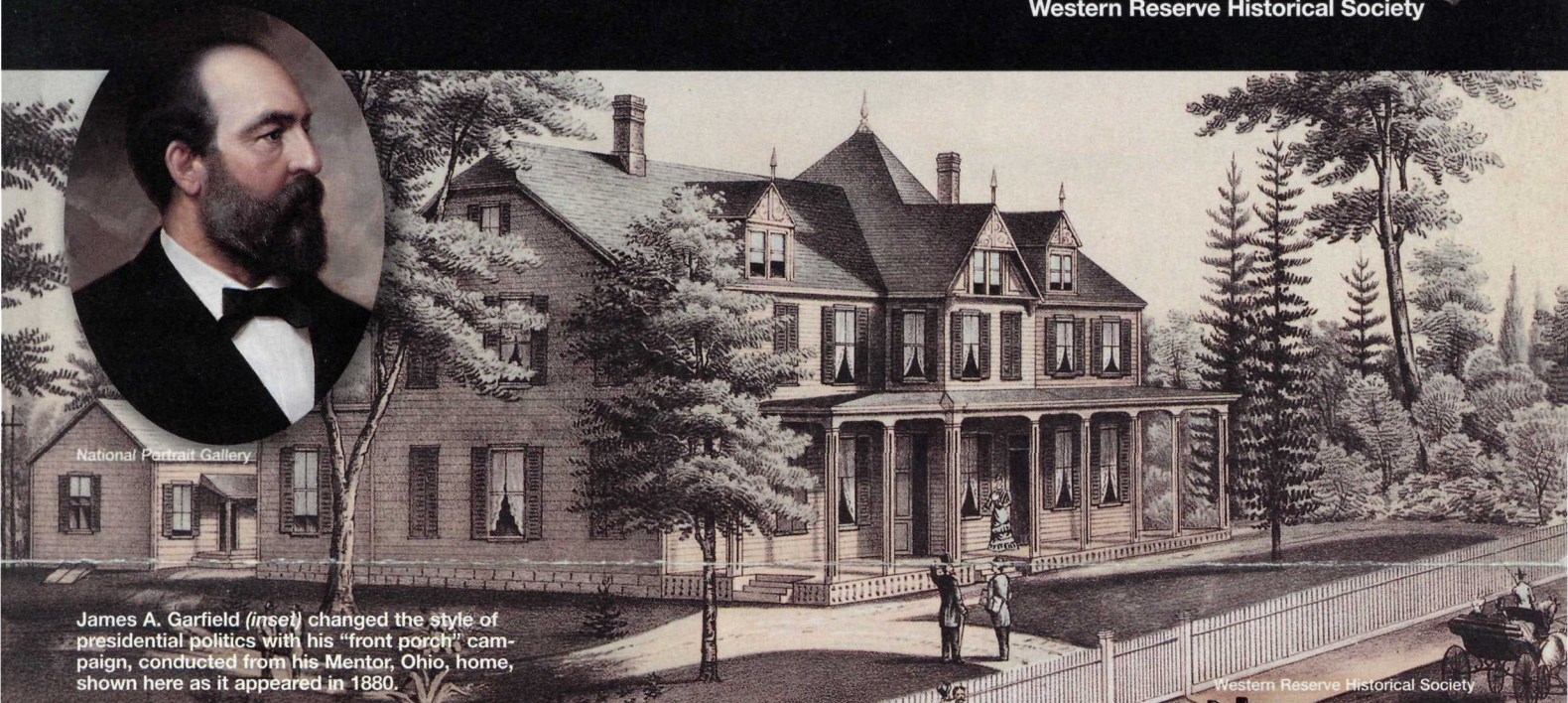


James A. Garfield

National Historic Site
Ohio

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Western Reserve Historical Society

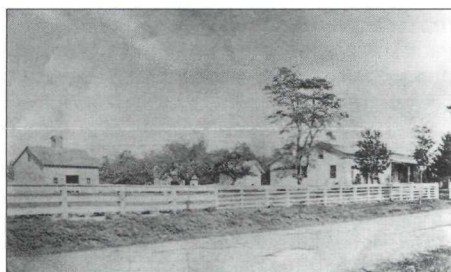


James A. Garfield (inset) changed the style of presidential politics with his "front porch" campaign, conducted from his Mentor, Ohio, home, shown here as it appeared in 1880.

From Log Cabin to White House



James A. Garfield and Lucretia Rudolph at the time of their engagement in 1858.
Western Reserve Historical Society



James Garfield purchased the Mentor farm from Harriet Dickey in November 1876. In 1880 he enlarged the main house from the modest one-and-a-half story building with nine rooms seen here to the 20-room structure shown on the cover.

Hiram College



The Garfields about 1880. The President's mother, Eliza Ballou Garfield, to whom he was devoted, is at far right.

