



The Garfield Telegraph

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Fall Events at James A. Garfield NHS to feature Edgar Allan Poe, U.S. Mint

James A. Garfield National Historic Site has a number of exciting events planned for the autumn of 2011. These events will help us conclude a year in which we began to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Civil War (1861-65), marked the 130th anniversaries of James A. Garfield's presidency and death (1881), and celebrated President Garfield's 180th birthday (1831).

On October 26-27, the site welcomes back David Keltz, the nation's preeminent Edgar Allan Poe living historian, for "An Evening with Edgar Allan Poe." Keltz last performed at James A. Garfield NHS in October 2010.

Keltz will perform twice each evening (6 p.m. and 8 p.m.) as Poe, still America's most famous writer of the macabre over 150 years after his death. Keltz will recite several Poe stories and poems from memory at each performance. Shows will be at 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. each night. **TICKETS ARE REQUIRED AND ARE ON SALE NOW. TICKET PRICE IS \$15.00 PER PERFORMANCE.**

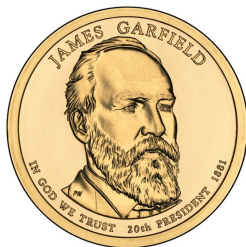
James A. Garfield was a fan of Poe's stories. In fact, several original Poe volumes are on the shelves of the Memorial



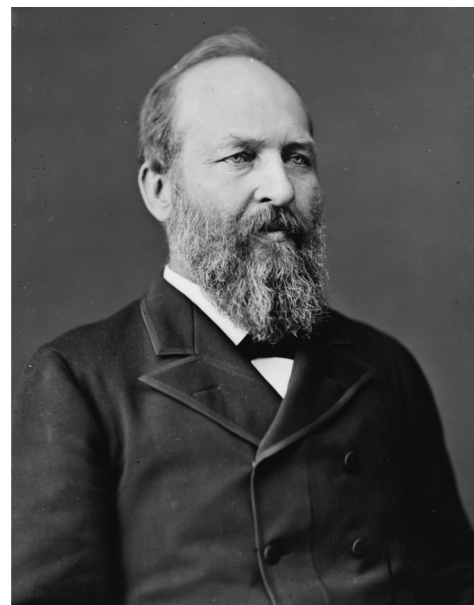
Library in the Garfield home at James A. Garfield National Historic Site. This program is made possible by a generous grant from the Lake County Visitors Bureau Arts and Culture Fund.



On Thursday, November 17, the U.S. Mint will visit the site to officially unveil and release the James A. Garfield Presidential \$1 coin. The Garfield coin will be the 20th presidential coin released by the U.S. Mint (which makes sense since Garfield was the 20th president!). The official unveiling ceremony will begin at 10 a.m. and is open to the public.



Related events will include a coin show at the Eastlake Radisson, a convocation at Hiram College, essay and coin design contests for school children, a hike from Garfield's birthplace in Moreland Hills to Lakeview Cemetery, and more!



Welcome to the first issue of *The Garfield Telegraph*

Thanks for picking up the very first issue of *The Garfield Telegraph*, the official newsletter of James A. Garfield National Historic Site. We plan to publish the *Telegraph* about four times per year and use it to share information about special events and programs, Garfield history, and James A. Garfield National Historic Site news. Please let us know what you think of the *Telegraph* by e-mailing us at jaga_interpretation@nps.gov. We'd also love to hear any ideas you have for articles or things you'd like to see in future issues. Thanks, and enjoy!

Q & A with Candice Millard, author of *The Destiny of the Republic*

Author of the new book about President Garfield spoke at James A. Garfield NHS on Thursday, Sept. 22

What led you to choose James A. Garfield as a subject?

Before I began this book, I knew very little about President Garfield, beyond the fact that he had been shot after just four months in office. I was interested in Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone. While researching Bell, I learned that he had turned his own life upside down trying to help save Garfield's life. I was fascinated that a genius like Bell would go to such lengths to help another man, even a President. So I wondered what kind of man Garfield was. What I learned was what Bell must have known: that Garfield was one of the most extraordinary men ever elected President.

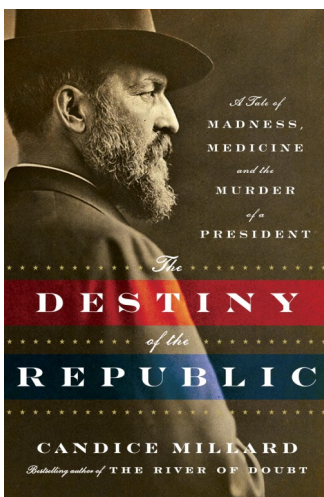
What did you learn during your research that surprised you the most?

