

# PRESIDENTIAL PATHWAYS



## BENJAMIN HARRISON

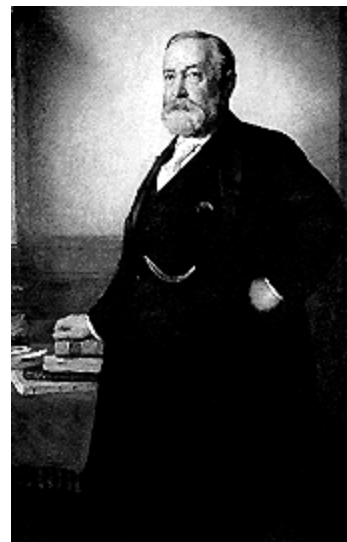
23rd President of the United States

Prepared for use along the  
**Presidential Pathways Scenic Byway**  
and  
**Whitewater Canal Scenic Byways**  
by  
Bonita Porter  
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# BENJAMIN HARRISON

23rd President of the United States

Benjamin Harrison was born in 1833 in North Bend, Ohio, on his grandfather's farm. That would not have been remarkable except for the fact of his family's involvement in politics. Benjamin's father, John Scott Harrison, would later be U.S. Congressman from Ohio. His grandfather, William Henry Harrison, would soon be President of the United States. Benjamin's great-grandfather, also named Benjamin Harrison, had signed the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Political discussion and public service were constant themes in Benjamin's childhood, along with the stories of his ancestors' exploits in the wilderness of the Northwest Territory. Benjamin was a shy, quiet child and was seldom seen without his older brother Matthew. However, his shyness could not hide his intelligence. He eventually went to Farmer's College in Elizabethtown, OH, not far from his home.



*Official Presidential Portrait*

In Elizabethtown, the Reverend John W. Scott, was trying to establish a Female Institute to provide a higher education for his daughter, Caroline, and other intelligent young women. Young Benjamin Harrison met Caroline there. Rev. Scott, however, had decided to take his Female Institute north to Oxford, taking his beautiful daughter with him. Benjamin transferred to Miami University, also in Oxford, so that he could be close to the intelligent and outgoing Caroline. In Oxford, they courted under the watchful eyes of her reverend father and mother. After his graduation in 1852, Benjamin married Caroline Scott. Her father officiated at the wedding, then bid them goodbye as they left for Cincinnati where Benjamin studied law. The young couple soon moved to Indianapolis, Indiana, where Benjamin reported the decisions of the Indiana Supreme Court. Caroline settled into raising their two children, Russell and Mary (called Mamie by the family).



*"Come on boys!"* General Benjamin Harrison in the Battle of Resaca, 1864.

The Civil War broke into their routine lives. Benjamin was appointed as a Union Colonel, leading the 70th Indiana Volunteer Infantry Regiment, in August 1862. They fought in General Sherman's famous march across the Confederate south.

The issues that brought about the Civil War, and what he had seen during that war, informed Benjamin's ideas in his later political career. In 1865, Benjamin was mustered out of the army and returned to Indianapolis to practice law.

Although Benjamin was very happy just practicing law, but the leaders of Indianapolis politics convinced him to run for Governor of Indiana in 1876. He was defeated, but was not finished with politics. In 1881, he won a position in the US Senate, where he championed Indian and Freedman's rights, the rights of homesteaders and Civil War veterans. He served only one term in the Senate, giving up the position in 1887 to begin his campaign for the Presidency.

The primary campaign in 1888 was fraught with accusations of fraud, but Benjamin was nominated the Republican candidate. He opposed the Democrat, Grover Cleveland, who was running for re-election. Although Benjamin Harrison received fewer popular votes, he won in the electoral college. Benjamin and Caroline packed up and moved into the White House after Benjamin's inauguration in March, 1889.

Caroline was horrified. Mice ran through the Presidential residence, and the rooms' decorations were out of date and covered in smoke from the gas lamps. Furniture and household items from past presidents and their families were piled in the basement, often mildewed and water damaged. Never one to sit back and be happy with things as they were, Caroline began redecorating the White House to be a showcase of the emerging nation, a place worthy of receiving foreign dignitaries. She had electric lights installed by the Edison Electric Co.. She brought the first



*Benjamin Harrison's inauguration*

Christmas tree into the White House. And, being the more outgoing of the first couple, she often learned more about foreign dignitaries, and their needs, on the dance floor than her still shy husband, often referred to as 'The Human Iceberg', could find out in the oval office. She designed what was later to become the West Wing of the White House. She thoroughly catalogued the furniture and household belongings of former presidents, including the china now displayed in the China Room of the White House. She agreed to help with fundraising to build Johns Hopkins Medical Center, but only on the condition that the new institution agree to educate women. She also took on the role of first President General of the Daughters of the American Revolution.