Lake County Historical Society

By the time of his death at the age of 49 in 1881, James Abram Garfield had led a remarkably varied life. He had been teacher, college principal, minister, state legislator, lawyer, Civil War general, Congressman, U.S. Senator-elect, and President of the United States. Born in Orange Township, Ohio, on November 19, 1831, he was the youngest of five children born to Abram and Eliza Ballou Garfield, who had carved a farm out of the wilderness frontier of Ohio's Western Reserve. When James was almost two, his father died, leaving the family poverty-stricken and struggling to survive. At age 16, after failing to become a sailor, James took a job as a canal boat tow boy on the Ohio canals. Dreamy and clumsy, he often fell into the water. His canal career ended abruptly after six weeks when he contracted malaria and had to return home.

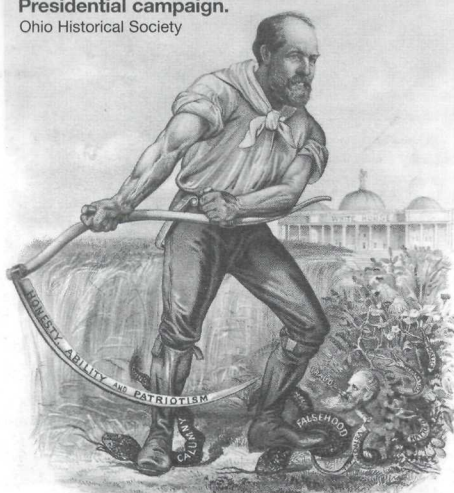
In 1851, after spending a year in Geauga Seminary in Chester, Ohio, and being baptized a Disciple of Christ, James entered the Western Reserve Eclectic Institute (later Hiram College) in Hiram, Ohio. In 1854 he entered Williams College in Massachusetts, where he further developed his oratorical skills and graduated with honors two years later. Garfield's speaking ability helped him achieve leadership positions, including being appointed principal of the Eclectic Institute in 1858. That same year, he became an ordained minister and married Lucretia Rudolph. In 1859 he was elected to the Ohio senate on an antislavery platform. While in the senate, he studied law and was admitted to the bar on the eve of the Civil War.

When the Civil War began in 1861, Garfield recruited, trained, and became lieutenant colonel of the 42nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Given brigade command early in 1862, he won minor victories in Kentucky, for which he was promoted to brigadier general. He participated in the Battle of Shiloh, Tenn., and the subsequent advance on Corinth, Miss. In the fall of 1862 his military accomplishments led to his election to the U.S. House of Representatives. Congress did not meet until December 1863, so he remained in the army. Serving as chief of staff to Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans from February 1863 through the Chickamauga campaign, Garfield earned the rank of major general.

Garfield's congressional career began December 7, 1863, and lasted 17 years. As head of the House Appropriations Committee from 1871-75, he excelled at managing the country's finances, reducing government spending, and fighting inflation. He pushed for civil service reform to end the worst abuses of the patronage system. A scholar at heart, he sought to create a Department of Education and served as a regent of the Smithsonian Institution. Elected to the U.S. Senate in January 1880, he was asked to nominate John Sherman for President at the Republican National Convention in June. When the convention deadlocked, Garfield suddenly found himself the nominee. In November he was elected 20th President of the United States. His term, however, was cut short on July 2, 1881, when he was shot by Charles Guiteau, a deranged political fanatic. He died September 19.

A Career Timeline

This Currier & Ives political cartoon portrays candidate Garfield as a farmer cutting away weeds of waste and corruption in his 1880 Presidential campaign.
Ohio Historical Society



FARMER GARFIELD
Cutting a Swath to the White House.

1831 Born Nov. 19, the last U.S. President to be born in a log cabin.

1848 Works as canal boat tow boy on Ohio canals for 6 weeks.

1849 Enters Geauga Seminary in Chester, Ohio, Mar. 6.

1851 Enters Western Reserve Eclectic Institute in Hiram, Ohio, Aug. 25.

1854 Graduates from Eclectic Institute, June 22. Enrolls in Williams College, Williamstown, Mass., July 11.

1856 Graduates from Williams College, Aug. 7.

1858 Becomes principal of Eclectic Institute, May. Ordained as minister, Sept. 18. Marries Lucretia Rudolph, Nov. 11.

1859 Elected to Ohio state senate, Oct. 11.

1861 Admitted to bar, Feb. Civil War begins, Apr. 12. Appointed Lt. col., 42nd Ohio Infantry, mid-August.

1862 Wins battles at Middle Creek, Ky., Jan. 10, and Pound Gap, Ky., Mar. 16. Promoted brig. gen., Jan. 11. At Battle of Shiloh, Tenn., Apr. 7. Elected to Congress, Oct.

