

# presidents of the *United States of America*

"I ran the first modern presidential campaign in American history and served as the 9th President of the United States."



**William Henry Harrison**





# Become a Presidential Historian By Solving This Puzzle

In this magazine, you'll learn all sorts of facts about William Henry Harrison's amazing life and accomplishments. But there's still one last thing we need to know about him.

President Harrison had a pet and we need to find out its name and what kind of animal it was. Your task is to help us uncover the answer! Hidden in the text are bolded letters. Read this magazine carefully to find them and fill the letters into the blanks below in the order they appear.

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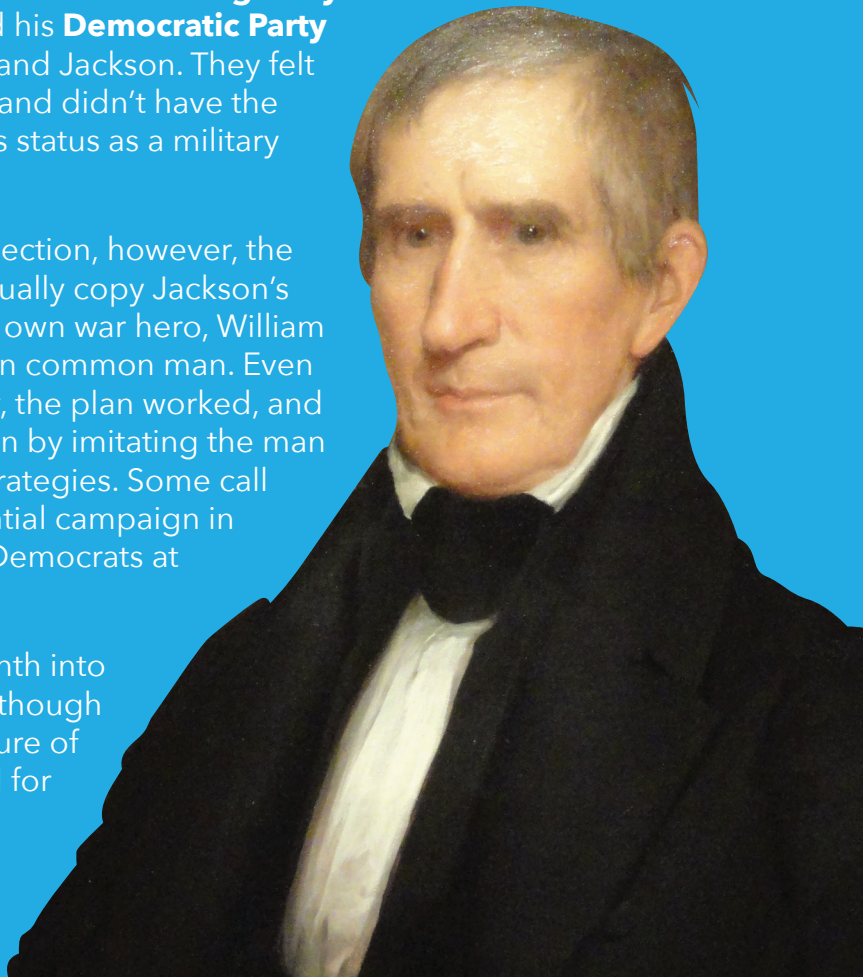
Once you've solved this puzzle, you'll be a  
true PragerU Kids presidential historian!

## Meet William Henry Harrison

Have you ever been so upset about losing at something, that you did everything you could to win the next time? That's how the **Whig Party** felt when it kept losing to Andrew Jackson and his **Democratic Party** in the 1820s and 1830s. The Whigs couldn't stand Jackson. They felt that he was too similar to the "**common man**" and didn't have the dignity to be president. They felt that Jackson's status as a military hero didn't qualify him for the presidency.

The more the Whigs thought about the next election, however, the more they realized that, to win, they had to actually copy Jackson's strategy. In the 1840 election, they chose their own war hero, William Henry Harrison, and portrayed him as their own common man. Even though he actually came from a wealthy family, the plan worked, and Harrison was elected president. The Whigs won by imitating the man that they hated, and did so using innovative strategies. Some call Harrison's campaign the first modern presidential campaign in American history. They had beaten Jackson's Democrats at their own game.

