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Michigan Regimental Round Table Newsletter—Page 1

September 2020

Our September 28, 2020 meeting has been cancelled as stated in a previous e-mail. The Farmington Library is presently working on Stage 3 of their reopening for meetings. The library is reimbursing us for our cancelled meetings.

We thank our scheduled September speakers, our friends Ron Carley (Abraham Lincoln) and David Walker (Jefferson Davis), who were going to debate the issues of the 1860's (not 2020's). We hope to reschedule them for 2021.

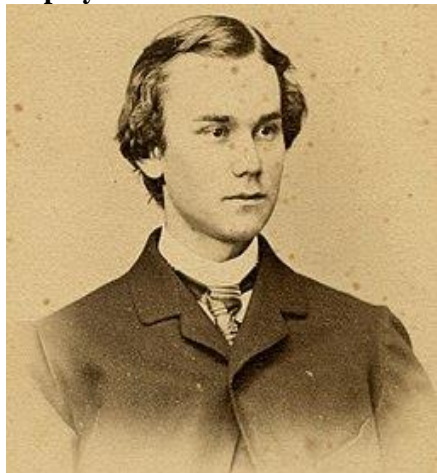
WE HAVE DECIDED TO POSTPONE OUR TRIP TO THE BRANDY STATION/CULPEPPER, VIRGINIA AREA UNTIL THE FALL OF 2021. This decision is based on all the uncertainty involved with the COVID-19 virus. We plan to keep our great tour guide, Clark "Bud" Hall, for 2021. We are really looking forward to visiting the various Civil War sites in the Culpepper area. We thank our trip committee of Jeanie, Linda, and Mollie for their great work! We will have a great trip in 2021.

Please visit our website at <http://www.farmlib.org//mrrt>. Several Civil War presentations are listed on our website.

Civil War Essentials - John Hay, Lincoln's Secretary

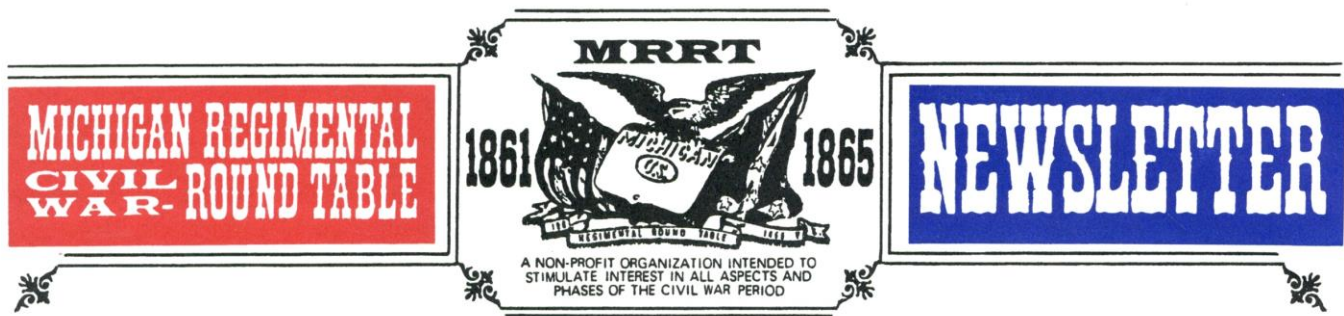
Abraham Lincoln had 2 young men who acted as his secretaries – John G. Nicolay and John M. Hay. In the 1860s, the Office of the President was budgeted only for one secretary, so John Hay was officially an employee of the Interior Department.

Hay was born in 1838 in Indiana, but his family moved to Illinois in 1841. His father, Charles, was strongly against slavery and John undoubtedly picked up his views. John's uncle, Milton Hay, who had a connection with Lincoln, invited John to come to live in Pittsfield, Ill. and attend an academy there. While in Pittsfield, John met 20-year-old Nicolay who was working as a newspaperman. After graduating, 13-year-old Hay moved to Springfield to live with his grandfather. There he continued his schooling and in 1855 his uncle enrolled him in Brown University. His studies were in the humanities and he joined literary circles and while there began a career of writing poetry and fiction. **He received a Master of Arts degree in 1858 and returned to Springfield.** His uncle had moved his law office there from Pittsfield and John began clerking for him and studying law. **Because Lincoln's law office was nearby, Hay met his future employer at this time.**



Although he was initially equivocal about Lincoln as a presidential candidate, Hay began writing articles promoting him after Lincoln won the nomination in Chicago. Nicolay was already working for Lincoln during the election campaign, but he felt overwhelmed and suggested that Hay also be employed. **After the election, Lincoln hesitated at first but then agreed to take both Nicolay and Hay with him to Washington City** possibly because Hay's uncle agreed to pay John's salary for 6 months. John was admitted to the Illinois bar in February 1861 and so he arrived in Washington as a lawyer.

