

= Edward Everett =

Edward Everett (April 11 , 1794 ? January 15 , 1865) was an American politician , pastor , educator , diplomat , and orator from Massachusetts . Everett , a Whig , served as U.S. Representative , U.S. Senator , the 15th Governor of Massachusetts , Minister to Great Britain , and United States Secretary of State . He also taught at Harvard University and served as its president .

Everett was one of the great American orators of the antebellum and Civil War eras . He is often remembered today as the featured orator at the dedication ceremony of the Gettysburg National Cemetery in 1863 , where he spoke for over two hours ? immediately before President Abraham Lincoln delivered his famous , two @-@ minute Gettysburg Address .

The son of a pastor , Everett was educated at Harvard , and briefly ministered at Boston 's Brattle Street Church before taking a teaching job at Harvard . The position included preparatory studies in Europe , so Everett spent two years in studies at the University of Göttingen , and another two years traveling around Europe . At Harvard he taught ancient Greek literature for several years before becoming involved in politics , and began an extensive and popular speaking career . He served ten years in the United States Congress before winning election as Governor of Massachusetts in 1835 . As governor he introduced the state Board of Education , the first of its type in the nation .

After being defeated in the 1839 election by one vote , Everett was appointed Minister to Great Britain , serving until 1845 . He next became President of Harvard , a job he quickly came to dislike . In 1849 he became an assistant to longtime friend and colleague Daniel Webster , who had been appointed Secretary of State . Upon Webster 's death Everett served as Acting Secretary for a few months . In the later years of his life Everett traveled , giving speeches all over the country . He supported efforts to maintain the Union before the Civil War , running for Vice President on the Constitutional Union Party ticket in 1860 . He was active in supporting the Union effort during the war and supported Lincoln in the 1864 election .

= = Early life and education = =

Edward Everett was born on April 11 , 1794 in Dorchester , Massachusetts (then independent from Boston) , the fourth of eight children , to the Rev. Oliver Everett and Lucy Hill Everett , the daughter of Alexander Sears Hill . His father was a direct descendant of early colonist Richard Everett , and his mother 's family also had deep colonial roots . His father had served as pastor of New South Church , retiring due to poor health two years before Everett was born . He died in 1802 , when Edward was eight , after which his mother moved the family to Boston . He attended local schools , and then a private school of Ezekiel Webster . During this time Ezekiel 's brother Daniel sometimes taught classes ; Everett and Daniel Webster would later form a close friendship .

Everett attended Boston Latin School in 1805 , and then briefly Phillips Exeter Academy , where his older brother Alexander Hill Everett was teaching . At the age of 13 , he was admitted to Harvard College . In 1811 , at age 17 , he graduated as the valedictorian of his class . Unlike some of the other students at the time , Everett was an earnest and diligent student who absorbed all of what was taught . While a student , he was a member of the Hasty Pudding Club .

= = Pastor and student = =

Uncertain what to do next , Everett was encouraged by his pastor , Joseph Stevens Buckminster of the Brattle Street Church , to study for the ministry . This Everett did under the tutelage of Harvard President John Thornton Kirkland , earning his MA in 1813 . During this time in particular he developed a facility for working with both the written and spoken word . The Reverend Buckminster died in 1812 , and Everett was immediately offered the post at the Brattle Street Church on a probationary basis after his graduation , which was made permanent in November 1813 . Everett dedicated himself to the work , and became a highly popular Unitarian preacher . Listeners wrote of his " florid and affluent fancy " , and his " daring imagery " , while one critic wrote what would become a common criticism of his speaking style : " [Everett] spoke like some superior intelligence

, discoursing to mortals of what they ought to feel and know , but as if [he] himself were too far exalted to require such feelings , and such knowledge himself . " Everett , over the year he served in the pulpit , came to be disenchanted with the somewhat formulaic demands of the required oratory , and with the sometimes parochial constraints the congregation placed on him .

