

THE HISTORY OF THE JAMES A. GARFIELD CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

In June, 2015, a gathering of four individuals established the James A. Garfield Civil War Round Table. Ben Frayser, Andrew Mizsak, Jason Sonenshein, Rick Weil, and Wayne Witkowski gathered together to share their common interest in the Civil War. Dana Best-Mizsak, then the Director of the Bedford Historical Society, was gracious enough to allow this organization to use the Bedford Historical Society as our home location, when necessary. By August, 2015, Frank Artino, Gene Best, and Andy Mizsak joined the organization.

The organization, based in Bedford, Ohio, is the regional Civil War Organization for Southeastern Cuyahoga County, and is named for The Honorable James A. Garfield. Garfield, born in the former Orange Township (now Moreland Hills), is from the area the Round Table seeks to serve. He also recruited men from the Bedford area (and surrounding Townships) for his unit, the 42nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry.

Rooted in many of the customs and traditions of *Lincoln's Generals*, this organization believes in the idea of excellence in the study and understanding of the Civil War, as well as the highest standards of historical interpretation, academic research and presentation, and honor of those who fought on both sides of the War.

Members of the James A. Garfield Civil War Round Table have participated at the Civil War Encampment Weekend at James A. Garfield National Historic Site in Mentor with their brothers and sisters from *Lincoln's Generals*, as well as events at the Zimmerman-Bury Octagon House, Wayne County CWRT CW History Day, Hale Farm, the Ohio Civil War Show, Century Village in Burton, and the Ohio Statehouse. The James A. Garfield Civil War Round Table also is the primary sponsor of the annual Garfield Symposium.

In September, 2015, Ben Frayser was elected as the first Commander of the James A. Garfield Civil War Round Table. The current Command Staff includes: Vice Commander Wayne Witkowski, Adjutant Andrew Mizsak, Treasurer Jason Sonenshein, Secretary Anita Benedetti, Historian Dana E. Best-Mizsak, Librarian Paul Pojman, Quartermaster Michael Rambert, and Chaplain Gene Best. This succeeds the first Command Staff of Commander Frayser, Adjutant Wayne Witkowski, Treasurer Jason Sonenshein, Secretary Andrew Mizsak, Sergeant-at-Arms Frank Artino, Quartermaster Michael Rambert, and Chaplain Gene Best.

The Round Table, now at 27 members, has chosen to adopt a Flag Retirement Ceremony as its annual Community Service project. Since September, 2015, the Round Table has been collecting flags that are ready for retirement, and will prepare them for their proper retirement. Members of the Round Table will have leading roles in an upcoming Flag Retirement Ceremony.

The Round Table has adopted as its crest the Presidential Eagle of 1861 – 1885. This symbol is representative of the Seal of the President of the United States used during the Garfield Administration from March 4, 1881 – September 19, 1881.