

Ambrose Sevier

Ambrose Hundley Sevier was born to John Sevier and Susannah Conway in Greene County, Tennessee on November 10, 1801. His father and his uncles were all distinguished soldiers and statesmen. His cousins included several of the prominent Arkansas Conways - James Sevier Conway, Arkansas's first governor, and Elias Nelson Conway, the state's fifth governor.

Ambrose Sevier received an excellent education, studying law under his father. In 1820, he moved to Little Rock and practiced law for a short time but soon abandoned that profession for the more enticing field of politics. In 1821, he became clerk of the Territorial House of Representatives and two years later was elected as a representative from Pulaski County. He was re-elected in 1825, and in 1827, he became Speaker of the House. That same year, Thomas W. Newton challenged Sevier to a duel over some disparaging remarks he made about Robert Crittenden. After one shot was fired, the seconds and attending friends interceded and convinced the two to discontinue the fight.

In September 1827, Sevier joined another influential political family when he married Juliette E. Johnson; they had four children. Related to both the Conway and the Johnson families, Sevier quickly became a key figure in Arkansas politics. Upon his election to the U.S. Congress in 1828, he became the leader of "the Dynasty". Despite the Whigs' attempts to unseat him with formidable opponents, he was re-elected the following four terms.

In 1836, Arkansas was admitted to the Federal Compact and Sevier was elected without opposition to the U.S. Senate. He was re-elected in 1842 and 1848. He resigned his seat in 1848 to accept President James K. Polk's appointment as Special Envoy to Mexico. He and U.S. Attorney General Nathan Clifford negotiated the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo by which the United States acquired vast possessions from Mexico. On his way home from Mexico, he contracted a fatal disease in Vera Cruz and passed away at his plantation in Pulaski County on December 31, 1848, at the age of 47.