

# HARDWARE

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### Five Minute Chats on Our Presidents

By JAMES MORGAN

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JAMES MONROE

1758—(April 28) James Monroe born in Westmoreland county, Va.  
1776—Graduated William and Mary. Entered the army.  
1782—In the legislature.  
1783-86—In the Continental congress.  
1787—In the legislature.  
1788—In the state constitutional convention.  
1790-4—In the senate.  
1794-6—Minister to France.  
1799-1802—Governor of Virginia.  
1803-8—In the diplomatic service.  
1809-10—In the legislature.  
1811—Governor.  
1811-17—Secretary of state.

NO OTHER president, with the exception of John Quincy Adams, has served the country as long as James Monroe and, without exception, none has had an official experience so varied.

From 1776, when he was a vigorous, six-foot, broad shouldered, raw-boned boy of eighteen, and left William and Mary's college to enter the Revolution, Monroe remained in the public service until 1825, when he retired from the White House a wrinkled, care bent, impoverished old man. In those 49 years, he had been a minor military officer under Washington; repeatedly a member of the legislature, and of the national senate; twice governor of Virginia; minister to France, England and Spain; secretary of state and war at the same time and finally president for two terms.

Without wealth or family influence, with a slow, commonplace mind, with no gifts as a speaker; with a modest, awkward presence and plain, unpolished manners, this very ordinary man plodded up the ladder of ambition to its topmost rung. How? By sheer force of his rugged, courageous, in-



James Monroe.

dustrious, honest, loyal character—a triumph of the homely virtues.

Although he failed in some of his most important tasks, Monroe's failures were forgiven because they were honest mistakes. The ridicule and the disgrace brought upon him by the most spectacular episode of his undramatic life would have buried forever a man more brilliant and less sincere.

This remarkable scene was enacted on the highly theatrical stage of the national convention at Paris directly after the Reign of Terror and the fall of Robespierre, when France was the outcast among nations. At that moment Monroe appeared as the envoy of the only sister republic and, to let all the world see that the Revolution had at least one friend left on earth, the president of the convention melodramatically folded the rustic Virginia in his arms.

After two years, he was recalled for his zeal, and came home in a rage of indignation. Passing by the gate of Mount Vernon without paying his respects to Washington, he paid them instead in 500 pages which he published in defense of himself and in denunciation of the administration. Nevertheless, the discredited diplomat was sent to Paris again by President Jefferson in a few years, when he came away covered with success, and with the treaty for the purchase of Louisiana under his arm by a fitting prelude to the Monroe doctrine, 20 years later.

There is a most interesting souvenir of Monroe in Paris. Like Madison, he had fallen in love while a member of congress and had married Elizabeth Kortright of New York. Two children having been born to them, one of the girls was placed in the famous French school of Mme. Campan where she formed a friendship with Hortense Bonaparte that outlasted the many vicissitudes of Josephine's daughter.

Recently the notable figures in the court of the first consul of Malmaison were modeled and grouped about Napoleon for a celebrated wax works show in Paris. In that brilliant galaxy of monarchs and dukes yet to be, Eliza Monroe, in girlish prettiness, is seen again by the side of the future queen of Holland and the destined mother of Napoleon III.

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SLAYING DRAGONS

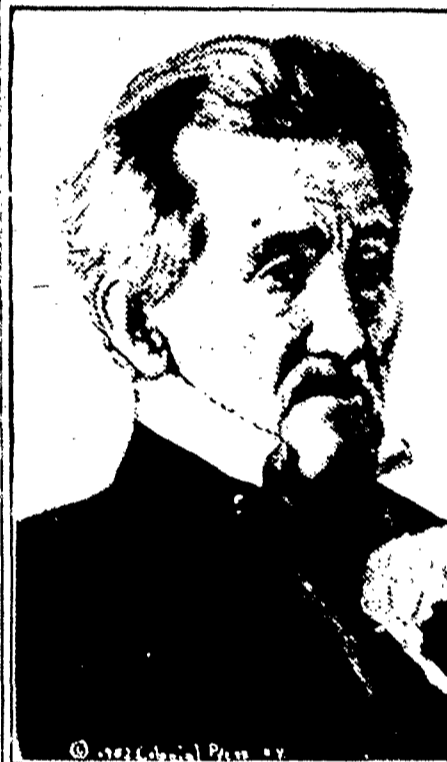
1828—Andrew Jackson elected president.  
1829—Inaugurated, seventh president, aged 61.  
1832—Vetoed bank bill suppressing nullifications. Re-elected triumphantly.  
1833—Removed the bank deposits.  
1834-5—Brought France to terms.  
1837—Jackson retired.  
1845—June 8, death of Jackson, aged 78.

JACKSON'S administration stands forth in the half-century between Jefferson and Lincoln because of two measures. One of these was the overthrow of the United States bank.

That great institution, patterned after the Bank of England and the Bank of France, was an efficient but dangerous partner for a democratic government. It was a money monopoly which could make or break any enterprise in the country; it held in its grasp the financial life of America; it received and distributed all the revenues of the nation and half of its deposits were public moneys; but, with only a fifth of its directors appointed by the government, it was not under public control.

When Jackson began his audacious fight upon the bank, it was at the height of its power. Against heavy odds, he vetoed the bill for rechartering it; took his case to the people in his campaign for re-election, and scored a complete victory. On the strength of that popular verdict he removed the government deposits and left the bank to a slow and ignominious collapse.

For this action the senate censured him. After a bitter fight, in which



Andrew Jackson in Old Age.

Jackson's one-time antagonist, Thomas H. Benton, now a senator from Missouri, was his champion, the resolution was expunged by drawing about it in the records a heavy black line.

Jackson was equally bold and victorious in meeting the threat of nullification, although it came from his own section, from his own party and from his own vice president, John C. Calhoun. Shortly before his inauguration congress passed the first tariff that was framed for the benefit of the new manufacturing industries which were springing up in New England. This bestowal of a special privilege aroused the jealousy of the agricultural South.

At a Democratic banquet in Washington in 1830, President Jackson rose and proposed this toast: "For Federal Union; it must be preserved." Then Vice President Calhoun got up and toasted the rights of the states. Thus the two highest officials of the government joined issue across that dinner table on a question which great armies would fight out in another generation.

Two years afterward a convention in South Carolina solemnly adopted an ordinance nullifying the tariff act for that state and forbidding within the boundaries of the state the collection of customs duties under it. While recommending to congress a modification of the offending tariff, Jackson appealed to the patriotism of the South Carolinians in a proclamation which set all the North and much of the South ringing with cheers; ordered General Scott to the scene of threatened trouble; re-enforced the forts of the dissatisfied state; dispatched a naval fleet to Charleston harbor, and only waited for the first overt act of revolt to give him warrant for arresting Calhoun and the other leaders. But the nullifiers nullified their nullification, leaving the resolute and patriotic president riding a high tide of popular favor.

Jackson's pre-eminent service to the country was rendered in his battle with nullification. "The tariff was only the pretext," he said, "disunion and a southern confederacy the real object. The next pretext will be the negro." Thanks to him, that irrepressible conflict had been postponed 25 years, until a great West should grow up and join hands with the East in saving the Union.

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