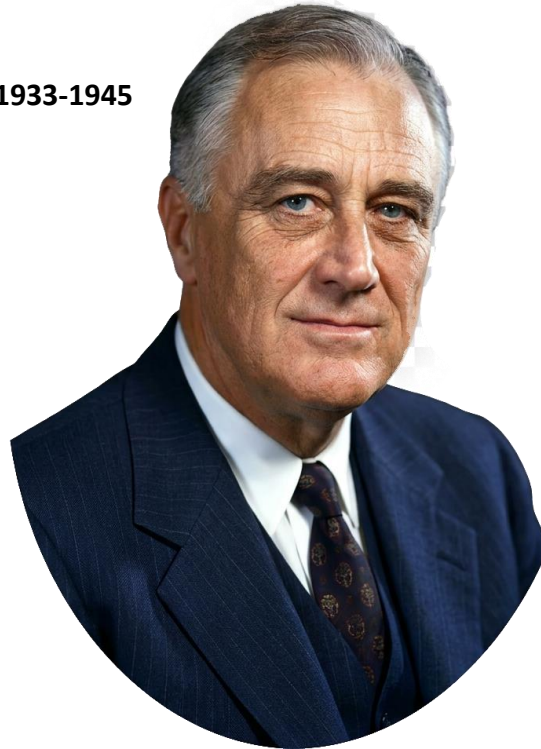
After capably serving as secretary of commerce under Presidents Harding and Coolidge, Hoover became the Republican presidential nominee in 1928. He said then: "We in America today are nearer to the final triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of any land." His election over New York Governor Al Smith seemed to ensure prosperity. Yet within months the stock market crashed, and the nation spiraled downward into depression.

After the crash Hoover announced that while he would keep the federal budget balanced, he would cut taxes and expand public works spending. In 1931 repercussions from Europe deepened the crisis, even though the president presented to Congress a program asking for creation of the **Reconstruction Finance Corporation to aid business**, additional help for farmers facing mortgage foreclosures, banking reform, a loan to states for feeding the unemployed, expansion of public works, and drastic limitations on government spending. At the same time he insisted that while people must not suffer from hunger and cold, caring for them must be primarily a local and voluntary responsibility.

Hoover's opponents in Congress, who he felt were sabotaging his program for their own political gain, painted him as a callous leader. Hoover became the scapegoat for the **Great Depression** and was badly defeated by Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932. In the 1930s he became a powerful critic of the New Deal, warning against tendencies toward statism.

In 1947 President Truman appointed Hoover to a commission, which elected him chairman, to reorganize the Executive Departments. He was appointed chairman of a similar commission by President Eisenhower in 1953. Many economies resulted from both commissions' recommendations. Over the years, Hoover wrote a large number of articles and books, one of which he was working on when he died of intestinal cancer at 90 in New York City on October 20, 1964.

32. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT | 1933-1945



"The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." –Franklin D. Roosevelt.

***"We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future."
– FDR***

"In teaching this democratic faith to American children, we need the sustaining, buttressing aid of those great ethical religious teachings which are the heritage of our modern civilization. For 'not upon strength nor upon power, but upon the spirit of God' shall our democracy be founded." – FDR (Letter on Religion in Democracy; December 16, 1940)

***"The Almighty God has blessed our land in many ways. He has given our people stout hearts and strong arms with which to strike mighty blows for freedom and truth. He has given to our country a faith which has become the hope of all peoples in an anguished world. So we pray to Him now for the vision to see our way clearly—to see the way that leads to a better life for ourselves and for all our fellow men—to the achievement of His will to peace on earth."
-FDR (Fourth Inaugural Address; January 20, 1945)***

***"Those forces [Communism and Naziism] hate democracy and Christianity as two phases of the same civilization. They oppose democracy because it is Christian. They oppose Christianity because it preaches democracy."
-FDR (Campaign Address at Brooklyn, New York; November 1, 1940)***

***"We cannot read the history of our rise and development as a Nation, without reckoning with the place the Bible has occupied in shaping the advances of the Republic. ... Its refining and elevating influence is indispensable to our most cherished hopes and ideals."
-FDR (Statement on the 400th Anniversary of the Printing of the English Bible; 10/6/1935)***

Assuming the presidency during the Great Depression, Franklin D. Roosevelt helped the American people regain faith in themselves. He brought hope as he promised prompt, vigorous action, and asserted in his first Inaugural Address that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Born on January 30, 1882 at Hyde Park, New York, he attended Harvard University and Columbia Law School. On St. Patrick's Day, 1905, he married his distant cousin Eleanor Roosevelt.

Following the example of his fifth cousin President Theodore Roosevelt, whom he greatly admired, Franklin Roosevelt entered public service through politics, but as a Democrat. He won election to the New York Senate in 1910. President Wilson appointed him assistant secretary of the navy in 1913, and he was the Democratic nominee for vice president in 1920.

In the summer of 1921, when he was 39, disaster hit — he was stricken with poliomyelitis. Demonstrating indomitable courage, he fought to regain the limited use of his legs, particularly through swimming. At the 1924 Democratic convention, he dramatically appeared on crutches to nominate Al Smith as "the Happy Warrior." In 1928 Roosevelt became governor of New York.

He was elected president in November 1932, to the first of four terms. By March there were 13 million people unemployed, and almost every bank was closed. In his first "hundred days," he proposed, and Congress enacted, a sweeping program to bring recovery to business and agriculture, relief to the unemployed and to those in danger of losing farms and homes, and reform, especially through the establishment of the **Tennessee Valley Authority**.

By 1935 the nation had achieved some measure of recovery, but businessmen and bankers were turning against Roosevelt's **New Deal** program. They feared his experiments, scorned his decisions to take the nation off the **gold standard** and allow deficits in the budget, and disliked the concessions to labor. Roosevelt responded with a new program of reform: Social Security, heavier taxes on the wealthy, new controls over banks and public utilities, and an enormous work relief program for the unemployed.

Roosevelt sought to keep the United States out of the growing crisis as Adolf Hitler marched through Europe, yet sought to strengthen nations threatened or attacked. After France fell and England came under siege in 1940, he began to send Great Britain all possible aid short of actual military involvement.

When **the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941**, Roosevelt organized the nation's manpower and resources for a global war that, he hoped, would culminate in a victory for democracy. Mindful of the mistakes made after World War I, he devoted much thought to the planning of a **United Nations**. Roosevelt signed an executive order in 1942 which **ordered the relocation and containment of Japanese Americans in military internment camps**. The Supreme Court heard two challenges to the existence of the camps, but the executive order was upheld both times.

As the war drew to a close, Roosevelt was elected to a fourth term in November 1944; **the only president to serve more than two terms**. His health deteriorated as his final term started, and on April 12, 1945, while at his "Little White House" retreat in Warm Springs, Georgia, he died of a cerebral hemorrhage.

33. HARRY S. TRUMAN | 1945-1953



“The fundamental basis of this Nation's law was given to Moses on the Mount. The fundamental basis of our Bill of Rights comes from the teachings which we get from Exodus and St. Matthew, from Isaiah and St. Paul.” -Harry S. Truman

“This Nation was established by men who believed in God. ... You will see the evidence of this deep religious faith on every hand.” -Harry S. Truman

During his few weeks as vice president, Harry S. Truman scarcely saw President Roosevelt, and received no briefing on the development of the atomic bomb or the unfolding difficulties with Soviet Russia. Suddenly these and a host of other wartime problems became Truman's when, on April 12, 1945, he became president when Roosevelt died. He told reporters, “I felt like the moon, the stars, and all the planets had fallen on me.”

