



Wilson Shannon

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

Introduction

Wilson Shannon (1802-1877) was the first Ohio Governor born in the Northwest Territory. His slow-to-start career was relatively successful and stainless at the county level, which enabled him to secure his first governorship in 1838. His Jacksonian, laissez-faire approach kept Ohio from accruing debt, but he lost his re-election to Whig fanfare. Although he gained a second term in 1842, he resigned to take a post as Minister to Mexico. His apparently ineffective diplomacy did not ease tensions over the annexation of Texas. He was recalled to the U.S., where he resumed legal practice in St. Clairsville and Cincinnati until being elected as an Ohio congressman in the U.S. House of Representatives. He voted for popular sovereignty in the territories, which favored him to President Franklin Pierce who appointed him as the Territorial Governor of Kansas. Shannon supported the pro-slavery Border Ruffians and under his leadership the Bleeding Kansas conflicts grew violent. He resigned and remained in Kansas with his legal practice until his death in 1877.

Important Dates

- 1802: Shannon is born in Belmont County to George and Jane Shannon and two older brothers.
- November 30, 1825: Shannon marries Elizabeth Ellis of St. Clairsville. Together they have one son.
- 1830: Shannon completes his independent law study and is admitted the Ohio Bar.
- November 25, 1832: Shannon marries Sarah Osburn. Together they have four sons and three daughters.
- 1832: Shannon loses his first election by 37 votes.
- 1833-1835: Shannon serves as the prosecuting attorney for Belmont County.
- 1838-1840; 1842-1844: Shannon serves as the 14th and 16th Governors of Ohio.
- April 1844-March 1845: Shannon unsuccessfully serves as Minister to Mexico, presiding over delicate relations regarding land disputes in the Texas area.
- 1849-1851: Shannon gets "gold fever" and leads a group of miners to California.
- 1855-1856: Shannon serves as Governor of the Kansas Territory, before being removed from office.

Suggested Search Strategies

- Try the following terms in a proximity search: Wilson Shannon, governor, St. Clairsville, Kansas, Mexico, court, election, vote, address, speech, letter.
- Limit your search by date to find information about specific parts of Shannon's career.
- Search newspapers in all states, not just Ohio.

Sample Articles from Chronicling America

- "[Victimized](#)" *Maumee City Express* (Maumee City, OH), December 28, 1839, Image 1, col. 5.
- "[The Voice of the Country](#)" *Ohio Democrat and Dover Advertiser* (Canal Dover, OH), March 20, 1840, Image 2, col. 4.
- "[Governor Shannon's Declension](#)" *Ohio Democrat* (Canal Dover, OH), December 9, 1841, Image 3, col. 2.
- "[Reception of Gov. Shannon at Westport](#)" *Perrysburg Journal* (Perrysburg, OH), September 22, 1855, Image 1, col. 1-2.
- "[Remarks](#)" *Belmont Chronicle* (St. Clairsville, OH), October 18, 1877, Image 1, col. 5-7.