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"Fascinatingly gruesome...The perfect gift for that morbid political junkie in your family." —*Entertainment Weekly*

BRIAN LAMB AND THE STAFF OF C-SPAN

WHO'S BURIED IN GRANT'S TOMB?

A TOUR of PRESIDENTIAL GRAVESITES

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY RICHARD NORTON SMITH AND DOUGLAS BRINKLEY

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Brian Lamb and the C-SPAN staff

Who's Buried in Grant's Tomb?

A Tour of Presidential Gravesites

with contributions by
Richard Norton Smith and Douglas Brinkley

PublicAffairs
New York

To the memory of
Eric Clitheroe (1907-1986)
a great teacher

Bill Hartnett (1936-1980)
a true public servant

Cal Andringa (1941-1997)
a good friend

Foreword

Forty-Three Men and the Great Adventure

By Presidential Historian Richard Norton Smith

"And what the dead had no speech for, when living,
They can tell you, being dead, the communication
Of the dead is tongued with the fire beyond the
language of the living."

—T.S. Eliot

Do not believe the old axiom that dead men tell no tales. In truth, they comprise a virtual ***Spoon River*** of self-revelation. Not long before he died, Herbert Hoover chose a burial site on a gentle knoll in his boyhood home of West Branch, Iowa. Hoover gave instructions that nothing was to be built or planted that might obstruct the view between his final resting place and the tiny, 14- by 20-foot white frame cottage where his life began in August 1874. The old man wished to draw the visitor's attention to the two-room dwelling, its dimensions identical to those of the modern American living room. What Hoover ***really*** wanted to celebrate was the American dream, as embodied in the life of an Iowa blacksmith's son who would feed a billion people in fifty-seven countries, and serve one, mostly unhappy, term in the White House.

Even more reticent than the Quaker orphan from West Branch was his sphinxlike predecessor, Calvin Coolidge. No friend to pomp, Coolidge once observed that "it is a great advantage to a President, and a major source of safety to the country, for him to know he is not a great man." Consistent with this philosophy, he scornfully rejected the offer of a wealthy friend to build him and his family a gleaming marble mausoleum near the old homestead in Plymouth Notch, Vermont. Today the nation's thirtieth president lies beneath a plain granite headstone, alongside five generations of Coolidges, including the mother and son whose early deaths cast a permanent shadow across this shy, sentimental Yankee.

It was to Plymouth that I talked my parents into driving me in the summer of 1962, a few months before my ninth birthday. There, beneath the looming purple mass of Salt Ash Mountain, we discovered a toy village of six houses, a number unchanged since Coolidge was born at the back of his father's country store on the Fourth of July 1872. From this modest beginning grew a hobby that would strike others as only slightly less ghoulish than graverobbing. Classmates celebrated the Celtics and Bruins, deconstructed the lyrics of Lennon and McCartney, pulled trout out of local streams, or pasted stamps in a book. Some collected baseball cards. I collected deceased presidents. Dead men talking.

As a youngster of annoying precocity, I was entrusted with planning responsibilities for each summer's family vacation, thereby exposing my siblings to these and countless other gravesites, battlefields, and historic homes. My fellow passengers in this station wagon hell, immune to the thrill of the chase that motivates any true collector, took what consolation they could in each night's motel pool. The pursuit of underground history, so to speak, is not for the faint of heart, as we discovered one evening at the corner of Witherspoon and Wiggins Streets in Princeton, New Jersey. Twilight was falling; to prevent being locked in for the night, the family car was parked astride the cemetery gates.

In life a three hundred pound mountain of a man, in death Grover Cleveland is anything but conspicuous. Tracking my quarry by headlight beams, ten minutes went by. Fifteen. Twenty. Adding to the surreal tone of the hunt, who should I come upon but—Aaron Burr? As an unreconstructed Hamiltonian, I was tempted to do an impromptu jig on the old reprobate, but time was growing short, the night was growing dark and everyone in the car was growing nervous lest we be arrested for trespassing. Eventually a kind, if dubious, groundskeeper appeared, flashlight in hand, to point out the modest stone marker and urn that adorns the Cleveland plot.

Those who haunt cemeteries can sometimes put their own mortality at risk. As the nation's first dark horse presidential candidate in 1844, James K. Polk sparked little fer vor ("James K. Who?" sneered rival Whigs who rallied to Henry Clay). Polk is still easily overlooked; on a broiling August afternoon in 1976, I contracted sunstroke while scouring a treeless expanse of lawn surrounding the Tennessee State Capitol in Nashville in search of the president who added more real estate to the United States than any other. ***Sic transit gloria***.

Another youthful summer was spent in Ohio, a state which, as the self-proclaimed Mother of Presidents, is also the mother lode of presidential gravesites. By and large, chief executives from the Buckeye State demonstrate an inverse ratio between accomplishment in life and the lavishness with which that life is memorialized. (Of course, who would remember Cheops were it not for his pyramid?)

Consider Warren Gamaliel Harding. Nothing so became Harding's life as his leaving it. His messy death in a San Francisco hotel room in August 1923 led to journalistic speculation that his wife, Florence, had poisoned him. In the years since, a scholarly consensus has formed around the belief that she didn't, but should have. Today the Hardings rest unquietly on the outskirts of Marion, Ohio, condemned to an intimacy

largely avoided in life, thanks to the generosity of countless schoolchildren who donated their pennies to construct a great hollow drum of white Georgia marble. Not far away is the famed front porch where Harding in 1920 proclaimed his desire for normalcy, and Mrs. Harding shooed away local mistresses whose desires ran in other channels.

Still another occupational hazard, a disappointed officeseeker, ended James Garfield's brief term in the summer of 1881. Angered over Garfield's refusal to give him the Paris consulship, Charles J. Guiteau shot the president in a Washington, D.C., railroad station. Guiteau had another motive for his crime: a frustrated author hoping to spur sales of his book, he anticipated today's tabloid culture, wherein notoriety is the surest ticket to a gig with Larry King (even if modern criminals generally wait until ***after*** committing an outrage to take the agent's call.)

In the feverishly inventive Gilded Age, even a mortally wounded president could inspire technological advance—in Garfield's case, the world's first indoor air conditioning system. Amid the stifling heat of a Washington, D.C., summer, a group of Navy engineers was summoned to the White House. Improvising a blower to force air cooled by six tons of ice through a heat vent in the president's sick room, they succeeded in lowering the temperature twenty degrees.

The patient remained snappish, hardly surprising given his diet of oatmeal and lime water. Told that the Indian warrior Sitting Bull was starving in captivity, Garfield snorted, "Let him starve." On second thought, a still more wicked alternative suggested itself. "Oh no," said Garfield, "send him my oatmeal."

Equally unrepentant, if decidedly more convivial, was Zachary Taylor, who declared on ***his*** deathbed, "I have no regret, but am sorry that I am about to leave my friends." It will come as no surprise that the same nineteenth century that reveled in gloom took a morbid interest in last words. Everyone recalls John Adams' poignantly inaccurate declaration of July 4, 1826, "Thomas Jefferson still survives." Less well known is Jefferson's political testament to his countrymen, contained in a letter published that very day in Washington's ***National Intelligencer***. Gracefully declining an invitation by citizens of the capital to attend ceremonies commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson reiterated his lifelong faith in the rights of man, and an optimism vouchsafed by "the light of science." To the end, he believed it a self-evident truth "that the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred ready to ride them legitimately, by the grace of God."

Professing indifference over his ancestry, Jefferson took a much different view of posterity. The inscription he composed for his own granite obelisk listed authorship of the Declaration of Independence and Virginia's Statute for Religious Freedom, and his founding of the University of Virginia, to the exclusion of his service as the nation's third president. Andrew Jackson used characteristically blunter language to propel his parting shot. Asked if he had any regrets, the fiery Jackson replied, "Yes. I didn't shoot Henry Clay, and I didn't hang John C. Calhoun." More tenderly, Jackson admonished his family and servants, black and white, to keep the Sabbath faithfully. His last

recorded words: “We will all meet in Heaven” (where, presumably, he didn’t expect to encounter either Clay or Calhoun).

Jackson’s great political rival, John Quincy Adams, lingered two days after a stroke felled him on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives on February 21, 1848. Adams ***did*** meet Clay, his onetime secretary of state, with whom he enjoyed a brief, emotional reunion. “This is the end of the earth, but I am content,” he is supposed to have remarked as breath ran out. It is a claim disputed by recent biographer, Paul Nagel, who points out, truthfully enough, that John Quincy Adams was never content. William McKinley, whose initial thought on being shot was for his assailant (“don’t let them hurt him”), expired early in the morning of September 14, 1901, after calling for prayer and murmuring, “Goodbye, goodbye all. It is God’s way. His will, not ours, be done.” The earnest Grover Cleveland did not depart this life before reassuring history, “I have tried so hard to do right.” At the last, a sightless Woodrow Wilson, the very picture of Scottish chill and Presbyterian rectitude, gasped a single word—“Edith!”—the name of his wife and White House protector.

It is no small irony that nineteenth-century presidents, for whom the Constitution existed as a limiting, not an enabling, charter, should have their graves marked by great piles of marble and stained glass, while their allegedly imperial counterparts of the modern era are entombed more modestly. Such is the contrast between Victorians who loved nothing better than a good prolonged cry, and the prosaic emotions of our ironic, if not cynical, age. A century ago, presidents were more remote but also more revered. To be sure, millions of Americans retain indelible memories of the untimely passings of Franklin Roosevelt and John Kennedy, but that was before twenty-four-hour-a-day exposure magnified the imperfections of our leaders.

Ever since George Washington was laid to rest “with the greatest good order and regularity” in December 1799, Americans have honored their deceased presidents with varying degrees of pomp and ceremony. As the first incumbent to die in office, William Henry Harrison was accorded a period of mourning scarcely shorter than his month-long tenure. By contrast, John Tyler’s death in 1862 prompted a single paragraph notice, several days after the event, in Washington’s newspapers. Such neglect may have been occasioned by Tyler’s decision to throw in his lot with the Confederacy, in whose Congress he was serving at the time of his passing. In fact, well into the twentieth century, presidential funerals were essentially family affairs. Flamboyant in life, even Theodore Roosevelt went to his grave in a small cemetery near his beloved Sagamore Hill with admirable restraint. At his wife’s request Woodrow Wilson was interred in the unfinished Washington Cathedral in February 1924, following a private service in the dead man’s S Street home. The first president of the modern era to lie in state in the Capitol rotunda was William Howard Taft, and then for only ninety minutes prior to his burial at Arlington National Cemetery.

When Calvin Coolidge died three years later at his home in Northampton, Massachusetts, the ceremonies were appropriately minimalist. The strains of Handel’s ***Xerxes*** filled a downtown church named for the Puritan divine Jonathan Edwards. President Hoover attended, as did Eleanor Roosevelt, the wife of the president-elect.

Local stores remained open, their owners asserting, truthfully enough, that Cal would have wanted it that way. Washington limited itself to a memorial session of Congress. The wishes of the deceased carried less weight in 1945. Franklin D. Roosevelt's preference for a simple East Room service, with no embalming or lying in state, yielded to more elaborate pageantry consistent with his singular place in public affection and the history of his times. Hundreds of thousands of grieving citizens watched the president's caisson roll through the streets of Washington en route to Union Station. From there a funeral train carried FDR home to Hyde Park. A quarter century later Dwight Eisenhower became the last American president to ride the rails to his resting place, and the first to have his state funeral at Washington National Cathedral. Although the cathedral never realized its original objective as an American Westminster Abbey, it has become the ***de facto*** Church of the Presidents, at least for the ceremonial planners of the Military District of Washington. Since Ike, the great Rose Window and soaring Gothic arches crowning Mount Saint Albans have twice provided a backdrop to presidential obsequies (Reagan in 2004 and Ford in 2007).

It is no accident that most recent presidents have chosen entombment at their presidential libraries, which are often located in settings that shaped their individual characters and outlook. Thus Harry Truman was buried a stone's throw from the office he frequented after leaving Washington (Truman especially enjoyed conducting tours of the library for visiting schoolchildren). His gravestone, inscribed with the seals of Jackson County, Missouri, the United States Senate, and the presidency, reads like a ***Who's Who*** entry, listing not only every office Truman held, but the dates of his marriage and the birth of his daughter. Andrew Johnson, with no library to commemorate his stormy tenure, insisted on being buried in an American flag, his head resting upon a copy of the Constitution whose wartime transformation he stubbornly refused to concede. Presidents, no less than historians, like to have the last word.

Then there was Lyndon B. Johnson, who chose burial in a family cemetery on the banks of his cherished Pedernales River, "where folks know when you're sick and care when you die." Two decades after Johnson received homage beneath the dome of the Capitol he had dominated as Senate majority leader and president, Richard Nixon passed up the formal commemoration of a capital city in which he had never felt at home. Emulating the example of his hero, Charles de Gaulle, Nixon opted for a less official, more heartfelt tribute in Yorba Linda, California—his Colombey-les-deux-Eglises. The town of his birth was also the site of his presidential library. As important, it epitomized the Silent Majority to whom Nixon had appealed during his time in the White House, and who turned out by the thousands to bid him farewell. In the interest of full disclosure: as one who had a hand in drafting Robert Dole's eulogy for Nixon, delivered on April 27, 1994, I will go to my grave convinced that Richard Nixon hoped to influence the 1996 presidential race from his. Should this really come as a surprise? An uncalculating Nixon, after all, is akin to a demure Madonna, nuance on talk radio, or a Unitarian pope.

In point of fact, Dole had been among the eulogists at Pat Nixon's funeral the previous June, as was California governor Pete Wilson. Both men were Nixonian

favorites. Ten months later the audience was vastly larger as Dole and Wilson reprised their speaking parts, joined this time by President Clinton and Henry Kissinger. Approximately thirty-three million Americans watched Nixon's late afternoon burial in the lengthening shadow of his boyhood home. They saw a side of Bob Dole few would have predicted—except Nixon himself. For he knew that Dole's feelings lay just below the surface, much closer than his hardboiled public image suggested. As evidence, he had only to flash back to the lawn of the Russell County Courthouse in August 1976. Following his unexpected vice presidential nomination a day earlier, Dole had returned to Russell for what turned out to be a highly emotional homecoming. Looking out at the crowd on the courthouse lawn, he recognized old friends and neighbors whose spontaneous gifts to a post-World War II fund had enabled a badly wounded second lieutenant to undergo repeated surgeries on his shattered right arm and shoulder. As feelings of the moment mingled with gratitude for past kindnesses, Dole teared up.

In designating him one of his Yorba Linda eulogists, Nixon anticipated the sob in Dole's voice as he struggled to complete his tribute to the central figure in what the senator that day called the Age of Nixon. So authentic a display of grief was touching to all but the Nixon-haters in the vast audience. Moreover, by exhibiting his feelings so openly, Dole was, in effect, humanized in ways no other speech could have done. Which is exactly what Nixon intended, I believe, as he made his own funeral a showcase for his political heirs. Nixon was always a better campaign manager than candidate.

Nixon's modest headstone reminds onlookers that "the greatest honor history can bestow is the title of peacemaker." By going home to Yorba Linda, he joined a tradition as old as George Washington, and carried on by Jefferson, Madison, Jackson, Hayes, and FDR, each of whom rests on his ancestral acres. Less rooted, geographically and politically, was William Howard Taft, whose bumbling performance in the White House was redeemed by his later service as Chief Justice of the United States. Far more than the proverbially jolly fat man of most accounts, Taft was a thoughtful, wry observer of a world moving a bit too fast for his tastes. After finishing third in the 1912 election behind Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt, Taft said he consoled himself with the knowledge that no other American had ever been elected ex-president so resoundingly.

So mellow a figure would doubtless have chuckled over the complaint voiced by Herbert Hoover, on leaving Taft's 1930 Washington funeral service. When ***his*** turn came, remarked Hoover, he would see to it that mourners were not denied the pleasure of a good cigar.

The waspish Henry Adams asserted that it was easy to disprove Darwin's theory of evolution; all one had to do was trace the line of presidents stretching from Washington to Grant. Less jaded observers agree that the Grants, no less than the Washingtons, have much to teach us about a nation that is nothing if not a work in progress.

As Brian Lamb demonstrates in the pages that follow, there is no better way to personalize the past than through the lives, and deaths, of America's presidents. But then, I have long believed there is more drama in a graveyard than a textbook. Meanwhile, the true C-SPAN junkie is left to grapple with an existential question beyond any president's fathoming: Is there cable in Heaven?

A 1983 photo of Richard Norton Smith with former Boston Mayor Kevin White at the King's Chapel Burial Ground in Boston. They stand behind the gravestone of Massachusetts's first governor, John Winthrop.

Introduction

If you like to explore old cemeteries, take heart. You are not alone, as this book demonstrates. C-SPAN's guide to presidential gravesites is for people like you and me and historians Richard Norton Smith and Douglas Brinkley, who enjoy learning through personal experience and who think that, as historic sites, cemeteries have much to offer.