The workload also took its toll on young Everett , who around this time acquired the nickname " Ever @-@ at @-@ it " , which would be used throughout his life . For a change of pace , Everett traveled to Washington , D.C. , where he visited with Daniel Webster and other Federalist Party luminaries from Massachusetts . In late 1814 Everett was offered a newly endowed position as professor of Greek literature at Harvard . The position came with authorization to travel for two years in Europe , and Everett readily accepted . He was formally invested as a professor in April 1815 . Everett was also elected a member of the American Antiquarian Society in 1815 .

Everett made his way across western Europe , visiting London and the major Dutch cities en route to the German city of Göttingen . There he entered the university , where he studied French , German , Italian , along with Roman law , archaeology , and Greek art . He was a disciplined student , but he and George Ticknor , with whom he had traveled , were also quite sociable . Everett noted that they were viewed by many at the university as curiosities , and were often the focus of attention . He was granted a Ph. D in September 1817 , which he believed to be the first such degree awarded to an American .

During his sojourn at Göttingen , Everett traveled to see other German cities , including Hanover , Weimar , Dresden , and Berlin . He received permission from Harvard to extend his time in Europe , and spent two more years traveling across the continent (from Constantinople and the Black Sea to Paris) , visiting the major cities of the continent before returning to the United States in 1819 . Among those he met in England were the Prussian diplomat Wilhelm von Humboldt , an influential architect of the Prussian education system , and William Wilberforce , a leading English abolitionist . While in Constantinople Everett acquired a number of ancient Greek texts which are now in the Harvard archives .

= = Teacher , writer , and speaker = =

Everett took up his teaching duties later in 1819 , hoping to implant the scholarly methods of Germany at Harvard and bring a generally wider appreciation of German literature and culture to the United States . For his Greek class he translated Philipp Karl Buttmann 's Greek lexicon . Among his students were future Speaker of U.S. House of Representatives Robert Charles Winthrop , presidential son and future U.S. Representative Charles Francis Adams , and future philosopher and essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson . Emerson had first heard Everett speak at the Brattle Street Church , and idolized him . He wrote that Everett 's voice was " of such rich tones , such precise and perfect utterance , that , although slightly nasal , it was the most mellow and beautiful and correct of all instruments of the time . "

In 1820 Everett became editor of the North American Review , a literary magazine to which he had contributed articles while studying in Europe . In addition to editing he made numerous contributions to the magazine , which flourished during his tenure and reached a nationwide audience . He was also instrumental in expanding Harvard 's collections of German language works , including grammars , lexicons , and a twenty @-@ volume edition of the collected works of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe , who Everett had visited in Weimar and whose works he championed on the pages of the Review .

Everett began his public speaking career while he taught at Harvard , which combined with his editorship of the Review to bring him some national prominence . He preached at a service held in the United States Capitol that brought him wide notice and acclaim in political circles . In 1822 he delivered a series of lectures in Boston on art and antiquities . The series was well attended , and he repeated it in subsequent years . He made a major speech in December 1823 advocating for American support of the Greeks in their struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire . This subject was adopted by Daniel Webster , who also made it the subject of a speech in Congress . (Everett 's support for Greek independence made him something of a hero in Greece , and his

portrait hangs in the National Gallery in Athens .) This collaboration between Webster and Everett was the start of a lifelong political association between the two men .

= = Marriage and children = =

On May 8 , 1822 Edward Everett married Charlotte Gray Brooks (November 4 , 1800 - July 2 , 1859) , the daughter of Peter Chardon Brooks and Ann Gorham , who like Everett were of old New England lineage . Brooks had made a fortune in a variety of business endeavors , including marine insurance , and would financially support Everett when he embarked on his career in politics . Everett would also become associated through the Brooks family with John Quincy Adams ' son Charles Francis , who married one of Charlotte 's sisters .

