

# presidents of the *United States of America*



"I served as the 21st President of the United States and fought against corruption in the government."



**Chester A. Arthur**



# Become a Presidential Historian By Solving This Puzzle

In this magazine, you'll learn all sorts of facts about Chester A. Arthur's amazing life and accomplishments. But there's still one last thing we need to know about him.

Since his wife Nell died before he became president, there was no First Lady during his presidency. Someone else, however, performed many of the duties of the First Lady in Nell's place. We need your help to find out who she was. Your task is to help us uncover the answer! Hidden in the text are bolded letters. Read this magazine carefully to find them and fill the letters into the blanks below in the order they appear.

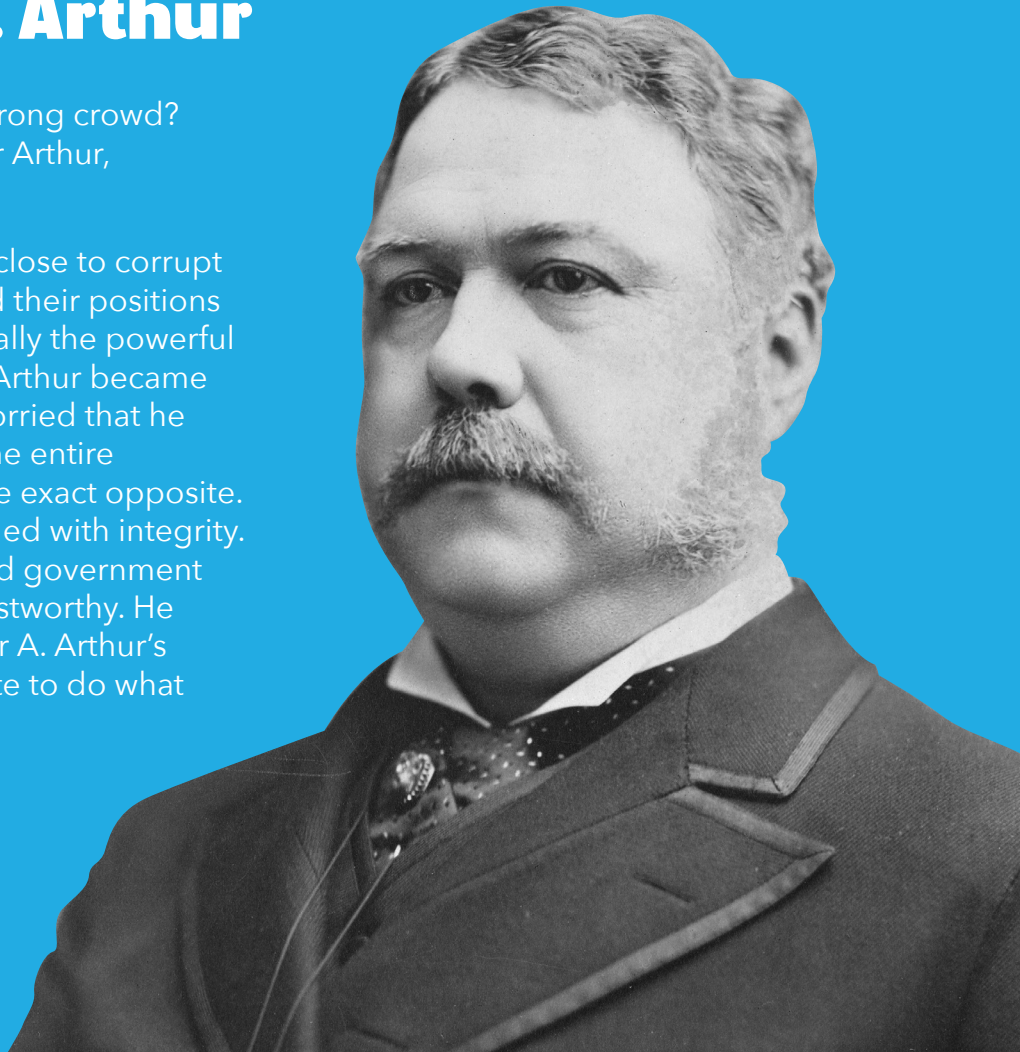


Once you've solved this puzzle, you'll be a true PragerU Kids presidential historian!

## Meet Chester A. Arthur

Have you ever hung out with the wrong crowd? That's what happened with Chester Arthur, America's 21st president.

