



Rebel Underground

Sons of Confederate Veterans
Major John C. Hutto Camp # 443
Jasper, Alabama

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Confederate Powder Works

The tall chimney at left is the last surviving part of the Confederate Powder Works complex in Augusta, Georgia. Chief of Ordnance Brigadier General Josiah Gorgas

Please join the Major John C. Hutto Camp on Sunday, November 17, 2019, at 2:00 pm for our regular camp meeting

History and marketing teacher at Middleton High School (TN) and adjunct history professor for Jackson State Community College, Professor Randy Bishop will be speaking. Professor Bishop is a member of several historical associations and preservation groups and the Sons of Confederate Veterans.



Josiah Gorgas
(1818-1883)

by Donna R
Causey & Leah
Rawls Atkins

Josiah Gorgas was born July 1, 1818, in Running Pumps, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania. He was graduated from West Point in 1841 and was assigned to the Ordnance Department.

Gorgas served in arsenals in different parts of the country before the Civil War broke out. Early in his career, Gorgas served at Watervliet Arsenal near Troy, New York, and at the Detroit Arsenal. Following the Mexican-American War, Gorgas served in

Pennsylvania and in November 1851 was transferred to Fort Monroe in Virginia. There he began his association with the Tredegar Iron Company, which would become an important Southern foundry once the Civil War began.

Gorgas went on to serve at the Mount Vernon Arsenal north of Mobile, Alabama beginning in 1853 where he met and married Amelia Gayle, daughter of former Alabama governor John Gayle. She was born in Greensboro, Hale County, Alabama. He served in the Mexican-American War and was promoted to captain in 1855.

The Gorgas family lived in Mount Vernon until mid-1856 and then moved to various arsenal locations in Maine, South Carolina, and Pennsylvania.

As the political situation deteriorated, Gorgas faced a daunting decision: whether to stay with the regular army or resign his

U.S. Army commission. Josiah was commanding the Frankford Arsenal when he resigned from the United States Army on March 21, 1861 (effective April 3). It seems to have been motivated as much by his various career resentments as by political principle. His Southern friends urged him in the direction of the Confederacy but not, apparently, his wife. “It was a heart-rending decision for him,” Gorgas’s biographer Frank Everson Vandiver has written, “and he made it alone, for Amelia remained a silent onlooker. The consequence was a permanent estrangement from his large family in Pennsylvania.”

“In 1861 Josiah received an appointment as chief of ordnance for the Confederacy. He relocated to Richmond, Virginia, with the rest of the Confederate government in June 1862, and his family joined him soon thereafter. When Josiah fled Richmond with the Confederate government in April 1865, his family, which by this time included

William Crawford and sisters Jessie, Mary Gayle, Christine Amelia, and Maria Bayne and brother, Richard Haynsworth, moved in with Amelia’s sister in Richmond. Later that year, the two sisters and their children moved to Maryland.”

“His most pressing concern was the Confederacy’s shocking lack of military hardware. An inventory turned up only 159,010 small arms and about a thousand cannon—many of which were old and obsolete—that had been captured at Norfolk Navy Yard and from forts along the Atlantic coast. Underdeveloped Southern manufacturing meant that initially the Confederacy would be forced to rely on importing goods, but the Union blockade of the Atlantic and Gulf coasts complicated this plan.

Gorgas sent Major Caleb Huse to Europe to trade cotton for ordnance and provisions and eventually established the Bureau of

Foreign Supplies to maintain the flow of imported goods, especially munitions, powder, copper, tin, saltpeter, and lead; he also organized a fleet of blockade-runners to bring them to Southern ports. Until 1863, about 90 percent of the weapons used by Confederate armies were either imported from Europe or captured from Union armies.

That balance began to shift because of Gorgas's efforts to increase Southern industrial capacity. He quickly established armories to manufacture weapons but was challenged by a lack of skilled labor and the proper machinery. He organized cannon foundries in Macon, Columbus, and Augusta—all in Georgia—and, in the last community, created the Augusta Powder Works, the largest manufacturer of its kind in North America.