The Everetts had a happy and fruitful marriage , producing six children who survived infancy :

Anne Gorham Everett (March 3 , 1823 at Atkinson Street , Boston , Suffolk County , Massachusetts , USA ? October 18 , 1843 at 46 Grosvenor Place , Belgravia , London , England)

Charlotte Brooks Everett (August 13 , 1825 ? December 15 , 1879) ; married Captain Henry Augustus Wise USN

Grace Webster Everett (December 24 , 1827 ? January 8 , 1836)

Edward Brooks Everett (May 6 , 1830 ? November 5 , 1861) ; married Helen Cordis Adams

Henry Sidney Everett (December 31 , 1834 ? October 4 , 1898) ; married Katherine Pickman Fay

William Everett (October 10 , 1839 ? February 16 , 1910) ; U.S. Representative from Massachusetts

= = Early political career = =

Everett had decided as early as 1821 that he did not particularly like teaching . In July 1824 Everett gave an unexpectedly significant speech at Harvard 's Phi Beta Kappa Society that would alter his career trajectory . Publicity for the event was dominated by the news that the Marquis de Lafayette , the French hero of the American Revolution , would be in attendance , and the hall was packed . The subject of Everett 's speech was " Circumstances of the Favorable Progress of Literature in America " . He pointed out that America 's situation as an expanding nation with a common language and a democratic foundation gave its people a unique and distinctive opportunity for creating truly American literature . Unfettered by Europe 's traditions and bureaucracy , Americans could use the experiences of settling the west to develop a new style of intellectual thought .

The crowd reacted with lengthy applause , and not long afterward an informal non @-@ partisan caucus nominated Everett as its candidate for the United States House of Representatives . Other political factions also endorsed his candidacy , and he was easily elected in the November 1824 election . He had expected to continue teaching at Harvard while serving , but was informed by its Board of Overseers that he had been dismissed because of the election victory . He took this news well , even agreeing to refund to the college the costs of his European travels . He continued to remain associated with Harvard , joining the Board of Overseers in 1827 and serving for many years .

= = = United States Representative = = =

The political situation in the country was quite fluid in the late 1820s . The Federalist Party had collapsed , and the victorious Democratic @-@ Republican Party had become diffuse , resulting in political factionalism in place of party affiliation . Everett was associated with the " National Republican " faction of John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay . He supported Clay 's " National System " ? which called for protective tariffs , internal improvements , and a national bank ? and the interests of Massachusetts ' propertied class . Everett was re @-@ elected to four additional terms as a National Republican , serving until 1835 . The National Republicans formally became the Whig Party in 1834 .

In Congress Everett sat on the House Committee on Foreign Affairs , and on the Committee on

Libraries and Public Buildings , both of which he chaired in his last term . Since he was already well known to President Adams , he was a frequent guest at the White House , and came to champion the president 's agenda in the House . He supported tariff legislation that protected Massachusetts ' growing industrial interests , favored renewal of the charter of the Second Bank of the United States , and opposed the Indian Removal Act .

Everett 's most controversial action in Congress took place relatively early during his tenure there . In 1826 Congress debated a Constitutional amendment to alter the way the president was elected , so that Congress would not be required to decide (as it had in the 1824 election) . Rising in opposition to the amendment on March 9 , 1826 , Everett delivered a three @-@ hour speech in which he generally opposed the need to amend the Constitution . However , he also expounded on the issue of slavery , noting that " the New Testament says ' Slaves obey your masters ' " , and accepting the document even though it contained the Three @-@ Fifths Compromise .

Reaction to this speech was highly critical , and Everett was attacked by political friends and foes for this apparent endorsement of slavery . He attempted to justify his statements by pointing out that he rejected the slave trade and the act of kidnapping someone into slavery , but this did not mitigate the damage , and he was heavily criticized for it in the Massachusetts press . Everett would be dogged by the speech for the rest of his political career .

