

Rutherford B. Hayes

Presidential Library & Museums

About the Museum



The museum of the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums was started by the President's second son, Colonel Webb Cook Hayes and his siblings, shortly after the turn of the 20th century. In several transactions, Colonel Hayes and his siblings deeded over to the state of Ohio, Spiegel Grove, the President's estate and all its holdings. Ground was broken in 1912 for the building, and the first presidential library/museum in the U.S. opened on May 30, 1916. Construction was funded by the State of Ohio and Webb C. Hayes. Ground breaking for the Hayes Museum/Library in 1912.



A view from the Jefferson Street entrance. The gates of Spiegel Grove were the former White House gates that were originally designed for horse and carriage but were replaced at the White House to accommodate modern vehicles. This was the original entrance of the Library and Museum.

Major additions in 1922, 1968 and 2016 brought the building to its present configuration of exhibit galleries (two floors), research library (one floor), and storage areas (four floors) comprising 52,640 square feet. In keeping with our mission, the museum uses its resources, including 19,000 artifacts, 1,785 of them on permanent display, to illustrate the life and times of Rutherford B. Hayes, his family, and Ohio history.



The Hayes Museum as it looked at the time of its opening in 1916. As President, Hayes contended with the aftermath of Reconstruction in the South, the problems of our Black citizens, and the plight of the American Indian. He fought against inflation, vetoed the controversial Chinese Immigration Exclusion Act, and promoted Civil Service reform. Before his election, President Hayes espoused a single six-year term for presidents and true to his word he retired after four years.

Hayes believed strongly that an ex-president should continue to serve his town, state, and country. As an ex-president, the Squire of Spiegel Grove remained active in local affairs, and on the national level traveled extensively to participate in veterans' affairs and promote prison reform, and advocated both vocational and scholastic education for black and white, rich and poor, North and South.

On a regular basis, the museum staff creates temporary exhibits on the Hayes family, the Hayes Administration, Ohio history, the Gilded Age, the Civil War, and personalities of the 19th Century. The Center also rents or borrows temporary exhibits that are appropriate to its mission.

For group bookings and additional information call Sandusky County Convention & Visitors Bureau at: 419-332-4470 or email us at sales@sanduskycounty.org; www.sanduskycounty.org

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About the Hayes Home



The Rutherford B. Hayes Home is a 31-room mansion and centerpiece of the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center in Fremont, Ohio. Rutherford B. Hayes' uncle and guardian, Sardis Birchard, constructed the original portion of the home between 1859 and 1863 as a summer home he could share with his nephew and young family. Construction took five years because materials and labor were difficult to obtain during the American Civil War.

The two-story brick home had eight bedrooms and a wrap-around verandah. Rutherford B. Hayes particularly loved the verandah. In 1873 he wrote in his diary, "The best part of the present house is the veranda. But I would enlarge it. I want a veranda with a house attached!" Hayes spent the next 20 years planning additions and improvements to his home and Spiegel Grove estate, much as Thomas Jefferson had with his beloved Monticello.

Sleigh rides through Spiegel Grove continue to be popular today. They are offered in December and February. Hayes moved his family into the home in 1873 for two years before leaving to serve as Governor of Ohio and then President of the United States. In 1880 President Hayes prepared for his return to Fremont from the White House by building a substantial addition and remodeling the interior. The addition included a library to house his 12,000 books, a large reception room, three bedrooms, and indoor plumbing. The most spectacular improvement was a four-story walnut and butternut staircase leading to a rooftop lantern offering a 360-degree view of Spiegel Grove (the Hayes estate).



Both Rutherford and Lucy are buried in their beloved estate and their tomb area is open to visitors for quiet reflection.

In 1889 the Hayes family once again added to their home in anticipation of visits from grandchildren and friends. A stick-built back wing was demolished and replaced by a larger brick addition housing a large dining room, kitchen, two servants rooms, and three bedrooms. Unfortunately, Mrs. Hayes died during the construction of this last addition to the home. President Hayes died in January 1893. Both died in their beloved home on the grounds of Spiegel Grove.

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The Estate (Spiegel Grove)

Spiegel Grove is the name given to the estate of 19th U.S. President Rutherford B. Hayes. It was so named for the large puddles of rainwater that collect beneath the towering trees following a storm. "Spiegel" is the German word for mirror - an accurate description for these nature-made reflecting pools. The Hayes Presidential Center is located within 25-acres of the President's original estate.

President Rutherford B. Hayes inherited the property known as Spiegel Grove from his maternal uncle, Sardis Birchard. Birchard purchased the property on November 5, 1846. He had long admired the large wooded acreage. Its large trees and thick underbrush are said to have reminded him of the German fairy tales of his youth. He kept the property in its natural state until 1859 when he began construction of a house on the property. Birchard never married. His intent was that his nephew and family reside there with him in his retirement.

As you enter the grounds of Spiegel Grove, a pair of large iron sentinels flank the roadway. Closer examination reveals the ornate gates bear the Presidential seal at their center. These are in fact the original gates to the White House. They are one of five sets donated in 1928 by Congress for use at the entranceways to Spiegel Grove - site of the nation's first presidential library.



**The Rutherford B. Hayes
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