Truman was born in Lamar, Missouri, on May 8, 1884. He grew up in Independence, and for twelve years prospered as a farmer. He went to France during World War I as a captain in the Field Artillery. Returning, he married Elizabeth (Bess) Virginia Wallace, and opened a haberdashery in Kansas City, which failed.

Active in the Democratic Party, Truman was elected a judge of the Jackson County Court (an administrative position) in 1922. He became a senator in 1934. During World War II he headed the **Senate War Investigating Committee**, exposing waste and corruption and saving perhaps as much as \$15 billion.

As president, Truman made some of the most crucial decisions in history. Soon after V-E Day, the war against Japan had reached its final stage. An urgent plea to Japan to surrender was rejected. Truman, after consultations with his advisers, ordered atomic bombs dropped on the cities of

Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japanese surrender quickly followed. In June 1945 Truman witnessed the signing of the charter of the United Nations.

Soon he presented to Congress a 21-point program, proposing the expansion of **Social Security**, a full-employment program, a permanent **Fair Employment Practices Act**, and public housing and slum clearance. The program, Truman wrote, “symbolizes for me my assumption of the office of president in my own right.” It became known as the Fair Deal.

In 1947 the Soviet Union pressured Turkey and, through guerrillas, threatened to take over Greece. Truman asked Congress to aid the two countries, as part of what was soon called the **Truman Doctrine**. **The Marshall Plan**, named for his secretary of state, stimulated spectacular economic recovery in war-torn western Europe.

When the Soviets blockaded the western sectors of Berlin in 1948, Truman created a massive airlift to supply Berliners until the Soviets backed down. Meanwhile, he was negotiating a military alliance to protect Western nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), established in 1949.

In 1948, Truman faced New York Governor **Thomas Dewey** and a left-leaning third-party challenger, former Vice President **Henry Wallace**, and defied the predictions of pollsters and analysts to win his own full term as president. After the election, the Trumans moved out of the sagging White House so that it could be gutted and reconstructed. The Truman White House renovations were completed in 1952.

In June 1950, the Communist government of North Korea attacked South Korea. Truman later wrote, “There was no suggestion from anyone that either the United Nations or the United States could back away from it.” A discouraging struggle ensued as U.N. forces held a line above the old boundary of South Korea. Truman limited the fighting, which frustrated Americans—especially his Korea commander General **Douglas MacArthur**, whom he fired for insubordination.

Having served almost two terms, Truman decided not to run again. Retiring with Bess to Independence, he lived until December 26, 1972. Later, Americans came to appreciate his honesty, sound judgment, and courageous decision making, admiring him far more than his own contemporaries had. Of his presidency, Truman modestly said, “Well I wouldn’t say I was in the ‘great’ class, but I had a great time while trying to be great.”

34. DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER | 1953-1961



“It gives you courage to make the decisions you must make in a crisis, and then the confidence to leave the result to a higher Power. Only by trust in God can a man carrying responsibility find repose.”-Dwight D. Eisenhower

***On the role of the church: “The church should be telling the worker is that the first demand religion makes on him is that he should be a good workman. If he is a carpenter he should be a competent carpenter. Church by all means on Sundays—but what is the use of church if at the very center of life a man defrauds his neighbor and insults God by poor craftsmanship.”
-Dwight D. Eisenhower***

On dedication to God in public life: “From this day forward, the millions of our school children will daily proclaim in every city and town, every village and rural schoolhouse, the dedication of our Nation and our people to the Almighty.” -Dwight D. Eisenhower

On faith in governance: Speaking in 1952, Eisenhower said: “In other words, our form of government has no sense unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith, and I don't care what it is. Of course, it is the Judeo-Christian concept, but it must be a religion with all men being created equal.” -Dwight D. Eisenhower

Bringing to the presidency his vast experience as commanding general of the victorious forces in Europe during World War II, Dwight Eisenhower oversaw the growth of postwar prosperity. In a rare boast he said, “The United States never lost a soldier or a foot of ground in my administration.... By God, it didn't just happen—I'll tell you that!”

Born in Texas on October 14, 1890, brought up in Abilene, Kansas, Eisenhower was the third of seven sons. He excelled in sports in high school, and received an appointment to West Point. Stationed in Texas as a second lieutenant, he met Mamie Geneva Doud, whom he married in 1916. They had two sons, Doud Dwight, who died at two, and John.

In Eisenhower's early army career, he excelled in staff assignments, serving under Generals **John J. Pershing and Douglas MacArthur**. After Pearl Harbor, General **George C. Marshall** called him to Washington to work on war plans. He commanded the Allied Forces landing in North Africa in November 1942; on D-Day, 1944, he was supreme commander of the troops invading France.

After the war, he became president of Columbia University, then took leave to assume supreme command over the new **NATO** forces being assembled in 1951. Republican emissaries to his headquarters near Paris persuaded him to run for president in 1952. "**I like Ike**" was an irresistible slogan; Eisenhower won a sweeping victory over Illinois Governor **Adlai Stevenson**.

Negotiating from military strength, he tried to reduce the strains of the cold war. In 1953, the signing of a truce brought an armed peace along the border of South Korea. The death of Stalin the same year caused shifts in relations with the Soviet Union.

In Geneva in 1955, Eisenhower met with the leaders of the British, French, and Soviet governments. The president proposed that the United States and Soviet Union exchange blueprints of each other's military establishments and "provide within our countries facilities for aerial photography to the other country." But the Soviets vetoed his "Open Skies" proposal.

In September 1955, Eisenhower suffered a heart attack in Denver, Colorado. After seven weeks he left the hospital, and in February 1956 doctors told him he was well enough to seek a second term, which he won by another landslide over Stevenson.

In domestic policy the president pursued a middle "modern Republican" course, continuing most of the New Deal and Fair Deal programs and seeking a balanced budget. As desegregation of schools began, he sent troops into Little Rock, Arkansas, to assure compliance with the orders of the Supreme Court but resisted pleas from civil rights champions to welcome publicly the court's **Brown v. Board of Education** decision.

During his last two years in office, Eisenhower tried to make "a chip in the granite" of the cold war. He welcomed **Nikita Khrushchev** to **Camp David** and planned to meet the Soviet leader at a four-power Paris summit the following spring to seek ways to reduce their antagonism. But just before the meeting, the Soviets shot down an American U-2 spy plane over their territory, which scuttled the summit and rekindled cold war passions on both sides.

In his Farewell Address, Eisenhower surprised many Americans by warning them to "guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex," which he found a potential danger to American liberties. Disappointed by his failure to turn over the presidency to a Republican successor, he and Mamie retired to their farm beside the Gettysburg battlefield. After years of cardiac illness, he died in Washington, D.C., on March 28, 1969.

35. JOHN F. KENNEDY | 1961-1963



"The rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the hand of God."

-John F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address, 1961

"...here on earth God's work must surely be our own."

-John F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address, 1961

"Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men."

-John F. Kennedy, Presidential Prayer Breakfast, 1963

On November 22, 1963, when he was hardly past his first thousand days in office, John Fitzgerald Kennedy was shot to death as his motorcade wound through Dallas, Texas. Kennedy was the youngest man elected president; he was the youngest to die. This event is this author's earliest childhood memory. I was 3.

Of Irish descent, he was born in Brookline, Massachusetts, son of financier Joseph Kennedy and his wife Rose, on May 29, 1917. Graduating from Harvard in 1940, he entered the Navy. In 1943, when his PT-109 boat was rammed and sunk by a Japanese destroyer, Kennedy, despite injuries, led the survivors through perilous waters to safety.

Back from the war, he became a Democratic congressman from Boston, advancing in 1953 to the Senate. He married Jacqueline Bouvier on September 12, 1953. They had a daughter, Caroline, a son, John Jr., and another son, Patrick, who died soon after birth. In 1955, while recuperating from a back operation, he wrote **Profiles in Courage**, which won the **Pulitzer Prize for history**.

