

Presidents of Liberia



**Joseph.
Jenkins
Roberts**



**Steven
Allen
Benson**



**Daniel
Bashiel
Warner**



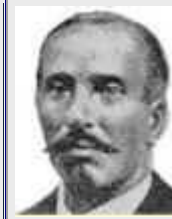
James S. Payne



Edwin J. Roye



**Joseph James
Cheeseman**



**William
David
Coleman**



Arthur Barclay

A look at the Administrations of some early Presidents of Liberia

Joseph. Jenkins Roberts - 1848 -1856

J. J. Roberts, Liberia's first President, spent his first year as Liberia's leader attempting to attain recognition from European countries and the United States. England and France were the first countries to accept Liberian independence in 1848. In 1849, Portugal, Brazil, Sardinia, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Hamburg, Bremen, Lubeck, and Haiti all formally recognized Liberia. However, the United States withheld recognition until 1862, during the presidency of Abraham Lincoln, because the U.S. leaders believed that the southern states would not accept a black ambassador in Washington D.C.

Roberts was re-elected three more times to serve a total of eight years. During his leadership, the coastline was extended to over 600 miles and an institution of higher learning, later to become Liberia University, was established.

Presidents & Interim Leaders of Liberia



Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

2006 to Present

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, born 1939, won 59% of the votes in the November 2005 run-off election, beating Liberian football star George Weah.

Sirleaf is a Harvard-educated economist, a former World Bank economist and veteran politician. At age 67, she became Liberia's and Africa's first elected female head of state.

Charles Gyude Bryant October

2003 to 2006

Charles Gyude Bryant (born 1949) was the interim president of Liberia. 2003-2006

He is a businessman and seen as politically neutral.



Gyude Bryant was chosen to lead a transitional government at the all-party peace talks in August 2003. The talks followed 14 years of civil war and the exile of former president Charles Taylor

Independent Republic of Liberia

July 26 1847 - Present

(Presidents & Interim Leaders of Liberia)

Joseph. Jenkins Roberts	1848-1856
Steven Allen Benson	1856-1864
Daniel B. Warner	1864-1868
James S. Payne	1868-1870
Edwin .J. Roye	1870-1871
J.S. Smith	1871-1872
J.J. Roberts	1872-1876
J.S.Payne (2 nd term)	1876-1878
A.W. Gardener	1878-1883
A.F. Russell	1883-1884
H.R. Johnson	1884-1892
J.J. Cheeseman	1892-1898
W.D. Coleman	1898-1902
G.W. Gibson	1902-1904
A. Barclay	1904-1912
Daniel Howard	1912-1920
Charles Dunbar Burgess King (1872-1961)	1920-1930
Edwin J. Barclay (1882-1955)	1930 - July 7, 1944
William Tubman (1895-	May 7 1944 - July

Steven Allen Benson - 1856-1864

Following Roberts, Stephen Allen Benson serves as president for eight years. His biggest accomplishment was the annexation of the Colony of Maryland, now Maryland Country, into the Republic of Liberia in 1857. He also obtained the recognition of Liberia from the following countries: Belgium, 1858; Denmark, 1869; United States and Italy, 1862; Norway and Sweden, 1863; and Haiti, 1864.

Daniel Bashiel Warner - 1864-1868

The president from 1864 to 1868 was Daniel Bashiel Warner. His main concern was how the indigenous people, particularly the indigenous people in the interior, could be brought into the society and become cooperating citizens. He organized the first expedition into the dense forest lead by J. K. Anderson.

James S. Payne - 1868-1870

Following Warner, James Spriggs Payne served for two years from 1868 to 1870. He also served as president again in 1876 to 1878. An Airport in Monrovia was named after this president of Liberia.

Bryant took over the leadership of Liberia on October 14th, 2003.

His title is Chairman of the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL), and he is appointed to serve a 2 year term. Gyude Bryant and the National Transitional Government has been given the following **mandate**:

- Disarm the combatants
- Rehabilitate them into their communities and with their families
- Bring back home all refugees and ensure that internally displaced persons go back to where they normally live.
- Ensure that Liberia becomes gun free, so that there will be no intimidation, extortion, and harassment through the barrel of the gun, so that come October 2005 people can vote their consciences and have a government of the people.





Charles Taylor

August 2 1997 - August 11, 2003

Charles Ghankay Taylor (born January 28, 1948) was resident of Liberia from 1997 to 2003. He was born in Arthington.