At its peak, a new ironworks in Selma, Alabama, was able to process thirty tons of

pig iron daily; shot and shell, meanwhile, were manufactured in Salisbury, Virginia, and Montgomery, Alabama. To supply these facilities with raw materials, he created the Nitre and Mining Bureau and reinforced preexisting railroads to ease shipment of both raw materials and finished goods.

All of these efforts contributed to Gorgas's ability to turn plowshares into swords, as the title of Vandiver's biography would have it. Ingenuity was important, as well. Saltpeter for gunpowder was discovered in limestone caves in the Appalachian Mountains and Southern women were encouraged to save the contents of their chamber pots, from which the same mineral could be leached.

Church and plantation bells were melted down for bronze, and battlefields were combed for lead and repairable weapons. The historian James M. McPherson has called Gorgas; Isaac M. St. John, who

headed the Nitre and Mining Bureau; and George W. Rains, superintendent of the Augusta Powder Works, the “unsung heroes of the Confederate war effort.” Their contributions were crucial to waging war but they were not able to share in battlefield glory and the Confederate high command was slow to promote them. Gorgas did not become a brigadier general until November 10, 1864.

Still, Gorgas was rightfully pleased with his accomplishment. In 1864, he wrote in his diary, “Where three years ago we were not making a gun, a pistol nor a saber, no shot nor shell (except at the Tredegar ironworks)—a pound of powder—we now make all these in quantities to meet the demand of our large armies.” Indeed, when the Army of Northern Virginia surrendered at Appomattox on April 9, 1865, Confederate general Robert E. Lee’s veterans had been without food for three days, but each emaciated infantryman

nevertheless carried seventy-five rounds of ammunition.

In 1866, Josiah Gorgas and several other investors reopened an existing iron works at Brierfield, Alabama, and his family joined him there. The years in Brierfield were happy for the family. The other directors appointed him to manage the iron works and he moved his family to the furnace site. Due to high operating and management costs, he was forced to lease the iron works after just a couple of years in operation.

The iron works failed in 1869, and Josiah Gorgas took a position as headmaster at the University of the South at Sewanee, Tennessee, set in a remote, mountain-top wilderness and populated largely by ex-Confederates.

In 1878, he was elected president of the University of Alabama and moved into an 1829 mansion on campus. A series of

strokes left him incapacitated. When he was forced to resign due to ill health, the trustees gave him the house for his retirement. The building was dedicated as a memorial to the family in 1944 and is now known as Gorgas House.



Built in 1829, the Gorgas House Museum is the oldest structure on the University of Alabama campus.

Originally serving as the student dining hall, campus hotel, and residence for the university's steward, it is one of only four current buildings on campus to survive the burning of the university by Union troops in 1865.

His widow was installed as the university's librarian. The main university library is named the Amelia Gayle Gorgas Library. Their oldest son, William Crawford Gorgas (born 1854) served as Surgeon General of the U.S. Army and is credited with implementing preventative measures against malaria that allowed for the completion of the Panama Canal.

Josiah Gorgas died at the age of 65 in Tuscaloosa in 1883 and he and his wife Amelia are buried in Evergreen Cemetery in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.



Dr. William Crawford Gorgas (1854-1920)
Tuscaloosa, Alabama

William Crawford Gorgas, Alabama native, is known throughout the world as the conqueror of the mosquito, and the malaria and yellow fever it transmits.

His pioneer efforts in halting an epidemic of yellow fever enabled the United States to complete the Panama Canal after earlier attempts had fallen before the onslaught of the treacherous insect.

Gorgas was a United States Army physician and 22nd Surgeon General of the U.S. Army (1914–1918).

William Crawford Gorgas was born in Toulminville, Mobile County, Alabama, October 3, 1854, at the home of his grandfather, John Gayle, a former governor of Alabama.

William Crawford was the first of six children of Josiah Gorgas and Amelia (Gayle) Gorgas. His father was president of

the University of Alabama and his mother was daughter of Governor Gayle. She became the librarian at the University of Alabama. The Gorgas home is still on the campus.

