

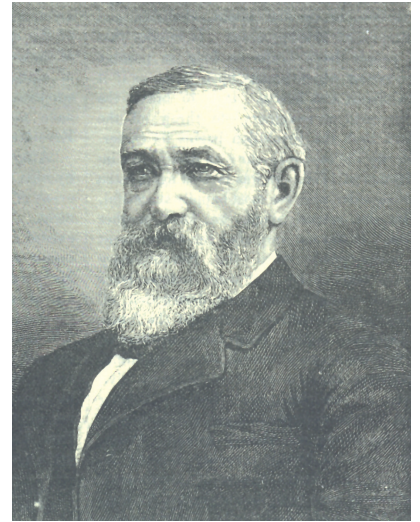
# *Benjamin and Caroline Scott Harrison*



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## *The "Earnest Fellow" and His "Dear Wife": Benjamin and Caroline Scott Harrison*

**B**orn near Cincinnati on August 20, 1833, Benjamin Harrison came from a historically significant family. He was the grandson of William Henry Harrison, the ninth president of the United States. His great-grandfather was John Cleves Symmes, whose land purchase in 1788 led to the establishment of Miami University.



Benjamin Harrison sent this Valentine to Helen Kemper, a student at Oxford Female Institute. The card reads, "Same as the vine grows round the stump, You are my darling sugar lump."

An 1852 graduate of Miami University, Harrison was a member of Phi Delta Theta. Ranking fourth in his class of 16, Harrison spoke on "England's Poor" at his graduation. In 1888, fellow Miami classmate David Swing recalled that Harrison was "an earnest fellow who had no time for joining in any form of mischief or any moonlight serenade."

From 1854 to 1889, Harrison practiced law in Indianapolis. Later, Harrison served as a reporter of the Supreme Court of Indiana from 1860 to 1862 and from 1864 to 1868.

During the Civil War, Harrison fought with the 70th Indiana Volunteer Infantry. He rose through the ranks to become colonel of that regiment.

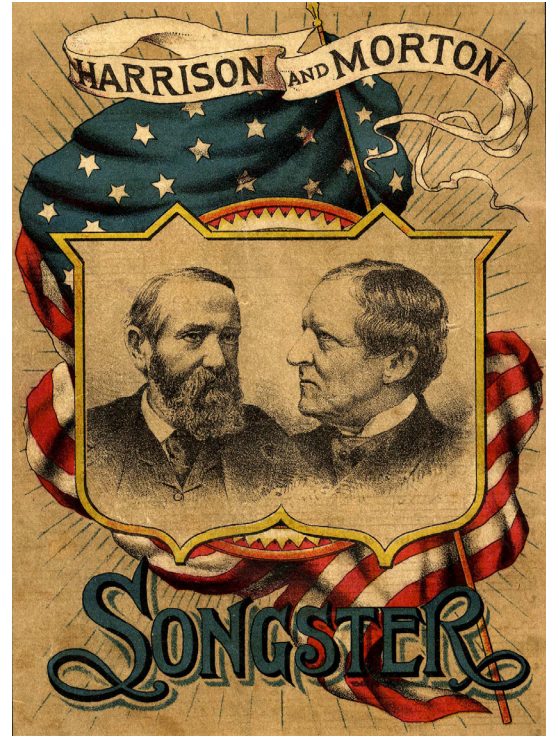


## The Only Miamian to Live in the White House

**H**arrison's political career began as the Republican candidate for Governor of Indiana in 1876. From 1881 to 1887, he served as a United States Senator from Indiana. Nominated for the presidency of the United States at the 1888 Republican Convention, Harrison campaigned by delivering short speeches to delegations from the front porch of his Indianapolis home. Although he received 100,000 fewer popular votes than his opponent, Grover Cleveland, he carried the Electoral College, earning 233 votes to Cleveland's 168 votes. Inaugurated on a rainy March 4, 1889, Harrison served as our 23rd president until 1893. Levi Morton was his vice president.

Harrison's Presidential administration saw the first meeting of the Pan American Congress in 1889, naval expansion, substantial appropriations for internal improvements, and subsidies for steamship lines. President Harrison also signed the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, designed to protect trade and commerce against unlawful restraints and monopolies.

