

## Benjamin Harrison

*Essay prepared by IHS staff*

Benjamin Harrison was elected president of the United States in 1888 while living on North Delaware Street in Indianapolis.

The grandson of a former president, William Henry Harrison, Benjamin Harrison was an Ohio-born and educated attorney who began his legal practice in Indianapolis in 1854. An official in the newly established Republican party during the 1850s, Harrison was elected reporter of the Indiana Supreme Court in 1860, a position he continued to fill while serving as an officer in the Civil War.

He was the GOP candidate for Indiana governor in 1876, opposing the denim-clad farmer and politician James D. Williams--a race described as one between "blue blood and blue jeans." Unsuccessful in this effort, Harrison was elected to the United States Senate in 1881, where he remained until 1887. The following year, he was the Republican choice to unseat incumbent President Grover Cleveland and did so, even though his popular vote was 100,000 less than that of the Democrats. Despite an inauspicious beginning, President Harrison signed into law much significant legislation, including the Sherman Antitrust Act and the McKinley Tariff, and presided over the admission of six new western states into the Union in 1889 and 1890. Defeated for reelection by his old foe Cleveland in 1892, Harrison returned to Indianapolis and a lucrative law practice.