= = = Governor of Massachusetts = = =

Everett retired from Congress in 1835 , after deciding that he did not really like the rough @-@ and @-@ tumble nature of the proceedings in the House . He had been offered the nomination for Governor of Massachusetts by the Anti @-@ Masonic Party in 1834 ; although he was known to be against secret societies like the Freemasons , he refused , and supported Whig John Davis for governor that year . Davis won the election , which was held in November 1834 . In February 1835 , the state legislature elected Davis to the United States Senate . In an arrangement brokered in part by Daniel Webster , Everett was promised the Whig nomination for governor (a move that upset Lieutenant Governor Samuel Turell Armstrong , who also sought the nomination) . Everett easily defeated the perennial Democratic Party candidate , Marcus Morton , in November 1835 . He was re @-@ elected by comfortable margins in the three following years , all facing Morton .

In 1836 he was elected a member of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts .

One of the most notable achievements of Everett 's tenure was the introduction of a state board of education to improve school quality and the establishment of normal schools for the training of teachers . Based on details of the Prussian education system which Everett had learned about , this groundbreaking accomplishment would be emulated by other states . The state Board of Education was established in 1837 , with reformer Horace Mann as its secretary . The state 's first normal school opened in Lexington the next year (it afterward moved to Framingham and is now known as Framingham State University) .

Other accomplishments during Everett 's tenure include the authorization of an extension of the railroad system from Worcester to the New York state line , and assistance in the quieting of border tensions between Maine and the neighboring British (now Canadian) province of New Brunswick . Massachusetts was involved in this dispute because , as part of Maine 's separation from the state in 1820 , it retained ownership of public lands in the disputed area . The border issue had been simmering for some years , but tensions rose substantially in the late 1830s as both sides pushed development activity into the disputed area , and the United States refused to accept a mediation proposal made by the Dutch king . In 1838 Everett proposed to President Martin Van Buren that a special commission be established to address the issue .

Abolitionism and temperance were two issues that became more politically prominent during Everett 's tenure , and both of those matters , as well as Whig indifference , would play a role in his defeat in the 1839 election . The abolitionist Liberty Party began to take shape in 1838 , and the ill @-@ timed passage of a temperance law banning the sale of less than 15 US gallons (57 l) of alcohol would drive popular support away from the Whigs in 1839 . The election , held November 11

, 1839 , was so close that the results were scrutinized by the (Whig @-@ dominated) legislature when it met in January 1840 . A joint legislative committee reported that Morton received exactly one @-@ half the votes cast , sufficient to secure his victory . (One vote less for Morton would have resulted in the Whig legislature deciding the election .) Everett refused to contest the results despite calls from the party to do so ; he wrote , " I am willing to let the election go . "

= = Diplomatic service = =

After leaving office , Everett traveled in Europe with his family for several months . When the Whigs , led by William Henry Harrison , won the 1840 presidential election , Everett was appointed ambassador to Great Britain at the recommendation of his friend Daniel Webster , who had been appointed Secretary of State . Everett was at first charged with handling the northeast border issues he first encountered as governor . A new British administration , friendlier to the United States than the previous one , sent Lord Ashburton to Washington to negotiate directly with Webster , and Everett 's role was reduced to acquiring documents from British records , and pressing the American case to the Foreign Office . In this role Everett was instrumental in acquiring and distributing a map that vindicated the United States from accusations that it had cheated Britain out of land in the 1842 Webster ? Ashburton Treaty .

Another major issue between the countries was the seizure of American ships by British naval forces interdicting the slave trade off the coast of Africa . Owners of ships accused but acquitted of complicity in the trade filed claims to recover their losses with the British government , and Everett , as ambassador , advanced these cases . In this he was generally successful , given the friendly British stance . One aspect of the slave trade interdiction proposed by Everett found its way into the treaty negotiated by Webster : the stationing of an American squadron off the coast of Africa to cooperate with the British effort . The issue of slaving @-@ related seizures caused some friction at home , especially after Webster was replaced as Secretary of State by a succession of Southern politicians . Everett in particular had to school John C. Calhoun on the diplomatic ramifications of pursuing claims after slaves mutinied aboard a ship plying the American coast and sailed it to the Bahamas .

