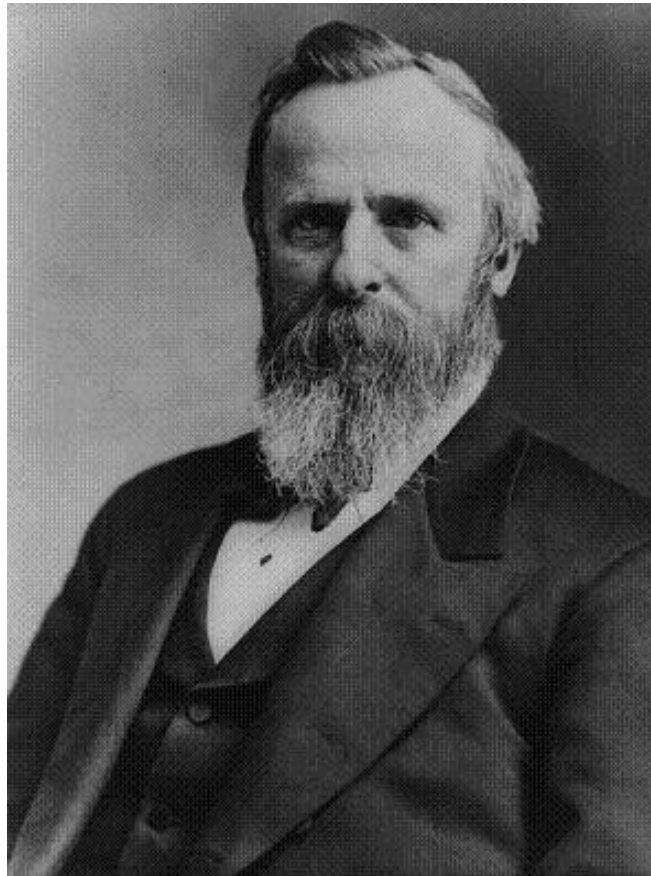


# Rutherford B. Hayes

The Un-President  
Nineteenth, 1877-1881



**Nicknames:** "Rud", "His Fraudulency", "Granny Hayes", "Queen Victoria in Riding Britches", "President De Facto", "The Dark Horse President", "Old Eight-to-Seven"

**Birth:** October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1822, Delaware, Ohio

**Death:** January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1893, Fremont, Ohio

**Significant Events During Hayes' Term:** Reconstruction Deconstructed ... Nez Perce Tragedy ... National Railroad Strike ... Phonograph Invented ... Electric Light Bulb Invented ... Number of States remains at thirty-eight

**Quotes:** *"I have always been ambitious, dreaming of future glory, of performing some virtuous or*

*patriotic action, but it has been all dreams, and no reality. From my earliest recollection, I have thought I had great power in me, yet at the same time I was fully satisfied of my present insignificance and mental weakness. I have imagined that at some future time I could do considerable, but the more I learn, the more I feel my littleness.*" -- Rutherford B. Hayes, 1841

*"I can retire to private life with the consciousness that I shall receive from posterity the credit of having been elected to the highest position in the gift of the people, without any of the cares and responsibilities of the office."* -- Samuel J. Tilden

*"He serves his party best who serves his country best."* -- Rutherford B. Hayes

**How his term ended:** Hayes chose not to run for a second term.

**Other Professions:** Lawyer, Soldier

**Worst Mistakes:** Hayes collaborated in/was a conspirator in, or at the very least agreed to, the wresting of the presidency from Samuel Tilden, who was the rightful winner of the election. Not only did Hayes cheat his way into the White House, he also sold the African-Americans in the South down the river, so to speak. He did this by turning his back on them when he agreed to end Reconstruction. This had the effect of sanctioning white supremacy (again) and plunging the former slaves in the South back into a situation almost as bad as they had endured under slavery.

Hayes reacted to strikes by workers in West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Illinois with violence, sending federal troops to those places to facilitate an "attitude adjustment" by busting heads.

**Saving Grace:** Hayes defended runaway slaves in his law practice. Although very commendable, this seems to fly in the face of his allowing Reconstruction to be dissolved. Will the real Rutherford B. Hayes please stand up?

**Notes:** Hayes' father died several weeks prior to Rutherford being born.

Hayes' boyhood nickname "Rud" may have been given him because of his red hair.

Although he was viewed as somewhat of a stuffed-shirt bookworm as a youth, Hayes metamorphosed into quite a hellion on the battlefield during the Civil War. He led charges, and engaged in hand-to-hand combat. At one of the fifty engagements he took part in, namely the battle of South Mountain in Maryland, he led a charge even after almost a third of his force had become casualties and his own arm had been shattered by a bullet. In 1864 and 1865, Hayes was wounded four times (once seriously) and had the same number of horses shot out from under him.

As referred to above in the "Worst Mistakes" section, Samuel J. Tilden was actually the man chosen by the populace to be President in 1876, but political intrigues caused Hayes to be the candidate to actually take office. A deal was struck with Hayes that if he ended

Reconstruction by withdrawing federal troops from the South (who were there enforcing civil rights that had long been denied the blacks) the office would be his. The deal was struck. It took three months of wrangling, though, to finally consummate this agreement. One of the controversies that caused the holdup was that Tilden's backers claimed that African-Americans in several states--including *Florida* (foreshadowing the 2000 election!)--had had their votes suppressed. Negotiations drag on so long that the deal wasn't finalized until just fifty-six hours before the inauguration was to take place.

Still wary of possible protests (there were riots throughout the country as a result of the shady shenanigans pulled off by the pols in this deal brokered in the proverbial "smoke-filled room"), outgoing President Grant (#18) had Hayes sworn in as incoming President at midnight on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1877.

Does the tainted election of 1876 sound familiar to modern-day readers? It might seem almost uncannily so, when we note this passage from "The Complete Book of U.S. Presidents" by William A. DeGregorio (anti-italics/bold mine):

*Although Tilden won the popular vote and was ahead in electoral votes, the returns of three states – South Carolina, Louisiana, and **Florida**, all controlled by Republicans – were in confusion...To win, Hayes needed every vote in dispute. Hayes appeared to be ahead in South Carolina, but Tilden led in Florida and Louisiana until **Republican officials there ruled numbers of Democratic ballots invalid**. To resolve the issue, Congress established a 15-man electoral commission...the commission voted 8-7 strictly along party lines to award all disputed states, and with them the election, to Hayes.*

As a consolation prize to ripping the presidency out of the hands of the rightful winner, Hayes, in accordance with the deal, mollified the outraged Southern Democrats with what was called the Compromise of 1877: agreeing to put an end to military occupation of the South (Reconstruction), effectively turning his backs on the former slaves.

Samuel Tilden's response to these irregularities is quoted above. Consider him credited; and as Tilden intimated, perhaps his lot was actually the better one, when one considers the trials Hayes had to deal with during his time in office.

Reminiscent of the Polks (#11), Hayes' wife was nicknamed "Lemonade Lucy" because she forbade alcohol on the White House. Lucy was the first college-educated First Lady.

Hayes began each day with prayers, and ended each day singing hymns.

The first telephone in the White House was used during Hayes' time there, though the President considered the contraption rather useless. He said of Alexander Graham Bell's marvel: "An amazing invention -- but who would ever want to use one?"

While President, Hayes fired future President Chester Arthur (#21), who at that time was Collector of the Port of New York.

Hayes attempted to change the length of Presidential office to a single term of six years

duration.

One of Hayes' sons, James Webb Hayes, started the company which eventually became Union Carbide.