

## *Part 1*

# United States Presidential Administrations

*After* the American Civil War, ten United States presidents appointed former Confederates to positions within the federal government.<sup>1</sup> In many cases, especially in the years immediately following the end of hostilities known as Reconstruction, the selections were made as part of the reintegration of Southerners into the federal government, and thus into American society.<sup>2</sup> After the first few presidential postwar administrations Southerners were assigned to important and influential positions, less for reasons of reintegration than because they were considered—to the extent that political appointments are supposed to be—worthy of holding the positions because of their own merit.

1 An eleventh president, Calvin Coolidge, retained a former Confederate in the U.S. diplomat corps.

2 The Reconstruction Era was a tumultuous political and cultural period after the Civil War—generally identified as the years between 1865 and 1877. During that time, the federal government and military authorities implemented control over conquered areas of the eleven states that had seceded to eventually form the Confederacy. Reconstruction included the formal abolition of slavery, the rebuilding and restoration of the local and state political structure of the Southern states, and the attempted transformation of the South from a slavery-based society to one of full civil rights and suffrage for freed slaves.

## Ulysses S. Grant Administration

The restoration of Southerners into the federal government began during the administration of Ulysses S. Grant, the former commanding general of the United States Army and the man credited with organizing and leading the defeat of the South that brought an end to the Civil War in the spring of 1865. Hiram Ulysses Grant was born on April 27, 1822, in the Ohio River Valley hamlet of Point Pleasant, Ohio, and raised in nearby Georgetown.<sup>3</sup> The son of a tanner, Grant reluctantly enrolled at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1839 and graduated in 1843 in the middle of his class—21st of 39 cadets.

He served in the U.S. Army during the Mexican War (1846-48) under General Zachary Taylor and alongside many officers who would later become generals in the Confederate Army, including Robert E. Lee, Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson, James Longstreet, Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard, Braxton Bragg, Joseph E. Johnston, Edmund Kirby Smith, Albert Sidney Johnston, and others. Although a quartermaster, Grant was twice promoted for “Gallant and Meritorious Conduct.”

In 1848 Grant married Julia Dent, whose prominent slaveholding family owned a large plantation in eastern Missouri. Julia’s brother Frederick was a classmate of Grant’s at West Point. After the Mexican War Grant served at Fort Humboldt, California, but resigned from the army in 1854 and returned to Missouri. After unsuccessful insurance and farming ventures he and Julia and their four children moved in 1860 to Galena, Illinois, where he worked for his father in a tannery and leather goods store.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Grant returned to military service and in June




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Ulysses S. Grant

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<sup>3</sup> Upon enrolling at West Point, Grant’s name was mistakenly recorded as “Ulysses S. Grant,” a name that he retained for the rest of his life. The initial “S” stands for no specific name.

1861 was appointed colonel of the 21st Illinois Infantry. His effective training techniques quickly organized the group of raucous recruits and by September Grant was a brigadier general of volunteers. In February 1862 he was promoted to major general and commanded Union forces at Forts Henry and Donelson, Shiloh, Corinth, and after several failed efforts, led in 1863 the bold and ultimately successful operation that captured Vicksburg and helped open the Mississippi River. Later that year Grant assumed command of federal forces partially besieged in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and scored victories there at Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge that drove the Confederate army back into North Georgia.

President Abraham Lincoln promoted Grant to the rank of lieutenant general in March 1864 and appointed him general in chief of the U.S. Army. Grant delegated command of Union forces in the Western Theater to his friend and former direct subordinate Major General William Tecumseh Sherman, who led the spring campaign into Georgia that eventually captured Atlanta in September. Sherman launched his March to the Sea two months later and captured Savannah, Georgia, and then moved north into the Carolinas, where he would accept the surrender of Joseph E. Johnston in late April 1865. Grant, meanwhile, accompanied George Meade's Army of the Potomac into the field in May of 1864 in its campaign against General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. A bloody series of battles collectively known as the Overland Campaign followed that carried Northern forces south to around Richmond and Petersburg. A nine-month siege followed. Both major cities fell in early April 1864, and Lee's exhausted army was pursued and overtaken at Appomattox, Virginia, where Lee surrendered on April 9. Although other Southern armies remained in the field, Lee's capitulation effectively ended Confederate hopes for independence. Grant's magnanimous terms of surrender offered various protections for the defeated Confederates and was widely recognized at the time as the beginning of postwar reconciliation.

