



Daniel Webster

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BORN ON JANUARY 18, 1782, IN SALISBURY, New Hampshire, Daniel Webster was a central figure in the nation's history. His father, recognizing that his son was more suited for scholastics than for farm life, ensured that Webster received an education. Webster studied at the Phillips Exeter Academy before enrolling at Dartmouth in 1797. There he became known as a forceful speaker. Following graduation, Webster vacillated between careers in law and teaching. Persuaded by his family to pursue the law, he studied in Boston and eventually began a practice in Portsmouth in 1807. Webster prospered, achieving financial success and professional prestige.

Politics soon became part of Webster's life. His eloquent orations made him a dominant figure in local circles, and when in 1812 he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, he successfully combined his political and legal careers. In 1822 Webster was elected to the U.S. Senate, where he increased his reputation as an orator. His response in 1830 to the doctrine of nullification and states rights made him a prominent national figure.

Although Webster's more notable efforts were performed in the Senate, he also served in the Cabinet as secretary of state under Presidents Harrison and Tyler in 1840–1843. Webster returned to the Senate in 1844, and there he continued to defend the unity of the nation with his eloquence. In 1850 he was called by President Fillmore to serve again as secretary of state, which office he held until his death on October 24, 1852.



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Marble by Carl Conrads (after Thomas Ball)
Given in 1894; located in National Statuary Hall.