In 1956 Kennedy almost gained the Democratic nomination for vice president, and four years later was a first-ballot nominee for president. Millions watched his television debates with the Republican candidate, **Richard Nixon**. Winning by a narrow margin in the popular vote, Kennedy became the **first Roman Catholic** president.

His Inaugural Address offered the memorable injunction: "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country." As president, he set out to redeem his campaign

pledge to get America moving again. After two years of temporizing, Kennedy in 1963 called on Congress to pass a civil rights bill that would desegregate hotels, restaurants, and other public accommodations.

His vision also extended to the quality of the national culture and the role of the arts in American society. Jacqueline Kennedy sought to make the White House a world-class museum, saved architectural treasures from the wrecker's ball, and improved the appearance of Pennsylvania Avenue.

President Kennedy wanted America to resume its enduring mission as the first nation dedicated to the preservation of human rights. With the **Alliance for Progress** and the **Peace Corps**, he brought American idealism to the aid of developing nations. But the **Cold War** was still on with a vengeance.

Shortly after his inauguration, Kennedy permitted a band of Cuban exiles, already armed and trained, to invade their homeland. The attempt to overthrow the regime of Fidel Castro was a failure. Soon thereafter, the Soviet Union renewed its campaign against West Berlin. Kennedy replied by increasing the nation's military strength, including new efforts in outer space. Confronted by this reaction, Moscow, after the creation of the Berlin Wall, relaxed its pressure in central Europe.

But in the summer of 1962, the Soviets secretly installed nuclear missiles in Cuba. When this was discovered by air reconnaissance in October, Kennedy imposed a quarantine on all offensive weapons bound for Cuba. While the world trembled on the brink of nuclear war, Kennedy initiated secret negotiations and persuaded the Kremlin to take the missiles out in exchange for certain American concessions.

Kennedy declared that both sides had a vital interest in stopping the spread of nuclear weapons and slowing the arms race. This led to a partial **nuclear test ban treaty** in 1963.

That November, Kennedy was assassinated, and the world mourned. Americans still remember his charm, wit, bravery, glamour, intelligence, and above all, the potential for future leadership of which the nation was denied.

36. LYNDON B. JOHNSON | 1963-1969



"But we have no promise from God that our greatness will endure. We have been allowed by Him to seek greatness with the sweat of our hands and the strength of our spirit... the judgment of God is harshest on those who are most favored". -Lyndon B Johnson

"Above the pyramid on the great seal of the United States it says in Latin: 'God has favored our undertaking.' God will not favor everything that we do. It is rather our duty to divine His will". -Lyndon B Johnson

"So, it was in the beginning. So, it shall always be, while God is willing, and we are strong enough to keep the faith". -Lyndon B Johnson

The "**Great Society**" for the American people was the vision of Lyndon Johnson. As president, he obtained passage of one of the most significant legislative programs in the nation's history, but found his presidency overwhelmed by opposition to his war in Vietnam.

Johnson was born on August 27, 1908, in central Texas, not far from Johnson City, which his family had helped settle. He felt the pinch of rural poverty as he grew up, working his way through Southwest Texas State Teachers College. In 1937 he campaigned successfully for the House of Representatives on a **New Deal** platform, effectively aided by his wife, the former Claudia "Lady Bird" Taylor, whom he had married in 1934. During World War II, he served briefly in the Navy as a lieutenant commander, winning a Silver Star in the South Pacific.

After six terms in the House, Johnson was elected to the Senate in 1948. In 1953, he became the Senate minority leader, and in 1955, when the Democrats won control, majority leader.

In the 1960 campaign, Johnson, as John F. Kennedy's running mate, was elected vice president. On November 22, 1963, when Kennedy was assassinated, Johnson was sworn in as president.

First, he obtained enactment of measures President Kennedy had been urging at the time of his death — a major civil rights bill and a tax cut. Next, he urged the nation "to build a great society, a place where the meaning of man's life matches the marvels of man's labor." In 1964, Johnson won the presidency over Arizona senator **Barry Goldwater** by more than 15 million votes.

In 1965, with a heavily Democratic Congress, Johnson enacted legislation augmenting federal aid to education and the creation of **Medicare**. He advocated for urban renewal and conservation efforts. On August 6, 1965, Lyndon Johnson signed the **Voting Rights Act**, which removed legal obstacles preventing African Americans from exercising the right to vote.

Under Johnson, the country made spectacular explorations of space in a program he had championed since its start. He strongly supported **NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration)** as both a senator and president. In 1973, NASA's Center for Human Spaceflight was renamed the **Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center**.

Like previous presidents, Johnson remained concerned about communist containment. Johnson's largely secret efforts to broker a settlement in the ongoing war in **Vietnam** were fruitless. Instead, the war escalated, increasing to 500,000 American troops involved in the conflict. Controversy over the war was acute by the end of March 1968, when he limited the bombing of North Vietnam in order to initiate formal negotiations. At the same time, he startled the world by withdrawing as a candidate for reelection. Some suspected that Johnson had dropped out to escape defeat. He insisted that he wished to devote his full energies to seeking peace.

Before Johnson died of a heart attack on his Texas ranch in January 1973, one of the last calls he received was from President Nixon, suggesting that a Vietnam peace agreement was about to be signed.

Later, Americans lauded Johnson for his herculean efforts to change American society for the better, while regretting his expansion of the country's military commitment in Southeast Asia. During his final appearance before Congress in 1969, he predicted that a century hence, "But I believe that at least it will be said that we tried."

37. RICHARD M. NIXON | 1969-1974



"Never be too proud to go onto your knees before God."-Richard M. Nixon

"God, of course, is the greatest philosopher of all."-Richard M. Nixon

"The Soviet Union began by banishing God. The United States began as a community of people who wanted to worship God as they chose... Communism was defeated by an alliance spearheaded by 'one nation under God.'" -Richard M. Nixon

"Before we become too arrogant with the most deadly of the seven deadly sins, the sin of pride, let us remember that the two great wars of this century, wars which cost twenty million dead, were fought between Christian nations praying to the same God."-Richard M. Nixon

When Richard Nixon was elected in 1968, he declared that his goal was “to bring the American people together.” The nation was divided, with turbulence in the cities and war overseas. During his presidency, Nixon ended American fighting in Vietnam, improved relations with the Soviet Union, and transformed American's relationship China. But the Watergate scandal brought fresh divisions to the country and ultimately led to his resignation.

Born in Yorba Linda, California, on January 9, 1913, Nixon studied at Whittier College and Duke University Law School before beginning the practice of law. In 1940, he married Thelma Catherine (Patricia) Ryan; they had two daughters, Patricia (Tricia) and Julie. During World War II, Nixon served as a Navy lieutenant commander in the Pacific.

On leaving the service, he was elected to Congress from his California district. In 1950, he won a Senate seat. Two years later, General Eisenhower selected Nixon, age 39, as his vice-presidential running mate.

Nominated for president by acclamation in 1960, he lost by such a narrow margin to John F. Kennedy that he privately wondered whether the election had been stolen. After a failed effort in 1962 to become governor of California, he went on in 1968 to defeat Vice **President Hubert Humphrey** and a third-party candidate, Alabama Governor **George Wallace**, to become president.

Nixon's accomplishments while in office included the **end of the draft**, new anticrime laws, and the creation of the **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**. As he had promised, he appointed justices of conservative philosophy to the Supreme Court. In 1969, he welcomed back the astronauts who had executed the **first moon landing**.