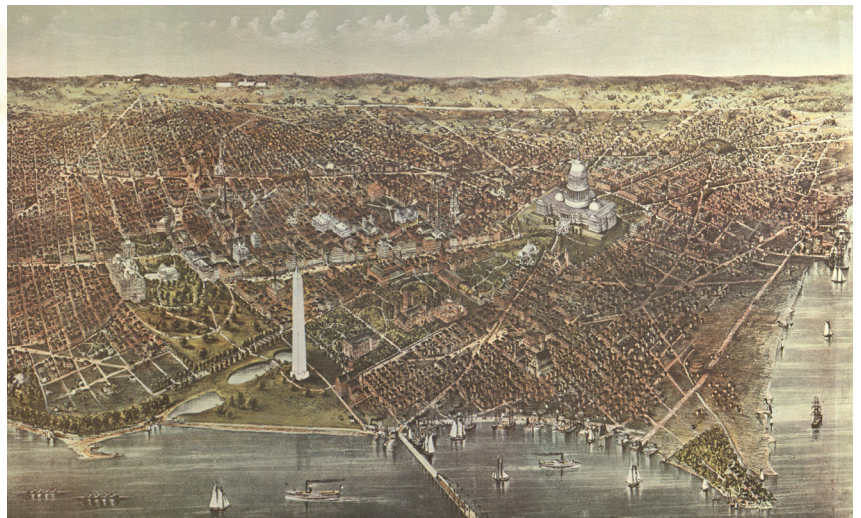
When Harrison ran unsuccessfully for a second term in 1892, his running mate was Whitelaw Reid, an 1856 Miami graduate. After working as a newspaper reporter during the Civil War, Reid became editor of the *New York Tribune* and served as minister to France from 1889 to 1892. This has been the only time in history that two graduates from the same university were candidates for both President and Vice President.



*The Tippecanoe Campaign Songster:  
Harrison and Morton; Sketch of Their Lives  
and Full Text of the Republican Platform.  
Philadelphia: The W.F. Shaw Co., 1888*



Harrison-Reid silk  
handkerchief, 1892



City of Washington, 1890





## Caroline Scott Harrison

**B**orn in Oxford, Ohio in 1832, Caroline Lavinia Scott was the second daughter of John Witherspoon Scott, a teacher and Presbyterian minister who founded the Oxford Female Institute. In 1853, she graduated from that institution with a degree in music. On October 20 of that year, she married Benjamin Harrison. The couple had three children: Russell Benjamin Harrison; Mary Scott Harrison McKee; and an unnamed stillborn daughter.

Two months before her husband's presidential inauguration, Caroline Scott Harrison wrote a letter to David Swing, in which she revealed some of her thoughts about her soon-to-be role as First Lady. She said: "I hardly yet realize this changes that - I am going to make - I feel a good deal like the Doge of Venice on being carried a hostage to Paris and was asked what surprised him most replied - 'Myself in this place.'"

An advocate of local charities, Mrs. Harrison helped to raise funds for the Johns Hopkins University medical school, provided that it admit women. She also served as the first President General of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

In her February 22, 1892 address to the First Continental Congress of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Mrs. Harrison said: "There have been difficulties in the organization, and now obstacles have met the Board at many points. These troubles, perhaps, at the time caused some friction and unpleasant feeling, but in view of the great success that has attended your labors and the more brilliant future which is before you, these can be happily forgotten. It may be in the future that other difficulties shall arise - it would be a rare society if everything should move along smoothly - and I can only commend a little patience, and for a rule of action Pryor's advice to a man in the regulation of his conduct towards his wife:

'Be to her faults a little blind,  
And to her virtues very kind.'"



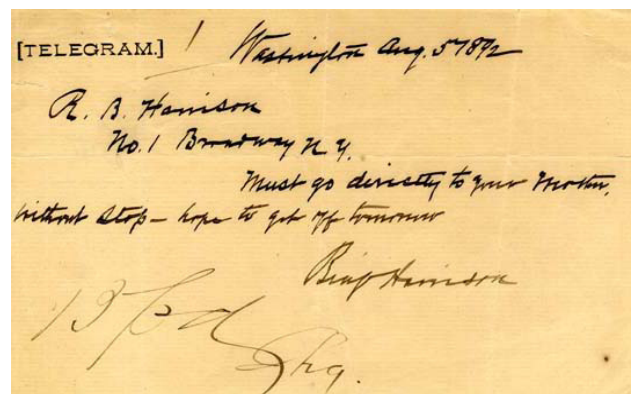
This photograph of Mrs. Harrison and other members of the Daughters of the American Revolution was taken by Matthew Brady on the occasion of the First Continental Congress of the Daughters of the American Revolution.