Why visit presidential graves? They are gateways to American history, helping us learn more about the men who held our nation's highest office and the times in which they lived. Americans believe our presidents are no greater than the rest of us. Nonetheless, only forty-three of our fellow citizens have made it to the White House and each helped shape the direction of our nation. When we learn about these men, we learn more about our collective selves.

If you're a curious but inexperienced gravesite tourist, don't be daunted by cemeteries. Presidential tombs are not morbid. The truth is, these graves aren't so much about death as they are about personal and political symbolism. In making this tour, I've come to realize how much presidents and their families, from our earliest times, understood the public nature of presidential deaths. Obvious care was given to planning most of their funerals and memorials.

Andrew Jackson and his beloved wife, Rachel, were buried under a cupola in the garden alongside their home in Nashville, surrounded by family members and Uncle Alfred, a favored slave. Our seventh president chose to have the title "general" chiseled into his sarcophagus. Thomas Jefferson also chose an epitaph that ignored his service as president. Visiting his iron-fenced grave at Monticello, you'll find him self-described for posterity as, "Author of the Declaration of American Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for religious freedom, and father of the University of Virginia."

Some of the presidents' final words can be as interesting as their epitaphs. William Henry Harrison, who served only one month of his term, seemed to have his place in history in mind while drawing his last breath. "I wish you to understand the true principles of government," he's reported to have said. "I wish them carried out. I ask nothing more." Grover Cleveland, succumbing to heart failure at age seventy-one, said, "I have tried so hard to do right." James Madison had no time to consider history. Expiring at the breakfast table, he tried to brush aside a niece's concern for his health, assuring her, "Nothing more than a change of mind, my dear."

Eight presidents died in office, four of them (Lincoln, Garfield, McKinley, and Kennedy) at the hands of assassins. Those who survived the White House lived anywhere from three additional months (James K. Polk) to more than thirty-one years (Herbert Hoover). The average age of our chief executives at death was seventy.

Quality of life after the White House varied greatly among the presidents. Many early presidents, like Grant, were virtually penniless. Worried about his family's

financial future, the old general worked furiously on his memoirs while gravely ill with throat cancer. Thomas Jefferson sold his extensive book collection to the Library of Congress to support his life at Monticello. Harry Truman, our thirty-third president and a man of modest means, finally put presidential financial security to rest by successfully lobbying for a presidential pension.

Who's Buried in Grant's Tomb? is full of facts like these about the post-White House years of our presidents, their deaths, and their funerals. We also tell you how to visit each presidential gravesite, taking you to small towns and to several of America's largest cities. As you progress, you'll see ornate memorials from the Gilded Age and a few tucked-away plots in lesser known burial grounds.

The idea of gravesites as lessons in history was suggested to me by Richard Norton Smith, George Washington biographer and the former executive director of several presidential libraries. His foreword tells of his own childhood, spent visiting presidential graves with his sympathetic family in tow, and how this grew into a career as a historian. During a television interview about history, Richard commented to me that to truly understand something, one ought to try it for oneself.

Another historian who encouraged my experiential learning is Douglas Brinkley, who wrote the after word for our book. Doug's an historian and Jimmy Carter biographer, and, at Rice University, has been known to pile his students onto a vehicle dubbed "The Majic Bus," to visit significant American cultural and historic sites. Doug is the kind of teacher who understands that personal experiences contribute to learning in ways that reading and lectures alone cannot.

Encouraged by the expeditions of these two historians, I began my own presidential gravesite tour in 1995, visiting and photographing thirty-six presidential graves and the libraries of the living former presidents over the next eighteen months. My journey began at Arlington National Cemetery, where two presidents are buried—John F. Kennedy and William Howard Taft, the only president to also serve as Chief Justice. Next was Washington's National Cathedral, where Woodrow Wilson lies beneath the stone floors of the church, in the style of the great European cathedrals. With a small touch of symbolism, I also ended my tour in the Washington area, visiting George Washington's burial site at Mount Vernon on a cold and quiet New Year's Day 1997.

Visiting the thirty-two other presidential gravesites in short order led to its share of adventures. In my initial days of grave-hopping, I planned a Hudson Valley swing, a triple-hitter, hoping to conquer the gravesites of Chester A. Arthur, Martin Van Buren, and Franklin Roosevelt in a single weekend. Arriving at the Albany airport on a Friday afternoon, I set out in a rental car for Albany Rural Cemetery where President Arthur is buried, only to find that the gates had closed at 5:00 p.m. I'd come too far to miss it. Spying no one, I decided to climb the cemetery's stone fence. Thankfully, I was able to find the grave, pay my respects, and snap a few photos without getting caught.

Readers of our book won't have to break any cemetery rules. ***Grant's Tomb*** gives detailed directions ***and*** visiting hours for every presidential gravesite. Those planning longer trips will find the memorials grouped by state in the appendix.

You will also find that many of the cemeteries on our presidential tour are filled with other interesting persons. In Cleveland's Lake View Cemetery, James Garfield has tycoon John D. Rockefeller, Ohio political boss Mark Hanna, and Lincoln assistant John Hay as his eternal neighbors. A stone's throw from Benjamin Harrison's grave in Indianapolis' Crown Hill Cemetery are three vice presidential resting sites—those of Thomas Hendricks (Grover Cleveland), Charles Fairbanks (Theodore Roosevelt), and Thomas Riley Marshall (Woodrow Wilson). A little additional exploration in these and other cemeteries will likely lead you to discoveries of your own.

Who's Buried in Grant's Tomb? was an outgrowth of C-SPAN's 1999 television series, ***American Presidents: Life Portraits***. During this nine-month series, our cameras visited the birthplaces, gravesites, libraries, and family homes of the forty-one men who had then served as our country's chief executives. Hours of video about each president has been archived on our web site, www.c-span.org, along with biographical and historic details about each president and links to other sites.

Like our television series, this book was a collective effort by a number of people at C-SPAN. Carol Hellwig, now a former member of our executive staff, was the book's primary researcher and writer. With my tour and photos as her base, Carol spent months combing documents in the Library of Congress, reading presidential anthologies, and phoning cemeteries. Weeks of writing presidential death scenes, Carol reports, turned her into a uniquely interesting dinner table conversationalist.

Carol had assistance from Anne Bentzel and Molly Murchie, and from interns Megan FitzPatrick and Henrik Acklen. Lea Anne Long had two important roles in this project—arranging travel to each cemetery and organizing nearly one hundred rolls of film documenting the gravesites, created in a time before digital cameras were ubiquitous.

Our executive assistant, Amy Spolrich, helped with photo editing for this new edition.

Marty Dominguez was the overall coordinator of this book project, while Ellen Vest was responsible for its look. Initial editing was done by Karen Jarmon. Historical verification came from two sources—Richard Norton Smith, who made contributions to each chapter and checked our facts, and from longtime C-SPAN education consultant Dr. John Splaine. John contributed significantly to many of the historical projects mounted by our network. Susan Swain, our executive vice president, adds her indispensable work on this book to a long list of C-SPAN publications.

Thanks, too, to Peter Osnos, Susan Weinberg, and the rest of the staff at PublicAffairs. Their interest in this project allows this book to make its way to many new readers.

Finally, a word of thanks to the cable industry, especially our board of cable executives—this year, headed by Advance Newhouse Chairman Bob Miron—for their ongoing support of C-SPAN. More than thirty years ago, the cable television industry agreed to fund C-SPAN as a public service. C-SPAN is a not-for-profit company, offering commercial-free public affairs programming that includes daily live coverage

of the U.S. Congress, programs about nonfiction books, extensive political coverage, and special series like ***American Presidents***. Our affiliates, both cable and satellite, carry our three networks, C-SPAN, C-SPAN2, and C-SPAN3, as a service to their customers.

Who's Buried in Grant's Tomb? is a lighter look at American history, yet it has a serious intent. We hope our book, full of facts about the final years of our nation's chief executives, will send you on a journey of discovery that helps you better understand certain aspects of our shared national history.

Brian Lamb
Washington, D.C.
December 2009

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike th'inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

—Thomas Gray, Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard, 1750

George Washington

Buried: Mount Vernon Estate, Mount Vernon, Virginia

First President - 1789-1797
Born: February 22, 1732, in Westmoreland County, Virginia
Died: 10:20 p.m. on December 14, 1799, at Mount Vernon, Virginia
Age at death: 67
Cause of death: Sore throat
Final words: “ ‘Tis well”
Admission to Mount Vernon: $15.00

George Washington's election to the presidency was really more of a coronation. Every one of the sixty-nine electors voted for the leader whose resume read like a timeline for the new republic. Thus the commander in chief of the revolutionary army and president of the Constitutional Convention became the first president of the fledgling United States of America.

Washington served two precedent-setting terms in New York and Philadelphia, the new nation's first two capital cities. In 1797, Washington, a country squire at heart, happily retired with his wife Martha to their beloved Virginia estate, Mount Vernon. Having become an icon, he learned to cope with the constant stream of sightseers to his home. He lived to enjoy only three more years at his refuge on the Potomac.

A wintry mix of snow, sleet and rain pelted Mount Vernon on December 12, 1799. Washington made his daily inspection tour of the estate but came down with a sore throat the next morning. His condition worsened and by December 14 the general's throat began to close. Doctors were summoned.

Sign marking George Washington's first tomb. The bodies of George and Martha Washington were moved to a new tomb in 1831.

The dying Washington was in control to the end: afraid of being buried alive, he ordered his secretary, Tobias Lear, not to allow his body to be interred less than three days after his death. As he was taking his own pulse, George Washington died. He was sixty-seven years old.

Washington's final instructions were nearly ignored in the grief surrounding his death. A legacy-minded group sought to have his remains interred beneath the Capitol rotunda. To aid the cause, then Representative John Marshall secretly obtained congressional permission to have Martha Washington buried beside her husband. Ultimately, Washington's wish to rest forever at Mount Vernon was respected.

His hopes for a simple funeral were not as successful. The service included a long procession of mourners, a contingent from Washington's Masonic lodge, a band, and a military honor guard. Martha was given a quieter farewell when she died and was buried next to him in 1802.

Washington's will stipulated the construction of a new tomb to replace the deteriorating old family structure on the property. When that new vault was completed in 1831, the bodies of George and Martha Washington, along with those of other family members, were moved to their current location.

Touring George Washington's Tomb at Mount Vernon

Mount Vernon, owned and operated by the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, is located sixteen miles south of Washington, D.C. It is open 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. April through August; 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., March, September, and October; and 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., November through February. Admission is $15.00 for adults, $14.00 for senior citizens, and $7.00 for

children ages six to eleven. Children under six are admitted free. Special rates are available for groups.

From Washington: Take the George Washington Parkway south to Alexandria/Mount Vernon. Follow the parkway past Ronald Reagan National Airport, through Old Town Alexandria. Mount Vernon is eight miles south of Old Town, located at a traffic circle at the end of the parkway.

Mount Vernon is also accessible by bus and, in the summer months, by boat. Several sightseeing services also include Mount Vernon on their tours.

To find Washington's grave from the west side of the museum, follow the road (marked as "Tomb Road") directly to the grave.

For additional information

Mount Vernon
P.O. Box 110
Mount Vernon, VA 22121
Phone: (703) 780-2000
www.mountvernon.org

George and Martha Washington's final resting place

"'I die hard, but I am not afraid to go,' Washington informed his doctors."
—Richard Norton Smith

Millions of tourists pay their respects before the red brick tomb whose construction George Washington had decreed in his will. Few making the trip to Mount Vernon have any idea of the theatrical scene enacted there in December 1799, by one of history's consummate actors. Taking charge of his treatment for a fatally sore throat, Washington held out his arm to be bled. "Don't be afraid," he assured his overseer. Over the next twenty-four hours or so, physicians would drain much of the old hero's blood supply. Around his neck, they placed flannel soaked in ammonium carbonate, a treatment no more effective than blisters of Spanish fly or vapors of vinegar. Heavy doses of calomel and emetick tartar emptied the patient's system of everything but the true source of his complaint.

Late on the afternoon of December 14, Washington asked his wife to go to his study and retrieve two wills from a desk there. One document was to be burned, the other preserved in her closet. As twilight fell, the ex-president seemed already to be wearing his death mask. "I find I am going," he told his secretary, Tobias Lear, adding that he faced the end "with perfect resignation." As thoughtful as he was organized, several times Washington apologized for the trouble he was causing. Lear, fighting back tears, said he only hoped to alleviate his friend's suffering.

"Well," replied Washington, "it is a debt we must pay to each other, and I hope when you want aid of this kind you will find it."

"I die hard, but I am not afraid to go," Washington informed his doctors. He felt his own fading pulse. The bedroom clock chimed ten as the dying man summoned his last reserves of strength. "I am just going," he whispered to Lear. "Have me decently buried, and do not let my body be put into the vault in less than three days after I am dead." (Washington wasn't alone in his dread of being buried alive; in her will Eleanor Roosevelt stipulated that her veins be cut as a precaution against the same fate.) The next morning saw the arrival of William Thornton, a family friend, amateur doctor and self-trained architect who had secretly designed the Capitol in the nearby Federal City as a final resting place for America's first president.

Never at a loss for ideas, Thornton proposed to resurrect the body laid out in Mount Vernon's handsome green banquet hall "in the following manner. First to thaw him in cold water, then to lay him in blankets, and by degrees and by friction to give him warmth, and to put into activity the minute blood vessels, at the same time to open a passage to the lungs by the trachea, and to inflate them with air, to produce an artificial respiration, and transfuse blood into him from a lamb." Other friends intervened to permit Washington a peaceful departure.

On Wednesday, December 18, Martha remained inside Mansion House as a little procession, led by the dead man's horse with its empty saddle, moved to the old family vault. A schooner anchored in the Potomac fired its minute guns and a Masonic band from Alexandria played a dirge. Local militia joined a handful of relations and friends in a brief service of committal. Later Martha consented to the removal of her husband's lead-lined mahogany coffin to Thornton's Capitol vault, on condition that she be allowed to share the space. Fortunately, the transfer was never made, thereby sparing the Father of his Country two centuries' exposure to lobbyists and boodlers.

In 1831 Washington's remains were moved a few hundred feet to the brick tomb that overlooks the Potomac. Having been embalmed while still living by a revolutionary generation in desperate need of a unifying icon, Washington of all people would understand why a million people a year are drawn to this place, hoping for inspiration with which to meet tests unimaginable to the Founders.

—RNS

John Adams

Buried: United First Parish Church (Church of the Presidents), Quincy, Massachusetts

Second President - 1797-1801
Born: October 30, 1735, in Quincy, Massachusetts
Died: 6:00 p.m. on July 4, 1826, in Quincy, Massachusetts
Age at death: 90

Cause of death: Heart failure and pneumonia Final words: “Thomas Jefferson still survives.” Admission to United First Parish Church: $4.00

John Adams

In 1797, John Adams stepped into the historical shoes of the venerable George Washington. Though he succeeded a legend, Adams could lay claim to one notable “first” of his own: he was the first president to occupy the White House. He and his wife Abigail moved into the unfinished President’s House, as it was then known, in the new capital city called Washington in 1800.

The second president had another distinction as well: he was the father and namesake of our sixth president, John Quincy Adams.

As president, John Adams had little trust in the masses; in truth, he was a political party of one. Defeated by Thomas Jefferson in 1800, Adams had more time for his solitary pursuits: leisurely walks and books. He retreated to the family home in Quincy, Massachusetts, where he harbored animosity toward his successor. For the next twenty-five years, Adams consumed the written word. When his eyesight failed and he could no longer read, he found others to read aloud to him. After a time, he renewed active correspondence with Thomas Jefferson. Though the two men had bitter political differences during their careers, they reconciled in retirement. Fate dictated that any distance between them would be bridged in death.

Marker for John Adams outside the crypt in Quincy's United First Parish Church (Church of the Presidents)

July 4, 1826 was an important day for the surviving founders—the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Ninety years old and in failing health, John Adams declined all requests to participate in the holiday celebrations. Instead, he stayed home with his family. That afternoon, he lost consciousness and died of heart failure complicated by pneumonia. Adams's last words were "Thomas Jefferson still survives…." He had it wrong, however. Amazingly, Jefferson had himself died just a few hours earlier.

John Adams was buried alongside his wife Abigail at the United First Parish Church in Quincy, Massachusetts. President John Quincy Adams, his son, and wife Louisa were later buried at the same site.

Touring John Adams's Tomb at United First Parish Church

United First Parish Church (Church of the Presidents) is located in Quincy, Massachusetts, about ten miles south of Boston.

From Boston: Take Interstate 93 or Route 128 South. Take exit 7, onto Route 3 South to Braintree and Cape Cod. Take the first exit off Route 3 South, marked exit 18 for Washington Street. Continue on Burgin Parkway through six traffic lights. At the seventh light, turn right onto Dimmock Street. Go one block and take a right onto Hancock Street. The church is located at 1306 Hancock Street.

