

presidents of the *United States of America*

"I served as
the 13th
President of
the United
States and
made a
compromise to
keep the
country
united."



Millard Fillmore

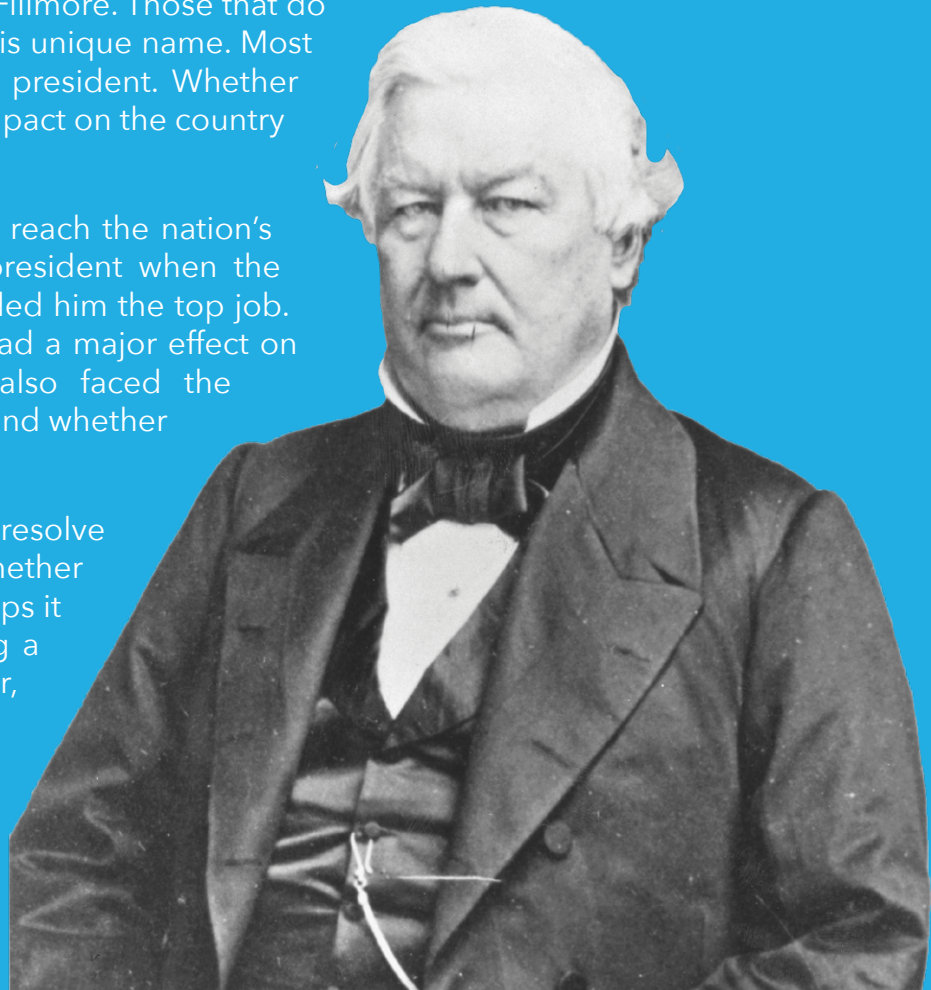
Become a Presidential Historian by Solving This Puzzle

After Fillmore served as president, another president visited him and stayed at his home prior to moving into the White House. We need to know the name of that president. 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 Millard Fillmore

The problem of slavery was very hard to resolve because Americans couldn't agree on whether to get rid of it or how to get rid of it. Perhaps it isn't fair to judge Fillmore for not finding a solution. Even with that said, however, Fillmore is rightly criticized for supporting strange political movements that were prejudiced against certain groups of people, and for failing to take a courageous stance on slavery.



