11. JAMES KNOX POLK
"The First Dark Horse"
1845 — 1849
Democrat

Birthdate: November 2, 1795
Birthplace: Mecklenburg Co., N.C.
Education: Univ. of North Carolina
Occupation: Lawyer
Home State: Tennessee
Married: Sarah Childress, 1824
Children: None
Died: June 15, 1849
Place of Death: Nashville, Tenn.
Place of Burial: Nashville, Tenn.

ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION
Fifteenth
Vice-President: George Mifflin Dallas

EVENTS IN POLK'S LIFE
1819 — Clerk of the Tennessee Senate
     Admitted to the Tennessee Bar
1823-1825 — Member of the Tennessee House of Representatives
1825-1839 — United States Representative from Tennessee
1835-1839 — Speaker of the House
1839-1841 — Governor of Tennessee
1844 — Elected to the presidency

EVENTS DURING POLK'S PRESIDENCY
1845 — Texas is admitted to the Union as the 28th state.
1846 — United States declares war on Mexico.
     United States annexes New Mexico Territory.
     Iowa is admitted to the Union as the 29th state.
     Famine in Ireland results in massive emigration to the U.S.
     Smithsonian Institution is founded in Washington, D.C.
     Sewing machine is invented by Elias Howe.
     Oregon Treaty between the U.S. and Great Britain is signed.
     Territory of California declares itself an independent republic.
1847 — U.S. Army captures Mexico City.
     Mormons establish Salt Lake City.
     Thomas Alva Edison is born.
     Alexander Graham Bell is born.
1848 — Gold is discovered in California, leading to the Gold Rush of 1849.
     Wisconsin is admitted to the Union as the 30th state.
     United States and Mexico sign peace treaty.
     The Communist Manifesto is published by Marx and Engels.

"Foreign powers do not seem to appreciate the true character
of our government. Our Union is a confederation of indepen-
dent states, whose policy is peace with each other and all the
world. To enlarge its limits is to extend the dominions of peace
over additional territories and increasing millions."

1845
12. ZACHARY TAYLOR  
“Old Rough and Ready”  
1849—1850  
Whig

Birthdate: November 24, 1784  
Birthplace: Orange County, Va.  
Education: Public schools  
Occupation: Soldier  
Home State: Kentucky  
Married: Margaret Smith, 1810  
Children: Four  
Died: July 9, 1850  
Place of Death: Washington, D.C.  
Place of Burial: Springfield, Ky.

ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION  
Sixteenth  
Vice-President: Millard Fillmore

EVENTS IN TAYLOR’S LIFE
1808 — Began military career as a First Lieutenant  
1812-1814 — Served in the War of 1812  
1832 — Served in the Black Hawk War  
1837-1840 — Served in the Second Seminole War  
1846-1848 — Served in the Mexican War  
1848 — Elected to the presidency

EVENTS DURING TAYLOR’S PRESIDENCY
1849 — Clayton-Bulwer Treaty between the United States and Great Britain is signed.  
Edgar Allen Poe dies.  
Who’s Who begins publication.  
California Gold Rush begins.  
1850 — President dies in office of typhus.

“For more than a half a century, during which kingdoms and empires have fallen, this Union has stood unshaken. The patriots who formed it have long since descended to the grave; yet still it remains, the proudest monument to their memory.”  
1849
13. MILLARD FILLMORE
"The Wool Carder President"
1850 — 1853
Whig

Birthdate: January 7, 1800
Birthplace: Locke Township, N.Y.
Education: Public schools
Occupation: Lawyer
Home State: New York

Married: Abigail Powers, 1826
Caroline McIntosh, 1858
Children: Two
Died: March 8, 1874
Place of Death: Buffalo, N.Y.
Place of Burial: Buffalo, N.Y.

ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION
Sixteenth
Vice-President: (None)

EVENTS IN FILLMORE'S LIFE
1814-1819 — Worked as an indentured servant to clothmakers
1819 — Earned his freedom from indenture by paying $30
1823 — Admitted to the New York Bar
1829-1831 — Member of New York State Assembly
1833-1835 — U.S. Representative from New York
1837-1843 — U.S. Representative from New York
1848-1849 — Comptroller of New York State
1849-1850 — Vice-President under Zachary Taylor
1850 — Succeeded to the presidency on Taylor's death

EVENTS DURING FILLMORE'S PRESIDENCY
1850 — Compromise of 1850 enacted.
California is admitted to the Union as the 31st state.
New Mexico and Utah territories are organized.
Slave trade is abolished in the District of Columbia.
The Fugitive Slave Act, requiring the return of runaway slaves, is passed.
1851 — The New York Times is first published.
The U.S. Capitol building and Library of Congress are partially destroyed by fire.
1852 — Harriet Beecher Stowe publishes Uncle Tom's Cabin.
Commodore Perry's mission to Japan begins.

