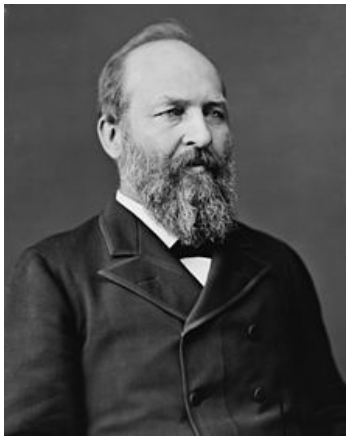

President	James A. Garfield
Chronological Order	20
Life Span	1831-1881
Home State	Ohio
Elected	1880
Political Party	Republican
Vice President	Chester A. Arthur
First Lady	Lucretia Rudolph Garfield
Children	5 sons, 2 daughters
Physical Attributes	6' tall, full beard, light brown hair, light blue eyes
Undergraduate Education	Western Reserve Eclectic Institute, Williams College
Military Service	Major General in Union Army during the Civil War
Profession	College Professor, Attorney
Other Political Offices	U.S. House of Representatives
Nickname	Boatman Jim
Family Lineage	English
ReligiousAffiliation	Disciples of Christ

Biographical Notes

1. Garfield ranked well above the average president in ability, education, and experience. He was not only a college graduate but also served as the president of a college, Western Reserve Eclectic Institute. Garfield performed courageously during the Civil War and rose to the rank of major general. He served in the House of Representatives for seventeen years and was one of the ablest orators in Congress. Through his service on various House committees, Garfield became an expert in government financial matters. He was kind and generous, and he served as a lay minister in his church. Garfield is the only sitting member of the House ever to be elected president.

However, he had one serious weakness: he was too eager to please people and had trouble saying “no” to them. For example, as the Republican candidate for president in 1880, he let the New York Stalwart faction of the party believe that he would clear New York patronage appointments with them in exchange for their support in the general election, when, in fact, he had no intention of doing so. In addition, as the Republican nominee, when a group of railroad magnates requested veto power over his future Supreme Court nominations in exchange for large donations, he granted it. As president, he allowed James G. Blaine and Roscoe Conkling to meddle in the construction of his cabinet, which exacerbated the intraparty rift between the Stalwart and Half-Breed factions of the party and led to a crisis over senatorial courtesy. Rutherford B. Hayes felt that Garfield was a "smooth, ready, pleasant man, not very strong." Senator Henry Dawes of Massachusetts, who served with Garfield for a dozen years in the House, wrote, “Garfield is a grand noble fellow,” with “more brains but no such will as [John] Sherman.” Nevertheless, as president, he demonstrated great strength in opposing powerful senators during the battle over senatorial courtesy.

Since Garfield was shot only four months after his inauguration, he did not accomplish much as president. He investigated the Star Route scandal at the Post Office Department, even though high-ranking Republicans were involved. Garfield used his financial acumen to refinance the national debt. The fact that a frustrated office seeker assassinated him helped motivate the passage of the Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act in 1883.

2. Garfield was born in a one-room log cabin to poor but hardworking parents and grew up in the Western Reserve, a primarily rural area in Northeast Ohio that included Cleveland. His father died when he was eighteen months old. As a teenager, he spent several months driving a team of dray horses that pulled boats

on the Ohio Canal, which earned him the nickname "Boatman Jim." When he was seventeen, a school teacher recognized his intellectual potential and arranged for him to attend a local academy. He then attended Western Reserve Eclectic Institute (later renamed Hiram College) for two years.

Garfield finished his undergraduate education at Williams College in Massachusetts, where he thrived. He relished the opportunity to hear Ralph Waldo Emerson speak and the challenge of confronting the strong personality of Williams's president, Mark Hopkins. At Williams, Garfield began to identify with the antislavery beliefs of the new Republican Party. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa.

3. Religion played a significant role in Garfield's life. In 1850, at age eighteen, Garfield experienced a religious conversion and was baptized into the denomination of his parents, the Disciples of Christ. The Western Reserve Eclectic Institute, where he initially attended college and later taught, was founded by the Disciples. While a student at the Institute, he began preaching at neighboring Disciples of Christ churches, a practice he also pursued later in life. Garfield was not an ordained minister because the Disciples did not have a formal ordination process at the time.

4. After graduating from Williams with honors in 1856, Garfield joined the faculty of Western Reserve Eclectic Institute. Although formally an instructor in classical languages, he taught a wide variety of courses, including English, history, geology, and mathematics. From 1857 to 1861, he served as president of the Institute, but he found the faculty bickering intolerable. In 1858, he married Lucretia Rudolph. In 1859, he was elected to the Ohio Senate. Studying law on his own, he passed the Ohio bar exam in 1861.

An enthusiastic abolitionist, Garfield believed that under no circumstances could the institution of slavery be allowed to extend into any Western territories. When Southern states began to withdraw from the Union, Garfield came out strongly against secession and urged the federal government to respond with force. He said, "I am inclined to believe that the sin of slavery is one of which it may be said that without the shedding of blood, there is no remission." He welcomed the fall of Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, believing it would unite Northern sentiment in support of waging war on the Confederacy.

