

= John Y. Brown (politician , born 1835) =

John Young Brown (June 28 , 1835 ? January 11 , 1904) was a politician from the U.S. state of Kentucky . He represented the state in the United States House of Representatives and served as its 31st governor . Brown was elected to the House of Representatives for three non-consecutive terms , each of which was marred by controversy . He was first elected in 1859 , despite his own protests that he was not yet twenty-five years old ; the minimum age set by the Constitution for serving in the legislature . The voters of his district elected him anyway , but he was not allowed to take his seat until the Congress ' second session , after he was of legal age to serve . After moving to Henderson , Kentucky , Brown was elected from that district in 1866 . On this occasion , he was denied his seat because of alleged disloyalty to the Union during the Civil War . Voters in his district refused to elect another representative , and the seat remained vacant throughout the term to which Brown was elected . After an unsuccessful gubernatorial bid in 1871 , Brown was again elected to the House in 1872 and served three consecutive terms . During his final term , he was officially censured for delivering a speech excoriating Massachusetts Representative Benjamin F. Butler . The censure was later expunged from the congressional record .

After his service in the House , Brown took a break from politics , but re-entered the political arena as a candidate for governor of Kentucky in 1891 . He secured the Democratic nomination in a four-way primary election , then convincingly won the general election over his Republican challenger , Andrew T. Wood . Brown 's administration , and the state Democratic Party , were split between gold standard supporters (including Brown) and supporters of the free coinage of silver . Brown 's was also the first administration to operate under the Kentucky Constitution of 1891 , and most of the legislature 's time was spent adapting the state 's code of laws to the new constitution . Consequently , little of significance was accomplished during Brown 's term .

Brown hoped the legislature would elect him to the U.S. Senate following his term as governor . Having already alienated the free silver faction of his party , he backed " Goldbug " candidate Cassius M. Clay , Jr. for the Democratic nomination in the upcoming gubernatorial election . However , the deaths of two of Brown 's children ended his interest in the gubernatorial race and his own senatorial ambitions . At the Democratic nominating convention of 1899 , candidate William Goebel used questionable tactics to secure the gubernatorial nomination , and a disgruntled faction of the party held a separate nominating convention , choosing Brown to oppose Goebel in the general election . Goebel was eventually declared the winner of the election , but was assassinated . Brown became the legal counsel for former Kentucky Secretary of State Caleb Powers , an accused conspirator in the assassination . Brown died in Henderson on January 11 , 1904 .

= = Early life = =

John Young Brown was born on June 27 , 1835 , in Claysville (near Elizabethtown) , Hardin County , Kentucky . He was the son of Thomas Dudley and Elizabeth (Young) Brown . His father served in the state legislature and was a delegate to the 1849 state constitutional convention . Two of his uncles , Bryan Rust Young and William Singleton Young , served as U.S. Representatives . Brown spent much time with his father at the state capitol , which sparked his early interest in politics .

Brown received his early education in the schools of Elizabethtown , and in 1851 , at the age of sixteen , matriculated at Centre College in Danville , Kentucky . In 1855 , he graduated from Centre and returned to Hardin County to read law . He was admitted to the bar in 1857 and opened his practice in Elizabethtown . His reputation as an orator put him in high demand , but his zealous criticism of the Know Nothing Party drew threats against his life .

Brown married Lucie Barbee in 1857 , but she died the following year . In September 1860 , he married Rebecca Hart Dixon , the daughter of former U.S. Senator Archibald Dixon . The couple had eight children .

= = U.S. House of Representatives = =

At a meeting of local Democrats in Bardstown , Kentucky , in 1859 , Brown was nominated to oppose Joshua Jewett for Jewett 's seat in the House of Representatives . Despite Brown 's protests that he was more than a year younger than the legal age to serve , he was elected over Jewett by about two thousand votes . He did not take his seat until the second congressional session because of his age . He became a member of the Douglas National Committee in 1860 and engaged in a series of debates with supporters of John C. Breckinridge for president , including Breckinridge 's cousin , William Campbell Preston Breckinridge .

It is not clear exactly when Brown relocated to Henderson , Kentucky . Confederate officer Stovepipe Johnson recounts that Brown was among the city leaders who welcomed him to Henderson in early 1862 , but other sources state that Brown did not settle in Henderson until after the war . His sympathies during the war were decidedly with the Confederacy . [a]

Brown was re @-@ elected to the House of Representatives in 1866 . His seat was declared vacant , however , because of his alleged disloyalty during the war . Voters in his district refused to elect anyone else to fill the vacancy , and Governor John W. Stevenson filed an official protest of the House 's action , but the seat remained unfilled throughout the Fortieth Congress .

