

The Formative Years, 1789–1860

Shortly after the United States Senate achieved its first quorum at Federal Hall in New York City on April 6, 1789, members elected a presiding officer to oversee the official counting of electoral ballots for the election of George Washington as president and John Adams as vice president. The Senate chose New Hampshire member John Langdon—merchant and delegate to the Continental Congress—to preside over the historic event. At its conclusion, the Senate formally elected Langdon president pro tempore. Langdon remained in that post for two weeks until Vice President Adams



John Langdon served as the Senate's first president pro tempore.

arrived in the Senate on April 21. When Langdon escorted Adams to the presiding officer's chair, he forfeited his own position as presiding officer.

As a constitutional officer of the Senate who is paid by legislative funds, the vice president was expected to preside full time. Absences were inevitable, however, due to difficulty in travel, illness, or other obligations. For that reason, the framers of the Constitution provided that in the absence of the vice president the Senate could choose a president

pro tempore to perform the duties of the chair. The Constitution did not define the duties, powers, and responsibilities of that office. Events, personalities, and the Senate's evolving needs would shape its early development. Over many decades, the Senate's president pro tempore would evolve into a position of respect and prestige, providing institutional stability and continuity.

In the Senate's earliest years, the president pro tempore—chosen on a temporary basis (*pro tempore* meaning “for the time being” in Latin)—was selected for personal characteristics, such as popularity, reliability, and mastery of the Senate's rules and procedures. The tenure of the president pro tempore ended with the appearance of the vice president, so terms of service typically were short and sporadic in nature. John Langdon served four separate terms from 1789 to 1793. During the Fourth Congress, there were three presidents pro tempore. Five served during the Fifth Congress, and another four served during the Sixth Congress. In all, more than a dozen senators held the office during the Senate's first decade. In the years that followed, a few served for longer periods, due to the death of a vice president or when a vice president succeeded to the presidency. When John Tyler became president following the 1841 death of President William Henry Harrison, for example, three presidents pro tempore served throughout the next four years.

Precedents set by John Adams as the Senate's constitutional president and John Langdon as the first president pro tempore shaped the early role of the presiding officer. Adams initially sought an active role in the Senate's daily debates, but the position of vice president soon



The Senate met in this chamber inside Congress Hall, in Philadelphia, PA, from 1790 to 1800.

became distinctly neutral. Unlike its counterpart on the other side of Capitol Hill—the Speaker of the House—the president pro tempore did not evolve into a position of party leadership, nor did it share the vice president’s constitutional prerogative—the ability to break a tie vote.

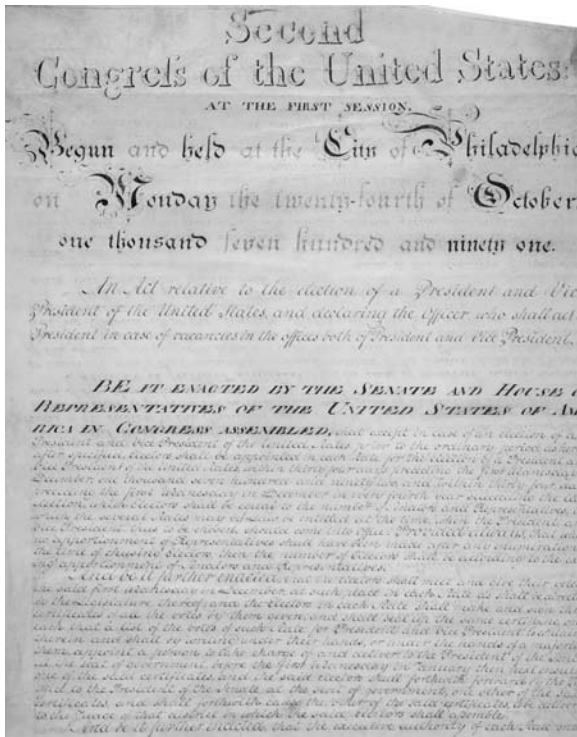
Unlike the vice president, the president pro tempore is an elected member of the U.S. Senate, able to speak or vote on any issue. Selected by the Senate at large, the president pro tempore has enjoyed many privileges and some limited powers. In 1792, the Succession Act placed the president pro tempore directly behind the vice president in the line to fill a presidential vacancy. Beginning in 1812, presidents pro tempore began receiving additional pay during the absence of a vice president. They have received a higher level of compensation than other senators since 1816. In the 1840s, following the elevation of Vice

President John Tyler to the presidency, the Senate began paying the president pro tempore the equivalent of a vice president’s salary. This policy remained in place until 1969 when the president pro tempore’s salary was fixed at the same level as the majority and minority leaders. During the 39th Congress, Senator Lafayette Foster was compensated for service as senator, president pro tempore, and—during an extended vacancy in the vice presidency—vice president.

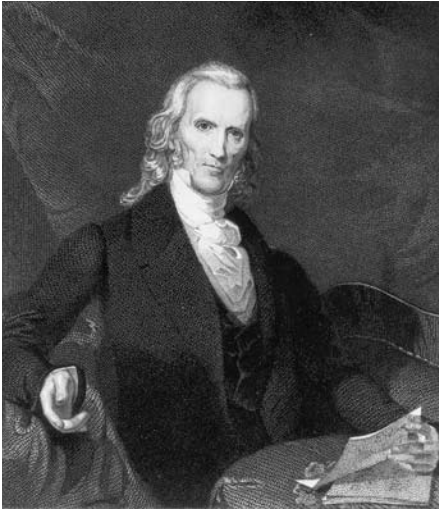
Although the Senate recognized the need to monetarily compensate the president pro tempore for his service, particularly during a vacancy in the vice presidency, it was less comfortable with allowing the position to influence the Senate’s legislative affairs. Beginning in 1820, the Senate allowed the president pro tempore to name other senators to perform the duties of the chair in his absence, but limited that service by terminating it with adjournment. By 1856, the *Congressional Globe* identified members who served as presiding officers in the absence of a president pro tempore.

Perhaps the most important role gained by the president pro tempore during this time period was the selection of members and chairmen of the Senate’s standing committees. The 1820s brought a new level of activity to the Senate, as monumental debates over territorial expansion and the future of slavery in America played out on a daily basis in the Senate Chamber. The resulting bustle of business prompted senators to seek more efficient ways to complete Senate tasks. In 1823, the Senate abandoned a system of electing each individual chairman and members of a committee, choosing instead the time-saving device of providing that “all committees shall be appointed by the presiding officer of this house.” At the time, this seemed to be a logical extension of the president pro tempore’s duties. Since the vice presidency had been vacant several times in recent years, or held by someone who took little interest in the business of the Senate, a more visible role for the president pro tempore had emerged. Only once between 1823 and 1825, however, did the new rule come into play for the president pro tempore, when John Gaillard made committee assignments in the absence of Vice President Daniel Tompkins.

When Vice President John C. Calhoun took office in December of 1825, he assumed a more active, partisan role in Senate proceedings, including exercising the right, as presiding officer, to appoint committee members. Senators objected to the partisanship of his committee appointments. They also balked at the idea of the vice president—not an elected member of the Senate—assuming a power they had expected to be exercised by the president pro tempore. (Since Calhoun presided regularly, the Senate had not elected a president pro tempore.) Senators sought to regain power over committees and on April 15, 1826, reestablished the old system of the full Senate electing committee members.



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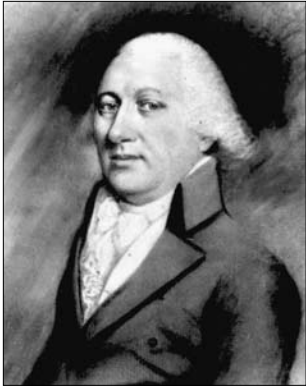
President pro tempore Hugh Lawson White was deprived of the power to make committees assignments when the Senate changed its rules in 1833.

In 1828, with Calhoun still in office, the Senate gave this power only to the president pro tempore, specifically denying it to the vice president. In 1833, as in 1825, the removal of that power from the president pro tempore was a political decision. With Andrew Jackson in the White House and newly elected Vice President Martin Van Buren scheduled to preside over the Senate, the anti-Jackson faction within the Senate successfully maneuvered to have committee assignments again made by Senate election, depriving President pro tempore Hugh Lawson White,

who was perceived to be a Jackson man, of that privilege. The power of the president pro tempore to influence committee assignments was reinstated again in 1837, but came to an end in 1845. When the 29th

Congress convened in December 1845, senators refused to allow Vice President George M. Dallas to appoint committee members on his own initiative. Instead, they gave the choice of committee assignments to the Senate's two party caucuses. After that time, vice presidents and presidents pro tempore formally made appointments, but only with the consent of the party caucus.

By the eve of the Civil War, the office of the president pro tempore had evolved into a position of institutional prestige, with additional compensation for service to the Senate, but with only limited power over the Senate's legislative business. As a neutral presiding officer, the president pro tempore became a significant fixture in daily management of Senate business, maintaining order and decorum in the Senate Chamber, particularly during long vice presidential absences and vacancies. The Senate's president pro tempore also provided continuity to the national government, standing ready to advance to the presidency should the need arise.



1. John Langdon (*New Hampshire*)

President Pro Tempore: 1789, 1792, 1793

Senate Service: March 4, 1789, to March 3, 1801

Party: Pro-Administration; Anti-Administration; Democratic Republican

Born: Portsmouth, New Hampshire, June 26, 1741

Died: Portsmouth, New Hampshire, September 18, 1819

Education: Attended Portsmouth, New Hampshire, grammar school; apprenticed as a clerk.

Non-Senate Career: John Langdon worked as a merchant and ship-builder and became a member of the New Hampshire general court in 1775. That same year, he was made a delegate to the Continental Congress, and served again in 1776 when he was appointed Continental prize agent for New Hampshire. In 1776 he became speaker of the state house of representatives, and then state senator in 1784. He was elected president of New Hampshire in 1785 and again in 1788 and served as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1787. After serving in the United States Senate, he again served in the New Hampshire legislature, from 1801 to 1805, and then became governor of New Hampshire, serving from 1805 to 1808, and again from 1810 to 1811, with the exception of 1809. Langdon declined the nomination as a candidate for vice president of the United States in 1812.

Observations: “[Langdon] apparently received this recognition not because he was looked to for leadership but because of his contributions to the revolutionary cause and his gracious and sociable manner. He appeared to good advantage in the Presiding Officer’s chair, where he was described as ‘attentive, prompt and impartial.’”

~ U.S. Congress, Senate, *The United States Senate, 1787–1801: A Dissertation on the First Fourteen Years of the Upper Legislative Body*, by Roy Swanstrom, S. Doc. 100–31, 100th Cong., 1st sess., 1988, 258.

“He was a true patriot and a good man, with a noble way of thinking and a frankness and warmth of heart that made his friends love him much, as it did me in a high degree, and disarmed his enemies of some of the asperities indulged toward others.”

~ James Madison on John Langdon, quoted in Charles R. Corning, *John Langdon* (Concord: Rumford Printing Company, 1903), 30.



2. Richard Henry Lee (*Virginia*)

President Pro Tempore: 1792

Senate Service: March 4, 1789, to October 8, 1792

Party: Anti-Administration

Born: “Stratford,” Westmoreland County, Virginia, January 20, 1732

Died: “Chantilly,” Westmoreland County, Virginia, June 19, 1794

Education: Received private instruction; attended Wakefield Academy (in England).

Non-Senate Career: Richard Henry Lee became a justice of the peace for Westmoreland County in 1757. He played a key role in events that led to the American Revolution, serving in Virginia’s house of burgesses from 1758 to 1775, and as a member of the Continental Congress from 1774 to 1779. Lee sponsored the resolution calling for American independence, was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and drafted the first national Thanksgiving Day proclamation issued by Congress at York, Pennsylvania, on October 31, 1777. He was a member of Virginia’s house of delegates from 1780 to 1784, serving as speaker in 1781, and again of the Continental Congress from 1784 to 1785 and in 1787, serving as president of the Congress in 1784. Although chosen as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1787, and also to the state ratifying convention in 1788, he declined to serve because of poor health. He retired from public life after serving as one of Virginia’s first two U.S. senators.

