

Bryan, James West ^[1]

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by Gertrude S. Carraway, 1979

7 Nov. 1805–28 Sept. 1864



A miniature portrait of James West Bryan by an unknown artist. Image courtesy of Tryon Palace. ^[2]James West Bryan, attorney and legislator, was born in New Bern to James Bryan (1769–1806) and Rachel Heritage Bryan (1782–1842), who after her first husband's death was married 1 Oct. 1807 to Dr. [Frederick Blount](#) ^[3]. [John Heritage Bryan](#) ^[4], a brother, born 4 Nov. 1798 at New Bern, was also a lawyer and statesman. He moved in 1838 to Raleigh, where he died 19 May 1870, with interment in Oakwood Cemetery. This branch of Bryans is said to have come to [Craven County](#) ^[5] from Nansemond County, Va., in 1747.

In 1824, James West Bryan was graduated from [The University of North Carolina](#) ^[6]. A classmate was [William Alexander Graham](#) ^[7], who became speaker of the state House of Commons, U.S. senator, governor of North Carolina, and secretary of the navy. The two friends married sisters, daughters of John Washington and Elizabeth Heritage Cobb Washington, who had moved to New Bern from Kinston. Bryan married Ann Mary Washington (19 Jan. 1814–29 Sept. 1864) on 19 Jan. 1831 at Christ Episcopal Church in New Bern. The bride was a Baptist but in 1839 joined her husband's church. He served as a vestryman and secretary of the vestry. Twin stained-glass windows, with the Bryan coat-of-arms, memorialize them in the church.

A Whig in politics, Bryan represented [Carteret County](#) ^[8] at the 1835 state constitutional convention and in the state senate in 1835 and 1836. From 1835 to 1856 he was trustee of The University of North Carolina.

For some time, Bryan's family resided in the brick mansion started in 1803 by his father, who had died before it was completed. During the Civil War, Bryan died at Baltimore, Md.; his wife died the next day. Both were buried in Cedar Grove Cemetery, New Bern. Their surviving children were [James Augustus](#) ^[9] (1839–1923); [Washington](#) ^[10], who married Mary Winder; and Laura (1837–68), who married Dr. James Bettner Hughes.

References:

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"Miniature Portrait Of James West Bryan, Accession #: [P.TP.1969.010.006](#) ^[2]." 18th century. Image courtesy of Tryon Palace Historic Site.

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Authors:

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Origin - location:

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[New Bern](#) ^[19]

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