Everett rebuffed several offers for other diplomatic posts proffered by Webster , who was unhappy serving under Tyler and apparently sought the UK ambassadorship as a way to distance himself from the unpopular president ; Webster eventually resigned in 1843 . Everett remained at his post until 1845 , when after the accession of James K. Polk to the presidency he was replaced by Democrat Louis McLane . His last months in the post were occupied with the Oregon boundary dispute , which was eventually resolved by McLane along lines negotiated by Everett .

= = Harvard Presidency = =

Even before his departure from London , Everett was being considered as a possible successor to Josiah Quincy as President of Harvard . Everett returned to Boston in September 1845 to learn that the Overseers had offered him the post . Although he had some misgivings , principally due to some of the tedious aspects of the job and difficult matter of maintaining student discipline , he accepted the offer , and entered into his duties in February 1846 . The three years he spent there were extremely unhappy . Everett found that Harvard was short of resources , and that he was not popular with the rowdy students . One of his most notable achievements was the expansion of Harvard 's academic programs to include a " school of theoretical and practical science " , then known as the Lawrence Scientific School .

Everett 's unhappiness with the post was apparent early on , and by April 1847 he was negotiating with Harvard 's overseers about the conditions of the job . These talks were ultimately unfruitful , and Everett , on the advice of his doctor , resigned the post in December 1848 . He had been suffering for sometime from a number of maladies , some of them prostate @-@ related . In the following years , his health would become increasingly fragile . He was somewhat rejuvenated by a visit to the springs at Sharon Springs , New York .

= = Secretary of State and Senator = =

When the Whigs won the 1848 national election and returned to power in 1849 , Everett returned to politics . He served as an aide to Daniel Webster , who President Millard Fillmore appointed Secretary of State . When Webster died in October 1852 , Fillmore appointed Everett , apparently at Webster 's request , to serve as Secretary of State during the remaining lame @-@ duck months of his administration . In this post Everett drafted the official letter that accompanied the Perry Expedition to Japan , reversed Webster 's claim denying Peruvian sovereignty over the guano @-@ rich Lobos Islands , and refused to engage the United States in an agreement with the United Kingdom and France to guarantee Spanish control of Cuba . Although he stated that the Fillmore administration had no interest in annexing Cuba , he made it clear that the U.S. did not want to foreclose the option by engaging in an essentially political alliance , and reinforced the notion that the U.S. saw Cuba as its concern and not a matter for outside interference .

While he was still serving as Secretary of State , Everett was approached by Massachusetts Whig leaders about running for the United States Senate . He was elected by the state legislature , and took the office on March 4 , 1853 . In the Senate he sat on the Foreign Relations Committee , and on the Committee on Territories . He was opposed to the extension of slavery in the western territories , but was concerned that the radical Free Soil Party 's hardline stance would result in disunion .

Everett opposed the 1854 Kansas @-@ Nebraska Act , which allowed the territories to choose whether to allow slavery by popular vote , calling it a " horrible " and " detested " bill . However , because of his health he missed a critical vote on the bill , departing the chamber during a debate that ended up lasting all night . This angered Massachusetts anti @-@ slavery interests , who sent him a strongly @-@ worded petition to submit to the Senate . Because of his distaste for the more extreme elements in the abolition debate , Everett 's speech in support of the petition was weak , for which he was further criticized . The rancor of the situation greatly upset Everett , and he submitted his resignation letter on May 12 , 1854 , after only a little more than one year into his six @-@ year term , once again citing poor health .

