

GEORGE CONGDON GORHAM

1832 - 1909

**Author, Editorial Writer & Biographer, Secretary of the United States Senate,
friend and confidant of Presidents**

by Dave Mills; 29 October 2025; davemillsaz@icloud.com

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George Congdon GORHAM



George Congdon

Birth: 5 Jul 1832, Greenport, Suffolk, New York [8, p G5],
[13, Vol. 11, p 575], [38, p 2], [802, place only],
[4059, p 1 & p 3]

Removal: 19 Dec 1849, San Francisco, San Francisco,
California, age: 17 [3518, p 1; year & state only],
[3910], [4059, p 1 & p 4], [4060, p 3]

Memo: onboard Bark Flora, from New London; listed as "G.
Gorman"

Removal: Feb 1850, Marysville, Yuba, California, age: 17
[4060, p 14]

Removal: abt Jun 1853, East, age: 20 [3910]

Memo: via Panama; remained nearly 20 months

Removal: abt 1855, Marysville, Yuba, California, age: 22 [3062]

Memo: Editor of Marysville newspaper, 1855

Removal: 7 Feb 1855, San Francisco, San Francisco, California, age: 22 [3910]

Memo: must have crossed Isthmus just before the Panama R. R. was completed

Removal: 1859, Sacramento, Sacramento, California, age: 26 [3518, p 1]

Removal: mid 1860s, San Francisco, San Francisco, California, age: 32 [3518, p 2]

Removal: 1867, Washington, DC, age: 34 [3518, p 2]

Will: 1892, age: 59 [4072]

Death: 11 Feb 1909, Washington, DC, age: 76 [808], [4059, p 3]

Burial: 13 Feb 1909, Rock Creek Cemetery, Washington, DC [808]

Occupation: Secretary of the U. S. Senate, 1868-1879 [3518]

Residence: San Francisco, Calif. & Washington, D. C; lived in Washington, DC since
1868; residence: 1763 Q St. N.W. [13, 11:600], [800]

URL:
<https://loc.harpweek.com/LCPoliticalCartoons/DisplayCartoonMedium.asp?SearchText=&UniqueID=11&Year=1867>

Flags: Mayflower Descendant

Father: **George GORHAM** (21 Feb 1809-24 Apr 1836)

Mother: **Martha Peckham CONGDON** [40, p 232] (abt 1807-28 Nov 1869)

- Birth: Family records and accounts point to Greenport, L. I., New York as place of Birth, but no certificate available. [800]
- Came around the Cape Horn. Arrived off the heads at San Francisco, 19 Dec 1849. [3910]
- The information contained in the list was extracted from the December, 1912 edition of the "Constitution, By-Laws and List of Members" of The Society of California Pioneers as published by the Society.
Gorham, George C. Dec. 19, 1849 [3925, p 1]

• [excerpts] When I sailed from my home in New London, Connecticut, for California in the Summer of 1849, little was known of that distant region. Our war with Mexico was at an end, and the treaty of peace in which California was ceded to the United States had been proclaimed by President Polk on the 4th of July 1848. Letters from some of our army officers in California were published in Eastern papers in the Fall of that year, given accounts of the discovery of gold and the general rush for the mines. These were confirmed by the President in his annual message, his statements being based on the official report of General Mason, then in command of that military department.

The "California Fever", as it was called, rose rapidly throughout the country and in nearly every seaport vessels large and small were bought by rapidly organized companies and fitted out for California. During the year three ships, four barks and eleven schooners were fitted out for such voyages at New London. Sometime in the Spring of 1849, a strong impulse was given to the excitement there by the arrival, directly from San Francisco, of the "Flora," a New London whaling bark of three hundred and thirty-eight tons burden. Having gone into that port her crew had deserted her and gone to the mines. After considerable delay a new crew was shipped and she returned home. Here were witnesses directly from the New Eldorado. A company soon bought her and rapidly made her ready for sea. She sailed July 3rd, 1849. I took passage on her, being attracted not only by the stories of successful gold hunting, but by accounts of the large salaries paid to clerks in San Francisco, ranging from \$1,800 to \$3,600 a year, for services which I was sure I could render. Being but seventeen years of age and of a slight build, I had some doubt of being equal to the work in the mines.

Five months and a half later, after passing through calms, — including one of ten days at the Equator, — and gales, — including a fierce one of twenty-six days off Cape Horn; after

experiencing the heat of the tropics within two hundred and fifty miles of Africa and the cold of the Frigid Zone as far South as Latitude 60°; after making the acquaintance of whales, porpoises, flying-fish, albatross (always called “gonies” by the sailors), Cape Frio pigeons, and “Mother [blank] Chickens;” after a ten days visit at St. Catherines in Brazil, and five days in Talcuahana, Chile; and after we had sufficiently enjoyed each other’s society and the long imprisonment on shipboard, we arrived at San Francisco on the 19th of December 1849. [4060, pp 1-3]