President Lincoln was assassinated in Washington on April 14, 1865, and was succeeded by his vice president Andrew Johnson, a Southern Democrat from Tennessee. Late in Johnson's administration, Grant quarreled with the president and soon found himself aligned with the Radical Republicans.<sup>4</sup> As a national hero

4 The Radical Republicans were a powerful faction within the Republican Party from the mid-1850s until the end of the Reconstruction era. Before the Civil War, the Radical Republicans supported an immediate and complete abolition of slavery without compensation to slaveholders. During the war they demanded aggressive military force against the seceded states. After the war they pushed heavy-handed measures and urged complete control over the Southern political establishment and full civil rights and suffrage for freed slaves.

symbolic of the Union victory in the Civil War, Grant was nominated by the Republican Party and elected president in 1868. He was reelected in 1872.

The political, social, and cultural chaos of Reconstruction began under Andrew Johnson. Grant inherited the turmoil. When he was elected, the American people hoped for an end to the lingering troubles. Grant, however, was a military man and not a politician or bureaucrat. He struggled in his new role and often looked to Congress for help. Grant presided over the government much like he had commanded the army, and even brought with him to the White House part of his army staff. His friends in the Republican Party came to be known as “the Old Guard.”

As is common with military men and women, Grant respected soldiers who served honorably, whether as former comrades or former foes. In fact, two of Grant’s pallbearers were former Confederate generals Joseph E. Johnston and Simon Bolivar Buckner—the latter of whom had unconditionally surrendered to Grant at Fort Donelson, Tennessee, on February 16, 1862.

Grant entrusted former Confederates with important positions in his government, most prominently Amos Tappan Akerman as U.S. district attorney for Georgia in 1869, and in 1870 as U.S. attorney general. Akerman, a native of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, lived in Illinois and North Carolina after his graduation from Dartmouth College, and eventually settled in Elberton, Georgia. Although Akerman opposed secession, he enlisted in the Confederate Army at the start of hostilities and rose to the rank of colonel while serving under Brigadier General Robert Toombs.

Akerman assumed office on February 21, 1870, making him the first attorney general of the newly created United States Department of Justice. He was the first attorney general to hire full-time law enforcement officers, and he established an investigative unit that would, in 1908, become the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Akerman had not been politically active before the Civil War but joined the Republican Party in 1866. Two years later he served as a delegate to the Georgia constitutional convention that guaranteed—in law, if not always in practice—equal political rights for former slaves.

As attorney general, Akerman drew the ire of railroad robber barons when he refused to grant federal land subsidy guarantees to the railroad companies until they had fulfilled their commitments. Akerman’s most pressing problem, however, was the Ku Klux Klan’s efforts to deny the newly granted civil rights of former slaves. He resented how casually some Southerners disobeyed new federal laws guaranteeing equal civil and political rights to blacks and whites, and as attorney general aggressively investigated and prosecuted members of the Klan. U. S. Grant

Amos Tappan Akerman

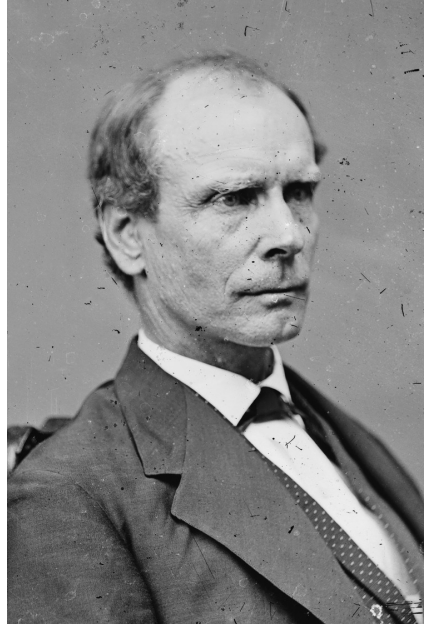
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biographer William S. McFeely wrote of Akerman, “No attorney general since . . . has been more vigorous in the prosecution of cases designed to protect the lives and rights of black Americans.” Akerman resigned his federal office in December 1871 and returned to Georgia, where he practiced law until his death on December 21, 1880.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to Akerman, Grant’s Department of Justice appointed other former Confederates, including a former lieutenant in the 21st North Carolina Infantry named Thomas Settle, who in 1877 was appointed judge of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida. In 1875, Major General James Fleming Fagan was appointed as a U.S. marshal and, two years later, as receiver for the U.S. Department of the Interior’s General Land Office (now known as the Bureau of Land Management). A native of Arkansas, Fagan had commanded Confederate brigades against Grant at the Battle of Shiloh and during the siege of Corinth.

