

THE CHARGER



CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

DECEMBER 2014

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John Hay's Tenuous Relationship to Cleveland

By Dennis Keating

John Hay's personal relationship to Cleveland began in 1872 when he first met Clara Stone in New York City. She and her sister Flora were the daughters of Amasa Stone, then the wealthiest Clevelander. From his humble beginnings as a carpenter, arriving in Cleveland in 1850, Stone became wealthy through his work on railroads and then investments in Jephtha Wade's Western Union and John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil and other businesses. Stone built an 8,000 square foot mansion on Millionaires' Row on Euclid Avenue. Hay first visited it in the summer of 1872 (although he had passed through Cleveland in 1861 on President Lincoln's inaugural train) as he began to woo Clara (ten years younger). They married in Cleveland on February 4, 1874. In 1875 John and Clara moved from New York City to Cleveland where a Euclid Avenue mansion was being built for him by his father-in-law adjacent to his own mansion. Hay then worked for Stone's business interests.

In 1879 John Hay went to Washington, D.C. to become Assistant Secretary of State. A stalwart Republican, he made a widely acclaimed speech in Mark Hanna's Euclid Avenue Opera House on behalf of Clevelander James Garfield, the Republican presidential candidate (later assassinated soon after his election). He served in the State Department until Spring, 1881. In ill health, he and Clara went to Europe in July, 1882. That Fall and Winter, Amasa Stone's fortunes took a bad turn and on May 11, 1883 he committed suicide. Most of his immense estate went to his daughters Clara and Flora (who had married Cleveland industrialist Samuel Mather's son). This made Clara's husband John Hay a very wealthy man.

Hay and Henry Adams became close friends in Washington, D.C. Adams was the grandson of U.S. President John Quincy Adams and the great-grandson of John Adams, the second president of the United States. In 1884 they decided to build adjoining

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homes on Lafayette Square, opposite the White House. Completed in 1886, the Hay 12,000 square foot mansion was described as the finest house in Washington. Afterwards, the Hays would spend only occasional time in their Cleveland mansion on Euclid Avenue although Clara did return there on her own. Until he first became President William McKinley’s Ambassador to England in 1897 and then in 1898 his Secretary of State, the Hays spent most of their time in Washington and at their immense summer retreat in New Hampshire. According to Hay biographer John Taliaferro “It didn’t take much to keep Hay away from Cleveland .”

When Hay died on July 1, 1905, having also served as President Theodore Roosevelt’s Secretary of State following the assassination of President McKinley, Clara decided upon a Cleveland burial. It took place on July 5, 1905 with the casket going from Public Square to Lake View Cemetery, accompanied by a cavalry honor guard. In attendance were President Roosevelt, his Vice-President and cabinet and other high ranking politicians and a delegation of foreign ministers. Robert Lincoln was also there to honor Hay.

While the Hay mansion was demolished along with most others on Millionaires’ Row, there are two remaining vestiges of Hay’s tenuous relationship to Cleveland through his marriage to Clara Stone. Hay and Clara decided to leave Euclid Avenue and move to Wade Oval. However, with John’s death in 1905, they never occupied their new mansion whose construction was completed in 1911. It was sold to Cleveland steel executive Price McKinney. It is now owned by the Western Reserve Historical Society. Not far away in University Circle is the Cleveland Public Early College High School named for John Hay. These two buildings and the Hay burial site in Lake View Cemetery, not far from the Garfield Memorial, are reminders of John Hay and his Cleveland connection.

References

In addition to Joshua Zeitz’s *Lincoln’s Boys*, there is also John Taliaferro’s biography entitled *All the Great Prizes: The Life of John Hay, from Lincoln to Roosevelt* (2013).



John Hay Burial Site Lake View Cemetery

On a ridge in Lake View Cemetery’s Section 10 (‘millionaires’ row’), a larger-than-life marble, “Archangel St. Michael” looks over the burial site of John Milton Hay. Hay was buried here July 5, 1905. He joined his oldest son, Adelbert, who had died in 1878. Clara Stone Hay joined them in 1914.

There was no question about where Hay would be buried.