- In the latter part of February [1850], I left San Francisco on a small schooner bound for Yuba City. We crossed San Francisco, San Pablo and Suisun Bays and sailed up the Sacramento and Feather rivers, reaching our destination after a voyage of ten days. The place would have furnished a good model for Dicken’s “Eden.” The proprietors of the town site had offered to give alternate lots to those who would build houses thereon. The consequence was that the locality was dotted with little, insignificant, uninhabited and uninhabitable structures of one story, ten or twelve feet square, without floors, constructed of “shakes” or rough timbers made by the sole use of axe and wedge. The donees then waited for the donors to improve the intermediate lots they reserved. They waited in vain. There was better management at Marysville, about two miles distant on the Yuba River, near its mouth, and there I took up my abode. No lots there were given away. A few active men had brought merchandise of various kinds, and quickly set up their cloth covered frame houses for stores about the small plaza. Their activity encouraged that great advance agent, the saloon, to erect itself; and a few gamblers, fiddlers and singers lent their talent to make the evenings lively. It was now March, and placer mining was beginning to reward the labors of the prospectors both on the Yuba and the Feather Rivers, and the little town grew rapidly [4060, pp 14-15]

- Marysville was a typical California town during the period of transition from a Mexican “department” to the organized state of California. The necessity of a local government was first felt in January, 1850 from the want of an officer to acknowledge deeds. The universal national American remedy of a town meeting was at once resorted to, and Stephen J. Field was elected Alcalde. [4060, p 16]

- Judge Field appointed me his clerk on the 20th of March 1850. [4060, p 17]

- I [Tom Rueter] was searching the web last night and came across this statement by

Stephan J. Field in Reminiscences of Early California - Yuba County History.

Personal reminiscences of early days in California, with other sketches.

EXPERIENCES AS ALCALDE.

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One day whilst I was Alcalde, a bright-looking lad, with red cheeks and apparently about seventeen years of age came into the office and asked if I did not want a clerk. I said I did, and would willingly give \$200 a month for a good one; but that I had written to Sacramento and was expecting one from there. The young man suggested that perhaps the one from Sacramento would not come or might be delayed, and he would like to take the place in [p.39] the meanwhile. I replied, very well, if he was willing to act until the other arrived, he might do so. And thereupon he took hold and commenced work. Three days afterwards the man from Sacramento arrived; but in the meanwhile I had become so much pleased with the brightness and quickness of my young clerk that I would not part with him. That young clerk was George C. Gorham, the present Secretary of the United States Senate. I remember him distinctly as he first appeared to me, with red and rosy cheeks. His quickness of comprehension was really wonderful. Give him half an idea of what was wanted, and he would complete it as it were by intuition. I remember on one occasion he wanted to know what was necessary for a marriage settlement. I asked him why. He replied that he had been employed by a French lady to prepare such a settlement, and was to receive twenty-five dollars for the instrument. I gave him some suggestions, but added that he had better let me see the document after he had written it. In a short time afterwards he brought it to me, and I was astonished to find it so nearly perfect. There was only one correction to make. And thus ready I always found him. With the most general directions he would execute everything committed to his charge, and usually with perfect correctness. He remained with me several months, and acted as clerk of my Alcalde court, and years afterwards, at different times was a clerk in my office. When I went upon the bench of the Supreme Court, I appointed him clerk of the Circuit Court of the United States for the District of California, and, with the [p.40] exception of the period during which he acted as secretary of Gov. Low, he remained as such clerk until he was nominated for the office of governor of the State, when he resigned. Through the twenty-seven years of our acquaintance, from 1850 to the present time, July, 1877, his friendship and esteem have been sincere and cordial, which no personal abuse of me could change and no political differences between us could alienate. His worldly

possessions would have been more abundant had he pursued the profession of the law, which I urged him to do; and his success as a public man would have been greater, had he been more conciliatory to those who differed from him in opinion.[p.41] [3925, pp 2-3]

- George C. Gorham, another early-day lawyer of Marysville, became secretary of the United States Senate, through the efforts of his friend, Judge Stephen J. Field, a position he held many years. He was distinguished as a great orator. [211, p 127]
- He resided in 1896 at 1763 Q Street, Washington, D. C. He was for many years Clerk of the U. S. Court at San Francisco, Cal., Republican candidate for Governor in 1867, and afterwards Secretary of the Senate of the United States. He wrote a biography of Edwin M. Stanton, in two volumes. [13, p 600]
- 12 June 1867, George C. Gorham was nominated for governor of California by the Union Party. He was defeated by Henry H. Haight, the nominee of the Democratic Party. [13, p 601]
- Henry Huntley Haight, born at Rochester, NY, May 20, 1825; died at San Francisco, Cal., Sept. 2, 1878; graduate of Yale, 1844. He removed from Rochester, NY to St. Louis in 1846 where he began the practice of law, but left St. Louis Nov. 1849, for California and arrived at San Francisco, July 20, 1850. He was eminently successful in the practice of law in San Francisco and acquired a considerable fortune. He was elected on the Democratic ticket Sept. 5, 1867, Governor of the State of California over George C. Gorham, the Republican candidate, by a majority of 10,000 votes, being the first Democratic Governor elected after the Civil War. He held the office of Governor until December, 1871. [790, p 619]
- Clerk of the Marysville City Council from 1856 to 1857. [814]
- George C. Gorham, 1859-60. Was admitted here but never practiced. Editor of the Marysville Daily Enquirer, 1855-56, and the Marysville National Democrat, 1859. On the San Francisco Nation, 1860, and the Sacramento Union, 1861. Clerk in United States District Court, 1865-67. Candidate for Governor, 1867. Secretary United States Senate, 1868-79. Secretary National Republican Executive Committee, 1876. [3062]
- In that campaign [for Governor] I was loaded down with issues on which a majority of

