

Collector's Journal

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2011 James A. Garfield Presidential Dollar

Twentieth in the Presidential Dollars Collection

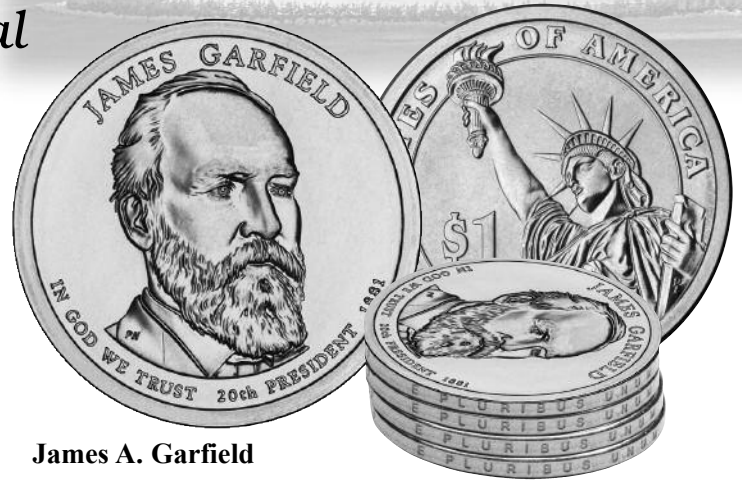
The James A. Garfield Presidential Dollar is the fourth and final Presidential Dollar issued by the U.S. Mint in 2011, as well as the 20th coin in the overall collection. Garfield was the 20th President, and coins are issued in the order in which the Presidents served. The Garfield Presidential Dollar was released in November 2011 and was struck for circulation at both the Philadelphia and Denver Mints.

According to the Presidential \$1 Coin Act of 2005 which authorized the Presidential Dollars series, each President will be featured on only one coin, regardless of the length of his term or the number of terms served. The only exception is Grover Cleveland, who will appear on two coins because he is the only President who served two non-consecutive terms. He was the 22nd and 24th President.

Four different Presidential Dollars are issued each year, and the two Grover Cleveland coins will be among the four coins issued in 2012. The four 2012 coins will be for Chester A. Arthur (21st President), Cleveland (22nd President), Benjamin Harrison (23rd President), and Cleveland again (24th President). The series is scheduled to end in 2016 with the Ronald Reagan coin. Only deceased Presidents are included, so if another President dies before 2016 he may also be included.

To complement the Presidential Dollars, the U.S. Mint also issues a series of half-ounce gold coins and bronze medals featuring First Ladies. The coin and medal for each First Lady are issued at about the same time as the appropriate Presidential Dollar. For example, the gold coin and bronze medal for First Lady Lucretia Garfield will be released about two weeks after the James A. Garfield Presidential Dollar.

The portrait on the James A. Garfield Presidential Dollar is based on a formal photograph taken by Mathew Brady at about the time of Garfield's Presidency.



James A. Garfield

James A. Garfield served only 199 days as President, making his the second-shortest term of any President after the 32 days of William H. Harrison. Garfield was born on November 19, 1831, in Orange, Ohio. Despite being raised in poverty, he received a college education, was elected to the Ohio legislature, and was admitted to the bar.

At the start of the Civil War in 1861, Garfield joined a volunteer regiment in Ohio. He quickly rose through the ranks to major general and commanded a brigade at the Battle of Shiloh in 1862. In 1863 he resigned from the Army to take a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. He was a member of the electoral commission in 1877 that decided the Presidential election in favor of fellow Republican Rutherford B. Hayes.

Garfield won the 1880 Republican nomination for President on the 36th ballot, and he narrowly won the election by fewer than 10,000 popular votes to become the 20th President.

On July 2, 1881 – fewer than four months after his inauguration – Garfield was shot at a railway station in Washington, D.C., by a disgruntled office-seeker. He survived for 80 days, most of which was spent in bed at the White House, but he died on September 19. He was the fourth President to die in office and the second after Abraham Lincoln to be assassinated.

Collectors Alliance • 1942 Swarthmore Avenue • Lakewood, NJ 08701

Call TOLL FREE 1-800-997-9843

www.collectorsalliance.com