Taylor was appointed by President Samuel Doe to run the General Services Agency but was arrested in Massachusetts when Doe accused him of embezzeling almost \$900,000.00. He remained in prison from May 1984 to September 1985 while awaiting extradition. He escaped prison, showed up in Ghana briefly then was thought to

1971)	23 1971
William R. Tolbert (1913-1980)	July 23, 1971 - April 1980
Samuel K. Doe (1951-1990)	April 12.1980 - Sept. 9, 1990
Amos Sawyer (Interim)	Nov. 23, 1990 - Aug. 18 1993
Bismarck Kuyon (Interim)	Aug. 18.1993 - Nov. 13.1993
Philip Banks (Interim)	Nov. 13, 1993 - Feb. 28, 1994
David Kpormakor (Interim)	Feb. 28, 1994 - Sept. 09, 1995
Wilton Sankawulo (Interim)	Sept. 9, 1995 - Sept. 3, 1996
Ruth Perry (Interim)	 <p>Sept. 3,1996 - Aug. 2, 1997</p>
Charles Ghankay Taylor	
 <p>Moses Blah (Interim)</p>	<p>August 11, 2003 - October 14, 2003</p>

Edwin .J. Roye - 1870-1871

Edwin J. Roye was the fifth president of Liberia and chief justice, and speaker of the House, before becoming president in 1871. Roye began a program of reconstruction for Liberia, intending to build new roads and schools.

For these purposes he needed money. Roye sailed for England where he began negotiations with London banks. The results proved ruinous, the terms of the loans were severe, among other things carrying an interest of 7 percent. Roye hastily agreed without consulting the legislature. Liberia actually received about \$90,000, while bonds were issued for \$400,000.

The whole affair caused great resentment against him, and when he returned home he was accused of embezzlement. He then tried to extend his two-year term of president by edict, after the people rose up against him.

In October 1871, Edward J. Roye was deposed from office., He was brought to trial, but escaped in the night . He is believed to have drowned while trying to reach an English ship in Monrovia harbor, on Feb. 12, 1872.

After many years Liberia took another look at it's fifth president.

have gone to Libya.

In 1989 Taylor launched an armed uprising from the Ivory Coast, which led to the fall of Doe in 1990 and to the political fragmentation of the Liberia into violent factions. In mid-1990, a faction led by Prince Johnson split from Taylor's group and captured Monrovia for itself, depriving Taylor of outright victory.

The civil war turned into an ethnic conflict, with seven factions fighting for control of Liberia's resources (esp. iron ore, timber and rubber). 300,000 Liberians were killed and more than 1 million were forced from their homes.

After the official end of the civil war in 1996, Taylor became Liberia's president following a landslide poll victory in 1997, taking 75% of the vote.

ON June 4th, 2003, Taylor was indicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity, by Sierra Leone-UN Court.

With the indictment of the Sierra Leone-UN Court, pressure from the US Bush administration and an offensive rebel attack on Monrovia by LURD and MODEL, Taylor on August 10, 2003, appeared on national television in Liberia to announce that he would resign the following day and hand power to the nation's vice president, Moses Blah.

Taylor harshly criticized the United States in his [farewell address](#), saying that the Bush administration's insistence that he leave the country was a foolish policy that would hurt Liberia.

On August 11 Taylor resigned, leaving Moses

Charles Gyude Bryant (Interim)	October 14, 2003 January 2006
Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf	January 2006 - Present

President By Succession



William R. Tolbert (1913-1980)

July 23, 1971-April 12, 1980

The Republic of Liberia was a one-party state ruled by the Americo-Liberian dominated True Whig Party (TWP). The True Whig Party dominated all sectors of Liberia from 1870, until April 12, 1980 when indigenous Liberian Master Sergeant Samuel K. Doe, from the Krahn ethnic group, seized power in a coup d'etat.

President William R. Tolbert was assassinated and on PRC order's, Doe's forces executed 13 officials of the Tolbert government, mostly of Americo-Liberian descent. As a result, 133 years of Americo-Liberian political domination ended with the formation of the People's Redemption Council (PRC). The event was the first coup in Liberia's then 133 years history. The execution was televised by the international

The E. J. Roye building is named in his honor, as well as a ship, a town, and several schools.

H. R. Johnson - 1884-1892

Hilary R. W. Johnson was elected and became the first Liberian-born president serving from 1884 to 1892. He negotiated with the British government to establish a treaty specifying exactly the boundary between Liberia and Sierra Leone.