At the top of the list has to be the fact that Garfield had not even been a candidate when he won the Republican nomination in 1880. More than that, he didn't *want* to be a candidate. The powerful and eloquent speech he gave at the convention, and his nomination in the wake of it—despite his fervent objections—is one of the most incredible stories I've ever heard.

Based on your research, who do you think *really* killed Garfield: Charles Guiteau or the doctors?

Garfield would have lived had his doctors simply left him alone. The bullet that tore through his back didn't hit his spinal cord or any vital organs. Far more lethal than Guiteau's bullet was the infection Garfield's own doctors introduced several

times a day, every day, for more than two months as they inserted unsterilized fingers and instruments in the President's back, searching for the bullet. Garfield's slow, painful death was entirely preventable.



If you could sit down and talk with James A. Garfield, what's the first question you'd ask him?

I can think of few things I'd rather do than have a conversation with James Garfield. Although I could ask him anything from classical literature to politics and farming, I think I would begin with his memories of his childhood. Not only was I born and raised in Ohio myself, but I'm fascinated that a fatherless child raised in desperate poverty could not only become President, but would have such a clear understanding of his own values and character that he could emerge from 18 years of public service unchanged.

What would you ask Garfield's assassin Charles Guiteau if you could talk to him?

Although Guiteau was mentally ill, he was highly intelligent and very articulate, and



he loved to talk about himself. He wrote an autobiography, which was published in the *New York Herald*, and he gave interview after interview from the District Jail. What no one asked him was if he understood not his own place in history—which he had given a great deal of thought—but Garfield's. Did he ever wonder what the President might have accomplished had he lived?

Some historians have called Garfield one of the most prepared men ever elected President. What do you think contributed to his readiness to assume the nation's highest office?

Obviously Garfield's 18 years in Congress, as well as his service during the Civil War, gave him a great deal of political and leadership experience. I think that what distinguishes him from the great majority of Presidents who came before and after him, however, is the fact that he had never yearned for the Presidency, had never had, in his words, "Presidential fever." As a result, he had not sacrificed anything—his relationship with his children, his ethics, his ideals—in pursuit of the White House. He was his own man, and I think that fact alone would have made him a highly effective President.

Candice Millard's *The Destiny of the Republic* is published by Doubleday. It is available for purchase in the Eastern National bookstore at James A. Garfield National Historic Site.



Austin Reynolds (3rd from right) with family members and friends.

Local Eagle Scout candidate repairs, repaints fence at James A. Garfield National Historic Site

Austin Reynolds, a member of local Boy Scout troop 885, recently completed his Eagle Scout project at James A. Garfield National Historic Site. The project consisted of making major repairs to the site's fence that runs in front of the Garfield home along Mentor Avenue. The fence is non-historic, but it is an important feature of the site's cultural landscape because it recreates a fence erected by the Garfield family during James A. Garfield's 1880 presidential campaign. Austin organized the project, worked with Commonwealth Lumber and Sherwin-Williams Paints to acquire materials, and supervised a work crew that spent about a month replacing rotten sections of fencing



and giving the entire fence a fresh coat of paint. Austin, his family and friends, and many fellow Boy Scouts contributed about 500 service hours to complete the project. Austin, 17, is a senior at Willoughby South High School. He will now submit final paperwork and should receive the prestigious Eagle Scout badge sometime in the next few months.

"We're very fortunate to have had Austin take on fixing our fence as his Eagle Scout project," said site Superintendent Sherda Williams. "This is a project we've wanted to address for quite some time. Austin and his crew did an amazing job, and their work is very much appreciated. It will be of great benefit to our visitors and the National Park Service for years to come."

Way to go, Austin!

A Message from the Superintendent

Greetings, and thank you for picking up this first issue of our new park newsletter! We're very excited to get this important park communications tools into your hands to let you know about what's happening at James A. Garfield National Historic Site.

James A. Garfield National Historic Site has been part of the National Park System since December 1980. Until early 2008, the site was jointly administered by the Western Reserve Historical Society and the National Park Service (NPS). Only for the last four years has the NPS fully operated the site. We are therefore still in the process of fully integrating NPS standards, policies, and best practices into our daily operations. A park newsletter is one very important way that we let the public know about upcoming events, changes in operating hours, and other important information you need to make your visit to the site as educational and enjoyable as possible.

Thank you once again for your interest in James A. Garfield National Historic Site. Enjoy *The Garfield Telegraph*, and we look forward to seeing you at the site very soon!

-Sherda K. Williams

For more information about James A. Garfield NHS:

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