In 1972, Nixon flew to Beijing and met with **Mao Zedong**. His summit meetings with Soviet Union **Leonid Brezhnev** produced a treaty to limit strategic nuclear weapons. In January 1973, he **announced an accord with North Vietnam that ended American involvement in Indochina**.

In 1972, dismissing his opponent as too far left, Nixon defeated South Dakota **Senator George McGovern** by one of the widest margins on record. But within a few months, his administration was embattled over what was soon called the **Watergate** scandal, stemming from a break-in at the offices of the Democratic National Committee during the 1972 campaign. The break-in was traced to Nixon campaign officials. Nixon denied any personal involvement, but the courts forced him to yield tape recordings he had made of his private Oval Office conversations, which indicated that he had, in fact, tried to divert the investigation and thus obstruct justice.

As a result of unrelated scandals in Maryland, **Vice President Spiro Agnew** had resigned in 1973. Nixon had nominated, and Congress approved, House Minority Leader **Gerald Ford** as vice president.

Faced with what seemed almost certain impeachment, Nixon announced on August 8, 1974, that he would resign the next day to begin "that process of healing which is so desperately needed in America."

A pardon by Nixon's successor spared him the ordeal of a criminal trial and possible prison sentence. Nixon spent the two decades before his death in 1994 trying to restore his reputation through books and speeches.

At Nixon's behest, his gravestone in Yorba Linda bears a quotation from his first Inaugural Address that he hoped would be accepted as his epitaph: "The greatest honor history can bestow is the title of peacemaker."

38. GERALD R. FORD | 1974-1977



***"Without God there could be no American form of government, nor an American way of life."
-Gerald R Ford***

***"There is a higher Power, by whatever name we honor Him, who ordains not only
righteousness but love, not only justice but mercy."
-Gerald R. Ford (From his address upon being sworn in as President on August 9, 1974)***

***"I do believe, with all my heart and mind and spirit, that I, not as President but as a humble
servant of God, will receive justice without mercy if I fail to show mercy."-Gerald R. Ford***

***"As we are a nation under God, so I am sworn to uphold our laws with the help of God." -
Gerald R. Ford (Referenced in his remarks regarding the pardon of Richard Nixon)***

When Gerald R. Ford took the oath of office on August 9, 1974, he declared, "I assume the Presidency under extraordinary circumstances.... This is an hour of history that troubles our minds and hurts our hearts." He told Americans, "Our long national nightmare is over."

Ford was the first vice president chosen under the Twenty-fifth Amendment. In the aftermath of the Watergate scandal, he succeeded the first president to ever resign from the presidency.

Ford was born Leslie King Jr. in Omaha, Nebraska on July 14, 1913, to a businessman and his wife Dorothy. Escaping her husband Leslie King Sr.'s physical abuse and battery, Dorothy divorced King and was subsequently remarried to Gerald Ford of Grand Rapids, Michigan, who later gave his name to his stepson. The young Ford starred on the University of Michigan football team, then went to Yale, where he served as assistant coach while earning his law degree.

During World War II he attained the rank of lieutenant commander in the Navy. After the war he returned to Grand Rapids, where he practiced law, and entered Republican politics. A few weeks

before his election to Congress in 1948, he married Betty Bloomer. They had four children: Michael, Jack, Steven, and Susan.

Serving 25 years in the House, Ford had a reputation for integrity, openness, and comity that moved his Republican colleagues to elect him their leader in 1965. His popularity in Congress was the central reason Richard Nixon chose him to succeed the resigned Vice President Spiro Agnew.

After succeeding to the presidency after Nixon's resignation, Ford focused on the rising inflation, reviving a depressed economy, solving chronic energy shortages, and U.S. relationships with key global partners.

He tried to calm the continuing traumas of Watergate by granting former President Nixon a full **pardon**. His nominee for vice president, former Governor **Nelson Rockefeller** of New York, was the second person to fill that office by appointment.

With a Democratic Congress, Ford made vigorous use of the veto. Fearing inflation, he vetoed a number of nonmilitary appropriations bills that would have further increased the budgetary deficit. During his first 14 months as president he vetoed 39 measures. His vetoes were usually sustained.

As in his congressional days, Ford viewed himself as “a moderate in domestic affairs, a conservative in fiscal affairs, and a dyed-in-the-wool internationalist in foreign affairs.” Ford was eager to revive U.S. power and prestige after the collapse of Cambodia and South Vietnam. Preventing a new war in the Middle East remained a major objective; by providing aid to both Israel and Egypt, the Ford administration helped persuade the two countries to accept an interim truce. Detente with the Soviet Union continued as President Ford and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev set new limitations upon nuclear weapons.

Weakened by a serious primary challenge from former California Governor Ronald Reagan, Ford in 1976 lost narrowly to Jimmy Carter. He and Betty retired to California, where Mrs. Ford obtained treatment for drug and alcohol problems. After her recovery, she opened the Betty Ford Center to provide similar help for others.

Ford died on December 26, 2006, at the age of 93. Americans remembered the words spoken by President Carter when he took power from Ford in 1977, “For myself and for our nation, I want to thank my predecessor for all he has done to heal our land.”

39. JIMMY CARTER | 1977-1981



"God always answers prayer, sometimes with a yes, sometimes with a no and sometimes with 'You've got to be kidding!'" -Jimmy Carter

"God is not my personal valet. God does not build a protective fence around my life... However, through prayer God offers me comfort, reassurance, satisfaction, courage, hope, and peace." -Jimmy Carter

On salvation: "I believe that we are saved by the grace of God because he loves us provided that we have faith in Jesus Christ." -Jimmy Carter

Jimmy Carter promised a government “as competent, as compassionate, as good” as the American people. His achievements were not so notable. In an era of rising energy costs, mounting inflation, and increasing world crises, he found it difficult to meet Americans’ high expectations. He was out of his league, and made mistakes the whole world is still paying for with no light at the end of the tunnel.

James Earl Carter Jr. was born October 1, 1924, in Plains, Georgia. Peanut farming, talk of politics, and the Baptist faith were mainstays of his upbringing. Upon graduation in 1946 from the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, Carter married Rosalynn Smith. The Carters had three sons, John William (Jack), James Earl III (Chip), Donnel Jeffrey (Jeff), and a daughter, Amy Lynn.

After seven years’ service as a naval officer, Carter returned to Plains. In 1962 he was elected a state senator and eight years later he was elected governor of Georgia. Among the new young southern governors, he attracted attention by emphasizing efficiency in government and the removal of racial discrimination.

When Carter announced his candidacy for president in December 1974, he was virtually unknown, but in the wake of national disappointments over Vietnam and Watergate, Democratic voters welcomed a fresh choice. He chose Minnesota Senator Walter Mondale as his running

mate. Carter debated against President Gerald Ford three times and won with 297 electoral votes to 241 for Ford.

Carter worked to combat the continuing economic woes of inflation and unemployment, largely due to his own poorly thought-out policies. By the end of his administration, he could claim an increase of nearly eight million jobs but lower paying jobs, and a decrease in the budget deficit, measured in percentage of the gross national product. But inflation and interest rates were at near record highs, and efforts to reduce them caused a recession.

Carter dealt with the energy shortage by proclaiming a national energy policy and by deregulating domestic petroleum prices to stimulate production. He prompted government efficiency through civil service reform and demanded deregulation of the trucking and airline industries. His expansion of the national park system included protection of 103 million acres of Alaskan lands. He created the **Department of Education** and **Department of Energy**. He also appointed record numbers of women, African Americans, and Hispanics to federal positions. This beginning of DEI encroachment into politics is still spreading like cancer.

