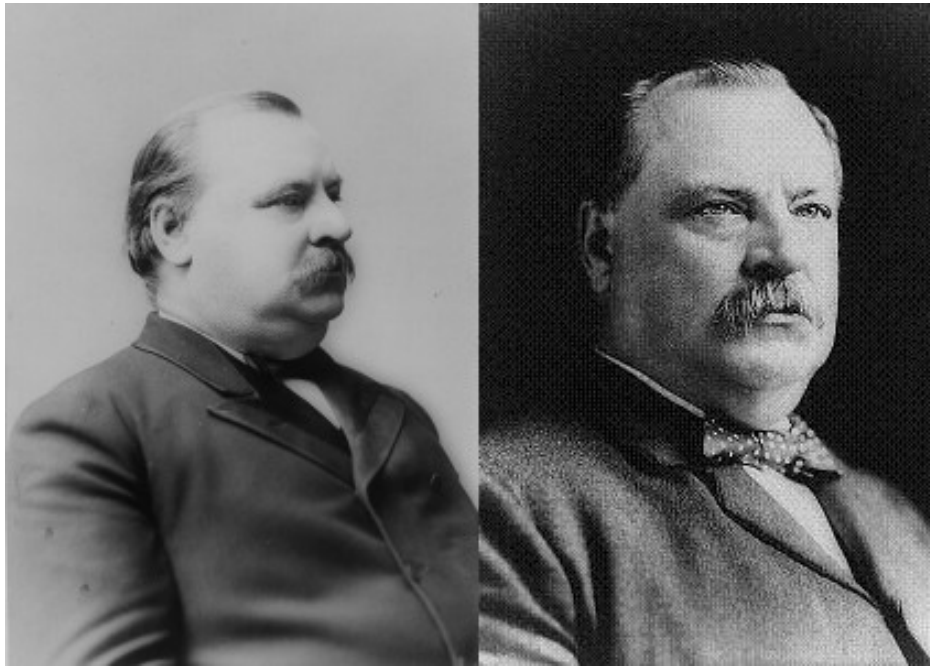


Grover Cleveland

Bless the Beast and His Children

Twenty-Second, 1885-1889, and Twenty-Forth, 1893-1897



Nicknames: "Uncle Jumbo", "Grover the Good", "The Sage of Princeton", "The Beast of Buffalo", "Hangman", "His Obstinacy", "The Stuffed Prophet", "The Elephantine Economist", "The Perpetual Candidate"

Birth: March 18th, 1837, Caldwell, New Jersey

Death: June 24th, 1908, Princeton, New Jersey

Significant Events During Cleveland's First Presidency: Mark Twain's "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" ... Statue of Liberty Unveiled ... Coca-Cola Introduced ... Geronimo Surrenders ... Dawes Act ... Haymarket Riot ... First Portable Camera ... Number of States remains at thirty-eight

Significant Events During Cleveland's Second Presidency: Economic Depression ... Coxey's Army ... Pullman Strike ... Plessy v. Ferguson ... Utah (#45) becomes a State

Quotes: *Ma, ma, where's my Pa? Gone to the White House, Ha Ha Ha!*

-- Anti-Cleveland campaign chant

"The lessons of paternalism ought to be unlearned and the better lesson taught that while the people should patriotically and cheerfully support their Government, its functions do not include the support of the people." -- Grover Cleveland

"I feel sure that the vast business interests of the country will be safe in your hands."

-- "Robber baron" Jay Gould, to Grover Cleveland

"Two names stand out as meaning all that can be said of treachery and infamy. They are Judas Iscariot and Benedict Arnold. A third should be added, that of Grover Cleveland." -- Champ Clark, 1897

"Your patriotic virtues have won for you the homage of half the nation and the enmity of the other half. This places your character upon a summit as high as Washington's...When the votes are all in a public man's favor the verdict is against him. It is sand, and history will wash it away. But the verdict for you is rock, and will stand." -- Mark Twain

"This office-seeking is a disease – I am entirely satisfied of that. It is even catching. Men get it, and they lose the proper balance of their minds. I've known men to come here to Washington on other business, with no thought of office, but when they had been here a couple of weeks they had caught it."

-- Grover Cleveland

"I mistake the American people if they favor the odious doctrine that there is no such thing as international morality; that there is one law for a strong nation and another for a weak one."

-- Grover Cleveland

"I have tried so hard to do right." -- Grover Cleveland, on his deathbed

How his term ended: The first time, 1888, Cleveland lost to Benjamin Harrison; the second time, 1896 (after defeating Harrison in 1892), Cleveland did not run – William McKinley defeated William Jennings Bryan.

Other Professions: Grocery Clerk; Teacher at the New York Institute for the Blind; Lawyer; Sheriff

Worst Mistakes: Cleveland clamped down hard on the labor movement; he sent federal troops into the Pullman strike in Chicago in 1894 even though the Illinois Governor had assured him that federal intervention was not necessary. It was odd that the President used the need for the mail to get through as the reason for taking such action, since the strikers had expressed their willingness to let the mail cars go through as long as the non-mail cars were uncoupled from them.

