

## Vice Presidents of the United States

### Richard Mentor Johnson (1837-1841)

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Introduction by Mark O. Hatfield.

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... I pray you to assure our friends that the humblest of us do not believe that a lucky random shot, even if it did hit Tecumseh, qualifies a man for the Vice Presidency.

—Tennessee Supreme Court Chief Justice John Catron to Andrew Jackson, March 21, 1835.<sup>1</sup>

The United States Senate elected Richard Mentor Johnson of Kentucky the nation's ninth vice president on February 8, 1837. His selection marked the first and only time the Senate has exercised its prerogative under the U.S. Constitution's Twelfth Amendment, which provides, "if no person have a majority, then from the two highest numbers on the list, the Senate shall choose the Vice-President." Johnson became Martin Van Buren's running mate after three decades in the House and Senate, a congressional career spanning the administrations of five presidents from Thomas Jefferson through Andrew Jackson. Detractors alleged, however, that he owed his nomination solely to the dubious claim that he killed the Shawnee chieftain Tecumseh in 1813 at the Battle of the Thames. Johnson wielded substantial power in the House of Representatives during Jackson's two administrations, and his successful decade-long campaign to end imprisonment for debt won him a national following. For most of his career, the voters of his district held him in great esteem. They forgave him when he sponsored the 1816 Compensation Act, one of the most unpopular laws ever enacted by Congress, as well as on more than one occasion when he lined his own pockets with government funds.

During the 1836 presidential campaign and Johnson's single term as vice president, however, his popularity dissipated. The plain manners and habits that had once endeared him to his constituents and supporters, combined with his controversial personal life and unfortunate penchant for lending his influence in support of questionable undertakings,

proved serious liabilities. A campaign to remove him from the Democratic ticket in 1840 failed only because Van Buren, while no Johnson enthusiast, was unwilling to alienate the eastern labor vote and because party leaders were reluctant to force a potentially divisive confrontation. The 1840 election, resulting in a decisive victory for the Whig ticket headed by Johnson's former comrade-in-arms, William Henry Harrison, signalled the end of the Kentuckian's long and often controversial career.

## A Frontier Youth

Little is known of Richard Mentor Johnson's early years. Nineteenth-century campaign biographies and a modern study based on these earlier accounts are heavily colored by the heroic rhetoric that Johnson and his supporters employed throughout his career.<sup>2</sup> Although he was, as he later claimed, "born in a cane-brake and cradled in a sap trough,"<sup>3</sup> the Johnsons were a powerful family of substantial means. The future vice president was born on October 17, 1780, at Beargrass, a Virginia frontier outpost near the site of present-day Louisville, Kentucky.<sup>4</sup> His father, Robert Johnson, had migrated from Orange County, Virginia, with his wife, Jemima Suggett Johnson, in 1779. By 1812 Robert Johnson was one of the largest landholders in Kentucky. He served in the Virginia house of burgesses, attended both the 1785 convention that petitioned the Virginia legislature for Kentucky statehood and the 1792 Kentucky constitutional convention, and represented his district in the state legislature for several years after Kentucky's admission to the Union. After three of Richard Mentor Johnson's brothers achieved national office—James and John Telemachus served in the House of Representatives and Benjamin was a federal district judge—critics charged that the family sought "power in every hole and corner of the state." The Johnsons proved remarkably effective in obtaining government contracts and other favors for family members and allies, and their financial interests in local newspapers such as Amos Kendall's Georgetown *Minerva* and the Georgetown *Patriot* added to their considerable influence.<sup>5</sup>

Richard Mentor Johnson received enough of an early education to qualify him for apprenticeships reading law under Kentucky jurists George Nicholas and James Brown,<sup>6</sup> both former students of Thomas Jefferson's legendary teacher George Wythe.<sup>7</sup> The allusions that flavor his letters and speeches suggest at least a passing familiarity with the classics.<sup>8</sup> After his admission to the bar in 1802, he returned to the family's home near Great Crossings, Kentucky, to practice law.<sup>9</sup> He later operated a retail store at Great Crossings and engaged in other business and speculative ventures with brothers James, Benjamin, and Joel. These efforts, together with a sizeable bequest of land and slaves from his father, eventually made Johnson a wealthy man, although he never identified with the privileged classes. He routinely waived legal fees for the indigent land claimants he represented in suits against wealthy speculators,<sup>10</sup> and his home was a mecca for disabled veterans, widows, and orphans seeking his assistance. No one was refused hospitality at Blue Spring Farm, his estate near Great Crossings. An acquaintance "heard men say they were treated so well by Col. Johnson when they went out there, they loved to go."<sup>11</sup>

Early accounts describe the future vice president as a gentle and personable man, with a pleasant, if nondescript, appearance. Washington socialite Margaret Bayard Smith found him "[t]he most tender hearted, mild, affectionate and benevolent of men . . . whose countenance beams with good will to all, whose soul seems to feed on the milk of human kindness." He "might have been a fashionable man," she speculated, if not for his retiring nature and "plain . . . dress and manners."<sup>12</sup> He possessed, in the words of John C. Calhoun's biographer Charles M. Wiltse, "the rare quality of being personally liked by everyone."<sup>13</sup>

## **Soldier and Legislator**

From 1804 to 1806, Johnson served as a delegate from Scott County in the Kentucky house of representatives, where he supported legislation to protect settlers from land speculators.<sup>14</sup> Elected to the United States House of Representatives from the district encompassing Shelby, Scott, and Franklin counties in 1806, he served six consecutive terms, retiring from the House in 1819 to seek election to the Senate.<sup>15</sup> Throughout his career, Johnson professed allegiance to the principles of "Thomas Jefferson, the patriarch of republicanism," and correspondence from his early years in Congress suggests that he enjoyed a cordial acquaintance with Jefferson.<sup>16</sup> In a rambling letter of February 1808, Johnson recommended a candidate for federal office and assured the president that "I feel in you a confidence, & attachment which is indescribable & can never be excelled." "Having procured the Books mentioned in the memorandum from you," the young congressman suggested, "a course of Historical reading would be gratefully received."<sup>17</sup> The acquaintance continued after Jefferson's retirement. In 1813, Johnson wrote that he "constantly recollected how much mankind are indebted to you," adding somewhat self-consciously that "I make no apologies for indulging feelings which I really feel."<sup>18</sup> During the War of 1812, he apprised the retired president of military developments and solicited his counsel "as to the manner of reading, & the Books to read, particularly as it respects Military history."<sup>19</sup>

As the representative of a frontier, predominantly agrarian district, Johnson shared his constituents' concern for the security of the interior settlements, as well as their inherent distrust of bankers, speculators, and other monied interests. An "administration man" with respect to defense and foreign policy matters, he voted against Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin's proposal to recharter the Bank of the United States during the Madison administration.<sup>20</sup> "Great monied monopolies," he explained much later, "controlled by persons, irresponsible to the people, are liable to exercise a dangerous influence, and corporate bodies generally, especially when they have the power to effect the circulating medium of the country, do not well comport with genius of a republic."<sup>21</sup> He was a hardworking representative, popular among the voters of his district but otherwise undistinguished, until his heroism in the War of 1812 brought him national acclaim.<sup>22</sup>