Observations: “Lee exerted a powerful influence over the work and deliberations of the Senate. He was a good speaker, sometimes referring to prepared notes, according to Maclay. . . . His reputation as an experienced legislator preceded him, and despite his antifederalism he was immediately appointed to committees on rules, certification of the presidential election, and the inaugural ceremonies. By the end of the First Congress, Lee had been assigned to no fewer than thirty-two committees.”

~ Kenneth R. Bowling, Charlene Bangs Bickford, William Charles DiGiacomantonio, and Helen E. Veit, eds., *Documentary History of the First Federal Congress of the United States of America, March 4, 1789–March 3, 1791*, vol. 14, *Debates in the House of Representatives, Third Session, December 1790–March 1791: Biographies of Members* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 873.

Further Reading: Lee, Richard Henry. *The Letters of Richard Henry Lee*. Edited by James Ballagh. 1911–1914. Reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1970; Chitwood, Oliver. *Richard Henry Lee, Statesman of the Revolution*. Morgantown: University Library, 1967.



3. Ralph Izard (*South Carolina*)

President Pro Tempore: 1794

Senate Service: March 4, 1789, to March 3, 1795

Party: Pro-Administration

Born: “The Elms,” near Charleston, South Carolina, January 23, 1741 or 1742

Died: Near Charleston, South Carolina, May 30, 1804

Education: Pursued classical studies in Hackney, England.

Non-Senate Career: After his schooling in England, Ralph Izard returned to South Carolina in 1764 to manage his plantations. He moved to London in 1771 and then to Paris after October 1776, intending to return to America. He was elected by Congress in 1777 to serve as commissioner to the Court of Tuscany, and although he was never received by that government, he remained in France until 1780. From 1782 to 1783, he served as a delegate from South Carolina to the Continental Congress. After the war, he served in the state legislature before becoming one of South Carolina’s first two United States senators. Following his Senate service, he retired from public life to care for his estates.

Observations: “But he was not long allowed to remain in retirement; as—on the formation of the Federal Government—he was chosen Senator for six years. He once more embarked on the stormy sea of Politics—where his love of freedom—his liberal mind—strict integrity—and unflinching rectitude, were fully evinced—and though he differed in opinion with many of his contemporaries—he never lost the respect of any.”

~ Written by his daughter, Anne Izard Deas, Ralph Izard, *Correspondence of Mr. Ralph Izard of South Carolina: From the Year 1774 to 1804, with a Short Memoir*, ed. Anne Deas, 1844 Reprint (New York: AMS Press, 1976), xii.

“Notwithstanding a mild speech impediment, Izard also contributed heavily to deliberations on the floor. A significant proportion of his speeches and comments reflect a concern for protecting and enhancing senatorial prerogative. His aristocratic upbringing and experience in the courts of Europe influenced him significantly. He understood better than many the function of ceremony as a vehicle of power and prestige.”

~ Kenneth R. Bowling, Charlene Bangs Bickford, William Charles DiGiacomantonio, and Helen E. Veit, eds., *Documentary History of the First Federal Congress of the United States of America, March 4, 1789–March 3, 1791*, vol. 14, *Debate in the House of Representatives, Third Session, December 1790–March 1791: Biographies of Members* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 831–2.

Further Reading: Izard, Ralph. *Correspondence of Mr. Ralph Izard of South Carolina, From the Year 1774 to 1804, with a Short Memoir*. Edited by Anne Deas. 1844. Reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1976.



4. Henry Tazewell (*Virginia*)

President Pro Tempore: 1795

Senate Service: December 29, 1794, to January 24, 1799

Party: Anti-Administration; Democratic Republican

Born: Brunswick County, Virginia, November 27, 1753

Died: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, January 24, 1799

Education: Graduated from the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1770; studied law.

Non-Senate Career: Henry Tazewell was admitted to the bar and began practicing law in Brunswick County in 1773. In 1775, he became a member of Virginia's general assembly, where he represented Brunswick until 1778. During that time, he served as a delegate to the state constitutional convention of 1775 and 1776. In 1778, he moved to Williamsburg and was again elected to the general assembly, where he served until 1785. During the Revolutionary War, he raised and was commissioned captain of a troop of cavalry. He was a judge on the state supreme court from 1785 to 1793, serving as chief justice from 1789 to 1793, and was then appointed to the high court of appeals in 1793. He served in the U.S. Senate until his death. Henry Tazewell's son, Littleton Waller Tazewell, also served in the U.S. Senate and was elected president pro tempore in 1832.

Observations: "Henry Tazewell . . . was elected president pro tempore in February 1795. The remarkable fact here is that the forty-one-year-old Tazewell had only entered the Senate two months earlier, in December 1794! Moreover, he was a Jeffersonian Republican at a time when the Senate was controlled by the Federalist party. Could anyone imagine the election today of a young freshman member of the minority party as president pro tempore? It would be inconceivable!"

~ U.S. Congress, Senate, *The Senate, 1789–1989, Addresses on the History of the United States Senate*, by Robert C. Byrd, vol. 2, S. Doc. 100–20, 100th Cong., 1st sess., 1991, 170.

Henry Tazewell was "among the most distinguished of our early statesmen, who from his youth, in the sunshine of peace and amid the storms of revolution, had developed all his faculties to the service of his country; and if the light of his glory in the long lapse of years has seemed to grow dim, it is a subject of gratulation [satisfaction] that it has been lost, as his fondest wishes would have led him to lose it, in the blaze which the genius of his only son has kindled about his name."

~ C. W. Tazewell, ed., *Henry Tazewell: Most Popular Virginian of His Day* (Virginia Beach: W. S. Dawson Co., 1992), 7.



5. Samuel Livermore (*New Hampshire*)

President Pro Tempore: 1796, 1799

Senate Service: March 4, 1793, to June 12, 1801

Party: Pro-Administration; Federalist

Born: Waltham, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, May 14, 1732

Died: Holderness, Grafton County, New Hampshire, May 18, 1803

Education: Attended Waltham, Massachusetts, schools; graduated from the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) in 1752; studied law.

Non-Senate Career: Upon his admission to the bar in 1756, Samuel Livermore began practicing law in Waltham, Massachusetts. He moved to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in 1758 and was elected to the New Hampshire general assembly in 1768. He served in the general assembly until 1769, when he was appointed a judge-advocate in the admiralty court, and then attorney general. He moved to Holderness, New Hampshire, in 1775 where he worked as a state attorney for three years. He was a member of the Continental Congress from 1780 to 1782 and again from 1785 to 1786. In 1782, he became chief justice of the New Hampshire state supreme court, a position he held until 1789. He served as a member of the state constitutional convention in 1788 and was president of the convention in 1791. He was elected in 1789 to the U.S. House of Representatives where he served as chairman of the Committee on Elections from 1791 to 1793.

Observations: Samuel Livermore “rose, and continued in office, by the force of talents, and the reputation of integrity, and not by the mildness of his temper, or the amenity of his manners. He was a man of strong intellectual powers, of great shrewdness—possessed much wit, and had a vein for severe satire.”

~ William Plumer on Samuel Livermore, from James McLachlan, *Princetonians: A Biographical Directory, 1748–1768* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976–1991), 1: 52.

Further Reading: Corning, Charles R. *Samuel Livermore: Address Before the Grafton and Coös Bar Association*. Concord, NH: Republican Press Association, 1888.



6. William Bingham (*Pennsylvania*)

President Pro Tempore: 1797

Senate Service: March 4, 1795, to March 3, 1801

Party: Federalist

Born: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, March 8, 1752

Died: Bath, England, February 7, 1804

Education: Graduated from Philadelphia College in 1768.

Non-Senate Career: In 1776, William Bingham was appointed by the Continental Congress as a commercial agent to Martinique, and afterwards as consul at St. Pierre, in the West Indies, from 1777 to 1780. After returning to America, he served in the Continental Congress from 1786 to 1788. He was a member of Pennsylvania's house of representatives from 1790 to 1791, serving as speaker in 1791, and then became president of the state senate, serving from 1794 to 1795. Following his U.S. Senate service, he withdrew from public life and engaged in the management of his extensive estates. He moved in 1801 to Bath, England, and resided with his daughter until his death.

Observations: "He was pleasant in his manners, amiable in his temper, liberal but said not [to] be charitable."

~ Benjamin Rush, upon hearing of death of Bingham, 1804. Quoted in Robert C. Alberts, *The Golden Voyage* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1969), 429.

"Mr. Bingham is so well versed in the Politics of this place, and South of it, and so well acquainted with the movements in both houses of Congress, that it would be a Work of Supererogation in me, to give you the details."

~ *President George Washington*, June 9, 1796. Quoted in Robert C. Alberts, *The Golden Voyage* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1969), 285.



7. William Bradford (*Rhode Island*)

President Pro Tempore: 1797

Senate Service: March 4, 1793, to October 1797

Party: Pro-Administration; Federalist

Born: Plympton, Plymouth County, Massachusetts, November 4, 1729

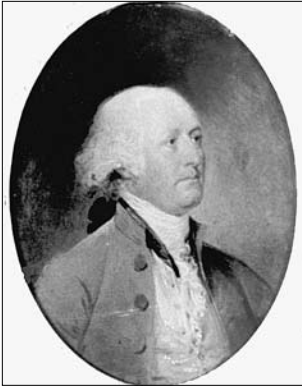
Died: Bristol, Rhode Island, July 6, 1808

Education: Studied medicine in Hingham, Massachusetts; studied law.

Non-Senate Career: William Bradford was admitted to the Rhode Island bar in 1767 after abandoning the practice of medicine for the law. He practiced law in Bristol, Rhode Island. Bradford was a member of the Rhode Island house of representatives for several terms between 1761 and 1803, serving as speaker on several occasions. He served on the Rhode Island Committee of Correspondence in 1773 and was deputy governor of Rhode Island from 1775 until 1778. In 1776, he was elected as a delegate to the Continental Congress, but did not attend. Following his U.S. Senate service, he retired to his home in Bristol, Rhode Island.

Observations: Bradford “received a liberal education, and later studied medicine at Hingham, Mass., under Dr. E. Hersey. He practised medicine for a time at Warren, R.I., later removing to Bristol, R.I., where he studied law, was admitted to the bar, and soon became one of the most eminent practitioners of the province. He took an active part in Revolutionary affairs.”

~ *National Cyclopedia of American Biography.*



8. Jacob Read (*South Carolina*)

President Pro Tempore: 1797

Senate Service: March 4, 1795, to March 3, 1801

Party: Federalist

Born: “Hobcaw” plantation in Christ Church Parish, near Charleston, South Carolina, 1752

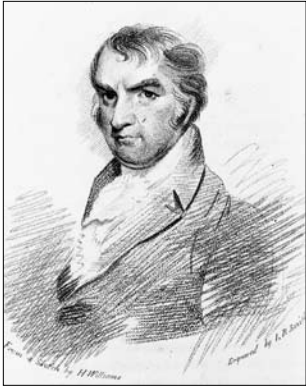
Died: Charleston, South Carolina, July 17, 1816

Education: Completed preparatory studies; studied law.

Non-Senate Career: Jacob Read was admitted to the South Carolina bar in 1773. He studied in England from 1773 to 1776, joining other Americans in London in 1774 in a petition against the Boston port bill. He returned to America in 1776 and served South Carolina in various military and civil capacities during the Revolutionary War. He spent 1780 and 1781 as a prisoner of the British in St. Augustine. After his release, he served in South Carolina’s state assembly in 1782, and on the privy council in 1783. He was elected to the Continental Congress in 1783 and served until 1785. After serving in the South Carolina house of representatives as speaker from 1787 to 1794, he was elected to the U.S. Senate. He ran unsuccessfully for a second Senate term and retired from public life.

