

Today in Columbus History:

On April 25, 1854, the *Weekly Times and Sentinel* and *Columbus Enquirer*, both ran stories about the visit from former president, Millard Fillmore. He actually arrived on April 18, 1854, but the papers could not report on the story until a week later. They did, however, print the program for his visit on the 18th.

Fillmore was the New York-born vice president of the United States elected along with Zachary Taylor in 1848. He became the 13th president upon the death of Taylor in 1850. He assumed the office on July 9, 1850 and remained there until to March 4, 1853, just over a year before his visit. He is best known for presiding over the debates on the Compromise of 1850 as vice president and then signing it into law as president. He was also the last Whig to hold that office.

Fillmore travelled through the South and West that Spring with his former Secretary of the Navy, John P. Kennedy. The welcoming committee rode out to Opelika to meet them and accompanied the party back to town. He stayed at the Oglethorpe House, on the corner of Randolph and Oglethorpe (or 12th Street and 1st Ave) during his visit. He toured the Eagle Factory and E.T. Taylor's cotton gin factory and stopped the home of Seaborn Jones, now known as St. Elmo. The next day, Fillmore and Kennedy were conducted through town by the local military companies to a reception at City Hall and a soiree that evening at Temperance Hall. Fillmore and his party took the 9 o'clock train for Macon the next morning.

Fillmore sought the Whig nomination for president in 1852 but lost to Winfield Scott, another person, well-known in Columbus. The Oglethorpe House historical marker at 12th and 1st mentions both Fillmore and Scott staying in the hotel. Scott set up his headquarters in the unfinished Oglethorpe House when came to town to take charge of the Second Creek War and forcibly remove the Creeks to the Indian Territory in 1836. Scott lost the election of 1852 to Democrat Franklin Pierce.

Several prominent Columbus residents organized a "Fillmore Club" to support his candidacy for president in 1856. It included several well-known residents, among them was John Peabody, W. L. Salisbury, J. J. Slade, R. L. Mott, Hines Holt, and many more. The officers alone numbered no fewer than seventy-seven. Fillmore was nominated by the American (Know Nothing) Party on platform that was neutral on the issue of slavery. He lost to Democrat James Buchanan when he and Georgia-born John C. Fremont, the first Republican candidate for president, split the opposition vote.

Fillmore did carry Muscogee County with 933 votes to Buchanan's 740, however he did not win the state of Georgia. In fact, the only state he won was Maryland. Overall, he came in third place, after Fremont. Of course, James Buchanan went on to become known as one of the worst presidents in American history. Before his term was over, eight states seceded from the Union, including Georgia on January 19, 1861.

Compiled by Daniel A. Bellware, Muscogee Genealogical Society

Clipping from Georgia Historic Newspapers (GALILEO).

Our weekly snippets of Columbus history are usually based on a few days-worth of searching through the most popular sources for Muscogee County history. Meant to inspire readers to explore more about Columbus history, they are not exhaustive dissertations on the topic and may contain mistakes. If you have corrections or additional information, feel free to share them with the group.

Reception of Messrs. Fillmore and Kennedy.

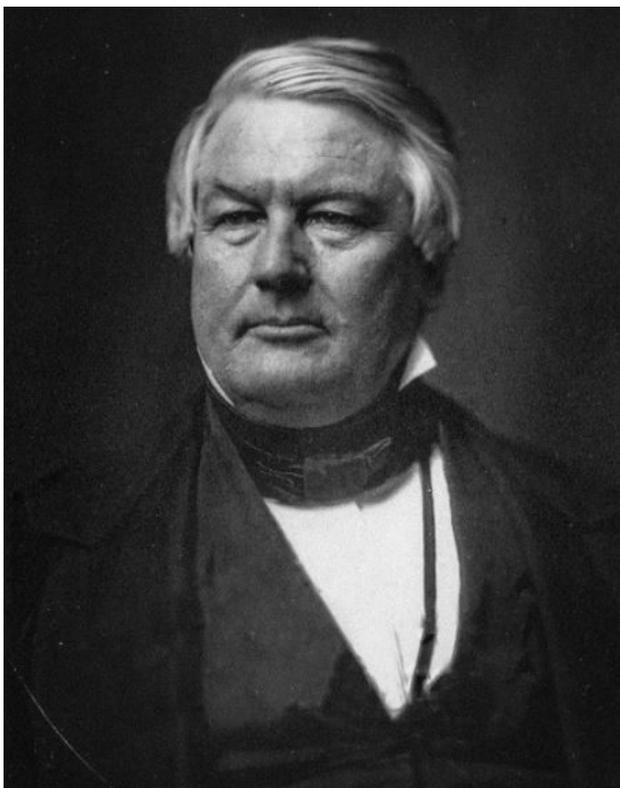
Mr. Fillmore, accompanied by Mr. Kennedy reached our city about 6 o'clock, P. M. on the 18th inst. He was met by His Honor, the Mayor, and members of the Common Council, about a mile beyond the city, where a large number of citizens had assembled to pay the distinguished gentlemen their respects.