5. In August 1861, Garfield received a commission as a colonel in the 42nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry regiment. The 42nd Ohio existed only on paper, so Garfield's first task was to fill its ranks. He did so quickly, recruiting many of his neighbors and former students from the Western Reserve Eclectic Institute. In December, Garfield was ordered to bring the 42nd to Kentucky, where they joined the Army of the Ohio under Brigadier General Don Carlos Buell.

Buell assigned Garfield the task of driving Confederate forces out of eastern Kentucky, giving him the 18th Brigade for the campaign, which, besides his 42nd, included the 40th Ohio Infantry, two Kentucky infantry regiments, and two cavalry units. Garfield's forces defeated those of Confederate General Humphrey Marshall at the Battle of Middle Creek, driving the Rebels back into Virginia. This battle was the Union's first significant victory of the war. In recognition of his success, Garfield received a promotion to brigadier general, making him the youngest general in the Union Army.

Garfield's promotion gave him command of the 20th Brigade of the Army of the Ohio under Major General Don Carlos Buell. Buell was instructed to join Major General Ulysses S. Grant's force as it advanced on Corinth, Mississippi, in April 1862. Before the Army of the Ohio arrived, however, Confederate forces under General Albert Sidney Johnston surprised Grant's men near Shiloh Church in southwestern Tennessee, driving them back. Garfield's troops were a day's march away from Grant's forces when the Battle of Shiloh began. By the time the 20th reached the frontlines of the battle, the last rebels were running away. The Battle of Shiloh, the bloodiest battle of the war to date, was over, and it had been won without them.

That summer, Garfield had jaundice and significant weight loss. He was forced to return home, where his wife nursed him back to health. While he was home, Garfield's friends organized a campaign for him for the Republican nomination to Congress from Ohio's 19th Congressional District, which included the Western Reserve. He won the nomination in September 1862.

He then returned to military duty and went to Washington to await his next assignment. In November 1862, he was elected to Congress. However, the Congress he was elected to did not convene until December 1863, so he decided to remain in the military until then. While in Washington, Garfield befriended Treasury Secretary Salmon P. Chase, a fellow Ohioan. Chase, a fellow Republican, was strongly antislavery and became a mentor to Garfield.

6. Eventually, Garfield procured an assignment as chief of staff to Major General William S. Rosecrans, commander of the Army of the Cumberland. Garfield helped Rosecrans devise the Tullahoma Campaign to

pursue and trap Confederate General Braxton Bragg's army in Tullahoma, Tennessee. After initial Union success, Bragg retreated from Chattanooga, Tennessee, down into northwest Georgia. However, Rosecrans did not pursue Bragg; he requested more troops and supplies. Garfield argued for an immediate advance, in line with the demands of General-in-Chief Henry Halleck and President Lincoln. After a council of war and lengthy deliberations, Rosecrans agreed to attack.

At the ensuing Battle of Chickamauga on September 19 and 20, 1863, Rosecrans's orders confused his wing commanders, and a gap was created in the Union lines. Confederate General James Longstreet's troops surged towards the gap. Rosecrans concluded that the battle was lost and fell back to Chattanooga to establish a defensive line. Garfield, however, thought that the part of the army commanded by General George H. Thomas had held and, with Rosecrans's approval, headed on horseback across Missionary Ridge to verify this and rally the troops.

Garfield's ride was spectacular. Bullets whizzed past him, as did the faces of Confederate soldiers shocked to see a Union general galloping by. One of the orderlies accompanying Garfield was killed, but the general kept riding towards Thomas's position. Garfield's horse was wounded and dropped dead upon Garfield's arrival. "How I escaped death I do not know," Garfield wrote later.

His bravery was rewarded by the sight of Thomas's men, holding off the rebel advance on Snodgrass Hill – the final bastion of resistance to the Confederate advance. Garfield spent the night with them and telegraphed headquarters that Thomas was "standing like a rock" against a flurry of Confederate attacks. Come dawn, the assault ebbed, and Chattanooga was saved. Hereafter, Garfield's ride became legendary; Thomas's nickname became "The Rock of Chickamauga"; and Rosecrans's obtuse orders and abandonment of the field of battle reignited criticism of his leadership.

While Rosecrans's army had avoided disaster, it was now stranded in Chattanooga, hemmed in by the Tennessee River on one side and by Bragg's army on the other three. Garfield sent a telegram to his friend, Treasury Secretary Salmon P. Chase, alerting him to the need for reinforcements to avoid the destruction of the Army of the Cumberland. Chase contacted Secretary of War Stanton immediately, and Stanton delivered 20,000 troops with horses, ammunition, and equipment by rail in seven days. In the meantime, Lincoln gave U.S. Grant the command of all the western armies, and Grant quickly replaced Rosecrans with Thomas. Garfield was promoted to major general and ordered to report to Washington.

7. After the Battle of Chickamauga, Garfield had to decide whether to take his seat in the House of Representatives or forfeit it and remain in the army. He went to President Lincoln for advice. Lincoln told him that although the government "had more commanding generals around loose than they knew what to do with," there was a shortage of administration congressmen, particularly those with practical knowledge of army affairs. Garfield took Lincoln's suggestion, resigned his army commission, and took his seat in the House of Representatives. He was assigned to the crucial Military Affairs Committee because of his war experience. As a member of this committee, he helped pass a strong draft bill that ended "commutation" – the process of a man paying a substitute to take his place in the army.