Unfortunately, Harrison died less than one month into his term – the first president to die in office. Although he is known mostly for having the shortest tenure of any president, he deserves to be remembered for the way he modernized presidential elections.



PUBLIC DOMAIN



# Young William

William Henry Harrison was born on February 9, 1773 in Charles City County, Virginia. He was the seventh and youngest child of Benjamin and Elizabeth Harrison. His father Benjamin was one of America's **Founding Fathers** – he signed the Declaration of Independence and served as Governor of Virginia. The Harrisons were one of the most prominent and wealthy families in the state.

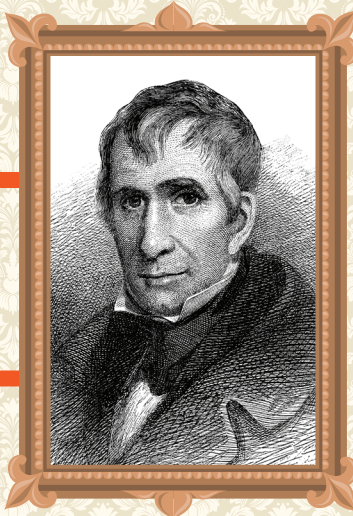
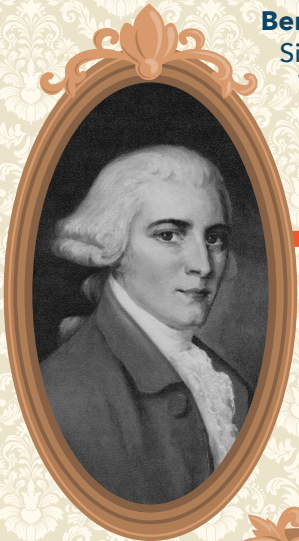
Young William grew up during the American Revolution, hearing heroic tales about his father's friend, George Washington, and the Continental Army. Benjamin hoped that young William would become a doctor and provided him with a strong education. William studied under **tutors** and then at Hampden-Sydney College.



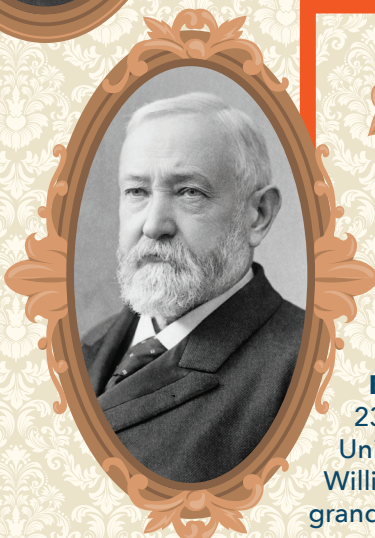
## Interesting Facts

- He was the last president born before the United States declared independence from Great Britain.
- He was a member of the Whig Party.
- He was the first president who was a member of the Whig Party.
- His father was a Founding Father who was friends with George Washington.
- He and his wife Anna had ten children.
- His nickname was "Old Tippecanoe" for winning the Battle of Tippecanoe.
- He was the first president to be photographed in office.
- He was the first president to die in office.
- As of 2022, he served the shortest term of any president – 31 days.
- He is the only president whose grandson (Benjamin Harrison) also became president.

**Benjamin Harrison V,**  
Signer of the Declaration of Independence,  
William Henry Harrison's father



**William Henry Harrison,**  
9th President of the  
United States of America



**Benjamin Harrison,**  
23rd President of the  
United States of America,  
William Henry Harrison's  
grandson

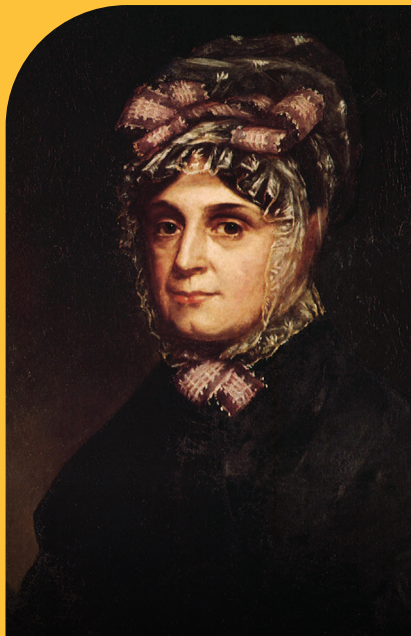




## Early Career

Instead of being a doctor, William wanted to serve in the military. In 1791, when he was 18, he joined the Army. Soon, he was serving as a **lieutenant** under Major General Anthony Wayne in the **Northwest Territory** – specifically in what is now Ohio. He helped Wayne defeat the **Native Americans** at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794.

