



Zachary Taylor

12th President

Born: Nov. 24, 1784

Birthplace: Orange Co., VA

Died: July 9, 1850

Burial Site: Louisville, KY

Spouse: Margaret Smith

Occupation: Soldier

Political Party: Whig

Term: 1849-1850

Vice President: Millard Fillmore

Zachary Taylor, the nation's 12th president, was one of only two Whigs to be elected to serve in the White House. Like Harrison, the only other Whig to hold office, Taylor was a soldier. He was also a farmer.

Born in Orange Co., VA, on Nov. 24, 1784, he was taken to the "new frontier" where he grew up in the remote section of Kentucky.

A Revolutionary patriot, Taylor fought the Indians first along the Wabash and then in the northwest and in Florida. The Mexican War made Zachary a hero after president Polk sent him to Texas to hold the shores of the Rio Grande River. Taylor held it but war resulted and with inferior numbers, "Old Rough and Ready" won battle after battle and virtually ended the war with major victories at Monterey and Buena Vista against Santa Ana. However, president Polk was disturbed by General Taylor's informal habits of command and his Whig Party leanings, and kept him in northern Mexico while sending General Winfield Scott to capture Mexico City.

Taylor tried to run his administration in the same rule-of-thumb fashion that he had fought Indians. He wanted people to determine their own destinies.

After 16 months in office, Taylor fell ill after participating in ceremonies at the Washington Monument and within five days he was dead. He was buried near Louisville, KY.