8. During the Civil War years, Garfield distinguished himself as one of the most radical Republicans in Congress. Even though he had campaigned for Lincoln, he never really liked the President and felt that he had failed to prosecute the war vigorously. He was pleasantly surprised when Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. At this time, Garfield supported the seizure of rebel property and the execution or exile of Confederate leaders

Over time, during his eight terms of office, Congressman Garfield tempered his youthful radicalism, becoming a seasoned politician. He developed an ability to work for compromise while still defending the core interests of his Western Reserve constituency. To some observers, Garfield's ability to walk a middle road smacked of opportunism. To others, it was the mark of a practical politician. During Reconstruction, Garfield differed from his more radical colleagues, often supporting moderation toward the defeated South. However, he eventually voted to impeach President Johnson. In 1868 and 1872, he backed Ulysses S. Grant for president, though he possessed grave reservations about the general's administrative abilities and political wisdom.

9. In 1865, Garfield befriended Secretary of the Treasury Hugh McCulloch. McCullough and Salmon P. Chase helped convince Garfield that financial issues would be of great importance to postwar America.

Garfield became an expert on financial matters by serving on key House committees. He held various positions, including Chairman of the Banking and Currency Committee and Chairman of the Appropriations Committee (1871 to 1875). He was also a member of the House Ways and Means Committee. In that capacity, he advocated hard-money policies despite the soft-money, or inflationary, sentiment in his home

district. He opposed all efforts to inflate the supply of money through the issuance of paper currency unbacked by gold; the use of the unbacked greenback dollars (printed during the Civil War) to redeem government bonds; or free and unlimited coinage of silver into coins. This hard money stance made him a favorite with eastern "Gold Bug" Republicans in their fight to keep the nation's money supply from expanding. Garfield also disliked the various cooperative farm programs supported by the Grange, the major voice of the embattled farmers and a group that advocated legislation ("Granger laws") regulating railroads. To the Ohio congressman, they represented "communism in disguise." On the tariff issue, Garfield took a middle line, advocating moderate and low tariff rates in response to the demands of his rural constituents for cheap European-manufactured goods. However, when it came to the interests of his own district, he protected Western Reserve ironworks by demanding a high tariff on pig iron. He opposed labor unions, fought the eight-hour workday for federal workers, and believed that federal troops should be used to break up strikes.

10. Jeremiah Black was an avid Democrat who had served as attorney general in the Buchanan administration. He was also a Disciple of Christ, and he and Garfield became close friends, despite being members of different political parties. In 1865, they formed a law firm, Black and Garfield, based in Washington, D.C.

During the Civil War, four proslavery northern civilians were found guilty of treason in a military court; three were sentenced to hang, and the other one to hard labor. The case ricocheted through the appeals court system, and Black and Garfield were retained to plead the case before the U.S. Supreme Court in 1866.

Garfield wrote the brief for the case, and when Black read his draft, he said, “Don’t change a word.” In this landmark case, *Ex parte Milligan,* Garfield successfully argued that civilians could not be tried before military tribunals, despite a declaration of martial law, as long as civil courts were still operating. Garfield's oral presentation of the brief lasted over two hours. The reason this was a landmark case was that it cast doubt on the jurisdiction of the military courts being used in the South during Reconstruction.

When Black pointed out to Garfield that his fellow Radical Republicans might criticize him for defending proslavery northern traitors, Garfield responded. "It doesn't make any difference. I believe in English liberty and English law."

11. In 1869, Garfield helped James G. Blaine of Maine become Speaker of the House by taking himself out of the running. Blaine acknowledged this by appointing Garfield as Chairman of the House Banking and Currency Committee and by having him run an informal committee to design the country’s next census. Blaine also put Garfield on the elite five-person Rules Committee.

Blaine had a charismatic personality; he was nicknamed “The Magnetic Man.” He and Garfield were good friends. Blaine had boundless energy, loved political intrigue, and, after stepping up to the Senate in 1870, became the leader of the Half-Breed faction of the Republican Party. Blaine had an insatiable desire to be president. He unsuccessfully sought the Republican nomination in 1876 and 1880 and finally won it in 1884. Blaine played a key role in Garfield winning the nomination in 1880.

12. Garfield was involved in two questionable dealings in the 1870s. Although these episodes seemed to his enemies evidence of deep-seated corruption, they more accurately indicated clumsiness and poor judgment. In one instance, Garfield accepted a $5,000 fee for advising a paving company seeking (and later winning) lucrative public business in Washington, D.C. Accepting the money was inappropriate because he chaired the House Appropriations Committee, which controlled the city's budget. He was also implicated, to a minor extent, in the Credit Mobilier scandal when he received a $329 stock dividend. However, the House committee that investigated the scandal produced no evidence that he had acted improperly. Garfield’s desire to make a little extra money was motivated by the fact that, while in Congress, he built a new house in Washington, D.C.

13. In terms of presidential politics, 1876 should have been a Democratic year. The country was in the third year of an economic depression that many Americans attributed to Republican economic policies. Also, the public was fed up with the numerous scandals of the Grant administration, leading to the Democratic campaign slogan: “Throw the rascals out.”

Democrat Samuel Tilden seemed like the antidote for both these problems. Before entering politics, he earned a national reputation as a “financial physician” for reorganizing and reinvigorating railroads with financial problems. Later, his analysis of the notoriously corrupt Boss Tweed's financial records brought down the Tammany Hall leader, eventually landing him in prison. This feat earned Tilden a well-earned reputation as a reformer.