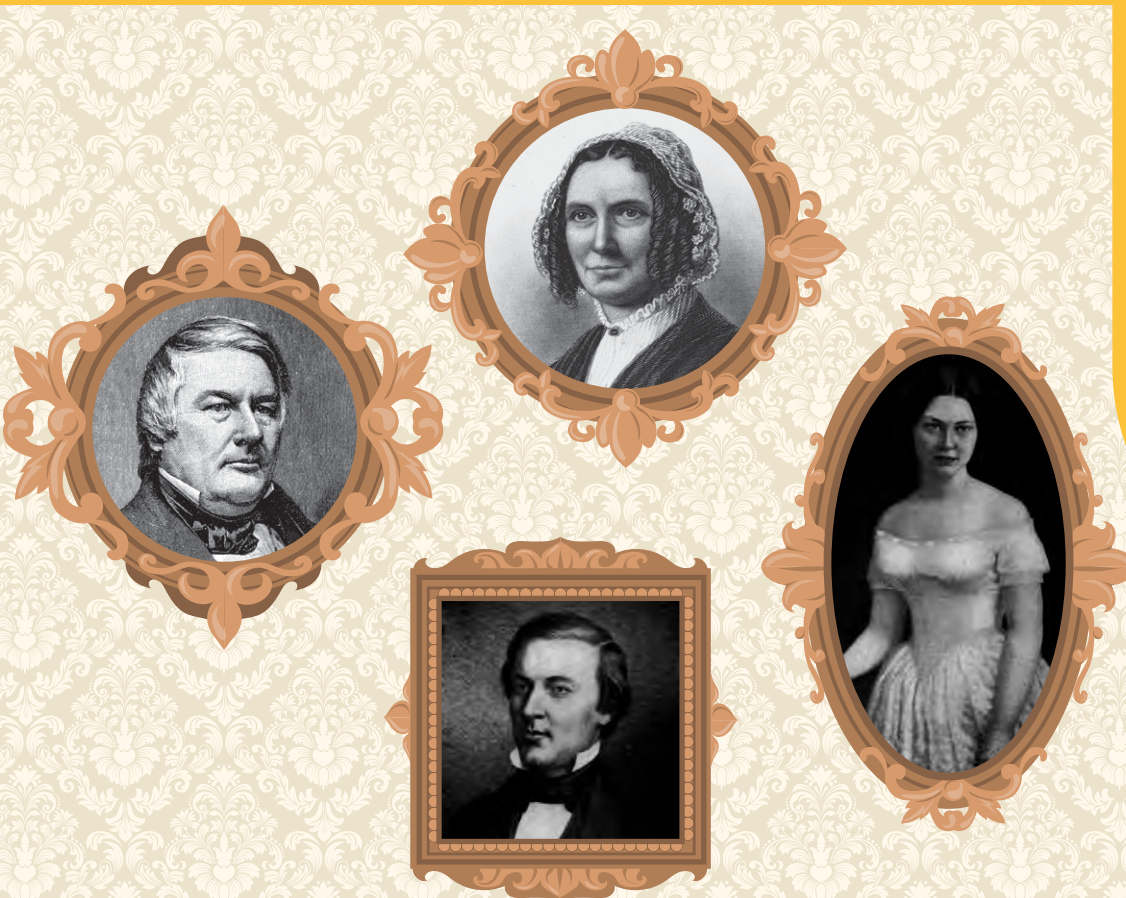
Young Millard

Millard Fillmore was born on January 7, 1800 in Moravia, New York. His parents, Nathaniel and Phoebe Fillmore, were poor farmers who had moved to upstate New York. They eventually had eight children, with Millard being the second oldest. Young Millard spent most of his childhood working hard on the family farm and didn't have much time for schooling. When Millard became a teenager, his father arranged for him to become an **apprentice** at a **textile** mill. The work was exhausting and, after four years, he returned home.

Millard soon discovered how much he enjoyed reading and learning about the world. He began attending a local **academy**. One of his teachers was a woman, two years older than him, named Abigail Powers. She was very intelligent and well-read and she encouraged Millard in his studies. Millard fell in love with her and they eventually married in 1826. They went on to have two children, Millard and Mary.

Interesting Facts

- He was the first president born in the 19th century.
- He was a member of the Anti-Masonic, Whig, and Know-Nothing parties.
- He was the second president who took office because of the death of his predecessor.
- He was the first president whose father was still alive when he left the White House.
- He was the second former president to run for president again after leaving office.
- His first name, Millard, was his mother's maiden name.



