



Henry Clay

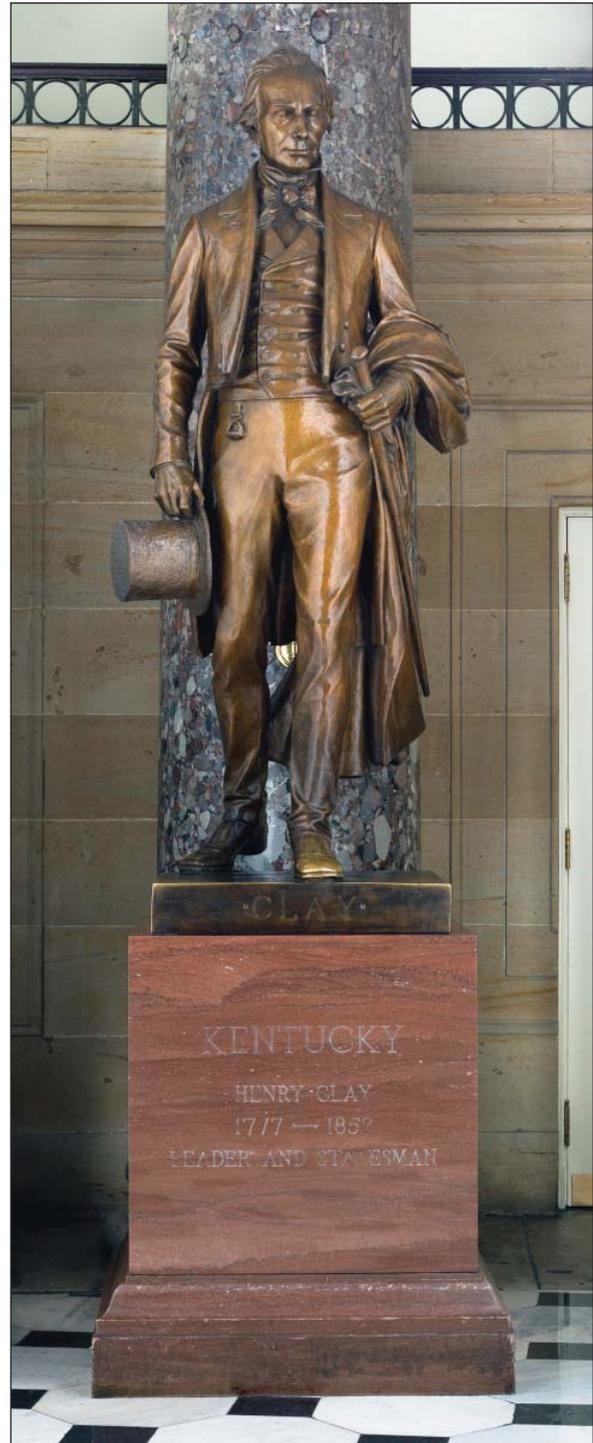
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HENRY CLAY WAS BORN IN HANOVER COUNTY, Virginia, on April 12, 1777. His only formal education was three years at a small school. After his father died, his mother remarried and Clay moved to Richmond. His stepfather secured him a position with the clerk of the High Court of Chancery. Inspired, Clay began law studies in 1796, finished a year later, and quickly earned a reputation as a skillful lawyer. In 1797 Clay moved to Lexington, Kentucky, a city with a reputation for culture and influence.

He was elected a U. S. senator for a short term in 1806–1807. He then returned to serve in the Kentucky legislature from 1808 to 1809. He returned to the United States Senate from 1810 to 1811; he also served in the Senate from 1831 to 1842 and from 1849 to 1852. Henry Clay had the distinction of also serving as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1811 to 1821 and from 1823 to 1825; he was Speaker of the House from 1811 to 1820.

Clay also served as a member of the Ghent Peace Commission. President John Quincy Adams appointed him secretary of state from 1825 to 1829, and he ran as the Whig nominee for President in 1832. Clay was author of the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and the Compromise of 1850. Henry Clay died on June 29, 1852.

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Bronze by Charles H. Niehaus
Given in 1929; located in National Statuary Hall.