For much of his career, Arthur was close to corrupt people in government who abused their positions to attain power and money, especially the powerful politician Roscoe Conkling. When Arthur became president in 1881, many people worried that he would introduce **corruption** into the entire government. Instead, Arthur did the exact opposite. He stood up to his old friends and led with integrity. **H**e signed a major law that required government workers to be more honest and trustworthy. He left off**i**ce a respected man. Chester A. Arthur's story shows us that it's never too late to do what **i**s right.



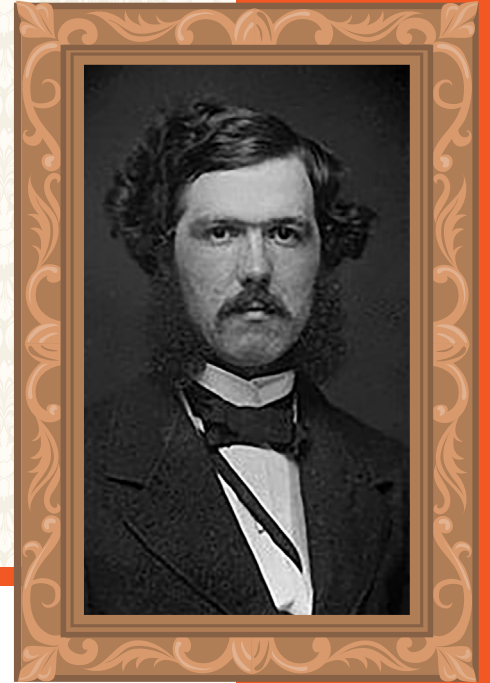
## Interesting Facts

- He was nicknamed the "Gentleman Boss."
- He was a member of the Republican Party.
- He was the first president to take the oath of office in his own home.
- He was the second president to take office because of the assassination of his predecessor.
- He was the first president who was born in Vermont.

## Young Chester

Chester Alan Arthur was born on October 5, 1829 in Fairfield, Vermont. He was the fifth of William and Malvina's children. His father William was a **minister** who traveled around New York State looking for a church he could pastor. Young Chester spent much of his childhood going from town to town with his family. In each location, he would make new friends, but would then have to start over with every move.

In 1845, when Chester was 15, he enrolled in Union College in Schenectady, New York. He was an average student there and loved pulling pranks on his classmates.

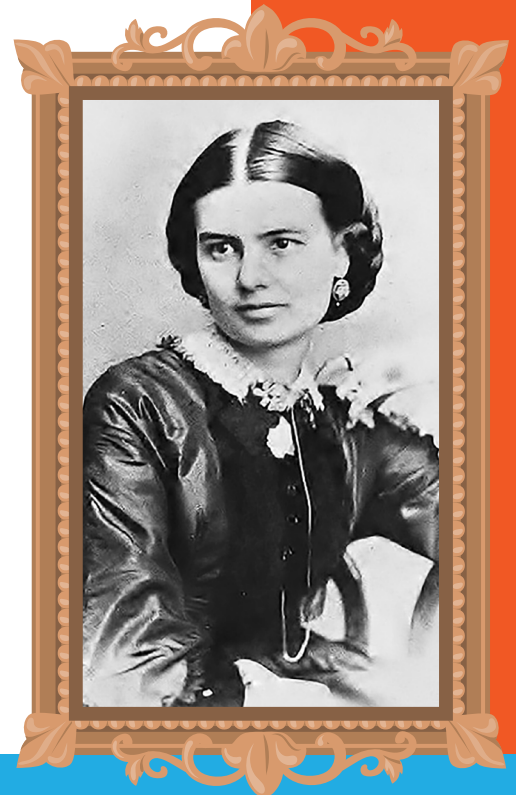


## Early Career

After graduating from college in 1848, Arthur became a teacher. He decided, however, that he wanted to become an attorney, so he passed the bar in 1854 and got a job as a law clerk in New York City.

Like his father, Arthur hated slavery. As a lawyer, he worked on several cases defending African-Americans. In one of his cases, he helped defend a woman named Elizabeth Jennings who had been forced out of a New York streetcar because she was black. Thanks to Arthur's work, Jennings was awarded **compensation** for her treatment. It was a major victory against racial discrimination.

Arthur also met a lovely woman named Ellen Herndon, nicknamed Nell, who was a cousin of one of his friends. She was also an excellent singer. The two fell in love and married in October of 1859. They eventually had three children, although one died in childhood.





## Rise to Power

During the Civil War, Arthur served as a **quartermaster** general for the New York militia. His job was to organize housing and supplies for hundreds of thousands of soldiers. Arthur impressed everyone with his efficiency and reliability and was promoted to brigadier general. He gained a reputation as an excellent administrator.

