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Martin van Buren: Forgotten but not Deserted

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Morgan O'Brien

18 November 2018

Dr. Rose

The American Presidency

Martin van Buren: Forgotten but not Deserted

When you walk up to the average American citizen on the street it can be argued that you would be lucky if that individual knew who the current president and George Washington were. Ask them who the eighth president was, I doubt they would know. For those that do not, the eighth president of the United States of America was none other than President Martin van Buren. "Old Kinderhook" is one of the most overlooked presidents, but he deserves to be remembered for his influence over our political system.

Martin van Buren was a one term president. He was also the first American born President. Van Buren covered a lot of firsts for our country, one of which is being the first (and only) President to speak English as a second language. This Dutch speaking gentleman was born on December 5, 1782, not long after the conclusion of the American Revolution.¹ He was born to Dutch parents, his father of which was a descendant of the first family that emigrated to the colonies from Holland.² His father was a well-known farmer, tavern keeper, and patriot of the American Revolution named Abraham Van Buren.^{3,4} His mother, Marie, was a widow with three children from her previous marriage. The couple would have five children together; the future president was the third to come. Although their people did not speak English as their first language it was clear that "those who farmed the rich fields of Columbia county (in New York)

¹ George Bancroft, "Martin Van Buren," 1986, 2.

² George Bancroft, "Martin Van Buren," 1986, 2-3.

³ George Bancroft, "Martin Van Buren," 1986, 2-3.

⁴ Edward Morse Shepard, "Martin Van Buren," 1980, 14.

were pretty thorough Americans.”⁵ The future President came from a people who had seen hardship and discrimination and had ended up on top.

In 1796 the “Little Magician”⁶ entered the law office of Francis Sylvester, whose office was located at home in Kinderhook, New York. He was 14 at the time. This is where Van Buren would officially start his law studies. His childhood and early studies were greatly influenced by legislative members of his home state. This included the likes of John Jay and Robert Livingston who were working on various treaties and diplomatic assignments at this time.⁷ He would also be greatly influenced by Thomas Jefferson who became President when Van Buren was yet a young law student.⁸

The future president got his first taste of real political heat in the year 1800 when the Republican members of his county sent him to a Republican convention as a delegate.⁹ Although it was not a huge convention, it was still a great honor for a student so young. Their trust in his showed promise for the future leader of the United States:

“The members of the Republican party of New York, at its first organization, blending liberal commercial principles with faith in the people, join in the support of Thomas Jefferson, the Virginia civilian for Presidency. Their zeal so kindled the youthful mind of Van Buren that, in 1800, in his eighteenth year, the Republican party of his vicinity sent him as their delegate to a Republican convention of the countries of Columbia and Rensselaer.”¹⁰

Van Buren would stay with Sylvester until he was twenty years old. From there he traveled, in 1802, to the city of New York where he would finish his seventh and final year of studies in the

⁵ Edward Morse Shepard, “Martin Van Buren,” 1980, 14.

⁶ Edward Morse Shepard, “Martin Van Buren,” 1980, intro.

⁷ George Bancroft, “Martin Van Buren,” 1986, 5-6.

⁸ Edward Morse Shepard, “Martin Van Buren,” 1980.

⁹ George Bancroft, “Martin Van Buren,” 1986, 5-6.

¹⁰ George Bancroft, “Martin Van Buren,” 1986, 6-7.

office of William P. Van Ness.¹¹ In 1803, “Van Buren’s ability and industry, his integrity and kindly frankness, rapidly won for him professional eminence...”¹² It was in this year that he was admitted to the bar of the Supreme Court of the state of New York and returned home to Kinderhook.¹³

