



Society Update

The Official Publication of the Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society

Spring 2014



The Civil War began on April 12, 1861, when Confederate warships bombed Union soldiers at Fort Sumter, South Carolina.

Three years later another conflict emerged: the right of soldiers to vote in their home districts while at war. Most northern states altered their election laws in order to allow absent soldiers to vote. However, the move was considered radical at the time and caused controversy in the states where it was enacted.

Michigan played its role in this part of the war with the election of 1864, 150 years ago.

The ballots of absent soldiers were decisive in the election of Washtenaw County Prosecutor Daniel Twitchell, a Republican. But among the civilian votes cast at home, the Democrat Amos Blodgett received more votes. The county election canvassers deemed the soldier-voting law unconstitutional, and gave the election to Blodgett. Twitchell contested the outcome in Court, eventually reaching the Michigan Supreme Court in 1865.

This important Michigan Supreme Court opinion is the topic of the historical vignette at this year's Annual Luncheon on Thursday, April 10. It will be presented by attorney historian David A. Collins.

People v Blodgett was decided by three of the Big Four justices (Thomas M. Cooley, Isaac P. Christianity, and James V. Campbell) and led by the Court's first Chief Justice George Martin.

Society Annual Luncheon Thursday, April 10, 2014



*“Arrogance or Vigilance:
Michigan’s High Court Says No to
Absentee Voting for Civil War
Soldiers”*

by David A. Collins

Visit www.micourthistory.org
to register for this year's Luncheon.

Civil War Justices



Joseph Copeland

Joseph T. Copeland, 14th Justice

Michigan Supreme Court 1852–1857

Copeland was born in Maine on May 6, 1813. He attended Harvard University and later read law with Daniel Webster. President Andrew Jackson sent him on a “secret mission” to Michigan, and returned in 1844 to settle in St. Clair.

Copeland had a long career as a gentleman soldier. When the Civil War broke out he raised a Michigan Cavalry Regiment and drilled under McClellan on the Potomac. He lost command of his regiment when McClellan was removed, and was forced to watch while General Custer led his regiment at Gettysburg, the bloodiest battle of the Civil War. “General” Copeland resigned his commission on November 8, 1865.

He died on May 6, 1893, eighty years to the day of his birth.

Allen B. Morse, 29th Justice

Michigan Supreme Court 1885–1892

Morse was born in Michigan and studied at Michigan Agricultural College (now Michigan State University). He taught school and had begun to study the law before enlisting in the Union Army. He served in a number of different capacities as a member of Michigan’s 16th Infantry. During the storming of Missionary Ridge, he was wounded and lost his left arm. Upon his discharge from the war, he resumed his law studies and began practicing law in Ionia County.

“Ever at the post of duty, either in the office or on the field, he won the esteem and confidence of his superior officers and the love and respect of his juniors.” his superior officer F.T. Sherman



Allen B. Morse



Charles D. Long

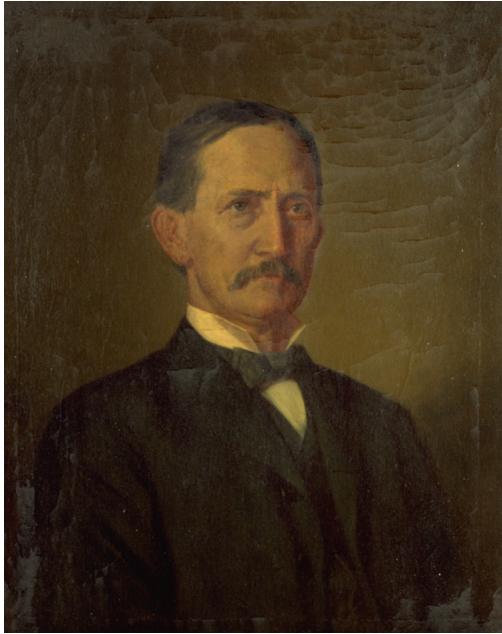
Charles D. Long, 30th Justice

Michigan Supreme Court 1888–1902

Long was born in Grand Blanc, Michigan, on June 14, 1841. He was preparing himself to enter the University of Michigan and teaching when the Civil War began, drastically altering his plans. He served in Company A of the 8th Michigan Infantry. On April 16, 1862, during the Battle of Wilmington Island, Georgia, he lost his left arm. A bullet was also lodged in his thigh where it remained for the rest of his life.