Observations: “As a member of the South Carolina [Ratification] Convention of 1788, [Read] showed Federalist trends in opposing the motions that consideration of the federal constitution be postponed and that re-eligibility of the president be deemed dangerous to liberty. Having voted for ratification, he moved the thanks of the convention to the South Carolina framers of the constitution.”

~ *Dictionary of American Biography.*



9. Theodore Sedgwick (*Massachusetts*)

President Pro Tempore: 1798

Senate Service: June 11, 1796, to March 3, 1799

Party: Federalist

Born: West Hartford, Connecticut, May 9, 1746

Died: Boston, Massachusetts, January 24, 1813

Education: Attended Yale College; studied theology and law.

Non-Senate Career: Theodore Sedgwick was admitted to the bar in 1766 and practiced law in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. During the Revolutionary War, he served in the 1776 expedition against Canada. He was a member of the Massachusetts state house of representatives for several terms between 1780 and 1788, and served as speaker. He was also a member of the state senate from 1784 until 1785. He served as a member of the Continental Congress in 1785 and 1786, and again in 1788. In 1788, he was a delegate to the Massachusetts state convention that adopted the federal Constitution. Sedgwick was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and served from March 4, 1789, until June 1796. Following his U.S. Senate service, he again served in the U.S. House from March 4, 1799, until March 3, 1801. He was the Speaker of the House from 1799 to 1801. In 1802, he became a judge of the supreme court of Massachusetts, where he served until his death.

Observations: “Mr. Sedgewick [sic] was by 12 Votes placed in the Chair as President pro tem—From the symptoms he exhibits I fear his head, of which you know he has been long complaining, will derive no advantage from this elevation.”

~ Senator John Brown, June 29, 1798, quoted in “The Letters of Honorable John Brown to the Presidents of the United States,” *Register of Kentucky Historical Society* 35 (January 1937): 17.

Further Reading: Welch, Richard. *Theodore Sedgwick, Federalist: A Political Portrait*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1965.



10. John Laurance (*New York*)

President Pro Tempore: 1798

Senate Service: November 9, 1796, to August 1800

Party: Federalist

Born: Falmouth, England, 1750

Died: New York City, November 11, 1810

Education: Studied law.

Non-Senate Career: John Laurance was admitted to the bar in 1772 and began practicing law in New York City. He served in the Revolution as a commissioned officer and was promoted to judge advocate-general in 1777, serving until 1782. He became regent of the University of the State of New York in 1784 and served as a trustee of Columbia College from 1784 until 1810. After serving in the state assembly in 1783 and 1785, he became a delegate to the Continental Congress from 1785 to 1787. He was a member of New York's state senate from 1788 until 1789, when he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, serving from April 8, 1789, to March 3, 1793. In May 1794, President George Washington appointed him United States judge of the district of New York, where he served until November 8, 1796, resigning to become a U.S. senator.

Observations: "A consistent Federalist in Congress, Laurance supported the Hamiltonian program in its entirety. He was one of the most active and vocal members, and sat on thirty-eight committees, including those that dealt with appropriations, import duties, Indian trade, naturalization, salaries, the seat of government, and Vermont statehood. . . . Despite looking after his constituents's interests, Laurance held to a broad view of legislative responsibility. In a congressional speech he said: 'Every member on this floor ought to consider himself the representative of the whole Union, and not the particular district which had chosen him.' . . . Laurance was highly regarded for his legal expertise. Of dignified presence and a powerful debater, he had a key role in achieving success for the Federalist program in Congress during the administrations of George Washington and John Adams."

~ *American National Biography.*



11. James Ross (*Pennsylvania*)

President Pro Tempore: 1799

Senate Service: April 24, 1794, to March 3, 1803

Party: Pro-Administration; Federalist

Born: Near Delta, Peachbottom Township, York County, Pennsylvania, July 12, 1762

Died: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, November 27, 1847

Education: Pursued Classical studies near Delta, Peachbottom Township, York County, Pennsylvania; studied law.

Non-Senate Career: When he was just 18, James Ross worked as an instructor of Latin and Greek at what is now Washington and Jefferson College, in Washington, Pennsylvania. He was admitted to the bar in 1784 and practiced law in Washington County and later Allegheny County. During the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794, President Washington appointed Ross to be a federal commissioner to negotiate with the insurgents. He served as a delegate to Pennsylvania's constitutional convention from 1789 to 1790. After his Senate career, he returned to the practice of law and was also heavily engaged in land speculation.

Observations: “Emerging [in the 1790s] as a major leader of the Federalist party, Ross was, in many respects, an advocate of Hamiltonian ideologies, for he was an Anglophile and favored fostering mercantile interests and westward expansion. . . . His assertive leadership did not go unnoticed. In 1799 a ship in Pittsburgh was named for him, and he was elected to serve as president pro tempore of the Senate. . . . Ross contributed significantly to the Federalist legacy. He backed the national government during seditious times, was an effective strategist in the Senate, and promoted western business interests. He was important to the development of Pittsburgh and served as the political and legal leader of the city’s prominent Federalist families.”

~ *American National Biography.*

Further Reading: Brownson, James I. *The Life and Times of Senator James Ross.* Washington, PA: Observer Job Rooms, 1910.



12. Uriah Tracy (*Connecticut*)

President Pro Tempore: 1800

Senate Service: October 13, 1796, to July 19, 1807

Party: Federalist

Born: Franklin, Connecticut, February 2, 1755

Died: Washington, D.C., July 19, 1807

Education: Graduated from Yale College in 1778; studied law.

Non-Senate Career: Uriah Tracy was admitted to the bar in 1781 and practiced law in Litchfield, Connecticut. A member of the state's general assembly from 1788 to 1793, he served as speaker in 1793. He was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in April 1793, and served until his resignation, effective October 13, 1796, when he became a U.S. senator. He also served as state's attorney for Litchfield County during part of his U.S. Senate tenure (1794–1799).

Observations: In Congress, Tracy “soon became distinguished, and his great reasoning powers conspicuous on every important question. On referring to his speeches, they will be found remarkable for their solidity and point. . . . As a companion he was instructive and agreeable. His observations in company, on passing events, and the political system of the day, were always profound and generally seasoned with lively anecdote. His thoughts on all occasions seemed to come from him without premeditation, and under a form that alarmed no one's pride or self sufficiency. His humour, too, was easy and natural; like the lightning of a summer's evening, which finishes without thunder, it would shew the object without wounding the person.”

~ *The Connecticut Courant*, August 12, 1807.



13. John Eager Howard (*Maryland*)

President Pro Tempore: 1800

Senate Service: November 30, 1796, to March 3, 1803

Party: Federalist

Born: “Belvedere,” near Baltimore, Maryland, June 4, 1752

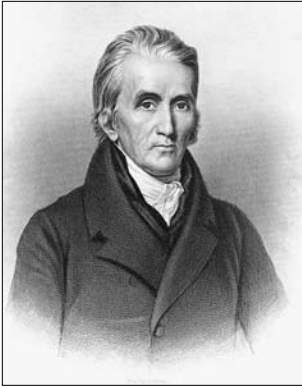
Died: “Belvedere,” near Baltimore, Maryland, October 12, 1827

Education: Privately tutored.

Non-Senate Career: John E. Howard served in the military throughout the Revolutionary War, beginning as a captain and holding the rank of colonel when peace was declared. He received a medal and the thanks of Congress for gallantry at the 1781 Battle of Cowpens. He was a delegate to the Continental Congress in 1788 and served as the governor of Maryland from 1789 to 1791. He was also a member of the state senate from 1791 to 1795. During his U.S. Senate tenure, Howard was offered the position of secretary of war by President George Washington, but he declined. He also declined a commission as brigadier general in the expected war with France in 1798. In 1816, he ran unsuccessfully as a Federalist candidate for vice president of the United States.

Observations: “Amidst the frantic agitations of party, which for a series of years convulsed the nation, he almost alone in his generation, won the universal confidence. The most inveterate popular prejudices seemed to yield to the affectionate conviction of his impregnable honesty, his unblenching love of country, and that personal independence which neither party zeal could warp from its course, nor passion subvert, nor faction alarm; and in their bitterest exacerbations, his fellow-citizens of all ranks turned towards him as to a fountain of undefiled patriotism.”

~ *A Memoir of the Late Col. John Eager Howard, reprinted from the Baltimore Gazette of Monday, October 16, 1827* (Kelly, Hedian & Piet, pub., 1863), 7–8.



14. James Hillhouse (*Connecticut*)

President Pro Tempore: 1801

Senate Service: December 1796, to June 10, 1810

Party: Federalist

Born: Montville, Connecticut, October 20, 1754

Died: New Haven, Connecticut, December 29, 1832

Education: Attended Hopkins Grammar School, New Haven, Connecticut; graduated from Yale College in 1773; studied law.

Non-Senate Career: James Hillhouse was admitted to the bar in 1775 and practiced law in New Haven, Connecticut. He served in the Revolutionary War and in 1779 was captain of the governor's foot guards when the British invaded New Haven. He was a member of the state house of representatives from 1780 to 1785. In 1786 and again in 1788, he was chosen as a delegate to the Continental Congress, but he did not attend. He served in Connecticut's upper house, the state council, from 1789 until 1790, when he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. He served in the House from March 4, 1791, until his resignation in the fall of 1796 to become a U.S. senator. Following his Senate service, he was a member of the Hartford Convention in 1814 and treasurer of Yale College from 1782 until his death.

Observations: "He was not a visionary statesman, like those who in their closets frame ingenious schemes of government for utopian commonwealths. Nor was he one of those who have a passion for pulling down the fabric of existing institutions for the sake of some new-fangled reconstruction. His genius was conservative rather than revolutionary, and practical rather than speculative. . . . He had that sort of natural leadership among his equals; that special faculty of influence over men, that power of winning their full confidence and of making them willing to follow where he led, which is given only in nature's patent of nobility. . . . What was admired and honored in James Hillhouse was, not the man's extraordinary ability—not his eloquence or his wit—not the depth and reach of his learning, or the acuteness and power of his logic,—but the man himself."

~ Leonard Bacon, *Sketch of the Life and Public Services of Hon. James Hillhouse of New Haven* (New Haven: n.p., 1860), 25, 42–43.



15. Abraham Baldwin (*Georgia*)

President Pro Tempore: 1801, 1802

Senate Service: March 4, 1799, to March 4, 1807

Party: Democratic Republican

Born: North Guilford, Connecticut, November 22, 1754

Died: Washington, D.C., March 4, 1807

Education: Attended private schools; graduated from Yale College in 1772; studied theology at Yale College and was licensed to preach in 1775; studied law during his service in the army.

Non-Senate Career: Abraham Baldwin worked as a tutor at Yale College from 1775 until 1779. He then became an army chaplain in the Second Connecticut Brigade of the Revolutionary Army. In 1783, he was admitted to the bar and practiced law in Fairfield County, Connecticut. He soon moved to Georgia and continued to practice law in that state. In 1785, he became a member of the Georgia state house of representatives. He was the originator of the plan for, and author of, the charter of the University of Georgia and served as president of the university from 1786 until 1801. He subsequently served as chairman of the university's board of trustees until his death in 1807. He served as a member of the Continental Congress in 1785, 1787, and 1788. He was also a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1787. He was elected to represent Georgia as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives in the First Congress and served in that body from March 4, 1789, until March 4, 1799, when he became a U.S. senator.

Observations: “In 1801 when Vice President Aaron Burr was absent, the Senate elected Baldwin as its presiding officer (President pro tempore) despite the fact that he had been a Senator for only two years. The reputation for ability and fairness in parliamentary proceedings that Baldwin had gained in the House of Representatives followed him into the Senate. He had become the ‘Old Congress-Man.’”

~ Albert B. Saye, quoted in E. Merton Coulter, *Abraham Baldwin: Patriot, Educator, and Founding Father* (Arlington, VA: Vandamere Press, 1987), viii.