*Caroline Scott Harrison*

Meanwhile, Benjamin set about influencing foreign policy by establishing an information center that would later become the Pan American Union which promoted closer commercial ties between the US and the countries of South and Central America. President Harrison signed the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, an attempt to break up businesses who used forceful tactics in order to control or monopolize certain areas of business. It was the first Federal act to control commerce across several states. During his administration, six states were added to the union, all of them west of the Mississippi River.



*This cartoon depicts Benjamin Harrison trying to catch "voter" fish and shoot "voter" ducks with a rifle labeled "Force Bill".*

Benjamin Harrison was the first President to have his voice recorded on a phonograph cylinder in 1889. He was the first President to travel across the entire United States by train in 1891, and the first President ever to attend a baseball game in 1892.

Despite his many accomplishments, Benjamin had a hard time living up to the larger than life reputation of his Presidential grandfather. The political cartoons of the period reflected this idea by depicting Benjamin with an oversized hat, supposedly belonging to William Henry Harrison.

Just two weeks before the Presidential election of 1892, Caroline Harrison died of tuberculosis. Their daughter, Mary Harrison McKee took on the duties of the First Lady until the end of Harrison's administration in March, 1893,

when the White House was returned to Grover Cleveland.

Harrison's contribution to national life did not stop in 1892. In 1899, he attended the First International Peace Conference in the Hague, The Netherlands, to build a covenant for the settling of international disputes. He represented Venezuela in a boundary dispute with the United Kingdom in 1900. He authored a book, "This Country of Ours", offering his views on the federal government and the presidency.

In 1901, Benjamin Harrison caught the flu. It worsened into pneumonia. He died on March 13, 1901. He was buried, not far from his Indianapolis home. His memory lives on in Ohio and Indiana.

- The Benjamin Harrison Law School in Indianapolis was named in his honor. In 1944, the school became part of Indiana University and is now the Indiana University School of Law-Indianapolis.
- At Miami University, Harrison Hall houses the political science department and the Harrison Scholarship is the school's most prestigious academic award.
- Harrison Hall, a co-educational dormitory at Purdue University, is named after President Harrison, who served on the Board of Trustees of Purdue University from July, 1895 to March, 1901.



*Harrison Monument in Indianapolis.*

## **Benjamin Harrison—Fast Facts**

**Twenty-Third President, 1889-1893, from the Republican Party**

**Born: August 20, 1833 in North Bend, Ohio**

**Wife: Caroline (Scott) Harrison**

**Occupation before he was President: Lawyer**

**Other ways he served: U.S. Senator from Indiana**

**Height: 5 feet, 6 inches**

**Pet: Goat**

**Died: March 13, 1901 in Indianapolis, Indiana. He died of pneumonia.**

**School attended: Miami University**

**Fun Fact: Only grandson of a President to become President.**

For more information, see the following websites.

Benjamin Harrison

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin\\_Harrison](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_Harrison)

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/bh23.html>

<http://www.americanpresident.org/history/benjaminharrison/>

<http://ap.grolier.com/article?assetid=0194650-00>

<http://www.ipl.org/div/potus/bharrison.html>

Caroline Scott Harrison

<http://www.lkwdpl.org/WIHOHIO/harr-car.htm>

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/firstladies/ch23.html>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caroline\\_Harrison](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caroline_Harrison)

# Ohio Educational Content Standards and this booklet.

## Fourth Grade Social Studies

- Plan a trip along the Presidential Pathways Scenic Byway.
- Measure the distance from North Bend, OH, when Benjamin Harrison grew up to Oxford, OH where he went to college. What direction is Oxford from North Bend?
- What groups of people settled between North Bend and Oxford? Where were they from? Why did they settle in Ohio?
- Who are the Shakers? How did their religion influence their lives and work?
- Where did the Miami and Shawnee Indians go when they left Ohio?
- What new immigrants to Ohio do you notice on your trip? Why would they immigrate to Ohio now?
- Trace the routes of rivers, canals and railroads in the area? How did these features affect where people decided to live? What industries or natural resources influenced the growth of cities along your route?
- Visit the Indian mounds that are featured on the byway. There is one in Shawnee Lookout Park and another in the Indian Creek Preserve in Butler Co. Who built these mounds? What were these mounds used for? What happened to the people who built them?
- Read about the Shawnee and Miami Native people who populated Ohio before white settlement. How did they live? What artifacts did they leave behind them?
- What government offices did Benjamin Harrison hold? Which branch of the government was each office a part of? What issues did Benjamin Harrison promote while in government? How did these issues promote the common good?

