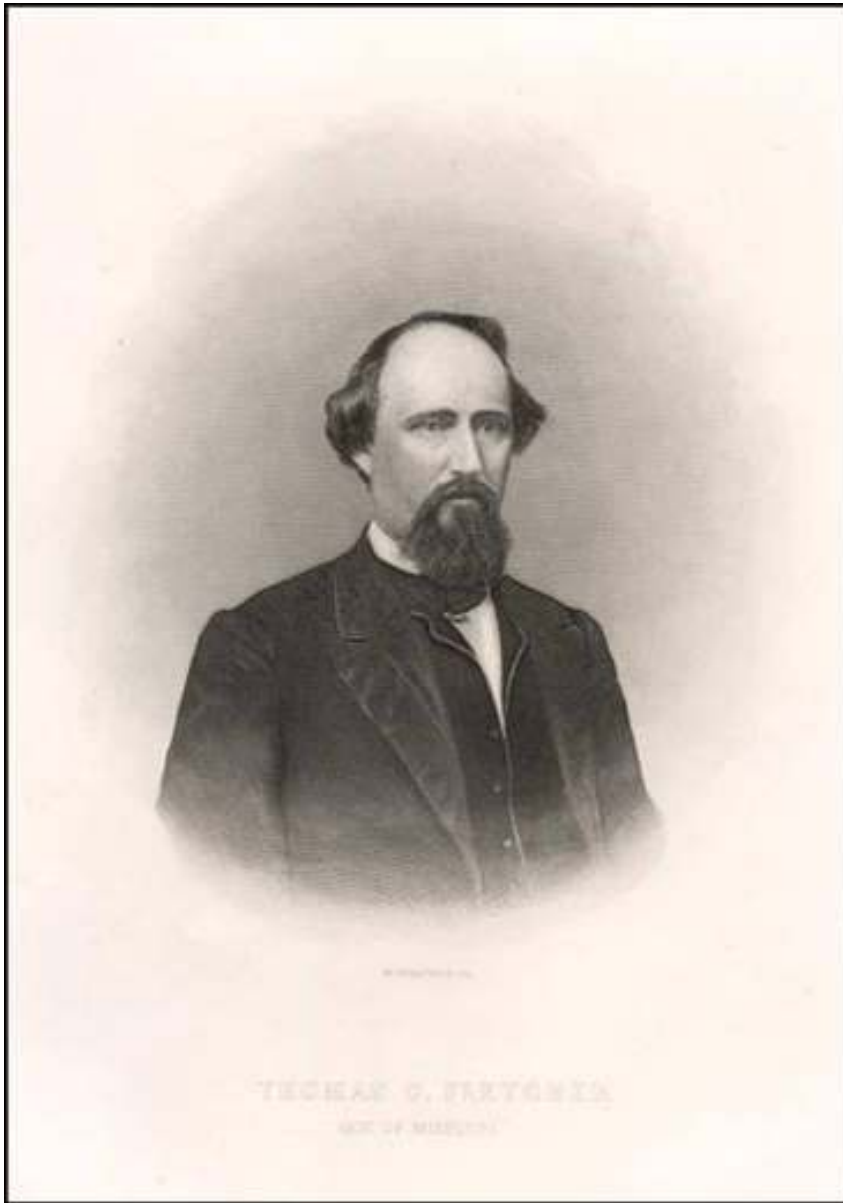


Thomas Clement Fletcher 1866



1st Commander. Brevet Brig-Gen. Governor of Missouri. Appointed by C-in-C Stephenson as 1st Missouri GAR Commander. Member of Gen. Lyon Post 2, St. Louis. Buried Bellefontaine Cemetery

<http://www.dnr.mo.gov/shpo/nps-nr/74001076.pdf> [link to his house on National Register]

Thomas Clement Fletcher (January 21, 1827 – March 25, 1899) was the Governor of Missouri during the latter stages of the American Civil War and the early part of Reconstruction. He was the first Missouri governor to be born in the state.

Early life and career Fletcher was born in Herculaneum, Missouri. His parents had immigrated to Missouri from Maryland in 1818. He received a public school education and was elected circuit clerk in Jefferson Co., Missouri, from 1849 until 1856. He was admitted to the bar in 1857.

Fletcher became a land agent for the southwest branch of the Pacific Railroad (which later became the St. Louis and San Francisco Railway) whereupon he moved to St. Louis. Although he had been raised as a Democrat in a slave-owning family, he had been an ardent abolitionist since his boyhood and became a Republican after 1856.

Civil War Fletcher was a delegate to the 1860 Republican National Convention in Chicago, where he supported the nomination of Abraham Lincoln. During the Civil War, he was Colonel of the 31st Missouri Volunteer Infantry in the Union army from 1862 until 1864, when he became Colonel of the 47th Missouri Volunteer Infantry. In 1862 he was captured at the Battle of Chickasaw Bayou and taken to Libby Prison, and

then exchanged in May 1863. He was present at the fall of Vicksburg and the Battle of Chattanooga, and commanded a brigade in the Atlanta Campaign.

Returning home because of illness in the spring of 1864, Fletcher recovered in time to organize the 47th and 50th Missouri infantry regiments and to command a regiment at the Battle of Pilot Knob, Missouri, where General Sterling Price's advance on St. Louis was stalled. For this service, President Lincoln brevetted him brigadier general of volunteers.

Political career Fletcher was nominated for governor of Missouri by the National Union Party and elected in 1864. He served from 1865 to 1869, and issued the proclamation abolishing slavery in the state. His administration was confronted with many problems, including amnesty for former Confederate soldiers, the disposition of the railroad property the state had acquired through default by the railroad companies failure to pay interest on bonds guaranteed by the state, and the reorganization of public education. The railroad property was sold under a guarantee of early completion and the state debt materially reduced. The public-school system was thoroughly reorganized and progress was made toward free education for all children.

He was unsuccessful, however, in his repeated efforts to obtain a constitutional amendment abolishing the test oath as a qualification for voting and for engaging in the professions. He supported normal schools for training teachers, greater funding for the state university, and special attention to agricultural education.

After serving as governor, Fletcher returned to St. Louis and practiced law for a time. He then moved to Washington, D. C., where he continued to practice until his death. He wrote *Life and Reminiscences of General Wm. T. Sherman* (1891).

He was buried in Bellefontaine Cemetery in St. Louis.

Fletcher, Missouri, is named after him, as was the U.S. Army's Fort Fletcher in Kansas.