Hay traveled to Washington with Lincoln and he and Nicolay began long days managing the President's office work. They shared a small bedroom in the White House. **Hay specialized in dealing with the great quantity of correspondence which Lincoln received.** He may have written the famous letter of consolation the President sent in late 1864 to Lydia Bixby, a widow who was reported to have lost 5 (2) sons in the war. [This letter became famous again when it was quoted



verbatim by a character in the popular 1998 movie *Saving Private Ryan*.] He and Nicolay both helped shield the President from the endless procession of people seeking jobs or favors; Hay's convivial personality helped him manage these people smoothly. **Hay also served as a "spin doctor" who wrote newspaper columns under several pen names which promoted a favorable image of Abraham Lincoln.** Interestingly, Hay, who accompanied Lincoln to Gettysburg, was only mildly complimentary in his contemporary diary reference to Lincoln's speech there.

Lincoln also sent John Hay on several missions to observe and report back on the progress of aspects of the war. He traveled with Horace Greeley to Niagara Falls in 1864 to attempt a negotiated peace with the Confederacy. **Several observers noted the paternal affection that the President exhibited toward both secretaries but particularly John Hay who he called by his first name.** This bond seemed to grow after the tragic death of Lincoln's son Willie in early 1862. **Hay, who had come to recognize Abraham Lincoln's outstanding character, reciprocated his feelings.** In late 1861 he wrote, "His strong common sense guards him from all extravagances, and his wonderful intuitive knowledge of the feeling and wish of the people is at once the cause and justification of the fullest public confidence."

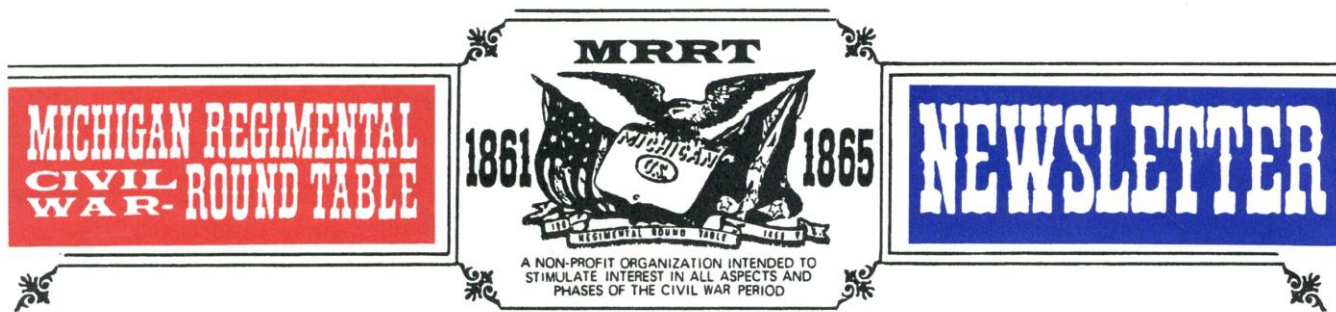
By early 1865, the President agreed with his two secretaries that they deserved a change from the brutally long hours and heavy workload they had endured for nearly four years. After Lincoln's second inauguration, John Nicolay was named US consul in Paris and John Hay became secretary of the US legation there. During the war, Hay had worked closely with Secretary of State Seward, so a diplomatic post was a natural. Before either could leave for Europe, President Lincoln was assassinated, and Seward was attacked and badly wounded. Hay was at the White House when he heard the news. He and Robert Lincoln hurried to the President's bedside and were present when he died the next morning. Hay later wrote of the peaceful expression which he saw come upon Lincoln's face now of his death. **For the rest of John Hay's long and productive life, he would feel the presence of the martyred president at his side.**

Through the rest of the century Hay served in several diplomatic postings, became a writer for the *New York Tribune* and worked on Abraham Lincoln's biography with John Nicolay. He backed William McKinley for president in 1896 and was appointed ambassador to the UK. At the end of the Spanish American War, Hay became Secretary of State. Although he also handled several complex issues involving China, **he is chiefly remembered for negotiating several treaties with Latin American countries, one of which set the stage for the building of the Panama Canal.** John M. Hay died in 1905.

September's Quiz pertains to the month of September during the Civil War.

1. In which orders did General Lee detail the splitting of his army for the Maryland campaign and who lost the orders?
2. What battle occurred on September 8, 1863? What was the significance of the battle?
3. To whom and what was General Lee referring to when he wrote on September 8, 1862: "*This army will respect your choice whatever it may be*"?
4. What was the role of Michigan General Isreal Richardson during the Battle of Antietam?
5. Which infamous Kansan led his Jayhawkers on a raid into Missouri? Which town did he attack?