our people had never been obtained. Our State had voted for the Union, but not for the equal rights of the colored people. I was invited to address the Anti-Chinese Societies in San Francisco, and declined in a letter disapproving their scheme of proscription and inhumanity. This created the most intense prejudice against me. The whole Congressional scheme of reconstruction had just been enacted, and this was its first presentation for endorsement on the Pacific coast. So earnest was the general desire for Republican success that the Governor of Oregon, and Senator Stewart, and Representative Fitch, of Nevada, came into the canvass, and spoke at all prominent points during the campaign. I was caricatured from one end of the State to the other, with a negro, a Chinaman, and an Indian on my shoulders. I made nearly forty speeches in the open air, traveling about two thousand miles to meet appointments, and everywhere proclaimed the most advanced views of the party, among other things, advocating the idea since embodied in the Fifteenth Amendment. [4071, p 7]

from HarpWeek cartoon (transcription):

THE RECONSTRUCTION POLICY OF CONGRESS, As illustrated in California

Complete Explanation:

A satire aimed at California Republican gubernatorial nominee George C. Gorham's espousal of voting rights for blacks and other minorities.

Brother Jonathan (left) admonishes Gorham, "Young Man! read the history of your Country, and learn that this ballot box was dedicated to the white race alone. The load you are carrying will sink you in perdition, where you belong, or my name is not Jonathan." He holds his hand protectively over a glass ballot box, which sits on a pedestal before him.

At center stands Gorham, whose shoulders support, one atop the other, a black man, a Chinese man, and an Indian warrior. The black man complains to Gorham, ". . . I spose we'se obliged to carry dese brudders, Kase des'se no stinkshun ob race or culler any more, for Kingdom cum."

Gorham replies, "Shut your mouth Cuffy--you're as indiscreet as Bidwell [another gubernatorial nominee] and Dwinelle--here's the way I express it--{grave}The war of opinion is not yet fought through. It must go on until national citizenship shall no longer be controlled by local authority, and "Manhood alone" shall be the test of the right to a voice in the Government.'" Chinese man: "Boss Gollam belly good man. He say chinaman vo-tee all same me1ican man--Ketch--ee mine all same--no pay taxee--belly

good.” Indian: “Chemue Walla! Ingen vote! plenty whisky all time--Gorom big ingin.” At right a man in a top hat, holding a monkey on a leash, calls out mockingly, “Say, Gorham! put this Brother up.”

- [excerpts] Into this volatile situation stepped former Secretary of the Senate George C. Gorham. Up to this point, the 51-year-old Republican had enjoyed an active career. Born in New York on July 5, 1832, and educated in Connecticut, he moved to California in 1849 -- joining other “49ers” in the mad rush to discover gold. Quickly tiring of that quest, he won a position as law clerk with Stephen J. Field, who became his lifelong mentor and friend. (Field went on to serve on the California Supreme Court and then the U.S. Supreme Court, where he would become the second-longest-serving justice in that body’s history.)

In 1859, Gorham shifted to journalistic pursuits, first as assistant editor of the Sacramento Daily Standard and then editor of the San Francisco Daily Nation. During the mid-1860s, thanks to Justice Field, he served as clerk of the U.S. circuit court in San Francisco. In 1867 he ran as Republican candidate for governor of California. His efforts to gain better treatment of that state’s exploited Chinese immigrant population proved unpopular with many voters and contributed to his defeat. Gorham then moved to Washington, D.C. to represent California on the Republican National Committee. On June 6, 1868, with an assist from California’s influential Senator John Conness, he won election as Secretary of the Senate, succeeding John Forney, who had resigned at the conclusion of Andrew Johnson’s impeachment trial.

Gorham’s eleven years as Secretary spanned the post-Civil War Reconstruction era -- a time of great turbulence for the Senate and the nation.

When the Democrats gained control of the Senate in March 1879, they quickly replaced Gorham, who had been an active and outspoken Republican throughout his tenure. In 1880, the former Secretary became editor of the National Republican and quickly displayed his talents as a gifted editorial writer.

Gorham retired from the National Republican in 1884 and devoted the remaining quarter-century of his life to writing. His most notable accomplishment of that period was an authoritative two-volume biography of Edwin Stanton, Abraham Lincoln’s Secretary of War. [3518, pp 1-2]

- TROUBLE AT BODIE

Mine Officials and a Sheriff Flee for Their Lives

Virginia (Nev.) Chronicle, January 9

There was a report on the street last night that C. F. McKinney, Sheriff at Bodie, together with Superintendent B. R. Taylor of the Noonday mine and George Gorham, a lawyer from San Francisco, were driven from Bodie by the miners of the Noonday Mining Company last Saturday night, and had to flee for their lives, the miners threatening to hang them. The Chronicle reporter has not been able to get full particulars of the affair, but the street rumor is as follows:

About forty miners of the Noonday mine last month, for wages due, attached the property of the Noonday Company, consisting of about \$10,000 in bullion and \$2500 in quicksilver. James Showers (then Sheriff) attached the property, but advised the miners to let the company take the bullion to San Francisco, the Superintendent of the mine giving his work that when the bullion was converted into coin the men would be paid. On the 1st of January Showers was succeeded by McKinney as Sheriff, and the affair remained unsettled. The miners, seeing no chance of getting their wages, waited upon Superintendent Taylor, who put them off for a few days, and then having affairs growing very hot, left town with Gorham, the company's attorney. The miners were indignant, and threatened the life of Sheriff McKinney, who left immediately for Bridgeport. It is charged that both Showers and McKinney were in the scheme to defraud the miners of their pay, and that they played into the hands of the Superintendent and attorney. There is no truth in the report which has been freely circulated to day of the hanging of the Sheriff. Threats were made, however, not only to hang him, but to burn the works. The local paper is as silent as the grave, and it is evident that strong influences are at work to prevent publication. [8, undated]