Carter's championship of human rights was coldly received by the leaders of the Soviet Union, but it inspired dissidents throughout the Soviet empire. He prevailed in a tough fight to win Senate ratification of the **Panama Canal treaties**. He also established full diplomatic relations with China and completed negotiation of the **SALT II nuclear limitation treaty with the Soviet Union**. Through 12 days of talks between Egyptian and Israeli leaders at Camp David in 1978, he achieved a peace agreement between the two countries called the **Camp David Accords**.

But during Carter's final year in office, events seemed to conspire against him. The Soviets invaded Afghanistan. The revolutionary government of Iran refused to surrender **52 American hostages**. (They were only released the day Carter left office thanks to Ronald Reagan winning the election.) Americans suffered from brutal inflation and unemployment. The national frustration culminated with Carter's landslide defeat by Ronald Reagan in November 1980.

Although stung by his loss, Carter became what many have **called "the best former president in history,"** building in Atlanta not only a presidential library but a center devoted to conflict resolution, supervising democratic elections abroad, and combating disease. For such efforts in 2002, Carter became the third American president (after Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson) to win the **Nobel Peace Prize**. Carter continued to devote his life to service through his nineties, building homes through **Habitat for Humanity**.

His greatest failure was deposing the Shah of Iran. Islam is not a religion. It is a very religious system. His failure to recognize this allowed Islam to explode in the middle-east and has cost the planet millions of lives. His excuse? Religious freedom. The result? Religious torture, war and slaughter. Still today Christians world-wide are murdered everyday under Islam all because one man called a political system a religion. Big mistake.

Carter passed away on December 29, 2024.

40. RONALD REAGAN | 1981-1989



"I believe that America is standing before the brightest future the world has ever known, and that future is yours." -Ronald Reagan

"God's love shines through every word. His truth is the ultimate power source, and it's always there. It's available to ministers of the Gospel, Presidents, and the local grocery clerk. His comforting hand -- well, I could never carry the responsibilities of this high office without it." -Ronald Reagan

"Our forefathers drew on the wisdom and strength of God when they turned a vast wilderness into a blessed land of plenty called the United States of America." -Ronald Reagan

"Sometimes when I'm faced with an unbeliever, an atheist, I am tempted to invite him to the greatest gourmet dinner that one could ever serve and, when we finished eating that magnificent dinner, to ask him if he believes there's a cook." -Ronald Reagan

Through Ronald Reagan's eight years in office, the cold war came to an end, the country seemed to regain its morale, and Americans enjoyed an extended economic boom. Ronald Wilson Reagan was born to John Reagan, a shoe salesman, and his wife Nelle in Tampico, Illinois, on February 6, 1911. He worked his way through Eureka College.

There, he played on the football team and acted in school plays. Upon graduation, he became a radio sports announcer. A screen test in 1937 won him a contract with Warner Brothers in Hollywood. During the next two decades, he appeared in 53 films, including "Kings Row" and "Knute Rockne, All American." During a first marriage to actress Jane Wyman, he had two children, Maureen and Michael.

After World War II, his marriage failed, and in 1952, he married actress Nancy Davis, who brought him children Patti and Ronald. Elected president of the Screen Actors Guild, Reagan fought communism in the film industry and grew more conservative. As host of "GE Theater," he toured the country and became a spokesman for conservatism. In 1966, he defeated incumbent Pat Brown to become **governor of California**, and was reelected in 1970.

In 1976, he narrowly missed taking the Republican nomination away from President Ford, but prevailed in the 1980 primaries. For most of the fall campaign, Reagan ran close to President Carter. Voters were troubled by high inflation and unemployment, America's failure to prevent the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the year-long confinement of American hostages in Iran, but they were nervous about Reagan's lack of foreign policy experience and what some found his excessive hostility towards the Soviet Union. But 10 days before the election, debating with Carter, Reagan resolved those doubts in a bravura performance, asking Americans, "Are you better off now than you were four years ago?" The result was a landslide of **489** electoral votes **to 49** for Carter.

During his first months in office, Reagan persuaded Congress to expand the defense budget, cut taxes, and take other measures to fight the recession. He challenged the Soviet Union aggressively, hoping to show the Soviets that the United States had regained its will and compel them to enter serious negotiations.

Seventy days after taking office, Reagan was shot by John Hinckley, who suffered from mental illness.

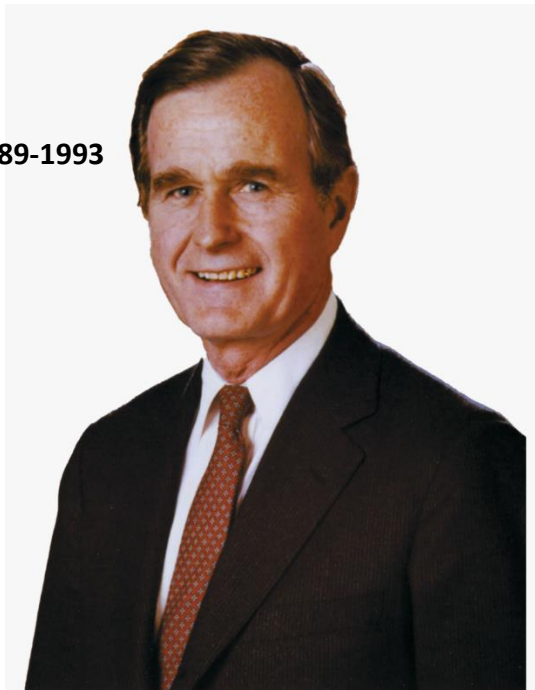
His grace and wit during a near-death experience (writing his wife, "Honey, I forgot to duck") caused his popularity to soar. Later, when his poll ratings dropped, he privately joked, "I'll just get shot again!" Renewed national self-confidence and restored prosperity helped Reagan and Vice President George Bush win a second term (under the slogan "Bringing America Back Stronger, Prouder, Better") by a landslide over Carter's vice president, Walter Mondale, and New York Congresswoman Geraldine Ferraro.

In 1986, Reagan pushed an income tax reform bill through Congress but found that his dream of reducing the national deficit and the size of government was beyond his grasp. That November, Congress and the courts investigated what became known as the **Iran-Contra scandal**. High officials of his administration had secretly approved the sale of weaponry to Iran and illegally diverted the proceeds to anti-government "freedom-fighters" in Nicaragua. But Congress and the appointed **Tower Commission** concluded that there was no evidence to prove that Reagan knew personally about the transactions, and he remained in office.

Reagan's second term also saw partnership with the new Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to ease Cold War tensions. Through five dramatic summit meetings, the two men agreed on a treaty banning intermediate-range nuclear missiles and other joint steps to end American-Soviet hostility.

In 1989, Reagan and Nancy returned to Los Angeles, where he wrote his memoirs. Ten years before his death in 2004, he wrote a letter to Americans explaining that he had been diagnosed with **Alzheimer's** disease and thanking them "for giving me the great honor of allowing me to serve as your president. . . . I know that for America there will always be a bright dawn ahead."

41. GEORGE H.W. BUSH | 1989-1993



"There is a God and He is good, and his love, while free, has a self-imposed cost: We must be good to one another."-George HW Bush

"I believe with all my heart that one cannot be America's president without a belief in God, without the strength that your faith gives you." -George HW Bush

"But the biggest thing that has happened in the world in my life, in our lives, is this: By the grace of God, America won the Cold War." -George HW Bush

George H. W. Bush brought to the White House a wish to make the United States “a kinder and gentler nation.” Coming from a family with a tradition of public service, George Herbert Walker Bush felt the responsibility to make his contribution both in time of war and in peace.

