

Exploring Indiana's Presidential Heritage



By Kim Marie Padgett, Historic Structures Reviewer
Indiana DNR Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology



Since its inception in 1789, the Office of the President of the United States of America has been filled by 45 men in 46 presidencies. The President serves in the nation's highest office as both head of state, head of government, and Commander-In-Chief of the armed forces. Although no U.S. President was born in the State of Indiana, Indiana is home to three National Historic Landmark properties with presidential ties: William Henry Harrison's Mansion "Grouseland" (Knox County), Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial (Spencer County), and Benjamin Harrison Presidential Site (Marion County). While most properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places are of state and local significance, National Historic Landmark status is the highest ranking for historic properties with exceptional national significance to American history.



William Henry Harrison
Photo from *The White House*,
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/william-henry-harrison/>

William Henry Harrison Home ("Grouseland")

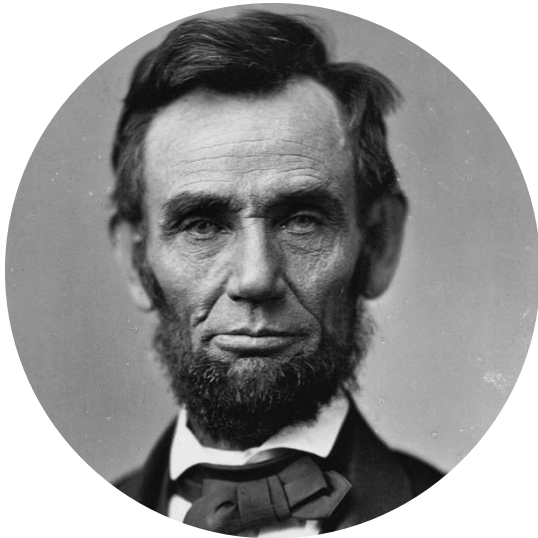
3 W. Scott Street
Vincennes, Indiana 47591
NR-2004

The ninth president of the United States, William Henry Harrison (1773–1841), called Indiana home from 1801 to 1812 while serving as the Territorial Governor of Indiana. Harrison was the son of Benjamin Harrison V, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. The William Henry Harrison Home, known as "Grouseland" [named because of the abundance of grouse in the area] was constructed on 300 acres along the banks of the Wabash River in Vincennes, the capitol of the Indiana Territory at the time. Completed in 1804, Grouseland is a two-story, Federal-style brick mansion that is reminiscent of plantation mansions in Virginia where he spent his childhood. The mansion was constructed with locally sourced materials and is alleged to be the first brick house in the Indiana Territory. Grouseland was the site of numerous highly important meetings with the Native American nations of the old Northwest Territory which would ultimately shape the course of Indiana and American history. William Henry Harrison lived in the mansion until he took command of the Army of the Northwest in the War of 1812. Harrison's military reputation as well as being a defender of the White tide of westward expansion secured his election as the ninth president in 1840. Grouseland remained in the Harrison family until 1850. In 1909, Grouseland was saved from demolition and renovated by the Francis Vigo Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Grouseland was

listed as a National Historic Landmark in 1960 as an excellent example of the Federal-style architecture and for its significant role in American History and listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1966. Grouseland continues to be maintained and rehabilitated as needed. It also operates as a historic house museum with period pieces of furniture along with military and presidential campaign memorabilia. **For more information to plan your visit: grouseland.org.**



Grouseland
Photos from SHAARD



Abraham Lincoln

*Photo from The White House,
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/abraham-lincoln/>*