Left:
President Millard Fillmore

Top Middle:
Abigail Powers Fillmore,
wife

Right:
Mary Fillmore,
daughter

Bottom Middle:
Millard Fillmore,
son



Early Career

Millard became an attorney and moved to East **Aurora**, New York. There, he began to prosper as a lawyer. Fillmore also started thinking more and more about politics. **H**e became suspicious of a secret social group called the **Masons**. At the time, many leaders in the Democratic Party, such as Andrew Jackson, were Masons. Fillmore and others believed in **conspiracy theories** about the Masons – that they were doing all sorts of evil things to take control of the whole country. He joined the **Anti-Masonic Party**, whose leaders **a**pproached Fillmore about running for political office.

In 1828, Fillmore was elected to the New York state legislature, where he would serve three terms. He was then elected as a member of the

U.S. House of Representatives in 1832, where he would serve until 1843. During this time, his Anti-Masonic Party **merged** with the Whig Party, one of the two major parties in the country and the one that opposed Jackson's Democrats.

While in Congress, Fillmore became chairman of the powerful **Ways and Means Committee**, which focused on making tax laws. He also opposed slavery but worried more about the issue dividing up the Union.

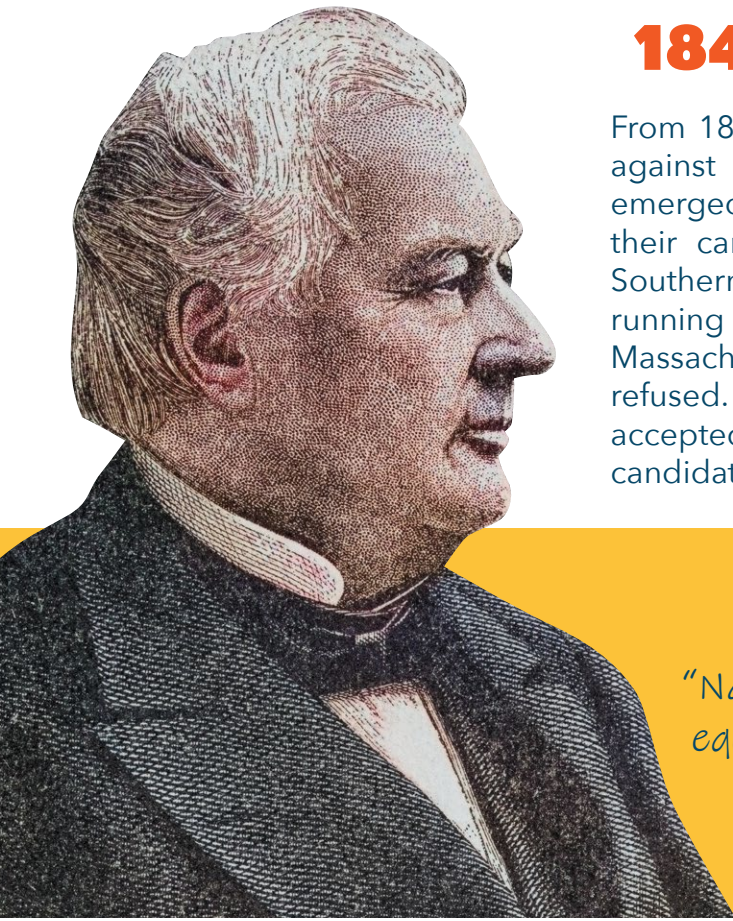
In 1843, Fillmore left Congress. The following year, he ran for Governor of New York, but lost. In 1847, however, he was elected as New York's **Comptroller**, which gave **h**im control over the state's finances.

Brainstorm: Your Future

Millard Fillmore had a lot of different jobs and filled a lot of different positions.

Think about your future. What do you see? What kind of jobs interest you?

Write about it, considering your talents and interest.



1848 Presidential Election

From 1846 to 1848, the United States fought and won a war against Mexico. During the conflict, General Zachary Taylor emerged as a national hero. The Whig Party nominated him as their candidate for president in 1848. Since Taylor was a Southerner, the Whigs wanted to choose a Northerner as his running mate to balance the ticket, so they turned to Massachusetts Senator Daniel Webster. Webster, however, refused. The party then turned to Millard Fillmore, who accepted. That fall, Taylor and Fillmore defeated Democratic candidate **L**ewis Cass in a close election.