It was in 1807 that the next big changes occurred in President Van Buren’s life. In February he was admitted as a counsellor of the Supreme Court. In celebration, he married his childhood sweetheart Hannah Hoes.¹⁴ Their marriage would not last long, she passed away from tuberculosis in 1819, but “to her memory Van Buren remained scrupulously loyal until his own death forty-three years afterwards.”¹⁵ It is interesting to note that within the contents of his fairly large autobiography he does not mention his late wife. When he is inaugurated as president Van Buren will have no one to signify as first lady (all of his four sons were bachelors). When his eldest son Abraham marries a year later his wife, Angelica Singelton Van Buren, will become the symbolic first lady.¹⁶

In 1813 Van Buren was elected to the state of New York’s State Senate, he had a seat on the correction of errors committee. Then, in 1815 at the age of 32, he was made the attorney general of the state. This was a very prominent position at the time. It had been previously held by the likes of Arron Burr. He remained in this position until July of 1819 when party control of the state switched, and he was removed.¹⁷ This did not stop his rise up the political ladder. On

¹¹ Edward Morse Shepard, “Martin Van Buren,” 1980, 16-17

¹² George Bancroft, “Martin Van Buren,” 1986, 7.

¹³ George Bancroft, “Martin Van Buren,” 1986, 6.

¹⁴ Edward Morse Shepard, “Martin Van Buren,” 1980, 21

¹⁵ Edward Morse Shepard, “Martin Van Buren,” 1980, 36-7

¹⁶ Fred L. Israel, Michael Kelly, and Hal Marcovitz, “Martin Van Buren,” *George Washington to James Buchanan*, January 2003, 96.

¹⁷ Edward Morse Shepard, “Martin Van Buren,” 1980, 22-3

March 4, 1821 he was sworn in as a United States Senator. He served in this capacity until December of 1828.¹⁸

It was in 1829 that the Martin Van Buren began to move closer to the center stage of American politics. From January 1, 1829 to March 12, 1829 he served as Governor of New York. His forty-three day term in office holds the record for being the shortest of any New York Governor.¹⁹ It was at this point that he caught the eye of President Andrew Jackson and took his place behind him. On March 28, 1829 he was sworn in as Secretary of State for President Jackson.²⁰ Van Buren quickly became one of Jackson's most trustworthy companions.

Van Buren had several successes during his tenure as Secretary of State, but his time in this position is not remembers by this. Instead, he is most remembered for his resignation from the position. Van Buren's resignation came because of a scandal, but it was not a scandal of his own creation.

It was well known that Jackson did not get along with his Vice President, John C. Calhoun; instead his two closest advisers were Van Buren and his Secretary of War, John Eaton. Secretary Eaton, at this point, had recently married his beloved wife Peggy.²¹ Today, the scandal that ensued would be nothing to bat an eye at, but it was a different time. Peggy had been previously married to another man who passed away and left her a widow. There is little question about whether her and Eaton had an affair (they most certainly did) but it was most likely Eaton's marriage to a lower-class woman that made it a real problem. Calhoun's wife led the wives of Washington in a snub of the Eatons. Jackson would call this a plot against his

¹⁸ Edward Morse Shepard, "Martin Van Buren," 1980, 24

¹⁹ Edward Morse Shepard, "Martin Van Buren," 1980, 27

²⁰ Edward Morse Shepard, "Martin Van Buren," 1980, 24

²¹ Widmer, Ted, *Martin Van Buren*, The American Presidency Serie (New York: Times Books: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2005), 78.

presidency, a seat in which Calhoun longed for. There was no question about whether or not Eaton had to leave his position, he did, but Van Buren and Jackson did not want him resigning in shame.²²

At this point, the only visitor the Eatons received was from Martin Van Buren himself. He had no wife to contend with, he was close friends with Secretary Eaton, and it has been said that he had a soft spot for Peggy too. He said that he was “not ashamed to say that I was born in the Franklin House and that my father was a tavern-keeper. I have always been superior to that petty American foolery.”²³ No one knows exactly why he chose to help the Eatons but help he did. In fact, the plan that he hatched may have helped him seal his role as Jackson’s future Vice President.