1863 Appointed chief of staff to Gen. William S. Rosecrans, Feb. At Battle of Chickamauga, Ga., Sept. 18-20. Promoted maj. gen., Sept. 19. Resigns from Army, Dec. 5. Takes seat in 38th Congress, Dec. 7.

1865 First appointed to the Smithsonian Institution Board of Regents.

1871-75 Heads House Committee on Appropriations.

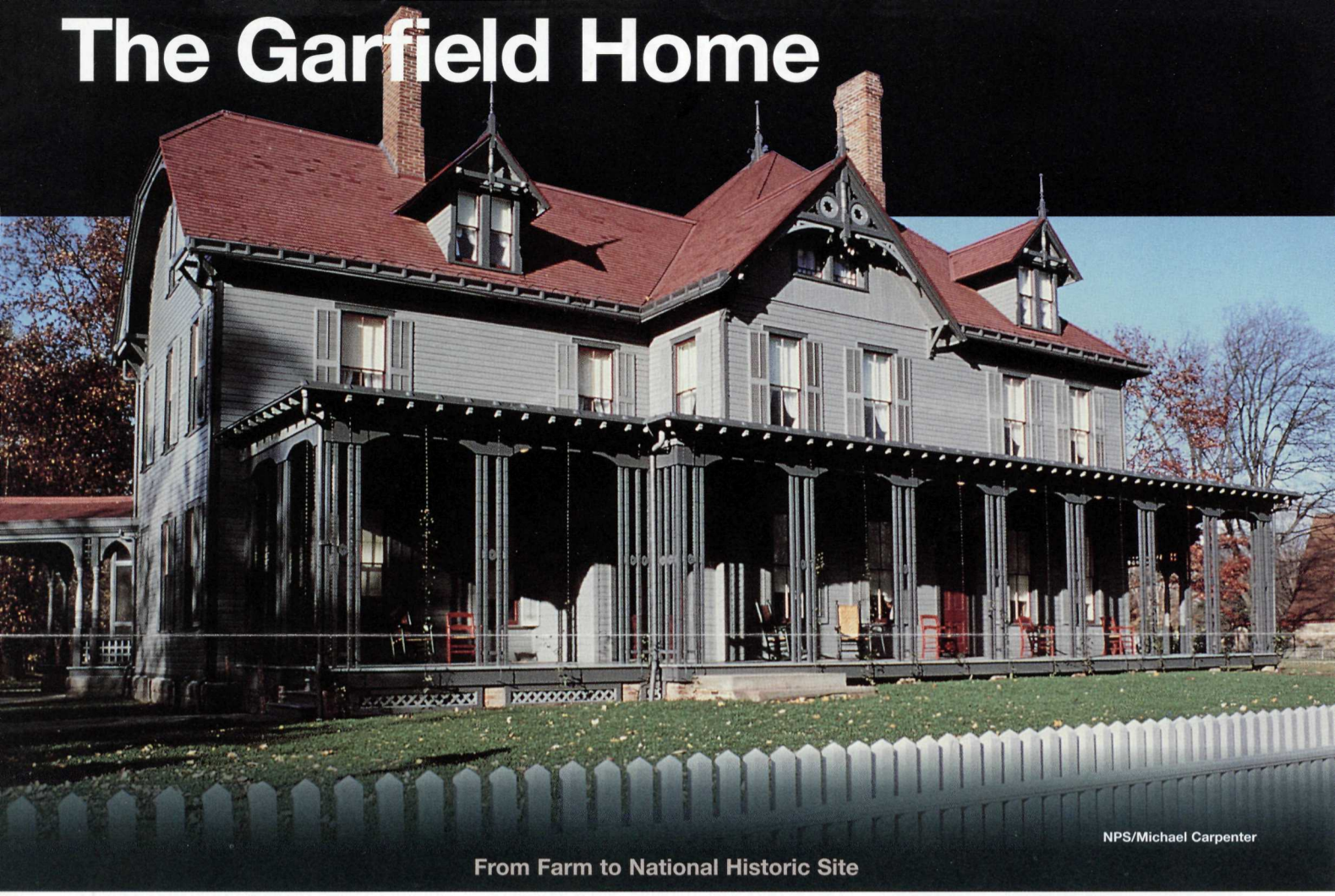
1880 Elected to U.S. Senate, Jan. 6. Nominated for President, June 8. Front porch campaign at Lawnfield, July-Nov. Elected President, Nov. 2.

1881 Inaugurated President, Mar. 4. Shot by Charles Guiteau, July 2. Dies in Elberon, N.J., Sept. 19. Buried in Lake View Cemetery, Cleveland, Ohio, Sept. 26.