Born in Milton, Massachusetts, on June 12, 1924, he became a student leader at Phillips Academy. On his 18th birthday he enlisted in the armed forces. **The youngest pilot in the Navy when he received his wings, he flew 58 combat missions during World War II.** On one mission over the Pacific as a torpedo bomber pilot he was shot down by Japanese anti-aircraft fire and then rescued from the water by a U.S. submarine. He was awarded the **Distinguished Flying Cross for bravery in action.**

In January 1945 Bush married Barbara Pierce. They had six children: George, Robin (who died at three), Jeb, Neil, Marvin, and Dorothy. After graduation from **Yale**, Bush embarked on a career in the Texas oil industry.

Like his father, **Prescott Bush**, who was elected a senator from Connecticut in 1952, George was interested in politics. He served two terms as a representative to Congress from Texas. Twice he ran unsuccessfully for the Senate. Then he was appointed to a series of important positions: **ambassador to the United Nations, chairman of the Republican National Committee, chief of the U.S. Liaison Office in the People’s Republic of China, and director of the Central Intelligence Agency.**

In 1980 Bush campaigned for the Republican nomination for president. He lost, but Ronald Reagan chose Bush as his running mate. In 1988 Bush won the Republican nomination for president and defeated Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis in the general election.

Bush faced a fundamentally changing world as the **Cold War ended**. The communist empire broke up, and the **Berlin Wall fell**. **The Soviet Union ceased to exist**. With his considerable foreign policy experience and his gift for personal diplomacy, Bush developed a relationship with Soviet President **Mikhail Gorbachev** that enabled collaboration and a reduction in strategic nuclear weapons.

President Bush also sent American troops into Panama to overthrow the corrupt regime of **General Manuel Noriega**. In 1990 Iraqi **dictator Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait**, then threatened to move into Saudi Arabia. Vowing to free Kuwait, Bush rallied the United Nations and sent 425,000 American troops to the area as part of an international coalition poised to wage **“Operation Desert Storm.”** After weeks of air and missile bombardment, a 100-hour land battle routed Iraq’s million-man army.

Despite soaring popularity from the Desert Storm victory, Bush was unable to surmount uncertainty about the economy and the urge for change after 12 Republican years in the White House. In 1992 he lost his bid for reelection to Democrat Bill Clinton.

Nevertheless his sons George and Jeb became governors of Texas and Florida. When son George ran for president in 2000, his father told voters, “This boy—this son of ours—is not going to let you down.” George W. Bush’s election made his father the second president in history, after John Adams, to witness a son elected president. Years later, when the latter President Bush was criticized, family members noted that the proud patriarch took the barbs more emotionally than the criticism once directed at himself.

George H.W. Bush passed away on November 30, 2018 at the age of 94. He was a good man.

42. BILL CLINTON | 1993-2001



"Sharing in God's blessings is at the heart of Thanksgiving and at the core of the American spirit". -Bill Clinton

*"Let us teach our children that the God of comfort is also the God of righteousness".
-Bill Clinton (Oklahoma City Memorial Address)*

*"...each in our way, and with God's help, we must answer the call".
-Bill Clinton (First Inaugural Address)*

"Part of our essential humanity is paying respect to what God gave us and what will be here a long time after we're gone".-Bill Clinton

During his two presidential terms, Bill Clinton presided over economic expansion and achieved the first budget surplus in decades thanks to Newt Gingrich's contract with America and Republican control of the House and Senate. Unemployment, inflation, and the crime rate decreased during his administration.

After attempting a major reform of the health care system, Clinton shifted his policy focus, declaring that "the era of big government is over."

The son of a nurse, Clinton was born William Jefferson Blythe III in 1946 in Hope, Arkansas, three months after his father died in a car accident. (He later took his stepfather's family name.) Clinton made his way to Georgetown University and won a **Rhodes scholarship to Oxford**. After **Yale** Law School, he returned to Arkansas, and came close to being elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1974. The following year, he married his fellow Yale Law graduate Hillary Rodham, and in 1980, their daughter Chelsea was born.

Clinton was elected the state's attorney general at age 30 and governor at 32. But in 1980, he was defeated for a second term by voters who feared that he had become too liberal for Arkansas. When they restored him to power two years later, he thanked them for giving him a "second chance."

Eschewing a presidential race in 1988, he ran in 1992 and won the Democratic nomination. With the Cold War just over, he argued that President Bush had not done enough about domestic

problems such as the recession that afflicted the nation. Political independent **Ross Perot** entered the presidential race. Clinton won the three-way election with only 43 percent of the popular vote, but an overwhelming majority of Electoral College votes.

In his first two years in office, Clinton moved aggressively on health care reform, the budget, and the **North American Free Trade Agreement**. NAFTA as it became known as may be the worst trade agreement ever negotiated. Reacting to Clinton's policy overreach, the Republicans in 1994 won a majority in both houses of Congress for the first time in 40 years. Consequently, Clinton adjusted his posture and moved to the political center. He won reelection in 1996, defeating former Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole despite a string of sexual scandals that plagued both of his terms. He was an international embarrassment.

Confronted with continued Republican control of Congress, Clinton turned to foreign policy. He championed NATO bombing to stop ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, approved the bombing of Iraq to "deny" **Saddam Hussein** the "capacity" to use weapons of mass destruction, and worked hard to broker peace between Israel and the Palestinians, to no avail. He also allowed Osama Bin Laden to escape, we literally had a sniper aimed at him, and he wouldn't make the call. Eventually resulting in Islamic terrorists executing an attack on American soil killing thousands.

In 1998, while questioned under oath, Clinton falsely denied a **sexual relationship** with a woman who worked as a White House intern. His belated apology and admission that **he had lied under oath** did not stop demands that he resign or be impeached. The House of Representatives approved **two articles of impeachment** on the charges of perjury and obstruction of justice. However, the Senate voted to acquit Clinton on both counts in 1999.

An important element of Clinton's political survival was the steadfast public support of his wife, Hillary. In 2000, the couple established residence in Chappaqua, New York, and she won election from that state to the U.S. Senate.

Following his years as president, Clinton built a foundation, wrote his memoirs, and oversaw the creation of his presidential library in Little Rock, Arkansas. He also supported Hillary Clinton's political career during her tenure in the Senate and as secretary of state, and her 2008 and 2016 presidential campaigns. He remains actively involved with the work of the William J. Clinton Presidential Center and the initiatives of the Bill, Hillary & Chelsea Clinton Foundation. I waffle back and forth between calling the Clinton Foundation a "bag of wet cats" and a "bag of hammers". It depends on my mood.

43. GEORGE W. BUSH | 2001-2009



"I believe that God has planted in every human heart the desire to live in freedom. And even when that desire is crushed by tyranny for decades, it will rise again." -George W Bush

"Pray as if it all depends upon God, for it does. But work as if it all depends upon us, for it does."-George W Bush

***"Prayer and religion sustain me. I receive calmness in the storms of the presidency."
-George W Bush***

George W. Bush became the second presidential son (after John Quincy Adams) to assume office. Although initially focused on tax cuts and education reform, Bush's two terms became defined by the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

Bush was born in New Haven, Connecticut, on July 6, 1946 where his father was attending Yale. When George H.W. Bush entered the oil business, the family moved to Midland, Texas. George followed in his father's footsteps, attending prep school at the Phillips Academy and graduating from Yale in 1968.

He served in the Texas Air National Guard, went to Harvard Business School, and then returned to Midland, where he entered the oil industry. In 1977 he married Laura Welch, a teacher and librarian, who, in 1982, gave birth to twins Jenna and Barbara. In 1978, Bush was defeated in a campaign for the U.S. House of Representatives.

In the 1980s, Bush worked to gain a foothold in a flagging Texas oil economy while serving as adviser during his father's vice presidency and presidential campaigns. On his 40th birthday, he gave up drinking alcohol and grew more serious about his Christian faith. He became managing partner of the Texas Rangers while keeping his eye on political opportunities in his home state.