16. Stephen Row Bradley (*Vermont*)

President Pro Tempore: 1802–1803, 1808–1809

Senate Service: October 17, 1791, to March 3, 1795; October 15, 1801, to March 3, 1813

Party: Anti-Administration; Democratic Republican

Born: Wallingford, Connecticut, February 20, 1754

Died: Walpole, New Hampshire, December 9, 1830

Education: Graduated from Yale College in 1775; received a MA degree from Yale in 1778; studied law.

Non-Senate Career: After graduating from Yale in 1775, Stephen Row Bradley became captain of a volunteer company during the Revolutionary War and served intermittently from 1775 to 1779. He was admitted to the Vermont bar in 1779 and practiced law in Westminster, Vermont. In 1780 he became state's attorney for Cumberland County, and then served as register of probate for Westminster from 1781 to 1791. He was appointed judge of Windham County in 1783 and represented Westminster in the general assembly in 1780, 1781, 1784, 1785, 1788, and 1790, serving as speaker in 1785. He was appointed associate judge of the superior court of Vermont in 1788. Upon the admission of Vermont as a state into the Union, he was elected to the United States Senate. He was an unsuccessful candidate for reelection in 1795, and became a member of the city council of Westminster in 1798. Following his second tenure in the U.S. Senate, he retired from public life and returned to Westminster. In 1818 he moved to Walpole, New Hampshire.

Observations: “Few men have more companionable talents, a greater share of social cheerfulness, a more inexhaustible flow of wit, or a larger portion of unaffected urbanity.”

~ John A. Graham, quoted in Walter H. Crockett, ed., *Vermonters: A Book of Biographies* (Brattleboro: Stephen Daye Press, 1931), 32.

Further Reading: Bradley, Stephen Row. *Vermont's Appeal to the Candid and Impartial World*. Hartford: Hudson Goodwin, 1780.



17. John Brown (*Kentucky*)

President Pro Tempore: 1803, 1804

Senate Service: June 18, 1792, to March 3, 1805

Party: Anti-Administration; Democratic Republican

Born: Staunton, Virginia, September 12, 1757

Died: Frankfort, Kentucky, August 29, 1837

Education: Attended Washington College (now Washington and Lee University), Lexington, Virginia, and Princeton College; completed his studies at William and Mary College, Williamsburg, Virginia; studied law.

Non-Senate Career: In 1776, John Brown enlisted as a private in the Revolutionary Army. He was admitted to the bar in 1782 and practiced law in Frankfort, Kentucky. From 1784 until 1788, he served as a member of the Virginia senate from the district of Kentucky. Brown was a delegate from that district to the Continental Congress in 1787 and 1788. He was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Virginia and served from March 4, 1789, until June 1, 1792, when that portion of Virginia, which is now Kentucky, was admitted as a state. Following his U.S. Senate service, he resumed the practice of law in Frankfort, Kentucky.

Observations: “In 1784 [John Brown] was elected to represent Kentucky in the Virginia Assembly and in 1787 was selected by it as one of its representatives to the Continental Congress. In this congress he labored diligently for separation from Virginia, for statehood in the Union, for effective protection against the Indians, and for some arrangement with Spain for the free navigation of the Mississippi. He was a member of the Virginia Convention to consider the ratification of the Federal Constitution, and in 1789 he was elected to represent the District of Kentucky in Congress. Re-elected in 1791, he resigned in 1792 to become one of the first two senators from the newly-admitted State. Again elected to the United States Senate in 1799, he retired in 1805 to private life. When he died in 1837 he was the sole surviving member of the Continental Congress.”

~ Huntley Dupre, “Three Letters of George Nicholas to John Brown,” *The Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society* 41 (January 1943): 2.

Further Reading: Sprague, Stuart S. “Senator John Brown of Kentucky, 1757–1837: A Political Biography.” Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1972; Warren, Elizabeth. “John Brown and His Influence on Kentucky Politics: 1784–1805.” Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1937.

18. Jesse Franklin (*North Carolina*)

President Pro Tempore: 1804

Senate Service: March 4, 1799, to March 3, 1805; March 4, 1807, to March 3, 1813

Party: Democratic Republican

Born: Orange County, Virginia, March 24, 1760

Died: Surry County, North Carolina, August 31, 1823

No Image Available

Education: Left school before he reached the age of 12, but read extensively.

Non-Senate Career: Jesse Franklin, a major during the Revolutionary War, served in North Carolina's house of commons from 1793 to 1794, in the U.S. House of Representatives from March 4, 1795, to March 3, 1797, and again in the state house from 1797 to 1798. After one term in the United States Senate, he served in the state senate from 1805 to 1806. After a second Senate term, he was appointed a commissioner to treat with the Chickasaw Indians in 1817 and was governor of North Carolina from 1820 to 1821.

Observations: Franklin "in 1798 was elected to the United States Senate, serving from 1799 to 1805. During the impeachment trial of Judge [John] Pickering, he was chosen president *pro tempore*. . . . Franklin voted for the conviction of Pickering and also for the conviction of Justice Samuel Chase. . . . He spoke seldom in the Senate, but was active and valuable in committee work, and won nationally the reputation he had at home for hard practical sense, straightforward simplicity, and fine integrity."

~ *Dictionary of American Biography.*



19. Joseph Inslee Anderson (*Tennessee*)

President Pro Tempore: 1805

Senate Service: September 26, 1797, to March 3, 1815

Party: Democratic Republican

Born: Near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, November 5, 1757

Died: Washington, D.C., April 17, 1837

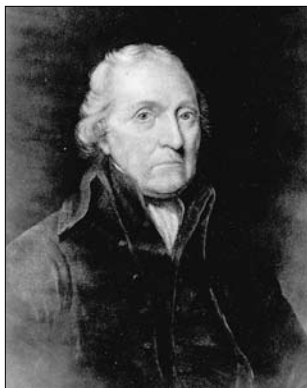
Education: Studied law.

Non-Senate Career: Joseph Anderson served in the military throughout the Revolutionary War, spending much of this time as a regimental paymaster, and attained the rank of brevet major in the Continental Army. After leaving the military service, he was admitted to the bar and practiced law in Delaware for several years. In 1791, he was appointed a United States judge for the territory south of the Ohio River. He also served as a member of the first constitutional convention of Tennessee in 1796. After serving a long tenure in the U.S. Senate, President James Madison appointed him to be the first comptroller of the U.S. Treasury, where he served until 1836. He lived in retirement until his death.

Observations: Anderson “served some 15 years, and was about the most active Senator during all that time. He seems to have been a member of all the important committees, and his reports very generally were accepted. Apparently, he kept up with the business of the Senate more accurately than did any other Senator. During the time he was there he was as active as James Madison was in the Constitutional Convention. . . . I regard Senator Anderson as one of the ablest and most efficient senators Tennessee ever produced. His industry was proverbial. His good sense was a tower of strength to him.”

~ Kenneth McKellar, *Tennessee Senators* (Kingsport, TN: Southern Publishers, Inc., 1942), 118–120.

Further Reading: McMillan, Fay E. “A Biographical Sketch of Joseph Anderson (1759–1837).” *East Tennessee Historical Society’s Publications* 2 (1930): 81–93.



20. Samuel Smith (*Maryland*)

President Pro Tempore: 1805–1807, 1808, 1828, 1829–1831

Senate Service: March 4, 1803, to March 3, 1815; December 17, 1822, to March 3, 1833

Party: Democratic Republican; Crawford Republican/Jacksonian

Born: Carlisle, Pennsylvania, July 27, 1752

Died: Baltimore, Maryland, April 22, 1839

Education: Attended a private academy.

Non-Senate Career: Samuel Smith of Maryland served in the Revolutionary War as captain, major, and lieutenant colonel and engaged in the shipping business after the war ended. He was elected to the Maryland house of delegates in 1791, and to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1792, serving from March 4, 1793, to March 3, 1803. At the time of the threatened war with France in 1794, he was appointed brigadier general of militia and commanded Maryland's quota during the Whiskey Rebellion. After serving two terms in the United States Senate, during which he became major general of militia in the defense of Baltimore during the War of 1812, he again served in the U.S. House from January 31, 1816, to December 17, 1822. He served as chairman of the House Committee on Expenditures in the Department of the Treasury (1816–1817), and the House Ways and Means Committee (1817–1822). He resigned his House seat, having been again elected to the U.S. Senate. He was elected mayor of Baltimore, Maryland, following his second U.S. Senate tenure, and served from 1835 to 1838, following which he retired from public life.

Committee Chair: Finance (1823–1833)

Observations: “The convening of the first session of the Ninth Congress in December 1805 was of more than usual interest to Smith. Not only was he concerned about growing French and British interference with American commerce, but also he was worried about his relations with the [Jefferson] administration, which had become strained during the

past year. With some relief he discovered that his position in the Republican party was still secure. Indeed, the Republican majority in the Senate felt no qualms in choosing Smith president pro tem, an honor that surprised and embarrassed him.”

~ Frank Cassell, *Merchant Congressman in the young Republic: Samuel Smith of Maryland, 1752–1839* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1971), 123.

“It was when General Smith had reached the venerable age of 84 years that a violent riot occurred in Baltimore which threatened to become completely beyond the control of civil authority. The mob became more menacing every minute. Suddenly to the astonishment of all there appeared on the streets the figure of an old man carrying an American flag. It soon became whispered among the rioters that it was ‘old Gen. Samuel Smith.’ As he approached the lines of the rioters themselves, followed by a limited number of peaceful citizens, the effect was miraculous. The revered personality, carrying in his hand the flag he had served so well, was too much even for a band of indignant rioters. Instead of violence, tranquility was established. Not a thing was done which the rioters felt would shock their beloved old general. Under the spell of this personal veneration the riot was quelled and the city's troubles were averted.”

~ *The Baltimore Sun*, December 17, 1915.

Further Reading: Pancake, John. *Samuel Smith and the Politics of Business, 1782–1839*. University: University of Alabama Press, 1972.



21. John Milledge (*Georgia*)

President Pro Tempore: 1809

Senate Service: June 19, 1806, to November 14, 1809

Party: Democratic Republican

Born: Savannah, Georgia, in 1757

Died: Near Augusta, Georgia, February 9, 1818

Education: Attended Bethesda School in Georgia and was privately tutored; studied law in the office of the King's Attorney.

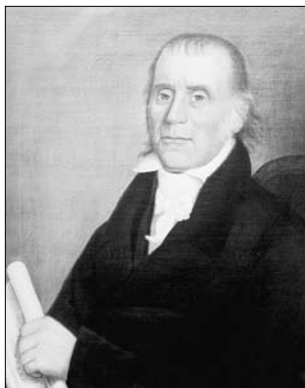
Non-Senate Career: John Milledge was admitted to the bar and practiced law in Savannah, Georgia. During the Revolutionary War, he was one of the patriots who rifled the powder magazine in Savannah in 1775 and later narrowly missed being hanged as a spy. In 1780, he became attorney general of Georgia. He was also a member of the state general assembly for several sessions. Milledge was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and served several terms between 1792 and 1802. In the House, he was the chairman of the Committee on Elections from 1801 until 1802. He became the governor of Georgia in 1802 and served until 1806, when he was elected the U.S. Senate. Milledge was also one of the founders of the University of Georgia at Athens.

Observations: In "1806 he was sent to the United States Senate to fill the vacancy caused by the death of James Jackson. Reelected for a full term in 1807, he resigned while president *pro tempore* in 1809 and retired, respected and admired by all, to a life of elegant leisure."
~ *Dictionary of American Biography*.

"In 1806 . . . Milledge was given the highest office that Georgia can bestow upon one of her sons. For three years he served as United States Senator, part of the time as President *Pro Tem.* of the Senate, resigning in 1809 and retiring from public life to his home. . . ."

~ Victor Davidson, included in Harriet Milledge Salley, ed., *Correspondence of John Milledge, Governor of Georgia, 1802–1806* (Columbia, SC: State Commercial Printing Company, 1949), 16.

Further Reading: Mellichamp, Josephine. *Senators From Georgia*. Huntsville, AL: Strode Publishers, 1976.