Johnson was one of the vociferous young congressmen, led by his fellow Kentuckian House Speaker Henry Clay, known collectively as the "warhawks." During the Twelfth Congress, this group urged military redress for British violations of American frontiers and shipping rights,<sup>23</sup> and in June 1812 they voted to declare war against Great Britain.<sup>24</sup> Not wishing "to be idle during the recess of Congress,"<sup>25</sup> Johnson raised and led two mounted regiments that joined the northwestern army under the command of his future rival, General William Henry Harrison, in the fall of 1813. Johnson's Kentucky volunteers crossed the Canadian border in pursuit of a combined British and Shawnee force led by General Henry Proctor and overran the enemy position at the Thames River on October 5, 1813. A heroic cavalry charge led by Johnson and his brother James ensured a decisive American victory, in which Tecumseh, the Shawnee leader who had preyed upon American settlements in the Northwest since 1806, was among the presumed casualties. Although his remains were never identified, some witnesses claimed after the fact that Johnson had killed Tecumseh.<sup>26</sup>

Johnson returned to Congress a hero on March 7, 1814, still suffering from the extensive wounds that plagued him for the rest of his life. He turned his attention to war-related matters: the relief of veterans, widows and orphans; the compensation of veterans for service-related property losses; and the improvement of the young nation's military establishment.<sup>27</sup> Johnson's newfound popularity and his characteristic willingness to accede to his constituents' demands ensured his political survival through the furor over the 1816 Compensation Act, which for the first time granted members of Congress an annual salary, rather than paying them only for the days Congress was in session. The measure became controversial when a newspaper estimated that the new system would cost the government an additional \$400,000 annually, and Congress repealed the law the next year. Although Johnson sponsored the bill, he quickly repudiated the measure after the public outcry cost many of his colleagues their seats.<sup>28</sup>

His nationalist perspective heightened by the war, Johnson joined with Henry Clay in advocating protection for frontier products and federal funding for internal improvements to give western producers readier access to eastern markets.<sup>29</sup> In 1817, he voted to override Madison's veto of the bonus bill, a proposal to fund internal improvements from the bonus and dividends from the Bank of the United States.<sup>30</sup> Widely regarded as an expert in military affairs as a consequence of his valor under fire, Johnson was one of several westerners whom President James Monroe considered to head the War Department after Henry Clay declined the post in 1817.<sup>31</sup> The nomination ultimately went to John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, but Johnson enjoyed considerable leverage over the department as chairman from 1817 to 1819 of the House Committee on Expenditures in the Department of War.<sup>32</sup> In 1818, Calhoun authorized an expedition to plant a military outpost at the mouth of the Yellowstone River, near the current site of Bismarck, North Dakota, and awarded the transportation and supply contract to the chairman's brother and partner, James Johnson.

The Yellowstone expedition departed from St. Louis just as the panic of 1819 brought postwar economic expansion to a halt and shortly before Treasury Secretary William H. Crawford issued a December 1819 report projecting a \$5 million budget deficit. The venture grossly exceeded anticipated costs (in large part because of James Johnson's malfeasance and Richard Mentor Johnson's repeated pleas for further advances). As a result, the expedition provided Calhoun's enemies in Congress with potent ammunition for an attack that ultimately led to drastic reductions in the War Department budget.<sup>33</sup> After Johnson requested yet another contract for James in the summer of 1820, Calhoun finally advised the president that, "to avoid all censure, the contracts ought to be made on public proposals."<sup>34</sup>

Johnson retired from the House long before the Yellowstone expedition stalled at Council Bluffs, Iowa, but the eventual outcry over the venture failed to diminish his stature in Kentucky.<sup>35</sup> As Monroe had earlier acknowledged, "the people of the whole western country" considered the expedition "a measure . . . to preserve the peace of the frontier."<sup>36</sup> The local press celebrated "the Herculean undertakings of the Johnsons," while accusing their critics of "political animosity."<sup>37</sup> On December 10, 1819, the Kentucky legislature elected Johnson to fill the unexpired portion of John J. Crittenden's Senate term.<sup>38</sup>

### **Relief for Debtors**

Johnson began his Senate career heavily in debt. He mortgaged several properties to the Bank of the United States to settle accounts outstanding from the Yellowstone expedition and other speculative ventures. In 1822 Bank counsel Henry Clay won a substantial judgment against the Johnson brothers.<sup>39</sup> Still, Johnson weathered the depression better than many of his constituents and others who were left destitute after the panic of 1819 severely depressed credit and agricultural prices. Thousands of overextended farmers and laborers found themselves pressed by increasingly frantic creditors during the depression that followed the panic. Imprisonment for debt was a common punishment in state and local courts during the early nineteenth century, although few debtors were incarcerated for outstanding federal obligations.<sup>40</sup>

Both Johnson's own experience and the suffering in his district and elsewhere convinced him that "the principle is deemed too dangerous to be tolerated in a free government, to permit a man for any pecuniary consideration, to dispose of the liberty of his equal."<sup>41</sup> The movement to end debt imprisonment began long before Johnson, on December 10, 1822, introduced a Senate bill to abolish use of the punishment by federal courts. He did, however, become one of the acknowledged leaders of the effort, first through his success in persuading the Kentucky legislature to abolish the practice in 1821 and then with his decade-long campaign in Congress that in 1832 achieved enactment of a federal statute.<sup>42</sup> Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri later explained that the impact of the 1832 law extended far beyond the federal courts "in the force of example and influence." The statute "led to the cessation of the practice of imprisoning debtors, in all, or nearly all, of the States and Territories of the Union."<sup>43</sup>

A second legislative accomplishment that brought Johnson national distinction was a report that he prepared during his final Senate term, as chairman of the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, in response to a flood of petitions from religious congregations in the East demanding the suspension of Sunday mail deliveries. The January 19, 1829, report, widely reprinted in the press, argued that, as "a civil, and not a religious institution," the government could take no action sanctioning the religious convictions or practices of any denomination. After leaving the Senate, Johnson continued his crusade as a member of the House of Representatives. In 1830, as chairman of the House Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, he submitted a second report. This, like the earlier Senate report, brought him widespread acclaim in the labor press as a champion of religious liberty. Some contemporaries doubted Johnson's authorship of the second report, however; and his biographer has conceded that Johnson's friends in the Post Office Department, including his landlord O.B. Brown, may have influenced his stance.<sup>44</sup>

During his ten years in the Senate from 1819 to 1829, Johnson gravitated toward the coalition, then emerging under the skilled leadership of Martin Van Buren, that eventually became the Democratic party, as well as toward the party's future standard bearer, Andrew Jackson.<sup>45</sup> The acquaintance dated at least from 1814, when Johnson wrote to Jackson at New Orleans to recommend a supply contractor.<sup>46</sup> He was Jackson's impassioned, if ineffective, defender in 1819 when Clay urged the House of Representatives to censure the general for his execution of two British subjects during the Seminole War.<sup>47</sup> Senator Johnson declared for Jackson after the 1824 presidential election was thrown into the House of Representatives<sup>48</sup>—and, by some accounts, after the candidate hinted that, if elected, he intended to name Johnson secretary of war.<sup>49</sup> When the House elected John Quincy Adams president, Johnson broke the news to Jackson that the new president had named as secretary of state Henry Clay, who had voted for Adams in spite of the Kentucky voters' clear preference for Jackson.<sup>50</sup> Johnson was absent when the Senate approved Clay's nomination on March 7, 1825.<sup>51</sup> A Washington journalist later reported that, after the election, Johnson "determined to enter the ranks of the opposition."<sup>52</sup> He had become, and would remain for the rest of his life, a steadfast "Jacksonian."