The following year, he married Anna Symmes, the daughter of a prominent judge. They would go on to have ten children.



## Frontier Leader

The Northwest Territory was split into the Ohio and Indiana territories. Harrison became a prominent citizen in the region, leading President John Adams to appoint him Governor of Indiana in 1800, where he served from 1801 to 1812. As Governor, Harrison aggressively negotiated with Native Americans in the region to acquire their territories for the **U**nited States. During this time, European powers like Great Britain were provoking the Native Americans to **attack** the settlers. Harrison would acquire more than 50 million acres of land from the Native Americans, for often as cheap as two cents per acre.

Harrison believed that white American settlers could better develop and use the land than the Native Americans. He felt that moving the Native Americans farther west, away from the settlers, would make the United States safer.

Back in 1787, the Founding Fathers banned slavery in the Northwest Territory. Despite this, Harrison, who had enslaved servants, supported expanding slavery into the Territory. He did, however, hope to prepare many of his enslaved servants for freedom – he even allowed one of them, Jack Butler, to be free.





# Military Hero



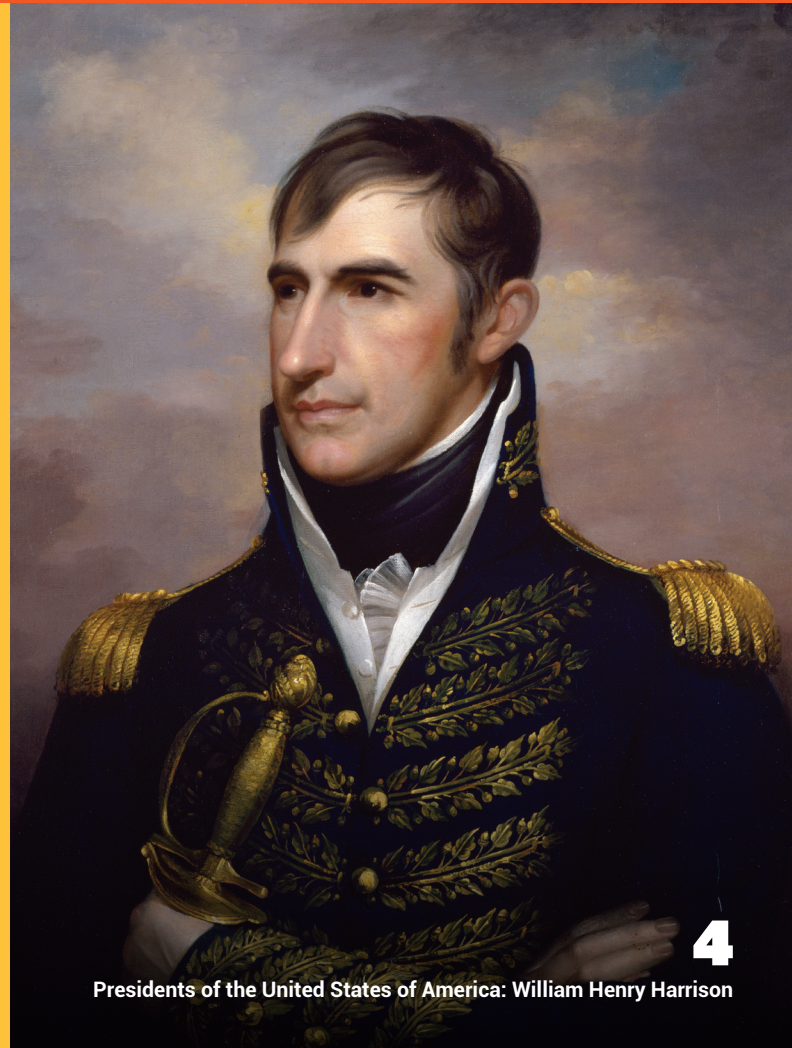
**Shawnee** chief Tecumseh and his brother Tenskwatawa grew frustrated with the tribes that sold land to Harrison. Fears of war led Harrison to raise an army and personally lead them to confront the Shawnees.