Quote

"Nations, like individuals in a state of nature, are equal and independent, possessing certain rights and owing certain duties to each other."

- December 1850

Vice President

During Taylor's presidency, slavery remained the biggest issue. The United States had acquired a large amount of land after winning the Mexican-American War. Americans debated about slavery, with Southerners hoping to expand slavery into the new territories and Northerners hoping to stop it from spreading. At the time, the nation had 15 free states and 15 slave states – a perfect balance. Both sides worried that, if the new territories became states and came in as either free or slave states, it would destroy the perfect balance and give the other side an advantage. Since Northerners and Southerners couldn't agree, many worried that a civil war might break out between the two sides.

Several leaders in Congress tried to forge a compromise to prevent war. Kentucky Senator Henry Clay negotiated a complicated agreement

that tried to satisfy both sides. It would appeal to Northerners because it allowed California to enter as a free state and ban enslaved people from being imported into Washington, DC. It would appeal to Southerners because it would allow New Mexico and Utah to decide whether they would accept slavery and would require enslaved servants who escaped slaveholders to be caught and returned (which would be called the **Fugitive Slave Law**).

President Taylor opposed the compromise, because he did **n**ot believe that slavery would work in the new territories, and refused to sign it into law. Despite being Taylor's vice president, Fillmore disagreed and supported the compromise. This angered Taylor and soured their relationship. Without Taylor's approval, it looked like the compromise was dead.

President

Everything changed when Zachary Taylor died of a stomach ailment in July 1850. Millard Fillmore was now the 13th President of the United States. He immediately faced the question of what to do about the compromise proposal. He decided to reverse Taylor's policy and support it. Angry debates broke out across the country once again.

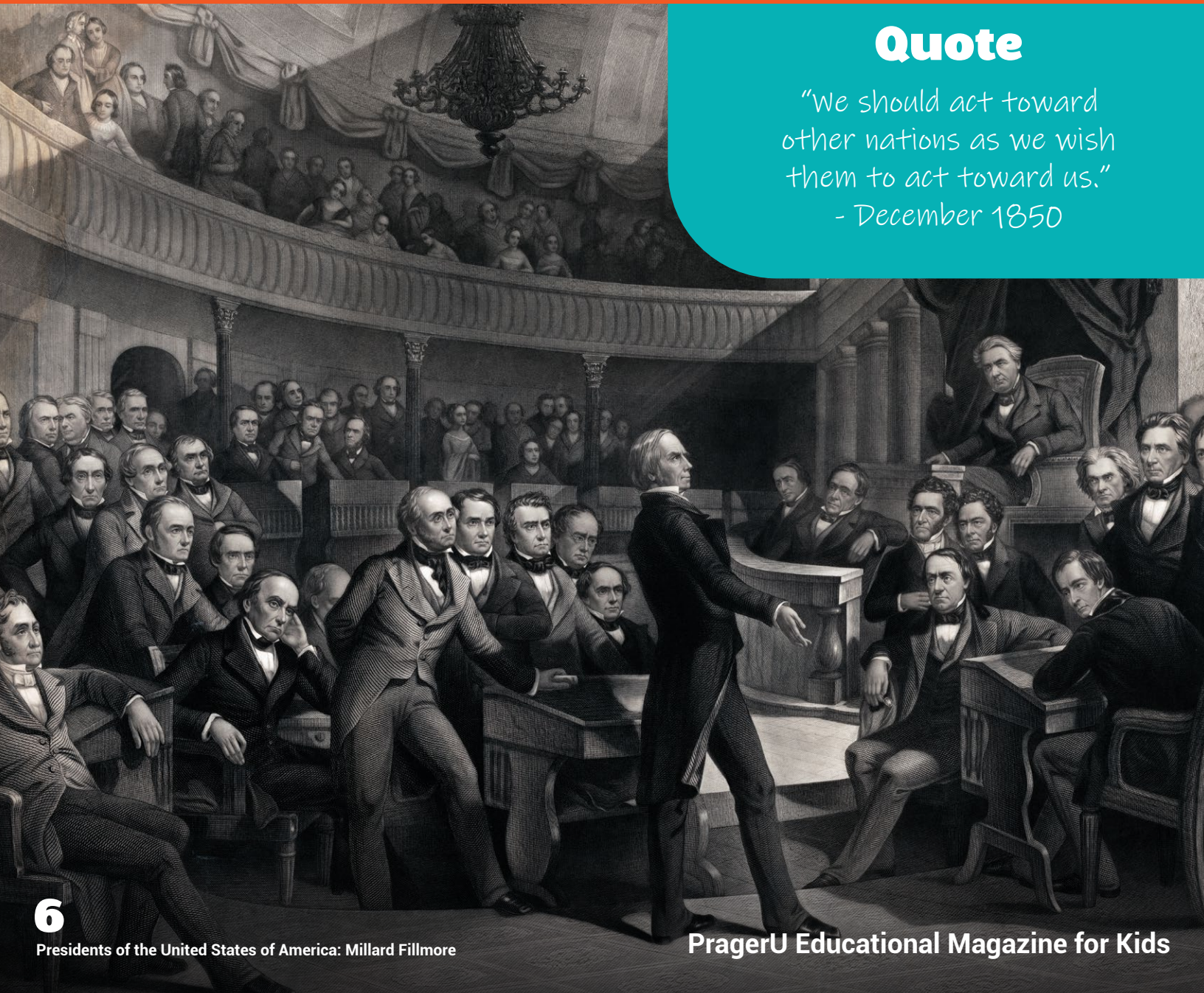
A young Democrat senator from Illinois, Stephen Douglas, took charge and worked hard to get Clay's proposal passed. By September of 1850, he had succeeded and Fillmore signed it into law.