The stage drove up in front of Mr. Weaver's, where the guest alighted and were presented by the Committee, who had accompanied them from Opelika. Mayor Bacon then welcomed them with an appropriate address and tendered them the hospitalities of the city, to which both Mr. Fillmore and Mr. Kennedy briefly replied.

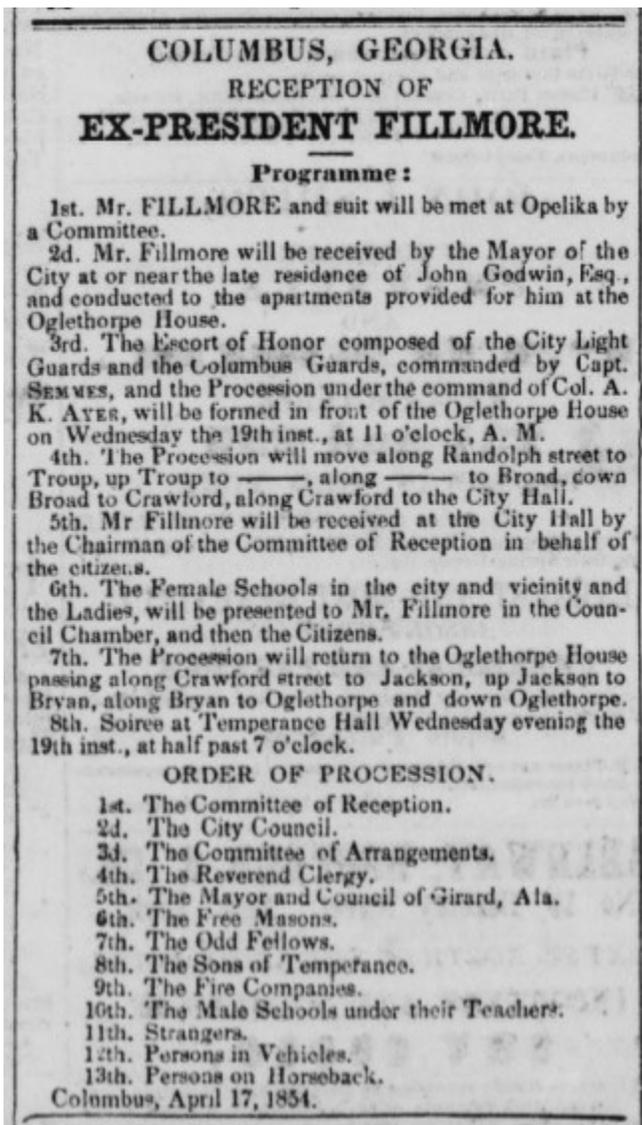
The distinguished gentlemen then took their seats in the carriages provided for them, and drove into the city to their quarters at the Oglethorpe House.

At eleven o'clock on Wednesday, an immense con-

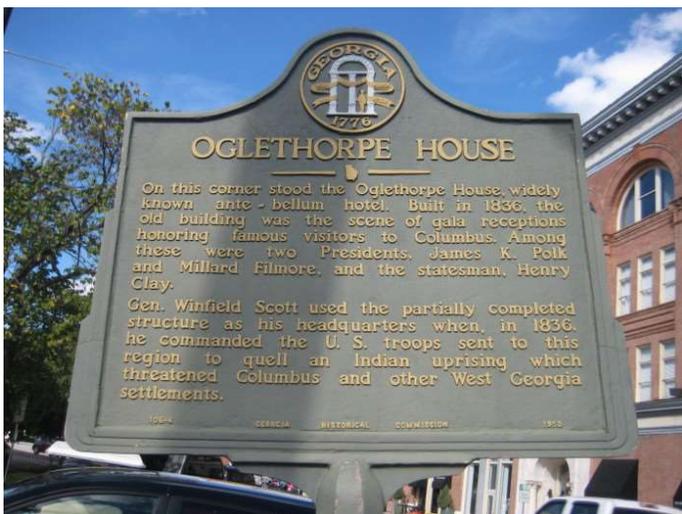
From the *Columbus Weekly Times and Sentinel*, April 25. 1854,
<https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>.



Millard Fillmore from Wikipedia.com, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millard_Fillmore



From the *Columbus Weekly Times and Sentinel*, April 18, 1854,
<https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>.



From the Georgia Historical Society webpage at: https://georgiahistory.com/ghmi_marker_updated/oglethorpe-house/

[BY REQUEST.]

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Winfield Scott from Wikipedia.com, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winfield_Scott



John Pendleton Kennedy from Wikipedia.com, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_P._Kennedy