

**ADDRESS ON THE LIFE
AND CHARACTER OF GEN.
WILLIAM HENRY
HARRISON**

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Address on the life and character of Gen. William Henry Harrison by Richard S. Coxe

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RICHARD S. COXE

**ADDRESS ON THE LIFE
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WILLIAM HENRY
HARRISON**

ADDRESS
ON THE LIFE AND CHARACTER
OF
GEN. WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON,
LATE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,
A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTION FOR
THE PROMOTION OF SCIENCE:

DELIVERED BEFORE THE INSTITUTION.

BY

RICHARD S. COXE.

JUNE 21, 1841.

WASHINGTON: ↵
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1841.

At a stated meeting of the NATIONAL INSTITUTION FOR THE PROMOTION OF SCIENCE, held on the 14th June, 1841, the following Letter was read:

PURVA FORCE, Esq., *Vice President of the National Institution:*

SIR: I have had the honor to receive your note, requesting me to prepare and deliver before the National Institution, at as early a day as practicable, an Address on the Life and Character of the late President of the United States, WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON, an Honorary Member of the Institution. I accept the appointment, and will, with great pleasure, undertake the performance of the duty assigned me. The selection of the time and place are submitted entirely to the pleasure of the Institution, and I shall be prepared whenever it may suit their convenience.

Very respectfully, yours,

RICHARD S. COXE.

May 15, 1841.

It was thereupon,

Resolved, That a Committee of three members be appointed to take charge of the above matter, to fix time and place for the delivery of the Address, and to make all necessary arrangements.

Messrs. B. O. TAYLOR, ROBERT LAWRENCE, and WILLIAM TENNELL, were appointed said Committee.

July 12th, 1841. The above Committee reported that they had discharged all the duties devolving upon them by their appointment, and moved the following Resolutions, which were unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That the thanks of the National Institution for the Promotion of Science, be presented to RICHARD S. COXE, Esq., for the great gratification it received in the delivery of his admirable Address before it, upon the Life and Character of General WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON, late President of the United States, and an Honorary Member of this Institution.

Resolved, That RICHARD S. COXE, Esq., be requested to furnish this Institution with a copy of his Address for publication.

A D D R E S S .

THE enlightened nations of antiquity were accustomed to honor the memory and to celebrate the achievements of their illustrious dead. The personal appearance of the departed worthies was preserved in the productions of the painter and the sculptor, which embodied a faithful resemblance of their forms and features. Their characters were delineated and their exploits recited by distinguished orators and cherished friends. The poet strung his harp to sound their praise, and the nation, by some public and solemn ceremonial, testified its sense of gratitude to the common benefactor. In thus preserving and fostering the recollections of departed excellence, the survivors were stimulated to imitate the example and to emulate the virtues which had been thus recognised and thus honored; and personal ambition for fame and distinction was guided to seek its gratification in those patriotic pursuits, which aimed at the aggrandizement and the glory of the commonwealth.

A similar practice has not generally prevailed in modern times. The principles of our nature, however, in which it originated, still continue to sway the human heart, and when fit occasions present them-

selves, it is not less a debt of gratitude which we discharge towards those who in their generation conferred signal benefits upon their country and upon their race, than a positive advantage to the nation thus to exhibit examples of public and private virtue for the admiration and imitation of posterity.

The voice which resounded throughout our land has proclaimed, in language which cannot be misunderstood, that such an occasion has arisen. No event has occurred in our brief national history, so imposing in all its circumstances, so impressive in all its details, so calculated to rouse and fix attention, as the death of **WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON**, late President of these United States. A long life, zealously devoted to the service of the public, had endeared him to the nation; his private and social virtues had won for him the affections of numerous family and immediate connexions, and gathered round him a large circle of personal friends. The incidents of his career had made his name and history familiar to the community, and awakened a deep and pervading interest in every hamlet of our land. Throughout the vast regions of the West, where his character had been mainly formed, where his life had been chiefly spent, and where, consequently, his private worth was more extensively known, and his public services were most highly appreciated, scarce an individual could be found, who participated in the general prosperity, but could trace the comforts which surrounded him and his family to the wise, humane, and disinterested policy of the individual to whom, by universal consent, has been awarded the proud

and merited appellation of being "the father of the land system, and the poor man's friend." No mother, while relating to her children, or hearing from her seniors, the recital of the bloody and inhuman ravages with which the youthful West had been so often and so widely devastated, as she poured out her thanksgiving to Heaven that her offspring had been spared from the tomahawk and the scalping-knife, but mingled with these outpourings of heartfelt gratitude a prayer for blessings upon him who, under God, had been the chief instrument in affording safety and protection from these ruthless barbarities.

The closing scenes of this eventful life were passed upon so lofty an eminence, and possessed so engrossing an interest, that the nation, nay the world, had been the spectators and the auditors. In themselves they had been so conspicuous and so extraordinary as to arrest the attention of mankind. The catastrophe was so sudden and so astounding, so unexpected yet so solemn, as to overwhelm us with astonishment and with awe. Within the brief period of six months, General Harrison had been drawn from the shades of a domestic and secluded life; had been the leader in one of the most animated and stupendous political struggles which had ever been witnessed—the entire country the scene of the contest, the whole nation the combatants, and the civilized world the anxious spectators. In this great contest he was eminently successful, and the "earthquake voice of victory" resounded throughout the land. Assembled thousands, congregated from the farthest extremes of this expanded empire, witnessed