The church is also accessible via the Metropolitan Boston Transit Authority's subway system. From Boston, take the red line train to the Quincy Center station. Go right when exiting the train and continue up the stairs. Take a left at the top of the stairs and exit onto Hancock Street. The church is located at 1306 Hancock Street.

The Adams family graves are located in the basement crypt. To reach the crypt after entering the church through the main doors, take a right, go down the stairs, and take

a left.

Guided tours of the crypt are also available for $5.00, beginning at the Adams National Historical Park Visitors Center, located at 1250 Hancock Street. The tour also includes the John Adams birthplace and the Adams family home. Tours operate from April 19 through November 10, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Admission is $5.00, free for those under sixteen.

A view from inside the Adams tomb

For additional information

United First Parish Church (Church
of the Presidents)
1306 Hancock Street (Quincy Center)
Quincy, MA 02169
Phone: (617) 773-0062
Fax: (617) 773-7499
www.ufpc.org

Adams National Historical Park
Visitors Center
1250 Hancock Street
Quincy, MA 02169
Phone: (617) 773-1177
Fax: (617) 847-3015
www.nps.gov/adam/

"Adams did not fear the great beyond."

—Richard Norton Smith

"Old age is a shipwreck," mused Charles De Gaulle. For John Adams, the shoals came sharply into view in October, 1818, when his beloved Abigail, "the dear Partner of my Life for 54 Years and for many Years more as a Lover," died from typhoid fever. "I wish I could lie down beside her and die too," said the grieving husband. And what did he expect to find when his wish was granted? The ancient patriot told his son, John Quincy, that he had "the compatible prospect of dying peaceably in my own bed, surrounded by amiable and affectionate children, kind neighbors, and excellent friends." On the other hand, "I should not like to Live in the Millennium. It would be the most sickish life imaginable."

Having outlived his revolutionary contemporaries, Adams did not fear the great beyond. He quoted his old friend and sparring partner, Benjamin Franklin, who said, "We are all invited to a great entertainment. Your carriage comes first to the door: but we should all meet there."

The United First Parish Church, the final resting place for John Adams and his son John Quincy Adams

The carriage came for Adams on July 4, 1826. Not until 1891, however, was his crypt beneath Quincy's Unitarian church, now known as the Church of the Presidents or the Adams Temple, open to the public.

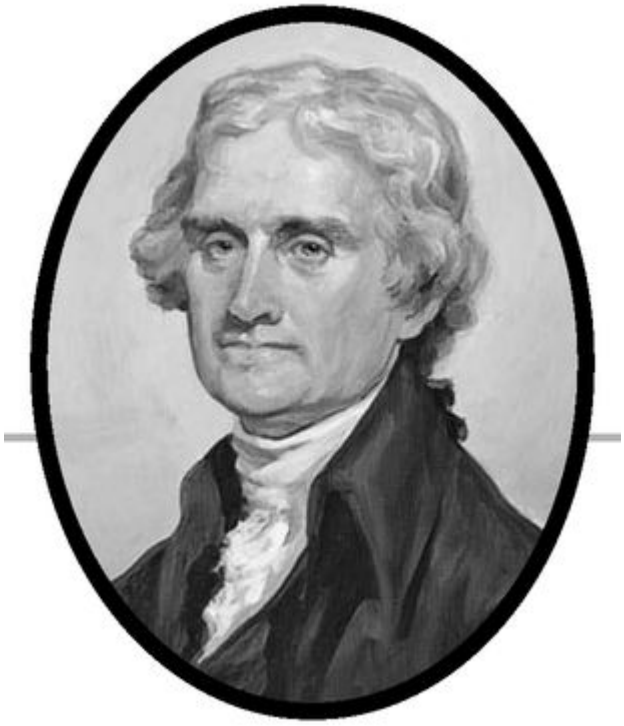
—RNS

Thomas Jefferson

Buried: Monticello, Charlottesville, Virginia

Third President - 1801-1809
Born: April 13, 1743, at Shadwell, Virginia
Died: 12:50 p.m. on July 4, 1826, at Monticello, Virginia
Age at death: 83

Cause of death: Heart failure
Final words: “Is it the Fourth?”
Admission to Monticello:
November-February: $15.00
March-October: $20.00



The election of Thomas Jefferson as our third president in 1800 signaled the young nation's first move from republicanism to democracy. It was also a time of growth and exploration. When the new administration completed the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the country doubled in size. Jefferson, always eager to explore new frontiers, sent Meriwether Lewis and William Clark on an 8,000 mile expedition through the western territory the following year.

Mostly satisfied with his accomplishments during his two terms, Jefferson retired to Monticello, his Virginia estate near Charlottesville. He was in debt and made a meager living from the sale of his crops. To maintain his genteel lifestyle, he eventually sold his 6,500 volume book collection to the Library of Congress for about $24,000. Despite his financial concerns, he devoted considerable energy to what would become one of his proudest achievements: the founding of the University of Virginia, which opened in 1825. Jefferson, the personification of the Age of Enlightenment, designed both the campus and curriculum.

Epitaph on Thomas Jefferson's grave, written by Jefferson himself

Jefferson's presence was in demand on July 4, 1826. The holiday marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Of the fifty-six signers, only three remained: Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Charles Carroll. Eighty-three-year-old Thomas Jefferson, feeling "weakened in body by infirmities and in mind by age," had declined all invitations to participate in the holiday festivities in Washington. On July 1, Jefferson began slipping in and out of consciousness. Jefferson had long suffered from rheumatism and an enlarged prostate and had regularly countered the pain with a concoction of opium and honey. During his last days, his doctor, Robley Dunglison, was on hand to administer the mixture, but Jefferson refused any medication. As though he were determined to hang on until the anniversary, Jefferson, in his lucid moments, asked several times whether it was the Fourth of July. With his family gathered at his bedside, Jefferson faded in and out of sleep. Finally, on July 4, he took his last breath; Dr. Dunglison pronounced him dead at 12:50 p.m.

As Jefferson had directed, an Episcopal rector conducted a simple graveside funeral service. He was buried in the family graveyard, next to his long-dead wife

Martha, on the grounds of Monticello. The tombstone, Jefferson's own creation, noted his involvement with the Declaration of Independence, the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, and the University of Virginia. Jefferson left out his service as his state's governor and his nation's vice president and president.

John Adams, Jefferson's longtime political and intellectual sparring partner, also lost consciousness and died that same afternoon in Massachusetts. Adams's last words were "Thomas Jefferson still survives…." Unbeknown to Adams, Jefferson had died just a few hours earlier.

Touring Thomas Jefferson's Tomb at Monticello

Monticello is located off Interstate 64 near Charlottesville, Virginia. It is open daily except Christmas Day. Hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., March 1 through October 31, and from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., November 1 until February 28. The Visitors Center is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., March 1 through October 31, and from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., November 1 through February 28.

Admission to Monticello is $15.00 for adults from November- February and $20.00 from March-October; it is $8.00 for children ages six to eleven year-round. Admission for children under six is free. Special rates are available for local residents and groups.

From Interstate 64: Take exit 121 to Route 20 South (if traveling westbound, turn left onto Route 20). Turn right at the first light to reach the Monticello Visitors Center. To reach Monticello, turn left on Route 53 just after the first stoplight. The entrance to Monticello will be on your right, about 1.5 miles from Route 20.

Jefferson's gravesite is located at the Monticello cemetery. To reach the cemetery after touring the house and grounds, follow the signs from the mountain top down Mulberry Row, heading west approximately 0.25 miles. The cemetery is at the end of that path. Visitors may also take the shuttle bus to the visitor's parking lot. Drivers stop at the cemetery, which is located about 0.3 miles from the lot.

For additional information

Monticello
Box 316
Charlottesville, VA 22902
Phone: (434) 984-9822
www.monticello.org

"'Nothing is better than a reliable friend,' wrote Jefferson."

—Richard Norton Smith

All the DNA evidence in the world will tell you less about Thomas Jefferson than climbing his little mountain, where the philosopher who insisted that the earth belonged to the living made a poignant exception of an eighty-foot-square patch of blood-red soil just below its summit. "Nothing is better than a reliable friend," wrote Jefferson. Together with his closest friend, Dabney Carr, the future president concluded an adolescent pact under whose terms the survivor would bury his companion beneath a great oak tree on the mountainside. Carr enjoyed a meteoric rise through the colony's legal and political elite, marrying Jefferson's sister and establishing himself as a forensic rival to Patrick Henry.

Unfortunately, everything about Carr's life was to be premature, including death from bilious fever before his thirtieth birthday. Faithful to his promise, Jefferson moved the remains of his friend from their original grave to the hillside site hallowed by boyish memory. Simultaneously he calculated that at the rate the workmen prepared Monticello's graveyard, a single laborer could grub an acre in four days. It was vintage Jefferson, more precise than emotional—unless one credits the latest evidence of his long rumored liaison with Sally Hemmings, whose descendants have reasons of their own for seeking a place near Dabney Carr's oak tree.

—RNS

Thomas Jefferson's grave on the grounds of Monticello

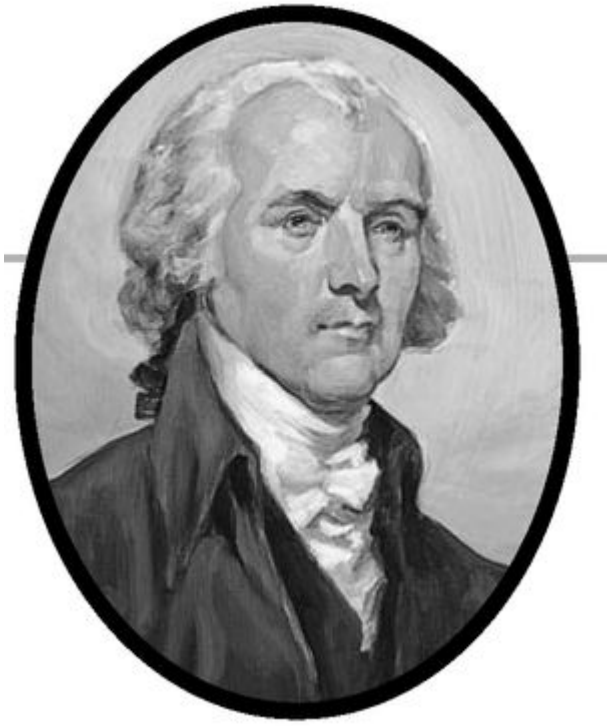
James Madison

Buried: Montpelier Estate, Montpelier Station, Virginia

Fourth President - 1809-1817
Born: March 16, 1751, in Port Conway, Virginia
Died: June 28, 1836, at Montpelier, Virginia
Age at death: 85
Cause of death: Heart failure

Final words: “Nothing more than a change of mind, my dear.”

Admission to Montpelier Estate: $14.00



He was a statesman best known as the “Father of the Constitution.” Yet, had he lived in the modern media age, James Madison might never have become president. Our shortest president at 5’4”, the soft-spoken Madison lacked the qualities of a successful politician. Luckily, his wife Dolley had enough for both of them. Attractive and outgoing, she made the White House the center of the capital’s social circuit. While her husband led America to victory over Britain in the War of 1812, Dolley is remembered for saving George Washington’s portrait from the burning White House.

James and Dolley Madison left the White House in 1817 after his two terms as president. They spent the next nineteen years at Montpelier, their estate in Virginia’s Orange County. Even though he was one of the county’s largest landowners, Madison had little money in retirement; a number of poor crops meant even less to live on. Yet he continued to contribute to the public discourse through debates on the slavery issue and through his involvement with Thomas Jefferson’s University of Virginia. After Jefferson’s death, Madison served as the university’s rector until his own health began to decline.

Dolley Madison's grave at Montpelier

During the first six months of 1836, James Madison was unable to leave his bedroom, his body plagued by a debilitating case of rheumatism. A neighbor of Jefferson's in the Virginia piedmont, Madison was treated by the same physician, Dr. Robley Dunglison, who tended to Jefferson in his final days. In his last months, clearly on the verge of death, Madison was told that drugs could prolong his life until the Fourth of July. He refused to try and delay the inevitable and thus did not survive to share the same memorable day of death as Presidents Adams, Jefferson, and Monroe.

Madison tried to eat an early breakfast with his family at Montpelier on June 28, 1836, when food lodged in his throat. One of his nieces grew concerned. Madison reassured her: "Nothing more than a change of mind, my dear." He then slumped over and died. He was laid to rest on June 29 in the family plot at Montpelier, an Episcopal priest committing his body to the earth. The funeral was attended by family, friends, and neighbors. More than one hundred slaves looked on as the "Father of the Constitution" was buried.

After James Madison's death, his widow returned to Washington, where she lived out the rest of her years. She is buried next to her husband at Montpelier.

Touring James Madison's Tomb at Montpelier

From points north: Take Route 66 West to Route 29 South. At Culpeper, take Route 15 South. Continue on Route 15 to Orange. At Orange, take Route 20 South. Montpelier is located on Route 20 just four miles from the town of Orange.

From points south: Take Interstate 95 North to Route 64 West. From Route 64, take Route 15 North. At Orange, take Route 20 South. Montpelier is located on Route 20 just four miles from the town of Orange.

The Madison Family Cemetery is accessible via the Montpelier parking lot. Follow the marked path to the cemetery.

Montpelier is open daily except on Thanksgiving and Christmas. Hours are from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. from April through October and 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. from November through March.

Admission to Montpelier is $14.00 for adults and $7.00 for children ages six to fourteen. Admission for children under six is free.

Note: You can no longer visit the cemetery without taking an official tour. The cemetery gates are only open to tour groups during visitor's hours.

For additional information

Montpelier
11407 Constitution Highway
Montpelier Station, VA 22957
Phone: (540) 672-2728
www.montpelier.org

"…Madison cherished hopes of freeing his slaves upon his death."

—Richard Norton Smith

"Take care of me when dead," Thomas Jefferson wrote James Madison, in February 1826, "and be assured that I shall leave with you my last affections." Faithful as ever, Madison succeeded his old friend as rector of the infant University of Virginia. Condemning southern nullifiers, he organized his voluminous notes on the Constitutional Convention for posthumous publication and cherished hopes of freeing his slaves upon his death. Madison was forced to abandon these plans as Montpelier sank into debt; idealism fell victim to the plantation economy (in his will, he did make modest provision for the American Colonization Society and its agenda of returning America's slaves to their African roots.)

The day after his death, the former president was buried in the Madison family plot half a mile south of his mansion. His much loved wife, Dolley, lived on in the nation's capital until 1849, sending the second telegraph (after Samuel Morse's immortal "What hath God wrought?") and being voted an unprecedented honorary seat in the House of Representatives. Her funeral was the largest Washington had ever seen, attended by, among others, "The Presidential Cabinet, The Diplomatic Corps, Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives…and their officers; Judges of the Supreme Court and Courts of the District and their officers; Officers of the Army and Navy; the Mayor and Corporation of Washington"—and a vast assembly of "Citizens and Strangers" come to pay respects to one of America's great women.

Originally laid to rest in the Congressional Cemetery on Capitol Hill, Dolley was not reunited with her husband until 1858. Today they sleep in the rolling horse country of Orange County.

—RNS

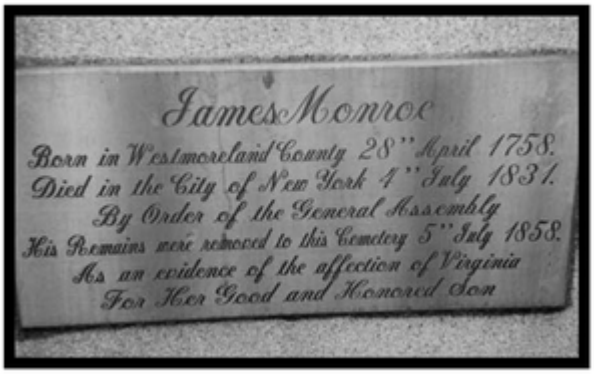
James Monroe

Buried: Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond, Virginia

Fifth President - 1817-1825
Born: April 28, 1758, in Westmoreland County, Virginia
Died: 3:15 p.m. on July 4, 1831, in New York, New York
Age at death: 73
Cause of death: Heart failure
Final words: Unknown
Admission to Hollywood Cemetery: Free

James Monroe's legacy is the doctrine which bears his name. Our fifth president warned Europe against intrusion in our hemisphere, a policy invoked by future administrations. Monroe, known for his genial demeanor, presided over the brief time called the "era of good feelings" for its lack of partisan divisions.