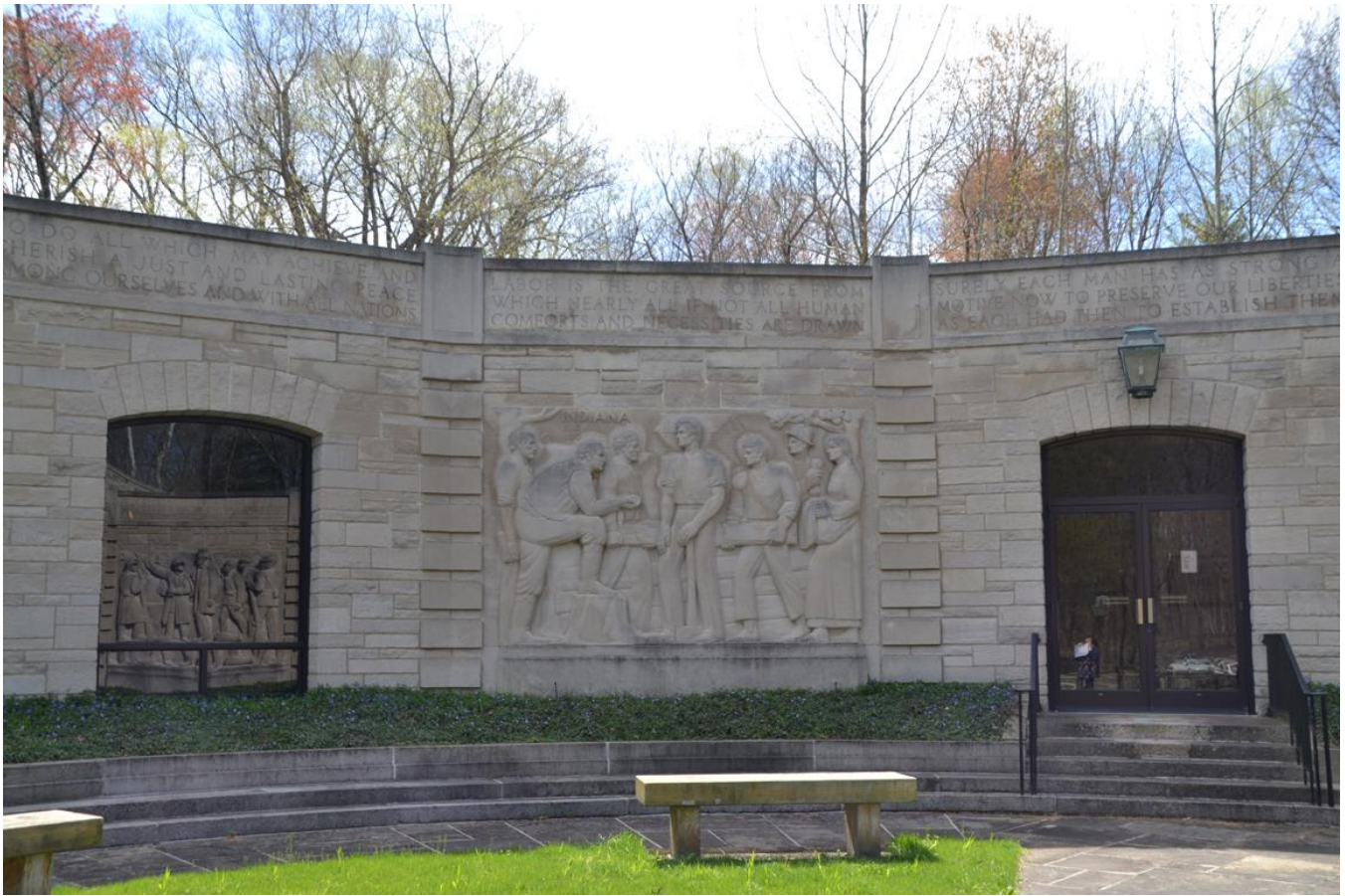
Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial

3027 East South Street

Lincoln City, Indiana 47552

NR-2005

Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865), one of the most prominent presidents in American history, lived most of his adolescent life in Southern Indiana from 1816-1830 before going on to become the 16th president of the United States in 1861. He was born into poverty in Kentucky to frontiersmen parents from Virginia. Lincoln was seven years old around the time Indiana became a state in 1816. It was then his father, Thomas Lincoln, established a pioneer farm in the Southern Indiana wilderness. Lincoln worked long days on the farm and was self-educated by his love of reading. At age ten, Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, died and was buried in the community cemetery near the farm. When Abraham was twenty-one, the family moved to Illinois where he practiced law and forged his political career that gained him national recognition which helped secure his election in 1861 as the 16th president. In 1863, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation which altered the course of the Civil War and American history. Lincoln's advocacy for Black rights was controversial and was arguably a contributing factor to John Wilkes Booth's assassination of Abraham Lincoln in 1865. During the 1920s and 30s, a campaign was launched and gained momentum to memorialize Nancy Hanks Lincoln and the farm where Lincoln grew up. The Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial consists of the Memorial Visitor's Center (with limestone panels carved in bas-relief), Lincoln Spring, Pioneer Cemetery (including Nancy Hanks Lincoln's gravesite), Cabin Foundation Site Memorial, Trail of Twelve Stones (from buildings associated with significant events in Lincoln's life), and the Living Historical Farm. The allee (an alley in a formal garden or park, bordered by trees or bushes) leading to Nancy's burial site was designed by renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead. The Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial was listed as a National Historic Landmark in 1960 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1966 as an artistically and architecturally significant monument to Nancy Hanks Lincoln and its recreation of a frontier farmstead that cultivated one of the most prolific presidents in American history. **For more information to plan your visit:** nps.gov/libo/index.htm.



Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial
Photos from SHAARD



Benjamin Harrison

*Photo from The White House,
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/benjamin-harrison/>*

Benjamin Harrison Home

**1230 North Delaware Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46202**

NR-2066

Benjamin Harrison (1833-1901) was a descendant of the Harrison family of Virginia political dynasty. He was the son of John Scott Harrison [born in Vincennes and served in the United States Congress], the grandson of William Henry Harrison [ninth president of the United States], and great-grandson of Benjamin Harrison V [a signer of the Declaration of Independence]. Benjamin Harrison was born in Ohio but moved to Indianapolis in 1854 to practice law. Harrison became well respected for his political service as an Indiana Supreme Court reporter and U.S. Senator as well as his military service as a breveted Brigadier Civil War General. Upon a successful law career, he built his stately two-and-one-half story Italianate brick home along North Delaware Street between 1874–1875 where he kept a detailed journal of the construction. In 1888, the Harrison home was where he learned of his nomination for the presidency and where he conducted one of the first “front-porch” campaigns securing his election as the 23rd President of the United States from 1889 to 1893. He is the only president to be elected from the State of Indiana. After his presidency, Harrison returned to Indianapolis and died in his home in 1901. He is the only late president laid to rest at Crown Hill Cemetery in Indianapolis. The Benjamin Harrison Home was listed as a National Historic Landmark in 1964 as an excellent example of Italianate architecture and for its significant role in American History. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1966. Prior to this, the Harrison home was purchased by the Arthur Jordan Foundation in 1937. It has been rehabilitated over the years and is maintained as a historic house museum with many of the Harrison family's own furnishings and presidential campaign memorabilia still within the home. **For more information to plan your visit:** bhpsite.org.



Benjamin Harrison Home

Photo from SHAARD

References

- *Benjamin Harrison Presidential Site*, <https://bhpsite.org/>.
- "The Executive Branch." *The White House*, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/our-government/the-executive-branch/>.
- "Grouseland," *Society of Architectural Historians SAH Archipedia*, <https://sah-archipedia.org/buildings/01-083-0003>.
- "The Harrison Family," *Benjamin Harrison Presidential Site*, <https://bhpsite.org/learn/the-harrison-family/>.
- "Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial.", *National Park Service*, <https://www.nps.gov/libo/index.htm>.
- "National Historic Landmarks," *National Park Service*, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalhistoriclandmarks/faqs.htm>
- National Register of Historic Places, Benjamin Harrison Home, Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana, NR-2066, SHAARD.
- National Register of Historic Places, Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial, Lincoln City, Spencer County, NR-2005, SHAARD.
- National Register of Historic Places, William Henry Harrison Home, Vincennes, Knox County, Indiana, NR-2004, SHAARD.
- "William Henry Harrison Home," *National Park Service*, https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/presidents/harrison_grouseland.html.
- "William Henry Harrison," *Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-Henry-Harrison/Political-career>.
- *William Henry Harrison's Grouseland*, <http://grouseland.org/>.
- "William Henry Harrison House, Park & Scott Streets, Vincennes, Knox County, IN," *Historic American Buildings Survey*, *Library of Congress*, <https://loc.gov/pictures/item/in0129/>.