22. Andrew Gregg (*Pennsylvania*)

President Pro Tempore: 1809

Senate Service: March 4, 1807, to March 4, 1813

Party: Democratic Republican

Born: Carlisle, Pennsylvania, June 10, 1755

Died: Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, May 20, 1835

Education: Attended Reverend John Steel's Latin School in Carlisle and the Academy in Newark, Delaware.

Non-Senate Career: Andrew Gregg served in the Delaware militia during the American Revolution. From 1779 to 1783 he worked as a tutor at the University of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia. He moved to Middletown, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, in 1783 and became a merchant, and then moved to Penn's Valley (now in Bucks County), Pennsylvania, in 1789 to engage in agricultural pursuits. He was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and served from March 4, 1791, to March 3, 1807. After one term as a U.S. senator, he moved to Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, in 1814 and engaged in banking. He served as secretary of state of Pennsylvania from 1820 to 1823 and ran unsuccessfully for governor in 1823.

Observations: "Gregg was well liked and respected by his contemporaries, one of whom called him 'a highly respectable inhabitant of this country, and for many years known as a public man in Pennsylvania and in the United States.' Another praised him for his 'sound and discriminating mind, agreeable and dignified manners, strict regard for truth, and unbending and unyielding honesty.' Gregg was a well-educated, accomplished leader who succeeded in a variety of careers and was a participant in some of the most significant political events of his time."

~ *American National Biography.*



23. John Gaillard (*South Carolina*)

President Pro Tempore: 1810, 1814, 1815–1819, 1820–1825

Senate Service: December 6, 1804, to February 26, 1826

Party: Democratic Republican; Crawford Republican; Jacksonian

Born: St. Stephens District, South Carolina, September 5, 1765

Died: Washington, D.C., February 26, 1826

Education: Studied law in England.

Non-Senate Career: John Gaillard, a planter, served as a member of the South Carolina state house of representatives from 1794 until 1796. He was a member of the state senate from 1796 to 1804 and served as president of that body from 1803 until 1804, when he became a member of the United States Senate.

Observations: “It becomes, Mr. President, my melancholy duty to announce to this House, that my respected colleague, the Father of the Senate, is no more. After a faithful and uninterrupted service in this body, of more than twenty-one years, he has fallen, in the fulness of his honors, and in the midst of his usefulness. . . . Mr. Gaillard took his seat in the Senate on the 31st of January, 1805. . . . In 1810, (when he had been but five years a member,) Mr. Gaillard was elected President pro tempore of the Senate, to which office he was *nine times* most honorably chosen, having, for a period of *fourteen years*, presided over the deliberations of this Assembly. . . . In fulfilling his duties as a Senator, the solidity of his judgment and his dignified and unostentatious deportment, elicited the esteem and commanded the respect of his associates. But it was in the performance of the high duties of the presiding officer of the Senate, (which he discharged for a longer period than has fallen to the lot of any other man) that the conspicuous traits of his character were mostly fully developed. The ease and fidelity with which he fulfilled these duties,—always arduous, and often of the most difficult and delicate nature—his perfect command of temper—exemplary patience—

strict impartiality, and clear discernment—have never been surpassed, and seldom equalled. . . . So thorough was his acquaintance with Parliamentary forms, and especially with the practice of this House, and such was the confidence reposed in his justice, that his opinion on all questions of order was considered as a binding authority. Though Mr. Gaillard was not in the habit of engaging in debate, yet, when it became necessary for him to explain the grounds of his decision, or to shed the lights of his experience on questions before the Senate, no man could express himself with more simplicity, perspicuity, or force. I know not how better to sum up the merits of the deceased, than in the words of [Nathaniel Macon who] lately declared ‘that Mr. Gaillard was designed by nature to preside over such an assembly *as this*.’”

~ Senator Robert Y. Hayne of South Carolina, U.S. Congress, Senate, *Register of Debates*, 19th Cong., 1st sess., February 27, 1826, 110–111.



24. John Pope (*Kentucky*)

President Pro Tempore: 1811

Senate Service: March 4, 1807, to March 4, 1813

Party: Democratic Republican

Born: Prince William County, Virginia, 1770

Died: Washington County, Kentucky, July 12, 1845

Education: Completed preparatory studies; studied law.

Non-Senate Career: John Pope was admitted to the bar and practiced law in Washington, Shelby, and Fayette Counties in Kentucky. He was elected to Kentucky's house of representatives and served in 1802 and again from 1806 to 1807. After one term as a United States senator, he served in the state senate from 1825 to 1829 and became territorial governor of Arkansas from 1829 to 1835. He resumed the practice of law in Springfield, Kentucky, and concluded his public service career as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, serving from March 4, 1837, to March 3, 1843.

Observations: "In the United States Senate, Mr. Pope's talents were displayed with exemplary zeal and brilliancy. During the earlier years of his six-year term he was recognized as one of the leaders of the Republican party in the Senate. In 1810 he was signally honored by being chosen president pro tem of that body."

~ Orval W. Baylor, "The Life and Times of John Pope—1770–1845," *The Filson Club History Quarterly* 15 (April 1941): 61–62.

"Following his short career in the Kentucky legislature, that body elected him to the United States Senate in 1806. A few months after he took office in Washington, he wrote to a friend: 'I have embarked in political life and mean to make a business of it. I occupy much higher ground here both on the scale of talents and republicanism than either you or myself expected; except Breckinridge no man from the West ever had more popularity in Congress.' Whether due to his popularity or his ability as a legislator, Pope's colleagues elevated him to the position of president pro tempore in 1811, an honor rare for first-term senators."

~ George T. Blakey, "Rendezvous with Republicanism: John Pope vs. Henry Clay in 1816," *Indiana History* 62 (September 1966): 234–35.

Further Reading: Baylor, Orval. *John Pope, Kentuckian: His Life and Times, 1770–1845*. Cynthiana, KY: The Hobson Press, 1943



25. William Harris Crawford (*Georgia*)

President Pro Tempore: 1812–1813

Senate Service: November 7, 1807, to March 23, 1813

Party: Democratic Republican

Born: Nelson County, Virginia, February 24, 1772

Died: Oglethorpe County, Georgia, September 15, 1834

Education: Received Classical education in a private school and in Richmond Academy, Augusta, Georgia; studied law.

Non-Senate Career: As a young man, William Harris Crawford taught English at the Richmond Academy in Augusta, Georgia. He was admitted to the bar in 1799 and began practicing law in Lexington, Georgia. Later that same year, he was appointed to prepare a digest of the laws of Georgia. He became a member of the state house of representatives and served from 1803 to 1807. Following his service in the United States Senate, he was appointed minister to France and served from 1813 until 1815. He was appointed secretary of war in 1815 and a year later moved to the Treasury Department as secretary of the treasury, where he served until 1825. Upon returning to Georgia in 1827, he was appointed judge of the northern circuit court, a position he held until his death.

Observations: “On March 23 [1812] the Senate adjourned because of the indisposition of the Vice President; the following day Crawford was elected president pro tempore on the first ballot. It is highly probable that Crawford’s subordination of partisan politics to issues and the impartiality of his criticism were significant factors in his being chosen. . . . Clinton had died within a month of his indisposition, and Crawford was elected president pro tempore at the next session. He seems not to have used his position to make partisan appointments or confer personal favors. . . .”

~ Chase C. Mooney, *William H. Crawford, 1772–1834* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1974), 28–29.

Further Reading: Green, Philip. *The Life of William Crawford*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965.



26. Joseph Bradley Varnum (*Massachusetts*)

President Pro Tempore: 1813–1814

Senate Service: June 29, 1811, to March 3, 1817

Party: Democratic Republican

Born: Dracut, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, January 29, 1750 or 1751

Died: Dracut, Massachusetts, September 21, 1821

Education: Self-taught.

Non-Senate Career: Joseph Bradley Varnum was a life-long farmer and served in the Revolutionary Army. He represented Dracut in the Massachusetts house of representatives from 1780 to 1785, and northern Middlesex County in the state senate from 1786 to 1795. During that time, he was a delegate to the state convention that ratified the federal Constitution in 1788. He was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1795 and served from March 4, 1795, to June 29, 1811, when he resigned to join the U.S. Senate. He was chairman of the House Committee on Elections from 1797 to 1799 and Speaker of the House from 1807 to 1811. After his U.S. Senate service, he became a delegate to the state constitutional convention in 1820 and a member of the state senate, where he served from 1817 until his death.

Committee Chair: Militia (1815–1817)

Observations: “Joseph Bradley Varnum was one of the patriots of the Revolution, one of the builders of our present form of government. He served in the army that won our independence; in the legislature of his State, which fed the fires of patriotism and kept alive the spirit of liberty in the hearts of the people; in the National House of Representatives, where he was twice elected Speaker, and in the United States Senate, where he served one term as president pro tem. Then served the people of Massachusetts as Chief Justice of one of its major courts. In every place he served well.”

~ William Henry Smith, *Speakers of the House of Representatives of the United States* (Baltimore, MD: Simon J. Gaeng, 1928), 47.



27. James Barbour (*Virginia*)

President Pro Tempore: 1819

Senate Service: January 2, 1815, to March 7, 1825

Party: Anti-Democrat/Whig

Born: “Frascati,” near Gordonsville, Orange County, Virginia, June 10, 1775

Died: Barboursville, Orange County, Virginia, June 7, 1842

Education: Attended the common schools; studied law.

Non-Senate Career: James Barbour was admitted to the bar in 1794 in Orange County, Virginia. He was deputy sheriff of Orange County before serving several terms in the Virginia house of delegates between 1796 and 1812. He was speaker of that body from 1809 to 1812. In 1812, he was elected governor of Virginia, a position he held until 1814. Following his U.S. Senate service, he served as secretary of war under President John Quincy Adams. In 1828, he became United States minister to England and served until 1829. He was chairman of the Whig National Convention in 1839 and also was the founder of the Orange Humane Society, for the education of poor children.

Committee Chair: Foreign Relations (1817–1821, 1823–1825); District of Columbia (1821–1823)

Observations: “Barbour also enjoyed the confidence of his colleagues in the Senate, who in 1819 elected him to the position of president pro tempore. . . . Barbour’s influence in the Senate rested primarily on two qualities: his capacity for hard work in committee, where he demonstrated both an understanding of complex issues and a willingness to engage in the give and take of practical politics, and his effectiveness in debate. . . . He loved the long roll and thunder of rhetoric, fashioned somewhat on the Burkean model. Possessing that dramatic instinct and romantic imagination common to the actor and the orator, he sought splendid imagery and classical allusions. His brother, Philip, observed that he could ‘clothe a beggarly idea in robes of royalty and call down the lightning of heaven to kill a gnat.’ . . . To many who heard him speak, Barbour was ‘a giant in language,’ an orator in the best tradition who, even in his old age, could speak extemporaneously for five hours and could deliver, by the admission of his opponent, ‘the ablest speech ever heard from the lips of any man.’”

~ Charles D. Lowery, *James Barbour, A Jeffersonian Republican* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1984), 104–105.



28. Nathaniel Macon (*North Carolina*)

President Pro Tempore: 1826–1827

Senate Service: December 13, 1815, to November 14, 1828

Party: Democratic Republican; Crawford Republican; Jacksonian

Born: Near Warrenton, Warren County, North Carolina, December 17, 1757

Died: ‘Buck Spring,’ near Macon, Warren County, North Carolina, June 29, 1837

Education: Pursued classical studies and attended the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University).

Non-Senate Career: Nathaniel Macon served in the Revolutionary War and was elected to the North Carolina state senate in 1781, 1782, and 1784. After moving to a plantation on the Roanoke River, he was elected in 1785 to the Continental Congress but declined to serve. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from March 4, 1791, to December 13, 1815, where he served as chairman of the House Committee on Revisal and Unfinished Business from 1797 to 1799, the House Committee on Claims from 1799 to 1801, and the House Committee on Public Expenditures from 1813 to 1815, and as Speaker of the House of Representatives from 1801 to 1807. Following service in the U.S. Senate, he ran for the vice presidency, unsuccessfully, in 1825. In 1835 he was chosen president of the state constitutional convention and became a presidential elector on the Democratic ticket in 1836.