Civil War Essentials – States Barton Flandreau – States Barton Flandreau was one of the most interesting unknown characters of the Civil War period. A New York native, he first fought in a Confederate regiment then switched sides across the Rappahannock and was separately wounded and captured while in both armies. Domestically, States had up to eight wives (and at least as many names) without the benefit of any divorce decrees (at least in the existing records).



States was born on February 19, 1842 to William, a shoemaker in New Rochelle, New York, and Ophelia. His birth name, Staats, was changed to States. States eventually moved to Louisiana in 1859, briefly changing his name to Flatbush.

While in Louisiana he married for the first time, to Azenath Hendrix.

When the Civil War began, States enlisted in the 8th Louisiana Infantry with the name Stephen Flandreau. He was promoted to sergeant and was then captured on June 2, 1862 near Strasburg, Virginia. Stephen was exchanged on August 5, 1862 after a two-month stay at Fort Delaware. Soon, he rejoined his regiment where he was wounded at the battle of Kettle Run, Virginia on August 27, 1862. His wife died in October and his enthusiasm for the Confederacy waned.

The 8th Louisiana was encamped along the Rappahannock during the winter of 1862-1863 after the Battle of Fredericksburg. **Then, during the spring of 1863 the regiment fought at Second Fredericksburg and Salem Church during the Chancellorsville campaign. States decided to desert his unit and swam across the Rappahannock on May 22, 1863 and surrendered to a Brooklyn regiment.**

During 1863, he married Elizabeth Seidel in Pennsylvania, using the name Stephen Flatbush. Louisiana was now long gone.

Reverting to the name States Flandreau, he enlisted in Company H of the 2nd Connecticut Heavy Artillery on December 31, 1863. Until General Grant brought them down to the Army of the Potomac in May 1864 his new regiment served in the Washington defenses. The regiment's first major combat was at Cold Harbor on June 1, 1864. States was slightly wounded in the side by a shell during the battle.

During the fall of 1864 States may have been captured in the Shenandoah and exchanged for the second time (with the sides reversed) Afterwards, he went back to New Rochelle and married Carolyn Underhill even though Elizabeth Siedel was still living in Pennsylvania.

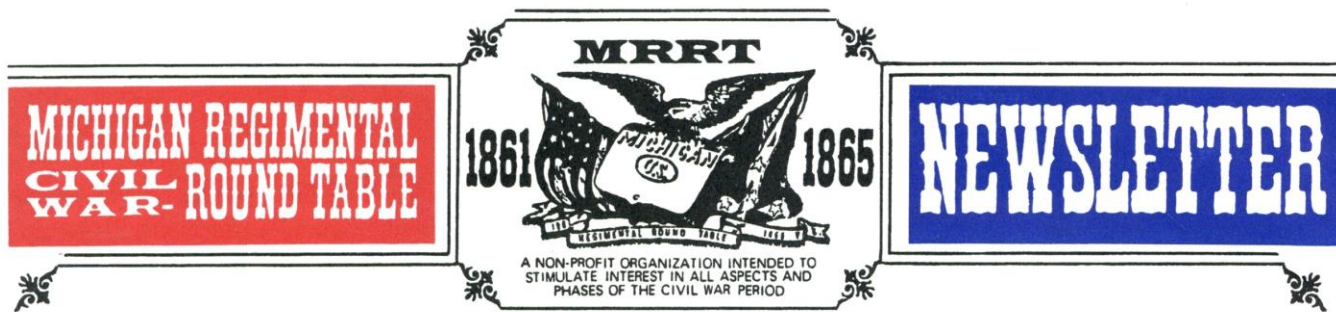
After participating in the successful Union Sixth Corps assault on the Petersburg trenches on April 2, 1865, States mustered out of the Army on August 18, 1865 and then worked as a painter and contractor. **Genealogical records indicate he fathered children with Elizabeth Siedel, Carolyn Underhill, Nancy Baker (married in Indiana in 1868), Sarah Crouch (married in Illinois in 1874), Adda Watson (married in Iowa in 1878), Sarah Howell (married in Illinois in 1883) and Elizabeth Miller (married in Missouri in 1891). During this time States went by at least seven names.**

Elizabeth Miller was very upset when States deserted her after being married for only six months. "Mrs. Flandreau yesterday she was almost crazed with grief over the absence of her husband. She said it was hard for her to believe that her husband had deserted her... When he left, he wore a suit of dark clothes, pants badly worn. He had with him a large sum of money when he disappeared".