The Republicans, led by their rough-and-tumble national chairman Zacharias Chandler, nominated Governor Rutherford B. Hayes of Ohio for president and came at Tilden hard. First, they accused him – falsely – of not paying enough federal income tax. Then they implied that the clean-shaven, fastidiously dressed, sixty-two-year-old, lifelong bachelor who lived in a tastefully decorated mansion must be homosexual. The famous political cartoonist Thomas Nast frequently sketched Tilden wearing a dress.

But, most of all, they waved the "bloody shirt," blaming Democrats for the Civil War and all the subsequent deaths of Union soldiers. The nationally renowned Republican orator Robert G. Ingersoll crisscrossed the country during the last six weeks of the campaign, giving the same speech repeatedly. The heart of his message was:

> I am opposed to the Democratic Party, and I will tell you why. Every state that seceded from the United States was a Democratic state. Every ordinance of secession was drawn up by a Democrat. Every man that endeavored to tear the old flag from the heaven it enriches was a Democrat. Every man that tried to destroy this nation was a Democrat. Every enemy that this great republic has had for twenty years has been a Democrat. Every man that shot Union soldiers was a Democrat. Every man that denied to the Union prisoners even the worm-eaten crust of famine was a Democrat. Every man that loved slavery better than liberty was a Democrat. The man that assassinated Abraham Lincoln was a Democrat. Every man that raised bloodhounds to pursue human beings was a Democrat. Soldiers, every scar you have on your heroic bodies was given you by a Democrat.

Garfield knew his fellow Ohioan, Hayes, well and respected him as a sound-money man sympathetic to civil service reform. He campaigned extensively for Hayes, but instead of using these issues, he followed Hayes's instructions and, for the most part, waved the bloody shirt.

14. By the evening of Election Day 1876, Tilden had won states worth 184 electoral votes; he needed just one more electoral vote to win. Three Southern states still under military control had not yet been decided, and one Republican elector in Oregon was ineligible, casting doubt on that vote. Florida (four electoral votes) and Louisiana (eight electoral votes) reported returns that favored Tilden, while Hayes led in South Carolina (seven electoral votes). Since Tilden had a sizeable lead (6,300 votes) in Louisiana, both candidates assumed that Tilden would win and went to bed.

However, at the Republican Party headquarters in New York City, Dan Stickles, a former Union general, made no such assumption. He realized that Republicans controlled the election boards in each disputed state and that if Hayes secured all 20 outstanding electoral votes, he would win the presidency. Alone at the headquarters, except for one clerk, he sat down at the desk of Republican Party chairman Zacharias Chandler and composed a telegram to be sent to leading Republican functionaries in the four questionable states. The telegram, which went out immediately under Chandler's name, said, "With your state sure for Hayes, he is elected. Hold your state." The day after the election, Chandler himself sent another round of messages to the Republican governors of the three disputed southern states, urging them to take control of the fluid situation and bluntly promising them that "Troops and money will be furnished." In addition, the Republican Party sent "visiting statesmen" to the three Southern states to advocate for the Republican candidates. Garfield was the statesman sent to Louisiana.

15. The Louisiana electoral system gave the state election board the power to approve as well as count all ballots. The board membership was required by law to be bipartisan; in fact, all the members were Republicans. Garfield was one of ten Northern visiting statesmen (five from each party) invited to witness the board's work. The board's investigation of the presidential election showed conclusively that Tilden had won a majority of the votes cast. However, Garfield and the other Republicans felt that the result did not represent the true voice of the state. They argued that the Democrats had, by "the most malignant cunning," intimidated and "bulldozed" Blacks to prevent them from voting Republican. The five Republican visiting statesmen decided to investigate on their own what had occurred in the bulldozed parishes, and Garfield was assigned to scrutinize the electoral results of West Feliciana Parish.

In past elections, the parish had consistently given Republicans a safe margin of 800 to 1,200 votes, but this time, Tilden had won by 471 votes. Garfield attributed this to the work of Democratic "rifle clubs" and "committees of safety," which, he reported, had threatened Black voters and committed violent acts to intimidate them. In preparing his report, Garfield personally sought out witnesses, interviewed them, polished their testimonies and, very likely, coached them for future appearances. The board "redeemed" West Feliciana Parish from its Democratic majority by disqualifying enough Democratic votes, making Hayes

the winner of the parish by 386 votes.

Fortified by such support from the five Republican visiting statesmen, the Louisiana election board threw out more than 13,000 Democratic votes and awarded the state's electoral votes to Hayes. Irate Democrats screamed "Fraud!" They charged that the election board was illegally constituted and blatantly corrupt, that evidence of intimidation had been manufactured, and that the witnesses were openly for sale to the highest bidder.

16. The election boards in Florida and South Carolina also disqualified enough Democratic votes for Hayes to win their states, and the three southern states sent their results to Congress. Democrats claimed fraud and forwarded their own sets of returns to Congress, showing a Democratic win. Oregon submitted two sets of returns as well. As the Constitution required, a joint session of Congress assembled in which the President of the Senate was to count the electoral votes. Congress deadlocked because the Democrats disagreed with the Republican President of the Senate over which sets of ballots should be counted.

