



Presidential PROFILES

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

President No. 16 | **Born:** 1809 **Died:** 1865 | **Served:** 1861 to 1865

Just two years into his presidency, Abraham Lincoln in 1863 issued the influential Emancipation Proclamation that declared freedom for slaves within the Confederacy. It was a bold move that defined Lincoln’s legacy — both as a person and a president.

For Lincoln to be in such a position of power was surprising in itself, especially considering his humble upbringing.

The son of a Kentucky frontiersman, Lincoln’s childhood and teenage years were full of hard work and struggles.

From his writings published by the White House Historical Association, Lincoln wrote:

“My mother, who died in my 10th year, was of a family of the name of Hanks. ... My father ... removed from Kentucky to ... Indiana, in my eighth year. ... It was a wild region, with many bears and other wild animals still in the woods. There I grew up.”

BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

Lincoln made money in his early years by working on a farm and splitting rails for fences. He progressed into a captain role in the Black Hawk War and spent eight years in the Illinois legislature.

He married Mary Todd and fathered four boys, only one of whom lived to maturity. In 1858 Lincoln lost to Stephen A. Douglas for Senator but in debating with him gained a national reputation that catapulted him into the Republican nomination for President in 1860.

MAJOR POLICY

Upon his presidential victo-



Abraham Lincoln

ry, Lincoln made clear his policy toward secession, calling it illegal and letting the South know that he was willing to use force to defend federal law.

As president, he built the Republican party into a strong national organization while rallying most northern

Democrats to the Union cause. On Jan. 1, 1863, he issued the Emancipation Proclamation.

Lincoln achieved a great deal during his presidency, winning re-election in 1864. But it was his ability to transcend major challenges while still resonating with the

American people that set him apart.

The message of his second inaugural address is now inscribed on one wall of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D. C. It reads: “With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives

us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation’s wounds.”

Lincoln was assassinated at Ford’s Theatre in Washington by John Wilkes Booth on Good Friday, April 14, 1865 — a tragic end for a tremendously respected president.

WILLIAM MCKINLEY

President No. 25 | **Born:** 1843 **Died:** 1901 | **Served:** 1897 to 1901

Imagine a presidential campaign won by a candidate utilizing a low-key approach comprised mostly of speeches from his own front porch. That's exactly how William McKinley won the 1896 election against William Jennings Bryan.

Bryan delivered more than 600 speeches and traveled across the United States. McKinley spoke to more than 700,000 supporters in front of his house in Canton, Ohio. These “front-porch campaign” speeches started as meetings between McKinley and national delegations and morphed into great publicity for the candidate.

William McKinley has been recognized as one of the most charismatic — and accomplished — presidents in United States history. He is also remembered for his untimely assassination that cut his presidency short.

Among his chief wins as president, McKinley led the country to victory in the Spanish-American War and raised protective tariffs to promote American industry.

Born in Niles, Ohio, in 1843, McKinley enlisted as a private in the Union Army when the Civil War broke out. After the war, he studied law, opened an office in Ohio and married Ida Saxton.

BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

McKinley leveraged his military career and strong leadership qualities to win a seat in Congress at age 34. He was rapidly appointed to the Ways and Means Committee,

earning a reputation for advocating for the public rather than private interests.

During his 14 years in the House, he became the Republican subject matter expert on tariffs. He was later elected governor of Ohio, serving two successful terms.

MAJOR POLICY

For all his expertise on tariffs and economics, McKinley's administration became focused on foreign policy.

