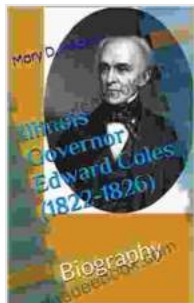


Edward Coles: The Visionary Governor of Illinois from 1822 to 1826



Illinois Governor Edward Coles (1822-1826): Biography (Southern Illinois History Series) by Mary D. Hébert

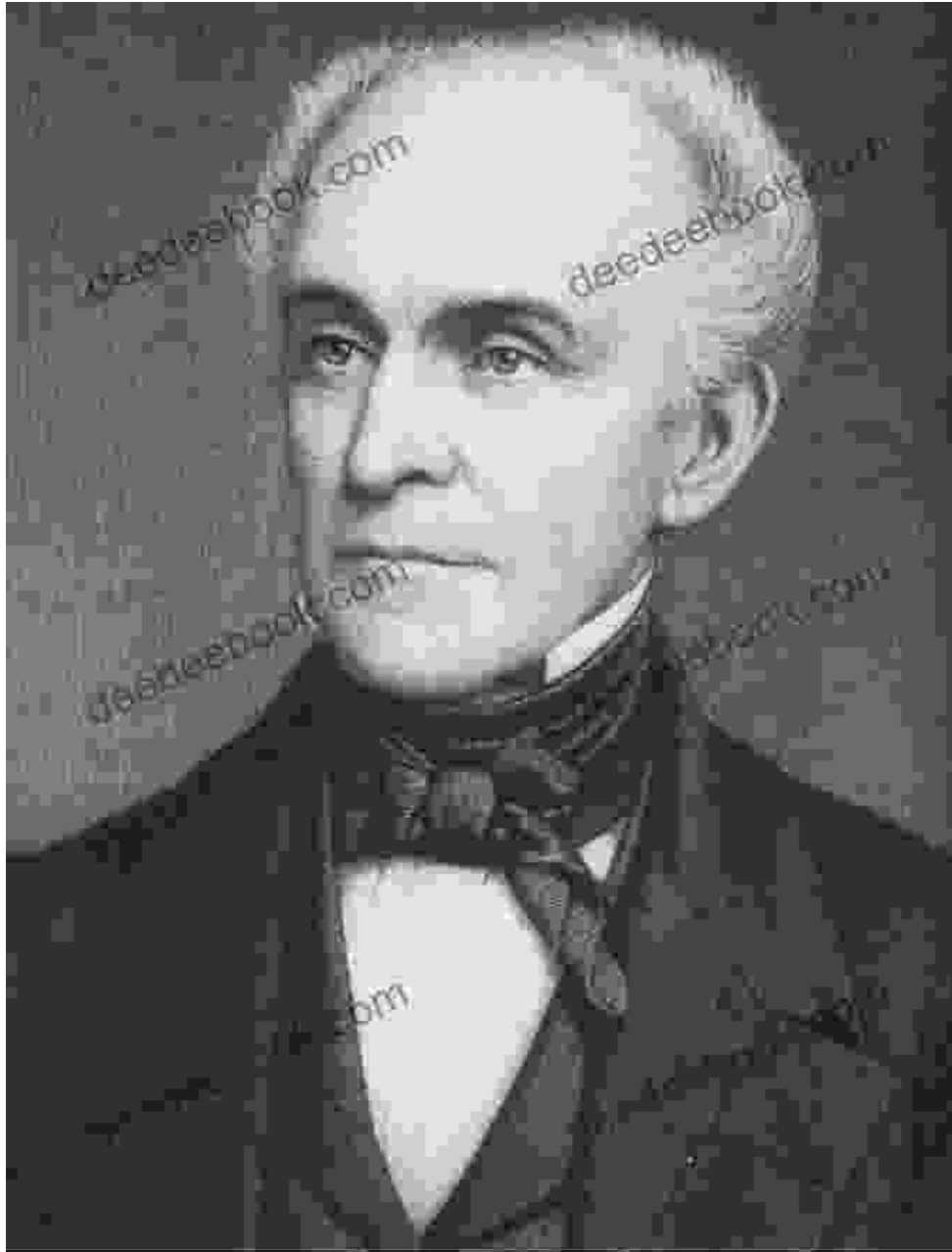
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Language : English
File size : 10062 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
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Early Life and Education

Edward Coles was born on December 15, 1786, in Albemarle County, Virginia. His father, John Coles, was a prominent planter and Revolutionary War veteran. Coles received his early education at home from private tutors before attending the College of William and Mary. He graduated in 1807 and went on to study law.

Military Service and Political Career

In 1812, Coles joined the Virginia Militia and served in the War of 1812. After the war, he entered politics and was elected to the Virginia House of Delegates in 1816. He served two terms before being elected to the United States Congress in 1818.

Governor of Illinois

In 1822, Coles was elected the second governor of Illinois. During his term, he worked tirelessly to improve education, infrastructure, and the economy of the state. He established the first public school system in Illinois and founded the Illinois College in Jacksonville. He also oversaw the construction of roads, canals, and railroads that connected Illinois to other parts of the country.

Opposition to Slavery

Edward Coles was a staunch opponent of slavery. He was one of the few slaveholders in Illinois who voluntarily freed his slaves and openly advocated for the abolition of slavery. Coles's anti-slavery stance was highly controversial at the time, but he remained steadfast in his beliefs.

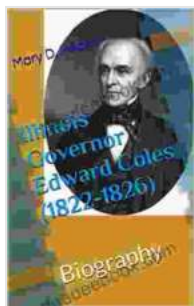
Later Life and Legacy

After his term as governor, Coles returned to Virginia and continued to fight against slavery. He wrote a series of articles exposing the evils of slavery and helped organize the American Anti-Slavery Society. Coles died in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on December 7, 1868.

Edward Coles's legacy as the visionary governor of Illinois and an ardent abolitionist is still remembered today. His accomplishments helped shape

the state of Illinois and contributed to the movement for the abolition of slavery in the United States.

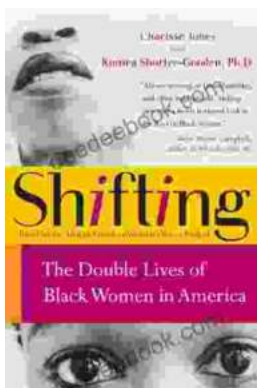
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