Johnson was reelected to a full Senate term in 1822 but in 1828 lost his reelection bid because Kentucky Democrats feared that controversy over his domestic life would jeopardize Jackson's chances in the national election. Johnson never married. Family tradition recounts that he ended an early romance, vowing revenge for his mother's interference, after Jemima Johnson pronounced his intended bride unworthy of the family.<sup>53</sup> He later lived openly with Julia Chinn, a mulatto slave raised by his mother and inherited from his father, until her death from cholera in 1833. Johnson freely acknowledged the relationship, as well as the two daughters born to the union, and entrusted Julia with full authority over his business affairs during his absences from Blue Spring Farm.<sup>54</sup>

The relationship provoked little comment in Johnson's congressional district, but as a member of the Senate, with an expanded constituency, he was vulnerable to criticism by large slaveholders and others who disapproved of open miscegenation. Threatened press exposure of the senator's personal life during the 1828 campaign unnerved Jackson supporters in the Kentucky legislature. They therefore attempted to dissociate the national candidate from the now-controversial Johnson, joining forces with the Adams faction to oppose Johnson's reelection and ultimately forcing state legislator John Telemachus Johnson to withdraw his brother's name from the contest.<sup>55</sup> The defeat ended Johnson's Senate career. In his three later attempts to return to the Senate, he lost to Henry Clay in 1831 and 1848 and to John J. Crittenden in 1842.<sup>56</sup>

### **In the House Again**

In 1829 the voters in Johnson's old district returned him to the House of Representatives,<sup>57</sup> where he remained during Jackson's two administrations. After chairing the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads from 1829 to 1833, he served as chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs from 1833 to 1837.<sup>58</sup> An acknowledged power in the House, Johnson offered his services and advice to the administration on several occasions, albeit with noticeably less success than the more politically astute Martin Van Buren.<sup>59</sup>

Johnson was, by nature, a conciliator, whose vehement rhetoric belied a tendency to avoid politically risky confrontations. In 1830 he urged Jackson to sign a bill to fund an extension of the national road from Lexington to Maysville, Kentucky, warning in emphatic terms that "you will crush your friends in Kentucky if you veto that Bill." When the president proved intransigent, he conceded that a tax to fund the Maysville Road "would be worse than a veto." He failed to vote when the House sustained the veto on May 18, 1830.<sup>60</sup>

An early aspirant for the 1832 Democratic presidential nomination, Johnson refocused his sights on the vice-presidency after Jackson announced that he would seek a second term.<sup>61</sup> New York labor leader Ely Moore and members of the Workingmen's party supported Johnson for vice president,<sup>62</sup> but Democratic strategists questioned the wisdom of adding him to the ticket. A correspondent of Navy Secretary John McLean noted that "Gen. Jackson . . . is in *feeble* health; and may not live to the end of his second term" and questioned whether "Colo. Johnson's calibre will answer for so high a station."<sup>63</sup> Despite clear indications that Van Buren would replace Calhoun as the vice-presidential candidate, however, Johnson abandoned his campaign only after Jackson's adviser William B. Lewis convinced him to do so.<sup>64</sup> When, on May 22, 1832, the Democratic convention tapped Van Buren as Jackson's running mate on the first ballot, Johnson received only 26 votes from the Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois delegations—a poor showing compared to Van Buren's 208 votes and the 49 votes of former House Speaker

and Calhoun ally Philip P. Barbour. Jackson and Van Buren then went on to win an easy victory in the general election.<sup>65</sup>

As early as April 1833, shortly after Jackson's new term began, Duff Green's *Political Register* reported that "the western States are flooded with handbills nominating Col. *Richard M. Johnson*, of Kentucky, as a candidate for the Presidency in 1836." Johnson's friend William Emmons published *The Authentic Biography of Colonel Richard M. Johnson* in 1833, and Richard Emmons' play, *Tecumseh, of the Battle of the Thames*, soon followed. A poem by Richard Emmons supplied the slogan that Johnson enthusiasts trumpeted in the 1836 and 1840 campaigns: "Rumpsey, Dumpsey, Colonel Johnson killed Tecumseh!"

The candidate delighted in these overblown celebrations of his military prowess, boasting after a well-attended and well-received performance of *Tecumseh* that he had "more friends than ever."<sup>66</sup> But Johnson's following was based upon more than his military accomplishments, exaggerated though they were by his eager promoters. His efforts to abolish imprisonment for debt and to continue Sunday mail deliveries ensured him the support of the workingmen's movement in the urban centers, and his "hard-money," antibank fiscal policy appealed to the party's "radical" faction. He also enjoyed a strong following in the West, where Jackson's "Kitchen Cabinet" advisers Amos Kendall and Francis P. Blair considered him the only candidate who could neutralize Clay's overwhelming appeal.<sup>67</sup> Party regulars understood, however, that in selecting Van Buren as his running mate in 1832, Jackson had named the diminutive New Yorker his successor. Johnson eventually acceded to the president's wishes with his usual equanimity, refusing to run as an opposition candidate when approached in 1834 by a coalition of disaffected Tennesseans led by David Crockett and John Bell.<sup>68</sup> Blair and Kendall quietly changed their tactics in hopes of securing the vice-presidential nomination for "Old Dick."<sup>69</sup> Perhaps they hoped that Johnson would thus become the "heir apparent" to succeed Van Buren, or perhaps they merely recognized the futility of opposing Old Hickory's will. Van Buren served as Jackson's "right hand" during his term as vice president, but this arrangement resulted more from his longstanding relationship with the president than from any commonly held assumptions regarding the role of the vice president.