The Compromise of 1850 helped keep the Union intact for the time being, but the issue of slavery remained unsettled. Fillmore angered many Northerners when he strongly enforced the Fugitive Slave Law.

Fillmore also had some foreign policy successes. He sent a squadron of ships to Japan led by Commodore Matthew Perry to force Japan to open up trade relations. He also warned the French to not annex the Hawaiian Islands, which at the time, were an independent kingdom.

Quote

*"We should act toward other nations as we wish them to act toward us."
- December 1850*



Retirement

The Whigs, angered at Fillmore's policies, especially the Fugitive Slave Law, rejected him as their nominee for the 1852 election and chose General Winfield Scott. Scott lost to Democrat candidate Franklin Pierce that fall. Fillmore left the presidency in 1853. Sadly, soon after he retired, his wife Abigail and daughter Mary died of illnesses.

Fillmore was devastated, and he looked to re-enter politics as a way of coping. He joined a new party, called the **Know-Nothing Party**, which supported women's rights and labor, but was also suspicious of immigrants, especially Irish Catholics. The Know-Nothings chose Fillmore as their candidate in the 1856 presidential election. Fillmore didn't win the election, but did get about 21 percent of the popular vote.

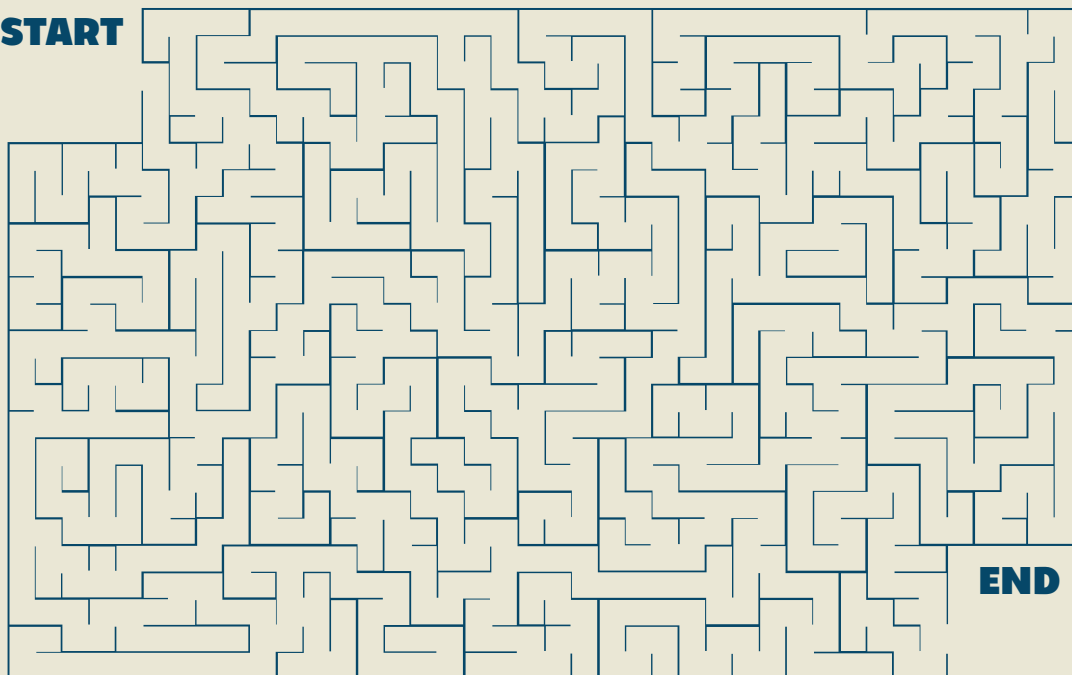
After the election, Fillmore retired to Buffalo, New York, where he married a wealthy widow named Caroline McIntosh. During the Civil War, Fillmore supported the Union but, staying true to form, supported a compromise to allow the South back into the Union with slavery intact. After suffering a couple of strokes, he died on March 8, 1874 at the age of 74.



Quote

*"An honorable defeat is better than a dishonorable victory."
- September 1844*

START



END

Maze of Life

Millard Fillmore's life, like many of us, was filled with twists and turns, success and failure, open doors and dead ends.

Life can be like a maze with a lot of decisions that lead to different places. Find your way through the maze.



Legacy

Millard Fillmore served during a difficult time in American history – a time when the nation was divided over the issue of slavery. Throughout that time, many people feared the nation would split apart. He sought, above all, to keep the United States together no matter what.

Although Fillmore served for a short period of time, he did have an impact on his country and the world. He forced Japan to open up to the world, although some criticize him for meddling with the decisions of another country, and he protected Hawaii from conquest.

Fillmore's biggest impact on the United States was reversing Taylor's policy and signing the Compromise of 1850. He succeeded temporarily in keeping the country together, but the Compromise failed to settle the issue of slavery once and for all. We don't know if anyone could have settled it, but many historians fault Fillmore for not being more courageous and opposing slavery in some way. Only the Civil War, which broke out a decade later, would determine the final outcome.