## Fourth Grade Science

- Stop in any of the parks along the Presidential Pathway Scenic Byway.
  - Group common plants according to their traits (tree leaves, flowers, seeds, roots)
    - Relate plant structures to their specific functions such as growth, survival and reproduction.
    - Can you identify these plants, trees and bushes using a common reference book?
    - If this is not your first visit, compare what the plant looks like now to what it looked like before. What part of its life cycle is it in now? (germination, maturity, reproduction, death)
    - How were these plants used by early settlers in southwest Ohio?
  - Walk along the creeks to find fossils.
    - Take rubbings of them using crayons across newsprint paper. Can you identify them?
    - What type of environment existed when these fossils were actually living animals? How does that environment differ today?
- The technology of canals and covered bridges
  - Visit the two covered bridges along the byway. Draw the truss structure used to build the bridge.
    - Why do you think it was built this way?
    - What problems were solved by having a bridge with a roof?
    - How did covered bridges improve the lives of the people in the area?
  - Follow the Whitewater River canal way along Kilby Rd.
    - What would interfere with a canal boat floating down the river? How was each problem addressed?
    - Why was the canal eventually replaced by a railroad? Is the railroad still operating?

# Ohio Educational Content Standards and this booklet.

## **Eighth Grade Social Studies**

- Visit the various museums and other historic sites along the Presidential Pathways Scenic Byway.
  - Where did the settlers in southwest Ohio come from?
  - What reasons brought settlers to southwest Ohio?
  - What were the interactions between the Miami and Shawnee and the U.S. government? Foreign governments? Did these interactions lead to war?
- Discuss the steps of how Ohio went from Indian Territory to statehood. How did the Northwest Ordinance affect this transition? What forms of early government emerged? What democratic institutions were established?
- How did Ohio deal with the issue of slavery? Were there dissenting voices? How and why did they differ from the State's decision as stated in the Ohio constitution? How did these differences influence the Underground Railroad? The course of the Civil War?
- Discuss the differences between the abolitionist movement and the copperhead movement? Who were the leading spokespersons for each group? How did they interpret the runaway slave laws? What did they do about their beliefs?
- What was the basis of the Ohio economy around the time of the Civil War? Can you see evidence of this same Ohio economy today?
  - How did religious diversity effect issues of slavery and economics along the Presidential Byway?
- Explain how Benjamin Harrison won the presidency despite his lower number of popular votes.
- What issues did Benjamin Harrison promote while in government? How did these issues promote the common good?
- How did the Oxford Female Institute impact issues of women's rights in the area? What impact did Caroline Harrison have on the United States?

## **Eighth Grade Math and Science**

- Covered Bridge Building.
  - Why put a roof on a bridge? What effect would sun, wind, water and extremes in temperature have on a wooden bridge? What effect would vibration by moving horses, wagons, etc. have on the bridge?
  - Bring a protractor to measure the angles of trusses used inside covered bridges. Why did different bridges use different truss types? Why use triangles of different angles and dimensions? What does the truss type have to do with the span of the bridge or the soils and other support structures used beneath the bridges? See [http://dot.state.oh.us/se/coveredbridges/truss\\_types.htm](http://dot.state.oh.us/se/coveredbridges/truss_types.htm)
  - Experiment with the different angles you discover to try to make a bridge from toothpicks. How does a design for a covered bridge use translations, reflections, rotations and dilations of triangles. How are these same angles used in modern-day bridge building?
- Canal Building
  - Water was used to carry canal boats from Indianapolis to Cincinnati. What problems did the canal builders discover? What limits did the builders have to work within?
  - What angle of slope was needed to keep enough water flowing to keep the canal boat moving? What was the top speed of a canal boat?
  - What environmental problems might a canal builder encounter? What solutions were used?
  - Make a model similar to southwest Ohio's geography and test portions for their appropriateness for canal or railroad building. Remember, no sharp turns or steep hills!
- Railroads—Why did railroads eventually triumph over canals as a preferred means of travel?
  - What environmental impacts came from building and using railroads?
  - Were these impacts greater or less than the environmental impacts of canals?
- Fossils and the Environment. Any creek bed in southwest Ohio contains fossils.
  - What environmental changes have taken place since these animals were living? Earthquakes? Global warming? Glaciers?