After studying at The University of the South and Bellevue Hospital Medical College, Dr. Gorgas was appointed to the US Army Medical Corps in June 1880.

He was assigned to three posts — Fort Clark, Fort Duncan, and Fort Brown—in Texas. While at Fort Brown (1882–84), he survived yellow fever and met Marie Cook Doughty, whom he married in 1885.

Since he had yellow fever, he was immune to the disease. He also treated his future wife when she contracted the disease, and for this reason, Gorgas and his wife were posted to Havana during the occupation of Cuba, as the city was ravaged with yellow fever and malaria.

In 1898, after the end of the Spanish-American War, he was appointed Chief Sanitary Officer in Havana, working to eradicate yellow fever and malaria. He served as president of the American Medical Association in 1909–10.

Gorgas was made Surgeon General of the Army in 1914. In this capacity, he was able to capitalize on the momentous work of another Army doctor, Major Walter Reed, who had himself capitalized on insights of a Cuban doctor, Carlos Finlay, to prove the mosquito transmission of yellow fever.

While Cuban physician Carlos Juan Finlay discovered the role mosquitoes play in transmitting disease; it was Gorgas' task to prevent the insect from playing that role.

His first efforts against yellow fever were in Havana, where more than 500 deaths to the disease had been counted in each of the preceding ten years.

Gorgas assumed the herculean task of listing, inspecting, and controlling every possible breeding place in the city. Within months the city was clear of yellow fever and it was 18 years before another yellow fever death occurred.

In the Canal Zone, Gorgas successfully maintained a zone in which mosquitoes could not exist around the canal workers as they progressed across the narrow Isthmus of Panama.

Yellow fever was so much of a problem in the 1890s that they wrote songs about it. As such, Gorgas won international fame battling the illness—then the scourge of tropical and sub-tropical climates—first in Florida, later in Havana, Cuba and finally at the Panama Canal.

A lesser man than Gorgas might have failed before the opposition he encountered even after the success at Havana gained world-

wide publicity and acclaim.

United States officials in the Canal Zone refused to believe in Gorgas. They pigeon-holed his requests for equipment, refused him authority to deal with the people, discredited him to higher authorities and frequently clamored for his dismissal. Only the faith and authority placed in General Gorgas by President Theodore Roosevelt enabled him to complete his task.

Meanwhile Alabama Power Company was generating electricity in Alabama to help in the World War I war material manufacturing efforts, and after the war providing electricity to public consumers.

After the war, owners in Alabama Power and members of congress began efforts to rename the generating plant and community at Gorgas in honor of former Surgeon General of the Army William C. Gorgas, who had testified on behalf of the utility in a

series of lawsuits claiming that the construction of Lay Dam was responsible for an outbreak of mosquito-borne illnesses.

In 1918 Alabama Power Company owner Tom Martin and Senator John H. Bankhead Sr., visited with General William C. Gorgas in Washington and asked his permission to name the new post office at the Gorgas plant community after the general.

Martin never forgot his friends or those who stood by him in adversity, and he always gave General Gorgas credit for saving the company with his testimony in the mosquito lawsuits.

Besides that, Martin thought the Alabama native deserved the recognition of having a post office and a community in his home state named for him; however, the steam plant was not dedicated to Gorgas until 1944.

Dr. Gorgas died July 3, 1920, in London, England from a stroke and his body was interred in Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia. His wife Marie and daughter, Aileen are also buried there.

SOURCES

Encyclopedia of Alabama
Encyclopedia of Virginia
Alabama Hall of Fame, 1968
*'Developed for the Service of Alabama':
The Centennial History of the Alabama
Power Company*

[Gorgas House Museum Gallery](#)

Twelve (12) pictures

HUTTO CAMP OFFICERS

Commander	James R. Blackston
1 st Lt. Cmd.	John Tubbs
2nd Lt. Cmd.	Jeremy Jackson
Adjutant	Trent Harris
Chaplain	Barry Cook
Communications.	Gene Herren
Facebook	Brandon Prescott
.	Jeremy Jackson
Quartermaster	Barry Cook
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