When the war ended, Arthur went back to practicing law and became a wealthy man. He also became close friends with powerful politician Roscoe Conkling, the **party boss** of the New York Republican Party. Conkling, who was a congressman and, eventually, a senator, controlled New York politics through **patronage**. Although many people considered Conkling a corrupt politician, Arthur benefited from their friendship. With Conkling's help, Arthur was appointed to the **lucrative** position of Collector of the Port of New York in 1871, serving until 1878. This meant Arthur managed thousands of agents and a massive amount of government money. Arthur himself had a salary that was close to what the President of the United States made.

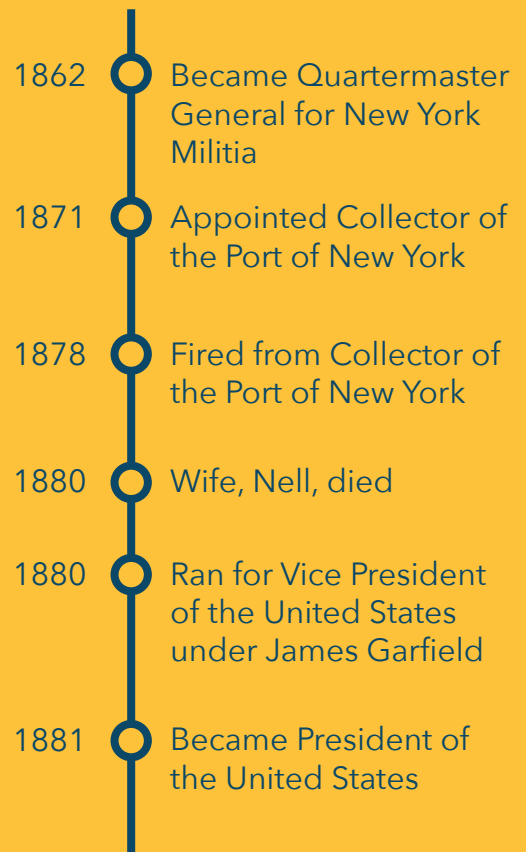
Things changed, however, when Republican Rutherford B. Hayes became president in 1877. At the time, the Republicans were divided between **Stalwarts** (people like Conkling and Arthur who supported patronage), and **Half-Breeds** (people like Hayes who supported reforming the government to reduce corruption). The new president wanted to take on corruption in the government, so he fired Arthur from his job.

Even worse, in January of 1880, his wife Nell died of pneumonia at the age of 42. Arthur was heartbroken and devastated. He never remarried.

## Quote

*"Men may die, but the fabrics of our free institutions remain unshaken."  
- September 1881*

## Timeline

- 
- 1862 Became Quartermaster General for New York Militia
  - 1871 Appointed Collector of the Port of New York
  - 1878 Fired from Collector of the Port of New York
  - 1880 Wife, Nell, died
  - 1880 Ran for Vice President of the United States under James Garfield
  - 1881 Became President of the United States