Monroe lived just six years after he left the presidency. He and his wife Elizabeth departed the White House in 1825 for Oak Hill, their newly built Virginia home. Their architect was Thomas Jefferson. Like some other presidents before him, he retired owing money; there were no pensions for presidents until the second half of the twentieth century. Monroe worked diligently to obtain back pay from the federal government, with little success. He also maintained some involvement with public affairs, serving as president of the Virginia Constitutional Convention and as a regent at the University of Virginia. Stunned by Elizabeth's death in 1830, he was no longer able to live at Oak Hill without her. Monroe moved to New York City to live with his daughter, Maria Hester Gouverneur.



Bronze plaque marking Monroe's marble tomb

Monroe remained mentally alert into his seventies and began work on his memoirs, but his heart was weak. He developed what may have been tuberculosis during the final months of his life and died of heart failure at his daughter's home in New York City on July 4, 1831. He was the third president, following Adams and Jefferson, to die on the Fourth of July.

On July 7, city businesses closed while a public eulogy was held for Monroe at New York City Hall. Funeral services followed at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Thousands clogged the streets as they joined a funeral procession to Marble Cemetery while a seventy-three-gun salute marked each year of Monroe's life. As mourners looked on, James Monroe's body was placed in his son-in-law's family vault.

On July 5, 1858, President Monroe's remains were moved from New York City to Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond, Virginia. The Virginia General Assembly ordered the transfer, believing that its native son should be buried on home territory. His grave now sits atop a hill in that cemetery, surrounded by a black iron cage-like monument. A bronze plaque notes that he is buried there "as an evidence of the affection of Virginia For Her Good and Honored Son." Other notable political figures are buried nearby, including President John Tyler; Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederacy; Confederate Generals Jeb Stuart and George Pickett; and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Lewis Powell.

Touring James Monroe's Tomb at Hollywood Cemetery

Hollywood Cemetery is located in Richmond, Virginia. It is open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. There is no admission fee. A tour map is sold in the office for $1.00.

From Interstate 95 southbound or Interstate 64 eastbound: Take exit 76 to Belvidere Street. Follow Belvidere south through downtown over the Downtown Expressway to Spring Street. Make a right onto Spring Street. Continue on Spring until you reach

Cherry Street, and take a right onto Cherry. The entrance to the cemetery is located at the corner of Cherry and Albemarle Streets.

From Interstate 95 northbound or Interstate 64 westbound: Take exit 76/Chamberlayne Avenue and turn left off the ramp onto Chamberlayne Parkway. Follow the parkway to Leigh Street. Turn left around the Bojangles monument onto Leigh Street and follow Leigh to Belvidere Street. Turn left onto Belvidere. Follow Belvidere south through downtown over the Downtown Expressway to Spring Street. Make a right onto Spring Street. Continue on Spring until you reach Cherry Street and take a right onto Cherry. The entrance to the cemetery is located at the corner of Cherry and Albemarle Streets.

President Monroe's grave is located in President Circle. From the cemetery entrance, bear right on Hollywood Avenue. Turn left at Westvale Avenue and proceed to Hillside Avenue which leads to President Circle. Monroe is buried in the center of the circle; President John Tyler is buried on the circle's perimeter.

For additional information

Hollywood Cemetery
412 South Cherry Street
Richmond, VA 23220
Phone: (804) 648-8501
www.hollywoodcemeter y.org

"As his health declined, Monroe became a near recluse. . . ."
—Richard Norton Smith

Monroe's final years had been demeaning. Shadowed by debt, grief-stricken over the loss of his wife, Elizabeth, the last of the Virginia Dynasty was compelled to sell his Loudoun County estate and take up residence with his daughter and son-in-law in New York City. As his health declined, Monroe became a near recluse, dosing himself with syrup of horehound for a tubercular condition. On the afternoon of July 4, 1831, he became the third American president to succumb on the nation's birthday. (Madison fell just short, dying on June 28, 1836.) Thousands turned out to watch a hearse bear his remains slowly up Broadway to a "temporary" vault, where they remained until the Virginia legislature in 1858 decided to observe the centenary of Monroe's birth with an elaborate homecoming and burial in the most bizarre of presidential tombs—a black iron birdcage-like affair that only Charles Addams could love.

—RNS

Elizabeth Monroe's grave lies next to her husband's birdcage-liketomb in Hollywood Cemetery

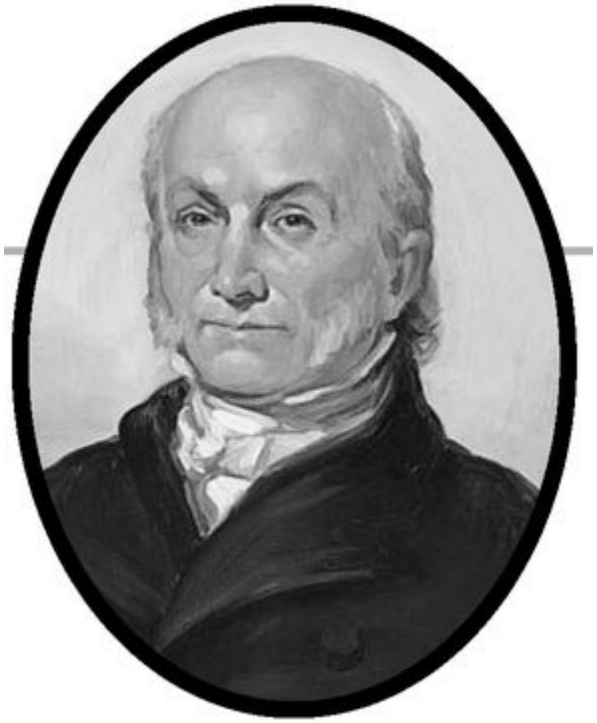
John Quincy Adams

Buried: United First Parish Church (Church of the Presidents), Quincy, Massachusetts

Sixth President - 1825-1829
Born: July 11, 1767, in Quincy, Massachusetts
Died: 7:20 p.m. on February 23, 1848, in Washington, D.C.
Age at death: 80
Cause of death: Stroke

Final words: “I am content” or “I am composed” (accounts vary)

Admission to United First Parish Church: $4.00



The easygoing Monroe was followed by John Quincy Adams who candidly described himself as reserved and austere. The son of our second president arrived at the White House in 1825 after a fractious election. None of the four presidential candidates captured a majority of electoral votes, so the race was decided in the House of Representatives.

Our sixth president kept in shape by walking between the White House and the Capitol. As befit his cold personality, he was also fond of skinny-dipping in the chilly waters of the Potomac. His British-born wife, Louisa, was the only first lady born outside the United States. Unhappy in her position, she avoided social occasions whenever possible.

After losing the presidency to Andrew Jackson in the election of 1828, John Quincy Adams embarked on yet another political career as the only former president to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives. In 1830, he was elected to represent a Massachusetts district. He returned to Washington and resumed his early morning swims, a habit he continued until just before his death.

Eighteen years later, at age eighty, though his health had deteriorated after a minor stroke in 1846, he was still serving in Congress. On February 21, 1848, at his desk in the House chamber, Adams suffered a second and more serious stroke. After vehemently voting to reject more decorations for some Mexican War generals, the Congressman fell into the arms of Ohio Representative David Fisher. His colleagues carried him to the Speaker’s Room, just off the House floor, where he was attended by five physicians, four of whom were fellow Representatives. Accounts of Adams’s last

words vary. Some claimed to have heard him whisper, “I am content.” Others recalled the words, “I am composed.” He slipped into a coma and died at the Capitol two days later.

Adams’s body lay on view in a House committee room for two days, where thousands filed past to see him. Funeral services were conducted by the House chaplain on February 25, with the coffin resting before the Speaker’s rostrum in the House chamber. Adams’s body was taken in a grand procession to a receiving vault at Congressional Cemetery in Washington. A few days later, it was transported back to Massachusetts by train, accompanied by a member of Congress from each state. Mourners lined the route and a public memorial service was held at Faneuil Hall in Boston. At the end of the journey, Adams was laid to rest in the family vault at the Quincy cemetery. He was eventually buried in the Adams crypt at the United First Parish Church in Quincy alongside his parents. His wife Louisa was also buried there when she died in 1852.

Sign outside the Adams crypt at the United First Parish Church (Church of the Presidents)

Touring John Quincy Adams’s Tomb at United First Parish Church

United First Parish Church (Church of the Presidents) is located in Quincy, Massachusetts, about ten miles south of Boston.

From Boston: Take Interstate 93 or Route 128 south. Take exit 7, onto Route 3 South to Braintree and Cape Cod. Take the first exit off Route 3 South, marked exit 18 for Washington Street. Continue on Burgin Parkway through six traffic lights. At the seventh light, turn right onto Dimmock Street. Go one block and take a right onto Hancock Street. The church is located at 1306 Hancock Street.

The church is also accessible via the Metropolitan Boston Transit Authority's subway system. From Boston, take the red line train to the Quincy Center station. Go right when exiting the train and continue up the stairs. Take a left at the top of the stairs and exit onto Hancock Street. The church is located at 1306 Hancock Street.

The Adams family graves are located in the basement crypt. To reach the crypt after entering the church through the main doors, take a right, go down the stairs, and take a left.

Guided tours of the crypt are also available for $5.00, beginning at the Adams National Historical Park Visitors Center, located at 1250 Hancock Street. The tour also includes the John Adams birthplace and the Adams family home. Tours operate from April 19 through November 10, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Admission is $5.00, free for those under sixteen.

For additional information

United First Parish Church (Church of the Presidents) 1306 Hancock Street (Quincy Center)

Quincy, MA 02169

Phone: (617) 773-0062 / Fax: (617) 773-7499 www.ufpc.org

Adams National Historical Park Visitors Center 1250 Hancock Street

Quincy, MA 02169

Phone: (617) 773-1177 / Fax: (617) 847-3015

www.nps.gov/adam/

"…the sarcophagus provided for…JQA was too small for his elaborate coffin…"

—Richard Norton Smith

Upright and unadorned, the Quincy meetinghouse reflects the characters of the two presidents who, with their wives, share a subterranean crypt carved from solid granite. John and Abigail Adams were placed there in 1828. Twenty-four

years later the area was enlarged to accommodate the remains of John Quincy and his wife Louisa. As it happened, the sarcophagus provided for the second President Adams was too small for his elaborate coffin, forcing a halt in the ceremony while stonemasons were summoned to widen the enclosure. Somehow it made perfect sense, given Adams's failure while in the White House to fit his spacious views within the cramped vision of nineteenth-century agrarianism. Almost forty years would pass before the iron grillwork fronting the Adams crypt swung open to admit the general public.

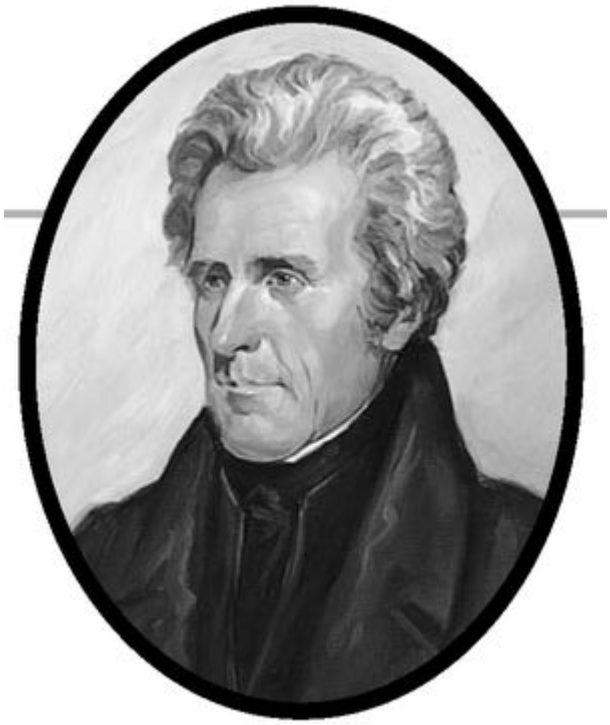
—RNS

John Quincy Adams lies next to his British-born wife Louisa in the Adams crypt

Andrew Jackson

Buried: The Hermitage, Hermitage, Tennessee

Seventh President - 1829-1837
Born: March 15, 1767, in Waxhaw, South Carolina
Died: 6:00 p.m. on June 8, 1845, at the Hermitage, Tennessee
Age at death: 78
Cause of death: Heart failure
Final words: “We shall all meet in heaven.”
Admission to the Hermitage: $17.00



Andrew Jackson's reputation as a man of the people was cemented at his inauguration. After his swearing-in at the Capitol, many citizens returned with the new president to the White House. The celebration lasted throughout the night and went down in history as one of the most raucous parties ever held on the South Lawn.

Two women played prominent roles in Andrew Jackson's presidency. The first was his beloved wife, Rachel. His election campaign of 1828 was marred by charges of adultery when it became known that Rachel's divorce from her first husband was not yet final when she and Jackson married. The ensuing publicity devastated the couple. Rachel fell ill and died suddenly in December of 1828, just after the election. Andrew Jackson blamed his political enemies.

His bitterness resurfaced when Washington society snubbed the wife of his secretary of war, John Eaton, who had married Peggy Timberlake only two months after her first husband's suicide. Gossip swirled. Jackson, reminded of his late wife's anguish, stubbornly insisted that the other cabinet members and their wives treat Peggy Eaton with respect. Only Secretary of State Martin Van Buren complied. Angered over this point of honor, Jackson forced the resignation of his entire cabinet.

In March of 1837, at the end of his second, more stable term, Jackson returned alone to the Hermitage, his home near Nashville. Enormously popular, he spoke frequently on behalf of his successor, Martin Van Buren, and for a future president, James K. Polk.

Jackson was obsessed with Rachel's memory. He hung her portrait across from his bed so that it would be the first and last thing he saw each day. Over the next eight years, Jackson's health declined rapidly; tuberculosis and partial blindness rocked the strong man's body and outlook. Jackson became bloated as dropsy spread throughout his body. On June 2, 1845, a doctor operated to drain fluid from his midsection. By June 8, he had fallen unconscious. Knowing the end was near, his son Andrew and daughter-in-law Sarah gathered at his bedside. Many of the family slaves congregated outside. In his final moments, Jackson told them not to cry and hoped that they all, black and white, would meet in heaven. He died later that afternoon, at the age of seventy-eight. His friend Sam Houston, the legendary former governor of Tennessee, arrived too late to see his hero's last moments.

Andrew and Rachel Jackson are buried side-by-side under a cupola in the southeast corner of Rachel's garden. His tombstone declares him as General Andrew Jackson, not mentioning his service as President. Other members of the Jackson family, and several Jackson family slaves, are buried nearby.

Grave of Uncle Alfred, a Jackson family slave

Touring Andrew Jackson's Tomb at the Hermitage

The Hermitage is located twelve miles east of Nashville, Tennessee.

From Nashville: Take Interstate 40 East to exit 221A (Old Hickory Boulevard). The Hermitage is located just off Old Hickory Boulevard in Hermitage, Tennessee. Signs for the Hermitage are clearly marked from the Old Hickory Boulevard exit.

Andrew Jackson's grave is visible from the main house. Look for the garden at the side of the home; Jackson's grave is located in the garden's right-hand corner, under a cupola.

The Hermitage is open from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. April 1 through October 15 and 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. October 16 through March 31, except for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the third week in January. Admission is $17.00 for adults, $14.00 for senior citizens, $11.00 for students ages thirteen to eighteen, and $7.00 for children ages six to twelve. Children under six are admitted free.

For additional information

The Hermitage
4580 Rachel's Lane
Hermitage, TN 37076
Phone: (615) 889-2941
Fax: (615) 889-9909
www.thehermitage.com

Andrew and Rachel Jackson lie under a stone cupola in the Hermitage garden

"Yet even as his tortured body disintegrated, his iron will remained intact."
—Richard Norton Smith

That Andrew Jackson survived as long as he did is less a testimony to the vagaries of nineteenth-century medicine—the patient self-medicated himself over the years with vast dosages of lead and mercury—than to Jackson's indomitable spirit.

Somehow the old man soldiered on, notwithstanding frequent abscesses caused by two bullets lodged in his body from a youthful duel; bleeding in the lungs; malarial fever; chronic dysentery; severe toothache; malnutrition and

"dropsical habits" which caused his feet and ankles to swell, and for which he took regular warm salt baths.

"Salts are injurious to all dropsical habits," Jackson told a fellow sufferer in 1813, "and calomel is the great cleanser of the blood."

By the spring of 1845, Jackson was, in his own words, "a perfect Jelly from the toes to the upper part of my abdomen, in any part of which a finger can be pressed half-an-inch and the print will remain for minutes." Due to massive edema, Jackson was literally drowning in his own fluids. Yet even as his tortured body disintegrated, his iron will remained intact. Artist G.P.A. Healy, having already completed two likenesses of the General, wished to beg off a commission to paint Jackson's beloved granddaughter Sarah because he was late for a session with Henry Clay. On learning this, the dying man's eyes blazed with indignation.

"Young man," he snapped, "always do your duty."

Healy did as he was told, leading Clay to observe, when they belatedly met, "I see that you, like all who approached that man, were fascinated."

