

R.051 INFORMATION ON PRESIDENT WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON.

Entered in December of 1993 by Robert R. Hill of Brandon, Fla.

Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica

PRESIDENT WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON.

William Henry Harrison (1773-1841) was the 9th president of the United States. He was born at the Berkley Plantation in Charles City county, Virginia on the 9th of February 1773, the third son of Benjamin Harrison.

His father, long prominent in Virginia politics, served his state in a number of capacities; as a member of the Virginia house of burgesses; as a delegate to the Continental Congress (1774-1777); as a signer of the Declaration of Independence; and as governor of Virginia (1781-1784).

William Henry Harrison attended Hampden-Sidney college from 1787 to 1790, and later enrolled at the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Philadelphia. He withdrew in 1791 to enter the army as an ensign in the 1st regiment at Ft. Washington, Cincinnati. Promoted to lieutenant the following year, he later acted as aide-de-camp to General Anthony Wayne (q.v.) in the campaign against the Indians that ended in the battle of Fallen Timbers on August 20th 1794.

In 1797, Harrison received his captiancy but elected to resign his commission the next year. Soon afterward he was made secretary of the Northwest Territory. In 1799 the Jeffersonian party there sent him to congress as territorial delegate.

In May 1800, President John Adams appointed Harrison governor of the newly created Indiana territory. Sworn into office on January 10, 1801, he served as governor until September 1812.

In 1803 he became a special commissioner to the Indians and in this role negotiated a number of treaties that opened new areas of land to white settlement.

Greatly dissatisfied with these treaties, the Indians, led by Tecumseh (q.v.) and his brother, "The Prophet," and undoubtedly encouraged by the British, began the hostilities that terminated at the Tippecanoe river on November 7th, 1811. Here, Harrison, leading a force of regulars and militia, won the victory that not only established his military reputation but also gained for him the national

prestige which made possible, in part, his subsequent election to the presidency.

When the war broke out with Great Britain in the summer of 1812, Harrison was appointed a major general in the Kentucky militia. A few weeks later, he was made a brigadier general in the regular army of the United States and placed in command of all the troops in the northwest.

On October 5, 1813, after re-occupying American territory previously surrendered to the enemy, troops under his command defeated the British at the battle of Thams. (See War of 1812).

Harrison resigned his commission in 1814 and shortly afterward was appointed to negotiate a second treaty of Greenville with the Indians (July 22, 1814). Settling at this time in Ohio, Harrison quickly became important in the politics of his adopted state. He served in congress from 1816 to 1819 and in the Ohio senate from 1819 to 1821.

From 1825 to 1828 he served in the U.S. senate. In 1828 he was appointed the first U.S. minister to Colombia, but retained this position for less than a year. For the next several years he lived in semiretirement at North Bend, Ohio.

Early in 1835, Harrison began to receive favourable mention as a candidate for president on the Whig ticket and was later "nominated" at large public meetings in Pennsylvania, New York and Maryland. In the election of 1836 he led the candidates running against Martin Van Buren (q.v.) but received only 73 electoral votes, while Little Magician" won 170 electoral votes.

Harrison's military record and his noncommittal political views made him the most "available" candidate for the Whig party nomination in the election of 1840. He received the Whig nomination at the party's convention in Harrisburg, Pa. in December 1839.

Largely to attract the votes of discontented and anti-Jacksonian Democrats, the Whigs nominated John Tyler for vice-presidency. The campaign of 1840 was notable for the use of campaign songs, political slogans and party insignia. When the Democrats derisively referred to Harrison as the "log cabin and hard cider" candidate, the Whigs quickly adopted miniature log cabins and cider jugs as their major identifying symbols. The cry "TIPPECANOE & TYLER TOO!!" echoed throughout the land.

In the November election, Harrison overwhelmingly defeated his Democratic opponent, receiving 234 electoral votes to Van Buren's 60.

William Henry Harrison took his oath of office on March 4th, 1841, and delivered a long inaugural address for the occasion.

One month later, on April 4th, 1841, he died, the first president in office. Vice-President John Tyler (q.v.) succeeded him.

It is generally agreed that Harrison died of pneumonia, but his illness was complicated by the excitement and fatigue brought on by the innumerable demands of office seekers, who plagued him incessantly. His body was permanently interred at North Bend, Ohio.

In 1795, Harrison married Anna Symmes (1775-1864), daughter of John Cleves Symmes. Their grandson, Benjamin Harrison (q.v.) became the 23rd president of the United States (1889-1893).

END OF DOCUMENT.