"The government of the United States is a limited government. It is confined to the exercise of powers expressly granted, and such others as may be necessary for carrying those powers into effect; and it is at all times an especial duty to guard against any infringement on the just rights of the States."

1850
14. FRANKLIN PIERCE
“Handsome Frank”
1853 — 1857
Democrat

Birthdate: November 23, 1804
Birthplace: Hillsborough, N.H.
Education: Bowdoin College, 1824
Home State: New Hampshire

Married: Jane Means Appleton, 1834
Children: One
Died: October 8, 1869
Place of Death: Concord, N.H.
Place of Burial: Concord, N.H.

ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION
Seventeenth
Vice-President: William Rufus DeVane King (1853)

EVENTS IN PIERCE’S LIFE
1827 — Admitted to the New Hampshire Bar
1829-1833 — Member of the New Hampshire Legislature
1831-1832 — Speaker of the New Hampshire Legislature
1833-1837 — U.S. Representative from New Hampshire
1837-1842 — U.S. Senator from New Hampshire
1845-1848 — U.S. District Attorney for New Hampshire
1852 — Elected to the presidency

EVENTS DURING PIERCE’S PRESIDENCY
1853 — The Gadsden Purchase is signed, adding portions of southern Arizona and New Mexico and completing the present border of the continental United States.
The first manned heavier-than-air flying machine travels 500 yards.
1854 — Commodore Perry negotiates the first U.S.-Japan treaty.
The Kansas-Nebraska Act is passed, repealing the Missouri Compromise of 1820.
The first fractional distillation of crude oil is accomplished by Benjamin Sullivan.
1855 — Sault Ste. Marie Canal opens, linking Lake Superior with Lake Huron.
The first U.S kindergarten opens in Watertown, Wisconsin.
Familiar Quotations is published for the first time by John Bartlett.
1856 — The Bessemer converter for producing steel is patented.
Neanderthal man fossils are discovered in Germany.
The Western Union Company is chartered.

“It is with me an earnest and vital belief that as the Union has been the source, under Providence, of our prosperity to this time, so it is the surest pledge of a continuance of the blessings we have enjoyed and which we are sacredly bound to transmit undiminished to our children.”

1853
15. JAMES BUCHANAN
"The Bachelor President"
1857 — 1861
Democrat

Birthdate: April 23, 1791
Birthplace: Cove Gap, Pa.
Education: Dickinson College, 1809
Occupation: Lawyer
Home State: Pennsylvania

Married: Never
Children: None
Died: June 1, 1868
Place of Death: Lancaster, Pa.
Place of Burial: Lancaster, Pa.

ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION
Eighteenth
Vice-President: John Cabell Breckinridge

EVENTS IN BUCHANAN'S LIFE

1812 — Admitted to the Pennsylvania Bar
1815-1816 — Member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives
1821-1831 — U.S. Representative from Pennsylvania
1832-1833 — Minister to Russia
1834-1845 — U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania
1845-1849 — Secretary of State under Polk
1853-1856 — Minister to Great Britain
1856 — Elected to the presidency

EVENTS DURING BUCHANAN'S PRESIDENCY

1857 — The Dred Scott decision by the Supreme Court reinforces the institution of slavery.
1858 — Minnesota is admitted to the Union as the 32nd state. The first transatlantic message is sent between Buchanan and Queen Victoria of Great Britain.
1859 — Petroleum production begins in the U.S. at Titusville, Pa. Oregon is admitted to the Union as the 33rd state. John Brown's raid at Harpers Ferry, Va., is crushed, resulting in increased anti-slavery sentiment. Charles Dickens publishes A Tale of Two Cities. Charles Darwin publishes On the Origin of Species by Natural Selection, describing the evolutionary process.
1860 — South Carolina adopts an Ordinance of Secession. The Pony Express begins operation from Missouri to California. The pasteurization of milk is developed by Louis Pasteur. The Southern Confederacy of seven states is formed at Montgomery, Ala. Attempts to reinforce Fort Sumter (S.C.) by the North are defeated by the South.
1861 — Kansas is admitted to the Union as the 34th state.

"I believe (slavery) to be a great political and a great moral evil. I thank God, my lot has been cast in a State where it does not exist. But, while I entertain these opinions, I know it is an evil at present without a remedy...one of those moral evils, from which it is impossible for us to escape, without the introduction of evils infinitely greater."

1826