- Member of the Society of Mayflower Descendants in the State of New York, 1907, General No. 115, State No. 115. [793, p 49]

- **WIELDED STRONG PEN**

Gorham Pronounced One of the Ablest Editorial Writers

BIOGRAPHER OF STANTON

Of Pronounced Convictions and Enduring Attachments

DEATH FOLLOWS ACTIVE LIFE

Came to Washington From California Over Forty Years Ago –

Funeral Tomorrow Morning

The funeral of George C. Gorham, the veteran newspaper man, who died at his place of residence, 1763 Q Street, early yesterday morning, will be held from his late home at 11 o'clock tomorrow morning. Rev. Dr. Wallace Radcliffe of the New York avenue Presbyterian Church will conduct the services. The pallbearers will be: Mr. Justice Harlan and Mr. Justice Brewer of the Supreme Court, Senator Henry M. Teller of Colorado, former Senator William M. Stewart of Nevada, Joseph Cranford and James R. Watson. The burial will be private.

Mr. Gorham, who died after a short illness, was seventy-seven years old and for forty years had been well known in Washington. His career in journalism and politics was a notable one. From the time he came to Washington in 1868 until the day of his death he was closely associated with the leading men of the country.

Entered Politics in California.

Although a native of New York, Mr. Gorham went to California at an early age and there laid his foundation for the great reputation he afterward made as a newspaper writer. When about eighteen years old he left Greenport, N. Y., where he was born in 1832, for New London, Conn. There he embarked for California, making the trip around the Horn. The gold fever did not hit Mr. Gorham when he reached California. He engaged in mercantile pursuits first, and later became clerk to Stephen J. Field, the alcalde [mayor] of Marysville, who was later an associate justice of the United States Supreme Court. Mr. Gorham took an active part in California politics, and was once candidate for governor of that state, being defeated by a few votes on account of his efforts to gain better treatment for the Chinese.

In 1868 Mr. Gorham came to Washington, and was made secretary of the Senate, which office he held until 1879. In 1880 he became editor of the National Republican of this city, and for four years his editorials in that publication attracted attention all over the country. He was pronounced one of the best editorial writers this country ever produced. Some of his most effective leaders were written in support of the bill creating the interstate commerce commission, and especially the long and short haul clause.

Until the presidential campaign of 1896 Mr. Gorham was an ardent republican, but in that year he espoused the cause of William Jennings Bryan. He stuck to Bryan ever after, working hard for the Nebraskan at every opportunity. In 1900 he wrote the democratic campaign book.

Biographer of Stanton.

In later years Mr. Gorham continued to write a great deal. In 1899 he completed and published a biography of Edwin M. Stanton, Lincoln's Secretary of War. This work is a textbook in many schools. While secretary of the Senate Mr. Gorham married Miss Effie Bassett, daughter of David Bassett of this city. One daughter, Maud Bassett Gorham, was born to them.

Senator Stewart's Tribute.

Ex-Senator William M. Stewart of Nevada, a warm personal friend of Mr. Gorham, paid him the following tribute:

"Gorham was one of the most remarkable men I ever met. I was intimately acquainted with him from the spring of 1859. He was then a law clerk in the office of Stephen J. Field, later justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. He remained a friend of Judge Field until his death. The judge regarded him as a friend and able advisor.

"He was intuitively a great editor, and was known by his writings throughout the Pacific coast before he was twenty years old.

"He was engaged actively in the politics of California. Coming to Washington, where his reputation had preceded him, he was elected secretary of the Senate to succeed J. W. Forney. He remained secretary of the Senate until the politics of that body changed. He then did editorial work for many leading papers.

Of Strong Convictions.

"Mr. Gorham was a man of strong convictions, which he would not surrender for any consideration, and because of this and other qualifications became an intimate friend of President Grant. Senator Conkling made him his intimate friend and associate.

"I do not know that his literary work [or] newspapers has been preserved or could now be collected. He wrote the life and times of Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War under President Lincoln, which will be referred to as authoritative by those who write the history of that great struggle in many years to come.

"Gorham never abandoned a friend in either good or bad repute. He would defend a friend or advocate a principle which he believed to be right without regard for personal consideration.

"All who knew him well will respect and honor his memory. I am glad I knew him, and enjoyed his original and instructive conversation for more than half a century. I hope the newspapers will speak of him as he deserves. Nothing more is necessary to gratify the

feelings of those who knew him well." [805]

• **Obit:** Sacramento Union 16 Feb 1909. "Gorham—In Washington D.C., February 11, 1909, George C. Gorham, husband of Effie Bassett Gorham, father of Sherwood F., William H., Paul, Mary G., Belle and Maud Gorham and brother of Charles M. Gorham." Passing of George C. Gorham. In the death of George C. Gorham, announced in the Union today, there passes away one of the men who formed a connecting link with the glorious past of California. Stirring as have been the political activities of the Republican party since its birth in this State, especially since Haight's administration, nothing has ever equaled the constant display of energy and ability that marked the career of George C. Gorham, to whom the Republican party of California, as we now know it, owed its existence, for it was through him that the Union party was organized, and out of that our present Republican party was developed.