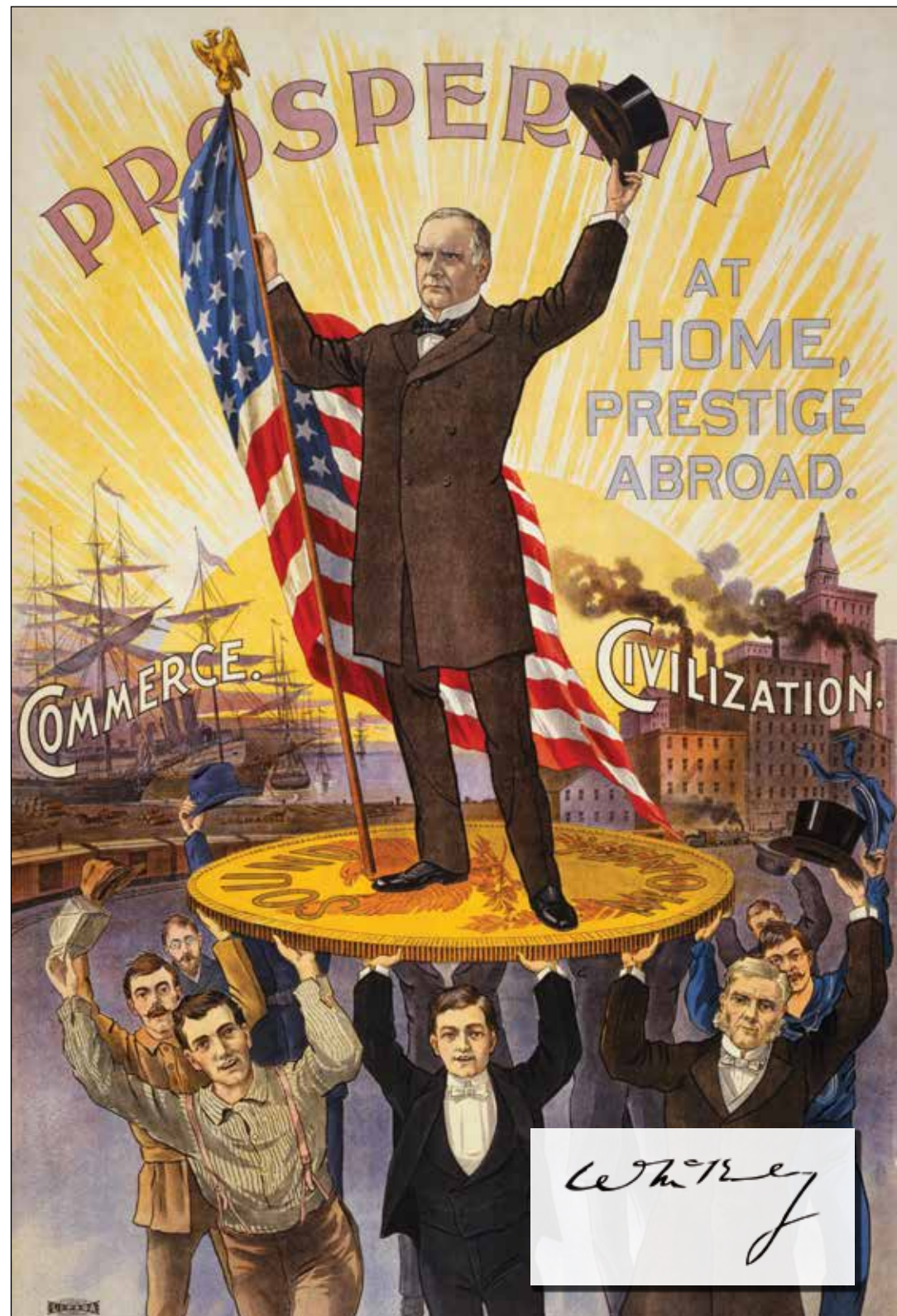
Some examples of his most impactful work:

- Declaration of neutral intervention in Cuba in April 1898. According to WhiteHouse.gov, Congress voted three resolutions tantamount to a declaration of war for the liberation and independence of Cuba.

- The 100-day war, during which the U.S. destroyed the Spanish fleet outside Santiago harbor in Cuba, captured Manila in the Philippines and occupied Puerto Rico.

- Spearheaded strategic planning and coordination of annexation of Philippines, Guam and Puerto Rico.

McKinley's second term ended tragically in September 1901 when he was shot twice by a deranged anarchist. He died eight days later.



WOODROW WILSON

President No. 28 | **Born:** 1856 **Died:** 1924 | **Served:** 1913 to 1921

The son of a Presbyterian minister, Woodrow Wilson was born in Virginia in 1856. He would later ascend into a leader of the Progressive Movement, following the mantra, “Make the world safe for democracy,” as he directed the American entrance into World War I.

