



William Dennison Jr.

Topic Guide for Chronicling America (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>)

Introduction

William Dennison Jr. (1815–1882) was born in Cincinnati. He attended Miami University before studying law with Nathaniel G. Pendleton in Cincinnati. He married Anne Eliza Neil, the daughter of a Columbus businessman. Before politics, Dennison had considerable success in the railroad business and in banking. He was elected as the 24th governor of Ohio in 1860 just before the start of the Civil War, where his robust military mobilization in support of the Union was widely considered a hallmark of his term. He was also known for his refusal to punish people who disobeyed the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. After supporting President Abraham Lincoln as postmaster general for the remainder of the Civil War, he returned to Ohio to continue in local politics and business. After another stint in national politics a decade later, Dennison fell ill, leaving behind Anne and their seven children, and is buried in Columbus.

Important Dates

- November 23, 1815: William Dennison Jr. is born in Cincinnati.
- 1835: Dennison graduates from Miami University.
- 1840: Dennison is admitted to the Ohio bar, starts his own law office, and marries Anne Eliza Neil.
- 1849-1850: Dennison serves as senator, where he helped repeal Ohio's "Black Laws."
- September 6, 1851: Dennison helps to found Franklin County Agricultural Society as secretary.
- 1853-1854: Dennison serves as a member of the Columbus City Council.
- 1860-1862: Dennison serves as governor of Ohio.
- April 1861: Dennison establishes Camp Dennison near Cincinnati to train recruits.
- May 1861: Dennison sends George McClellan with Ohio troops to defend the Wheeling Convention in western Virginia against Confederate troops.
- 1864-1866: Dennison serves as postmaster general.
- 1874-1878: Dennison serves as President of the Board of Commissioners for the District of Columbia.
- 1880: Dennison loses to James Garfield in the U.S. Senate race.
- June 15, 1882: Dennison dies from illness in Columbus.

Suggested Search Strategies

- Try the following terms in combination (as an "all" word search), proximity or as phrases: William Dennison Jr., Wm. Dennison, Columbus and Xenia Railroad, Exchange Bank.
- Limit your search by date to find information about specific parts of Dennison's career.
- Search newspapers in all states, not just Ohio.

Sample Articles from Chronicling America

- "[Ohio Legislature](#)" *Portage Sentinel* (Ravenna, OH), February 14, 1849, Image 2, col. 6-7.
- "[The Treasury Investigation](#)" *Cadiz Democratic Sentinel* (Cadiz, OH), July 27, 1859, Image 1, col. 4.
- "[A Chapter for Old-line Whigs](#)" *McArthur Democrat* (McArthur, OH), July 28, 1859, Image 2, col. 3.
- "[The Proposed Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky Conference](#)" *Weekly Lancaster Gazette* (Lancaster, OH), May 9, 1861, Image 1, col. 3-5.
- "[Home](#)" *Rugbeian* (Rugby, TN), June 17, 1882, Image 1, col. 5.