In November of 1811, Harrison and Tenskwatawa's forces met at the Battle of Tippecanoe (named after the small river next to the camp). Although Harrison's men suffered many casualties, they won and destroyed the Shawnee village of Prophetstown. The victory made Harrison a national hero, and he would later be nicknamed, "Old Tippecanoe."

The following year, the War of 1812 broke out between the United States and Great Britain. In October of 1813, Harrison fought the British at the Battle of the Thames in Ontario, Canada. Also at the battle were Tecumseh and his warriors, since they had allied with the British. Harrison took advantage of the fact that he had more men under his command and won the battle. Tecumseh himself was killed. This victory made Harrison, at age 41, one of the top heroes of the war – along with Andrew Jackson.

## Quote

*"The qualities of the general and the hero must be devoted to the advantage of mankind."  
- September 1829*





# Rise to the Presidency

Harrison resigned from the Army the following year, even though the war was still raging. He spent the rest of his life seeking public office. President John Quincy Adams wrote, "This person's thirst for **lucrative** office is absolutely rabid... as hot in pursuit as a hound on the scent of a hare." He lost several elections, but managed to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1816 to 1819, and the U.S. Senate from 1825 to 1828. President Adams also sent him as America's Minister to Colombia in 1829.

During Andrew Jackson's presidency, from 1829 to 1837, the country became divided between his supporters, the Democrats, and his opponents, the Whigs. The American people loved Jackson because so many of them could identify with him – he was, after all, the first "common man" president. Unlike his predecessors, he came from poverty and had been orphaned at a young age. Although the Whigs hated Jackson, they realized that the best way to beat him was to run a common man of their own.

Although Harrison was not a common man – he, in fact, came from a wealthy and prominent Virginia family – it was easy to portray him as one. The Whigs ran Harrison as a candidate for president in 1836 and 1840, both times against the Democratic nominee, Martin Van Buren. They pointed out that, just like Jackson, Harrison was a war hero, and they published songs and stories of how Harrison lived the rough life of a western frontiersman.

Van Buren won the presidency in 1836, but by 1840, he was in trouble. There was a major depression and Harrison's Whigs were on the rise. When former Virginia Senator John Tyler was chosen as Harrison's running-mate, the campaign took on the slogan "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too," one of the most famous in American history. Harrison easily won the presidency, 234 electoral votes to 60.

## Quote

"The strongest of all governments is that which is most free."  
- September 1829

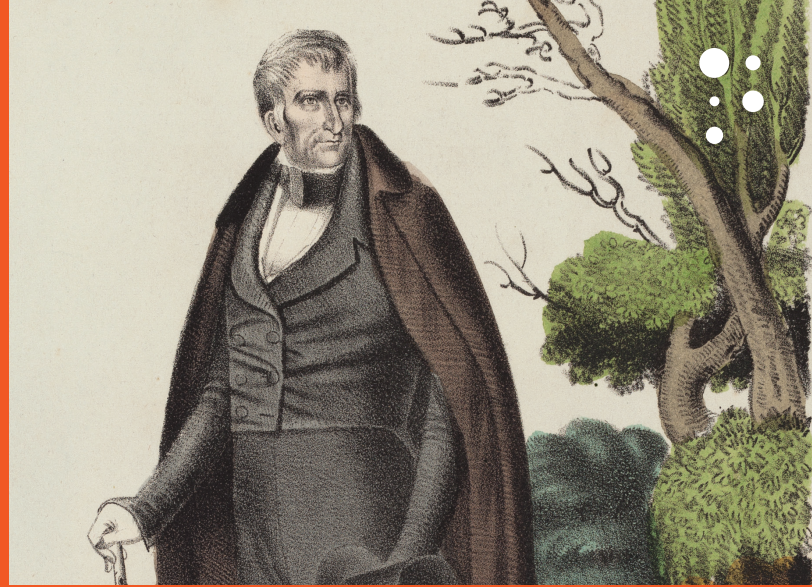




# A Groundbreaking Campaign

In modern presidential elections, candidates travel across the **c**ountry by plane to give speeches at massive **rallies**. This wasn't always the case – prior to the 20th century, most candidates didn't actively campaign for the presidency. Some even stayed at home, giving low-key speeches on their own front porch. At the time, it was seen as inappropriate for someone to campaign for the nation's highest office. It was believed that the office should seek the man – not the other way around.