Wilson was a highly educated president, graduating from Princeton (then the College of New Jersey) and the University of Virginia Law School.

He then earned his doctorate at Johns Hopkins University and entered a career in academia before marrying Ellen Louise Axson in 1885.

BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

Wilson was a professor of political science and became president of Princeton in 1902. A group of conservative Democrats noticed Wilson and persuaded him to run for Governor of New Jersey in 1910.

He endorsed and carried out a progressive platform as governor — offering some foreshadowing on his presidential policies.

MAJOR POLICY

Near the middle of Wilson’s presidency, he made the biggest decision of his tenure. On April 2, 1917, he asked Congress for a declaration of war on Germany.

His other major efforts included:

- Guiding three major pieces

of legislation through Congress: the Underwood Act (a lower tariff), the Federal Reserve Act and the establishment of the Federal Trade Commission to prohibit unfair business practices;

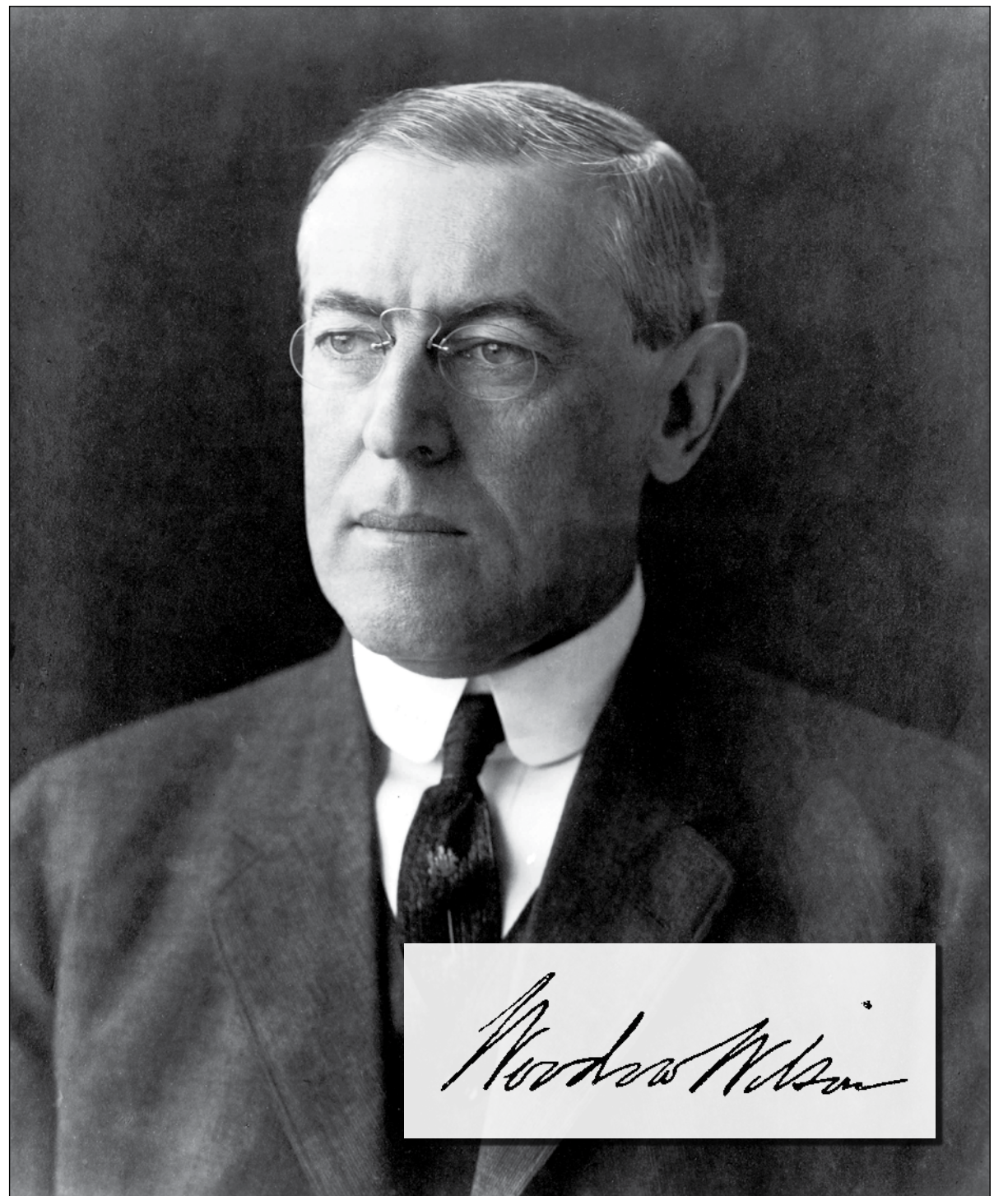
- Law prohibiting child labor; and
- Law limiting railroad workers to an eight-hour day.