Grant also appointed a former lieutenant in the 3rd Missouri Artillery Battalion named Thomas Benton Catron as territorial attorney general for New Mexico from 1869 to 1872. Grant later promoted Catron to U.S. district attorney for New Mexico. Catron was later elected mayor of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and represented the state in the U.S. House of Representatives and in the U.S. Senate.



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5 Parker, David B. “Amos T. Akerman (1821-1880),” *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, October 28, 2019.

Grant was the first of several presidents to appoint or retain former Confederates as United States diplomats in his Department of State, where three of them would serve.

Before becoming a federal judge, Thomas Settle served as the U.S. ambassador to Peru in 1871. Darwin Ponton Fenner, a former Confederate surgeon in Eldridge's Louisiana Light Artillery Battery, served as the U.S. consul to Guatemala during Grant's administration. James Lawrence Orr, a prewar speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and former colonel of the 1st South Carolina Rifles, was appointed as Grant's U.S. ambassador to Russia.

Another former Confederate who served the U.S. government after the war was President Jefferson Davis's private secretary Burton Norvell Harrison. Born in New Orleans in 1838, Harrison graduated from the University of Mississippi and from Yale University, where he was a member of the legendary Skull and Bones Society. After his graduation from Yale in 1859, Harrison taught mathematics at the University of Mississippi, and in 1862 joined the Washington (Louisiana) Artillery before being sent to the Confederate White House in Richmond to become Davis's personal secretary. Harrison was with Davis and his wife when they were captured by Union forces near Irwinville, Georgia, on May 10, 1865. Harrison was imprisoned at Fort Delaware, and after his release in 1866 moved to New York City and began practicing law. In 1872, he was appointed by President Grant as the U.S. envoy to the Dominican Republic. After his return, Harrison was named secretary and general counsel of the New York Rapid Transit Commission and became involved in national Democratic Party politics. Harrison was offered appointments as assistant U.S. secretary of state and U.S. ambassador to Italy by President Cleveland in 1893, but declined both positions. He died in Washington, D.C., in 1904.

Another former Confederate served as a diplomat—but not for the U.S. government. Lieutenant Colonel Paul Francis de Gournay was a French citizen who had spent his early adulthood as a manager of his family's sugar plantations in Cuba. In 1851, de Gournay fled the island nation during its bloody revolution and settled in New Orleans. At the outbreak of the Civil War, the dashing young Frenchman enlisted in the Confederate Army and quickly became a skilled artilleryman. He rose in rank and responsibility to eventually command artillery batteries during the siege of Port Hudson in Louisiana, whose garrison finally surrendered to Union forces in July 1863 after Vicksburg had fallen. De Gournay remained a captive nearly a year and a half until December of 1864. After the war, de Gournay returned to France but was back in the United States by 1867, this time

as French vice consul in Baltimore, Maryland. He served in that position until 1874.<sup>6</sup>

## Rutherford B. Hayes Administration

Like his predecessor Ulysses S. Grant, the nineteenth president of the United States, Rutherford Birchard Hayes, was a former Union general and native Ohioan. Hayes ended Reconstruction and continued Grant's efforts toward national reconciliation and unity. He also instituted civil service reforms intended to end political patronage appointments in favor of qualified and experienced applicants.

Hayes was born in Delaware, Ohio, in 1822, was educated at Kenyon College, and studied law at Harvard University, where he received his degree in 1845. He practiced in Lower Sandusky, Ohio, until 1849 and moved to Cincinnati, where his law practice flourished. Hayes, who opposed slavery, was active in the Whig Party, which was the predecessor of the Republican Party.