## 1836 Election

When the Democratic convention met at Baltimore on May 22, 1835, to ratify Van Buren's nomination and select his running mate, Johnson's only serious opponent for the vice-presidential nomination was former senator William Cabell Rives of Virginia, who had served as minister to France during Jackson's first administration. Southern Democrats, and Van Buren himself, strongly preferred Rives. Although he counted "the gallant Colonel . . . among the bravest of the brave," Van Buren also feared that Johnson could not "be relied upon to check the cupidity of his friends." Jackson, however, concerned about the threat that opposition candidate Hugh Lawson White posed among



western voters, strongly preferred his Kentucky lieutenant. His anger over Rives' diplomatic failures and his gratitude for Johnson's longstanding loyalty and support also weighed heavily in his decision. In spite of the president's considerable influence, however, Johnson received the required two-thirds vote only after New York Senator Silas Wright prevailed upon nondelegate Edward Rucker to cast the fifteen votes of the absent Tennessee delegation in his favor.<sup>70</sup>

The choice provoked bitter dissent in Democratic ranks. Virginia delegate Dr. R.C. Mason questioned Johnson's fidelity to the party's "great republican principles" and announced that his delegation would not support the nomination.<sup>71</sup> Johnson's letter of acceptance, explaining that "I consider the views of president Jackson, on the tariff and internal improvements, as founded in true wisdom," failed to mollify the Virginians.<sup>72</sup> Van Buren's ally Albert Balch had previously warned Jackson that "I do not think from what I hear daily that the nomination of Johnson for the Vice Presidency will be popular in any of the slave holding states except Ky. on account of his former domestic relations,"<sup>73</sup> and a Van Buren correspondent later predicted that "Col. Johnson's . . . weight would absolutely sink the whole party in Virginia."<sup>74</sup> Tennessee Supreme Court Chief Justice John Catron warned Jackson that Johnson was "not only positively unpopular in Tennessee . . . but affirmatively odious" and begged the president "to assure our friends that the humblest of us do not believe that a lucky random shot, even if it did hit Tecumseh, qualifies a man for the Vice Presidency." He predicted that "the very moment Col. J. is announced, the newspapers will open upon him with facts, that he had endeavored often to force his daughters into society, that the mother in her life time, and they now, rode in carriages, and claimed equality."<sup>75</sup>

The Whigs still formed a loose coalition bound by mutual opposition to Jackson's antibank policies but lacked the party unity or organizational strength to field a single ticket or define a coherent platform. Instead of a single nominee, they offered a series of sectional candidates nominated by local caucuses in hopes of defeating Van Buren in each region and throwing the election into the House of Representatives. The Whig presidential candidates were Daniel Webster, Tennessee Senator and former Jacksonian Hugh Lawson White, and Johnson's former commander, General William Henry Harrison. For vice president, opposition caucuses nominated New York Anti-Mason Francis Granger and former Democrat John Tyler of Virginia.<sup>76</sup>

In the bitter campaign that followed, Whigs attempted to attract disaffected Democrats by focusing on personalities rather than issues. In the South, opposition strategists raised the specter of abolition against Van Buren,<sup>77</sup> while attacking Johnson as a "great amalgamator," who had "habitually and practically illustrated" abolitionist principles in his own home.<sup>78</sup> Johnson not only cost his party southern votes, but he also failed to attract western votes as anticipated. His own state went for Harrison and Granger. In spite of these disappointments, however, Van Buren still managed a narrow victory with just over fifty percent of the popular vote.<sup>79</sup>

On February 8, 1837, President pro tempore of the Senate William R. King of Alabama proclaimed to the members of Congress assembled in the House chamber to tally the electoral returns that Martin Van Buren, with 170 electoral votes, was the "duly elected President of the United States." Johnson, however, received only 147 electoral votes, 70 more than his closest contender, Francis Granger, but one less than the number required to elect. The Virginia electors had remained loyal to Van Buren, who carried the state by a close margin, but cast their votes in the vice-presidential contest for William Smith of Alabama. After King announced that "it devolved on the Senate of the United States . . . to choose . . . a Vice President of the United States," the Senate retired to its own chamber.<sup>80</sup>

After reassembling to elect the vice president, the Senate approved Tennessee Senator Felix Grundy's resolution to establish the voting procedure:

[T]he Secretary of the Senate shall call the names of Senators in alphabetical order; and each Senator will, when his name is called, name the person for whom he votes; and if a majority of the whole number of Senators shall vote for either the said Richard M. Johnson or Francis Granger, he shall be declared by the presiding officer of the Senate constitutionally elected Vice President of the United States."

Secretary of the Senate Asbury Dickins called the roll, with 49 of the 52 senators present voting along strict party lines: 33 for Johnson, 16 for Granger. President pro tempore King then announced that Johnson had been "constitutionally elected Vice President of the United States for four years, commencing on the fourth day of March, 1837."<sup>81</sup>

## **Vice President**

Notified of his election,<sup>82</sup> Johnson responded that his "gratification was heightened from the conviction that the Senate, in the exercise of their constitutional prerogative, concurred with and confirmed the wishes of both the States and the people." He explained that he had never paid "special regard to the minuteness of rules and orders, so necessary to the progress of business, and so important to the observance of the presiding officer" during his three decades in Congress. He was nonetheless confident—in words reminiscent of Jefferson's forty years earlier—that "the intelligence of the Senate will guard the country from any injury that might result from the imperfections of the presiding officer." While he hoped "that there may be always sufficient unanimity" to prevent equal divisions in the Senate, he would perform his duty "without embarrassment" in the event that he was called upon to cast a tie-breaking vote.<sup>83</sup>

President pro tempore King administered the oath of office to Johnson in the Senate chamber at 10:00 a.m. on March 4, 1837. In a brief address to the Senate, the new vice president observed that "there is not, perhaps, a deliberative assembly existing, where the presiding officer has less difficulty in preserving order." He attributed this characteristic to "the intelligence and patriotism of the members who compose the body, and that personal respect and courtesy which have always been extended from one member to another in its deliberations." At the conclusion of his remarks, the ceremony of newly elected senators presenting their credentials to the Senate and taking the oath of office was temporarily interrupted by the arrival of President-elect Van Buren and his party.

The senators therefore joined the procession to the east portico of the Capitol for the presidential inauguration.<sup>84</sup>

Contemporary witnesses and scholarly accounts of the day's festivities mention Richard Mentor Johnson only in passing, if at all. The outgoing president, worn and emaciated from two terms in office and a recent debilitating illness but still towering over his immaculately attired successor, was clearly the focus of attention. Thomas Hart Benton, a dedicated Jackson supporter, later recounted the "acclamations and cheers bursting from the heart and filling the air" that erupted from the crowd as Jackson took his leave of the ceremony. From Benton's perspective, "the rising was eclipsed by the setting sun."<sup>85</sup> Johnson's friendship with Jackson and his stature in the House had assured him access to the president and some measure of influence during Jackson's administrations. The controversy surrounding his nomination, however, together with his disappointing showing in the 1836 election, his longstanding rivalry with Van Buren, and the constitutional limitations of his new office severely curtailed his role in the Van Buren administration. Histories of Van Buren's presidency do not indicate that he ever sought his vice president's counsel.<sup>86</sup> Johnson's duties were confined to the Senate chamber, where he watched from the presiding officer's chair as Senate Finance Committee Chairman Silas Wright of New York introduced Van Buren's economic program.<sup>87</sup> Johnson was, however, willing to use on behalf of his friends and cronies the limited influence he still commanded. When Lewis Tappan asked the vice president to present an abolition petition to the Senate, Johnson, who owned several slaves, averred that "considerations of a moral and political, as well as of a constitutional nature" prevented him from presenting "petitions of a character evidently hostile to the union, and destructive of the principles on which it is founded."<sup>88</sup> "Constitutional considerations" did not, however, prevent him from lobbying Congress on behalf of Indian subagent Samuel Milroy when Milroy, an Indiana Democrat who performed "special favors" for the vice president, sought the more lucrative position of Indian agent.<sup>89</sup>