Along with his major policies, Wilson also suffered a dramatic defeat in 1918. After the Germans signed the Armistice, Wilson presented to the Senate the Versailles Treaty, containing the Covenant of the League of Nations.

But the treaty failed by seven votes in the Senate, dealing Wilson a major blow in his efforts to mobilize Americans for peace and unity.

The treaty was so important to Wilson that he nearly died for it, organizing a national tour to capture public sentiment for it, even against the orders of his doctors. He became so overcome with exhaustion that he suffered a stroke and nearly died.

Wilson would recover but eventually passed away in 1924.



DWIGHT EISENHOWER

President No. 34 | **Born:** 1890 **Died:** 1969 | **Served:** 1953 to 1961

One of the most reputable commanding generals of the victorious forces in Europe during World War II, Dwight D. Eisenhower utilized his expertise to garner major global achievements and partnerships during his presidential tenure from 1953 to 1961.

Raised in Abilene, Kan., Eisenhower was the third of seven sons and thrived as a student-athlete in high school. He received an appointment to West Point and was stationed in Texas as a second lieutenant when he met his future wife, Mamie Geneva Doud.

BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

In his early Army career, Eisenhower served under some of the most prominent generals of the time, including John J. Pershing, Douglas MacArthur and Walter Krueger. After Pearl Harbor, General George C. Marshall commissioned Eisenhower to Washington for a war plans assignment.

He commanded the Allied Forces, landing in North Africa in November 1942, and served as Supreme Commander of the troops invading France on D-Day, 1944.

After the war, Eisenhower transitioned into the academic sector, being named president of Columbia University.

MAJOR POLICY

Republicans persuaded Eisenhower to run for President in 1952. He was up to the challenge, riding the

slogan “I like Ike” to a sweeping victory. Near the end of his first term, Eisenhower suddenly suffered a heart attack in Denver. He was cleared after seven weeks in the hospital and later that year was elected for his second term.

Here are a few of his most impressive presidential achievements as he pursued the moderate policies of “Modern Republicanism:”

- Obtained a truce in Korea through tactful, strategic negotiations.