To resolve the crisis, Congress passed a law, which President Grant signed, creating the Electoral Commission (five senators, five House members, and five Supreme Court justices) to decide the election. The commission was politically balanced: seven Democrats, seven Republicans, and one Independent (Supreme Court Justice David Davis). When the House of Representatives chose Garfield for membership on the Electoral Commission, Democrats objected because of his activities in Louisiana, but he served on the commission, nonetheless.

On the night before the law establishing the commission was to take effect, the Democrats in the Illinois legislature elected Davis to the U.S. Senate. Davis felt that this violated his impartiality and declined to serve on the Electoral Commission. Since all the remaining members of the Supreme Court were Republicans, the Republicans obtained an 8 to 7 majority on the commission. Voting strictly along party lines, the commission resolved every disputed ballot in favor of Hayes, making him the winner by 185 to 184 electoral votes.

The Democrats refused to walk away empty-handed. They could still filibuster, creating enough delay to prevent Hayes's inauguration and trigger a constitutional crisis, but few wanted to play this card. Some, however, were willing to use the bluff to gain concessions from the Republicans. In particular, Democrats wanted the removal of federal troops that still supported the governments of Louisiana, Florida, and South Carolina, the last Republican regimes in the South. If the troops left, the three state governments would revert to Democratic control.

Hayes promised nothing, but some of his associates, including the sitting president, U.S. Grant, privately pledged a withdrawal of troops if the southern governments promised to uphold freed persons' rights. Grant removed the troops from Florida; Hayes removed them from Louisiana and South Carolina. This bargain between the Republicans and the Democrats is referred to as the Compromise of 1877.

17. In January 1880, Garfield was elected to the U.S. Senate by the Ohio General Assembly with help from former Senator John Sherman. In exchange for Sherman's support, Garfield agreed to support Sherman's bid for president in 1880. Garfield's senatorial term was not scheduled to begin until March 4, 1881. He was never seated in the U.S. Senate because he was elected president in the fall of 1880.

18. President Rutherford B. Hayes's decision not to run for re-election meant that the 1880 Republican nomination for president was wide open. Consequently, as the campaign of 1880 neared, former president U.S. Grant's stock once again rose sharply. Republican spoilsmen, referred to as Stalwarts, had been stymied by Hayes's civil service reforms and pined for "four more good years of stealing" like they had in Grant's previous two terms. The Stalwarts – led by New York Senator Roscoe Conkling – supported Grant, arguing that the three-term tradition only applied to three *consecutive* terms.

Grant's chief opponents for the Republican nomination were Senator James G. Blaine of Maine and Senator John Sherman of Ohio. Blaine was the leader of the "Half-Breed" faction of the party. The Stalwarts gave Blaine's faction that nickname to indicate that since they disagreed with the Stalwarts on a host of issues, they were really only half Republican. The rivalry between the Stalwarts and the Half-Breeds – already fierce due to philosophical differences – was exacerbated by an extreme personal animosity between Conkling and Blaine. Sherman was neither a Stalwart nor a Half-Breed.

19. At the 1880 Republican National Convention, Garfield gave the nominating speech for Sherman for president. Three hundred seventy-nine votes were necessary to win the nomination for president. The tally for the first ballot was: Grant 304, Blaine 284, Sherman 93, and a smattering for minority candidates. For the next twenty-seven ballots, things stayed pretty much the same, then the convention adjourned for the night. During the wee hours of the morning, the Blaine and Sherman representatives met to try to break the

impasse, but neither side would concede and give their votes to the other to defeat Grant. In particular, the Blaine contingent did not feel they should give their votes to Sherman because their support was three times as strong. Moreover, if Blaine released his delegates, many of them would switch to Grant rather than to Sherman. Sherman had hard feelings toward Blaine because he resented the senator from Maine poaching delegates from his home state (Ohio). The strategy of the Grant camp was to "stand by [Grant] and secure his nomination by waiting for the break-up of their opponents."

The next morning's balloting continued along the same line. Grant placed first each time, without topping 309 votes, and the Blaine and Sherman vote totals changed very little. Then, Garfield emerged as a "dark horse" candidate on the thirty-fourth ballot when the Wisconsin delegation – prompted by one of Garfield's friends – gave him 16 votes. On the thirty-fifth ballot, both Blaine and Sherman lost support, and Indiana cast 27 votes for Garfield, bringing his total to 50.

After the thirty-fifth ballot, Blaine realized that the only way to avoid a Grant victory was to throw his votes to Garfield. Also, Blaine calculated that if he provided the votes necessary for Garfield's nomination, the Ohioan – already his friend – would appoint him to a prominent position in the cabinet, from which Blaine could influence or possibly even control Garfield. In addition, Sherman's operatives told him that he had no chance of winning, and he also threw his support to Garfield. Garfield won on the thirty-sixth ballot with 399 votes. Three hundred and six of Grant's supporters stuck with him to the very end. To have been one of the loyal "306" became a badge of honor and the ultimate bragging right amongst the Stalwart faction.

20. Since Grant's following remained very strong all the way to the last ballot, Garfield's men felt that they must appease the Stalwarts for the sake of party unity by offering them the vice presidency. First, they offered it to Stalwart Congressman Levi P. Morton, who declined. Next, they told the New York delegation, which was dominated by Stalwarts, that they could choose the vice-presidential nominee.