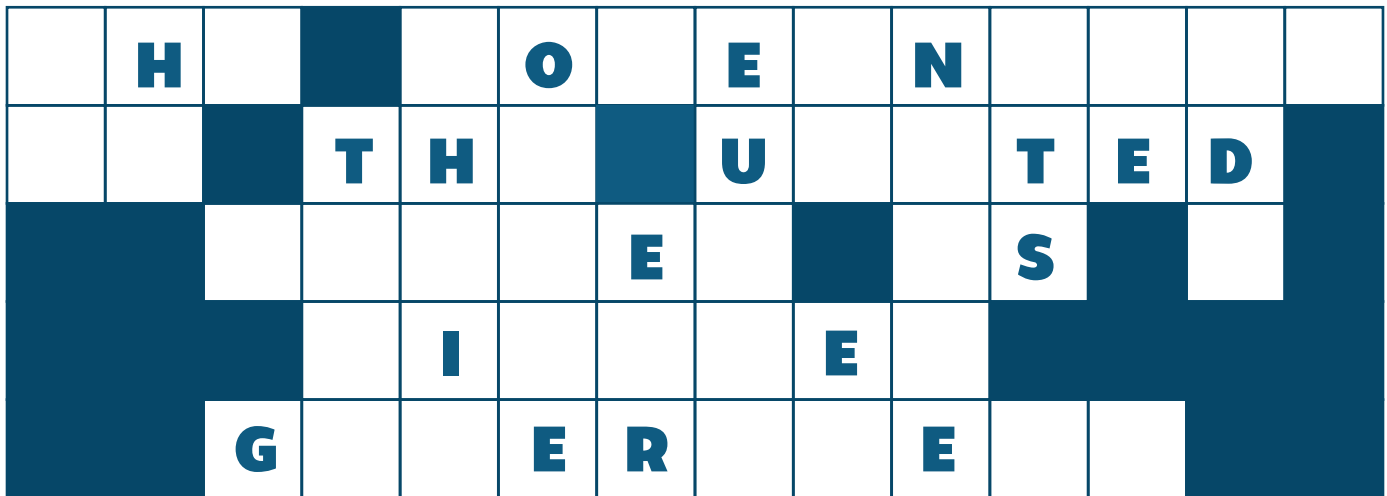
Quote

*"The Constitution will be my guide."
- December 1850*



What Did He Say?

Solve the puzzle below to find out what Millard Fillmore said as president in December of 1850. The letters from each column are below the puzzle. Try to rebuild the original message by choosing the letters for each square.



O F E O G E I T M I M T A T
T S T A T V N N D N E N
L V E S R I



Glossary

Apprentice: A person who is learning a trade from someone else with more experience.

Textile: A type of cloth or woven fabric.

Academy: A school usually above the elementary level.

Masons: An organization that traces their origins to artisans and stoneworkers from the Middle Ages. The group often conducted their activities secretly, which has led many people to believe conspiracy theories about them.

Conspiracy theory: A belief that an event or a set of circumstances is the result of a secret plot by powerful people.

Anti-Masonic Party: A political party in the United States during the early 19th century that believed the Masons were committing crimes and plotting to take over the country.

Merge: To combine into one group.

Ways and Means Committee: The committee in Congress that handles tax policy. It is the oldest committee in Congress and considered one of the most powerful.