Van Buren decided that he would resign from his position as Secretary of State.²⁴ This would give Jackson the opportunity to ask for the resignation of many of his cabinet members, he would simply claim that he was reorganizing his cabinet. With this Eaton would be able to resign without resigning in disgrace. After both men had resigned Van Buren still remained as one of Jackson’s closest confidants. Their talks, along with the meetings with many other unofficial advisors, became known as the Kitchen Cabinet.²⁵

²² Widmer, Ted, *Martin Van Buren*, The American Presidency Serie (New York: Times Books: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2005), 78-9.

²³ Widmer, Ted, *Martin Van Buren*, The American Presidency Serie (New York: Times Books: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2005), 79

²⁴ Fred L. Israel, Michael Kelly, and Hal Marcovitz, “Martin Van Buren,” *George Washington to James Buchanan*, January 2003, 96.

²⁵ Fred L. Israel, Michael Kelly, and Hal Marcovitz, “Martin Van Buren,” *George Washington to James Buchanan*, January 2003, 96.

Van Buren had a short stint as the United States Minister to the United Kingdom. He served in this capacity from August 8, 1831 to April 4, 1832.²⁶ He was called home by President Jackson with the hope that he would become the next Vice President, he did. He was sworn in as Vice President on March 4, 1833 and served in this capacity until he himself became President. In this period of time he put a seal on the idea that he would be the next President. President Martin Van Buren was sworn in as President on March 4, 1837.²⁷

President Van Buren knew that he had a lot to live up to when he took the presidential oath. In his inaugural address he said:

“In receiving from the people the sacred trust twice confided to my illustrious predecessor, and which he has discharged so faithfully and so well, I know that I can not expect to perform the arduous task with equal ability and success. But united as I have been in his counsels, a daily witness of his exclusive and unsurpassed devotion to his country’s welfare, agreeing with him in sentiments which his countrymen have warmly supported, and permitted to partake largely of his confidence, I may hope that somewhat of the same cheering approbation will be found to attend upon my path.”²⁸

Andrew Jackson was a favorite of the American people. Van Buren knew that he would have to potentially ride that coat tail throughout his presidency. Unfortunately for him, even following the great Andrew Jackson would not help make his presidency a success. Even though Van Buren can be credited with helping to shape the democratic system as we know it today, his presidency was riddled with one problem after another. Not only would the country experience

²⁶ Fred L. Israel, Michael Kelly, and Hal Marcovitz, “Martin Van Buren,” *George Washington to James Buchanan*, January 2003, 96.

²⁷ Donald A. Zinman, ed., “Martin Van Buren: The Unfortunate Mop-up Man,” in *The Heir Apparent Presidency* (University Press of Kansas, 2016), 57–78, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1bd6jjq.7>, 65

²⁸ Donald A. Zinman, ed., “Martin Van Buren: The Unfortunate Mop-up Man,” in *The Heir Apparent Presidency* (University Press of Kansas, 2016), 57–78, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1bd6jjq.7>, 66

the worst economic crisis in its history, but it would also face backlash from controversial Native American policy's, worsening sectional tensions, and disagreements with Mexico.²⁹

The first problem that Van Buren faced was the Panic of 1837. Under the reign of Andrew Jackson, the first Bank of the United States had come to an end. Van Buren had supported this movement, in fact he had supported Representative George Clinton on his vote officially defeating the renewal of the Bank.³⁰ Since that time though the financial crisis had only risen, thus it came to a roaring crescendo in May of 1837. The problem started in New York where more and more banks became overwhelmed and ceased their specie payments. This started a ripple effect where more and more banks across the country had to stop specie payments. What followed quickly became the worst economic disaster the country had ever seen. Credit tightened, internal improvement projects were abandoned, industrial production slowed, and unemployment became widespread.³¹

The financial community began to blame the Specie Circular Order as the cause of the depression.³² The Specie Circular Order was an executive order signed on July 11, 1836 by President Jackson. It required the payment for the purchase of public lands to be made exclusively in gold or silver. This was an effort by the administration to curb land speculation and to diminish the growth of paper money. This Order worked in part, but it also caused

²⁹ Donald A. Zinman, ed., "Martin Van Buren: The Unfortunate Mop-up Man," in *The Heir Apparent Presidency* (University Press of Kansas, 2016), 57–78, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1bd6jjq.7>, 66.