Committee Chair: Foreign Relations (1817–1819, 1825–1828); Audit and Control of the Contingent Expenses (1821–1823)

Observations: “Yet how many Southerners have ever had a more distinguished career! Not only a Congressman, but Speaker of the House! Not only a Senator, but President of the Senate! Not only the friend and advisor of Jefferson, Jackson, and other Presidents, but a man who twice (or thrice) declined Cabinet positions, and received the electoral vote of so discriminating a state as Virginia for Vice-President! And not only a leader in the convention that remade the Constitution of his state in 1835, but the chief of that convention!”

~ Clarence Poe, “Nathaniel Macon, The Cincinnatus of America,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 37 (January 1938): 12.

In “what may well be deemed idiosyncratic in these days, he was punctual in the performance of all his minor duties to the Senate, attending its sittings to the moment, attending all the committees to which he was appointed, attending all the funerals of the members and officers of the Houses, always in time at every place where duty required him.”

~ Senator Thomas Hart Benton, *Thirty Years’ View* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1871), 1: 118.

Further Reading: Dodd, William E. *The Life of Nathaniel Macon*. Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards and Broughton, 1903; Cunningham, Noble E., Jr. “Nathaniel Macon and the Southern Protest against National Consolidation.” *North Carolina Historical Review* 32 (July 1955): 376–84.



29. Littleton Waller Tazewell (*Virginia*)

President Pro Tempore: 1832

Senate Service: December 7, 1824, to July 16, 1832

Party: Jackson Republican; Jacksonian

Born: Williamsburg, Virginia, December 17, 1774

Died: Norfolk, Virginia, May 6, 1860

Education: Privately tutored; graduated from the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1791; studied law.

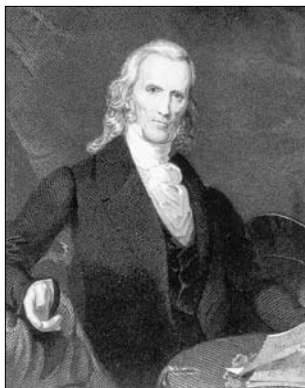
Non-Senate Career: After being admitted to the bar in 1796, Littleton W. Tazewell practiced law in James City County, Virginia. He became a member of the Virginia state house of delegates in 1798 and served until 1800. Following service in the U.S. House of Representatives from November 26, 1800, until March 3, 1801, he moved to Norfolk, Virginia, and served again in the Virginia general assembly from 1804 to 1806, and for a third time from 1816 until 1817. In 1821, he was one of the commissioners of claims under the treaty with Spain ceding Florida. He was a delegate to the state convention in 1829, during his U.S. Senate service, and was governor of Virginia from 1834 until his retirement in 1836. Littleton Tazewell's father, Henry Tazewell, also served in the U.S. Senate and was elected president pro tempore in 1803 and 1804.

Committee Chair: Foreign Relations (1827–1832)

Observations: Just “one day after Tazewell’s election as president pro tempore, Congress received [President Andrew Jackson’s] message vetoing the act to recharter the Bank of the United States. . . . The veto message touched off an outpouring of violent opinions greater than any since Webster and Hayne had engaged in verbal combat, and Tazewell, in the chair, presided over a wild scene. Webster cried ‘despotism’ and likened Jackson to ‘James the Second of England, a month before he was compelled to fly the kingdom,’ or to Louis XIV of France, who had the audacity to declare, ‘I AM THE STATE’ The Senators from Missouri and Kentucky exchanged abusive remarks, with Benton defending the president and Clay recalling Jackson’s propensity to take the law into his own hands by resorting to various forms of physical violence. Both hurled charges of ‘atrocious calumny’ as Tazewell attempted to gavel them to order. . . . The session had been the most exciting and exasperating Tazewell had experienced.”

~ Norma Lois Peterson, *Littleton Waller Tazewell* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983), 210–212.

Further Reading: Sawers, Timothy R. “The Public Career of Littleton Waller Tazewell, 1824–1836.” Ph.D. dissertation, Miami University, 1972.



30. Hugh Lawson White (*Tennessee*)

President Pro Tempore: 1832–1833

Senate Service: October 28, 1825, to January 13, 1840

Party: Jacksonian; Anti-Jackson; Whig

Born: Iredell County, North Carolina, October 30, 1773

Died: Knoxville, Tennessee, April 10, 1840

Education: Pursued classical studies in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; studied law in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Non-Senate Career: Prior to pursuing his education in Pennsylvania, Hugh Lawson White became private secretary to William Blount, the territorial governor of Tennessee. In 1793, he participated in an expedition against the Cherokee Indians. After he studied law in Pennsylvania, he returned to Knoxville, was admitted to the bar in 1796, and practiced law. He became judge of the state superior court from 1801 to 1807 and served in Tennessee’s state senate from 1807 to 1809. In 1808 he was appointed United States district attorney, and then served as judge of the state supreme court from 1809 to 1815. He was president of the state bank from 1812 to 1827, and again served in the state senate from 1817 until 1825, when he entered the United States Senate.

Committee Chair: Indian Affairs (1827–1840)

Observations: “[White’s] grave and venerable form is even now before us—the air of patient attention, of grave deliberation, of unrelaxed firmness. Here his position was of the highest—beloved, respected, honored; always in his place—always prepared for the business at hand—always bringing to it the treasured reflections of a sedate and vigorous understanding.”

~ Senator William Preston of South Carolina, quoted in Kenneth McKellar, *Tennessee Senators, As Seen by One of their Successors* (Kingsport, TN: Southern Publishers, Inc., 1942), 181.

Further Reading: Gresham, L. Paul. “The Public Career of Hugh Lawson White.” Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1943; Scott, Nancy, ed. *A Memoir of Hugh Lawson White*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1856.



31. George Poindexter (*Mississippi*)

President Pro Tempore: 1834

Senate Service: October 15, 1830, to March 3, 1835

Party: Jacksonian; Anti-Jackson

Born: Louisa County, Virginia, in 1779

Died: Jackson, Mississippi, September 5, 1853

Education: Studied law.

Non-Senate Career: After he was admitted to the bar in 1800, George Poindexter practiced law in Milton, Virginia. He moved to the Mississippi Territory in 1802 and practiced law in Natchez. In 1805, he was appointed attorney general of the Mississippi Territory. He became a member of the territorial general assembly in 1805 and a delegate to Congress from the Mississippi Territory in 1807. He served as United States district judge for the territory from 1813 until 1817. Poindexter became a member of the U.S. House of Representatives on December 10, 1817, and served in that body until March 3, 1819. In the House, he served as chairman of the Committee on Public Lands from 1817 until 1819. He was then elected governor of Mississippi and served from 1820 until 1822. Following his Senate service, he resumed the practice of law until his death.

Committee Chair: Private Land Claims (1831–1833); Public Lands (1833–1835)

Observations: “He was never without a quarrel on his hands, and for the settle of these he used the courts, his fists, his cane, his riding crop, his pistols, and his superb vocabulary of invective.”

~ Mack Swearingen, *The Early Life of George Poindexter*, quoted in “Two Irascible Antebellum Senators,” *Journal of Mississippi History* 46 (February 1984): 20.

“To honor Poindexter for his sharp attack on the administration [during the bank war], the Whig majority chose him, in June of 1834, to be president pro tempore of the Senate. The Jacksonians were furious. Not only were the bitter feelings between Poindexter and Old Hickory well known, but the Mississippian was one of two senators—Calhoun being the other—who were not on good personal terms with Vice President Van Buren. The Democrats regarded his election as an attempt to ‘disgrace the Chair, in which Mr. Van Buren has been placed by the People of the United States.’ One editor said: ‘This man . . . yet rank with the fumes of a low debauch, his step yet tottering, and his eyes rolling with a drunken leer, this man, all filth and vermon [*sic*], called, probably, from a brothel or a gin cellar, to the Senate Chamber, this man, they choose . . . to preside over the Senate of the United States.’”

~ Edwin A. Miles, “Andrew Jackson and Senator George Poindexter,” *The Journal of Southern History* 24 (February 1958): 60.

Further Reading: Smith, Suanna. “George Poindexter: A Political Biography.” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern Mississippi, 1980; Swearingen, Mack. *The Early Life of George Poindexter*. New Orleans: Tulane University Press, 1934.



32. John Tyler (*Virginia*)

President Pro Tempore: 1835

Senate Service: March 4, 1827, to February 29, 1836

Party: Democratic Republican; Jacksonian; Anti-Jackson

Born: Charles City County, Virginia, March 29, 1790

Died: Richmond, Virginia, January 18, 1862

Education: Attended private schools; graduated from the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1807; studied law.

Non-Senate Career: John Tyler was admitted to Virginia's bar in 1809 and practiced law in Charles City County. He was a member of the state house of delegates from 1811 to 1816 and became captain of a military company in 1813. In 1816, he became a member of the council of state and was then elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, serving from December 17, 1816, to March 3, 1821. He declined to be a candidate for renomination in 1820 because of impaired health. He was again elected to the state house of delegates, serving from 1823 to 1825, before becoming governor of Virginia from 1825 to 1827. While serving as one of Virginia's U.S. senators, he was a delegate to Virginia's state constitutional convention in 1829 and 1830. Following his U.S. Senate service, he became a member of the state house of delegates for a third time in 1839. He was elected vice president of the United States on the Whig ticket with William Henry Harrison in 1840, was inaugurated March 4, 1841, and served until the death of President Harrison on April 4, 1841, when he became president of the United States. He took the oath of

office as president on April 6, 1841, and served until March 3, 1845. He was a delegate to and president of the peace convention held in Washington, D.C., in 1861 in an effort to devise means to prevent the impending war, and a delegate to the Confederate Provisional Congress in 1861 after Virginia seceded from the Union. Although he had been elected to the House of Representatives of the Confederate Congress, he died before the assembling of that Congress.

Committee Chair: District of Columbia (1833–1836); Manufactures (1833–1835)

Observations: “Tyler received a signal honor at the hands of his colleagues. In the evening of March 3 he was elected president *pro tempore* of the Senate, and for the few hours between six o'clock and midnight he presided over that body.”

~ Oliver P. Chitwood, *John Tyler: Champion of the Old South* (Newtown, CT: American Political Biography Press, 1939/1990), 132.

Further Reading: Monroe, Dan. *The Republican Vision of John Tyler*. College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2003.



33. William Rufus de Vane King (*Alabama*)

President Pro Tempore: 1836–1837, 1839–1841, 1850–1852

Senate Service: December 14, 1819, to April 15, 1844; July 1, 1848, to December 20, 1852

Party: Democratic Republican; Jacksonian; Democrat

Born: Sampson County, North Carolina, April 7, 1786

Died: “King’s Bend” plantation, Alabama, April 18, 1853

Education: Attended private schools; graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1803; studied law.

Non-Senate Career: William Rufus de Vane King was admitted to the bar in 1806 and practiced law in Clinton, North Carolina. He was a member of the state house of commons from 1807 to 1809 and city solicitor of Wilmington, North Carolina, in 1810. King was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and served from March 4, 1811, until November 4, 1816. He resigned from the House to serve as secretary of the legation at Naples and later at St. Petersburg. He returned to the United States in 1818 and settled in Alabama, where he was a planter. In 1819, he was a delegate to the convention that organized the Alabama state government. Between his two tenures as U.S. senator, from 1844 until 1846, he served as minister to France, and in 1853, he became the 13th vice president of the United States.

Committee Chair: Public Lands (1831–1833); Commerce (1831–1833, 1837–1841); Foreign Relations (1849–1851); Pensions (1849–1851)

Observations: “The Federal Constitution devolves upon the people, through the medium of the Electoral Colleges, the choice of the presiding officer of this body. But whenever the Senate was called to supply the place temporarily, for a long course of years, and till he ceased to belong to it, it turned spontaneously to [King].”