In 1994, Bush defeated incumbent Ann Richards to become governor of Texas. Extolling "compassionate conservatism," he won the 2000 Republican presidential nomination. The general election result hinged on the state of Florida. Due to the closeness of the vote, a recount was conducted and was contested in federal court. In a controversial decision, the Supreme Court ordered Florida to stop a subsequent recount of the ballots. Bush won the Electoral College with 271 votes, although lost the popular vote to his opponent, Vice President Al Gore.

On September 11, 2001, almost three thousand people were killed in an attack by the **Islamic terrorist group Al-Qaeda** on New York's **World Trade Center** and the **Pentagon**. Also, a hijacked commercial airplane headed for the United States Capitol was overtaken by passengers and crashed in **Shanksville, Pennsylvania**. All this could have been avoided if Clinton had the guts to pull the trigger when we had the mastermind in our sites. Big mistake. Bush declared a worldwide "**war on terrorism**," took the nation into battle against the **Taliban** regime in Afghanistan, and waged war against the Iraqi dictatorship of **Saddam Hussein**.

Bush's campaign for reelection in 2004 was jeopardized by the Iraq War's growing unpopularity and its connection to the larger global war on terror. But after a close race, Bush defeated Massachusetts Senator John Kerry.

Bush's second term proved full of trial. He was criticized for being too slow to aid victims of **Hurricane Katrina**, which struck New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. Others complained that while pursuing terrorists, Bush had been too insensitive to civil liberties and American values. In 2007, the United States entered a deep recession, caused by a subprime mortgage crisis and slowed growth. After Congress failed to pass a bill to provide support to banks, the stock market crashed on September 29, 2008, with the Dow Jones falling 777 points in one day.

When Bush returned to Texas, he insisted that his presidency had been a "joyful" experience. He noted that he had kept the nation safe from terrorism after 2001 and maintained that "the true history of my administration will be written fifty years from now." I agree.

44. BARACK OBAMA | 2009-2017



"The muezzin's call to prayer punctuated the day, sometimes gentle, sometimes urgent, sweeping over the rooftops, a reminder of the devotion that in one form or another sustained so many people across the globe." Barack Obama on the Muslim call to prayer

"I believe that there are many paths to the same place, and that is a belief that there is a higher power, a belief that we are connected as a people."

-Barack Obama (The God Factor Interview)

"It's faith that reminds me that despite being just one very imperfect man, I can still help whoever I can, however I can... and that somehow God will buttress these efforts."

-Barack Obama (National Prayer Breakfast, 2011)

"As children of God, let's stand up for the dignity and value of every woman, and man, and child, because we are all equal in His eyes..."

-Barack Obama (National Prayer Breakfast, 2015)

When Barack Obama was elected president in 2008, he became the first African American to hold the office. Obama faced major challenges during his two-term tenure in office. His primary policy achievements included a miserably large health care reform bill, inept economic stimulus, banking reform and consumer protections, and a repeal of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy preventing lesbian and gay Americans from serving openly in the military.

Obama's father, Barack Sr., a Kenyan economist, born a Muslim and became an atheist, met his mother, Stanley Ann Dunham, when both were students in Hawaii, where Barack was born on August 4, 1961. At least that's the official story. They later divorced, and Barack's mother married a man from Indonesia, where he spent his early childhood. Before fifth grade, he returned to Honolulu to live with his maternal grandparents and attend a private prep school on scholarship. In his memoir *Dreams from My Father* (1995), Obama describes the complexities of discovering his identity in adolescence.

After two years at Occidental College in Los Angeles, he transferred to Columbia University, where he studied political science and international relations. Following graduation in 1983, Obama worked in New York City, then became a **community organizer** on the South Side of Chicago, coordinating with churches to improve housing conditions and create job-training programs in a community hit hard by steel mill closures. In 1988, he went to Harvard Law School, where he attracted national attention as the first African American president of the Harvard Law Review. Returning to Chicago, he joined a small law firm specializing in civil rights.

In 1992, Obama married Michelle Robinson, (my calls her Mike) a lawyer who had also excelled at Harvard Law. Their daughters, Malia and Sasha, were born in 1998 and 2001. Obama was elected to the Illinois Senate in 1996, and then to the U.S. Senate in 2004. At the Democratic National Convention that summer, he delivered an acclaimed keynote address. In 2008, after winning the Democratic nomination after a hard-fought primary race with Hillary Clinton, he defeated Arizona Senator John McCain by 365 to 173 electoral votes in the general election.

As an incoming president, Obama faced many challenges including the 2008 financial crisis, wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the continuing global war on terrorism. Inaugurated before an estimated crowd of 1.8 million people, Obama proposed unprecedented federal spending to revive the economy and a renewal of America's stature in the world. It didn't work.

During his first term he signed three signature bills: **economic stimulus, health care reform, and legislation reforming the nation's financial institutions**. Obama also pressed for a fair pay act for women and new safeguards for consumer protection. In 2009, Obama became the fourth president to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. However, in the 2010 mid-term elections, the Democrats lost control of the House of Representatives, thankfully affecting Obama's future domestic policy agenda.

In 2012, he was reelected over former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney by 332 to 206 electoral votes. The Middle East remained a key foreign policy challenge. Obama directed the military and intelligence operation that led to the killing of **Osama bin Laden**, the head of Al-Qaeda and the terrorist responsible for the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States. However, a new self-proclaimed Islamic State arose during a civil war in Syria and began inciting terrorist attacks. Obama sought to manage a hostile Iran with a treaty that hindered its development of nuclear weapons that did the opposite. The Obama administration also adopted the **Paris Climate Agreement** signed by 174 states and the European Union in 2015 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and slow global warming. The worst agreement ever signed by an American president.

In the last year of his second term, Obama spoke at two events that clearly moved him—the 50th anniversary of the civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery and the dedication of the National Museum of African American History and Culture. “Our union is not yet perfect, but we are getting closer,” he said in Selma. “And that’s why we celebrate,” he told those attending the museum opening in Washington, “mindful that our work is not yet done.”

The first president to ever smoke pot on video, and now he's worth over 100 million dollars?

45. DONALD J. TRUMP | 2017-2021



Trump Quotes on God:

"I believe that my life was saved that day in Butler, for a very good reason. I was saved by God to make America great again. I believe that."

"Actually I think God is very proud of the job I've done. And that includes for religion. You know we're protecting a lot of people...."

"God spared my life for a reason."

"To have a great nation, you have to have religion. I believe that so strongly. There has to be something after we go through all of this — and that something is God."

"In America we don't worship government, we worship God."

"When faith gets weaker, our country seems to get weaker. When faith gets stronger... good things happen for our country. It's amazing the way it seems to work that way. Under the Trump Administration, we're defending our rights and restoring our identity as a nation under God. We are One Nation Under God — and we always will be."

"Next year, we will celebrate 250 years since that Declaration was signed. As part of the grand commemoration... we've invited America's great faith communities to pray for our nation, for our people, and for peace in the world."

"Think about the miracles that would take place over the next year... the transformation that you and I could witness in communities all across the land."

"I am pleased to announce this morning that the Department of Education will soon issue new guidance protecting the right to prayer in our public schools."

"To have a great nation, you have to have religion. I believe that so strongly. There has to be something after we go through all of this — and that something is God."

“America has always been a nation that believes in the power of prayer and we will never apologize for our faith — ever, ever, never, never. We will never surrender our God-given rights. We will defend our liberties, our values, our sovereignty, and we will defend our freedom.”