The New Yorkers chose Chester A. Arthur, Conkling's right-hand man in the New York Stalwart political machine. The choice was controversial (and made without consulting Garfield), but Garfield's men went along with it, even though it made them feel uncomfortable. The difficulties with the selection were that Arthur was a machine politician, had never run for elected office, and had been removed from his post as Collector of the New York Custom House by President Hayes. In the words of John Sherman: "He never held an office except the one he was removed from." Most Republicans rationalized the choice by noting that since Garfield was young and healthy, having Arthur as vice president would do no harm.

21. To win the general election, Garfield needed to win New York state, and he needed the support of Roscoe Conkling and the New York Stalwart political machine to do that. To gain that support, he traveled to New York City and met with a group of former and current Conkling lieutenants at the Fifth Avenue Hotel: Chester Arthur, Senator Thomas Platt, Congressman Levi P. Morton, and Congressman Richard Crowley. Platt was blunt. He said to Garfield, "The question we would like to have decided before the work of this campaign commences is whether, if you are elected, we are to have four years more of an administration similar to that of Rutherford B. Hayes [or] whether you are going to recognize and reward the men who must do the work in this state." In other words, if Conkling's Stalwarts helped deliver New York's electoral college votes, they expected to be rewarded with control of patronage in the state of New York. If Garfield could not make such a promise, the Stalwarts would "retire from the active work of the canvass."

According to Platt, Garfield responded by harshly criticizing the Hayes administration and its civil service reforms. He acknowledged that he needed Conkling's help to win the election and promised that the Stalwarts' wishes "should be paramount with him, touching on all questions of patronage." Garfield said that he would have to reward the non-Stalwart New Yorkers who had sided with him at the Republican National Convention, but that he would "consult with [Conkling's] friends and do only what was approved by them." "These assurances were oft-repeated, and solemnly emphasized, and were accepted and agreed to by all those present," Platt recalled. Arthur agreed with Platt that a deal had been struck and reported that to Conkling a few days later. The agreement is often referred to as the Treaty of Fifth Avenue.

But what the Stalwarts understood as an ironclad promise to protect their patronage meant something different to Garfield. After he met with the Stalwarts, he wrote in his diary, "No trades, no shackles, and as well-fitted for defeat or victory as ever."

22. In 1879, the Supreme Court upheld, by a five-to-three decision, a law that would have compelled the Union Pacific Railroad to set aside a portion of its profits to pay off its debt to the government. The decision, coming on the heels of the similar "Granger Cases," raised the specter of massive federal regulation of private corporations unless this "revolutionary" judicial tendency was reversed. Railroad owners were very

concerned, and with three Supreme Court seats soon likely to fall vacant, the next President would have the power to reshape the Court.

Garfield's public record did not assuage their fears. His opposition to the Camden & Amboy Railroad monopoly during the Civil War, his repeated warnings that the state must control the railroads or be controlled by them, and his proud advocacy of a bill to regulate interstate commerce seemed to betray a disturbing lack of sympathy for the sanctity of private corporations. Nevertheless, using Whitelaw Reid as an intermediary, three railroad magnates dropped enticing hints to Garfield of large campaign contributions in return for the proper guarantees. Gingerly, as if avoiding a trap, he responded with cautious generalities.

Garfield could not squirm off the hook so easily. Reid wrote back, disappointed; his friends expected a more precise response, demanding to know whether Garfield agreed with the Associate Justices who had written a dissent in the Union Pacific case. Again, his reply was not sufficient for them, but eventually, Garfield promised to give Reid's group veto power over his Supreme Court nominees in exchange for large campaign contributions. As President, he nominated Stanley Matthews, a former railroad lawyer, for a seat on the Supreme Court. There was strong opposition to the nomination because of Matthews' background, but he was confirmed by a vote of 24 to 23 in the Senate.

23. In the late nineteenth century, the custom was that presidential candidates did not actively campaign. Instead, they relied on hundreds of others to speak for them throughout the country. Organizing events and obtaining speakers were crucial components for victory, and that required money and managers.

Chester Arthur was a brilliant fundraiser and a persuasive manager, and he was a central factor in the ticket's eventual victory. From his elegant office suite in the Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York City, he worked tirelessly for the ticket, levying assessments, raising money from donors, wheedling and cajoling, getting speeches printed and distributed, organizing events, and doling out campaign funds. He arranged multiple speaking engagements before huge crowds for Conkling (three cities in Ohio, three in Indiana, and nine in New York) and Grant (in Ohio, New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Jersey) on behalf of the ticket.

The standard-bearer for the Democrats, Winfield S. Hancock of Pennsylvania, was a mirror image of Garfield: a former Union Civil War general who was moderate, competent, colorless, and a compromise candidate nominated at a divided convention. In the end, Garfield eked out the narrowest of victories. His margin of victory in the Electoral College was decisive, 214 to 155 votes, but he won the pivotal state of New York (35 electoral votes) by just 20,000 votes out of 1.1 million cast. The New York Stalwarts had worked hard for him and fulfilled their part of the Treaty of Fifth Avenue.

24. When it came time to select his cabinet and fill other important government positions, two things loomed large in Garfield's mind. First, that he owed, in large part, his presidential nomination to Blaine and the Half-Breeds. Second, that he owed, in large part, his general election victory to Conkling and the Stalwarts. He felt that he would have to appease both groups to have a successful administration.