Known for her elegant hospitality, Mrs. Harrison presided over many White House receptions and dinners. A talented artist, she designed the china used during her husband's administration. It featured an American eagle motif in the center and a border design of open corn ears in cobalt blue and gold. An inner border of 44 small gold stars represented each of the existing American states. Writing to her daughter on April 29, 1890, Mrs. Harrison confessed that her design was "right pretty."

She was also the initial First Lady to personally plan and supervise the cleaning, renovation and restoration of the White House.

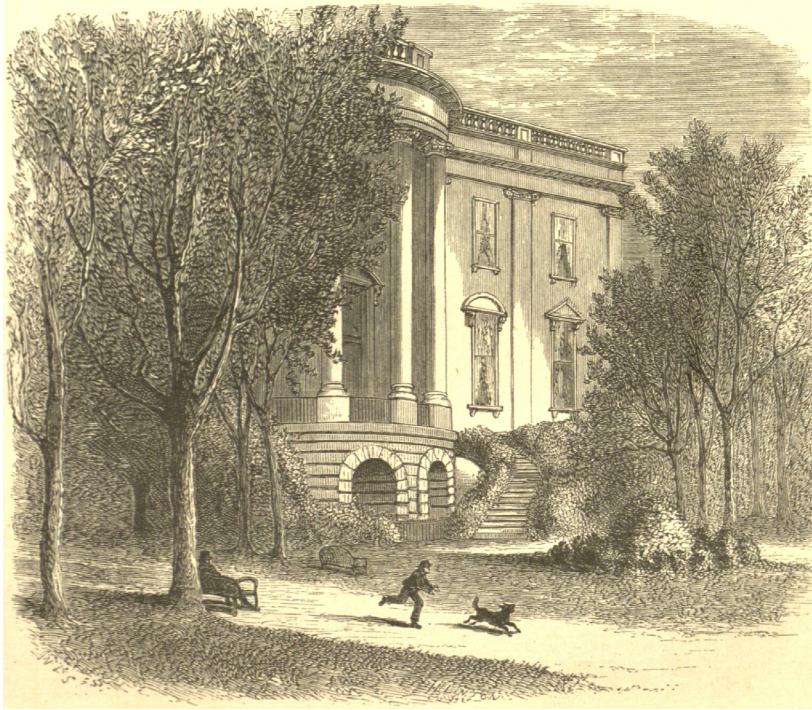
During Harrison's 1892 campaign against Grover Cleveland, First Lady Caroline Harrison became ill with tuberculosis. Following her death on Oct. 25, 1892, Harrison used traditional black-bordered mourning stationery



Telegram to Russell Harrison, August 5, 1892

for a New Year's Day 1893 letter to his son. "It is too bad that our last New Year's in the White House should be spent like this," President Harrison wrote.

After a service in the East Room of the White House, Mrs. Harrison was buried from her church in Indianapolis. Mary Harrison McKee acted as hostess for her father in the last months of his term.



"The White House Grounds" from *Picturesque America, or the land we live in* by William Cullen Bryant. (New York: Appleton, 1872-74)

### Returning to Indianapolis

After Harrison left the White House in 1893, he returned to Indianapolis to practice law. On April 6, 1896, he married Mary Scott Lord Dimmick, Caroline Scott Harrison's widowed niece and former secretary. They had one daughter, Elizabeth Harrison, born February 21, 1897.

Harrison died on March 13, 1901. Twenty-five years Harrison's junior, Mary Lord Harrison survived her husband by nearly 47 years, dying on January 5, 1948.

On October 27, 1908, a monument to Benjamin Harrison was erected in Indianapolis at the south edge of University Park, opposite the United States Court House and Post Office. A military parade and addresses were followed by a poem by James Whitcomb Riley, titled "The Tribute of His Home." The poem's final lines read:

"We knew him – long before the world's applause  
And after – as a neighbor, kind and good,  
Our common friend and fellow-citizen."



Photography of the Harrison monument from *The Addresses: On the Occasion of the Unveiling at Indianapolis, Indiana, October Twenty-Seventh, Nineteen Hundred Eight of the Statue of Benjamin Harrison* (Indianapolis: Hollenbeck Press, 1909)