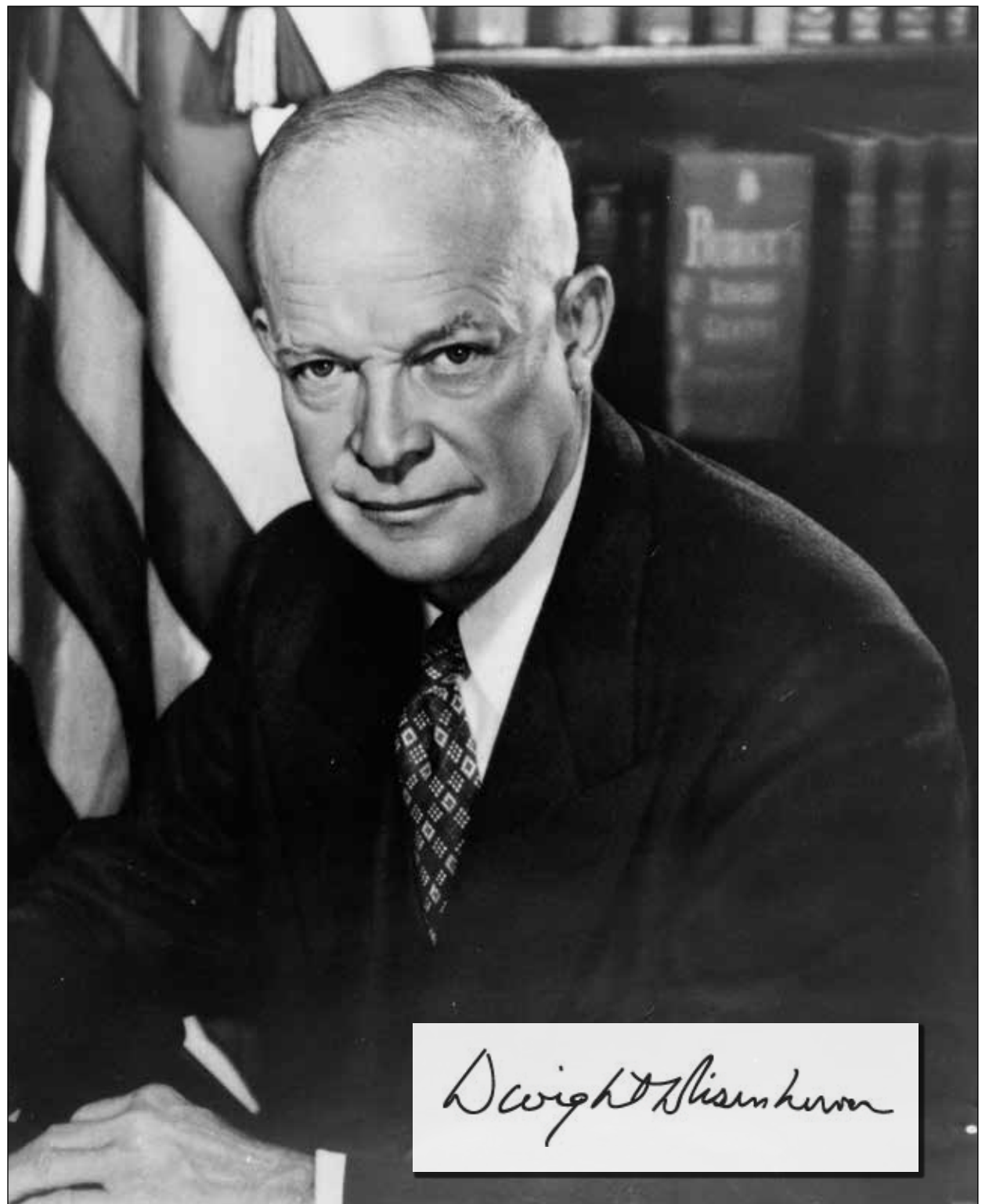
- Successfully eased tensions of the Cold War.

- Met with leaders of the British, French and Russian governments in Geneva in July 1955, proposing that the U.S. and Russia exchange blueprints of each other’s military establishments and “provide within our countries facilities for aerial photography to the other country.”

- Sent troops into Little Rock, Ark., to assure compliance with the orders of a Federal court upon the desegregation of schools.

- Ordered the complete desegregation of the Armed Forces.

Eisenhower died after a long illness, on March 28, 1969.



ULYSSES GRANT

President No. 18 | **Born:** 1822 **Died:** 1885 | **Served:** 1869 to 1877

Ulysses S. Grant is the classic case of war hero turned president. In 1865, he led the Union armies to victory over the Confederacy in the Civil War as commanding general. Just a few years later, he was leading American policy as the commander-in-chief.

Whether in the military or the White House, Grant made it his mission to support the implementation of anti-slavery action and policy at every level.

Born in 1822, Grant was the son of an Ohio tanner and attended West Point — famously against his will. In the Mexican War he fought under Gen. Zachary Taylor. His diverse training and military experience enabled him to build relationships with some of the most prominent generals of his time.

BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

At the onset of the Civil War, Grant worked in his father's leather store in Galena, Ill. He transformed an underperforming volunteer regiment and was promoted to the rank of brigadier general of volunteers.

Upon taking over Fort Henry and attacking Fort Donelson in February 1862, Grant was promoted by President Abraham Lincoln to major general.

Other key wins during the war included Vicksburg, a key city on the Mississippi, and the breaking of the Confederate hold on Chattanooga.

