

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 17, 2022

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS PROCLAIM THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2022 “JAMES A. GARFIELD MONTH” IN LAKE COUNTY

PAINESVILLE, OH, February 17, 2022 — The Lake County Board of Commissioners has proclaimed February as “James A. Garfield” month in Lake County. “It is an honor to dedicate this month to the life and legacy of James A. Garfield. We are proud to recognize Lake County as his home for several years until his untimely death,” said Commissioner John Hamercheck.

As the last of the log cabin presidents, James A. Garfield was born in Cuyahoga County in 1831 and made Ohio his home for all but his college years. In 1876, while serving in the U.S. House of Representatives, he and his wife Lucretia purchased their farm in Mentor, referred to as Lawnfield, named for the many reporters camped out on the lawns around the house. Shortly thereafter, Garfield began to expand their home to accommodate their five children who they taught how to farm. During a three year period, the home was enlarged from nine rooms to 20, a porch was added onto the front, and the interior was refurnished.

At the Republican Convention in June 1880, James A. Garfield won the nomination for the U.S. Presidency after being considered a “dark horse” nominee. He conducted a large part of his successful and precedent-setting campaign right from what would become his famous front porch. He converted a small building, formerly used as his personal library, into his campaign headquarters equipped with a temporary telegraph that sent and received messages, including the results of that election. In November 1880, after serving nine terms in the U.S. House of Representatives and by a margin of only 10,000 popular votes, he became the 20th President of the United States until his assassination 200 days later. On July 2, 1881 he was shot twice from behind by an embittered attorney who had been rejected for a foreign service post. President Garfield died on September 19, 1881 as a result of his wounds.

“The life of James Garfield was tragically cut short, but beyond impactful. From humble beginnings, President Garfield attacked political corruption and changed the United States and the entire world in his roles as Minister, Professor, State Senator, Congressman, General and President. That is why his fellow Lake Countians admire President Garfield to this day,” said Commissioner John Plecnik.

“President Garfield is Lake County’s favorite son,” remarked Todd Arrington, Site Manager at the James A. Garfield National Historic Site in Mentor. He added, “We are so proud to be part of the Lake County community. It is our honor to commemorate and interpret his life, career, and legacy. We thank the Lake County Commissioners for designating February as James A. Garfield month”.

“If you haven’t had the opportunity to visit the James A. Garfield historical site in Mentor, please take some time to do so. More than 80% of the furnishings in the home belonged to the Garfield family in the 1882 and it includes the first presidential library,” said Commissioner Ron Young. “It is truly fascinating to step back in time and experience this slice of history.”

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