

## American Minute with Bill Federer

"The people are responsible for the character of their Congress..."-Garfield's warning at 100th anniversary of Declaration of Independence

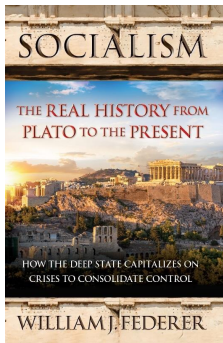
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One bullet grazed his elbow, but a second lodged in the back of **President James Garfield**, who was shot JULY 2, 1881, as he waited in a Washington, D.C., train station



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The assassin was **Charles Guiteau**, who had been a member the **socialist utopian "Oneida Community."**

The Oneida Community had **common ownership of property** and **abandonment of moral norms**. It affirmed free love, polygamy, pederasty, group control over procreation and children raised by "villages."

Legal incidents over **psychological cult abuse** and rape

devolved into dissension, and conflict. Younger members wanted to return to traditional marriages.

By 1879, the **socialist experiment** was losing members, and it eventually dissolved in **failure**.

**President James Garfield** had been in office only four months.

Though not wounded seriously, unsterile medical practices trying to remove the bullet resulted in an infection.

**Alexander Graham Bell** devised a **magnetic metal detector device** to locate the bullet, but the metal bed frame confused the instrument.

Two months before his 50th birthday, **Garfield** died on September 19, 1881.

The next day, Secretary of **State James Blaine** wrote to James Russell Lowell, the U.S. Minister in London:

"**James A. Garfield**, President of the United States, died ...

For nearly eighty days he suffered great pain, and during the entire period exhibited extraordinary patience, fortitude, and **Christian resignation**. Fifty millions of people stand as mourners by his bier."

**Vice-President Chester Arthur** assumed the Presidency and declared a **National Day of Mourning**, September 22, 1881:

"In His inscrutable wisdom it has pleased **God** to remove from us the illustrious head of the nation, **James A. Garfield**, late President of the United States ...

It is fitting that the deep grief which fills all hearts should

manifest itself with one accord toward the **Throne of Infinite Grace** ... that we should bow before the **Almighty** ... in our affliction."

**James Garfield** had been a **Disciples of Christ preacher** at Franklin Circle Christian Church in Cleveland, 1857-58.

Biographer Frank H Mason wrote in *The Life and Public Services of James A. Garfield, Twentieth President of the United States* (Bret Harte Publisher: London, Trübner & Co., 1881):

"(**Garfield**) delivered his powerful and convincing sermons from the pulpit with the consent and encouragement of the Church authorities."

**Garfield** was principal of **Western Reserve Eclectic Institute** (Hiram College), 1857-1860, during which time he **defended creation in a debate against evolution.**

Mason wrote that **Garfield:**

"... completely overwhelmed his opponent, who, after that defeat, abandoned his theory and gave up the fight against the inspiration of the Bible."

**Garfield** became a lawyer in 1861, and a Major General during the Civil War.

Elected to Congress, Garfield despised fiat paper "**Greenbacks,**" supporting instead **gold-silver backed currency.**

Elected a U.S. **Senator, James Garfield** gave a stirring speech at the 1880 Republican National Convention **opposing the rule that all delegates from each State were required to vote for the candidate with the majority of delegates:**

"There **never can be a convention** ... that shall **bind my vote against my will** on any question whatever."

**Garfield** won the crowd. In an unprecedented move, after 34 ballots, he was chosen as the Republican Presidential nominee over **Ulysses S. Grant** seeking a **3rd term**.

**James Garfield** stated in his Inaugural Address, March 4, 1881, just 200 days before his death:

"Let our people find a new meaning in the **divine oracle** which declares that 'a little child shall lead them,' for our own little children will soon control the destinies of the Republic ...

Our children ... will surely bless their fathers and **their fathers' God** that the Union was preserved, that **slavery was overthrown**, and that **both races were made equal before the law.**"

**Republican President James Garfield** appointed **African-Americans** to prominent positions:

- **Frederick Douglass**, recorder of deeds in Washington;
- **Robert Brown Elliot**, special agent to the U.S. Treasury;
- **John M. Langston**, Haitian minister; and
- **Blanche K. Bruce**, register to the U.S. Treasury.

**Garfield** appointed as **U.S. Minister to Turkey** the Civil War General **Lew Wallace**, author of the famous novel ***Ben-Hur-A Tale of Christ***.

**Garfield** described **Otto von Bismark**, who **united German** and served at its **first Chancellor**, 1871-1890:

"I am struck with the fact that **Otto von Bismarck**, the great statesman of Germany, probably the foremost man in Europe today, stated as an unquestioned principle, that the support, the defense, and propagation of the **Christian Gospel** is the central object of the German government."

**Otto von Bismark** saw the creeping danger of **socialism** and instituted **Germany's Anti-Socialist Laws** in 1878.

When **Kaiser Wilhelm II** forced **Bismark** to resign it precipitated **World War I**.

As a **Congressman**, **James Garfield** had stated at the **100th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence**, July 4, 1876:

"Now more than ever before, the **people** are **responsible** for the **character of their Congress**."

**If that body** be ignorant, reckless, and corrupt, it is because the **people tolerate ignorance, recklessness, and corruption**.

If it be intelligent, brave, and pure, it is because the people demand these high qualities to represent them in the national legislature ...

... **If the next centennial** does not find us a great nation ... it will be because those who represent the enterprise, the culture, **and the morality of the nation** do not aid in **controlling the political forces**."

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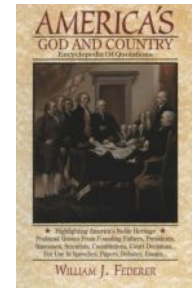


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[wjfederer@gmail.com](mailto:wjfederer@gmail.com)

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