Governor Stevenson resigned his office to accept a seat in the U.S. Senate , and the remainder of his term was filled by President Pro Tem of the Senate Preston Leslie . When Leslie , who enjoyed only lukewarm support from his party , sought the Democratic gubernatorial nomination in 1871 , Brown 's name was among those put in nomination against his ; after a few ballots , however , it became clear that Brown would not be able to gain a majority , and his supporters abandoned their support of him in favor of other candidates . The following year , Brown was re @-@ elected to the House of Representatives by an overwhelming vote of 10 @,@ 888 to 457 and was allowed to assume his seat . He was twice re @-@ elected , serving until 1877 .

Brown 's most notable action in the House was a speech he made on February 4 , 1875 , in response to Massachusetts Representative Benjamin F. Butler 's call to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1875 . Referring to comments Butler had made the previous day about lawlessness against African @-@ Americans in the South , Brown claimed that unjust charges had been made against Southerners by an individual " who is outlawed in his own home by respectable society , whose name is synonymous with falsehood , who is the champion , and has been on all occasions , of fraud ; who is the apologist of thieves , who is such a prodigy of vice and meanness that to describe him would sicken the imagination and exhaust invective . " Brown continued by referencing notorious Scottish murderer William Burke , whose method of murdering his victims became known as " Burking . " At this point in the speech , Speaker of the House James G. Blaine interrupted Brown , asking if he was referring to a member of the House ; Brown gave an ambiguous response before continuing : " If I wished to describe all that was pusillanimous in war , inhuman in peace , forbidden in morals , and infamous in politics , I should call it ' Butlerizing ' . " The House gallery exploded in protest at Brown 's remark , and incensed Republican legislators called for Brown 's immediate expulsion . Though not expelled , he was officially censured by the House for the use of unparliamentary language . The censure was expunged from the record by a subsequent Congress .

= = 1891 gubernatorial election = =

Following his service in the House , Brown resumed his law practice in Louisville , Kentucky . In 1891 , he was a candidate for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination . The other candidates included Cassius Marcellus Clay , Jr . , son of former Congressman Brutus J. Clay and nephew of abolitionist Cassius Marcellus Clay ; Dr. John Daniel Clardy , later to be elected a U.S. Representative ; and Attorney General Parker Watkins Hardin . The party was split between supporters of corporations , such as the Louisville and Nashville Railroad , and supporters of agrarian interests . Another split was between the more conservative Bourbon Democrats , who supported maintaining the gold standard , and more progressive Democrats , who called for the free coinage of silver . Agrarian voters were about equally split between Clay and Clardy , while Free

Silver Democrats were about equally split between Hardin and Clardy . Having lived in the agrarian western part of the state for most of his life , and never having alienated the powerful Farmers ' Alliance , Brown was acceptable to most agrarian interests , while the Louisville and Nashville Railroad felt he was a moderate on the issue of corporate regulation . Bourbon Democrats were also pleased with his sound money stand .

Entering the Democratic nominating convention , Brown seemed to be the favorite for the nomination . On the first ballot , he garnered the most votes (275) , leading Clay (264) , Clardy (190) , and Hardin (186) . Over the next nine ballots , the vote counts changed little . Finally , the convention chairman announced that the candidate receiving the fewest votes on the next ballot would be dropped from the voting . Clardy received the fewest votes , and on the next ballot , his supporters divided almost equally between the remaining three candidates . Hardin was the next candidate to be dropped , and Brown received a majority over Clay on the thirteenth ballot .

The Republicans nominated Andrew T. Wood , a lawyer from Mount Sterling , who had failed in earlier elections for Congress and state attorney general . Concurrently with the gubernatorial election , the state 's voters would decide whether to ratify a proposed new constitution for the state in 1891 . The divided Democrats had taken no stand on the document as part of their convention 's platform , and Wood spent much of the campaign trying to get Brown to declare his support for or opposition to it . About six weeks before the election , Brown , sensing strong public support for the new constitution , finally came out in favor of it . For the remainder of the race , Wood touted an alleged conspiracy between Brown and the Louisville and Nashville Railroad to thwart meaningful corporate regulations , but the issue failed to gain much traction .

Both Democrats and Republicans were concerned about the presence of S. Brewer Erwin , nominee of the newly formed Populist Party , in the race ; he enjoyed strong support for a third @-@ party candidate , despite the fact that many believed his party 's platform was too radical . Democrats , who were used to carrying the agrarian vote by a wide margin , were especially concerned that the Farmers ' Alliance , consisting of over 125 @,@ 000 members in Kentucky , would endorse Erwin . This did not occur , however , and in the general election , Brown defeated Wood by a vote of 144 @,@ 168 to 116 @,@ 087 . Though he won the election , Brown had not won a majority of the votes ; Populist Erwin captured 25 @,@ 631 votes ? 9 percent of the total cast ? and a Prohibition candidate received 3 @,@ 292 votes .