## Patronage

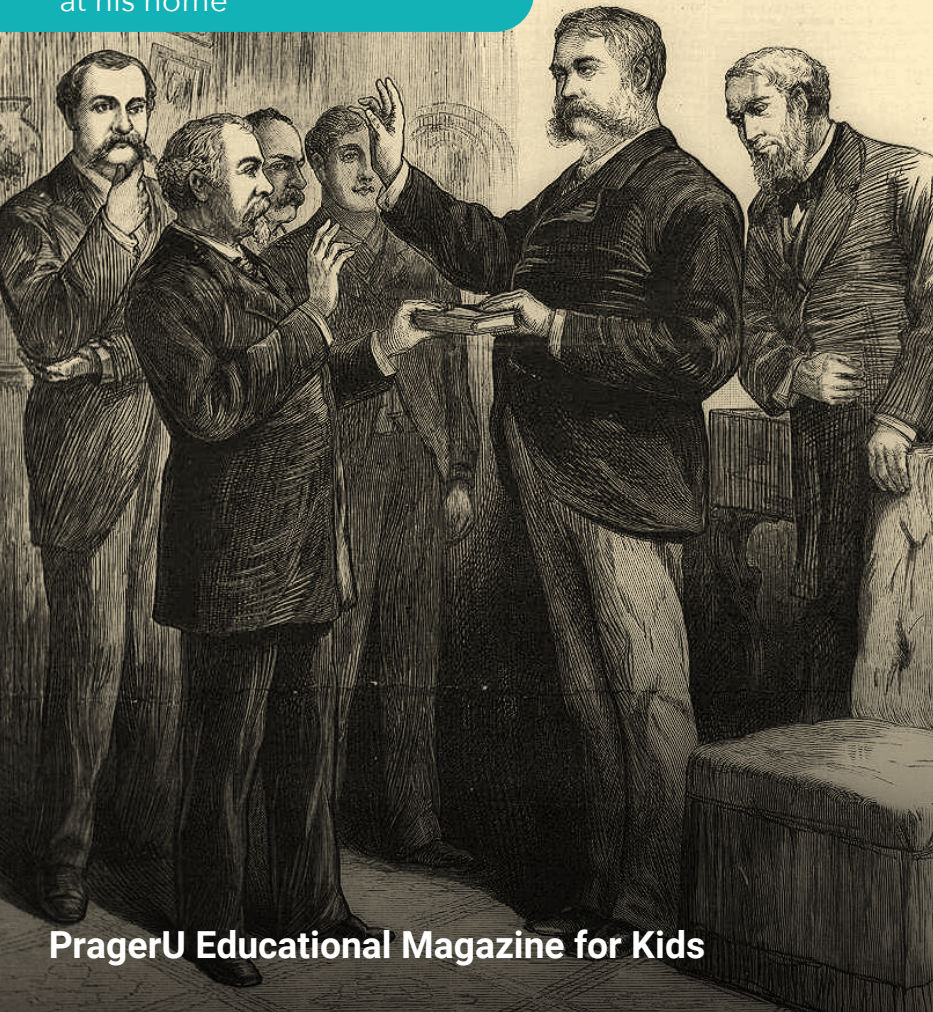
Patronage is when a politician appoints or hires a person to a government job as a reward for their loyalty. Many people felt patronage led to the appointment of corrupt and unqualified people to government jobs. Others, however, felt that the most corrupt people in the government were members of the civil service, and patronage allowed public officials to remove them. What do you think?

# The 1880 Presidential Election

Conkling and Arthur were angered by Hayes's actions. In the 1880 presidential election, they hoped that former President Grant could win back the White House, since he was a close friend of Conkling's and supported patronage. At their national convention, however, the Republicans rejected Grant as their nominee for president in favor of Congressman James A. Garfield, who was friendly to the Half-Breeds. The Half-Breeds knew they needed Conkling's support to unify the Republicans and win the presidency, so they nominated Arthur as Garfield's vice presidential running mate. They went on to defeat Democratic candidates Winfield Hancock and William English in the general election.



President Arthur sworn in at his home



## Assassination

Chester Arthur was now the Vice President of the United States - the second highest-ranking official in the country. It was the perfect job for Arthur - he had a high status position without too much responsibility. All of that, however, would change on July 2, 1881 when a disturbed man named Charles Guiteau shot President Garfield at a train station in Washington, DC. Guiteau had tried to get a job from Garfield. When the president refused, Guiteau grew angry and decided to assassinate him. Upon firing at Garfield, he yelled, "I am a Stalwart of the Stalwarts! Arthur is president now!"

Although Garfield lived on for several weeks, an infection eventually killed him on September 19, 1881. Chester Arthur was now the 21st President of the United States.

# President

Americans didn't expect much from Arthur. They were suspicious because he came from a corrupt **political machine**. To their surprise, Arthur ended up being a principled and confident national leader. Since America was rising as a world power, Arthur knew it needed a world-class navy, so he fought for the building of gunboats and steam-powered warships.

When Congress passed a bill to stop allowing people from China to enter the United States for 20 years, Arthur vetoed it. He felt it was unfair to Chinese people. Congress passed it

again, but this time, thanks to Arthur's efforts, the ban's length was reduced from 20 years to 10 years. It is known as the **Chinese Exclusion Act**.

People were most surprised when Arthur defied his mentor, Roscoe Conkling. In 1883, he went against Conkling's wishes and signed the **Pendleton Civil Service Act**, one of the most important **civil service reform** laws in American history. It ensured that many jobs in the government would be filled by people who were qualified - not just because they knew a powerful boss like Conkling.

## Quote

*"There are very many characteristics which go to make a model civil servant. Prominent among them are probity, industry, good sense, good habits, good temper, patience, order, courtesy, tact, self-reliance..."*  
- December 1881



## Quote

*"We have no wish for foreign conquest."*  
- December 1883





## A Man of Fine Taste

Chester Arthur was known to have been a man of elegant and refined taste. He enjoyed hosting lavish parties complete with fine food and wine, while socializing with the most prominent figures of society. He dressed well and was rumored to have owned 80 different pairs of pants.