Partisan feeling has died away. We no longer draw social and fraternal lines on party differences. We fail to realize the intense bitterness that characterized politics in the late '50s and the 60s and can scarcely comprehend the fierce struggle for supremacy of which men like George C. Gorham were the center.

Gorham had been a war editor of the Union, and, under his pen, the editorial columns of this paper never preached a treasonable doctrine or said a false thing. He had come to the Union from the Marysville Democrat which he had conducted as a straight-out Union paper, and it was in Sacramento that he gave all his restless energy to the formation of the Union party. His was a task compared to which those of Hercules were puerile. The Whigs were still strong and bitter; the Republicans were new and were distrusted; the Conness Democrats were still hoping for power, while, of the old Breckenridge Democracy, there were many who chose to stay by the Union. It was essential to amalgamate all these elements into an harmonious whole.

It is true that Gorham had as assistants in this effort some of the most vigorous men of the time, but he had also to labor against the implied hostility, if not downright antagonism, of men who surrounded Milton Latham and his friends. Yet Gorham persevered, and, by working night and day, he accomplished what had seemed to be the impossible. He wrought harmony out of discord and the Union party stood as a monument to his indomitable efforts. With the end of the war, the Union was no longer able to support Mr. Gorham. He entered into alliances that we believed to be dangerous. His coalition with the boss elements in San Francisco and the methods with which his nomination for

Governor was obtained did not appeal to the Union. The columns of this paper were open to him, always, but he was unable to satisfy the body of the voters of his sincerity and his integrity. His position on the Chinese question was retrograde. He did not see the rising tide against Asiatic encroachments and his stand in favor of Chinese immigration – for it could be understood in no other way – forced into opposition even those who admired his courage in assuming such an attitude.

His defeat led to his withdrawal to the East and to Washington. We suppose that during the last administration of Grant, that of Hayes and even along so far as the early part of Arthur's, no single Californian wielded a larger influence in California's affairs at Washington. As Secretary of the United States Senate he was in a position to make that influence effective, and it is a strong testimonial to the worth of the man that no one can ever point to a single nomination secured by his efforts, or with his aid, that ever brought discredit upon the State.

He realized the error in regard to the immigration of Asiatics, and it is but just to him to say that Senator Newton Booth of California and Senator Jones of Nevada, to whose efforts the first anti-Chinese bill was due – the measure that was vetoed by Hayes – received his cordial aid.

Time has removed the animosities of the old days. We who were then his enemies have long since forgiven and forgotten and he, on his part, had forgiven, too. Today we remember only that he was one of the great men of that marvelous period in the political history of California when the leaders of the people were giants, and he was one of them. He occupies an enduring place in the annals of the Golden State, and history holds him dear as one of the heroic figures of the West." [800]

- I also have the will of G. C. Gorham written in 1892, leaving everything to Effie Gorham and her heirs and filed Feb 1909. [4072]

- **Prominent Public Men Officiate as Pallbearers for Intimate Friend**

[excerpts] Marked by the presence of men high in public life, the funeral of George C. Gorham, veteran newspaper writer, and former secretary of the United States Senate, who died at his residence, 1763 Q street, Thursday at the age of seventy-one years, took place from the house this morning at 11 o'clock.

The honorary pallbearers, intimate friends of Mr. Gorham in his long service in public life and journalism, were: Associate Justices Harlan and Brewer of the Supreme Court,

Senator Henry M. Teller of Colorado, Senator William M. Stewart of Nevada, Joseph Cranford and James R. Watson. [8532]

- **George C. Gorham Claimed By Death**
Career of Able and Estimable Man Is Ended
Known As Brilliant Writer
Friend and Confidant of Presidents and Statesmen

[excerpts from lengthy two column story]

George Congdon Gorham, politician, editorial writer, distinguished lawyer, and at one time Secretary of the United States Senate, died at the family residence, 1763 Q street northwest, early yesterday morning, after an illness of four days. Bright's disease was the immediate cause of death.

Friend and confidant of Presidents and statesmen, there were few men better known nationally than Mr. Gorham. Always taking an active interest in politics, Mr. Gorham began writing at an early age, and his wide experience and keen insight into national affairs soon placed him in the foremost ranks of editorial and political writers of the country.

In 1890 Mr. Gorham finished his biography of the life of Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War under President Lincoln. This work brought Mr. Gorham further fame, and later was adopted in the principal colleges and schools throughout the country. [8533]

Census: • 1840 Census: New London, New London, Connecticut. Age 5 to 10. [5458]

- 1850 Census: New London, New London, Connecticut. Age 17, clerk, b NY. Living with mother, Martha. [156], [803]

- 1860 Census: Sacramento, Sacramento, California. Age 28, b NY. Editor. \$0; \$1200. [1673]

- 1870 Census: Washington, District of Columbia. Age 37, b NY. Secretary Senate. \$0; \$3000. [4764]

- 1880 Census: Washington, District of Columbia. Age 47, b NY. Journalist. Parents b MA. [3497]

- 1900 Census: Washington, District of Columbia. Age 67, b Jul 1832, NY. Father b MA; mother b CT. [4765]

General: • See Source [6611] for info on the life and career of his friend, Justice Stephen Johnson Field.