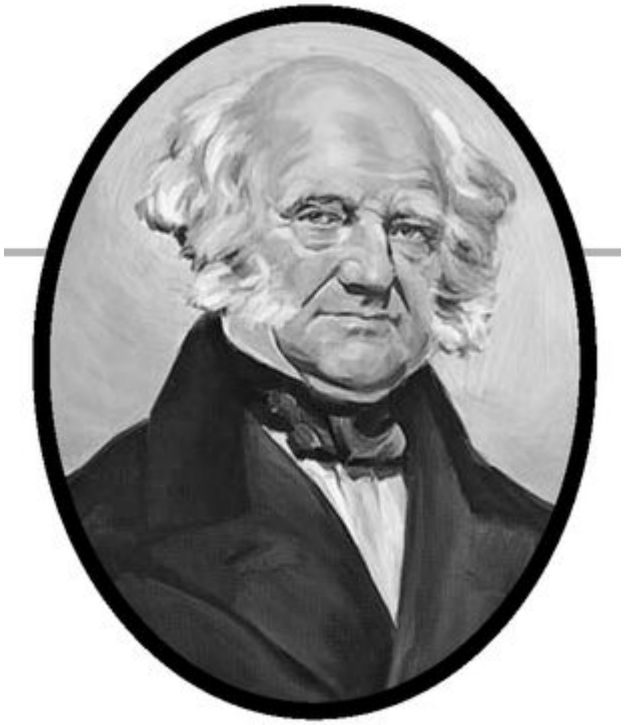
To the end, "that man" remained faithful to his political creed. When a returning naval officer offered the former president an elaborate sarcophagus originally made for the Roman Emperor Severus, Jackson's refusal was instantaneous. "My republican feelings and principles forbid it," he wrote; "the simplicity of our system of government forbids it."

—RNS

Martin Van Buren

Buried: Kinderhook Reformed Cemetery, Kinderhook, New York

Eighth President - 1837-1841
Born: December 5, 1782, in Kinderhook, New York
Died: 2:00 a.m. on July 24, 1862, in Kinderhook, New York
Age at death: 79
Cause of death: Heart failure
Final words: “There is but one reliance.”
Admission to Kinderhook Reformed
Cemetery: Free



One of the most comical and biting assessments of our eighth president, Martin Van Buren, came from Tennessee Congressman Davy Crockett. The plain-spoken frontiersman was not impressed when he encountered “what the English call a dandy.” Crockett observed that “when he enters the Senate chamber in the morning, he struts and swaggers like a crow in the gutter.” Crockett thought he saw corsets constricting Van Buren’s ample waist and stung him further: “It would be difficult to say, from his personal appearance, whether he was man or woman.” Crockett concluded that his whiskers resolved any doubt.

The dapper Van Buren was the first president born an American citizen. He served a single term before being defeated for reelection by William Henry Harrison in 1840. Retiring to his Lindenwald estate in Kinderhook, New York, near Albany, he plotted his comeback. Van Buren sought the presidency twice more, but was unsuccessful. Thereafter his withdrawal from public life was complete, save for an occasional editorial on current affairs. His personal time was spent gardening and visiting with lifelong friends.

Martin Van Buren is Kinderhook Reformed Cemetery's best-known resident

In 1853 Van Buren traveled to Europe, hoping a warmer climate might help his chronic asthma. He stayed there until the summer of 1855, but his respiratory problems resurfaced when he returned. Back in New York, he also suffered a series of falls, including one in which he broke his left arm and another in which he was thrown from a horse. Van Buren's sense of humor remained intact. After the latter fall, he remarked, "Does not this not speak well of my skull?"

Van Buren was at work on his memoirs when he was stricken with pneumonia in the fall of 1861. He was bedridden thereafter. Martin Van Buren died of heart failure on Friday, July 24, 1862, at the age of seventy-nine, while at home with his sons. The announcement of his death was no surprise to the nation; rumors of the former president's ill health had been circulating for the past year.

Van Buren's funeral was held the following Monday at the Reformed Dutch Church of Kinderhook. Parishioners there remembered Van Buren for his loud singing voice—he frequently drowned out the hymns of those around him. Hundreds of mourners who could not fit into the church waited outside until it was time for the public viewing.

Witnesses noted that the former president, well-dressed as always, looked quite natural in his rosewood coffin. As he had instructed, no bells were rung as Kinderhook's Fire Company No. 2 led the cortege to Kinderhook Reformed Cemetery. Martin Van Buren was laid to rest alongside his beloved wife Hannah.

Touring Martin Van Buren's Tomb at Kinderhook Reformed Cemetery

Kinderhook Reformed Cemetery is open year-round from 9:00 a.m. until dusk. Admission is free.

From the east: Take Interstate 90 to exit B1 onto U.S. Route 9 South. At the stop light on Route 9, turn onto Albany Avenue. The cemetery is located 0.5 miles ahead on both sides of Albany Avenue.

From the west: Take Interstate 90 to exit 12 onto U.S. Route 9 South. At the stop light on Route 9, turn onto Albany Avenue. The cemetery is located 0.5 miles ahead on both sides of Albany Avenue.

Van Buren's grave is located in the northeastern section of the cemetery on the right side of Albany Avenue, the cemetery's only road.

For additional information

Columbia County
Department of Tourism
401 State Street
Hudson, NY 12534
Phone: (800) 724-1846 /
(518) 828-3375
www.columbiacountyny.org

Martin Van Buren National
Historic Site
1013 Old Post Road
Kinderhook, NY 12106
Phone: (518) 758-9689
www.nps.gov/mava

Kinderhook Reformed Chuch
23 Broad Street
Kinderhook, NY 12106
Phone: (518) 758-6401

Martin Van Buren's monument towers over the other graves in Kinderhook Reformed Cemeter

> **"Van Buren's final hours played out against the much greater drama of the Fraternal War..."**
>
> ***—Richard Norton Smith***

The so-called Red Fox of Kinderhook is remembered today as a political tactician of impressive gifts and flexible principles. After defending slavery while in the White House, in 1848 he reinvented himself as the standard bearer of the Free Soil Party. A natural-born conciliator, Van Buren nevertheless rejected an appeal from Franklin Pierce that would have enlisted America's ex-presidents in calling a Peace Convention on the eve of Abraham Lincoln's first inauguration.

Van Buren's final hours played out against the much greater drama of the Fraternal War; as his life drew to its close, the man in the White House sought advice from his Cabinet about the timing of a presidential proclamation to emancipate slaves in areas still in rebellion against the United States government.

On learning of his predecessor's death, Lincoln took time out from his crushing responsibilities to draft a statement of tribute. "The grief of his patriotic friends," wrote the man in the White House, "will measurably be assuaged by the consciousness that while suffering with disease and seeing his end approaching, his prayers were for the restoration of the authority of the government of which he had been head, and for peace and good will among his fellow citizens."

Lincoln, facing hotly contested midterm elections, was not above putting words of endorsement in a dead man's mouth. The president once known as the Little Magician would have approved.

—RNS

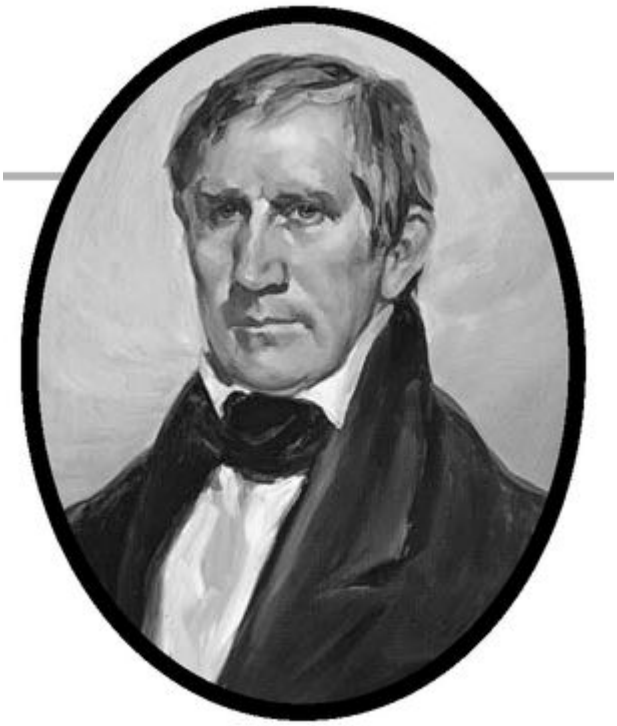
William Henry Harrison

Buried: Harrison Tomb, North Bend, Ohio

Ninth President - 1841
Born: February 9, 1773, in Charles City County, Virginia
Died: 12:30 a.m. on April 4, 1841, at the White House, Washington, D.C.
Age at Death: 68
Cause of death: Pneumonia

Final words: “I wish you to understand the true principles of the government. I wish them carried out. I ask nothing more.”

Admission to Harrison Tomb: Free



On March 4, 1841, William Henry Harrison delivered his inaugural address, which holds the record for length—over one hundred minutes. Speaking outdoors without an overcoat, Harrison vowed not to seek a second term. His promise was fulfilled, but not on his terms. Shortly after the inauguration, Harrison was caught in a downpour while out for a walk. The cold he contracted turned into pneumonia and he was soon confined to his bed. He stayed there for several days with brief signs of improvement, but Harrison seemed to sense that he was gravely ill. He reportedly remarked, “I am ill, very ill, much more so than they think.” He grew delirious, but his last words reflected his awareness of his position: “I wish you to understand the true principles of the government. I wish them carried out. I ask for nothing more.” On April 4 at 12:30 a.m., just one month after taking office, William Henry Harrison died quietly in his bed at the White House, the first of eight presidents to die in office.

Harrison’s wife Anna had stayed behind at their home in North Bend, Ohio, to pack up their belongings. Though she planned to join her husband at the White House in May, she never made the trip.

Episcopal funeral services were conducted in the East Room of the White House, where Harrison’s body was on view in an open casket. The casket was escorted up Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House by twenty-six pallbearers, one for each state. The new president, John Tyler, as well as the Cabinet, the Diplomatic Corps, and fourteen militia companies joined 10,000 mourners in the procession. Harrison’s body lay in state at the Capitol before being taken to Washington’s Congressional

Cemetery. In June of that year, it was moved to North Bend, Ohio, where the Harrisons had made their home, for permanent burial.

Although she never lived in the White House, Anna Harrison was the first widowed presidential wife to receive a pension. President John Tyler, her husband's former neighbor in Virginia, granted her the sum of $25,000 in June of 1841. Anna Harrison was buried alongside her husband when she died in 1864.

William Henry Harrison's 100-foot funeral monument near the banks of the Ohio River

Touring William Henry Harrison's Tomb at the Harrison Tomb State Memorial

The Harrison Tomb is located in North Bend, Ohio, fifteen miles west of Cincinnati. The tomb is open year-round during daylight hours. Admission is free.

From Cincinnati and other points east: Take U.S. Route 50 West. The Harrison Tomb is located on Cliff Road, west off U.S. Route 50. Follow the signs for the Harrison Tomb State Memorial.

From the west: Take U.S. Route 275 to Route 50 West. The Harrison Tomb is located on Cliff Road, west off Route 50. Follow the signs for the Harrison Tomb State Memorial.

Stone pillars topped by giant eagles mark the entrance to the Harrison Tomb

For additional information

Harrison Tomb
c/o Site Operations Department
The Ohio Historical Society
1982 Velma Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43211

Phone: (800) 686-1535 /
(614) 297-2630
Fax: (614) 297-2628
www.ohiohistory.org/
places/harrison

"…Harrison, no master of the sound bite, is the only American president to die from talking too much."

—Richard Norton Smith

Ohio boasts chief executives whose chief claim to modern recollection is their funerary monuments. For instance, it took longer to build William Henry Harrison's hundred-foot shaft overlooking the Ohio River at North Bend, dedicated in 1924, than it did for Harrison to seek, win, and fill the presidency. Contracting pneumonia after delivering a lengthy inaugural address in March 1841, the sixty-eight-year-old Harrison, no master of the sound bite, is the only American president to die from talking too much.

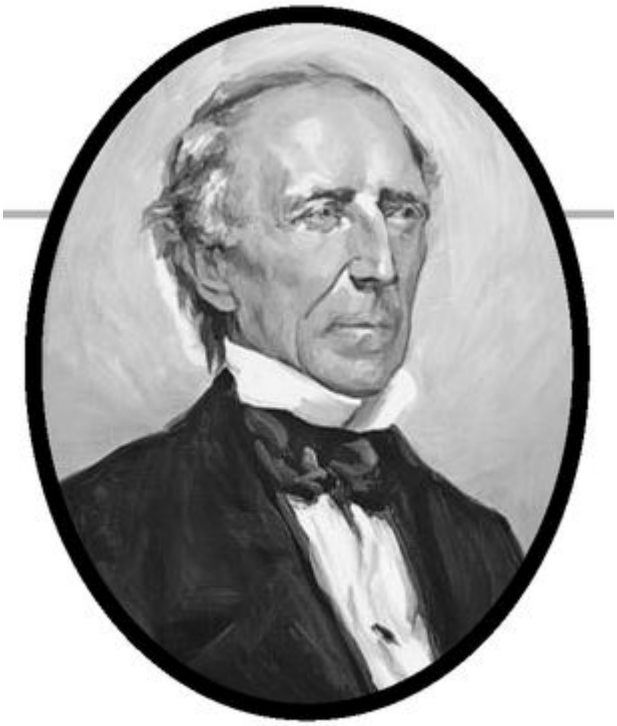
At the Hermitage, his estate outside Nashville, Andrew Jackson could hardly contain his delight at the news. "A kind and overruling providence has interfered to prolong our glorious Union and happy republican system," Jackson told his old henchman, Francis P. Blair, "which General Harrison and his Cabinet were preparing to destroy under the dictation of the profligate demagogue, Henry Clay." Fortunately, Harrison's death put a halt to such dire possibilities. "The Lord ruleth, let our nation rejoice," Jackson added with a flourish, in a display of partisan bad taste unparalleled in American history.

—RNS

John Tyler

Buried: Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond, Virginia

Tenth President - 1841-1845
Born: March 29, 1790, in Charles City County, Virginia
Died: 12:15 a.m. on January 18, 1862, in Richmond, Virginia
Age at death: 71
Cause of death: Bilious fever
Final words: “Perhaps it is best.”
Admission to Hollywood Cemetery: Free



John Tyler

William Henry Harrison's swift and untimely death in 1841 elevated John Tyler to the presidency and earned him the nickname "His Accidency." At his home in Virginia only a month after the inauguration and unaware of Harrison's illness, Tyler was shocked to learn of his ascendance to the nation's highest office.

In 1845, after nearly four fractious years as president, Tyler returned to Sherwood Forest, his plantation near Richmond. Remarried after the death of his first wife to a woman thirty years his junior, Tyler fathered seven additional children after leaving the White House. Our most prolific president, he had fourteen children who lived to maturity.

He remained deeply involved in politics and as the Civil War drew near, supported secession for his beloved Virginia. In November of 1861 he was again elected to public office as a member of the Confederate House of Representatives.

Tyler did not live to serve the Confederacy. He arrived in Richmond, the Confederate capital, to begin his term, and moved into the Exchange Hotel. His wife Julia met him there on January 10, 1862. Though she had not planned to join him so soon, she grew alarmed after dreaming that her husband was gravely ill. Two days after her arrival, Tyler became sick and collapsed in the hotel dining room. His physician determined that Tyler was suffering from bronchitis and liver dysfunction, then known as "bilious fever." The doctor prescribed morphine and ordered the former president to bed. The Tylers planned to return to Sherwood Forest, but the night before their departure, John Tyler took a turn for the worse. He awoke with difficulty breathing in the middle of the night. A doctor arrived, but there was nothing to be done. Moments before he died, Tyler said, "Perhaps it is best."

John Tyler's grave stands near James Monroe's tomb in Richmond's Hollywood Cemetery

John Tyler's body lay in state at the Confederate Congress in Richmond with a Confederate flag covering the open casket. Following the funeral at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, a procession of over 150 carriages followed Tyler's coffin to Richmond's Hollywood Cemetery. He was buried near another former president, James Monroe. Because his active support for the Confederacy was unpopular with officials in Washington, Tyler's death was virtually ignored by the federal government. This president was viewed as a Confederate and buried near its government. Congress did not place an official marker at his gravesite until more than fifty years later.

Touring John Tyler's Tomb at Hollywood Cemetery

Hollywood Cemetery is located in Richmond, Virginia. It is open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. There is no admission fee. A tour map is sold in the office for $1.00.

From Interstate 95 southbound or Interstate 64 eastbound: Take exit 76 to Belvidere Street. Follow Belvidere south through downtown over the Downtown Expressway to Spring Street. Make a right onto Spring Street. Continue on Spring until you reach Cherry Street and take a right onto Cherry. The entrance to the cemetery is located at the corner of Cherry and Albemarle Streets.

