



John Caldwell Calhoun

Given by South Carolina to the National Statuary Hall Collection

ON A SMALL PLANTATION IN ABBEVILLE COUNTY, South Carolina, John Caldwell Calhoun was born on March 18, 1782. He studied at Waddell's Academy in Georgia, graduated with honors from Yale in 1804, studied at Tapping Reeve's Law School in Litchfield, Connecticut, and was admitted to the bar in 1807. He practiced briefly in Abbeville before pursuing a political career. After one year in the state House of Representatives, he served from 1811 to 1817 in the U.S. House of Representatives, becoming a leader of the "war hawks" and a staunch nationalist. Calhoun resigned to become President Monroe's secretary of war.

He subsequently was elected to two successive terms as vice president, serving under Presidents John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson. Resigning in 1832 because of political differences with Jackson, Calhoun was elected to the U.S. Senate and served until 1843. Appointed President Tyler's secretary of state, he secured the annexation of Texas. Elected again to the U.S. Senate in 1845, he served until his death.

A powerful orator, Calhoun became the leading spokesman for the South during attempts to resolve politically the conflict between the sections. Calhoun, a brilliant theoretician, advocated a fine balance of nullification and the use of "concurrent majorities" to prevent the dissolution of the Union. His political treatises, published posthumously, were influential in America and abroad. Calhoun died on March 31, 1850, in Washington, D.C., and is buried in Charleston, South Carolina.

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Marble by Frederic W. Ruckstull
Given in 1910; located in Crypt.