Finally, Mr. Flandreau moved to the Soldiers Home at Camp Leavenworth in 1911. He would visit his last wife, their son, and his grandkids. He died on February 16, 1922 and was buried in Leavenworth National Cemetery. **Family tradition said that he was placed on a hill so "even in death, he could keep an eye out for his many wives."**

Quiz Answers:

1. Special orders #191 and no one knows for sure who lost the orders.
2. The Battle of Sabine Pass (TX) occurred on Sept. 8, 1863. The Confederates stopped one of several Federal attempts to invade and occupy at least part of Texas.
3. The people of Maryland and their possible secession from the Union.
4. General Richardson led the First Division of the 2nd Corps in the attack on the Sunken Road. He was directing artillery and organizing another attack when he was mortally wounded.



5. James Lane attacked Osceola, Missouri on September 22, 1861.

Civil War Essentials – Confederate General Josiah Gorgas. Josiah Gorgas worked miracles for the Confederacy during the War. He developed a massive ordnance production program in the largely agricultural South.

Josiah Gorgas was a Pennsylvanian who graduated near the top of his West Point class of 1841. He devoted his Army career to ordnance, or munitions. He served in the Mexican War. After the Mexican War, Josiah served at the Detroit Arsenal. While commanding several Southern arsenals, including the Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond, he married Amelia Gayle, whose father was governor of Alabama.



Josiah, while commander of the Philadelphia arsenal in February 1861, was offered the high-level post of Confederate chief of ordnance. He then severed ties with his brothers, sisters, and friends in the North.

Starting almost from scratch, Josiah Gorgas improvised and significantly industrialized the South for the war effort. He had to develop factories in many locations because of the region’s overburdened rail system. The rail system had major difficulties delivering munitions from Richmond throughout the South.

Among the actions Josiah and his staff took to industrialize the South were:

- Purchased munitions in Europe and swift ships to run the Federal blockade and deliver the goods.
- Increased production from mineral and ore deposits such as the lead works at

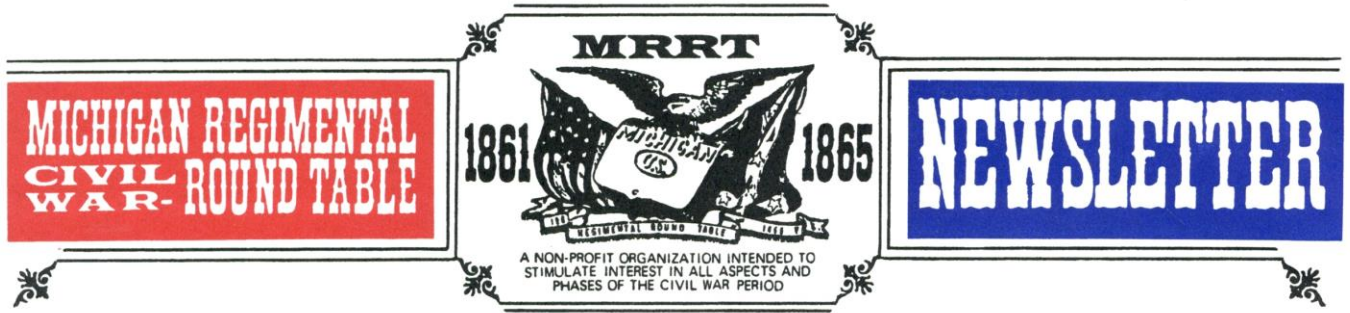
Wytheville, Virginia.

- Whiskey stills were confiscated to provide copper for rifle percussion caps.
- Bells were melted down for the bronze needed to build cannon.
- Battlefields were scavenged for weapons. Confederate soldiers accumulated 100,000 discarded Union firearms in only one year.

During the war, the rural South was mobilized beyond what anyone had expected. Gorgas himself wrote that the results were “beyond my utmost expectations”. The Confederate soldiers often lacked clothing and food but until 1865 was there a shortage of munitions. One expert later said that there had never been “such a miraculous transformation of ploughshares into swords”.

Following the Confederate defeats at Gettysburg and Vicksburg in 1863, General Gorgas wrote in his diary, “Today absolute ruin seems t4o be our portion. The Confederacy totters to its destruction”.

Josiah Gorgas became the President of the University of Alabama in 1878. He and his wife, Amelia, moved into a home which is today the Gorgas Museum. She served as the University’s librarian for 23 years after Josiah died at the age of 65 in 1883. The University of Alabama’s main library today is named the Amelia Gorgas Library in her honor. **Their oldest son, William Crawford Gorgas (born 1854) served as Surgeon General of the U.S. Army. He implemented preventive measures against yellow fever and malaria that allowed for the completion of the Panama Canal.**



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