Toward the end of Long’s life he was engaged in various legal battles over his pension rights as a Civil War veteran. His service on the Michigan Supreme Court was interrupted by pain from his wounds in 1902 and he subsequently died.

Civil War Justices



Edward Cahill

Edward Cahill, 31st Justice

Michigan Supreme Court 1890

Cahill was born on August 3, 1843, in Kalamazoo, Michigan. In 1862, he joined the Union Army and fought in Kentucky until he was discharged later that year due to illness. He returned to Kalamazoo and began studying law in the offices of Miller and Barns.

In the fall of 1863, he raised the first African American Infantry Unit in Michigan and served with these men, eventually attaining the rank of Captain, until the end of the war.

African Americans constituted ten percent of the entire Union Army by the end of the war, and nearly 40,000 died over the course of the war.

Cahill, who was the great-nephew of Michigan Governor and Supreme Court Justice Epaphroditus Ransom, was appointed to the bench in 1890 to replace Thomas R. Sherwood.

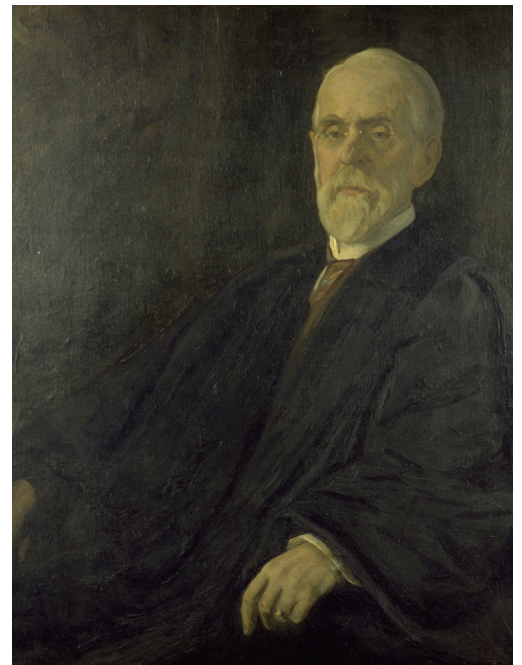
Claudius B. Grant, 32nd Justice

Michigan Supreme Court 1890–1909

Grant was born in Maine on October 2, 1835. He entered the University of Michigan at age 20, and following the completion of his studies taught school in Ann Arbor. He resigned as principal in the school district to serve in the Union Army.

He participated in many notable battles and resigned from duty in 1864 with the rank of Colonel, a title he carried proudly throughout the rest of his life. Later in life, he was very disciplined in keeping in touch with his regiment and never missed a reunion with his comrades in arms.

Immediately after the war, Grant entered law school at the University of Michigan. Upon admittance to the Bar, he began practicing with former Justice and Governor Alpheus Felch, and married Felch's eldest daughter, Caroline.

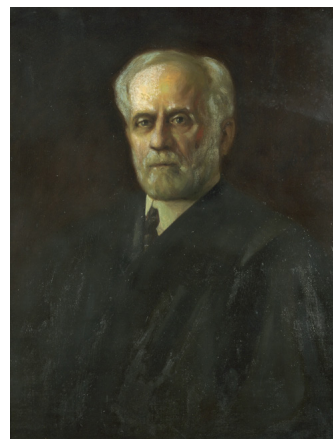


Claudius B. Grant



Robert M. Montgomery
34th Justice, 1892–1910

Montgomery, born in Eaton Rapids, enlisted in the Union Army and was a part of the 7th Michigan Cavalry, but did not see active service during the Civil War.



Joseph B. Moore
37th Justice, 1895–1925

Moore was born November 3, 1845. He tried to enlist in the Union Army, however, upon arrival in the barracks the surgeon refused to accept him and his brother took his place in the ranks.



MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1st Floor, Hall of Justice
925 W. Ottawa Street
Lansing, MI 48915



Inquiry Into Isaac Marston

A member of the Poyntzpass & District Local History Society in Northern Ireland is researching Michigan Supreme Court Justice Isaac Marston who emigrated from Poyntzpass to Michigan in 1856. Specifically, he is searching to:

- understand the exact legacy that Isaac left behind (an improved codification of offenses?)
- connect with descendants of Isaac Marston
- connect with residents of Bay City
- connect with residents of Detroit

Can anyone help?

Contact Hugh Daly with information at hugh.daly@tesco.net