Spouse: **Sarah Ann HILLS**
Birth: 18 Feb 1825, Dracut, Middlesex, Massachusetts [13, p 600], [265, p 317], [802, place only]
Removal: abt 1856, California, age: 30 [1673]
Memo: based on birthplace of Sherwood in 1857
Death: 16 Dec 1875, Boston, Suffolk, Massachusetts, age: 50 [8, p G5; no surname given], [13, p 600], [265, p 317], [820]
Father: **Paul HILLS** [265, p 317] (3 Sep 1789-19 Apr 1864)
Mother: **Mary Ann BOROUGHS** [265, p 317] (Apr 1799-)

Census: • 1870 Census: Boston, Suffolk, Massachusetts. Age 70, b MA. Living in household of William N. Hills [son?] [5835]

Marriage: 8 Nov 1853, Lowell, Middlesex, Massachusetts [13, Vol. 11, p 600; year & place only], [265, p 378; marriage only], [802]

They had 7 children...

- i. **George Congdon** (1855-1897)
- ii. **Sherwood Field** (1857->1940)
- iii. **Mary Greenwood** (1859-)
- iv. **William Hills Esq.** (1861-1935)
- v. **Charles B.** (Died as Infant) (1865-1865)
- vi. **Paul** (1867-)
- vii. **Sarah Belle** (1871-)

Spouse: **Effie E. BASSETT** [8, p G5]
Birth: 12 Oct 1847, Washington, DC [7641]
Death: 3 May 1921, Swarthmore, Delaware, Pennsylvania, age: 73 [7641]
Burial: Rock Creek Cemetery, Washington, DC [7641]
Father: **David BASSETT** [2130] (15 Feb 1821-15 May 1873)
Mother: **Catherine Matilda DUNCANSON** [2130] (27 Feb 1829-28 Oct 1890)

Census: • 1860 Census: Washington, DC. Age 31, b DC. Listed as C. M. Bassett. [5442]
• 1870 Census: Washington, DC. Age 40, b DC. Listed as Matilda. [5441]
• 1880 Census: Washington, DC. Age 51, b DC. Widow. Mother-in-law in household of George C. Gorham. [3497]

George Congdon Gorham

Marriage: 20 Dec 1876, Washington, DC [13, 11:600; year & place only], [800, date only], [2129], [4765, marriage only]

Memo: married 23 years in 1900

They had 1 child...

- i. **Maud Bassett** [8, p G5; name only] (1877-1971)

- 8. Eckart Family Genealogy and Notes**, Author: by William R. Eckart, Locality: Pasadena, California, Date: prepared abt 1955.
Files (33): 8.1.Hempstead.jpg, 8.3.jpeg, 8.6.jpg, 8.7.jpg, 8.8.jpg, 8.G1.jpg, 8.G2.jpg, 8.G3.jpg, 8.G4.jpg, 8.G5.jpg, 8.G6.jpg, 8.G7.jpg, 8.G8.jpg, 8.G9.jpg, 8.G10.jpg, 8.G11.jpg, 8.G12.jpg, 8.G13.jpg, 8.G14.jpg, 8.G15.jpg, 8.G25.jpg, 8.G26.jpg, 8.G27.jpeg, 8.G28.jpg, 8.G29.jpeg, 8.G30.jpeg, 8.G31.jpeg, 8.G32.jpeg, 8.INDEX.jpg, 8.Stanford.1.jpg, 8.Stanford.2.jpg, 8.Mayflower Descent.jpg, 8.Mayflower letter.jpg
- 13. The Gorham Family**, Author: by Henry S. Gorham, Noroton, Conn., 28 volume manuscript, Date: written 1932-43, Document Location: at the New England Historic Genealogical Society, Boston, MA, Date: copied 26 May 1990.
Files (27): 13.Cover.jpg, 13.002 (13.2.jpg), 13.010.jpeg, 13.011.jpeg, 13.013.jpeg, 13.014.jpeg, 13.015.jpeg, 13.026.jpeg, 13.027.jpeg, 13.027a.jpeg, 13.028.jpeg, 13.029.jpeg, 13.030.jpeg, 13.031.jpeg, 13.032.jpeg, 13.033.jpeg, 13.105.jpeg, 13.116.jpeg, 13.117.jpeg, 13.223.jpeg, 13.302.jpeg, 13.302a.jpeg, 13.342.jpg, 13.575.jpg, 13.600.jpg, 13.601.jpg, 13.602.jpg
- 38. Genealogy of the Gorhams of Cape Cod, Massachusetts**, Author: prepared by Charles Miner Gorham of San Francisco, California, Date: before 1912, Document Location: Eckart genealogy binder, Other surname(s): *Holt*.
• "These genealogical statements are accurate and authentic, all being matters of record."
Files (3): 38.1.jpg, 38.2.jpg, 38.3.jpg
- 40. The Congdon Chronicle**, Author: by G. E. Congdon, Grafton, Vermont, in 20 volumes, 240 pages, Date: July 1921-October, 1934, Submitter: received Dec 1990 from Diane Morales of Spokane, WA.
• complete book available in one PDF file
Files (7): 40.1.jpg, 40.2.jpg, 40.29.jpg, 40.138.139.jpg, 40.162.jpg, 40.163.jpg, 40.232.png
- 156. 1850 Census**, Locality: New London, New London, Connecticut, Date: 7 Aug 1850, Page(s): 106, Other surname(s): *Congdon; Gorham*.
File: 156.jpg
- 211. History of Yuba & Sutter Counties**, Author: by Peter J. Delay, Submitter: notes made by Lou Eckart Moody, received 10 Feb 1998, Other surname(s): *Eckart; Gorham*.
File: 211.jpg
- 265. The Hills Family in America**, Author: compiled by William Sanford Hills, Publisher: *The Grafton Press*, Locality: New York, Date: 1906, Other surname(s): *Boroughs; Atkinson;*

Sources

Clark; Gorham; Wright; Smith; Ordway; Lowe; Sawyer; Lewis; Orcutt; Wise.