Garfield began by giving the most prestigious cabinet position – secretary of state – to his friend (and Conkling's sworn enemy), James G. Blaine. Conkling was enraged by this and demanded the second most prestigious position – secretary of the treasury – be given to New York Stalwart Levi P. Morton, a Wall Street banker. Garfield was favorably inclined toward Morton, who had handled important financial matters for the just-completed presidential campaign, but there were two problems. First, there were conflict-of-interest regulations that prohibited Treasury officials from being involved in banking and the sale of government securities, and Garfield felt these regulations disqualified Morton. Second, Western Republicans strongly opposed the idea that a Wall Street banker with ties to the notorious financier Jay Gould would serve as secretary of the treasury. Nevertheless, Conkling was furious when Garfield rejected Morton. The only Stalwart selected for the cabinet was Postmaster General Thomas James of New York.

Meanwhile, Blaine was bombarding Garfield with suggestions for Treasury and all the other cabinet slots. (Mrs. Blaine told her daughter, "Your father and I have picked out Garfield's cabinet for him.") Consequently, Garfield spent an inordinate amount of time trying to balance Blaine and Conkling's cabinet demands, so much time that he neglected the composition of his inaugural address. He finished writing it at 2:30 a.m. on Inauguration Day, and it turned out to be mediocre.

After the inauguration, Garfield tried to appease Conkling by appointing five Stalwarts to important non-cabinet positions. When Blaine heard this, he rushed to the White House and threatened to resign. To placate Blaine, Garfield agreed to appoint William Robertson, Blaine's ally and Conkling's New York state enemy, as Collector of the New York Custom House, the most lucrative post in the federal government and the hub of Conkling's New York City political machine. The Collector controlled hundreds of patronage jobs

and millions of dollars in tariff revenue. In addition, to make room for Robertson, Garfield had to downgrade the diplomatic assignments of three prominent Stalwarts: Adam Badeau (one of General Grant's best friends), Michael Cramer (Grant's brother-in-law), and Nicholas Fish (son of Grant's secretary of state).

25. Conkling and the Stalwarts viewed the appointment of Robertson as a direct violation of the Treaty of Fifth Avenue. Tom Platt, Conkling 's fellow Senator from New York, said, "There will be hell before Judge Robertson is confirmed." Vice President Arthur was livid when he found out about it. He told a newspaper editor, "Garfield has not been square, nor honorable, nor truthful with Conkling. It is a hard thing to say of a President of the United States, but it is, unfortunately, only the truth. Garfield – spurred by Blaine, by whom he is easily led – has broken every pledge made to us. Not only that, he seems to have wished to do it in a most offensive way."

"Senatorial courtesy" is a long-standing, unwritten, and unofficial tradition in the U.S. Senate whereby the Senate honors the opposition of a home-state senator to a presidential nominee for an important federal position in his state. If a home-state senator opposes such an appointment, the Senate typically rejects the nominee. Both Conkling and Platt tried to invoke senatorial courtesy to persuade the Senate to reject Robertson's appointment. Garfield rose up against this challenge to his ability to make appointments. He said that he was ready to "settle the question [of] whether the President is registering clerk of the Senate or the Executive of the United States." Garfield made it clear to senators that they would not be welcome at the White House if they opposed Robertson's appointment, and he also put other forms of pressure on them.

In a last-ditch move to engender sympathy for their position and embarrass the President, Conkling and Platt resigned from the Senate in protest, confident that the New York State legislature would side with them and return them to the Senate. Forty-eight hours after the resignations, Robertson was confirmed. The state legislature did not re-elect Conkling and Platt; it selected two new senators. Conkling never returned to politics, but Platt did.

26. On March 9, only five days after his inauguration, Garfield called Postmaster General James into his office. He informed James of rumors involving what became known as the Star Routes corruption ring in the Post Office Department and insisted that a thorough investigation be launched immediately. Within a few weeks, James had learned enough to realize that he was facing a scandal of such monumental proportions that its exposure could seriously damage the Republican Party's fortunes. In particular, the scandal involved former Congressman Bradley Barlow of Vermont, Second Assistant Postmaster General Thomas J. Brady, and Senator Stephen W. Dorsey of Arkansas. Dorsey had been Secretary of the Republican National Committee during Garfield's 1880 presidential campaign.

James asked Garfield if he should pursue the probe, even if it cost the Republican Party control of the Senate. The President thought for a moment and replied firmly, "I have sworn to execute the laws. Go ahead regardless of where or whom you hit. I direct you to not only probe this ulcer to the bottom, but to cut it out." Garfield's sincerity was soon demonstrated when he ordered a purge in the Post Office Department, which eliminated Brady. As further indication that he meant business, the President hired a corps of detectives to prepare a case against Dorsey. By the fall, they had unearthed enough evidence that Attorney General McVeigh began planning to take the case to trial.

After Garfield's assassination, President Arthur pursued the investigation. Two federal prosecution trials took place in 1882 and 1883, and the postal ring was finally shut down. Although the fraudulent scheme was widespread, there were few convictions. Many of the defendants in the Star Routes trials were successfully defended by noted lawyer and orator, Robert Ingersoll. The jury acquitted Brady and Dorsey in the 1883 trial. Public disgust over the Star Routes graft served as an impetus for civil service reform and the passage of the Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act in 1883.

27. As president, Garfield used his financial expertise, which was acquired through his congressional committee experience, to refinance the national debt. Specifically, he recalled government bonds that were paying 6 percent interest and was able to refinance them to pay 3.5 percent. This saved the federal government $10 million annually — about 4 percent of the overall budget at that time.

