

Early Independence



**Joseph
Jenkins
Roberts**

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 a institution of higher learning, later to become Liberia University, was established.

By 1860, through treaties and purchases with local African leaders, Liberia had extended its boundaries to include a 600 mile coastline.

**Stephen
Allen
Benson**

Following Roberts, Stephen Allen Benson serves as president for eight years. His biggest accomplishment was the annexation of the Colony of Maryland, now Maryland County, 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.

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



**Daniel
Bashiel
Warner**

Following Warner, James Spriggs Payne served for two years from 1868 to 1870. He also served as president again in 1876 to 1878.

James Spriggs Payne

