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Chester Arthur I

Lead: Although historians regard his presidency as one of modest achievements, Chester Arthur left a legacy of elegance in the White House.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: Chester Arthur became the twenty-first president on September 19, 1881, after James Garfield was shot by an assassin's bullet on July 2, 1881. Just four months into his term, Garfield was the fourth president to die in office and the second to be assassinated. He

lingered for eighty days.

Chester Arthur took the oath of office a widower having lost his beloved wife Ellen “Nell” Arthur to pneumonia the previous year.

Arthur was born in North Fairfield, Vermont, in 1829. An ardent abolitionist, Arthur started his legal career in New York City. He served as Quartermaster General of New York’s state troops during the Civil War and was appointed tax collector of the Port of New York by President Grant in 1871, but was removed by President Hayes in 1878.

When Arthur acceded to the presidency, the public was skeptical.

He had risen in the ranks of Roscoe Conkling's corrupt New York Republican Party machine, and he was known to be an adherent of the spoils system in which political allies are appointed to office whether or not they are qualified to serve.

During his term, however, Arthur surprised even his toughest critics by conducting his administration with honesty and integrity. He instituted Civil Service reform and created the Bureau of Labor.

Chester Arthur was tall, stylish, handsome and had impeccable manners. As president he was known as "the gentleman boss."

Next Time: The White House clean-up.

**At the University of Richmond,
this is Dan Roberts.**

Resources

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