

## 25. William McKinley.

Republican.

Governor of Ohio.

Studied at Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania but didn't graduate.

Last America president to have served in the civil war, the only one who started as an enlisted soldier.

During the Battle of Antietam, McKinley drove a wagon of hot coffee and rations to soldiers on the front lines while under heavy fire. This act of bravery led his political opponents to later nickname him "Coffee Bill".

Led the nation to victory in the Spanish-American War. 3rd president to be assassinated, shot six months into his second term. (Up to that point the president had no bodyguards but his assassination prompted the Secret Service, which was originally established to fight counterfeiting, to create a unit of elite bodyguards for the President, Vice President, candidates, and various high officials.)

Famously wore a red carnation for good luck, often giving it to admirers.

On the day he was assassinated in 1901, McKinley gave his trademark lucky red carnation to a 12-year-old girl in the crowd just moments before he was shot.

Only clean shaven President between Andrew Johnson and Woodrow Wilson.

Interesting trivia: he could remember names and faces even after meeting someone briefly.

He had several firsts: he was the first sitting president to have his inauguration filmed, the first President to use a telephone to campaign, and the First President to ride an automobile while in office, riding a steam-powered Stanley Steamer.

An electric ambulance would transport him to the hospital after he was shot.

Denali, the highest point in North America has been named after him but with much controversy. He had never visited Alaska or had any historical connection to Denali but he was President during the annexation of Hawaii.

In 1975 the Alaskan legislature asked the federal government to officially name it Denali, the name commonly used by the Alaskan Native peoples. The change was repeatedly blocked by congressional delegates from Ohio, the home state of McKinley. The Obama administration officially changed the name to Denali in 2015. In 2025 on the first day of his second term Donald Trump signed an executive order to change the name back to Mount McKinley, although the Denali National Park and Preserve name continues unchanged.

*“The mission of the United States is one of benevolent assimilation.”*