After her 1874 marriage to Hay, Clara’s father, Amasa Stone, built them a fine home on elegant Euclid Avenue, right next to his own magnificent residence. Later, June 13, 1882, he purchased a huge lot in Lake View Cemetery. Sooner than expected (1884) Stone himself was buried in part of this lot. Part of the Stone lot had already been reserved for Clara’s family (the Hays’ son, Adelbert.) Stone’s other daughter, Flora, married Samuel Mather so their Cleveland burial was assumed.



The Statue: The marble "Archangel St. Michael"

A Cleveland art historian tells us that Augustus Saint-Gaudens was asked to create the Hay memorial. Clara certainly had a connection with the sculptor: When living in Washington, The Hays lived next door to and were close friends with Henry Adams and his wife, Clover. Saint-Gaudens had sculpted the powerful memorial for Clover's burial site in Washington. He was recruited for the Hay memorial and began the design, but could not complete it due to his own terminal illness. He died just 2 years after John Hay. The monument was completed by James E. Fraser in 1916 and cut by the Piccirilli Brothers of New York. The stone is framed by surrounding trees, evergreen bushes and blue spruce.



Why "Archangel St. Michael"? It's a challenging question. Hay was a talented and active poet and may have included references to this major angel. Or, Clara may have wanted this highest of the archangels to represent her husband. We don't know. Another 'title' has also been found, "Perpetual Achievement of Peace". This may be appropriate for Hay who had done much in the Department of State to promote good will.

The marble has not weathered well. St. Michael's sword broke some time ago and has been replaced with a concrete facsimile. The eroded words on the tablet on the front of the statue (one has to squint to read this) are consistent with this theme: "The spirit of Righteousness Is Sown in Place of them that make peace."

John Hay lies in Cleveland in death, as well as in life, next door to his father-in-law Amasa Stone. Also close by are Clevelanders important to his life including James Garfield and John D. Rockefeller and not so far away, Marcus Hanna.

Marjorie Wilson

The December, 1864 Capture of Savannah

by Dennis Keating

William Tecumseh Sherman ended his epic March to the Sea by capturing the city of Savannah, Georgia. His army arrived there on December 10, 1864. On December 13 the division of William B. Hazen successfully assaulted Fort McAllister. Hazen was born in Vermont but grew up in Hiram, Ohio and became a friend of James Garfield. He distinguished himself at the battle of Stones River. In his postwar career, President Rutherford Hays appointed him the Army's Chief Signal Officer. He became embroiled in controversies with Generals George Armstrong Custer and David Stanley and Secretary of War Robert Todd Lincoln, resulting in his court martial in 1885.

Following the fall of Fort McAllister, General William Hardee's Confederates evacuated Savannah, which surrendered to Sherman on December 21. On December 22 Sherman sent his famous message to President Lincoln: "I beg to present to you as a Christmas gift, the city of Savannah, with one hundred and fifty heavy guns and plenty of ammunition, and also about twenty-five thousand bales of cotton". Lincoln responded in a December 26 letter thanking Sherman. Sherman would leave Savannah for his Carolinas campaign ending with the surrender of Joe Johnston's forces in North Carolina in Spring, 1865.

Noah Andre Trudeau. Southern Storm: Sherman's March to the Sea.



The Battle of Nashville, December 1864

by Dennis Keating

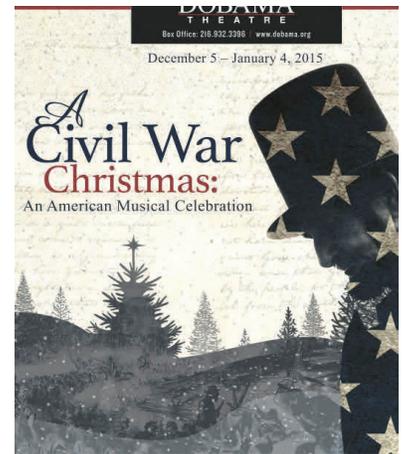
Despite his devastating defeat at Franklin on November 30, 1864, John Bell Hood drove his battered Army of Tennessee on to Nashville, where George Thomas' combined forces, including John Schofield's force, awaited him in the heavily fortified state capitol. Thomas had 55,000 troops facing Hood's barely 20,000. Yet, Hood presumed to besiege Nashville while awaiting Thomas' move. Meanwhile, Thomas was under pressure from Grant to attack Hood and Grant even sent John Logan to take command if Thomas had not yet attacked by his arrival. Hood had sent Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry off to attack Murfreesboro, further reducing his army. Thomas was prepared to attack, only to be delayed by an ice storm and following sub-freezing weather. Thomas finally launched his assault on December 15, sending James Steedman's U.S. Colored Troops to attack Hood's right flank, while launching the main assault on Hood's left. The Confederates were in retreat by day's end. Late on December 16, the Confederate left collapsed and Hood's decimated troops were routed. The badly defeated remnant of the Army of Tennessee finally reached Mississippi with about half of its number when it invaded Tennessee. It was effectively done as a fighting force. Hood resigned on January 13, 1865.