Johnson was a competent presiding officer,<sup>90</sup> although not an accomplished parliamentarian. In keeping with Senate practice during the 1830s, he appointed senators to standing and select committees, a duty that President pro tempore William R. King performed when he was absent.<sup>91</sup>

Although he had hoped for "equanimity" in the Senate, Johnson was called upon to cast his tie-breaking vote fourteen times during his single term in office, more frequently than any previous vice president except John Adams and John C. Calhoun.<sup>92</sup> Three of his predecessors—Adams, George Clinton, and Daniel D. Tompkins—had addressed the Senate on occasion to explain their tie-breaking votes, but Johnson declined to do so.<sup>93</sup> In at least one instance, however, he did explain a vote to readers of the *Kentucky Gazette*. Justifying his support for a bill granting relief to the daughter of a veteran, Johnson reminded his former constituents that he had always "used my humble abilities in favor of those laws which have extended compensation to the officers and soldiers who have bravely fought, and freely bled, in the ir country's cause, and to widows and orphans of

those who perished.<sup>94</sup> In other instances, however, Johnson voted with Democratic senators in support of administration policy.<sup>95</sup>

Notwithstanding his steady, if lackluster, service in the Senate, Johnson from the outset represented a liability to Van Buren. Still heavily in debt when he assumed office, he hoped to recoup his fortunes through the Choctaw Academy, a school he established at Blue Spring Farm during the 1820s that became the focus of the Jackson administration's efforts to "socialize" and "civilize" the Native American population. He received federal funds for each student from tribal annuities and the "Civilization Fund" established by Congress during the Monroe administration,<sup>96</sup> but revenues from the school failed to satisfy his mounting obligations. By the spring of 1839, Amos Kendall reported to Van Buren on the vice president's latest venture: a hotel and tavern at White Sulphur Spring, Kentucky. He enclosed a letter from a friend who had visited "Col. Johnson's Watering establishment" and found the vice president "happy in the inglorious pursuit of tavern keeping—even giving his personal superintendence to the chicken and egg purchasing and water-melon selling department."<sup>97</sup> Kendall wrote with consternation that Johnson's companion, "a young Delilah of about the complexion of Shakespears swarthy Othello," was "said to be his third wife; his second, which he sold for her infidelity, having been the sister of the present *lady*."<sup>98</sup> Although one of the most fashionable in Kentucky,<sup>99</sup> Johnson's resort also formed a source of considerable embarrassment for the administration.

As debts, disappointments, and the chronic pain he had suffered since 1813 took their toll, Johnson's once-pleasing appearance became dishevelled, and the plain republican manners that had in earlier days so charmed Margaret Bayard Smith now struck observers as vulgar and crude,<sup>100</sup> especially compared to the impeccably clad and consummately tactful Van Buren. Henry Stanton observed Johnson presiding over the Senate in 1838 and pronounced him "shabbily dressed, and to the last degree clumsy," a striking contrast with his "urbane, elegant predecessor."<sup>101</sup> English author Harriett Martineau sat opposite the vice president at a dinner party, and predicted that "if he should become President, he will be as strange-looking a potentate as ever ruled. His countenance is wild, though with much cleverness in it; his hair wanders all abroad, and he wears no cravat. But there is no telling how he might look if he dressed like other people."<sup>102</sup> The trademark scarlet vest that Johnson affected while vice president (after he and stagecoach line operator James Reeside agreed to don vests to match Reeside's red coaches)<sup>103</sup> only accentuated his unkempt appearance and eccentric habits.

Van Buren and Johnson took office just as weakened demand for American products abroad and credit restrictions imposed by British banks and trading houses combined to produce a massive contraction in the economy. Critics focused their wrath on Jackson's fiscal policies, which were in part responsible for the panic of 1837, but Van Buren would not abandon his predecessor's "hard money" stance. He refused mounting demands to rescind the 1836 Specie Circular, Jackson's directive to end speculation and inflation by requiring purchasers of public land to pay in specie. During the September 1837

special session of Congress that Van Buren called to address the crisis, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Silas Wright of New York introduced the new administration's remedy, a proposal to end government reliance on the banking system. Congress finally approved Van Buren's independent treasury plan in the summer of 1840, but not before bitter debate and the worsening economy galvanized the Whig opposition.<sup>104</sup> Adding to Van Buren's considerable difficulties, and contributing to Democratic losses in the 1837 and 1838 local elections, were a border dispute with Canada, armed resistance to removal by the Seminole tribe in Florida, heightened sectional antagonism over slavery in Congress, and flagrant misconduct on the part of several administration appointees.<sup>105</sup>

## 1840 Campaign

Although Van Buren's renomination was never in doubt, Democratic strategists began to question the wisdom of keeping Johnson on the ticket in 1840. They feared, as Harriett Martineau had predicted, that "the slavery question . . . may again be to the disadvantage of the Colonel."<sup>106</sup> Even Jackson finally conceded that Johnson was a liability and insisted on former House Speaker James K. Polk of Tennessee as Van Buren's new running mate.<sup>107</sup> "I like Col. Johnson but I like my country more," he wrote Francis P. Blair shortly before the Democratic convention, "and I allway go for my Country first, and then for my friend."<sup>108</sup>

In spite of the entreaties of several southern Democrats, anonymous hints in the Democratic press that Johnson would not stand for reelection, and his own half-hearted offer to withdraw from the contest if asked to do so, he remained a candidate.<sup>109</sup> With William Henry Harrison, Johnson's former commander and comrade-in-arms and the "Hero of Tippecanoe," emerging as a likely Whig presidential contender, Van Buren was reluctant to drop the Democrats' own hero from the ticket. He was also well aware of "Old Dick's" following among "hard-money" Democrats in the Northeast.<sup>110</sup> Party leaders, unwilling to risk an open confrontation, approved Van Buren's compromise proposal that the 1840 convention would leave the selection of the vice-presidential candidate to the state party organizations, but they ultimately backed Johnson after two crucial states—New York and Pennsylvania—rallied behind him and other prospective candidates declined to run.<sup>111</sup>

Eastern Whigs' fear that Clay could not win the presidency, as well as Harrison's surprising showing in the 1836 contest, assured Harrison the 1840 Whig nomination. To balance his strength in the North and West, Whigs chose former Virginia Senator John Tyler as their vice-presidential candidate. Whigs portrayed Harrison as a champion of the people and a welcome corrective to the New York dandy whose economic policies had failed to relieve widespread suffering among ordinary folk.<sup>112</sup>

