



Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard
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With Presidents' Day having been only a day ago, I find it appropriate once again to pay tribute to those men who have served our country as President of the United States. While this is a dignified position to hold, some not so dignified facts are floating around out there about our past presidents. Having enjoyed reading several, I'd like to share just a few.

When talking presidential trivia, some facts are well publicized. For instance, our tallest president was Abraham Lincoln at 6 feet 4 inches in height. The shortest president was exactly a foot shorter at 5 feet 4 inches. That was James Madison. It will not surprise you to know that he was also the lightest weight president at 100 pounds. William Howard Taft falls into the category of being the heaviest president at 300 pounds. One popular legend is that he once got stuck in the White House bathtub, but that was later proven false. Warren G. Harding is pointed out as the president with the largest feet at size 14.



The average age of presidents on the day of inauguration is 56. The oldest was Ronald Reagan at 69 and the youngest was John Kennedy at 43.

Another well-known presidential fact has to do with William Henry Harrison who was in office for the least amount of time. He is also credited with giving the longest inaugural address in history. This was done without an overcoat in terrible weather conditions, which led to pneumonia and his passing a month later.

Last year I wrote a brief biographical sketch about Millard Fillmore, who our county and city are named after. An additional little known fact about him that I discovered later was that while he was in office, the Library of Congress caught fire. He and his cabinet members helped fight the fire.

The second president, John Adams and his family had a problem finding their way to their new home after his election. They are said to have wandered aimlessly in the woods for hours before finally finding their way to the White House.



Presidents often play host to visiting dignitaries but this proved to be a problem for **James Buchanan**. When the Prince of Wales and his vast entourage visited the White House, President Buchanan was forced to sleep in the hallway.

Calvin Coolidge **refused to use the telephone during his time in office, but** Grover Cleveland **was known for personally answering phone calls to the White House.**

The only bachelor president was **James Buchanan**. **John Tyler**, on the other hand, had 15 children.

Many of the presidents had varied occupations before becoming president. **Lyndon Johnson** was a school teacher, **Gerald Ford** was a fashion model and Yellowstone park ranger, **Ronald Reagan** was a movie actor, and **Woodrow Wilson** was the president of Princeton University.

Herbert Hoover was a generous man and donated his salary to charity.

In an Alaska travel brochure, I read that **Warren G. Harding** traveled to Alaska in style in July 1923. His opulent railroad car is now a museum in Fairbanks. He brought with him both his wife and his mistress to celebrate the finishing of the construction of the Alaska Railroad and to officially open it by driving in the “Golden Spike” It was 95 degrees and everyone was overdressed in their best finery. The president left afterward for Vancouver after eating “a mess of King Crabs drenched in butter”. He died when reaching San Francisco. For a short time, his wife was under suspicion for the “crime”, but was quickly cleared of any wrong doing.

Thomas Jefferson, in writing his own epitaph, did not even mention that he had been President. He died on July 4th, 1826, fifty years to the day after signing the Declaration of Independence. A few hours later, **John Adams**, who also signed the Declaration, passed away. **James Monroe** died on Independence Day five years later.