Files (11): 265.Title.jpg, 265.001.jpeg, 265.255.jpeg, 265.256.257.jpeg, 265.258.jpeg, 265.260.261.jpeg, 265.268.269.jpeg, 265.284.285.jpeg, 265.317.jpeg, 265.378.jpg, 265.636.jpg

- 790. The King Family of Suffield, Connecticut**, Author: compiled by Cameron Haight King, San Francisco, California, Publisher: *Hoyt's Issue*, Page(s): 619, Date: Fall 1990, Other surname(s): *Gorham*.

Files (2): 790.618.jpeg, 790.619.jpg

- 793. Society of Mayflower Descendants in the State of New York**, Author: Membership Directory, Publisher: *published by the New York Society*, Date: 1907, Document Location: Mills Library, Other surname(s): *Gorham*.

- Membership of George Congdon Gorham & Charles Miner Gorham

Files (2): 793.Title.jpg, 793.49.jpg

- 800. George Congdon Gorham Individual Record**, Author: as prepared by Tom Rueter, Locality: Anchorage, AK, Date: Jun 1994, Other surname(s): *Bassett*.

Files (2): 800.1.jpg, 800.2.jpg

- 802. Marriage of George C. Gorham & Sarah A. Hills**, Date: 8 Nov 1853, Locality: City of Lowell, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Submitter: received 9 Jul 1994 from Tom Rueter, Other surname(s): *Hills; Boroughs*.

File: 802.jpg

- 803. Letter to Tom Rueter**, Author: from Connecticut State Library, Hartford, CT, Date: 26 Feb 1993, Other surname(s): *Congdon*.

- Information was found in the Barbour Collection and Hale Collection of Connecticut Cemetery Inscriptions.

File: 803.jpeg

- 805. George C. Gorham Obituary**, Publisher: *The Evening Star*, Locality: Washington, D.C., Friday, February 12, 1909, Date: 24 Apr 1994, Document Location: microfilm at the Library of Congress.

File: 805.jpg

- 808. George Congdon Gorham Death Certificate**, Date: 11 Feb 1909, Locality: Washington, D. C., Submitter: received 9 Jul 1994 from Tom Rueter.

File: 808.jpg

- 814. Notes from City Directories**, Author: compiled by David W. Mills, Document Location: Sutro Library, San Francisco, Date: 26 Aug 1989, Other surname(s): *Gorham*.

File: 814.jpeg

- 820. Pedigree Chart from Kathleen Margaret Gorham**, Submitter: prepared by Tom Rueter, Anchorage, AK, Date: 4 Jan 1994, Other surname(s): *Hills; Congdon; Burroughs; Walton*.
File: 820.jpg
- 1673. 1860 Census**, Locality: 3rd District, Sacramento County, California, Other surname(s): *Hills; Gorham*.
File: 1673.jpeg
- 2129. IGI Marriage Record, George C. Gorham & Effie E. Bassett**, Date: 20 Dec 1876, Locality: Washington, DC, Publisher: *Family Search Ancestral File*, Date: 10 Aug 1999.
File: 2129.jpeg
- 2130. Individual Record, Effie E. Bassett**, Publisher: *Family Search Ancestral File*, Date: 10 Aug 1999.
File: 2130.jpeg
- 3062. Yuba County, California History, 1850-1900**, Date: 14 Aug 2001, Other surname(s): *Gorham*.
File: 3062.jpeg
- 3497. 1880 Census**, Locality: Washington, District of Columbia, Call Number: ED 39 and 40, Page(s): 369C, Date: 15 Nov 2002, Other surname(s): *Gorham; Bassett*.
File: 3497.jpeg
- 3518. George C. Gorham**, Publisher: *Senate Statistics*, Date: downloaded 13 Dec 2002.
Files (4): 3518.1.jpg, 3518.2.jpg, 3518.3.jpg, 3518.4.jpg
- 3910. Notes on George C. and Charles M. Gorham**, Author: by William Rankine Eckart, Date: 23 Jan 1955, Document Location: original with Lou Moody Eckart, San Diego, CA, Other surname(s): *Holt*.
• on reverse side of check
Files (2): 3910.1.jpg, 3910.2.jpeg
- 3925. Email from Tom Rueter**, Locality: Anchorage, AK, Date: 22 Feb 2004, Document Location: www.sfgenealogy.com, Other surname(s): *Gorham*.
Files (3): 3925.1.jpeg, 3925.2.jpeg, 3925.3.jpeg
- 4059. Application of George Congdon Gorham for Membership**, Date: 1886, Publisher: *Society of California Pioneers*, Submitter: obtained by Tom Rueter, Anchorage, AK from the Society, Date: forwarded by email, 17 Apr 2004.
• Note by George C. Gorham: "I think the Custom House entry of arrival was Dec 20, but I am confident we came into port during the twilight of the 19th."
• The Society's membership is limited to people who arrived in California prior to 1850.