When Arthur moved into the White House, he was disappointed to find it in poor condition, so he got Congress to approve the equivalent of over a million dollars today to refurbish the place. He hired one of the most famous designers in New York City, Louis Comfort Tiffany, to redecorate the White House.



Red Room, White House, 1890



# Retirement

Arthur could have sought the 1884 Republican nomination and run for his own term as president, but he was suffering from a kidney disease and needed to rest. He didn't actively seek the nomination. That year, Democrat Grover Cleveland was elected to succeed him.

Arthur retired to New York City, where he continued to practice law. Less than two years after leaving office, on November 18, 1886, he died at the age of 57.

# Word Search

K	A	D	J	Y	U	J	N	P	A	Q	I	H	R	S
Y	P	H	Q	T	T	Z	O	C	R	U	I	A	E	A
P	W	E	M	J	A	W	I	E	Z	A	S	L	P	L
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J	U	H	M	E	H	S	P	T	P	T	B	B	B	V
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E	R	A	E	G	A	N	O	R	T	A	P	C	H	K
S	P	O	H	C	N	O	T	T	U	M	K	Y	F	C

- Arthur
- Chester
- Compensation
- Corruption
- Half Breeds
- Lucrative
- Minister
- Mutton Chops
- Party Boss
- Patronage
- Quartermaster
- Republican
- Stalwarts



# Legacy

Few Americans today remember anything about Chester Arthur. He is most famous for his fancy **mutton chops**. He deserves to be remembered, however, for so much more.

When Arthur became president, many Americans had low expectations for him. They knew he came from a corrupt political machine and expected him to continue in his corrupt ways. Instead, he surprised everyone by signing one of the biggest civil service reform laws in history, helping to clean up the government. He was a firm and principled leader who helped build America's navy. Perhaps Mark Twain said it best when he said, "it would be hard to better President Arthur's administration."