He undoubtedly owed this honor to distinguished qualifications for the chair. He possessed, in an eminent degree, that quickness of perception, that promptness of decision, that familiarity with the now somewhat complicated rules of congressional proceedings, and that urbanity of manner, which are required in a presiding officer. . . . [King] possessed the rare and the highly important talent of controlling, with impartiality, the storm of debate, and moderating between mighty spirits, whose ardent conflicts at times seemed to threaten the stability of the Republic.

In fact, sir, he was highly endowed with what Cicero beautifully commends as the *boni Senatoris prudentia*, the ‘wisdom of a good Senator;’ and in his accurate study and ready application of the rules of parliamentary law, he rendered a service to the country, not perhaps of the most brilliant kind, but assuredly of no secondary importance.”

~ Senator Edward Everett, *Congressional Globe*, 33rd Cong., 1st sess., December 8, 1853, 20.

Further Reading: Martin, John M. “William Rufus King: Southern Moderate.” Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1955; U.S. Congress. *Memorial Addresses*. 33rd Cong., 1st sess., 1853. Washington, D.C.: Armstrong, 1854.



34. Samuel Lewis Southard (*New Jersey*)

President Pro Tempore: 1841–1842

Senate Service: January 26, 1821, to March 3, 1823; December 2, 1833, to June 26, 1842

Party: Democratic Republican; Anti-Jackson; Whig

Born: Basking Ridge, Somerset County, New Jersey, June 9, 1787

Died: Fredericksburg, Virginia, June 26, 1842

Education: Attended the village school; graduated from the College of New Jersey (now Princeton College) in 1804; studied law.

Non-Senate Career: Samuel Lewis Southard worked as a tutor for a family near Fredericksburg, Virginia, in 1805. He was admitted to Virginia's bar in 1809, moved back to New Jersey, and began practicing law in Flemington in 1811. He was elected to New Jersey's general assembly in 1815 but sat for only a few days before he was appointed associate justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court, serving from 1815 to 1820. Following his first term in the U.S. Senate, he became secretary of the navy, serving for Presidents Monroe and Adams from 1823 to 1829. He also served as secretary of the treasury ad interim in 1825 and secretary of war ad interim in 1828. Southard returned to Trenton after Andrew Jackson's election as president and was appointed attorney general of New Jersey in 1829. He served as governor of New Jersey from 1832 to 1833, before returning to the U.S. Senate.

Committee Chair: Naval Affairs (1833–1837)

Observations: “The soundness of his judgment, the candor of his disposition, the sweetness of his temper, and the firmness of his adherence to his own sense of right were, to me, as a colleague and a confidential assistant and advisor, a treasure beyond all price.”

~ John Quincy Adams, June 28, 1842, quoted in Michael Birkner, *Samuel L. Southard: Jeffersonian Whig* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984), 198–99.

“The major anxiety afflicting Southard during the early months of the session was breaking the ice on the Senate floor and offering a maiden speech. Despite his legal background and his modest reputation as an orator, Southard had always been nervous about public speaking, and in such a forum as the United States Senate he was practically paralyzed. Opportunities to speak out on various minor issues abounded, but Southard could not bring himself to rise. December and January passed, and still he had not taken the floor. Friends, newspaper editors, and even his father, began to wonder aloud whether he would ever make his speaking debut. Finally in early February, Southard resolved to rise during a secret session of the Senate, when he would not have to face a gallery of interested onlookers. But even though he had points he wanted to make during that session, his paralysis continued to grip him, and he did not rise. ‘As I sat in my room at night reflecting on the business of the day,’ he later confessed to his wife, ‘I felt mortified at my own folly, in not daring to speak when my duty seemed to require it.’”

~ Michael Birkner, *Samuel L. Southard: Jeffersonian Whig* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984), 55.

Further Reading: Ershkowitz, Herbert. “Samuel L. Southard: A Case Study of Whig Leadership in the Age of Jackson.” *New Jersey History* 88 (Spring 1970): 5–24.



35. Willie Person Mangum (*North Carolina*)

President Pro Tempore: 1842–1845

Senate Service: March 4, 1831, to November 26, 1836; November 25, 1840, to March 3, 1853

Party: Jacksonian; Anti-Jackson; Whig

Born: Orange (now Durham) County, North Carolina, May 10, 1792

Died: Red Mountain, North Carolina, September 7, 1861

Education: Attended academies at Hillsboro, Fayetteville, and Raleigh; graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1815; studied law.

Non-Senate Career: Willie Person Mangum was admitted to the bar in 1817 and practiced law in Red Mountain, North Carolina. He was a member of the state house of representatives from 1818 until 1819 and was twice elected a state superior court judge. In 1823, he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and served from March 4, 1823, until March 18, 1826. In 1837, following his first term as U.S. senator, he received South Carolina's 11 electoral votes for president of the United States. Following his second U.S. Senate tenure, he continued to practice law until his death.

Committee Chair: Naval Affairs (1841–1843); Printing (1841–1843)

Observations: “He presides in the Senate and occupies the Vice-President’s room in the Capitol. He is a man above the common size, of fair complexion and commanding air, rather grave in his manners, but very agreeable and appears to be kind-hearted. His voice is clear, sufficiently loud and distinct to be heard all over the Senate chamber and its gallery. On the whole, he is, taking him all in all, the best presiding officer that I ever saw in any legislative assembly. He is always at his ease, always dignified and always agreeable.”

~ Caleb Atwater, *Mysteries of Washington City, During Several Months of the Session of the 28th Congress* (Washington, D.C.: G. A. Sage, 1844), 131.

“It was in [the Senate] that he made his great reputation. . . . In the Senate he became a hard worker, forceful debater, and capable party leader. . . . On May 31, 1842, Mangum was elected president *pro tempore* of the Senate—a position he held until 1845. Since the Vice President, Tyler, had assumed the office of President on the death of Harrison, Mangum was by virtue of his office next in succession to the presidency. Tyler’s narrow escape from the tragic accident on the *U.S.S. Princeton* in 1844 measured the margin of chance by which Mangum failed to become President. When his position of presiding officer drew to a close on March 4, 1845, he initiated the practice of turning back the clock to lengthen the legislative day of the out-going administration.”

~ Willie Mangum, *The Papers of Willie Person Mangum*, ed. Henry Thomas Shanks (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1950), 1: xxvii.

Further Reading: Hoffmann, William S. “Willie P. Mangum and the Whig Revival of the Doctrine of Instructions.” *Journal of Southern History* 22 (August 1956): 338–54.



36. Ambrose Hundley Sevier (*Arkansas*)

President Pro Tempore: 1845

Senate Service: September 18, 1836, to March 15, 1848

Party: Jacksonian; Democrat

Born: Greene County, Tennessee, November 4, 1801

Died: Pulaski County, Arkansas, December 31, 1848

Education: Studied law.

Non-Senate Career: Ambrose Hundley Sevier moved to Arkansas in 1820 and became clerk of the territorial house of representatives in 1821. He was admitted to the bar in 1823, and that same year, was elected to the territorial house of representatives. He served from 1823 to 1827 and was chosen speaker in 1827. In 1828, he became a delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives, serving from February 13, 1828, until June 15, 1836, when Arkansas was admitted to the Union. After serving two terms as one of Arkansas's first U.S. senators, Sevier resigned his Senate seat and was appointed minister to Mexico to negotiate the treaty of peace between that Republic and the United States.

Committee Chair: Indian Affairs (1839–1841, 1845–1847); Foreign Relations (1845–1848)

Observations: By 1840, Sevier “had already come to realize that he could afford to retain his natural political style in the Senate. That style was direct, exuberant, aggressive, and hostile to any veneer of sophistication. Sevier’s forte was bluntness, a manner befitting his power in Arkansas politics. He often seems to have taken a great delight in flaunting his crudeness and disregard for political niceties.”

~ Brian G. Walton, “Ambrose Hundley in the Senate,” *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 32 (Spring 1973): 38.

Sevier is “a political partisan of the most ultra-radical type. . . . This is one of those rough and tumble geniuses which no country can produce but ours; and in ours, only the extreme western portion.”

~ *New York Express*, quoted in *Arkansas State Gazette*, June 21, 1843.



37. David Rice Atchison (*Missouri*)

President Pro Tempore: 1846–1849, 1852–1854

Senate Service: October 14, 1843, to March 3, 1855

Party: Democrat

Born: Frogtown, Kentucky, August 11, 1807

Died: Near Gower, Clinton County, Missouri, January 26, 1886

Education: Attended Transylvania University, Lexington, Kentucky; studied law.

Non-Senate Career: In 1829, David Atchison was admitted to the bar and began practicing law in Liberty, Clay County, Missouri. He also engaged in agricultural pursuits. He became a member of the Missouri state house of representatives in 1834, and again in 1838, and was appointed judge of the Platte County circuit court in 1841. Following his Senate career, he resumed the practice of law.

Committee Chair: Militia (1845–1847); Indian Affairs (1847–1853)

Observations: “In Missouri, there is a statue of Senator Atchison that identifies him as president of the United States for one day, March 4, 1849. Since the traditional day for presidential inaugurations, then March 4, fell on a Sunday that year, President-elect Zachary Taylor waited until Monday to be sworn in. Senator Atchison based his claim to the presidency that Sunday on the grounds that, as president pro tempore, he was next in the line of succession—although he never took the presidential oath. When asked later about his ‘presidency,’ Senator Atchison liked to say, ‘That was the honestest administration this country ever had.’ Although scholars dismiss Atchison’s claim, he did in fact come close to becoming president four years later. In 1853, on his way to Washington, President-elect Franklin Pierce was in a train wreck that took the life of his only child. If Pierce had not survived the accident, David R. Atchison, as president pro tempore, would have succeeded

to the presidency, since Vice President [William R.] King died a month after the inauguration.”

~ U.S. Congress, Senate, *The Senate, 1789–1989, Addresses on the History of the United States Senate*, by Robert C. Byrd, vol. 2, S. Doc. 100–20, 100th Cong., 1st sess., 1991, 177.

Further Reading: Atchison, Theodore. “David R. Atchison, A Study in American Politics.” *Missouri Historical Review* 24 (July 1930): 502–15; Parrish, William E. *David Rice Atchison of Missouri: Border Politician* Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1961.



38. Lewis Cass (*Michigan*)

President Pro Tempore: 1854

Senate Service: March 4, 1845, to May 29, 1848; March 4, 1849, to March 3, 1857

Party: Democrat

Born: Exeter, New Hampshire, October 9, 1782

Died: Detroit, Michigan, June 17, 1866

Education: Attended Exeter Academy; studied law.

Non-Senate Career: Lewis Cass taught school in Wilmington, Delaware, moved to the Northwest Territory in 1801, and settled on a farm near Zanesville, Ohio. He was admitted to the Ohio bar in 1802 and served in the state house of representatives in 1806. He was United States marshal for the district of Ohio from 1807 to 1812, when he resigned to enlist in the army. From 1813 to 1814, he served in the United States Army, attaining the rank of brigadier general. He was appointed military and civil governor of Michigan Territory, where he served from 1813 to 1831. He settled in Detroit, and in 1831 President Andrew Jackson appointed him secretary of war. He resigned in 1836, having been appointed envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to France. He served in that diplomatic post from 1836 to 1842. He resigned from the Senate when he was nominated for president of the United States but was re-elected to the Senate to fill the same seat when he lost his presidential bid. Following his Senate service, he was secretary of state from 1857 until his resignation in 1860, when he returned to Detroit and engaged in literary pursuits.

Committee Chair: Military Affairs (1847–1848)

Observations: “His strength of will, his clearness of intellectual vision, his rare judgment of practical matters, his independence of opinion, his fullness of learning, his patience in acquisition, his hours of close and protracted application, his temperate habits and his simple mode of life are too well known to require description. He was a public rather than a public-spirited man, tenacious of his opinion, though affable in his manners; a strong partisan and an obstinate and unyielding opponent.”
~ 1866 obituary, U.S. Senate Historical Office.