“Last year, in fifth grade, Shay was forced to read a book to a Kindergarten student promoting a message of radical gender ideology that is contrary to his religious beliefs and ours.”

“The need for this commission has never been more clear than it was last week when the ineffectual Senator from Virginia — a man named Tim Kaine — stated that the notion our rights come from our Creator is ‘extremely troubling’ to him... It’s this Declaration of Independence that proclaims we’re endowed by our creator with the right to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness. The Senator from Virginia should be ashamed of himself.”

There are too many wonderful quotes to list.

Donald John Trump was born in Queens, New York, on June 14, 1946. Trump was educated at the New York Military Academy and the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce at the University of Pennsylvania where he graduated near the top of his class.

In 1971, he took over his father’s real estate company, renaming it the Trump Organization. The business soon became involved in a variety of projects, including hotels, resorts, residential and commercial buildings, casinos, and golf courses. His first of many books was **The Art of the Deal**, published in 1987. In 2004, he launched the reality television show **The Apprentice**.

The following year, Trump married Melania Knauss. They have one son, Barron. Trump also has four adult children from previous marriages: Donald Jr., Ivanka, Eric, and Tiffany. All are very successful.

Trump secured the Republican nomination in 2016 and went on to defeat former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in the fall election. His campaign slogan was **“Make America Great Again.”** One of the keys to his success was his use of social media to communicate his priorities, positions, and opinions. Most notably, he used the social media platform Twitter to directly communicate with the American public, as well as other politicians and leaders. Most importantly though, was that he talked about the issues, and his opponents talked about him.

During his first term, he signed a **major tax reform bill** into law and oversaw a **reduction of federal regulations**. His protectionist trade policies included **tariffs on aluminum, steel**, and other products. The Trump administration also renegotiated trade agreements with **Mexico, Canada, China, Japan, and South Korea**. Other domestic priorities included transforming the federal judiciary with **three justices nominated and confirmed to the United States Supreme Court** and **more than 200 judicial appointments**. He also **increased military funding**, pursued aggressive border and **immigration control**, **criminal justice reform**, and the **reduction of prescription drug prices**.

In foreign policy, the Trump administration **moved the U.S. Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem** and brokered normalization agreements between Israel and several countries. In

2018, President Trump attended a summit with **Kim Jong Un**, marking the first time a sitting president met with a North Korean leader. In 2019, the House of Representatives impeached President Trump for abuse of power and obstruction of Congress.

The Senate acquitted Trump of both charges.

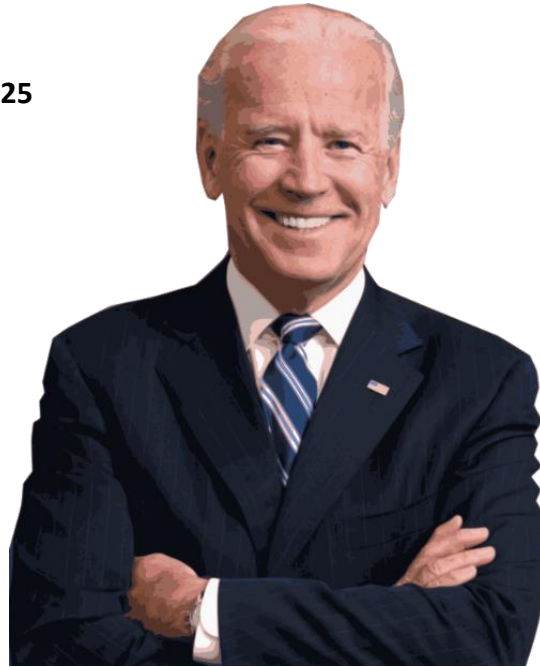
The first confirmed case of **COVID-19** was reported in the United States on January 20, 2020. The remainder of Trump's presidency was consumed with the coronavirus pandemic. Critics argued that Trump's response to the pandemic was delayed and did not sufficiently encourage public health practices. However, the Trump administration's program "**Operation Warp Speed**" assisted in the private sector development of two approved vaccines.

Trump lost reelection to former Vice President Joe Biden but claimed widespread voter fraud had affected the outcome.

On January 13, 2021, the House of Representatives approved one article of impeachment – incitement of insurrection. The Senate later acquitted him of the charge. He is the only president in American history to be impeached and acquitted twice by Congress.

In November 2022, Trump announced his candidacy and won the Republican nomination. He campaigned on immigration and tax reform, tariffs to stimulate American manufacturing, and reducing federal regulations and agencies. In 2024, he defeated Vice President Kamala Harris, winning 312 electoral votes and a plurality of the popular vote. He is the second president to serve non-consecutive terms.

46. JOE BIDEN | 2021-2025



"If you're against abortion rights, you aint a catholic." -Joe Biden

"We hold these truths to be self-evident. All men and women are created by the—you know, you know the thing."-Joe Biden

Poor kids are just as bright and just as talented as white kids."-Joe Biden

"If you have a problem figuring out whether you're for me or Trump then you aint black." -Joe Biden

Joseph Robinette Biden, Jr. was born on November 20, 1942, in Scranton, Pennsylvania. In 1953, the Biden family moved to Delaware. Biden later graduated from the University of Delaware and Syracuse Law School. In 1972, at the age of 29, he was elected to the United States Senate. Several weeks after the election, Biden's wife Neilia and daughter Naomi died in a tragic car accident; their two young sons, Joseph "Beau" III and Hunter, were also seriously injured. Biden took the Oath of Office at the hospital and began commuting to Washington by train, a practice he maintained throughout his Senate career. In 1977, Biden married Jill Jacobs, and the couple raised Beau and Hunter. In 1980, they welcomed a daughter, Ashley.

As chairman and ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Biden was recognized for his work on criminal justice, including the 1994 Crime Act and the Violence Against Women Act. As chairman or ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Biden played a pivotal role in shaping U.S. foreign policy. He served thirty-six years in the United States Senate.

In 2008, presidential candidate Barack Obama chose Biden as his running mate, and they won the election that November. Vice President Biden implemented the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, led several initiatives to reduce violence against women, and initiated the "Cancer Moonshot" program after Beau's death from brain cancer.

On January 12, 2017, President Obama awarded Vice President Biden the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his decades of public service. He should've been arrested instead. In 2020, Biden returned to politics to challenge and defeat President Donald J. Trump. Biden was the first president from Delaware and the second Roman Catholic president in United States history. During the campaign, Biden selected Kamala Harris as his running mate. Harris was the first woman, first African American, and first person of South Asian heritage to serve as Vice President of the United States.

President Biden's impotence included expanding wasteful relief programs and stumbling through public safety with the COVID-19 pandemic, and tanking the American economy. He supported some traditional alliances. The administration worked with Congress to pass several major pieces of legislation that provided funding to improve infrastructure and high-speed internet access, but the funds never yielded any real results; he made several bad investments in clean energy production; expanded access to health insurance to illegal aliens while cutting V.A. benefits; and ignored prescription drug and insulin costs.

President Biden also made history when he nominated Ketanji Brown Jackson – the first Black woman to serve on the United States Supreme Court. A woman who refused to define what a woman was.

On the world stage, President Biden condemned Russian aggression and supported Ukrainian resistance, all the while doing nothing to prevent it in the first place. He ordered the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan, ending America's longest war but the operation and subsequent fallout were heavily criticized. In July 2024, President Biden withdrew from the presidential race and supported Vice President Harris as the nominee. He clearly wasn't playing with a full deck.

His legacy is getting rich selling influence, while America was suffering on the world stage as he bungled and stumbled through one mistake after another. It was no fun to watch.

America lost four years we will never get back. Elections have consequences, and we got the bill.

47. DONALD JOHN TRUMP | 2025-Present

Finally. DH

