

Collection #
SC 2974

WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON INVITATION, 4 MARCH 1841

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 1 folder

COLLECTION
DATES: 4 March 1841

PROVENANCE: Richards 176

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NUMBER: 1983.0432

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Henry Harrison (February 9, 1773-April 4, 1841) was born on the Berkeley Plantation, Charles City County, Virginia to Benjamin Harrison V and Elizabeth Bassett. He was the youngest of seven children. The Harrison family was heavily involved in politics, as Benjamin Harrison V was a delegate to the Continental Congress, signed the Declaration of Independence and later served as Governor of Virginia. Harrison studied the classics at Hampden-Sydney College, and briefly studied medicine before joining the Army, where he was sent to the Northwest Territory in 1791.

Harrison started in the Army as an ensign, but rose quickly through the ranks, earning the rank of Lieutenant by 1794. In 1795, Harrison married Anna Symmes of North Bend, Ohio. The couple had ten children, nine of whom survived to adulthood. In 1797, Harrison resigned from the Army and decided to pursue his interest in politics. He began with an appointment as Secretary of the Northwest Territory. From there, he served as the first delegate to represent the Northwest Territory in the United States Congress. Harrison was then appointed and confirmed as Governor of the newly formed Indiana Territory in 1800.

However, Harrison did not end up abandoning his military roots. Harrison engaged with Native Americans in the Indiana Territory, and became famous for his victory over Tecumseh's forces at the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811. Soon after, when the War of 1812 broke out, Harrison was appointed as major general, in command of the Army of the Northwest. However, a dispute with Secretary of War John Armstrong led to Harrison's resignation from the Army again in 1814. Harrison returned to political life again from 1816-29, serving variously as a U.S. Representative for Ohio, U.S. Senator for Ohio, and as a foreign minister to Colombia.

Harrison was in relative retirement until 1836, when he ran as the Whig candidate for President in 1836, but was unsuccessful. Harrison ran again in 1840, and was able to attack the Van Buren administration for elitism and a weak economy, whereas he portrayed himself as a common man and war hero. Harrison was successful this time, and was inaugurated on March 4, 1841. Harrison became ill with pneumonia just three weeks after the inauguration, and just one month after his inauguration, Harrison became the first United States President to die in office.

Sources:

“William Henry Harrison.”

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents/williamhenryharrison>

“William Henry Harrison.” <http://bioguide.congress.gov>

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains an invitation to an Inaugural Ball held in honor of President William Henry Harrison at the Masonic and Town Halls of Springfield, IL. The invitation is extended to “Mr. Ethan S. Chapin & Lady”.

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CONTAINER

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CATALOGING INFORMATION

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1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog:
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2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, SC 2974).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.