

BIOGRAPHY OF MILLARD FILLMORE

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649074341

Biography of Millard Fillmore by Ivory Chamberlain

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IVORY CHAMBERLAIN

**BIOGRAPHY OF
MILLARD FILLMORE**



1850

Millard Fillmore



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BIOGRAPHY

OF

MILLARD FILLMORE,

By

J. Chamberlain, Esq.
Editor of Commercial

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BUFFALO:

THOMAS & LATHROPS, PUBLISHERS.

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15,5236,5,2

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Entered according to the act of Congress, in the year 1880,

By THOMAS & LATHROP,

in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Northern
District of New York.

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INTRODUCTION.

In the spring of 1853, MILLARD FILLMORE, the subject of the following biographical sketch, retired from the Presidency. Several of our most illustrious statesmen, who, at the commencement of his administration, were master-spirits in the national councils, had been gathered to their fathers. CALHOUN, indeed, had been summoned away before the dispensation of Providence which placed a new pilot at the helm of State, and before the portentous storm, then raging, had gathered all its blackness. His last speech in the Senate, read for him by a friend because he was too feeble to deliver it, is pervaded by dark forebodings scarcely relieved by a gleam of hope. His two great compeers, who sympathized in his apprehensions, although they did not share in his despondency, were still spared to the country, and, at the commencement of Mr. FILLMORE'S administration, were leading members of the Senate. CLAY had, some years before, bid a formal, and, as he supposed, a final farewell to this theater of his labors; but a great and perilous crisis had now summoned him again to the service of his country. WEBSTER,

then also in the Senate, had recently put forth one of the most powerful efforts of his eloquence for the preservation of the endangered Union. Although, to use his own language, "the imprisoned winds are let loose"—although "the east, the west, the north, and the stormy south, all combine to throw the whole ocean into agitation, to toss its billows to the skies, and to disclose its profoundest depths," he would neither shrink from his duty nor abandon hope. "I am looking out for no fragment," he says, "upon which to float away from the wreck, if wreck there must be, but for the good of the whole, and the preservation of the whole; and there is that which will keep me to my duty during this struggle, whether the sun and stars shall appear, or shall not appear for many days."

It was in the midst of an agitation which thus aroused the energies—in the midst of dangers which thus alarmed the apprehensions of our greatest and most experienced statesmen, that the administration of MILLARD FILLMORE commenced. Before he had been two months in power, there was a lull in the storm—the crisis had passed—and although a heavy ground-swell continued, for some time, to mark the violence of the recent tempest, the country was fast settling into tranquillity. As the ablest men of both political parties had lent their influence to secure the compromise, so they now united to give it stability by all the combined weight of their characters. Two years afterwards, both the great political parties, into which the country was then divided, solemnly endorsed it, in their national conventions, as the FINAL SETTLEMENT of a most dangerous controversy.