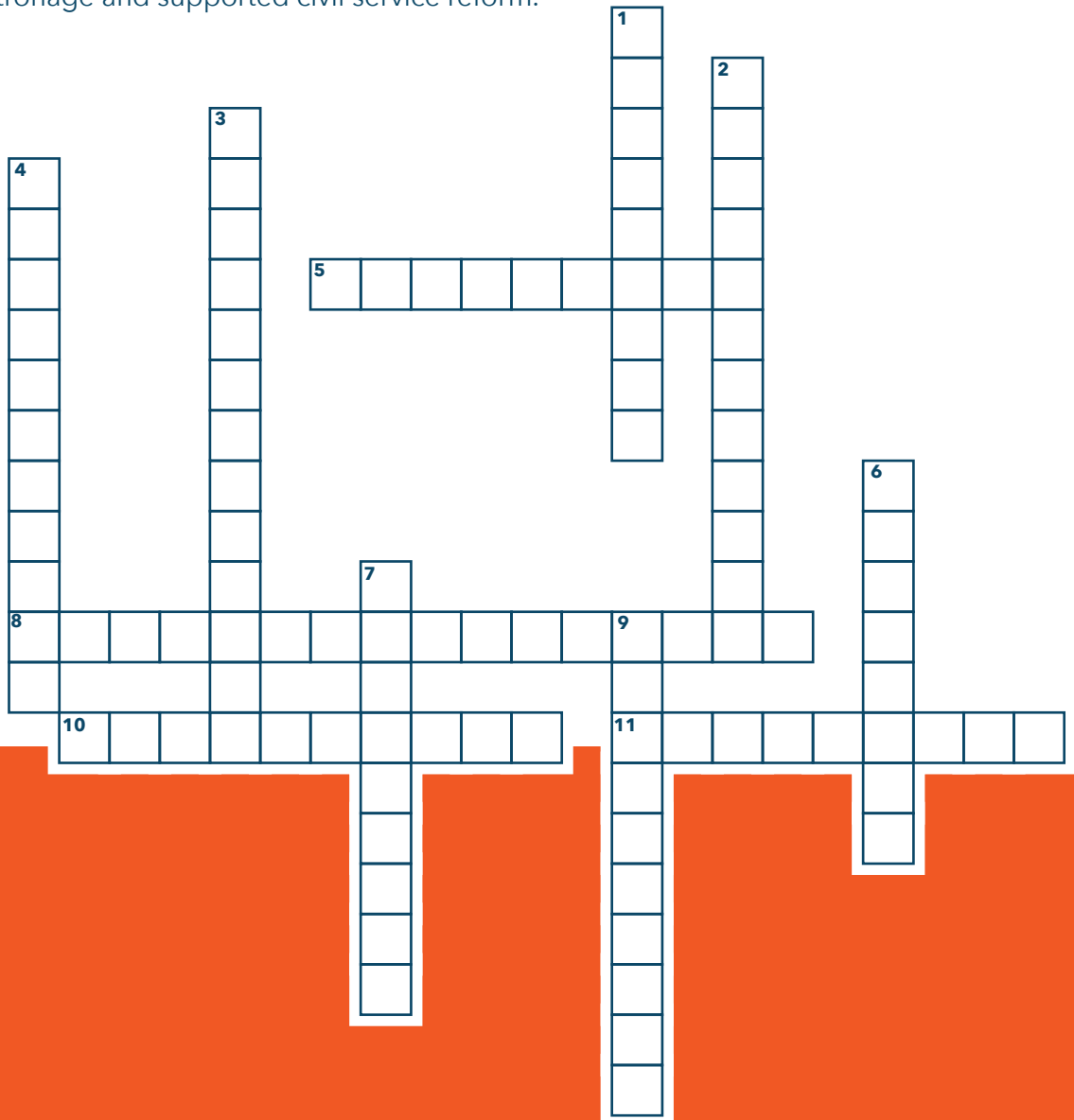
# Cross Word

## Down:

1. A group within the Republican Party after the Civil War that strongly supported African-American rights and the use of patronage.
2. A payment to make up for an injury or some type of harm committed.
3. A military officer responsible for providing housing, clothes, food, and supplies for soldiers.
4. Facial hair on the side of a man's face.
6. A person who performs religious (usually Christian) ceremonies.
7. A person who has gained political power through corrupt activities, such as stealing government money or bribing politicians.
9. A group within the Republican Party after the Civil War that opposed patronage and supported civil service reform.

## Across:

5. When a politician appoints or hires a person to a government job as a reward for their loyalty.
8. An organization, usually led by a boss or group, with powerful political influence over a city or area.
10. Dishonest, often illegal, activity where an individual seeks selfish gain.
11. Producing much wealth or profit.



# Glossary

**Corruption:** Dishonest, often illegal, activity where an individual seeks selfish gain.

**Minister:** A person who performs religious (usually Christian) ceremonies.

**Compensation:** A payment to make up for an injury or some type of harm committed.

**Quartermaster:** A military officer responsible for providing housing, clothes, food, and supplies for soldiers.

**Party Boss:** A person who has gained political power through corrupt activities, such as stealing government money or bribing politicians to vote a certain way.

**Patronage:** When a politician appoints or hires a person to a government job as a reward for their loyalty. Many people felt patronage led to the appointment of corrupt and unqualified people to government jobs. Others, however, felt that the most corrupt people in the government were members of the civil service and patronage allowed public officials to remove them.

**Lucrative:** Producing much wealth or profit.

**Stalwarts:** A group within the Republican Party after the Civil War that strongly supported African-American rights and the use of patronage.

**Half-Breeds:** A group within the Republican Party after the Civil War that opposed patronage and supported civil service reform.

**Political Machine:** An organization, usually led by a boss or group, with powerful political influence over a city or area. They are often considered corrupt.

**Chinese Exclusion Act:** A law signed by President Arthur in 1882 that banned Chinese workers from immigrating into the United States for 10 years. Thanks to Arthur's work, the length of time had been reduced from 20 years to 10 years.

**Pendleton Civil Service Act:** A law signed by President Arthur in 1883 that ensured government workers would be hired based on their qualifications, or merit, and not on their political connections. It is considered one of the most important civil service reform laws in American history.

**Civil Service Reform:** Government laws and actions in the late 19th and early 20th century that were intended to reduce corruption in the federal government and allow for public officials to be hired based on their abilities and merit.

**Mutton Chops:** Facial hair on the side of a man's face.

## Sources

"The Presidents: Chester Alan Arthur." *American Experience*, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/presidents-arthur/>. Accessed 14 December 2022.

Doenecke, Justus. "Chester A. Arthur." *Miller Center, University of Virginia*, <https://millercenter.org/president/arthur/>. Accessed 13 December 2022.

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## Answers:

CROSSWORD:

WORD SEARCH:

PERSON WHO FULFILLED THE FIRST LADY DUTIES: HIS SISTER MARY