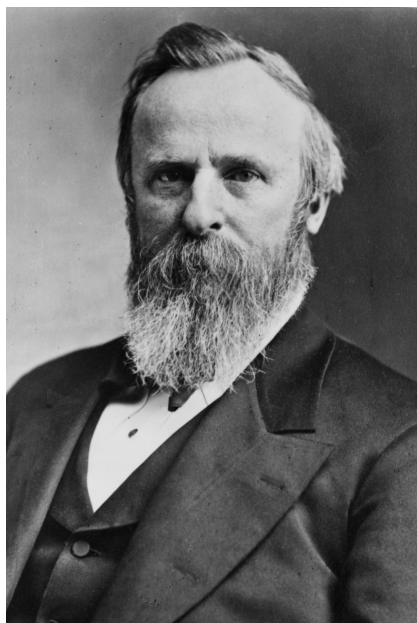
Influenced by the deep religious convictions and abolitionist sentiments of his wife, the former Lucy Webb, Hayes volunteered for the Union Army at the outbreak of the war, was commissioned as a major, and placed in command of the 23rd Ohio Infantry Regiment. Hayes saw significant action during the war and was seriously wounded on September 14, 1862, at the Battle of South Mountain. In 1864, Republicans in Cincinnati nominated Hayes for the U.S. House of Representatives. Despite his refusal to campaign, he won the election while still serving in the field and refused to take his seat in Congress until the war ended. "Any officer fit for duty who at this crisis would abandon his post . . . ought to be scalped," scoffed Hayes. When he eventually entered Congress in December 1865, he expressed concern over "Rebel influences . . . ruling the White House" of President Andrew Johnson, Lincoln's successor.<sup>7</sup>

Hayes served two terms in Congress and three terms as governor of Ohio before gaining the Republican nomination for president in 1876 after proclaiming that, if elected, he would serve only one term. The Democratic Party nominated Governor Samuel J. Tilden of New York, and even though an array of famous

6 Joslyn, Mauriel, "Well-born Lt. Col. Paul Francois de Gournay was the South's adopted 'marquis in gray'", *America's Civil War*, September 1995, p. 8, 85-88.

7 Rutherford B. Hayes. (n.d.). Retrieved from [http://ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Rutherford\\_B\\_Hayes](http://ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Rutherford_B_Hayes).





Rutherford B. Hayes

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Republicans—including Mark Twain—campaigning for Hayes, he was not expected to win. The election was extremely close, with Tilden leading by a comfortable majority of the popular vote. After four months of uncertainty and the appointment of a special electoral commission made up of eight Republicans and six Democrats, Hayes was declared the victor with 185 electoral votes to Tilden’s 184. The tension surrounding the election was so high that Hayes secretly took the oath of office on

March 3, 1877, inside the White House.

Hayes brought honesty and integrity to the presidency, but during the campaign and contentious post-election period, Northern Republicans had promised Southern Democrats federal infrastructure subsidies, the withdrawal of federal troops Grant had sent into Louisiana and South Carolina to quell civil unrest, and a cabinet post for a Southerner. Hayes wrote in his diary on February 17, 1877, “I should like to get support from good men of the South, late Rebels. How to do it is the question. I have the best disposition towards the Southern people, Rebels and all.”<sup>8</sup>

Hayes based his appointments on merit rather than political favoritism. He selected men of high character and ability for his cabinet, but he angered many Republicans by appointing ex-Confederates to high government positions.

Hayes also advocated for African-American rights in the South while seeking the restoration of “wise, honest, and peaceful local self-government” in the former Confederate states. He withdrew troops from those states and hoped conciliatory policies would help establish a “new Republican party” in the South, winning the support of white businessmen and conservatives.<sup>9</sup>

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.



Some Southern leaders embraced conservative Republican economic policies, but in return faced rejection at the polls if they joined the widely despised party of Reconstruction. Notwithstanding Hayes's efforts, the Democrats retained their domination over Southern government offices and institutions throughout his presidential term. As promised, after his single term in office Hayes retired and returned to his home in Fremont, Ohio, where he died in 1893.