³⁰ George Bancroft, "Martin Van Buren," 1986, 16.

³¹ Donald A. Zinman, ed., "Martin Van Buren: The Unfortunate Mop-up Man," in *The Heir Apparent Presidency* (University Press of Kansas, 2016), 57–78, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1bd6jjq.7>, 66.

³² Donald A. Zinman, ed., "Martin Van Buren: The Unfortunate Mop-up Man," in *The Heir Apparent Presidency* (University Press of Kansas, 2016), 57–78, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1bd6jjq.7>, 67.

deflation and was in part to blame for the Panic of 1836, but not fully to blame.³³ After discussing this issue with many advisors Van Buren decided to stick with the Jacksonian way and refused to repeal the order.³⁴ The order would eventually be repealed through a Congressional joint resolution issued on May 21, 1838.³⁵

What Van Buren instead decided to do was call Congress into a special session. He did this in order to introduce his independent Treasury bill, often called the divorce bill. It called for moving federal deposits out of the state banks and into a federally run and noncommercial treasury system. "A written message to Congress detailed Van Buren's proposals, as well as an indictment of the usual Jacksonian enemies (bankers and speculators) for causing the panic."³⁶ One odd thing about the bill is that it had the support of Van Buren's enemy, John C. Calhoun. Also, Van Buren's close friend and ally, Senator William Rives of Virginia, was leading the opposition. He argued that the bill would strengthen the federal government and financially tie the states to it. In the end, the Senate passed the bill, but it died in the House of Representatives. Van Buren was able to make some small successes with Congress. In an effort to loosen the money supply treasury notes were handed out in ten million-dollar intervals. Also, hard pressed

³³ "Specie Circular | United States History | Britannica.Com," accessed November 18, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Specie-Circular>.

³⁴ Donald A. Zinman, ed., "Martin Van Buren: The Unfortunate Mop-up Man," in *The Heir Apparent Presidency* (University Press of Kansas, 2016), 57–78, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1bd6jjq.7>, 67.

³⁵ "Specie Circular | United States History | Britannica.Com," accessed November 18, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Specie-Circular>.

³⁶ Donald A. Zinman, ed., "Martin Van Buren: The Unfortunate Mop-up Man," in *The Heir Apparent Presidency* (University Press of Kansas, 2016), 57–78, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1bd6jjq.7>, 67.

mercantilists were given a reprieve on customs. Unfortunately for President Van Buren, the rejection of his Treasury bill surpassed the good he accomplished with his smaller measures.³⁷

After the end of 1837 prosperity did not return. In fact, the modest signs of recovery were washed away when the economy double dipped in late 1839. Tighter credit again set off a chain reaction of more bank failures, plummeting agricultural prices, and widespread hardship. Because of the down turn Congresses response was to pass President Van Buren's Treasury bill which was enacted in 1840.³⁸

Another issue that Van Buren faced was the continued removal of Native Americans upon the Trail of Tears. There was a Constitutionality question that came with this issue. The question was whether or not the President needed the permission of Congress to use military force. This issue would prompt eleven opinions from the attorney general and seven from the President on this matter.³⁹ The concluding decision came from the Attorney General, Benjamin Butler:

There had, ““since the 14th of January, 1836, a public war with the tribe of Indians, within the meaning of the rules and articles of war and the constitution of the United States.” Butler noted that “Congress, by a law approved on that day, recognized the commencement of these hostilities, and appropriated money to suppress them. Several appropriations for the same object have been made by law; so, although no formal declaration of war has been made (and probably because deemed unnecessary), the war, on our part, has been waged by the authority of the legislative department, to whom the

³⁷ Donald A. Zinman, ed., “Martin Van Buren: The Unfortunate Mop-up Man,” in *The Heir Apparent Presidency* (University Press of Kansas, 2016), 57–78, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1bd6jjq.7>, 67-8.