Van Buren remained aloof from the popular hoopla that distinguished the 1840 campaign from earlier contests, despite Johnson's warning that the campaign "would be *hard run*, and that he ought to go out among the voters as I intended doing."<sup>113</sup> The vice president

plunged headlong into the fray, opening his shirt to display battle scars before an Ohio audience, revisiting the Battle of the Thames in progressively more lurid detail with each retelling, and delivering "rambling" diatribes on several occasions. He always also took care to remind western audiences that Van Buren had "raised himself from a poor Dutch orphan boy to the highest station in the world." During an Ohio campaign tour with Governor Wilson Shannon and Senator William Allen, the trio's inflammatory charges against Harrison touched off a riot in Cleveland.<sup>114</sup> Still, as Robert Gray Gunderson concluded in his study of the "log-cabin campaign," "Old Rumpsey Dumpsey conducted a more effective campaign than any other Democrat in 1840."<sup>115</sup>

Unprecedented public interest aroused by the campaign, coupled with broadened suffrage requirements in several states, ensured a record voter turnout. Harrison defeated Van Buren with 52.9 percent of the popular vote and 234 electoral votes to Van Buren's 60, and Whigs won majorities for the first time in both the House and the Senate.<sup>116</sup> Johnson's showing was particularly embarrassing: Kentucky voters again backed the opposing ticket, but this time the Whigs carried the vice president's own district as well.<sup>117</sup> One of the 23 Virginia electors, and all of South Carolina's 11 electors, voted for Van Buren but defected to James K. Polk and Littleton W. Tazewell of Virginia, respectively, in the vice-presidential contest.<sup>118</sup>

Johnson had the painful duty of presiding over the joint session of Congress that met in the House chamber on February 10, 1841, to count the electoral votes. After proclaiming Harrison's election, he announced that John Tyler "was duly elected Vice President of the United States for four years, commencing with the 4th day of March, 1841." He then appointed Whig Senator William C. Preston of South Carolina to a joint committee to notify Tyler of his election,<sup>119</sup> and nine days later, he reported Tyler's acknowledgement of the message.<sup>120</sup>

## **Farewell**

Johnson took his leave of the Senate on March 2, 1841, the day before the Twenty-sixth Congress adjourned, to allow the Senate "an opportunity of selecting a presiding officer, for the convenience of organization" when the next Congress convened two days later. Recalling his association with "a very great majority of the members of the Senate . . . for many years, in the councils of our common country," he reflected that his "personal relations" with them had "ever been kind and tender," notwithstanding "diversity of opinion . . . on minor points, or . . . points of greater magnitude." The "generous, the magnanimous course" of individual senators, and particularly "their indulgence" of a presiding officer "who never studied the rules of order technically," had rendered his service in the Senate "pleasant and agreeable" despite "momentary agitation and excitement in debate." As the Senate's presiding officer, he had tried to "act with perfect

impartiality" and to treat "each Senator as the representative of a sovereign and independent State, and as entitled to equal consideration of me."

Johnson claimed that he retired "without the least dissatisfaction," obedient to "the great radical and fundamental principle of submission to the voice of the people, when constitutionally expressed." But his parting comments betrayed a sense of regret:

[A]nd when I am far distant from you—as time must separate us all even here, not to speak of hereafter—as long as I shall have my recollection to remember the associations which I have had with this body, I shall always be animated by the sentiment of kindness and friendship with which I take my final leave of the Senate.<sup>121</sup>

## Later Years

Johnson's 1840 defeat effectively ended his political career. He was a candidate for the Senate in 1842 but lost to John J. Crittenden. Early efforts by Kentucky Democrats to secure the 1844 Democratic presidential nomination for "Colonel Dick," and his own tours of the northern states and the Mississippi Valley toward that end, met with polite but condescending resistance from Democrats who shared William L. Marcy's view that "he is not now even what he formally was. It may be there was never so much of him as many of us were led to suppose."<sup>122</sup> Jackson was characteristically blunt. Johnson, he warned Van Buren, would be "dead weight" in the forthcoming election.<sup>123</sup> An observer noted the old hero's mounting frustration: "Colonel Dick Johnson . . . seems to understand very well Mr. V Buren is stacking the cards . . . Dick . . . will be *bamboozled* as sure as a gun. . . . You never saw a more restless dissatisfied man in your life, than Dick is."<sup>124</sup> By 1843, Johnson partisans conceded that he had no chance of winning the presidential nomination, and a Kentucky Democrat assured Van Buren that "the friends of Col. Johnson do not ask anything more than a vote on the first ballot in his favor."<sup>125</sup> Several Democrats speculated that Johnson's real objective was the vice-presidential nomination, although he never formally declared himself a candidate.<sup>126</sup> But by early 1844 he realized that "his party doesn't even intend to place him upon the Vice Presidents ticket."<sup>127</sup>

Johnson made a final attempt to return to the Senate in 1848, but the Kentucky legislature sent his old colleague and adversary, Henry Clay, to Washington. Scott County voters elected Johnson to the state legislature two years later, but he was gravely ill when he took his seat on November 8, 1850. Shortly after the *Louisville Daily Journal* reported that "it is painful to see him on the floor attempting to discharge the duties of a member," Johnson suffered a stroke. He died on November 19, 1850, and, by resolution of the Kentucky legislature, was buried at the Frankfort cemetery. State Senator Beriah Magoffin eulogized the frontier hero as Johnson would have wished to be remembered: "He was the poor man's friend. . . . Void of ostentation, simple in his taste, his manners, and his dress—brave, magnanimous, patriotic and generous to a fault, in his earliest years he was the beau ideal of the soul and the chivalry of Kentucky."<sup>128</sup>

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Notes:

1. John Spencer Bassett, ed., *Correspondence of Andrew Jackson* (Washington, DC, 1931), 5:331.
2. The first full-length account of Richard Mentor Johnson's career was William Emmons' highly laudatory campaign biography, *Authentic Biography of Colonel Richard M. Johnson* (New York, 1833). Ignatius Loyola Robertson's *Sketches of Public Characters--Drawn from the Living and the Dead* (New York, 1830), includes a brief and highly complimentary sketch of Johnson's career. Leland Winfield Meyer, *Life and Times of Colonel Richard M. Johnson* (New York, 1967, reprint of 1932 edition), pp. 176, 298, 342, 104, 405, 489. Meyer's biography, the only modern account of Johnson's life and career, accepts at face value many of the assumptions and assessments that color the earlier works
3. *Louisville Journal*, October 14, 1840, quoted in Meyer, p. 290.
4. U.S., Congress, *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774-1989*, S. Doc. 100-34, 100th Cong., 2d sess., 1989, p. 1270.
5. Meyer, pp. 13-48, 325-27.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 290-91.
7. Robert V. Remini, *Henry Clay: Statesman for the Union* (New York, 1991), p. 18.
8. See, for example, Johnson's December 4, 1816, speech on the Compensation Law, U.S., Congress, House, *Annals of Congress*, 14th Cong., 2d sess., pp. 235-43.
9. Meyer, p. 292.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 290-342 and *passim*.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 312-14 and Appendix, "Mr. James Y. Kelly's Reminiscences about 'Dick Johnson' Taken Down as He Spoke, April 2, 1929, to Leland W. Meyer," pp. 477-78.
12. Mrs. Samuel Harrison Smith (Margaret Bayard Smith), *The First Forty Years of Washington Society* (New York, 1906), quoted in Meyer, pp. 293, 304-5.
13. Charles M. Wiltse, *John C. Calhoun*, vol. 2, *Nullifier, 1829-1839* (New York, 1968; reprint of 1948 ed.), p. 37.
14. Meyer, pp. 49-58.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 58; *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, p. 1270.
16. R. M. Johnson to Andrew Stevenson et al., June 9, 1835, in James A. Padgett, ed., "The Letters of Colonel Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky," *Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society* 40 (January 1942): 83-86.
17. Richard M. Johnson to Thomas Jefferson, February 27, 1808, in James A. Padgett, ed., "The Letters of Colonel Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky," *Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society* 38 (July 1940): 190-91.
18. Richard M. Johnson to Thomas Jefferson, January 30, 1813, in *ibid.*, p. 197.
19. Richard M. Johnson to Thomas Jefferson, February 9, 1813 [1814?], in *ibid.*, p. 198.
20. Meyer, pp. 49-58.
21. Richard Mentor Johnson to Dawson et al., February 6, 1836, printed in *Kentucky Gazette*, April 2, 1836, and reprinted in Meyer, p. 142.
22. Meyer, pp. 49-84.
23. Marshall Smelser, *The Democratic Republic, 1801-1815* (New York, 1968), pp. 208-9; John Niven, *John C. Calhoun and the Price of Union* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1988), p. 36; Harry W. Fritz, "The War Hawks of 1812," *Capitol Studies* 5 (Spring 1977): 28.
24. Smelser, p. 216.
25. Richard Mentor Johnson to John Armstrong, received February 23, 1813, quoted in Meyer, pp. 100-101.
26. Smelser, pp. 210, 255-56; Meyer, pp. 101-35.
27. Meyer, pp. 136-88.
28. U.S., congress, House, *Annals of Congress*, 14th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 1127-34, Appendix, p. 1801; 14th Cong., 2d sess., pp. 235-43, Appendix, p. 1278; Charles M. Wiltse, *John C. Calhoun*, vol. 1, *Nationalist, 1782-1828* (New York, 1968; reprint of 1944 edition), pp. 125-31; U.S., Congress, Senate, *The Senate*,



- 1789-1989: *Addresses on the History of the United States Senate*, by Robert C. Byrd, S. Doc. 100-20, vol. 2, 1991, pp. 350-51; Meyer, pp. 168, 172, 326-27.
29. Meyer, pp. 162-67.
30. *Annals of Congress*, 14th Cong., 2d sess., p. 1062.
31. Harry Ammon, *James Monroe: The Quest for National Identity* (Charlottesville, VA, 1990), pp. 358-59.
32. *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, p. 1270.
33. John Niven, *John C. Calhoun and the Price of Union* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1988), pp. 59-80; Ammon, pp. 468-71; Meyer, pp. 189-206; Merrill D. Peterson, *The Great Triumvirate: Webster, Clay, and Calhoun* (New York, 1987), pp. 88-95; Chase C. Mooney, *William H. Crawford, 1772-1834* (Lexington, KY, 1974), pp. 151-57.
34. John C. Calhoun to James Monroe, July 14, 1820, quoted in Meyer, p. 195.
35. Meyer, pp. 202-5.
36. James Monroe to John Calhoun, July 5, 1819, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 202.
37. *Kentucky Gazette*, October 8, 1819, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 203.
38. Meyer, pp. 183-88.
39. *ibid.*, pp. 205-6; Robert V. Remini, *Henry Clay: Statesman for the Union* (New York, 1991), pp. 207-8.
40. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Jackson* (Boston, 1945), pp. 134-36.
41. Speech of Col. Richard M. Johnson to the Senate, January 14, 1823, quoted in Meyer, pp. 283-84.
42. Schlesinger, pp. 134-36; Meyer, pp. 235, 282-89; *Annals of Congress*, 17th Cong., 2d sess., pp. 23-27.
43. Thomas Hart Benton, *Thirty Years' View; or, A History of the Working of the American Government for Thirty Years, From 1820 to 1851* (New York, 1871; reprint of 1854 ed.), 1:291-92.
44. Meyer, pp. 256-63, 293-94.
45. *Ibid.*, *passim*; Donald R. Cole, *Martin Van Buren and the American Political System* (Princeton, NJ, 1984), p. 125.
46. Richard M. Johnson to Major General Andrew Jackson, November 21, 1814, in James A. Padgett, ed., "The Letters of Colonel Richard M. Johnson," *Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society* 38 (October 1940): 326-27.
47. Remini, *Henry Clay*, pp. 161-66.
48. Meyer, p. 220.
49. *Ibid.*, pp. 221-22.
50. Remini, *Henry Clay*, p. 268.
51. Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Freedom, 1822-1832* (New York, 1981), p. 103; U.S., Congress, Senate, *Journal*, Appendix, 19th Cong., special session of March 4, 1825; U.S., Congress, Senate, *Executive Journal*, 19th Cong., special session, p. 441.
52. *Niles' Weekly Register* April 28, 1827, quoted in Meyer, pp. 220-21.
53. Meyer, pp. 318-19.
54. *Ibid.*, pp. 317-22.
55. *Ibid.*, pp. 251-55.
56. Remini, *Henry Clay*, pp. 373, 716; Meyer, p. 457.
57. Meyer, p. 256.
58. *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, p. 1270.
59. Meyer, pp. 266-71; Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Democracy, 1833-1845* (New York, 1984), pp. 203-16, 305-6, 423; Richard M. Johnson to Andrew Jackson, February 13, 1831, in James A. Padgett, ed., "The Letters of Colonel Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky," *Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society* 40 (January 1942): 69.
60. Meyer, pp. 273-76; U.S., Congress, House, *Journal*, 21st Cong., 1st sess., pp. 763-64; Remini, *Jackson and the Course of American Freedom*, pp. 252-56.
61. Remini, *Jackson and the Course of American Freedom*, p. 304; Meyer, pp. 393-400.
62. Walter Hugins, *Jacksonian Democracy and the Working Class: A Study of the New York Workingmen's Movement* (Stanford, CA, 1960), pp. 63-64, 97.
63. John Norvell to John McLean, January 23, 1832, and Worden Pope to John McLean, quoted in Meyer, p. 398.