On April 9, 1865, at

Appomattox Court House, the Confederacy surrendered — a key win for Grant and his war strategies.

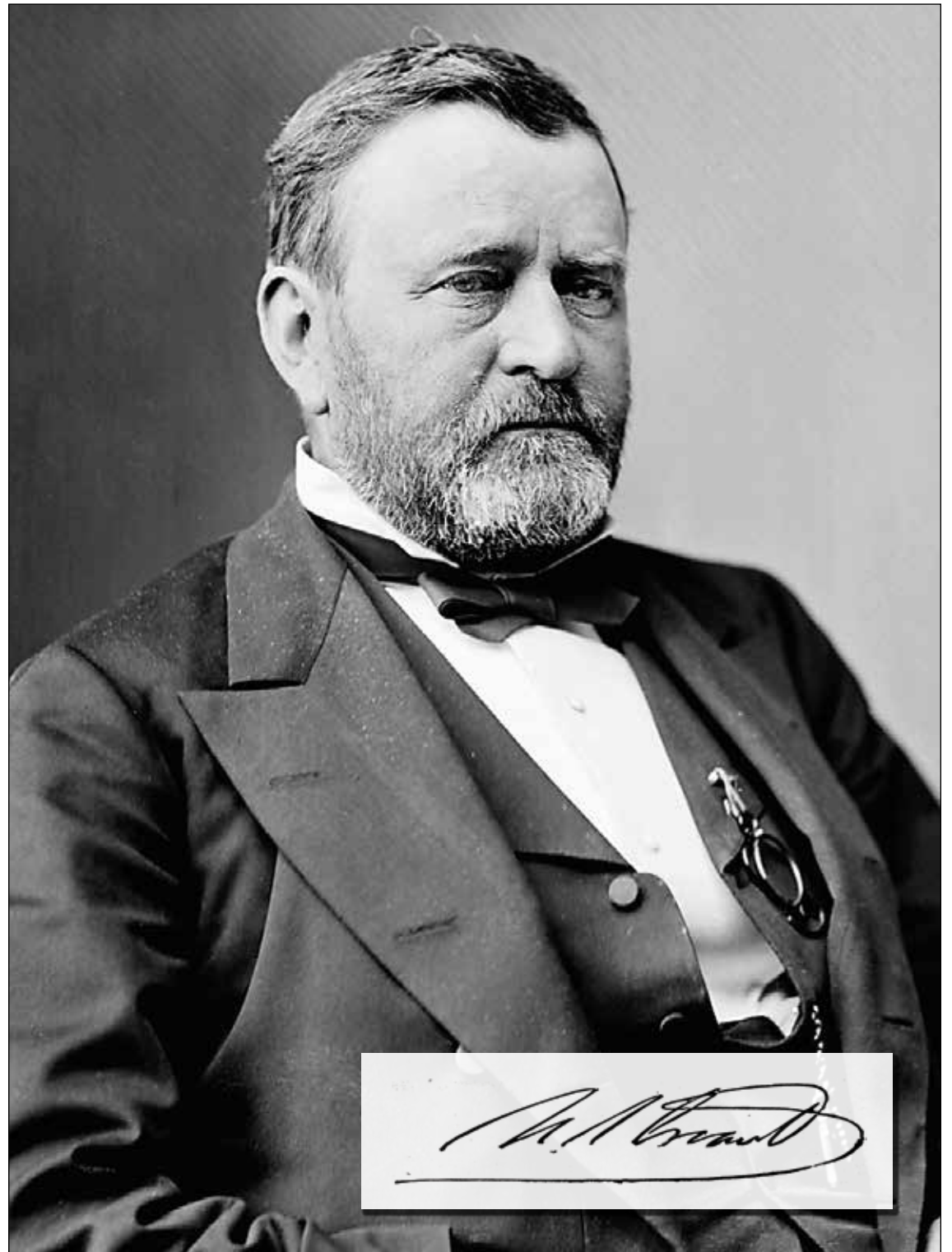
MAJOR POLICY

Grant's administration was marked by many social and governmental landmarks. He was also forced into taking on many scandals, including the Black Friday financial panic in 1869.

