James A. Garfield was one of the most extraordinary men ever elected president. Born into abject poverty, he rose to become a wunderkind scholar, a Civil War hero, and a renowned and admired reformist congressman. Nominated for president against his will, he engaged in a fierce battle with the corrupt political establishment. But four months after his inauguration, a deranged office seeker tracked Garfield down and shot him in the back.

But the shot didn’t kill Garfield. The drama of what happened subsequently is a powerful story of a nation in turmoil. The unhinged assassin’s half-delivered strike shattered the fragile national mood of a country so recently fractured by civil war, and left the wounded president as the object of a bitter behind-the-scenes struggle for power—over his administration, over the nation’s future, and, hauntingly, over his medical care. A team of physicians administered shockingly archaic treatments, to disastrous effect. As his condition worsened, Garfield received help: Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone, worked around the clock to invent a new device capable of finding the bullet.

Good Reads

This talk will be led by Robert Poczik

Thursday
April 9, 2020
6:30pm

Registration is required for this free program for adults. Space is limited. Stop in or call the library to register.

Sponsored by the Friends of the Aurora Town Public Library

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