

= Thomas Metcalfe ( Kentucky ) =

Thomas Metcalfe ( March 20 , 1780 ? August 18 , 1855 ) , also known as Thomas Metcalf or as " Stonehammer " , was a U.S. Representative , Senator , and the tenth Governor of Kentucky . He was the first gubernatorial candidate in the state 's history to be chosen by a nominating convention rather than a caucus . He was also the first governor of Kentucky who was not a member of the Democratic @-@ Republican Party .

At age 16 , Metcalfe was apprenticed to his older brother and became a stonemason . He helped construct the Green County courthouse , known as the oldest courthouse in Kentucky . Later , political opponents would mock his trade , giving him the nickname " Old Stone Hammer . " His political career began with four terms in the Kentucky House of Representatives . His service was interrupted by the War of 1812 , in which he commanded a company in the defense of Fort Meigs . At the age of thirty @-@ eight , he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives . He held his seat in the House for five terms , then resigned to run for governor . In an election decided by 709 votes , Metcalfe defeated William T. Barry in the gubernatorial election of 1828 . Metcalfe 's predecessor , Joseph Desha was so stunned by his party 's loss that he threatened not to vacate the governor 's mansion . Ultimately , however , he respected the will of the people , and allowed an orderly transition .

Metcalfe 's primary concern as governor was the issue of internal improvements . Among his proposed projects were a road connecting Shelbyville to Louisville and a canal on the Falls of the Ohio . When President Andrew Jackson vetoed funds to construct a turnpike connecting Maysville and Lexington , Metcalfe built it anyway , paying for it entirely with state funds . Following his term as governor , he served in the state senate , and completed the unfinished term of John J. Crittenden in the U.S. Senate in 1848 . After this , he retired to " Forest Retreat " , his estate in Nicholas County , where he died of cholera in 1855 . Metcalfe County , Kentucky was named in his honor .

= = Early life = =

Thomas Metcalfe was born on March 20 , 1780 to John Metcalfe and his third wife , Sarah " Sally " Dent ( Chinn ) Metcalfe in Fauquier County , Virginia . His father served as a captain in the Revolutionary War . In 1784 , the Metcalfe family settled near Russell 's Cave in Fayette County , Kentucky . Some years later , they would move to a farm in Nicholas County .

Metcalfe received only a rudimentary education , and at age sixteen , he was apprenticed to his brother and learned the craft of stonemasonry . Three years later , their father died , leaving the brothers to provide for their mother and younger siblings . Metcalfe became one of the most prominent stonemasons and building contractors during the settlement period of Kentucky . A number of his stone houses survive and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places , including his first home in Robertson County . Other structures built by the Metcalfe brothers are the state 's first governor 's mansion and the Green County courthouse , known as the oldest courthouse in Kentucky , and the Presbyterian church at West Union in far southern Ohio .

On October 2 , 1801 , Metcalfe enlisted as a lieutenant in the 29th Regiment of the Kentucky Militia . He was promoted to captain on October 12 , 1802 . About 1806 , Metcalfe married Nancy Mason of Fairfax , Virginia . The couple had four children . Between 1817 and 1820 , Metcalfe built a house for his family in Nicholas County . The estate was dubbed " Forest Retreat " by statesman Henry Clay who , on his first visit to the newly constructed house , told Metcalfe , " Tom , you have here a veritable Forest Retreat . "

= = Political career = =

Metcalfe 's political career began in 1812 when he was elected to represent Nicholas County in the Kentucky House of Representatives . His service was interrupted by the War of 1812 . In 1813 , he raised a company of volunteers and commanded them at the Battle of Fort Meigs . While he was away at war , the voters of his district re @-@ elected him to the Kentucky House ; only thirteen

votes were cast against him . He continued to serve in the Kentucky House until 1816 .

= = = In the House of Representatives = = =

At the age of thirty @-@ eight , Metcalfe was elected to the Sixteenth Congress , defeating Joshua Desha . During his tenure in the House , which lasted five terms , he was the chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs and the Committee on Militia . He opposed the Second Bank of the United States , but favored extension of credit to purchasers of public land . In 1821 , he proposed granting preemption rights to squatters . He also opposed restrictions on slavery in Missouri and the Louisiana Purchase .