William Henry Harrison's 1840 campaign was different from any that came before – it was one of the earliest in which the candidate openly sought the presidency. The Whigs organized huge rallies and parades in support of Harrison, who gave speeches to tens of thousands of people at a time. Harrison's supporters also wrote songs and sold "Harrison-brand" whiskey to promote their candidate. Many historians have described Harrison's 1840 candidacy as the first modern campaign in American history. In Illinois, one young member of the Whig Party got caught up in Harrison-mania. His name was Abraham Lincoln.



## Quote

*"It behooves the people to be most watchful of those to whom they have entrusted power."*  
- March 1841

## The Shortest Presidency

On March 4, 1841, Harrison took the oath of office to become the ninth President of the United States. At the age of 68, he was the oldest president up to that time. It was a cold, wet day and Harrison delivered his inaugural address without an overcoat or hat. The speech remains the longest inaugural address in American history, which took Harrison almost two hours to read.

Harrison promised to reverse Jackson's and Van Buren's policies by reestablishing a national bank and reducing the power of the presidency.

Harrison wouldn't have the chance to fulfill those promises. By the end of March, he **was** ill with **pneumonia**. Although he received the best medical care available at the time, he died in the White House on April 4, 1841, one month after taking office. He was the first U.S. president to die in office.





# Legacy

William Henry Harrison is known for having the shortest tenure as president. People often laugh at the fact that he got sick and died after giving a long inaugural address. They forget, however, that he was a major leader in the western territories prior to serving as president, where he acquired large amounts of territory for the United States. Also, he demonstrated strong leadership abilities with his victories at Tippecanoe and the Thames.

Lastly, whenever you see a candidate for president give speeches at big rallies, remember that Harrison was one of the earliest American politicians to use this style of campaigning.

Some historians have criticized Harrison for being unfair and greedy towards Native Americans, as well as for being too focused on his career and attaining public office. Regardless, it's important to remember that Harrison did much more than serve the shortest tenure of all the presidents.



## Write About It!

William Henry Harrison's presidency was short, but he still left a legacy. His life was filled with family, career, and politics.

What kind of legacy would you like to leave? Take a few minutes to brainstorm the type of person you'd like to be and write about it.