From Interstate 95 northbound or Interstate 64 westbound: Take exit 76/Chamberlayne Avenue and turn left off the ramp onto Chamberlayne Parkway. Follow the parkway to Leigh Street. Turn left around the Bojangles monument onto Leigh Street and follow Leigh to Belvidere Street. Turn left onto Belvidere. Follow Belvidere south through downtown over the Downtown Expressway to Spring Street. Make a right onto Spring Street. Continue on Spring until you reach Cherry Street and take a right onto Cherry. The entrance to the cemetery is located at the corner of Cherry and Albemarle Streets.

President Tyler's grave is located in President Circle. From the cemetery entrance, bear right on Hollywood Avenue. Turn left at Westvale Avenue and proceed to Hillside Avenue which leads to President Circle. James Monroe is buried in the center of the circle; Tyler is buried on the circle's perimeter.

For additional information

Hollywood Cemetery
412 South Cherry Street
Richmond, VA 23220
Phone: (804) 648-8501
www.hollywoodcemetery.org

"…John Tyler, died a traitor."

—Richard Norton Smith

To date, no American president has been cremated, although many have been condemned to the flames of academic purgatory. One member of the fraternity, John Tyler, died a traitor. After failing to secure a peaceful settlement of sectional differences in the winter of 1860-61, Tyler, a native Virginian, followed his state into the Confederacy. His passing in January 1862, came before he took his seat in the Confederate Congress. Jefferson Davis and other high

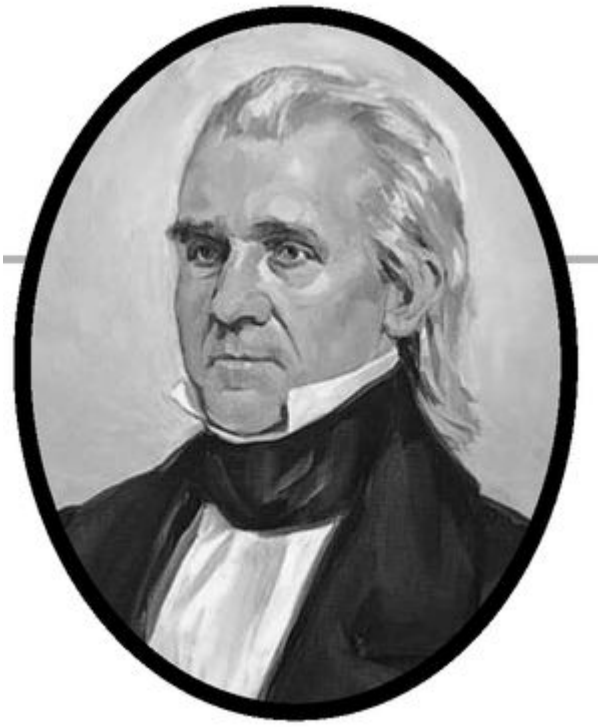
rebel officials accompanied his cortege to Richmond's Hollywood Cemetery where Davis himself would rest one day, part of a presidential trifecta that includes James Monroe, a Virginian of stauncher nationalist sympathies.

—RNS

James K. Polk

Buried: State Capitol, Nashville, Tennessee

Eleventh President - 1845-1849
Born: November 2, 1795, in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina
Died: June 15, 1849, in Nashville, Tennessee
Age at death: 53
Cause of death: Undetermined, possibly cholera
Final words: “I love you, Sarah, for all eternity,
I love you.”
Admission to State Capitol: Free



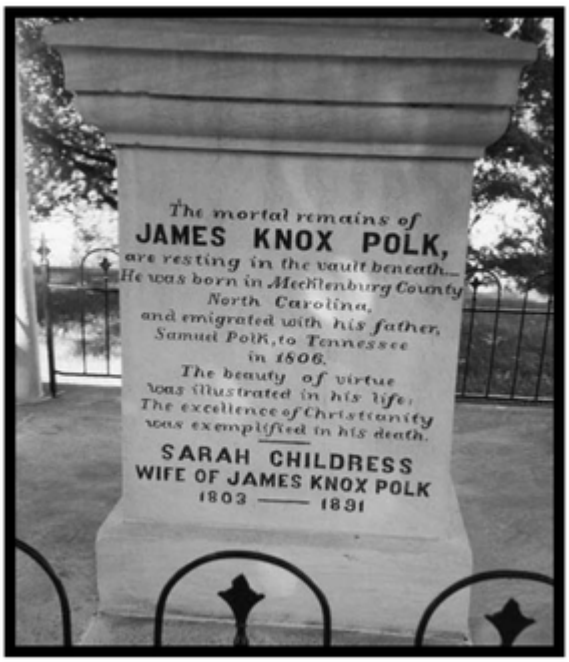
Despite being one of the younger presidents, Democrat James Polk was eager to fulfill his promise to retire at the end of his first term. A workaholic, he spent much of his presidency consumed by the war with Mexico. He wrote in his diary of the prospect, “I am sure I shall be a happier man in my retirement than I have been during the four years I have filled the highest office in the gift of my countrymen.”

Polk purchased a Nashville home, which he dubbed Polk Place and set about organizing his political papers and remodeling the home to his tastes. He had been retired from the presidency for only three months when he went on a tour of the southern states. He made the mistake of stopping in New Orleans, where a cholera epidemic had recently broken out. Polk became sick shortly thereafter. He quickly grew weaker and died on June 15, 1849, at the age of fifty-three. The prevailing feeling at the time was that the arduous duties of the presidency may have weakened Polk’s constitution, leaving him vulnerable to infection and unable to fight off the disease.

James Polk was immediately buried in a common cemetery with thirty-two other victims of the cholera epidemic. Local officials believed that the quick disposal of bodies would prevent spread of the disease. Polk was later given the honors accorded a former president and was laid to rest at Polk Place.

Polk’s wife Sarah lived at Polk Place for forty-two more years. A proper Victorian widow, she wore black the entire time. When she died in 1891, she was buried alongside him. Despite Polk’s specific instructions that their home should be given to

the state of Tennessee, Polk Place was demolished after Sarah's death. The bodies of James and Sarah Polk were moved to the grounds of the Tennessee State Capitol in Nashville in 1893.

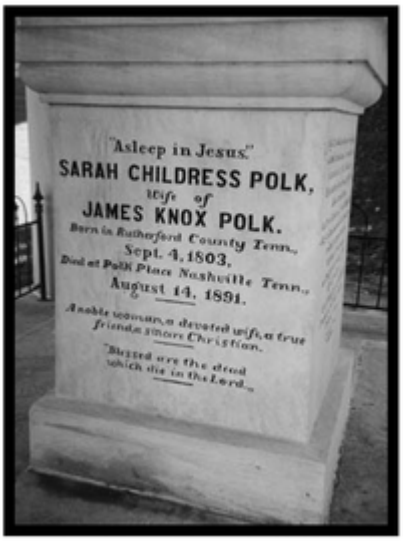


Polk's third and final resting place

Touring James K. Polk's Tomb at the Tennessee State Capitol

James K. Polk's grave is located on the grounds of the state capitol building in downtown Nashville, Tennessee. The capitol is open 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The grounds are also open on weekends. Limited street parking is available in the area. There is no admission fee.

From I-40: Exit on Broadway (exit 209A from I-40W; exit 209B from I-40E), going toward downtown. Turn left on Fifth Avenue and go three blocks. The museum is on the left between Union and Deaderick Streets.



Sarah Polk, who lived forty-two years after her husband's death, was buried beside him in 1891. The bodies of James and Sarah Polk were moved to the state capitol grounds two years later.

For additional information

Tennessee State Capitol
Charlotte Avenue and 7th Avenue, North
Nashville, TN 37243
Phone: (615) 741-2692
www.tnmuseum.org

"On his deathbed, Polk sought baptism into the Methodist Church…"
—Richard Norton Smith

For many men, retirement provides a whole new lease on life. In Polk's case, it was a very short lease indeed. Never blessed with robust health, in the spring of 1849, the former president came down with a debilitating illness. "My bowels were affected and the shaking of the Boat had become inconvenient to me," he acknowledged outside Memphis, where one doctor ruled out cholera. In fact, some believe Polk was afflicted with chronic diarrhea, a frequent complaint in the unsanitary nineteenth century. On his deathbed, Polk sought baptism into the Methodist Church—thus defying his mother, who had arrived, minister in tow, in hope of making her dying son a Presbyterian.

A personal note: As it happens, my Harvard roommate is a Polk descendant. I won't lower the intellectual or other standards of the present volume by quoting our ribald exchanges concerning the final hours of his distinguished ancestor; suffice it to say I learned as a sophomore where sophomoric humor gets its name.

—RNS

Polk's grave on the grounds of the Tennessee State Capitol

Zachary Taylor

Buried: Zachary Taylor National Cemetery, Louisville, Kentucky

Twelfth President - 1849-1850
Born: November 24, 1784, in Orange County, Virginia
Died: 10:35 p.m. on July 9, 1850, in Washington, D.C.
Age at death: 65
Cause of death: Cholera
Final words: “I am sorry that I am about to leave my friends.”
Admission to Zachary Taylor National Cemetery: Free

Zachary Taylor

The hero of the Mexican War known as “Old Rough and Ready,” Zachary Taylor was the first president to die in office while Congress was in session. He had served a little over a year, much of it consumed by sectional issues. Though a slaveholder himself, Taylor opposed secession and the extension of slavery into new territories. He did not live to see the conflict resolved. On the Fourth of July, 1850, Taylor attended groundbreaking ceremonies for the Washington Monument in sweltering heat. Upon returning to the White House, he devoured a large bowl of fruit and some cold milk. He became severely ill later that day. A doctor diagnosed cholera, an inflammation of the stomach and intestines, the result of having eaten food that had not been properly refrigerated. The president was given drugs and improved slightly. By July 8, however, his condition worsened. Doctors blistered his skin and bled his veins in the hope of freeing his body from infection. Taylor himself sensed their efforts were futile. That evening he reportedly said, “I am about to die. I expect the summons very soon. I have tried to discharge my duties faithfully. I regret nothing, but I am sorry that I am about to leave my friends.” He died at 10:35 p.m. in his bed at the White House. His wife Peggy became hysterical and forbid the embalming of his body. She also prevented the molding of a death mask, but finally permitted an artist to draw the president in death.

Gary Peak, former director of the Zachary Taylor National Cemetery, points to list of Mexican War battles in which "Old Rough and Ready" fought. This final granite marker to Taylor has a misspelling. The last entry should read Buena Vista.

The ceremonies honoring the president were extensive. Taylor's body lay in state for public viewing in the East Room of the White House until funeral services were held there on July 13. More than one hundred carriages joined the funeral procession as his body was taken to Congressional Cemetery in Washington. His favorite horse, "Old Whitey," accompanied the cortege. Henry Clay and Daniel Webster were among the pallbearers. In October of that year, his remains were moved to a family cemetery, now the Zachary Taylor National Cemetery in Louisville, Kentucky.

Touring the Tomb at Zachary Taylor National Cemetery

Zachary Taylor National Cemetery is located in Louisville, Kentucky. The cemetery office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., but the gates to the cemetery are open sunrise to sunset. Admission is free.

To reach the cemetery: Take U.S. Route 64 to Route 264 East. From Route 264, take the Route 42/Brownsboro Road exit. At the exit, take a left onto U.S. Route 42 West/Brownsboro Road and follow the signs to Zachary Taylor National Cemetery.

The cemetery contains only one main road which leads directly from the cemetery entrance to Taylor's gravesite.

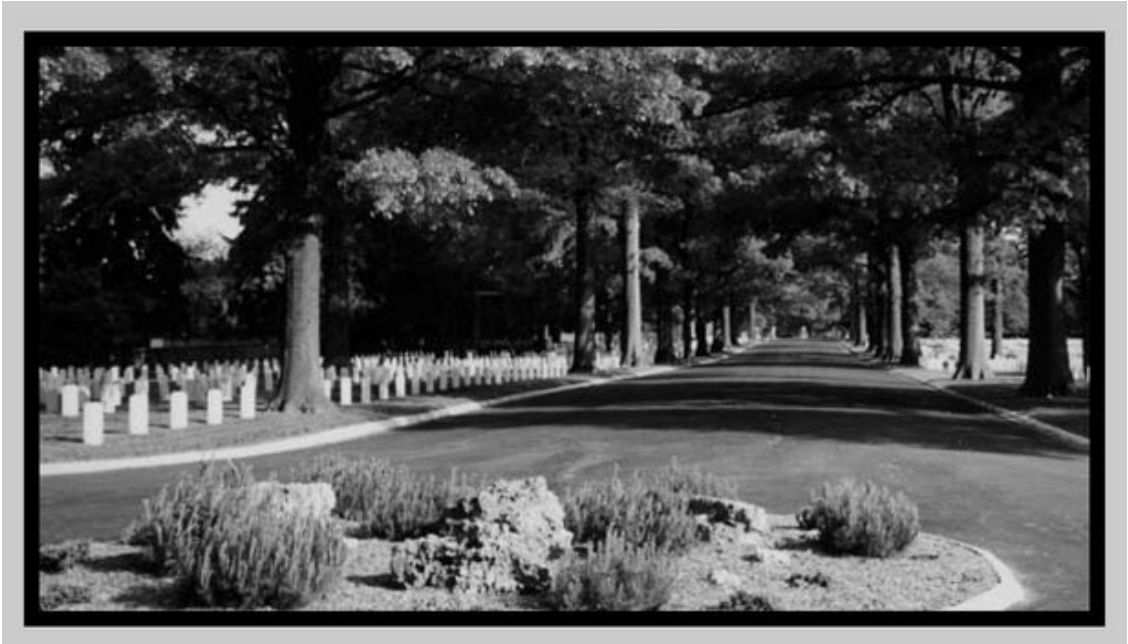
For additional information

Zachary Taylor National Cemetery
4701 Brownsboro Road
Louisville, KY 40207
Phone: (502) 893-3852
www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/ZacharyTaylor.asp

"For a few days the country's twelfth president was back in the headlines…"
—Richard Norton Smith

For Zachary Taylor, eternal rest was anything but. It was bad enough that "Old Rough and Ready" suffered an agonizing death from cholera in July 1850. Margaret Taylor had her husband's casket opened three times before interment in order that she might gaze upon his lifeless features. The pattern repeated itself 141 years later, when a prospective academic biographer, persuaded that Taylor may have been poisoned by his political enemies, obtained permission to remove the general's mortal remains from the mausoleum in which they had rested just outside Louisville, Kentucky since early in this century. Oliver Stone, it appeared, had no monopoly on conspiracy theories. For a few days the country's twelfth president was back in the headlines, a perfect USA Today story, lacking only a front page poll and graphic of Taylor astride "Old Whitey," his Mexican War mount. All glory is fleeting, however: when tests for arsenic proved negative, Taylor returned to Louisville and the obscurity that has enshrouded him since death.

—RNS

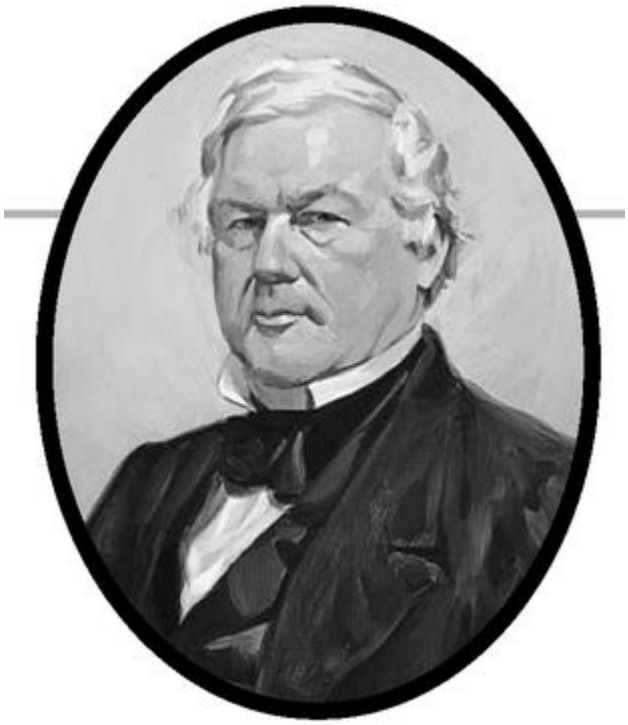


Zachary Taylor National Cemetery is the final resting place for hundreds of military veterans

Millard Fillmore

Buried: Forest Lawn Cemetery, Buffalo, New York

Thirteenth President - 1850-1853
Born: January 7, 1800, in Cayuga County, New York
Died: 11:10 p.m. on March 8, 1874, in Buffalo, New York
Age at death: 74
Cause of death: Stroke
Final words: “The nourishment is palatable.”
Admission to Forest Lawn Cemetery: Free



Best known for being one of the least known presidents, Millard Fillmore was the last Whig to win the White House. The most notable achievement of his administration was the Compromise of 1850, which delayed civil war over the slavery issue. On a more personal level, the book-loving Fillmore and wife Abigail (his former school teacher) wrangled Congressional funds to establish a White House library. The two amassed the home's first permanent collection during Fillmore's single term as president.