28. The principal foreign policy initiative of the Garfield administration was its efforts to strengthen ties between Latin American countries and the United States. Garfield had urged this as a congressman in 1872 and developed this theme in a major speech in the House four years later.

Garfield authorized Secretary of State Blaine to call for a Pan-American conference in 1882 to mediate disputes among Latin American nations and serve as a forum for trade talks. In particular, they hoped to negotiate peace in the War of the Pacific, which involved Bolivia, Chile, and Peru. Nine countries accepted

invitations to the conference, but Blaine resigned from the cabinet after Chester Arthur succeeded Garfield because he did not want to serve under a Stalwart president. The Arthur administration then canceled the Pan-American conference.

29. Charles Giteau was an unemployed, mentally unstable man who fancied himself a Stalwart. He had repeatedly approached both Garfield and Blaine for a diplomatic post in Europe – for which he was completely unqualified – and they had rebuffed him.

The solution to this problem came to him suddenly, "like a flash," he would later say. On May 18, two days after Conkling's dramatic resignation from the Senate, Giteau, "depressed and perplexed … wearied in mind and body," had climbed into bed at 8 p.m., much earlier than usual. He had been lying on his cot in his small, rented room for an hour, unable to sleep, his mind churning, when a single thought struck him: "If the President was out of the way, everything would go better."

Following Conkling's defeat, Blaine was triumphant, and Garfield felt that he had scored one for the executive branch. On July 2, 1881, Blaine accompanied Garfield to the Washington railroad station to see him off. But before Garfield reached the platform, he was shot twice by Charles Giteau. One bullet grazed Garfield's shoulder; the second lodged itself deep in his back. Quickly grabbed by onlookers and the police, Giteau calmly stated, "I did it, and I will go to jail for it. I am a Stalwart, and Arthur will be president." In the days after the shooting, there was legitimate concern that Giteau was linked to the Stalwarts and that the attempt on the president's life would cause a political crisis. However, once investigators discovered that he was deranged and acted alone, that concern abated.

The doctors could not find the bullet lodged in Garfield's back, but it was not necessarily life-threatening. Plenty of Civil War veterans walked around with musket balls in them, and Andrew Jackson did that for decades. Nevertheless, Garfield's doctors kept probing the wound – in an unsanitary manner – trying, unsuccessfully, to find the projectile. The wound became infected, and it became hard for the president to hold food down. His weight fell from 210 to 130 pounds. Garfield died of complications caused by infection and blood poisoning on September 19.

30. During Garfield's two-and-a-half-month incapacitation, the country had no president because no legal mechanism existed for temporarily transferring the powers of the president to the next person in the line of succession (usually the vice president). This problem also existed during the latter part of Woodrow Wilson's second term, when a severe stroke disabled him. The Twenty-fifth Amendment to the Constitution, ratified in 1967, solved this problem. The amendment provides a mechanism for the president to declare himself incapacitated; the next person in the line of succession becomes the acting president. The president can then reinstate himself when he has recovered. If the president cannot or will not declare himself incapacitated, the amendment provides a mechanism for the vice president and the cabinet to declare that he is incapacitated. Again, the next person in the line of succession becomes the acting president.

31. The fact that a frustrated office seeker assassinated Garfield generated a lot of sympathy for civil service reform, and Congress passed the Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act in 1883. The act articulated a new standard for federal employees. Civil servants were to be appointed because of their capacity to do the job, not because of whom they knew or what they could pay. Applicants were to compete for jobs through examinations administered by a neutral civil service commission and graded by boards unaffiliated with political factions. They were no longer subject to mandatory contributions during elections, and they were given job security so they could perform their jobs without worrying about losing favor with the party bosses.

The act covered the employees at large custom houses, Washington clerks, and some postal workers – about ten percent of the federal workforce by 1885. However, it also allowed the president to expand the number of federal employees covered by the act, which subsequent presidents did, especially Grover Cleveland. Forty percent of the federal workforce was covered by 1897, and current coverage is ninety percent.

Onlookers were genuinely surprised when President Chester Arthur, the former "Gentleman Boss" of Roscoe Conkling's New York City political machine, signed the Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act into law. He did it to restore public confidence in the government following the assassination of Garfield by Giteau.

32. Lucretia Garfield returned to the family home in Mentor, Ohio, after being widowed. The home is now the James A. Garfield National Historical Site. She spent much of the rest of her life preserving her husband's papers and other materials, establishing what was effectively the first presidential library.

When Garfield was assassinated, he had four sons and one daughter: Abram (age nine), Irvin (eleven),

Mary (fourteen), James (sixteen), and Harry (nineteen). Two other children had died in infancy. The children all grew up to be successful and productive citizens. In 1908, Harry, a professor of politics at Princeton, became the president of Williams College. During World War I, he also served as Woodrow Wilson's fuel administrator. In 1907, James ("Jim") became secretary of the Interior under President Theodore Roosevelt. Jim worked closely with Roosevelt to help preserve America's natural resources. Irvin became a successful corporate lawyer in Boston, and Abram, a graduate of MIT, worked as an architect in Cleveland. Mary, whose husband was a prominent investment banker, was active in civic affairs in New York and Pasadena, California.

See the next page for a list of references.

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