³⁸ Donald A. Zinman, ed., “Martin Van Buren: The Unfortunate Mop-up Man,” in *The Heir Apparent Presidency* (University Press of Kansas, 2016), 57–78, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1bd6jjq.7>, 68.

³⁹ Michael J. Gerhardt, *The Forgotten Presidents : Their Untold Constitutional Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 15, <https://sacredheart.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=564207&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

power of making war has been given by the constitution.” He explained that “cases in which a war between the United States and a public enemy may exist without the sanction of Congress—as where an unexpected war is commenced against the United States and waged before Congress acts upon the subject.”⁴⁰

This response helped strengthen the President’s control over military and foreign affairs. The opinion of Butler concluded that the President did not need the permission of Congress when faced with an emergency.⁴¹ Since there had been a war, technically declared by Congress, with the Seminoles than the President had full authority to control the military as he was at the time. It was also concluded that the war with the Native Americans was not unjust, they were simply trying to move foreign powers off of American soil.

The annexation of Texas was yet another issue Martin Van Buren inherited from Andrew Jackson. Just prior to the beginning of Van Buren’s term Texas had assembled its own government, revolted against Mexican rule, and applied for statehood.⁴² “Nothing had really been settled along the northeast border with Canada. Diplomatic relations had lapsed between the United States and Mexico. The issue of the annexation of Texas not only threatened a split in the party along sectional lines but also to bring on a war with Mexico.”⁴³ On December 21,

⁴⁰ Michael J. Gerhardt, *The Forgotten Presidents : Their Untold Constitutional Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 16, <https://sacredheart.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=564207&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

⁴¹ Michael J. Gerhardt, *The Forgotten Presidents : Their Untold Constitutional Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 16, <https://sacredheart.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=564207&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

⁴² Michael J. Gerhardt, *The Forgotten Presidents : Their Untold Constitutional Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 17, <https://sacredheart.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=564207&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

⁴³ Niven, John, *Martin Van Buren: The Romantic Age of American Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 435.

1836 President Jackson issued a statement urging Congress to recognize Texas as sovereign.⁴⁴ Just days before he was to leave office Jackson would officially recognize Texas.⁴⁵ “As expected, Southern Democrats favored recognizing and eventually annexing Texas, while Northerners worried about the consequences of enlarging the South’s national influence.”⁴⁶ It was up to Van Buren to decide if Texas would be annexed or not. He received immense pressure from all sides of the issue. Some Texas officials even threatened that, if Van Buren did not approve annexation, that they would go and sign treaties with other nations.⁴⁷

In the end, Van Buren decided to reject the Jacksonian policy. Even though it was supported by his predecessor, Van Buren felt that risking their relationship with Mexico was not worth it. He felt that if he annexed Texas then war was surely to follow.⁴⁸ Van Buren stated that there was no constitutional basis for annexing Texas. It simply was not worth the potential war. Although Van Buren’s rejection of Texas upset Southern Democrats, Van Buren was able to

⁴⁴ Michael J. Gerhardt, *The Forgotten Presidents : Their Untold Constitutional Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 17, <https://sacredheart.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=564207&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

⁴⁵ Donald A. Zinman, ed., “Martin Van Buren: The Unfortunate Mop-up Man,” in *The Heir Apparent Presidency* (University Press of Kansas, 2016), 57–78, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1bd6jjq.7>, 73.

⁴⁶ Donald A. Zinman, ed., “Martin Van Buren: The Unfortunate Mop-up Man,” in *The Heir Apparent Presidency* (University Press of Kansas, 2016), 57–78, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1bd6jjq.7>, 73.