Garfield funeral memorial ribbon
Smithsonian Institution



The Garfield Home



NPS/Michael Carpenter

From Farm to National Historic Site



James Garfield called his wife Lucretia "one of the coolest and best-balanced women I ever saw." After his death, she remained in mourning the rest of her life and actively made Lawnfield the focus of extended family life.



When James A. Garfield purchased the Dickey farm in November 1876, he hoped it would become a place "where I can put my boys at work, and teach them farming" and "where I can touch the earth and get some strength from it." Even though well-located between a major road and a railroad line, the property had been neglected and was in need of repairs, which Garfield set about to make. By the spring of 1880, he had transformed the small nine-room, one-and-a-half-story farm house into an impressive 20-room, two-and-a-half-story structure and improved the surrounding landscape.

During the summer of 1880, the farm, which reporters named "Lawnfield," became the backdrop for Garfield's successful bid for the Presidency. It was here that he broke from the tradition of presidential candidates remaining quiet during the election process and began a precedent-setting "front porch" campaign that paved the way for future candidates to more actively seek the Presidency. Countless delegations of dignitaries, students, well-wishers, and political supporters came by horse, buggy, or train to hear the Republican Party's best speaker talk on subjects such as patriotism, protective tariffs, labor, and other issues of the day. Garfield maintained an office, known as the "snuggery," in the main house for private meetings and conversations. The center of activity, however, was a small personal library building that Garfield converted into a campaign headquarters and equipped with a temporary telegraph to send and receive messages.

Following the President's death, Lucretia and her family were able to live comfortably and make substantial improvements to Lawnfield, thanks to financial contributions from the American public. Lucretia supervised the transformation of Lawnfield into a splendid country estate, a family sanctuary where she could enjoy her children and grandchildren, and a monument to her martyred husband's memory. In 1885-86 she had a wing added to the main house for a memorial library and vault to safeguard her husband's numerous books and papers. She also oversaw construction of a tenant house (1885) for use as a farm overseer's residence; a gas-holder (1885) to provide fuel for cooking, heating, and lighting; a chicken coop (1893); a carriage house (1893); and a windmill (1894) to supply water to all parts of the farm. She also relocated the 1877 horse barn, one of the few structures remaining from James Garfield's time, and the granary, which most likely dates to when the Dickeys owned the farm.

Lucretia Garfield survived her husband by 37 years, dying at her winter residence in southern California on March 13, 1918, at the age of 85. Following her death, Lawnfield remained in family ownership until 1936 when, because of increasing cost of upkeep, it was donated to the Western Reserve Historical Society to be maintained as a historical shrine to the memory of James A. Garfield. Congress authorized Lawnfield as a national historic site in 1980. Today it is administered jointly by the Western Reserve Historical Society and the National Park Service.



Garfield once kept books and papers in the building he used as his 1880 campaign office (above, top). His books are now in the Memorial Library (above) that Lucretia had added to the main house in 1885-86. NPS/Michael Carpenter

Visiting Lawnfield



James A. Garfield National Historic Site is located on Mentor Avenue (U.S. 20) in Mentor, Ohio, approximately 25 miles east of Cleveland. It is open from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday and from noon-5 p.m. Sunday. The site is closed Memorial Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, December 24 & 25, and January 1. For information, write 8095 Mentor Avenue, Mentor, OH 44060; call 440-255-8722; or www.nps.gov/jaga on the Internet.

The site consists of the main house and its memorial library, the 1880 campaign office, the 1893 carriage house, the pump house/windmill, tenant house, gasholder, chicken coop, granary,

and the 1877 horse barn. Most of the furnishings and personal effects in the main house are original Garfield family pieces.

The visitor center is in the carriage house and contains exhibits and artifacts relating to Garfield's life and career. It also contains a bookstore and an auditorium featuring an 18-minute video on the life and times of our 20th President. The visitor center is wheelchair accessible. Admission is free.

Main house tours run regularly, but may be limited. Call for schedule. Admission is \$6 for adults, \$5 for seniors, and \$4 for children 6-12. Children under 6 and

Western Reserve Historical Society members receive free admission. National Park Service pass holders pay a \$3 fee. Groups require reservations and group rates are available. House tours are largely wheelchair accessible.

Nearby Garfield Sites

The James A. Garfield Birthplace site in Moreland Hills is about 25 miles east of Cleveland near Moreland Hills City Hall on Ohio 91 about three miles north of Ohio 422. The Moreland Hills Historical Society maintains a replica cabin and a trail leading to the site of the birthplace cabin. For information about the site, call Moreland Hills City Hall at 440-248-1188.

The James A. Garfield Monument stands in Lake View Cemetery about 6 miles east of downtown Cleveland at 12316 Euclid Avenue. It is open daily from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., April 1 through November 15. For information, call 216-421-2665.

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Garfield Monument
Lake View Cemetery