

Millard Fillmore

Millard Fillmore was born on January 7, 1800, in Cayuga County, New York. He had eight brothers and sisters. As a teenager, Fillmore served as an apprentice to a cloth maker but received little formal education apart from briefly attending New Hope Academy in New Hope, New York. In 1819, he began to clerk for Judge Walter Wood in Montville, New York, whom he studied law under. In 1823, he was admitted to the New York bar and started practicing in East Aurora, New York (near Buffalo). In 1826, he married Abigail Powers. The couple would have two children.

Fillmore's law career moved quickly. In 1836, he formed the practice Fillmore, Hall & Haven, which would become one of western New York's most successful firms. In 1846, Fillmore founded the University of Buffalo, which today is the largest university in the State University of New York (SUNY) system. From 1832 to 1843, Fillmore served in the New York State Assembly as a Whig. From 1848 to 1849, he served as New York State Comptroller.

In 1849, Fillmore was selected as Whig presidential candidate Zachary Taylor's running mate. Even though Fillmore was relatively unknown, he was selected by Whig officials because it was thought he would help them win the vote in New York and block New Yorker Thurlow Weed from receiving the nomination.

In 1850, President Zachary Taylor died unexpectedly, and Fillmore was sworn in as the 13th president. He would be the last Whig president and the first president to have been born after the death of George Washington. Fillmore's presidency was dominated by dissension in the Whig Party and by the growing division over the question of the extension of slavery into new states. In what came to be known as the Compromise of 1850, California was admitted to the Union as a free state, the New Mexico Territory was established, and the Fugitive Slave Law was enforced in the Northern states, enraging some Northern members of the Whig Party.

As dissension over the slavery issue caused the disintegration of the Whig Party, Fillmore joined the Know-Nothing Party, an anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant party that believed America was being overrun by immigration. Like the Whigs, the Know-Nothing Party soon disintegrated and Fillmore's political career ended. In 1862, he founded the Buffalo Historical Society and became its first president. Fillmore died on March 8, 1874, of a stroke.

1. Which of the following best describes Millard Fillmore as a youth?

- A. Lonely
- B. Uneducated
- C. Scholarly
- D. Lazy

- 2. Which of the following is NOT true of Millard Fillmore?**
- A. He founded the University of Buffalo
 - B. He was a successful lawyer
 - C. He served in the New York state assembly
 - D. He was well-known politically when he ran for election with Zachary Taylor
- 3. How did Millard Fillmore become president?**
- A. He was elected
 - B. He was nominated
 - C. Zachary Taylor died
 - D. Congress appointed him as president
- 4. The word “dissension” is used twice in this passage. Which of the following has the same meaning?**
- A. Discussion
 - B. Strong disagreement
 - C. Compromise
 - D. Inaction
- 5. Which of the following did Millard Fillmore believe in the 1860s?**
- A. He believed in slavery
 - B. He believed America had too many immigrants
 - C. He believed in the disintegration of the Whig Party
 - D. He believed he would become president again
- 6. What would be the BEST title for the fourth paragraph?**
- A. Politics in the 1860s
 - B. The Beginning of the End for the Whigs
 - C. The History of the Whigs
 - D. The Fugitive Slave Law
- 7. Millard Fillmore was...**
(circle BOTH that are true)
- A. in multiple political parties that both disintegrated.
 - B. president, vice-president, and governor.
 - C. well educated as a child.
 - D. founder of the Buffalo Historical Society and the University of Buffalo.