J. J. Cheeseman - 1892-1898

Joseph James Cheeseman was from Edina, Grand Bassa County. President Cheeseman died in office in 1898.

W. D. Coleman 1898-1902

William David Coleman served the remainder of President J. J. Cheeseman's term and another four years until 1900.

William Coleman took office with broad ideas for opening up the Interior. He established Liberian influence in the interior northwest of the Saint Paul River. He conducted an expedition into Gola

Blah as his successor until a transitional government was established on October 14. At the handover and Taylor exit, were Ghanaian President John Kufuor, South African President Thabo Mbeki, and Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano, representing African regional councils. The U.S. brought three warships with 2,300 Marines into view of the coast. Taylor fled to Nigeria where the Nigerian government provided houses for him and his entourage.

Taylor is still facing charges by the Sierra Leone-UN Court and is currently living in exile in Nigeria.

Interim Presidents

- **Moses Blah** August 11th 2003 - October 2003
- **Ruth Perry** September 3rd 1996- August 2nd, 1997 - Full name, Ruth Sando Perry; born July 16, 1939, in Grand Cape Mount, Liberia.
- **Wilton Sankawulo** September 2.1995- September 03, 1996
- **David Kpormakor** February 28, 1994- September 02, 1995
- **Philip Banks** November 13, 1993- February 28, 1994
- **Bismarck Kuyon** August 18, 1993- November 13, 1993
- **Amos Sawyer** November 23, 1990- August 08, 1993

press. The body of president Tolbert was buried in a mass grave somewhere in the capitol city, Monrovia.



**Speeches By William R. Tolbert
Compiled by:
Christine Tolbert Norman**

[More Info](#)

Elected Presidents



William Tubman (1895-1971)

May 7, 1944-July 23, 1971

 **From Augusta to Africa**

The Chronicle presents a series on the history of
the Tubman Family of Liberia William V S

territory which he intended to subdue the Gola Tribe and their allies, but was terribly defeated.

The policy Coleman established was unaffected and reports of depredations upon the natives by Coleman's commanders caused leading citizens and prominent members of the Legislature to call for immediate change. Coleman resigned from office and was replaced by Garreston W. Gibson.

A. Barclay - 1904-1912

Arthur Barclay was the President from 1904 to 1912. During his administration Liberia joined the convention of African Powers for the preservation of big game, rare animals and birds. In 1907 he headed a mission to the U.S. to arrange boundary disputes with the British and French Governments.

President By Military Coup



Samuel Kanyon Doe (1951-1990)

April 12 1980 - September 9 1990

In 1980, he staged a military coup, executing the president William R. Tolbert, Jr. and taking over the country.

During his time in rule, he banned newspapers and outlawed opposition political parties. He also entered into various deals with the United States government, and made Liberia a member of the Nonaligned Movement .

On October 29, 1985, amidst voters intimidation and voting irregularities, Doe was announced the winner of Liberia's first multiparty election.

In the late 1980s, with the end of the Cold War and with accusation of human rights, rights abuses, mismanagement and "Rampant Corruption", charges against Doe, the US began cutting off critical foreign aid to Doe and Liberia.

Samuel Doe survived a failed coup attempt, staged by Thomas Quinwonkpa, an original member of Doe's People's Redemption Council (PRC), and one of the 17 enlisted men who staged the 1980 coup that made Samuel Doe the 19th President of Liberia.

Doe was captured and tortured to death on September 9 1990 by Prince Johnson leader of the I-NPFL one of the warring factions that fought in Liberia's first civil war (1989 and 1996).

Tubman was Liberia's 18th President.

- [Learn about these and other early presidents of Liberia](#)
- [Liberia Research Page](#)
- [Historical Landmarks and Significant Events](#)

Charles Dunbar Burgess King (1872-1961)

1920-1930



Charles D. B. King

The Scandal in the 1930's

Spanish colonials in Equatorial Guinea needed laborers for their cocoa plantations. In 1905, Liberia agreed to supply the workers on contract. Village chiefs rounded up young men and supplied them to the contractors; the laborers received no salary until they returned to Liberia.

The League of Nations published a scathing report equating the system to slavery and **implicating both President Charles D. B. King, and his vice-president** as part of the syndicate of Liberians receiving a cut in the lucrative venture. Liberia's "Watergate" ended with both the president and vice-president resigning.