64. Schlesinger, p. 142.
65. Robert V. Remini, "Election of 1832," in *History of American Presidential Elections, 1789-1968*, ed. Arthur M. Schlesinger and Fred L. Israel, (New York, 1971), 1:507-8; John Niven, *Martin Van Buren and the Romantic Era of American Politics* (New York, 1983), p. 300.
66. Meyer, pp. 315-16, 398-402, 411.
67. Major L. Wilson, *The Presidency of Martin Van Buren* (Lawrence, KS, 1984), pp. 15-16; Niven *Martin Van Buren* pp. 374-76; John Arthur Garraty, *Silas Wright* (New York, 1970; reprint of 1949 edition), p. 130; Remini, *Jackson and the Course of American Democracy*, p. 256; Meyer, pp. 393-429.
68. Remini, *Jackson and the Course of American Democracy*, pp. 252-53.
69. *Ibid.*, pp. 182-83, 252-55, Niven, *Martin Van Buren*, p. 351, 372-76; Cole, p. 262; Wilson, p. 16.
70. Remini, *Jackson and the Course of American Democracy*, pp. 256; Niven, *Martin Van Buren*, pp. 374-96; Wilson, p. 16; John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Autobiography of Martin Van Buren* (Washington, DC, 1920), 2:754, quoted in Meyer, pp. 337-38.
71. Niven, *Martin Van Buren*, p. 396; Meyer, p. 419.
72. Richard M. Johnson to Andrew Stevenson, et al., June 9, 1835, in James A. Padgett, ed., "Letters of Colonel Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky," *Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society* 40 (January 1942): 83-86.
73. Albert Balch to Andrew Jackson, April 4, 1835, quoted in Meyer, p. 413.
74. C.S. Morgan to Martin Van Buren, January 9, 1936, quoted in Robert Bolt, "Vice President Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky: Hero of the Thames--Or the Great Amalgamator?" *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 75 (July 1977): 201.
75. John Catron to Andrew Jackson, March 21, 1835, in Bassett, *Correspondence of Jackson*, 5:330-32.
76. Joel Silbey, "Election of 1836," in Schlesinger and Israel, eds., 1:584-86.
77. Silbey, pp. 586-91; Harry L. Watson, *Liberty and Power: The Politics of Jacksonian America* (New York, 1990), p. 204.
78. *United States Telegraph*, June 3, 1835, quoted in Bolt, pp. 198-99.
79. Niven, *Martin Van Buren*, pp. 401-2; Silbey, pp. 591-96; *Senate Journal*, 24th Cong., 2d sess., pp. 227-28.
80. *Senate Journal*, 24th Cong., 2d sess., pp. 227-28; Niven, *Martin Van Buren*, pp. 401-2.
81. *Senate Journal* 24th Cong., 2d sess., pp. 229-31. South Carolina Senators John C. Calhoun and William C. Preston and Tennessee Senator Hugh Lawson White attended but did not vote. Wiltse, 2:303.
82. *Senate Journal*, 24th cong., 2d sess., p. 231.
83. *Ibid.*, pp. 238-39.
84. *Ibid.*, Appendix, special session of March 4, 1837, pp. 355-65.
85. Benton, 1:735; Cole, pp. 289-90; Remini, *Jackson and the Course of American Democracy*, pp. 420-23; Stephen W. Stathis and Ronald C. Moe, "America's Other Inauguration," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 10 (Fall 1980): 561; Watson, p. 205.
86. See, for example, James C. Curtis, *The Fox at Bay: Martin Van Buren and the Presidency, 1837-1841* (Lexington, KY, 1970); Cole; Niven, *Martin Van Buren*; Wilson.
87. Niven, *Martin Van Buren*, pp. 423-24; Cole, pp. 307-11, 318.
88. Meyer, p. 431.
89. Ronald M. Satz, *American Indian Policy in the Jacksonian Era* (Lincoln, NE, 1975), p. 183.
90. Meyer, p. 431.
91. Byrd, 2:219; *Senate Journal*, 25th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 27-28; 2d sess., pp. 25, 32-33; 3d sess, p. 5; 26th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 5, 10-11, 46.
92. Henry Barrett Learned, "Casting Votes of the Vice-Presidents, 1789-1915," *American Historical Review* 20 (April 1915): 571; Byrd, *The Senate, 1789-1989*, vol. 4, *Historical Statistics, 1789-1992*, p. 642.
93. *Ibid.*, p. 574.
94. *Kentucky Gazette*, March 14, 1839, quoted in Meyer, pp. 431-32.
95. *Senate Journal*, 25th Cong., 2d sess., pp. 181-82; 26th Cong., 2d sess., pp. 274-76; Francis Jennings, ed., *The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy: An Interdisciplinary Guide to the Treaties of the Six Nations and Their Leagues* (New York, 1985), p. 206.
96. Satz, pp. 246-51; Meyer, pp. 337-39.

97. Letter to Amos Kendall, August 12, 1839, enclosed in Kendall's letter of August 22, 1839, to Van Buren, quoted in Meyer, p. 341.
98. Kendall to Van Buren, August 22, 1839, quoted in Meyer, p. 341.
99. Meyer, pp. 339-40.
100. Robert Gray Gunderson, *The Log-Cabin Campaign* (Lexington, KY, 1957), p. 80.
101. Henry B. Stanton, *Random Recollections* (New York, 1887), p. 61.
102. Harriett Martineau, "Life at the Capital," in *America Through British Eyes*, ed. Allan Nevins (New York, 1948; revised from 1923 edition), p. 150.
103. Joseph E. Morse and R. Duff Green, eds., *Thomas B. Searight's The Old Pike: An Illustrated Narrative of the National Road* (Orange, Va, 1971), pp. 105-6.
104. Glyndon Van Deusen, *The Jacksonian Era, 1828-1848* (New York, 1959), pp. 116-28; Watson, pp. 206-209; Cole, pp. 307-41, 347-60.
105. Niven, *Martin Van Buren*, pp. 425-52; Watson, p. 410; Van Deusen, pp. 132-40; Cole, pp. 318-42.
106. Harriett Martineau, "Life at the Capital," p. 150.
107. Remini, *Jackson and the Course of American Democracy*, pp. 463-64.
108. Andrew Jackson to Francis P. Blair, February 15, 1840, quoted in Remini, *Jackson and the Course of American Democracy*, p. 463.
109. Gunderson, p. 82; Meyer, pp. 435-36; Niven, *Martin Van Buren*, p. 463.
110. Niven, *Martin Van Buren*, p. 463; Gunderson, pp. 81-82; Gunderson, pp. 81-82; Cole, p. 358.
111. Niven, *Martin Van Buren*, p. 463; Gunderson, p. 83.
112. Gunderson, pp. 41-75; Peterson, pp. 248, 281-96; Remini, *Henry Clay*, pp. 545-67.
113. Washington *National Intelligencer*, September 24, 1840, quoting *Wheeling Gazette*, n.d., cited in Gunderson, p. 163; Wilson, p. 206.
114. Meyer, p. 433; Gunderson, pp. 241-46.
115. Gunderson, p. 246.
116. Remini, *Henry Clay*, pp. 566-67; Gunderson, pp. 253-54.
117. Gunderson, p. 255.
118. *Senate Journal*, 26th Cong., 2d sess., pp. 171-72.
119. *Ibid.*, pp. 172-73.
120. *Ibid.*, pp. 191-92.
121. *Ibid.*, pp. 231-32.
122. Meyer, pp. 452-59.
123. Andrew Jackson to Martin Van Buren, September 22, 1843, quoted in Meyer, p. 460.
124. R.P. Letcher to John J. Crittenden, June 2, 1842, quoted in Meyer, p. 454.
125. General McCalla to Martin Van Buren, January 11, 1843, quoted in Meyer, p. 457.
126. Meyer, pp. 461-62.
127. R.P. Letcher to John J. Crittenden, January 6, 1844, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 461.
128. Meyer, pp. 473-74.