= = Governor of Kentucky = =

Turmoil marked the legislative sessions of Brown 's term ; his supporters had been either unwilling or unable to influence the rest of the Democratic slate , and tensions over the currency issue soon split the administration . Attorney General William Jackson Hendricks , Treasurer Henry S. Hale , and Auditor Luke C. Norman were all free silver supporters and feuded with Brown and his (appointed) secretary of state , John W. Headley , throughout Brown 's term . Over time , the rift deepened and spread to the entire Democratic party . Brown also frequently clashed with the legislature and vetoed several of the bills it passed ; none of his vetoes were ever overridden .

When the General Assembly convened on the last day of 1891 , Brown reported that he had appointed a commission to study the impact of the new constitution on the state 's existing laws . He also announced that the state 's present budget deficit was \$ 229 @,@ 000 and was expected to reach almost half a million dollars by the end of 1893 . With these two large issues facing it , the Assembly was in session almost continuously from December 1891 to July 1893 . The length of the session earned it a derisive nickname ? the " Long Parliament " . Part of the reason for the extended session was each chamber 's difficulty in achieving a quorum ; a Louisville newspaper reported that , for an entire month , the largest attendance in the House of Representatives was 61 of 100 members . Consequently , some bills were passed by a plurality instead of a majority of the legislators . Fearing that these bills would be challenged in court , Brown vetoed them .

During the session , Brown secured the termination of a statewide geological survey , deeming it too expensive . By constitutional mandate , the regular session ended August 16 , but Brown convened a special session of the legislature on August 25 because important bills that he had

vetoed needed to be rewritten and passed , and because some bills he had signed needed to be amended to comply with the new constitution . Major legislation advocated by Brown and passed by the General Assembly included improvements in tax collection processes and tighter controls on corporations . Among the measures not specifically advocated by Brown that were enacted by the General Assembly was a measure racially segregating the state 's railroad cars , called the " separate coach law " . The special session lasted until November 1 .

Brown won acclaim from the railroad companies for vetoing a proposed railroad tax increase , but soon drew their ire for preventing the merger of the state 's two largest railways , the Louisville and Nashville Railroad and the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway . The Mason and Foard Company , which leased convict labor to build railroads , resented Brown 's prison reforms . Brown accused his predecessor , Simon Bolivar Buckner , of illegally allowing Mason and Foard to use convict labor , a charge Buckner vehemently denied .

During the 1894 legislative session , Brown advocated and won passage of several government efficiency measures , including a bill to transfer certain state governmental expenses to the counties , a bill to reform state printing contracts , and measures clarifying laws governing asylums and charitable institutions . The most significant bill , and the one that generated the most debate , was a law giving married women individual property rights for the first time in state history . Other measures passed during the session included a basic coal safety measure , a common school statute , a measure prohibiting collusive bidding on tobacco , new regulations on grain warehouses , and a law providing free turnpikes . Measures advocated by Brown but not enacted by the Assembly included broadening the powers of the state railroad commission , establishing the offices of state bank inspector and superintendent of public printing , and reforming prison management , including separate detention of adolescent criminals . Brown also lobbied for the abolition of the state parole board ; when the Assembly refused , Brown vowed to ignore the board 's recommendations .

Mob violence was prevalent in Kentucky during Brown 's tenure as governor . From 1892 to 1895 , there were fifty @-@ six lynchings in the state . During one notable incident , a Cincinnati judge refused to extradite a black man suspected of shooting a white man in Kentucky . The judge 's decision was based on his opinion that the accused was likely to be the victim of mob violence if returned to Kentucky . In disputing the judge 's decision , Governor Brown attempted to justify some of the violence that had occurred in the state 's past , declaring " It is much to be regretted that we have occasionally had mob violence in this Commonwealth , but it has always been when the passions of the people have been inflamed by the commission of the most atrocious crimes . "

= = Later life and death = =

It was widely known that Brown desired election to the U.S. Senate when his gubernatorial term expired in 1896 . The leading Democratic candidates to succeed Brown as governor were his old rivals , Cassius M. Clay , Jr. and Parker Watkins Hardin , and Brown believed he would need his eventual successor 's support to secure the Senate seat . Having already alienated Hardin and his free silver allies , Brown threw his support to Clay . Family tragedy would soon remove his interest in the race , however . On October 30 , 1894 , Brown 's teenage daughter Susan died of tuberculosis . A few months later , his son , Archibald Dixon Brown , divorced his wife ; it was subsequently discovered that he had been carrying on an extramarital affair . Acting on an anonymous tip , his lover 's husband found the couple at a brothel in Louisville ; drawing his pistol , he shot his wife and Archibald Brown , killing them both . Of the series of family tragedies , Governor Brown wrote to Clay , " I shall not be a candidate for the Senate . The calamities of my children , which have recently befallen , have utterly unfitted me for the contest . My grief is so severe that , like a black vampire of the night , it seems to have sucked dry the very arteries and veins of my ambition . " Clay went on to lose the nomination to Hardin . Brown refused to endorse Hardin , and the fractured Democratic party watched as the Republicans elected William O. Bradley , the party 's first @-@ ever governor of Kentucky . Despite Brown 's proclaimed lack of interest in the Senate seat , he received one vote during the tumultuous 1896 Senate election to replace Senator J. C. S. Blackburn .