“Few American statesmen have rivaled Cass in the multiplicity of his public duties as soldier, territorial governor, Secretary of War, Minister to France, senatorial leader, presidential nominee, and Secretary of State. He was a firm believer in American democracy and in local sovereignty. He tried to save this nation from Civil War.”

~ Senator Blair Moody, U.S. Congress, Senate, *Congressional Record*, 82nd Cong., 1st sess., A6349.

Further Reading: Klunder, Willard C. *Lewis Cass and the Politics of Moderation*. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1996; Wooford, Frank B. *Lewis Cass: The Last Jeffersonian*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950.



39. Jesse David Bright (*Indiana*)

President Pro Tempore: 1854–1856, 1856–1857, 1860

Senate Service: March 4, 1845, to February 5, 1862

Party: Democrat

Born: Norwich, Chenango County, New York, December 18, 1812

Died: Baltimore, Maryland, May 20, 1875

Education: Attended public schools in Madison, Indiana; studied law.

Non-Senate Career: Jesse D. Bright was admitted to the bar in 1831 and practiced law in Madison, Jefferson County, Indiana. In 1834, he became judge of the probate court of Jefferson County. He then served as United States marshal for the district of Indiana from 1840 until 1841. He was a member of the Indiana state senate from 1841 until 1843 and the lieutenant governor of Indiana from 1843 until 1845. After Bright was expelled from the U.S. Senate for supporting the rebellion, he moved to Kentucky and was elected to the Kentucky state house of representatives, serving from 1866 until 1871. He then moved to Baltimore, Maryland, and was president of the Raymond City Coal Co. from 1871 until his death.

Committee Chair: Enrolled Bills (1845–1847); Public Buildings (1845–1847); Revolutionary Claims (1847–1849); Roads and Canals (1849–1855); Public Buildings and Grounds (1857–1861)

Observations: [Bright] had natural talents of a high order, but was deficient in education and cultivation when he first went to the United States Senate. He is said to have violated rules of grammar not infrequently in his public speeches, but to have been so earnest in

his manner that his words burned into the minds of his hearers. His overwhelming energy and earnestness were great assets in addressing his hearers, and his oratory was that of the circuit lawyer of that time—loud, furious, violent, and heavy with historical comparison and political platitudes.”

~ Charles B. Murphy, *The Political Career of Jesse D. Bright* (Indianapolis: The Society, 1931), 106.

Bright “took the position seriously, and was always scrupulously just in the decisions he rendered regarding ordinary business, and in his decisions when individual members were involved. If he seemed a bit partisan when party benefits could be gained, one must remember that in those days it was common practice for the presiding officer to use his position for the advantage of his party.”

~ Charles B. Murphy, *The Political Career of Jesse D. Bright* (Indianapolis: The Society, 1931), 125.

Further Reading: Cooney, Charles F. “Treason or Tyranny? The Great Senate Purge of ’62.” *Civil War Times Illustrated* 18 (July 1979): 30–31; Murphy, Charles. “The Political Career of Jesse Bright.” *Indiana Historical Society Publications* 10 (1931): 101–45.



40. Charles Edward Stuart (*Michigan*)

President Pro Tempore: 1856

Senate Service: March 4, 1853, to March 3, 1859

Party: Democrat

Born: Near Waterloo, Columbia County, New York, November 25, 1810

Died: Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 19, 1887

Education: Studied law.

Non-Senate Career: Charles Edward Stuart was admitted to the New York bar in 1832 and began practicing law in Waterloo. He moved to Michigan in 1835 and settled in Kalamazoo. In 1842, he served in the state house of representatives and then was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in a special election, serving from December 6, 1847, to March 3, 1849. He served again in the House from March 4, 1851, to March 3, 1853. He was chairman of the House Committee on Expenditures in the Department of State from 1851 to 1853. After serving one term in the U.S. Senate, he resumed the practice of law. During the Civil War he raised and equipped the Thirteenth Regiment, Michigan Volunteer Infantry, of which he was commissioned colonel, but he resigned because of ill health.

Committee Chair: Public Lands (1855–1859)

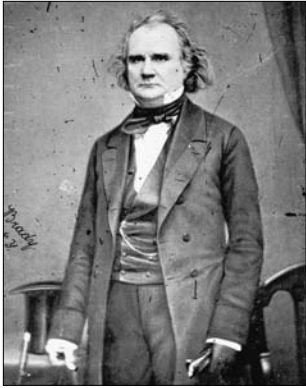
Observations: Stuart “was for two terms a member of the United States house of representative and served one term of six years in the United States senate. During his last term of office in the house he moved and

made a persistent effort and accomplished the passage of the law making a landed appropriation for the construction of the Sault St Marie canal—a law that has added more to the wealth of Michigan than almost any other that was ever enacted. Mr. Stuart was one of the very ablest presiding officers of a deliberative assembly that Michigan has ever produced. In his rulings on questions of parliamentary law he was rarely at fault, and in his political positions he always showed remarkable ability and a memory capable of absorbing and retaining a vast amount of knowledge on affairs in general.”

~ 1887 obituary, U.S. Senate Historical Office.

“If I were to characterize [Stuart] in a single sentence, I should say that he had large observation and intuitive knowledge of human nature; a judgment that made few mistakes; remarkable coolness and self-possession; courage, quick decision, and great firmness of will; natural logic in handling facts; and an easy, graceful, and most persuasive eloquence, assisted and set off by an unusually rich and sonorous voice, and a commanding dignity of carriage and gesture.”

~ Eulogy by Charles S. May, 1887, quoted in *The Kalamazoo Daily Telegraph*, November 21, 1894.



41. James Murray Mason (*Virginia*)

President Pro Tempore: 1857

Senate Service: January 21, 1847, to March 28, 1861

Party: Democrat

Born: Analostan Island, Fairfax County, Virginia (now Theodore Roosevelt Island, Washington, D.C.), November 3, 1798

Died: “Clarens,” near Alexandria, Virginia, April 28, 1871

Education: Privately tutored at an academy at Georgetown, D.C.; graduated from the University of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia in 1818; graduated from the law department of William and Mary College, Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1820.

Non-Senate Career: James Murray Mason was admitted to the bar in 1820 and practiced law in Winchester, Virginia. He was a delegate to the Virginia constitutional convention in 1829 and a member of the state house of delegates in 1826 and again from 1829 until 1831. Mason was a presidential elector on the Democratic ticket in 1832. He served as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from March 4, 1837, until March 3, 1839. After Mason was expelled from the U.S. Senate in 1861 for support of the rebellion, he became a delegate from Virginia to the Provisional Congress of the Confederacy and was appointed commissioner of the Confederacy to Great Britain and France. While on his way to his post, he was taken prisoner from the British mail steamer Trent on November 8, 1861, and confined in Fort Warren, Boston Harbor. He was released in January 1862 and proceeded to London, where he represented the Confederacy until its downfall in April 1865. He resided in Canada after the close of the war until 1868, when he returned to Virginia.

Committee Chair: Claims (1847–1849); District of Columbia (1849–1851); Foreign Relations (1851–1861); Naval Affairs (1851–1853)

Observations: “True to the high behests of his public duty, [Mason] is diligent in his attention to business, and the record of debates shows that he never hesitates to express his convictions upon all public measures, or to criticize the public conduct of public men. . . . His speeches show a high order of talent, which has been ripened and improved by long experience in political affairs. Arranging the points which he wishes to establish as systematically as Euclid laid down his problems, he so demonstrates their truths as he proceeds, calling to his aid time-honored authorities, that when he arrives at the closing argument the whole is geometrically proven. . . . In person, Senator Mason is stalwart and well-formed, with a fine, imposing head, a pleasing countenance, and a keen eye. One of the few remaining polished links between the statesmen of the past and present generations, his manners are courtly, and the genial warmth of his heart endears him to a large circle of relatives and friends.”

~ *Harper’s Weekly*, March 20, 1858.

Further Reading: Bugg, James L., Jr. “The Political Career of James Murray Mason: The Legislative Phase.” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1950.



42. Thomas Jefferson Rusk (*Texas*)

President Pro Tempore: 1857

Senate Service: February 21, 1846, to July 29, 1857

Party: Democrat

Born: Pendleton District, South Carolina, December 5, 1803

Died: Nacogdoches, Texas, July 29, 1857

Education: Self-taught; studied law.

Non-Senate Career: Thomas Rusk practiced law in Georgia before moving to Nacogdoches, Texas, in 1835. He was a delegate to the convention which declared for the independence of Texas in 1836 and became the first secretary of war of the new Republic. At the Battle of San Jacinto, he took command of the forces and retained command until October 1836, when he resumed his duties as secretary of war. He was a member of the Second Congress of the Republic of Texas and chief justice of the supreme court of Texas from 1838 to 1842. In 1843, he was appointed major general of militia of the Republic of Texas and served as president of the convention that confirmed the annexation of Texas to the United States in 1845.

Committee Chair: Enrolled Bills (1847–1851); Militia (1847–1849); Engrossed Bills (1847–1849); Post Office and Post Roads (1849–1857)

Observations: “Rusk was a most decided partisan, but no man ever doubted his sincerity. In manner he was blunt, frank and out-spoken; and in heart genial and kind. There was no guile in him. His position was always well defined and not to be mistaken. As an adversary he was bold, powerful, earnest and sincere. Conscious of his own integrity he conceded the same virtue to his colleagues. As a friend he was reliable; and in his whole life an exemplification of that true chivalry so often theorized and so seldom to be found. Eminently practical, possessed of an unusual share of plain common sense, liberal in his views of public policy, and ready at all times to join hands with whoever could aid him in accomplishing a public end, regardless of party affiliations, he has made his mark in the Senate Chamber on a host of successful public measures.”

~ *New York Daily Times*, August 5, 1857.

Further Reading: Clarke, Mary. *Thomas J. Rusk: Soldier, Statesman, Jurist*. Austin: Jenkins Publishing Company, 1971; Huston, Cleburne. *Towering Texan: A Biography of Thomas J. Rusk*. Waco: Texian Press, 1971.



43. Benjamin Fitzpatrick (*Alabama*)

President Pro Tempore: 1857–1860

Senate Service: November 25, 1848, to November 30, 1849; January 14, 1853, to March 3, 1855; November 26, 1855, to January 21, 1861

Party: Democrat

Born: Greene County, Georgia, June 30, 1802

Died: Near Wetumpka, Alabama, November 21, 1869

Education: Attended public schools in Alabama; studied law.

Non-Senate Career: In 1823, Benjamin Fitzpatrick was admitted to the bar and began practicing law in Montgomery, Alabama. He was elected solicitor of the Montgomery circuit and served from 1822 until 1823. A plantation owner, Fitzpatrick also served as governor of Alabama from 1841 until 1845. Following his Senate service, he served as president of the constitutional convention of Alabama in 1865.

Committee Chair: Printing (1853–1855); Engrossed Bills (1853–1855)

Observations: “The . . . Senator from Alabama, Benjamin Fitzpatrick, was a model of senatorial frankness. . . . He was a plain, old-fashioned miller, and not a man of conspicuous ability. He had not the audacity peculiar to men of dash and skill. . . .”

~ Samuel S. Cox, *Union—Disunion—Reunion: Three Decades of Federal Legislation* (Providence: J.A. & R.A. Reid, 1894), 60, 87.

“In 1855 the [Alabama State] legislature elected Fitzpatrick to serve a full term, which he did with great distinction. During President James Buchanan’s administration, Fitzpatrick was chosen to serve as president pro tempore of the Senate for the three years before the war, the only Alabamian other than [Rufus] King to have this distinction. His senatorial service was recognized as one of personal integrity, dedication, fairmindedness, and commitment to the public trust.”

~ Elbert L. Watson, *Alabama United States Senators* (Huntsville, AL: Strode Publishers, 1982), 51.

Further Reading: Roberts, Shepherd H. “Benjamin Fitzpatrick and the Vice-Presidency.” In *Studies in Southern and Alabama History*, ed. George Patrie, 46–53. Montgomery: Alabama Polytechnic Institute, 1904.