In James Monroe 's annual address to the legislature in December 1822 , he called on Congress to report on how to best deal with the Seminoles that inhabited the recently acquired territory of Florida . As chair of the Committee on Indian Affairs , Metcalfe delivered the report on February 21 , 1823 . His committee found that , under the terms of the Adams @-@ Onis Treaty that transferred control of Florida to the United States from Spain , the Seminoles were to be accorded the same privileges as U.S. citizens . Accordingly , the committee recommended that each Seminole family be given a land grant . They hoped that this would help break the tribal loyalties of the Seminoles and expedite their amalgamation into white society . The committee 's report was largely ignored .

In 1826 , Metcalfe served on a House committee that investigated allegations that Vice @-@ President John C. Calhoun had improperly benefited from a contract he awarded while serving as Secretary of War in 1822 . While Calhoun was cleared of any wrongdoing , his friend , South Carolina Representative George McDuffie , began an exchange of correspondence with Metcalfe regarding the proceedings . The correspondence became heated , and McDuffie challenged Metcalfe to a duel . As the recipient of the challenge , Metcalfe had the right to choose the terms of the engagement . He chose rifles as the weapon at a distance of 90 feet . McDuffie insisted that wounds from a previous duel had left him incapable of handling a rifle , and proposed pistols as an alternative . Metcalfe replied that he had never handled a pistol in his life . Unable to come to an agreement on the conditions of the duel , both sides eventually dropped the matter entirely .

= = = Governor of Kentucky = = =

Metcalfe resigned his seat in the House on June 1 , 1828 in order to run for the governorship of Kentucky . He was chosen as the candidate of the National Republican Party at their nominating convention and was the first gubernatorial candidate in the state to be chosen using this method . He defeated William T. Barry by a margin of 709 votes , but his running mate , Joseph R. Underwood , was badly defeated by the Democratic @-@ Republican nominee , John Breathitt . Metcalfe 's election in 1828 marked the first time the governorship had been won by a candidate who was not a Democratic @-@ Republican . However , only one Democratic @-@ Republican would hold the office between Metcalfe 's term and the election of Lazarus W. Powell in 1851 .

Joseph Desha , the outgoing governor , refused to believe that his party had lost the election . He disliked Metcalfe not only due to his party affiliation , but also because of his occupation as a stonemason , which he believed was too low a calling for a governor . Metcalfe 's opponents made slights on the quality of his stone work and his views on the Old Court @-@ New Court controversy . When told about these charges , Metcalfe remarked " They may say what they like about my views , but the first man that dares to attack my character , I will cleave his skull with my stone hammer , as I would cleave a rock . " As word of this remark spread , Metcalfe was given the nickname " Old Stone Hammer . " Despite his threats to remain in the governor 's mansion until the legislature convened , Desha respected the will of the people , and left the residence on September 2 , 1828 .

Metcalfe opposed the spoils system and the doctrine of nullification . He favored protective tariffs and federal aid for internal improvements . He oversaw the establishment of a road connecting Shelbyville to Louisville . When President Andrew Jackson vetoed federal aid for a turnpike connecting Maysville and Lexington , Metcalfe continued constructing it with state funds . ( The road is now a portion of U.S. Route 68 . ) Metcalfe 's term also saw the commissioning of the state 's first

railroad and the beginning of plans for a canal at the Falls of the Ohio . At the governor 's recommendation , the state legislature approved additional aid for education , and the creation of district schools .

= = Later life and death = =

Following his term as governor , Metcalfe represented Nicholas and Bracken Counties in the Kentucky Senate from 1834 to 1838 . In 1836 , he served as a Whig presidential elector , and he presided over the Kentucky Whig Convention in Harrodsburg on August 26 , 1839 . From 1840 to 1849 , he served as president of the state board of internal improvements . Finally , he was appointed and subsequently elected as a Whig to the United States Senate to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of John J. Crittenden . He served from June 23 , 1848 , to March 3 , 1849 . During his short tenure , he denounced secession , and asserted that Kentucky would remain part of the Union .

After his term in the Senate Metcalfe engaged in agricultural pursuits near Carlisle , Kentucky . He died of cholera in his home on August 18 , 1855 . He was interred in the family burial ground at Forest Retreat . Metcalfe County , Kentucky was formed in 1860 and named in his honor . " Forest Retreat " was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on October 2 , 1973 .