Sadly, Abigail caught a cold at the inauguration of her husband's successor, Franklin Pierce, and died several weeks later. Millard Fillmore soon remarried and traveled widely in Europe with his second wife Caroline, with the hope that a milder climate would benefit her chronic health problems. He retained an interest in public affairs, and was even nominated to the presidency again in 1856 by the American—or Know-Nothing—Party, but was unsuccessful. He remained in good health into his later years, saying, "My health is perfect. I eat, drink and sleep as well as ever, and take a deep but silent interest in public affairs, and if Mrs. Fillmore's health can be restored, I should feel that I was in the enjoyment of an earthly paradise."

Sign marking Millard Fillmore's grave

While trying to shave on the morning of February 13, 1874, the seventy-four-year-old Fillmore lost all sensation in the left side of his body. He had just suffered his first stroke. He regained partial use of his left side until he was stricken with a second stroke later that month. This time his throat muscles were severely affected, limiting his ability to swallow. Shortly before his death, in response to a doctor's question about the food he was given, Fillmore responded with his last words, "The nourishment is palatable." On March 8, Fillmore fell unconscious and died. At the announcement of his death, President Ulysses S. Grant issued a proclamation honoring the former president and flags in Fillmore's hometown of Buffalo were lowered to half mast.

Millard Fillmore's funeral was held the following Thursday, March 12. His body was kept in a rosewood coffin in the west room of the family home on Niagara Square, where a private service was held for family and close friends. At his head was a crown of camellias and rosebuds; a wreath and two large crosses lay on the coffin's lid. After the private service, Fillmore's body was borne into the hearse by Company D of the Buffalo City Guards. The cortege then traveled to St. Paul's Cathedral where the body lay in state in the vestibule for viewing by thousands of mourners. Delegations from the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives came to pay their respects, as did Buffalo's mayor. The ***New York Times*** reported, "Although much emaciated, Mr. Fillmore's face bore the courtly appearance so characteristic of him in life."

Following a brief and solemn service, the City Guards, the National Guard, and the U.S. Infantry led the flag-covered hearse and a long line of carriages to Fillmore's final resting place. Local businesses were closed and the procession route was lined with mourners. Prior to his death, Millard Fillmore had chosen his burial site at Forest Lawn Cemetery in Buffalo. Also buried at the site are his two wives, Abigail and Caroline, both of his children, and the mother of his first wife.

Touring Millard Fillmore's Tomb at Forest Lawn Cemetery

Forest Lawn Cemetery is located in Buffalo, New York. The cemetery is open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. from April through October and from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. the rest of the year. Admission is free.

To reach the cemetery from the north: From Route 190 South, take exit N-11 to Route 198 East. Take the Delaware Avenue exit, and turn right on to Delaware Avenue. Turn left into the cemetery gates at the corner of Delavan Avenue and Delaware Avenue.

From the south: Take I-190 North. Take the Church Street exit and turn right onto Church Street. Take a left onto Route 384. Continue on Route 384 through the roundabout. Turn right onto Delaware Avenue.

The cemetery is located at 1411 Delaware Avenue. After entering through the gates near the administration building, follow the paths heading north (parallel to Delaware Avenue) to the cemetery's section F. On the right is a sign directing you to Millard Fillmore's grave in section F.

For additional information

Forest Lawn Cemetery
1411 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14209
Phone: (716) 885-1600
Fax: (716) 881-6482
www.forest-lawn.com

Buffalo, New York

Fillmore's tall obelisk is surrounded by the graves of his two wives, children, and mother-in-law

"…Fillmore had himself become something of a historic site."
—Richard Norton Smith

Gateway to Forest Lawn Cemetery, the thirteenth president's chosen resting place

In his declining years, Fillmore busied himself with numerous civic organizations benefiting his cherished Buffalo. None held more appeal for him than the Buffalo Historical Society, which was only appropriate since, by then, Fillmore had himself become something of a historic site. With true Chamber of Commerce gusto, he predicted, "Buffalo…is destined by its position to be what Alexandria and Venice were."

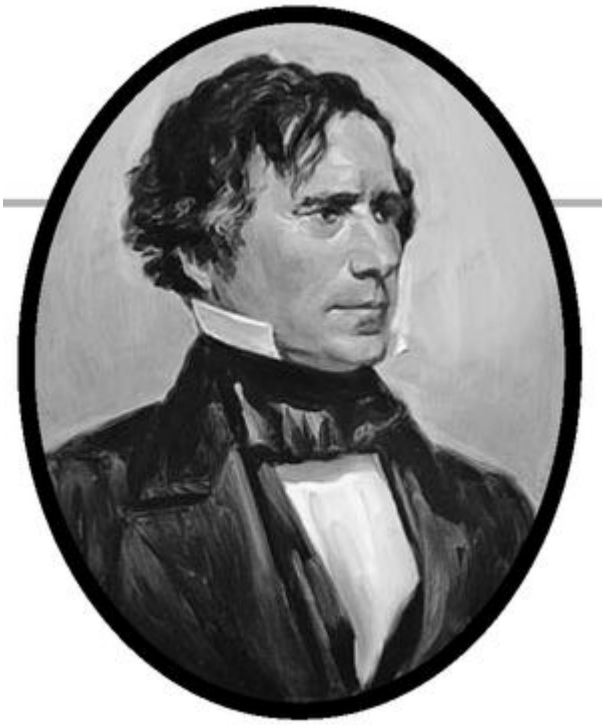
Any man who could see Babylon in nineteenth-century Buffalo was a natural born optimist and therefore a soft touch for every sort of worthy cause involving the solicitation of funds. Having chaired a campaign to erect a suitable Soldiers and Sailors Monument, a commemorative task uncompleted at the time of his death, Fillmore would not have been surprised to learn how many years it would take before the people of Buffalo placed his own statue before their City Hall on Niagara Square. But it is not the magnet that attracts the attention of Fillmore cultists today. That honor belongs to the pink granite obelisk at Forest Lawn Cemetery where, each year, a small crowd gathers to mark Fillmore's birthday and to mock his obscure place in presidential annals.

—RNS

Franklin Pierce

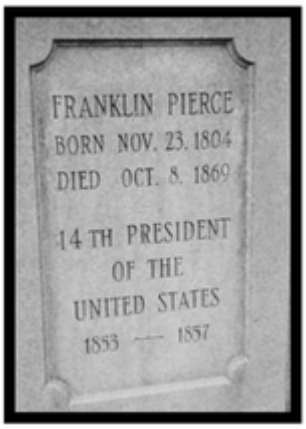
Buried: Old North Cemetery, Concord, New Hampshire

Fourteenth President - 1853-1857
Born: November 23, 1804, in Hillsboro, New Hampshire
Died: 4:40 a.m. on October 8, 1869, in Concord, New Hampshire
Age at death: 64
Cause of death: Stomach inflammation
Final words: Unknown
Admission to Old North Cemetery: Free



Franklin Pierce was the only presidential candidate to have his campaign biography penned by a literary immortal, in this case Nathaniel Hawthorne. Both native New Englanders, the two men were college classmates and lifelong friends.

Labeled by many historians as one of our less successful presidents, Franklin Pierce lost the nomination for a second term to James Buchanan in 1856. He was among the first presidents to enjoy financial stability after leaving the White House. Nonetheless, his twelve-year retirement was not a happy one. Since the eve of Pierce's inauguration, when their son Bennie was killed in a train accident, both Pierce and his wife Jane battled depression. Already prone to heavy drinking, Pierce's problem grew worse after returning home to Concord, New Hampshire. Hoping to stave off melancholy, Franklin and Jane Pierce spent some time in Europe and the Bahamas, but with little improvement.



Pierce's gravestone

Upon his return to Concord in 1860, Pierce spoke sympathetically of the Confederacy. Although he stopped shy of supporting secession, he was branded a traitor and was ostracized for the rest of his life. When Jane died of tuberculosis in 1863, the former president was truly alone.

By the summer of 1869, Pierce was suffering from dropsy, an accumulation of fluids in his body. He died of the disease at 4:40 a.m. on October 8, 1869, at the age of sixty-four. News of his poor health had been telegraphed frequently across the country, so his death came as no surprise.

Despite his unpopularity in his home state, Franklin Pierce was given the standard honors for a former president. For three days, his body, resting in a coffin covered in black cloth, lay in state with a large floral cross suspended overhead in Doric Hall at the New Hampshire State Capitol.

On October 11 twelve pallbearers, all fellow members of the state bar, carried the casket to St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Concord. A procession of local citizens and public school students followed the cortege. At the mayor's request, all local businesses closed for the duration of the funeral service. On order from President Grant, public buildings in Washington were draped in mourning. Flags were lowered to half mast in cities across the country, and the Brooklyn Navy Yard fired a thirty-one-gun salute in Pierce's honor.

Dr. John Splaine, C-SPAN's consulting historian, points to the historic marker at the Old North Cemetery

He was buried in Concord's Old North Cemetery alongside his wife and their three children. In 1914, after much debate, the state of New Hampshire erected a bronze statue of Pierce on the capitol grounds and in 1946 finally placed a granite memorial at his grave.

Touring Franklin Pierce's Tomb at the Old North Cemetery

The Old North Cemetery is located in Concord, New Hampshire.

From Concord State Capitol: From the capitol, drive north on Main Street to Park Street. Turn left onto Park Street. Drive 0.2 miles to State Street. Continue on State Street for another 0.7 miles until you reach Old North Cemetery. Parking is available on State Street. Inside the Old North Cemetery, walk straight ahead for approximately seventy-five feet. From that point, walk ten feet to the right to President Pierce's grave. The Old North Cemetery is open every day during daylight hours. Admission is free.

Franklin Pierce outlived his wife and three children. They are buried with him in the Old North Cemetery.

For Additional Information

New Hampshire
Historical Society
30 Park Street
Concord, NH 03301
Phone: (603) 856-0641
www.nhhistory.org

City of Concord
41 Green Street
Concord, NH 03301
Phone: (603) 225-8570
www.onconcord.com

"…there is undoubtedly a tragic quality to America's fourteenth president."
—Richard Norton Smith

Though hardly a figure of Shakespearian dimensions, there is undoubtedly a tragic quality to America's fourteenth president. The youngest ever to hold that office when he was sworn in 1853, whatever chance he had for success was crushed, along with his eleven-year-old son, Bennie, killed a few weeks earlier in a horrible train wreck as his parents looked on. For Bennie's mother, Jane, a strict Calvinist who blamed her husband's political ambitions for the loss of their child, the White House was a well-furnished purgatory. Her death in December 1863, wounded Pierce's spirit, while the passing of his dearest friend, Nathaniel Hawthorne, the following spring, dramatized the political ostracism caused by Pierce's pro-southern record in office. At Hawthorne's funeral the former president was excluded from the ranks of pallbearers, which included the likes of Emerson, Longfellow, and Whittier. Instead, Pierce remained behind the other mourners in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, to scatter a few blossoms into the open grave.

When his own casket was borne into Saint Paul's in October 1869, the ceremonies were formalistic, the grief contained. Concord's farewell to its "Man Who Might Have Been" recalled nothing so much as Longfellow's lyric written for Hawthorne's obsequies.

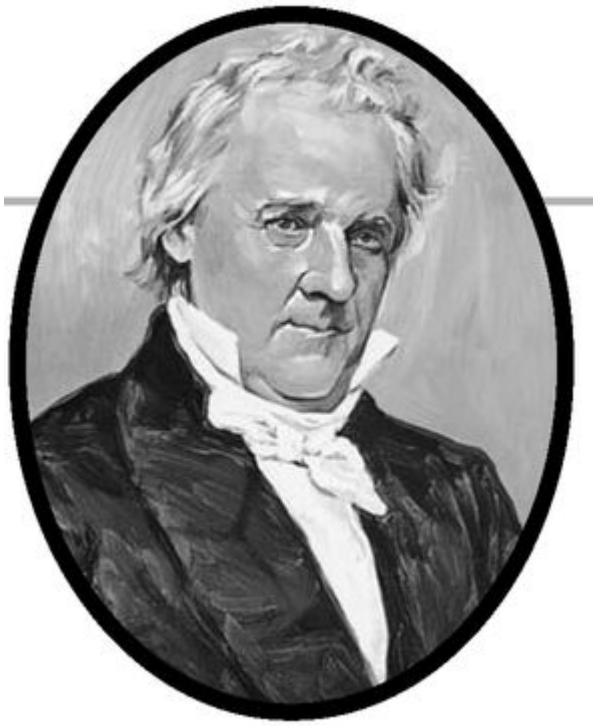
"How beautiful it was,
that one bright day
In the long week of rain!
Though all its splendor could
not chase away
The omnipresent pain."

—RNS

James Buchanan

Buried: Woodward Hill Cemetery, Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Fifteenth President - 1857-1861
Born: April 23, 1791, in Cove Gap, Pennsylvania
Died: 8:30 a.m. on June 1, 1868, in Lancaster, Pennsylvania
Age at death: 77
Cause of death: Pneumonia
Final words: “Oh Lord, God Almighty, as Thou wilt.”
Admission to Woodward Hill Cemetery: Free



James Buchanan is known as our only bachelor president. Less familiar is the story of Buchanan's early romance with a young woman named Anne Coleman. She died suddenly in 1819, shortly after they had quarreled. Buchanan suffered when rumors of suicide circulated, along with claims that he was only interested in her money. He declared that his happiness would be "buried with her in the grave" and that the cause of their breakup would be revealed in a letter released after his death.

It's said that Buchanan first ran for Congress in 1820 to escape his grief and the gossip mills in his hometown of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. However, rumormongering has followed him into the modern age. Buchanan's choice of a Washington roommate —flamboyant fellow senator William Rufus DeVane King—has led to speculation about his personal life. Lacking a wife to handle White House social duties, Buchanan asked his niece, Harriet Lane, to serve as his first lady when he won the presidency in 1856.

The inscription on Buchanan's grave

Weary of the slavery issue, he declined to seek a second term and left the White House for his Wheatland estate, where he received a hero's welcome and settled into a quiet retirement. He lived just seven more years. In his final days, Buchanan suffered from rheumatism and dysentery. These maladies left him susceptible to infection. In May of 1868, Buchanan contracted pneumonia. Sensing that the end was near, he did not leave his bedroom. James Buchanan died alone on June 1, 1868, at the age of seventy-seven.

The city of Lancaster held a public meeting in his honor. His body lay on view in the main hall at Wheatland. Mourners and curiosity seekers found the former president dressed in his typical white tie and high collar shirt. A two-and-a-half mile funeral parade followed, with bands, 125 carriages, and thousands of onlookers.

Historic marker at Woodward Hill Cemetery

Two days before his death Buchanan gave final instructions to Hiram Swarr, the executor of his estate. First, he wanted a simple obelisk for his tomb. Second, the letter explaining his broken engagement was to be burned, unopened. Both orders were obeyed. He was buried at Woodward Hill Cemetery in Lancaster, where a white marble monument stands today.

Touring James Buchanan's Tomb at Woodward Hill Cemetery

Woodward Hill Cemetery is located in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. It is open daily during the daylight hours. Admission is free.

From Philadelphia: Take the Pennsylvania Turnpike (I-76) West to exit 21. Drive south on Highway 222. Highway 222 turns into Prince Street. From Prince Street turn left onto Hager Street. On reaching Queen Street turn right.

From Harrisburg: Take Highway 283 east to the Harrisburg Pike exit. Take Harrisburg Pike west into the city of Lancaster. Harrisburg Pike turns into Harrisburg Avenue. Turn left onto Prince Street until reaching Hager Street; then turn left onto Queen Street.

To find Buchanan's grave, bear to the right after entering the cemetery gates. Climb up the small hill and head toward the red brick church. President Buchanan's gravesite is located to the left of the church.

Also buried at Woodward Hill is Frederick Muhlenberg, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, 1789-1791 and 1793-1795.

For additional information

Woodward Hill Cemetery
South Queen Street
Lancaster, PA 17602

Lancaster County Historical Society
230 North President Avenue
Lancaster, PA 17603
Phone: (717) 392-4633
www.lancasterhistory.org

"Buchanan proved no more successful as a prophet than a president."
—Richard Norton Smith

Before going to work as a screenwriter for the Weinstein brothers, Shakespeare observed that, "the evil that men do lives after them. The good is oft interred with their bones." The sentiment applies with unmistakable force to James Buchanan, the sine qua non of executive enfeeblement. The swashbuckling Theodore Roosevelt liked nothing better than to contrast "Buchanan presidents" and "Lincoln presidents," leaving no doubt as to in

which camp he belonged. Reproached for his conduct on the eve of Fort Sumter, Buchanan in retirement wrote a self-serving memoir, selected a burial spot in Lancaster's Woodward Hills Cemetery, and composed an inscription for his white marble tombstone. "I have no regret for any public act of my life, and history will vindicate my memory," he told those gathered around his sickbed in June 1868. Buchanan proved no more successful as a prophet than a president.