Some of his most important achievements included:

- Under Grant's leadership, the first transcontinental railroad was completed at Promontory Point, Utah.
- On Sept. 24, 1869, Grant ordered a large sale of \$4 million in gold in response to a financial panic set off by two railroad entrepreneurs, Jay Gould and James Fisk, Jr., cornering the gold market.
- The Fifteenth Amendment was adopted under Grant's leadership, stipulating that no state shall deprive any citizen of the right to vote because of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

After retiring from the Presidency, Grant became a partner in a financial firm and produced a memoir to pay off his debts. He died soon after completing the last page in 1885.



JAMES POLK

President No. 11 | **Born:** 1795 **Died:** 1849 | **Served:** 1845 to 1849

Born in Mecklenburg County, N.C., in 1795, James K. Polk served as a chief lieutenant of Andrew Jackson and is often referred to as the last of the Jacksonians in the White House.

He graduated with honors in 1818 from the University of North Carolina and succeeded as a young lawyer prior to his entry into politics, serving in the Tennessee legislature.

BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

Polk served as Speaker between 1835 and 1839 before leaving to become governor of Tennessee.

He was a leading contender for the Democratic nomination for vice president in 1844 but decided to run for president instead.

Both Martin Van Buren (Democrat) and Henry Clay (Whig nominee) were strongly opposed to the annexation of Texas — one of the hot-button issues at this point in history.

Polk took the alternate route, publicly asserting that Texas should be “re-annexed” and all of Oregon “re-occupied.”

Polk was nominated for president on the ninth ballot at the Democratic Convention.

MAJOR POLICY

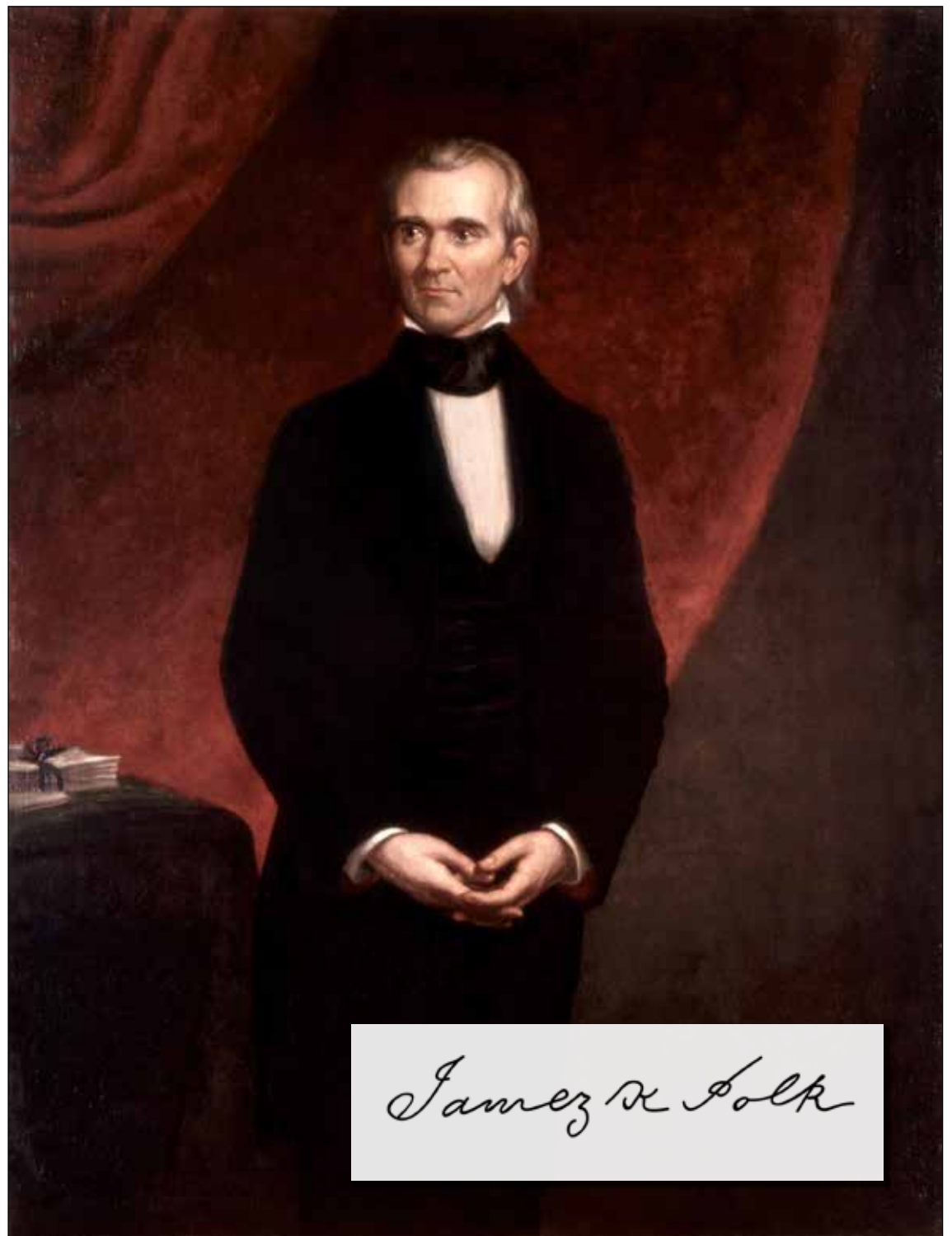
Before his first day in office, Polk’s presidency was impacted by Congress passing a joint