After his term as governor , Brown again returned to his legal practice in Louisville . He was an unsuccessful candidate for the House of Representatives in 1896 , losing to Republican Walter Evans . He would later claim that he had only run in order to improve Democratic voter turnout for William Jennings Bryan 's 1896 presidential bid . Prior to the 1899 Democratic nominating convention , Brown was mentioned as a possible gubernatorial nominee , but he declined to become a candidate . When the convention began , he was mentioned as a candidate for convention chairman , but he also refused to serve in this capacity .

Despite his proclaimed lack of interest in the gubernatorial nomination , Brown 's name was entered as a candidate on the first ballot , along with Parker Watkins Hardin , former Congressman William J. Stone , and William Goebel , President Pro Tempore of the state senate . The convention was thrown into chaos when a widely known agreement between Stone and Goebel ? designed to get Hardin out of the race ? broke down . As balloting continued over the next four days (Sunday excepted) with no candidate receiving a majority , Brown continued to receive a few votes on each ballot . Finally , the convention delegates decided to drop the candidate with the lowest vote total until one candidate received a majority ; this resulted in the nomination of Goebel a few ballots later .

Following the convention , disgruntled Democrats began to talk about rejecting their party 's nominee and holding another nominating convention . Brown became the leader of this group , styled the " Honest Election League " . Plans for the new convention were made at a meeting held August 2 , 1899 , in Lexington , Kentucky . The nomination was made official at a convention held in that city on August 16 . In addition to Brown , the Honest Election League nominated a full slate of candidates for the other state offices .

Brown opened his campaign with a speech at Bowling Green on August 26 , 1899 . He answered many allegations that had been made about him , including claims that he had secretly been seeking the Democratic gubernatorial nomination all along , that he had ambitions of succeeding Senator William Joseph Deboe , and that following the nominating convention , he had agreed to speak on behalf of the Goebel ticket . Brown conceded that he desired Senator Deboe 's senate seat and that he had agreed to accept the gubernatorial nomination if it had been offered to him , but he denied that he had ever agreed to speak on Goebel 's behalf . Outgoing Senator Blackburn also charged that Brown was bolting the party again , just as he had in supporting Stephen Douglas over John C. Breckinridge for president in 1860 . Brown replied by quoting an article by William Jennings Bryan 's Omaha World @-@ Herald that asserted the right of an individual to vote against the nominee of his party if the individual deemed the nominee unfit .

Due to his age and ill health , Brown was able to speak only once per week . At a campaign event in Madisonville , he challenged Goebel to a debate , but Goebel ignored the challenge . Brown , and other speakers enlisted on behalf of his campaign , frequently called attention to Goebel 's refusal to acknowledge the challenge or agree to a debate . When William Jennings Bryan came to the state to campaign with Goebel , Brown sent him a letter challenging him to repudiate Goebel 's nomination because of the broken agreement between Goebel and Stone . Bryan refused to comment on the events of the convention and stressed the importance of party loyalty . He denounced the Honest Election League 's convention as irregular and invalid .

Brown 's campaign faltered as the race drew to a close . Two weeks prior to the election , Brown was injured in a fall at Leitchfield ; as a result of the injury , he was confined to his home and unable to deliver campaign speeches , despite several attempts to allow him to speak from a chair or wheelchair . The final vote count gave Republican William S. Taylor a small plurality with 193 @,@ 714 votes to Goebel 's 191 @,@ 331 ; Brown garnered only 12 @,@ 140 votes .

Goebel challenged the vote returns in several counties . While the challenges were being adjudicated , Goebel was shot by an unknown assassin ; Goebel was ultimately declared the winner of the election , but died of his wounds two days after being sworn into office . Among those charged in Goebel 's murder was Governor Taylor 's Secretary of State , Caleb Powers . Powers employed Brown as his legal counsel during his first trial , which ended in a conviction in July 1900 . Brown died January 11 , 1904 , in Henderson and was buried at the Fernwood Cemetery in that city . He was the namesake of , but not related to , 20th century Kentucky Congressman John Y. Brown , Sr.