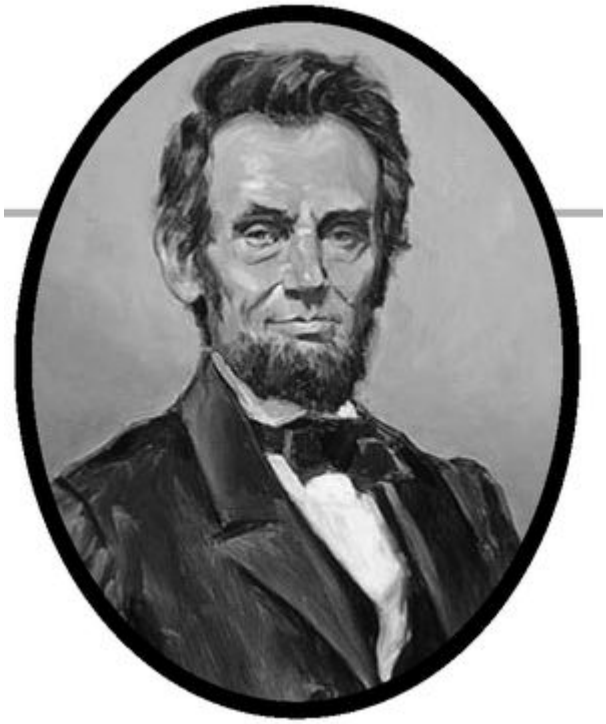
—RNS

James Buchanan's gravesite

Abraham Lincoln

Buried: Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield, Illinois

Sixteenth President - 1861-1865
Born: February 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky
Died: 7:22 a.m. on April 15, 1865, in Washington, D.C.
Age at death: 56
Cause of death: Gunshot wound to the head
Final words: Unknown
Admission to Oak Ridge Cemetery: Free



In his 1858 bid for an Illinois Senate seat, Abraham Lincoln engaged in a series of seven debates with incumbent Democrat Stephen Douglas. The frontier lawyer lost that election, but the fame he gained allowed him to face Douglas again in the 1860 presidential race. Lincoln won the White House, inheriting a nation bitterly divided over the slavery issue.

The Civil War began just one month into Lincoln's first term and became the defining event of his administration. Sectional differences cast the industrial North against those in the South who favored states' rights. Eleven southern states seceded from the Union and formed their own Confederate government, laying the groundwork for the bloody clash that began in April 1861. Lincoln was determined to save the Union above all else.

Lincoln's final resting place at Oak Ridge Cemetery

Lincoln's 1862 Emancipation Proclamation granted freedom to slaves in the seceding states. Despite considerable losses on the battlefields, the war continued to rage for three more years. The conflict officially ended with the surrender of the Confederacy on April 9, 1865, shortly after Lincoln's second inauguration.

For many, the hostilities lived on. Unable to accept the South's defeat, an actor named John Wilkes Booth plotted against the Union government, conspiring to kidnap President Abraham Lincoln, Vice President Andrew Johnson, and Secretary of State

William Seward. The scheme took a more violent turn when Booth decided that Lincoln must die. He went to Ford's Theatre in Washington on Good Friday, April 14, 1865, where Lincoln and his wife Mary Todd were attending a performance of the comedy ***Our American Cousin***. Booth entered the presidential box when the policeman on guard stepped away from his post. Approaching from behind, he shot Lincoln once in the back of the head. Laughter and applause from the audience nearly drowned out the sound of the fatal gunshot. Booth jumped over the balcony and landed on the stage, where he yelled "***Sic semper tyrannis!***" before running out of the theater. A distraught Mary Todd Lincoln cried out, "They have shot the President!" as a doctor raced to the mortally injured man.

The president was taken to a boarding house across the street from the theater, but never regained consciousness. He died on April 15, 1865, at 7:22 a.m., the first American president to die at the hands of an assassin. A grief-stricken Secretary of War Edwin Stanton pronounced him dead with the famous line, "Now he belongs to the ages."

A funeral carriage brought Lincoln's body back to the White House. Doctors performed an autopsy and undertakers prepared his body for burial. Lincoln was dressed in the same black suit he had worn just weeks before for his second inaugural.

Funeral arrangements were extensive. The White House was heavily draped in black and church bells tolled throughout the city. Government offices and businesses closed. Lincoln's body lay in state first at the Capitol rotunda in Washington, then in cities across the country. Inconsolable, Mary Todd Lincoln refused to join in the national funeral services.

Hundreds of thousands of Americans lined the 1700-mile route as a train carried Lincoln's body back home to Springfield, Illinois. The "Lincoln Special," as it was known, retraced the path the president traveled on his way to the White House in 1861. Its stops included Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Chicago. When Lincoln's body arrived in Springfield after two weeks on display, his discolored features so distressed spectators that an undertaker was called in to conceal the decay.

After a public viewing at the Illinois State Capitol, the martyred president's remains were taken for burial at Oak Ridge Cemetery. His mahogany coffin was interred together with that of his beloved son Willie, who had died in the White House at the age of eleven. Mary Todd Lincoln was buried with them in the family tomb when she died in 1882.

John Wilkes Booth was captured twelve days after the assassination and died as a result of the struggle. Historians are uncertain whether he was wounded by his pursuers or by his own hand. Four of his co-conspirators were found guilty and hanged for their roles in the scheme.

Touring Abraham Lincoln's Tomb at Oak Ridge Cemetery

The Lincoln Tomb State Historic Site is located at Oak Ridge Cemetery in Springfield, Illinois. It is open Labor Day through February, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (closed Sunday and Monday), and March through October, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily. It is closed on major holidays. Admission is free.

From the South: Take I-55 North to the Sixth Street exit. Follow Sixth Street through downtown Springfield. Take a left onto North Grand Avenue. From North Grand Avenue, take a right onto Monument Avenue to reach Oak Ridge Cemetery.

From the North: Take I-55 South to the Sherman exit. From the exit, follow Business Route 55 (Veterans Parkway). Take a left onto J David Jones Parkway. Go approximately one mile, then take a left into Oak Ridge Cemetery.

Lincoln's tomb is clearly visible from the cemetery's main road.

The receiving vault where Lincoln's body was first held

For additional information

Site Manager
Lincoln Tomb State Historic Site
Oak Ridge Cemetery
1500 Monument Avenue
Springfield, IL 62702
Phone: (217) 782-2717
www.illinoishistory.org

"Over the next quarter century, Springfield's city fathers buried and reburied their most famous citizen."

—Richard Norton Smith

The most revered of presidents has suffered posthumous indignities that Jeb Stuart wouldn't wish on his worst Yankee enemy. To begin with, there was Lincoln's funeral, which at twenty days was prolonged even by the lugubrious standards of the day. Too prostrate with grief to accompany her husband's remains to Illinois, Mary Lincoln found solace by quarreling with her Springfield neighbors, whose plan to entomb Lincoln in a downtown city lot she loudly vetoed. She insisted that Lincoln be interred in rural Oak Ridge Cemetery, a parklike setting modeled after such recently consecrated beauty spots as Boston's Mount Auburn and Brooklyn's Greenwood.

Alternatively, Mrs. Lincoln would consign her husband to the basement crypt in the Capitol that had originally been reserved for George Washington.

In defense of the much maligned widow, there is something about a funeral that brings out the worst in people—within hours of John F. Kennedy's assassination, an Iowa congressman and self-proclaimed watchdog of the treasury named H.R. Gross questioned the cost of placing an eternal flame over Arlington's Section 45, Grave S-45.

Anyway, with Mary holding all the cards, the Lincoln Monument Association quickly folded. Its members may have entertained second thoughts after a band of would-be bodysnatchers broke into the Lincoln tomb on election night, 1876. The conspirators planned to hide the presidential remains in an Indiana sand dune pending the release of their leader, who was in jail on counterfeiting charges. The intruders nearly succeeded in extricating the Great Emancipator's coffin before being surprised by agents who had infiltrated the gang.

This simple tombstone marks the second place Lincoln's body was interred

Over the next quarter century, Springfield's city fathers buried and reburied their most famous citizen.

At one point Lincoln's casket was concealed under construction materials, leaving admirers to pay homage before an empty tomb. In September 1901, a small group assembled at Oak Ridge; among those in attendance was a thirteen-year-old boy named Fleetwood Lindley, who had been hastily summoned to the scene by his father. A pungent odor filled the tomb as a blowtorch-wielding plumber removed the section of Lincoln's green lead casket above the president's head and shoulders. Young Lindley crowded forward with the others to get a better look.

What they saw, thirty-six years after the fact, was the handiwork of a Philadelphia undertaker, who had used white chalk to disguise the decomposing corpse during its cross-country rail journey.

Notwithstanding this macabre cosmetic touch, Lincoln's features were plainly recognizable to the boy. To be sure, the presidential eyebrows had vanished and yellow mold and small red spots, the latter guessed to be remnants of an American flag, disfigured the black broadcloth suit in which Lincoln had taken his second inauguration oath in March 1865. But the figure in the coffin was unmistakably Abraham Lincoln. His identity established and the crowd's

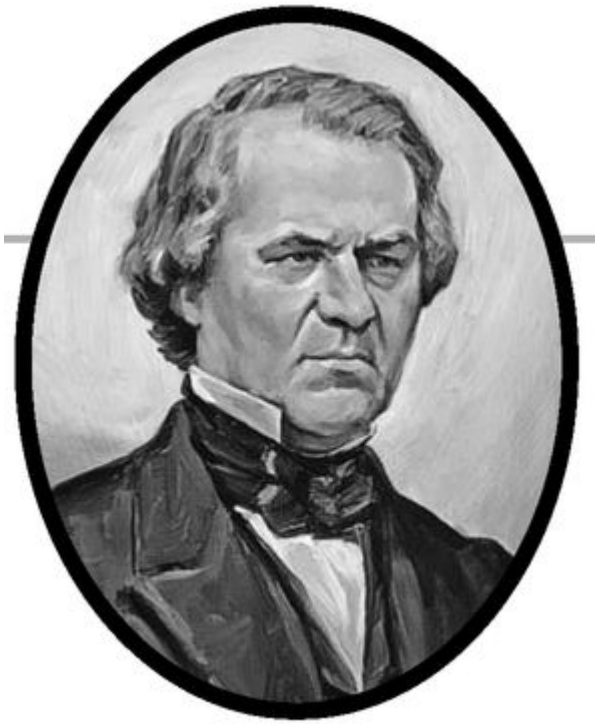
curiosity gratified, Lincoln was lowered for the final time into a cage of steel bars and smothered under ten feet of Portland cement. Before his death in 1963, Fleetwood Lindley claimed distinction as the last living person to have gazed upon the features of Abraham Lincoln.

—RNS

Andrew Johnson

Buried: Andrew Johnson National Cemetery, Greeneville, Tennessee

Seventeenth President - 1865-1869
Born: December 29, 1808, in Raleigh, North Carolina
Died: 2:30 a.m. on July 31, 1875, in Carter County, Tennessee
Age at death: 66
Cause of death: Stroke
Final words: Unknown
Admission to Andrew Johnson National Cemetery: Free



Even after winning the presidency, Andrew Johnson viewed himself as a common man. Born into poverty, Johnson opened his own tailor shop when he was seventeen. The next year he met and married Eliza McCardle, who taught him to read and write. Although he had no formal schooling, Johnson worked his way up through elective offices in his home state of Tennessee and in the U.S. Congress. In 1865, he became vice president under Abraham Lincoln.

Thrust into the presidency upon Lincoln's assassination, Andrew Johnson served a single term largely occupied with the reconstruction of the South after the Civil War. The first president to be impeached, he was acquitted in the Senate by just one vote. Andrew Johnson was not renominated by his party for a second term, but he was welcomed home with honors to Greeneville, Tennessee. He remained active in Democratic Party politics, campaigning on behalf of other candidates and even seeking further elective office himself. In 1874, he was elected to the U.S. Senate, the only former president to serve there.

Andrew Johnson's tomb

A cholera epidemic devastated much of the southern United States in 1873. Andrew Johnson caught the disease and recovered, but never fully regained his strength. In June of that year, sensing he was failing, he wrote, "I have performed my duty to my God, my country, and my family. I have nothing to fear in approaching death. To me it is the mere shadow of God's protecting wing."

On July 28, 1875, Johnson and his wife were visiting their daughter in Carter County, Tennessee, when he suffered a stroke that left his right side paralyzed. He regained consciousness the next day, but refused to seek the treatment of a doctor or the comfort of a minister. The following day he suffered a second stroke which left him unable to speak. Surrounded by family, Johnson died at his daughter's home on July 31, 1875. His body was placed in a simple pine casket packed with ice to counter the sun's sweltering rays. A public forum was held that evening in Nashville for citizens to express their condolences.

Johnson's body was taken to lie in state at the Greeneville courthouse on August 2. The town, including Johnson's old tailor shop, was draped in black. At his request, Johnson's body was wrapped in the American flag, his head rested on a copy of the Constitution. His body had already begun to decompose in the extreme heat, so the casket remained closed. Tennessee Governor James Porter was among the dignitaries who paid their respects. In cities across the country, federal offices were closed and flags were flown at half mast in Johnson's honor.

The next day under cloudy skies, five thousand people and a small honor guard escorted the casket to his gravesite where a simple Masonic funeral service was held. Andrew Johnson was buried on top of a hill on land he owned in Greeneville. He chose the site himself, marking it with a seedling reportedly taken from a willow tree

near Napoleon's St. Helena deathbed. His wife Eliza was buried beside him when she died six months later.

Touring the Tomb at the Andrew Johnson National Historic Site

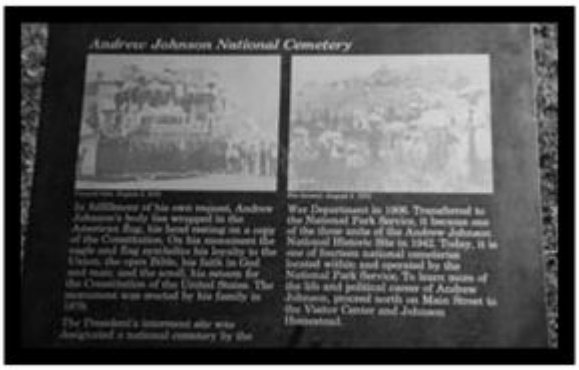
Andrew Johnson's gravesite is part of the Andrew Johnson National Historic Site in Greeneville, Tennessee. The site is open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and is closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Admission to the gravesite is free, and includes a guided tour of the homestead. Visitors under age eighteen or over sixty-one are admitted to the homestead for free.

To reach the site from the north: Take Interstate 81 South to exit 36, then Route 172 South to Greeneville. Follow the signs to the visitors center, located at the corner of College and Depot Streets in Greeneville.

From the south: Take Interstate 81 North to exit 23, then Route 11E north to Greeneville. Follow the signs to the visitor center, located at the corner of College and Depot Streets in Greeneville.

To reach the cemetery from the visitor's center, go north on College Street to McKee Street. Turn east on McKee Street. Take McKee Street to Main Street. From Main Street, head south two blocks, and turn left on Monument Avenue. The cemetery is at the top of Monument Avenue.

At the cemetery entrance, turn right. Take the road up the hill. President Johnson's gravesite is located on top of the hill and is designated with a large, white landmark.



This plaque at the Andrew Johnson National Historic site tells the story of Johnson's funeral

For additional information

Andrew Johnson National Historic Site
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"To admirers, he was 'the Old Commoner,' to critics, a hopeless relic…"
—Richard Norton Smith

The president who proposed Restoration instead of Reconstruction was himself restored to his pre-war place in the Senate by fellow Tennesseeans, most of whom shared his racial and economic views. To admirers, he was "the Old Commoner," to critics, a hopeless relic who single-handedly thwarted the cause of racial justice while squandering the moral high ground purchased with northern blood. "Pillow my head with the Constitution of my country," Johnson directed his executors. "Let the flag of the Nation be my winding sheet." His wishes were carried out to the letter.

On the eve of his funeral, Johnson's old tailor shop in Greeneville was festooned in mourning cloth. So was the Court House where thousands of plain people—his constituency of the dispossessed—came to pay their respects to the workingman's president. Today his grave is marked by a marble shaft atop which perches an American eagle. A

Andrew Johnson selected the spot where his marble tomb now stands

billowing stone flag drapes part of the monument. The words of the Constitution are carved into its side, above the simple, generous tribute, even more debatable than most such graveyard summations: "His faith in the people never wavered."

—RNS