resolution offering annexation to Texas. This led to the possibility of war with Mexico, leaving Polk with plenty of diplomatic relations challenges to overcome.

Polk’s main achievements during his time in office:

- Offered to settle the Oregon debate by extending the Canadian boundary. The British agreed and the treaty was signed in 1846.
- Acquisition of California proved far more difficult.
- Sent an envoy to offer Mexico up to \$20 million plus settlement of damage claims owed to Americans, in return for California and the New Mexico country. The offer was refused, leading Polk to send Gen. Zachary Taylor to the disputed area on the Rio Grande.
- Upon Mexican troops attacking Taylor’s forces, Congress declared war. American forces won repeated victories and occupied Mexico City. In 1848, Mexico ceded New Mexico and California in return for \$15 million and American assumption of the damage claims.

Polk left office with various health conditions, eventually dying in 1849.



JAMES MONROE

President No. 5 | **Born:** 1758 **Died:** 1831 | **Served:** 1817 to 1825

Considered the last President from the Founding Fathers, James Monroe left a remarkable impact on the United States with eight years of presidential service.

The fifth president of the United States was born in Westmoreland County, Va., in 1758. He attended the College of William and Mary and fought with distinction in the Continental Army.

Later, he practiced law in Fredericksburg, Va., polishing his knowledge of domestic and global legal processes.

BEFORE HE WAS PRESIDENT

Monroe joined the anti-Federalists in the Virginia Convention, which ratified the Constitution. He later was elected a United States Senator as a strong advocate of Jeffersonian policies.

In his role as Minister to France (1794-1796), he gained expertise in French life and governmental policies. This would be key knowledge in later negotiating the Louisiana Purchase.

MAJOR POLICY

Monroe was the clear Republican choice for the Presidency in 1816. He easily won re-election in 1820, setting the stage for major achievements impacting economics, as well as domestic and foreign policy.

Among his Cabinet choices,

Monroe selected John C. Calhoun as Secretary of War and John Quincy Adams as Secretary of State.

His major policy accomplishments:

- Monroe set the stage for the 1819 Transcontinental Treaty, transferring the Floridas from Spain to the United States for \$5 million. The treaty also advanced the U.S. border across Mexico to the Pacific Ocean.

- In 1820, Monroe signed the Missouri Compromise, admitting Maine (then part of northern Massachusetts) as a free state, admitting Missouri as a slave state, and restricting slavery to territories south of a specific latitude.

- In 1823, Monroe formerly announced concepts later hailed the Monroe Doctrine. Monroe's ideas contained several policies with global ramifications. The doctrine reiterated the traditional U.S. policy of neutrality with regard to European wars and conflicts and defined the Americas' desire to not be open to future European colonization.

At age 67 in 1824, Monroe decided not to seek re-election in the presidential race. He died in 1831.