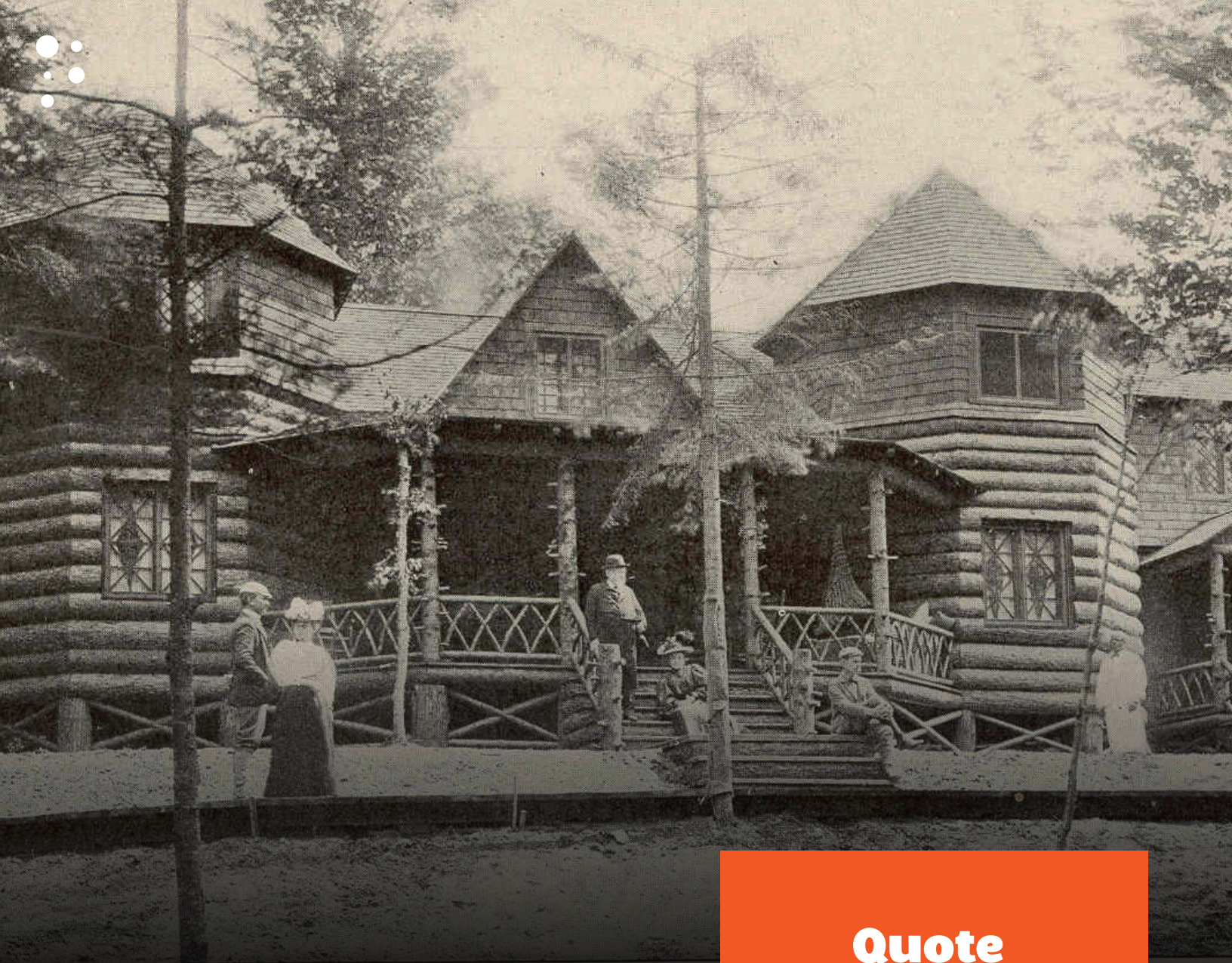




# True or False?

- T F** Harrison's nickname was "Old Man Canoe."
- T F** His father, Benjamin, signed the Declaration of Independence.
- T F** He was the first president from the Whig Party.
- T F** He was president for 2 months before dying.
- T F** He freed one of his enslaved servants.
- T F** He and his wife had 3 children.
- T F** His grandson, Benjamin, also became president.
- T F** Harrison pursued a career in the military.
- T F** He was not very interested in becoming the President of the United States.
- T F** He held rallies to try to become president.
- T F** Harrison was a famous war hero in his day.
- T F** He retired in his boyhood hometown in Virginia.





Adirondack Cottage of William Henry Harrison

## Quote

"There is nothing more corrupting, nothing more destructive of the noblest and finest feelings of our nature, than the exercise of unlimited power."  
- September 1829



# Glossary

**Whig Party:** The political party that opposed Andrew Jackson, which no longer exists today. It supported the building of roads and canals to boost the economy.

**Democratic Party:** The political party that supported Andrew Jackson and now supports liberal or progressive policies.

**Common Man:** An ordinary man without high social status or significant wealth; usually comprising the majority of a country's population.

**Founding Fathers:** The people who played leading roles in creating the United States, establishing its independence, and designing its Constitution and government.

**Tutor:** A person hired to teach someone individually.

**Lieutenant:** An officer of junior or middle rank in a country's military force.

**Northwest Territory:** A territory acquired by the United States and established in 1787 that was once considered America's western frontier. It included all or part of what are now the Midwestern states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

**Native Americans:** People whose ancestors lived in North America before European settlers arrived.

**Shawnee:** A member of a Native American tribe that spoke Algonquian and originally lived in the Eastern and Midwestern United States.

**Lucrative:** Producing much wealth or profit.

**Rally:** A large and lively meeting of people showing support and giving speeches for a political candidate or cause.

**Pneumonia:** A respiratory infection that inflames the lungs.

# Sources

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Freehling, William. "William Henry Harrison." *Miller Center, University of Virginia*, <https://millercenter.org/president/harrison/>. Accessed 6 September 2022.

Montgomery, H. *Life of Major-General William H. Harrison: Ninth President of the United States*. Tooker and Gatchell, 1853.

**Images:** Getty Images, WikiCommons

## Answers:

**HARRISON'S PET:**  
SUKEY THE COW

- |          |          |  |
|----------|----------|--|
| <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> | Harrison's nickname was "Old Man Canoe."                                   |
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