



James K. Polk

11th President

Born: Nov. 2, 1795

Birthplace: Mecklenburg Co., NC

Died: June 15, 1849

Burial Site: Nashville, TN

Spouse: Sarah Childress

Occupation: Lawyer

Political Party: Democratic

Term: 1845-1849

Vice President: George Dallas

James Knox Polk became the United States' 11th President on March 4, 1845. He was often referred to as the first "dark horse" candidate and he was the last of the Jacksonians to sit in the White House.

The Democratic Convention of 1844 required that its presidential candidate get two-thirds of the delegate vote. Former president Martin Van Buren expected and almost won the party support. When he could not get the necessary votes, the convention swung to Polk, who had been a Tennessee legislator, congressman and governor. Polk was a graduate of the University of North Carolina.

Soon after taking office, Polk sent troops to the Texas-Mexican border, which was in dispute and clashes there led to war. He declared war on Mexico in 1846 and the U.S. Army fought all the way to Mexico City before the Mexican government agreed to a peace treaty that gave the United States California and the area then called New Mexico (including Arizona and parts of Colorado and Nevada) for \$15 million.

A few months later, the Oregon boundary was agreed to and the march to the Pacific was complete. It was not long before gold was discovered in California and the migration west really started.

He died June 15, 1849, in Nashville, TN, just three months after he retired as president.