



Oliver Hazard Perry Morton

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THE FULL NAME OF THIS COLORFUL GOVERNOR of Indiana and United States senator was Oliver Hazard Perry Throck Morton. He was born on August 4, 1823. His mother died when he was three, and he went to live with his maternal grandparents, from whom he received a strict Scotch Presbyterian upbringing. He suffered a number of financial reversals as a young man but was eventually able to complete his law studies.

Morton's entry into the political arena coincided with the inception of the Republican party. He served as governor of Indiana for six years (1861–1867) and was a loyal supporter of the Union's efforts during the Civil War. He was a United States senator from 1867 to 1877. Morton became a controversial figure with his attitude toward paper money. He was considered “soft” because he favored issuing paper money with no backing during difficult times. This view, combined with his failing health, worked against his attaining the Republican presidential nomination in 1867. He did, however, participate as a member of the Electoral Commission appointed to determine the outcome of that contested presidential election.

Oliver Morton died of a stroke on November 1, 1877, while on a trip to Oregon investigating charges of bribery made against a newly elected senator from that state. Morton was a physically commanding person, known for his devotion to party, his honesty, and his rhetoric.

April 2011



Marble by Charles H. Niehaus
Given in 1900; located in Senate wing, 1st floor.