

**RECOLLECTIONS OF  
SIXTEEN PRESIDENTS FROM  
WASHINGTON TO LINCOLN;  
VOLUME II, PP. 241-438**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649223602

Recollections of sixteen presidents from Washington to Lincoln; Volume II, pp. 241-438 by  
Richard W. Thompson

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**RICHARD W. THOMPSON**

**RECOLLECTIONS OF  
SIXTEEN PRESIDENTS FROM  
WASHINGTON TO LINCOLN;  
VOLUME II, PP. 241-438**





*Richard W. Thompson.*

FROM A DAGUERRETYPE 1850.

RECOLLECTIONS  
OF  
SIXTEEN PRESIDENTS

FROM  
WASHINGTON TO LINCOLN

BY  
RICHARD W. THOMPSON

"Let us forget party and think of our country. That country embraces both parties. We must endeavor, therefore, to serve and benefit both. This can not be effected while political delusions array good men against each other."—GOUVERNEUR MORRIS.

"Three-score and ten I can remember well;  
Within the volume of which time I have seen  
————— things strange."  
—SHAKESPEARE.

VOLUME II

INDIANAPOLIS  
THE BOWEN-MERRILL COMPANY  
1894

E  
176  
-1  
T46  
1894  
V. 2

COPYRIGHT, 1894

BY

THE BOWEN-MERRILL CO.



PRINTED BY  
CARLON & HOLLENBECK  
INDIANAPOLIS



James H. Jackson





## CHAPTER XI

### JAMES K. POLK

DURING Polk's administration the public patience was severely tried. All protestations against the violation of the Constitution were answered by the roar of cannon and the deafening shouts of maddened partisans, who seemed to suppose that patriotism consisted only in a clamorous demand for enlarging the borders of the nation, no matter whether the means employed were right or wrong. The history of that period, therefore, should be well and carefully studied, in order to understand by what strange combinations a man of mere mediocre ability and without national reputation for statesmanship became enabled to defeat Van Buren—the acknowledged choice of Jackson—and reached the Presidential office. I do not contest, in the least degree, the claim he had upon his friends for such respectful consideration as should never be withheld from a well-spent private life, but can not refrain from asserting that, in my opinion, his intellectual qualifications never exceeded the average among public men. One of his confidential friends, from his own State, whose good and generous qualities won my personal esteem, wrote a history of his administration, in which he referred to his election as "indeed remarkable." This expressed the general sentiment. That he discharged his official duties

industriously, was well attested, but that he possessed the qualities which entitled him to be classed among American statesmen of commanding ability, was not claimed for him even by his most zealous defenders. The highest round he reached in the ladder of fame was that of respectability—nothing more. His nomination for the Presidency took the whole country by surprise, and by none of the people more than those of Tennessee, among whom he had lived nearly all his life. The Legislature of that State had, without any indication of enthusiasm, nominated him for the Vice-Presidency, but this met no response from any other part of the country, and was considered as merely complimentary. There was no popular demonstration in his favor even for this office. In view, therefore, of all the attending circumstances, his nomination for the Presidency can be viewed in no other light than as the result of political maneuvering upon the part of those who had some secret object to accomplish, and who, in order to assure success, were indifferent regarding the means they employed.

No sooner had Tyler indicated the purpose to bring about the annexation of Texas, in order to recover somewhat the popularity his administration had lost, than a class of politicians, both in the North and the South, conceived the idea of circumventing him by strategy, so as to take the matter out of his hands and transfer it to their own—that is, in common phrase, to steal his thunder. This purpose was soon manifested by their opposition to his annexation treaty, but afterwards became more palpable when they endeavored to denationalize the question by narrowing it to a controversy between the