

Franklin Pierce

14th President

Born: Nov. 23, 1804

Birthplace: Hillsboro, NH

Died: Oct. 8, 1869

Burial Site: Concord, NH

Spouse: Jane Appleton

Occupation: Lawyer

Political Party: Democratic

Term: 1853-1857

Vice President: William King



Franklin Pierce, this nation's 14th president, took over the White House at a time of apparent tranquility because of the Compromise of 1850, which seemed to have stemmed the tide of sectionalism.

He was born Nov. 23, 1804, in Hillsboro, NH. He graduated from Bowdoin College and served in the New Hampshire House and in Congress.

The son of a Revolutionary hero, General Benjamin Pierce, he was a classmate of writers Nathaniel Hawthorne and William Wadsworth Longfellow.

When the Mexican War broke out, Pierce enlisted as a private and did such a good job he came out a brigadier general.

Pierce was a compromise candidate in the 1852 Democratic convention, which nominated him on the 35th ballot. Two months before he took office, his 11 year-old son was killed in a train wreck and Pierce entered the presidency nervously exhausted.

Pierce approved Stephen A. Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska bill, which allowed these territories to decide for themselves about slavery and repealed the "Missouri Compromise."

During the Pierce administration, Commodore Matthew C. Perry visited Japan and made the United States' first treaty with that empire.