During his presidency Hayes fulfilled a campaign commitment by appointing Greeneville, Tennessee, native David McKendree Key as U.S. postmaster general. Hayes explained in his diary: "I could appoint a Southern Democrat in the Cabinet. But who would take it among the capable and influential good men of those States? General Joseph E. Johnston occurs to me." Hayes briefly considered the popular former Confederate general for secretary of war, and more seriously for secretary of the interior. "General Johnston's [postwar] character and conduct was patriotic and upright, but that some of his associations and connections were such that it might be embarrassing to him and to me to offer him a place." Anticipating opposition from fellow Republicans if Johnston joined his cabinet, Hayes instead chose Key, a less prominent Confederate.<sup>10</sup>

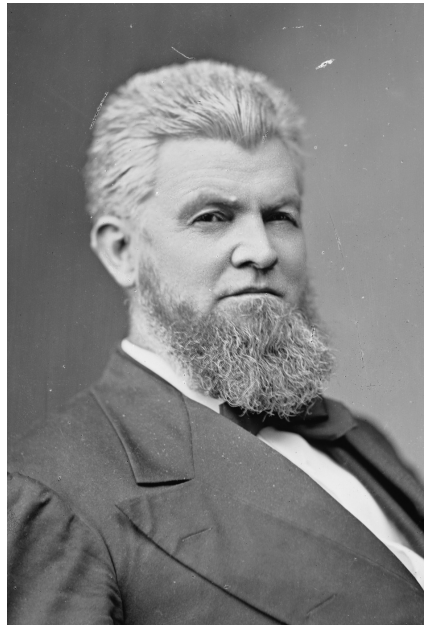
Key had actively opposed secession but remained loyal to his state once it joined the Confederacy. In 1861 he was commissioned an officer in the 43rd Tennessee Infantry and eventually reached the rank of lieutenant colonel.

After the war Key advocated reconciliation and worked to heal sectional strife. He served as postmaster general from 1877 to 1880, when he was appointed by Hayes as judge of the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee and the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee, where he served until his retirement in 1894.

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David McKendree Key

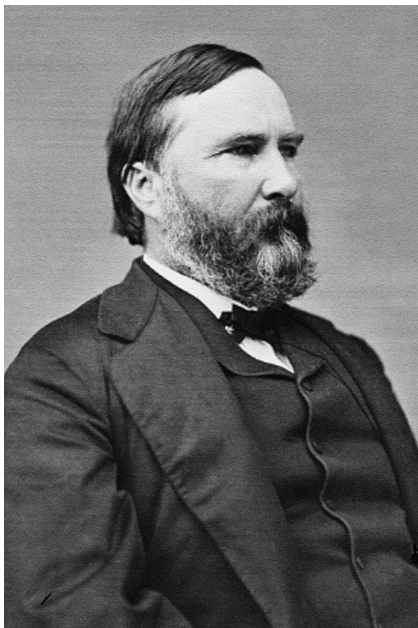
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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

On the domestic front, in 1879 the Hayes administration created the Mississippi River Commission as a division of the U.S. Department of War. The commission was tasked with managing the Mississippi River watersheds for the purpose of enhancing navigation and controlling flooding. One of the members of the first Board of United States Engineers for that commission was Paul Octave Hebert, a former Confederate brigadier general. Hebert was a prominent postwar civil engineer in New Orleans and a member of the Louisiana Board of State Engineers. He served only one year in the new federal position before dying in 1880.

James Longstreet was the highest-profile former Confederate to become part of the Hayes administration. The native of South Carolina and ex-lieutenant general and corps commander in Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia was appointed to the important position of U.S. ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. At its height in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the empire encompassed much of northern Africa, the Middle East, the Arabian Peninsula, and southeastern Europe. Although significantly reduced in size by the second half of the nineteenth century, it still included present-day Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Kuwait, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, and Palestinian-administered territories, as well as portions of the Arabian peninsula. After a year of service as a diplomat Longstreet returned to the United States and was appointed a U.S. Marshal from 1881 until 1883. After several years of semi-retirement Longstreet returned to public service in 1898 as the United States commissioner of railroads in William McKinley's administration.



