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The Republican Party, the Civil War, and the West

The Republican Party was founded in 1854 in northern states by anti-slavery activists and others and vigorously took hold of the young nation with its meteoric rise to power. But what led to the creation of this new dominant party and how did it rise from a small Midwestern coalition to an influential national party controlling Congress and placing its candidate, Abraham Lincoln, in the White House just six years later? Todd Arrington, Chief of Interpretation and Education for the National Park Service's James A. Garfield National Historic Site in Mentor will address these questions and more in "The Republican Party, the Civil War, and the West," presented Tuesday, October 5 at 7:15 p.m. in Kendal at Oberlin's Heiser Auditorium. The event, which is hosted by the Oberlin Heritage Center, is free and open to the public.

Arrington's illustrated presentation will examine the early years of the Republican Party and look especially at the West, the region in which the party had its strongest legislative impact. The Republicans' command of Congress during the Civil War and enactment of several bills opposed by the slave owners of the South also will be highlighted.

Todd Arrington is a career employee of the National Park Service. Before coming to the Garfield site in May 2009, he served ten years as the historian at the Homestead National Monument of America in Nebraska. He also has worked at Gettysburg National Military Park and Eisenhower National Historic Site in his home state of Pennsylvania. Arrington has spoken before hundreds of groups and presented papers at nearly a dozen academic conferences. He is the author of one book and numerous articles on various historical topics, including the Civil War, slavery in Kansas, Abraham Lincoln, and the Republican Party. He holds B.A. and M.A. degrees in history and is currently writing a Ph.D. dissertation for the University of Nebraska.

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