

## William Henry Harrison

*Essay prepared by IHS staff*

William Henry Harrison became famous as the victor in the Battle of Tippecanoe (Nov. 7, 1811), while also serving as Indiana's first territorial governor for 12 years, and he was elected president of the United States in 1840.

He was born into a distinguished family of Virginia, his father both a signer of the Declaration of Independence and a governor of Virginia. Harrison began his own military-political career in the Northwest as an aide to General Anthony Wayne and later to Governor Arthur St. Clair. Harrison was elected (over Arthur St. Clair, Jr.) as the Northwest Territory's first delegate to Congress in 1799, and the following year came the first of four appointments as governor of the Indiana Territory, created in 1800 by legislation Harrison had sponsored.

Successful but controversial as governor and superintendent of Indian affairs, Harrison was a general officer in the War of 1812. Afterwards, living in Ohio, he became active in local politics and served under President John Quincy Adams as United States Minister to Colombia. In 1836 he was one of the candidates for president put forward by the newly formed Whig party, and four years later he captured the White House as the "Log Cabin and Hard Cider" candidate. This election, featuring the Whig ticket of "Tippecanoe and Tyler too" (John Tyler of Virginia was the running mate), changed forever the nature of American campaign politics. Harrison died in office just 30 days after his inauguration.

For more information on Harrison, consult the [William Henry Harrison Papers](#) in the IHS Library.