Another renowned Confederate appointed by Hayes was Colonel John Singleton Mosby, a Virginia native and former leader of one of the most famous Confederate military units: the 43rd Battalion Virginia Cavalry. Better known as Mosby's Rangers, the battalion was a partisan cavalry regiment that operated in northern Virginia, independent of the central Confederate Army command. Mosby received his postwar pardon

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James Longstreet

John Singleton Mosby

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personally from President Grant, who wrote of Mosby in his memoirs, “Since the close of the war, I have come to know Colonel Mosby personally and somewhat intimately. He is a different man entirely from what I supposed . . . He is able and thoroughly honest and truthful.”<sup>11</sup>

“War loses a great deal of its romance after a soldier has seen his first battle,” wrote Mosby in 1887. “I have a more vivid recollection of the first than the last one I was in. It is a classical maxim that it is sweet

and becoming to die for one’s country; but whoever has seen the horrors of the battlefield feels that it is far sweeter to live for it.”<sup>12</sup>

And live for his country he did. In addition to winning Grant’s personal respect, Mosby earned the confidence of succeeding presidents Hayes, Garfield, and Arthur by serving in the important position of consul to Hong Kong, where Mosby exposed corruption and advocated and protected United States interests on the other side of the globe. After his service in China, Mosby served in a number of federal government positions under presidents McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt by representing the interests of the Department of the Interior and Department of Justice, mainly in the western United States.

Joining Longstreet and Mosby as former Confederates in the United States diplomatic corps was North Carolina native Henry Washington Hilliard, former colonel and commander of Hilliard’s Alabama Legion. Hilliard organized a five-battalion, 3,000-man infantry and cavalry corps in Montgomery, Alabama, in June 1862. The cavalry battalion later became part of the 10th Tennessee Cavalry

11 Ulysses S. Grant Quotes (Author of Personal Memoirs) (page 4 of 6). (n.d.). Retrieved from [https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/6926.Ulysses\\_S\\_Grant?page=4](https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/6926.Ulysses_S_Grant?page=4).

12 John S. Mosby Quotes (Author of The Memoirs of Colonel John S. Mosby). (n.d.). Retrieved from [https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/7324186.John\\_S\\_Mosby](https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/7324186.John_S_Mosby).

Regiment. After the war Hilliard practiced law in Georgia and in 1877 was appointed by Hayes as U.S. ambassador to Brazil.

Edwin Harvie Smith was yet another former Confederate appointed by Hayes as U.S. consul, this time to Naples, Italy. A lifelong resident of Virginia, Smith was a surgeon at Chimborazo Hospital in Richmond from 1861 until the end of the war, attaining the position of surgeon in charge of Chimborazo Hospital Number Three.

Former Confederate foreign agent Jose Agustin Quintero served as a diplomat during the Hayes administration, but not as a representative of the United States. Instead, Quintero served on behalf of Belgium and Costa Rica as consul to New Orleans. The former agent was born in Havana, Cuba, became a lawyer, and as an opponent of Spanish colonial rule was condemned to death and escaped to the United States. At the outbreak of the Civil War he enlisted in the Quitman Rifles of Austin, Texas, but was soon sent to Mexico by President Davis to spy and establish covert supply routes via Mexico on behalf of the Confederacy.

Arguably, Hayes's most important (and enduring) appointment was that of Stanford Emerson Chaille, the surgeon general of Louisiana in 1862 and medical director of the Confederate Army of Mississippi. Known as the "Father of Hygiene and Health Education," Chaille was appointed by Hayes as chairman of the Havana Yellow Fever Commission, created to study the disease following the deadly 1878 yellow fever epidemic in the lower Mississippi Valley and New Orleans. Chaille's bacterial studies of the blood of yellow fever victims led to the eventual discovery of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito as the carrier of the plague-like disease.

Chaille advocated for the establishment of community sanitary and sewage drainage systems, water purification, and mosquito control, and was instrumental in the creation of the National Board of Health, which later became the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Another Hayes appointee who served in the Confederate Army was Colonel William Henry Hunt of the 1st Louisiana Militia. Hayes appointed Hunt to a relatively obscure position as a judge of the United States Court of Claims in May 1878, a move that enhanced Hunt's visibility such that he was tapped by President Garfield to serve as the ambassador to Russia and as secretary of the U. S. Navy.

## James A. Garfield Administration

The last of the seven plebeian "log cabin presidents," James Abram Garfield was the twentieth president of the United States. He was elected in 1880 after