Somewhat similarly, a certain Jacob Coxey organized a march on Washington in 1894 (during the four-year depression which followed the "Panic of 1893") to protest the lack of work and

seek a \$500 million public works program. Coxey started with a band of 100 unemployed from his hometown of Massillon, Ohio. Their numbers gradually increased along the way, until they had swelled to some five hundred (including a six-piece band) along with some forty reporters by the time they reached Washington. Coxey's daughter Mame led the parade on a white horse, dressed as Peace. Cleveland called out the police, who violently put down the demonstration; Coxey was jailed for trespassing.

Cleveland proved himself a racist, like so many Presidents, when he made part of his campaign the denigrating of his opponent's attempts to guarantee Civil Rights to African-Americans.

Saving Graces: Cleveland reversed Chester Arthur's decision to open Indian Territory to white Settlement. The land had been promised to Indians in perpetuity.

Similarly, Cleveland also condemned the actions of the United States in bringing about the overthrow of Queen Liliuokalani in Hawaii, and not just in words: he withdrew from Senate consideration an annexing of the islands, which had been proposed by previous President Benjamin Harrison (this took place during Cleveland's second term).

Cleveland bravely took on the powerful and corrupt Tammany Hall political organization in New York when he was Governor of that State.

When Cleveland was accused of fathering a child in Buffalo with a woman to whom he was not married, Cleveland fessed up, rather than denying it. The fact is that he *could* have been the father, but didn't know that for sure. Probably nobody did. The child's mother was, shall we say, "community property" of several men. Cleveland agreed to accept the responsibility of paternity because he was the only possible father who was single at the time.

Notes: Like many Presidents, Cleveland was an orphan; his father died when he was sixteen.

Cleveland's full name was Stephen Grover Cleveland.

To flesh out the story outlined above, when Cleveland was single and leaving in Buffalo, New York, he may have fathered a child with a widow named Maria Halpin. Although she had, euphemistically speaking, "been with" several men after abandoning her two children in another state and moving to Buffalo, Mrs. Halpin named Cleveland as the child's father. Strangely, though, she gave the baby boy the name Oscar Folsom Cleveland (Oscar Folsom was Cleveland's business partner and, perhaps, one of the other possible fathers). As alluded to in the "Saving Graces" section above, Folsom and all the other men who may have been the boy's father were married, so Cleveland "took one for the club" and accepted the paternity charge. Cleveland paid the orphanage expenses (the baby was taken from its mother, even though she wanted to retain custody; Mrs. Halpin had begun drinking heavily and was for a time committed to an insane asylum). The boy was eventually adopted by a wealthy couple and went on to become a medical doctor.

When this account was dredged up during Cleveland's run for the presidency, he freely

admitted to its veracity. This was a refreshing change from the normal political response to suchlike charges (denying it, and treating the accuser like an idiot or even a traitor). As witnessed by his winning the election, the populace forgave Cleveland his trespasses.

Oddly enough, Oscar Folsom (Cleveland's business partner) was the father of Cleveland's future wife, Frances Folsom, and thus became (posthumously) Cleveland's father-in-law. When Folsom died, Cleveland became Frances' guardian; she was then eleven years old. When Frances was a baby, Cleveland had helped choose her baby carriage. After she graduated from college, they married, and Frances became the youngest First Lady (not the one to marry youngest—that was Eliza McCardle Johnson, wife of Andrew Johnson (#17)—but the youngest one at the time of her residing in the White House). At the time of their wedding, Miss Folsom was twenty-one and Cleveland was forty-nine. Cleveland is the only President to have been married in a ceremony at the White House.

Cleveland was the only President to serve discontinuous terms. Because of that, while there have been forty-three Presidents, there have only forty-two *different* men who have served as President, Cleveland being both the 22nd and the 24th.

Cleveland's daughter Ruth was called “Baby Ruth” by the press. She died at the age of twelve, in 1904.

Cleveland was the only President to have hanged a man (actually two). This took place when he was Sheriff of Buffalo, New York. As sheriff, Cleveland earned a reputation for fearlessness, incorruptibility, honesty, and efficiency. More impressively yet, he fought the powerful and corrupt Tammany Hall in New York once he became Governor of that State. It was for this reason that Edward S. Bragg said of Cleveland at the time he was nominated for President in 1884: “They love him, gentlemen, and they respect him, not only for himself, for his character, for his integrity and judgment and iron will, but they love him most of all for the enemies he has made.”

Cleveland vetoed more bills (over three hundred) than all the Presidents who had preceded him *combined* (there had been 132 vetoes before his administration, approximately six per predecessor). In other words, Cleveland vetoed fifty times as many bills as the average President up to then.

The Income Tax was deemed unconstitutional in 1895, during Cleveland's second term.

Cleveland ran for President three times in a row, in 1884, 1888, and 1892. He won the first and the last times. However, the time that he received the greatest percentage of the popular vote was the time he lost, 1888, when he garnered 48.6% of the votes, compared to Benjamin Harrison's 47.9% (one of the four times the popular winner did not get the greatest number of electoral votes and thus the presidency). In 1884, he received 48.5% to James G. Blaine's 48.2%, and in 1892 he garnered 46%, besting Benjamin Harrison's 43% and James Weaver's 8.5%.

As mentioned in the “Worst Mistakes” section, Cleveland showed no empathy for the

working man (at least when it came to labor disputes). He was also unwilling to do the heavy lifting in the Civil War, paying a substitute \$150 to take his place.

Cleveland was a distant cousin of U.S. Grant.