Comptroller: A position tasked with managing the accounting and finances of an organization.

Fugitive Slave Law: A law, part of the Compromise of 1850, that required all enslaved servants who escaped a slaveholder be captured and returned to that slaveholder.

The Compromise of 1850: A series of laws passed by Congress and signed by President Millard Fillmore in 1850 to resolve issues related to slavery and land acquired in the Mexican-American War. The Compromise helped to delay the Civil War, but didn't resolve the underlying issue of slavery.

Know-Nothing Party: A political party in the United States during the mid 19th century that opposed immigration, especially by Irish Catholics. It collapsed in the late 1850s.

Sources

Holt, Michael. "Millard Fillmore." Miller Center, University of Virginia, <https://millercenter.org/president/fillmore/>. Accessed 12 October 2022.

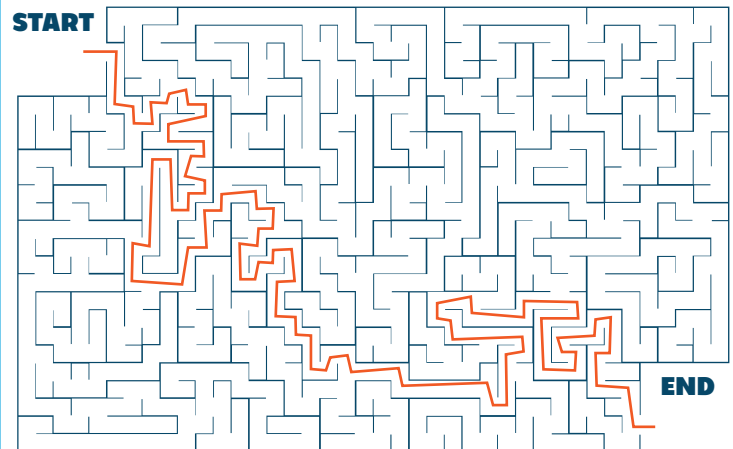
Finkelman, Paul. Millard Fillmore: The American Presidents Series: The 13th President, 1850-1853. Times Books, 2011.

Images: Getty Images, WikiCommons, FreePix

Answers:

NAME OF PRESIDENT THAT VISITED
FILLMORE:
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

MAZE OF LIFE:



WHAT DID HE SAY?

T	H	E		G	O	V	E	R	N	M	E	N	T
O	F		T	H	E		U	N	I	T	E	D	
		S	T	A	T	E	S		I	S		A	
			L	I	M	I	T	E	D				
		G	O	V	E	R	N	M	E	N	T		