⁴⁷ Michael J. Gerhardt, *The Forgotten Presidents : Their Untold Constitutional Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 17, <https://sacredheart.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=564207&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

⁴⁸ Donald A. Zinman, ed., “Martin Van Buren: The Unfortunate Mop-up Man,” in *The Heir Apparent Presidency* (University Press of Kansas, 2016), 57–78, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1bd6jjq.7>, 73.

solidify the idea that the President had unilateral authority to determine the proper method in which to settle international disputes.⁴⁹

Southern Democrats had wanted the annexation of Texas because they had wanted it admitted as a slave state. They were weary of Van Buren because of his northern ways. Jackson had been a good President for them because he was a Southern slaveholder. But the powers of the North were growing. Thus, Southerners worried about a New York born President. Van Buren attempted to still their fears by making promises on the issue of slavery. First of all, Van Buren made a deal that he would only sign a bill ending slavery in the District of Columbia with the consent of the Southern states.⁵⁰ Secondly, he made a promise to veto any bill interfering with slavery in Florida if it eventually became a state.⁵¹ Lastly, he defended the international slave trade while dealing with the case of the *La Amistead*. The *La Amistead* was a Spanish slave ship that landed on United States soil after a mutiny. President Van Buren concluded that they had to return the ship, with all of its slaves, to Spain because of the fact that they were all considered property under Spanish rule. The United States had no right to free them. A similar instance had previously occurred with three American slave ships that unexpectedly landed in the British occupied West Indies during the Jackson administration. British officials had freed the slaves on each ship, upsetting Southern slaveholders. Not only did Van Buren decide not to

⁴⁹ Michael J. Gerhardt, *The Forgotten Presidents : Their Untold Constitutional Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 17, <https://sacredheart.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=564207&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

⁵⁰ Donald A. Zinman, ed., "Martin Van Buren: The Unfortunate Mop-up Man," in *The Heir Apparent Presidency* (University Press of Kansas, 2016), 57–78, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1bd6jjq.7>, 72.

⁵¹ Donald A. Zinman, ed., "Martin Van Buren: The Unfortunate Mop-up Man," in *The Heir Apparent Presidency* (University Press of Kansas, 2016), 57–78, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1bd6jjq.7>, 72.

take a similar position as the British, he also eventually brokered a deal with England for compensation of the property on those ships.⁵² Unfortunately for Van Buren, the friends he made through these deals would not stick with him through the on going economic crisis and the President would not win his reelection bid.

President Martin Van Buren was not all together such a bad President. In fact, he reasserted a lot of the powers of the Presidency, and many modern Presidents followed in his foot steps with these policies. An economic crisis that was out of his hands was his real down fall. Although he followed a mostly Jacksonian track, he lacked Jackson's personality and popularity. In the election of 1840 he was easily defeated by the Whig candidate William Henry Harrison. When Van Buren leaves office the country will still be immersed in economic hardship. "Not one of his predecessors had been faced with so many crises, so many problems, in such a short space of time."⁵³ The President will attempt to run again in 1848 as a third-party candidate but he will once again be met with defeat.

One final fun fact about President Van Buren is that you probably mention him, without knowing it, in your every day rhetoric. This is because the term "ok" has its roots in his Presidential campaign. "The Old English Dictionary defines the term ok as "mid 19th century (originally US): probably an abbreviation of orl correct, humouous form of all correct, popularized as a slogan during President Van Buren's re-election campaign of 1840 in the US; his nickname Old Kinderhook (derived from his birthplace) provided the initials."⁵⁴

⁵² Donald A. Zinman, ed., "Martin Van Buren: The Unfortunate Mop-up Man," in *The Heir Apparent Presidency* (University Press of Kansas, 2016), 57–78, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1bd6jjq.7>, 72.

⁵³ Niven, John, *Martin Van Buren: The Romantic Age of American Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 435.

⁵⁴ "What Is the Origin of the Word 'OK'? | Oxford Dictionaries." Oxford Dictionaries | English, Oxford Dictionaries, en.oxforddictionaries.com/explore/what-is-the-origin-of-the-word-ok/.

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