= = Last years = =

Free of political obligations , Everett traveled the country with his family , giving public speeches . One cause he took up was the preservation of George Washington 's home at Mount Vernon . Over several years in the mid @-@ 1850s he toured , speaking about Washington (whom he compared favorably to Frederick the Great and the Duke of Marlborough) . Not only did Everett donate the proceeds from this touring (about \$ 70 @,@ 000) , he also refused to deduct his travel expenses . He also agreed to write a weekly column for the New York Ledger in exchange for a \$ 10 @,@ 000 gift to the Mount Vernon Ladies ' Association . These columns were eventually bound and sold as the Mount Vernon Papers .

Everett was disheartened by the sectional divisions between the northern and southern states during the late 1850s . The 1860 election threatened to produce a national crisis , with pro @-@ slavery Southerners splitting the Democratic Party and threatening secession if a Republican was elected President . A group of conservative ex @-@ Whigs organized the Constitutional Union Party , which claimed as its sole principle the preservation of the Union . Supporters of Everett put his name forward as a candidate for president , but the party ended up nominating John Bell , and Everett for Vice President . Everett reluctantly accepted the post , but did not campaign very much . The Bell @-@ Everett ticket received only 39 electoral votes , all from Southern states .

In the wake of the election of Abraham Lincoln , seven southern states began seriously debating secession . Everett was an active participant in advancing the unsuccessful Crittenden Compromise in a last @-@ ditch attempt to avoid war during the early months of 1861 . When the American Civil War broke out in April 1861 , he became an active supporter of the Union cause . He did not at first think highly of Lincoln , but came to support him as the war progressed . In 1861 and 1862 Everett

toured the northern states , lecturing on the causes of the war , and also wrote on behalf of the Union cause for the New York Ledger . Proposals were put forward that Everett serve as a roving ambassador in Europe to counter Confederate diplomatic initiatives , but these were never brought to fruition .

In November 1863 , when the military cemetery at Gettysburg , Pennsylvania was dedicated , Everett , by then widely renowned as the finest orator in the country , was invited to be the featured speaker . In his two @-@ hour formal oration he compared the Battle of Gettysburg to battles of antiquity such as Marathon , and spoke about how opposing sides in previous civil wars (such as the War of the Roses and the Thirty Years ' War) were able to reconcile their differences afterward . Everett 's oration was followed by the now far more famous Gettysburg Address of President Lincoln . For his part , Everett was deeply impressed by the concise speech and wrote to Lincoln noting " I should be glad if I could flatter myself that I came as near to the central idea of the occasion , in two hours , as you did in two minutes . " In the 1864 election , Everett supported Lincoln , serving as a presidential elector from Massachusetts for the Republicans .

= = Death = =

On January 9 , 1865 , Everett spoke at a public meeting in Boston to raise funds for the southern poor in Savannah . At that meeting he caught cold , which he exacerbated four days later by testifying for three hours in a civil dispute concerning property he owned in Winchester , Massachusetts . He died in Boston on January 15 , and was interred at Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge .

= = Legacy = =

Edward Everett Square , near his birthplace in Dorchester , is named for him . It is the intersection of Columbia Road , Massachusetts Avenue , East Cottage Street and Boston Street . A marker is placed near where his birthplace stood , and a statue of Everett stands near the square in Richardson Park . Everett 's name appears on the facade of the Boston Public Library 's McKim Building , which he helped found , serving for twelve years as president of its board . His name was also given to his nephew , Edward Everett Hale , as well as Hale 's grandson , the actor Edward Everett Horton .

Everett , Massachusetts , separated from Malden in 1870 , was named in his honor , as was the borough of Everett , Pennsylvania , and Mount Everett in western Massachusetts . Elementary schools in Dorchester and in Lincoln , Nebraska are named for him , as was a school in St. Cloud , Minnesota that was torn down in 1887 . Everett donated 130 books to St. Cloud , beginning the community 's first library .

= = Film and TV = =

In the 2015 documentary film *The Gettysburg Address* , Edward Everett is portrayed by actor Ed Asner .

= = Publications = =

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