Reference: Wiley Sword. Confederacy's Last Hurrah: Spring Hill, Franklin and Nashville.



From December 2, 2014-February 23, 2015 there will be numerous Civil War-related events at the Main (Lee Road) Cleveland Heights Library (www.heightslibrary.org).

Dobama Theatre's will present it's production of "A Civil War Christmas December 5-January 4).



On January 28 (7 PM) our Marge Wilson will speak about "Clevelanders in the Civil War".



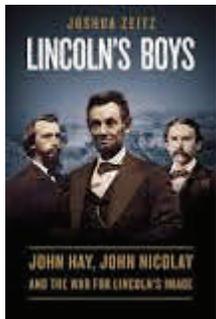
Photo from Cleveland Memory Project
<http://images.ulib.csuohio.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/press/id/2778/rec/6>



Lincoln's Boys: John Hay, John Nicolay, and the War for Lincoln's Image
by Joshua Zeitz

A Review by Dan Zeiser

In preparation for my December talk on John George Nicolay and John Hay, Lincoln's two (2) closest personal aides, I have just finished *Lincoln's Boys: John Hay, John Nicolay and the War for Lincoln's Image* by Joshua Zeitz. It is an excellent book, well written and easy to read. A welcome addition to any Civil War student's library, it is a must for any Lincoln scholar.



Make no mistake, this is not a biography of Nicolay and Hay. While it gives biographical sketches of their upbringing, the main thrust of this work is their relationship with Lincoln, how they came to appreciate him, and their efforts after his death to place him in the pantheon of American history. To them we owe the current image of Lincoln as master politician, the creator of the Team of Rivals, military genius, and Great Emancipator. Zeitz tells this tale very well. I will not dwell on the details, saving them for my presentation.

Divided into five (5) parts, the first gives biographical information for Nicolay and Hay. In many ways, they were polar opposites. Born in Germany, Nicolay came to America as a child. Without much formal education, he became a newspaper owner and editor in Illinois, where he was intimately involved in Republican politics. Hay was the child of a doctor, received an excellent education, both in Illinois and at Brown University, and wanted to become a poet, which, eventually, he did. Nicolay and Hay met in Springfield and became lifelong friends.

Part II details how they met Lincoln and served him as private secretaries during his presidency. Keep in mind that private secretaries then served very important roles that we do not ordinarily think of given the title. They were much more than just secretaries; they were central figures in all the major events of Lincoln's presidency. Part III tells of their lives after Lincoln's death. Having served and known Lincoln better than just about anyone, they were given important diplomatic posts in Europe.

Part IV is the heart of the book. Zeitz describes their efforts to create the image of the Lincoln they had come to appreciate. He argues that many of our current images of Lincoln stem from their ten (10) volume, 1.2 million word work. *Abraham Lincoln: A History* was not merely a biography of Lincoln. Nicolay and Hay wanted to show Lincoln both as a man created by and who helped create the times in which he lived. Zeitz argues well.

Finally, Part V gives a short history of Nicolay's and Hay's lives after their work was completed. In between these parts, Zeitz weaves the events of the day. He describes the creation of the Republican Party, Lincoln's efforts to gain the nomination in 1860, the events of the war, Reconstruction, and the changing view of the war promoted by Southern writers. This is broad history, covering seventy (70) years and many topics. It is well worth the read and highly recommended here.

REMEMBER

Our next meeting: Wednesday, December 10, 2014

Judson Manor

1890 East 107th St.

Cocktails: 6:00pm

Dinner: 6:30 pm

Please send an email to ccwrt1956@yahoo.com with your reservation