Files (4): 4059.1.jpg, 4059.2.jpg, 4059.3.jpg, 4059.4.jpg

4060. Pioneer Days in California, The California Fever in 1849 — Around Cape Horn,

Author: by George C. Gorham, Date: undated, but possibly 1886 when he applied for membership, Publisher: *Alice Phelan Sullivan Library at The Society of California Pioneers*, Locality: San Francisco, Page(s): 39, Document Location: Mills Library (white three-ring binder).

- A description of George C. Gorham's experiences from his departure from New London, around Cape Horn, his arrival in San Francisco on 19 Dec 1849, through statehood on 9 Sep 1850.

- Our Pioneer Association...received as members all who arrived before Admission Day, September 9th, 1850. (page 39)

Files (4): 4060.1.jpg, 4060.2.jpeg, 4060.3.jpeg, 4060.17.jpg

4071. Statement in replay to complaints made by Hon. Cornelius Cole, Author: by George

C. Gorham, Publisher: *Office of Secretary of the Senate*, Date: April 2d, 1870, Locality: Washington, D. C., Document Location: obtained at Library of Congress, Washington, DC, Date: 22 Apr 1994.

- On page 1, in his own hand, is written: "Apr 2/70. Mr Vice President, I take the liberty of furnishing you a copy of my statement thinking you might like to glance through it, though it is not of great national importance. Very Respectfully, G C. Gorham, Secy. Hon. Schuyler Colfax, V. P."

Files (8): 4071.Cover.jpg, 4071.1.jpg, 4071.2.3.jpg, 4071.4.5.jpg, 4071.6.7.jpg, 4071.8.9.jpg, 4071.10.11.jpg, 4071.cartoon.jpg

4072. Email from Tom Rueter, Locality: Anchorage, AK, Date: 20 Apr 2004, Other surname(s): *Bassett*.

File: 4072.jpeg

4764. 1870 Census, Locality: 5th Ward, Washington, DC, Date: 2 Jun 1870, Page(s): 4 (old), Date: 27 Apr 2005, Other surname(s): *Gorham*.

File: 4764.jpeg

4765. 1900 Census, Locality: Washington, DC, Call Number: D Street, Date: 21 Jun 1900, Page(s): ED 45, Sheet 20B, Date: 27 Apr 2005, Other surname(s): *Gorham; Bassett*.

File: 4765.jpg

5441. 1870 Census, Locality: Washington, DC, Date: 12 Aug 1870, Page(s): 640, Date: 20 Nov 2006, Other surname(s): *Bassett; Dunconson*.

File: 5441.jpeg

5442. 1860 Census, Locality: Washington, DC, Date: 3 Jul 1860, Page(s): 96 (old), Date: 18

Sources

Nov 2006, Other surname(s): *Bassett; Dunconson*.

File: 5442.jpeg

5458. 1840 Census, Locality: New London, New London, Connecticut, Date: 23 Nov 2006, Other surname(s): *Gorham*.

File: 5458.jpeg

5835. 1870 Census, Locality: Boston, Suffolk, Massachusetts, Date: 10 Dec 2020, Other surname(s): *Gorham; Hills*.

File: 5835.png

6611. Biographical Information on Justice Stephen Johnson Field, Publisher: *Multiple Sources*, Date: Feb 2004, Other surname(s): *Gorham*.

Files (6): 6611.1.jpg, 6611.2.jpg, 6611.3.jpg, 6611.4.jpg, 6611.5.jpg, 6611.6.jpg

7641. Effie Gorham Death, Date: 3 May 1921, Locality: Swarthmore, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Publisher: *findagrave*, Document Location: ancestry, Date: 20 May 2021, Other surname(s): *Bassett*.

File: 7641.png

8532. Funeral of G. C. Gorham, Publisher: *Washington Evening Star*, Locality: Washington, DC, Date: 13 Feb 1909, URL: newspapers.com, Scan/Download Date: 16 October 2025, Other surname(s): *Bassett*.

File: 8532.pdf

8533. George C. Gorham Claimed By Death, Publisher: *Washington Herald*, Locality: Washington, DC, Date: 12 Feb 1909, URL: newspapers.com, Scan/Download Date: 16 October 2025, Other surname(s): *Bassett*.

- Obituary mentions his authorship of the biography of Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War under President Lincoln. A copy of this book is in the possession of David W. Mills, Scottsdale, Arizona.

File: 8533.jpg

Boston, Suffolk, Massachusetts	
HILLS, Sarah Ann	17
California	
HILLS, Sarah Ann	17
Dracut, Middlesex, Massachusetts	
HILLS, Sarah Ann	17
East	
GORHAM, George Congdon	4
Greenport, Suffolk, New York	
GORHAM, George Congdon	4
Lowell, Middlesex, Massachusetts	
GORHAM, George Congdon	4
HILLS, Sarah Ann	17
Marysville, Yuba, California	
GORHAM, George Congdon	4
Rock Creek Cemetery, Washington, DC	
BASSETT, Effie E.	17
GORHAM, George Congdon	4
Sacramento, Sacramento, California	
GORHAM, George Congdon	4
San Francisco, San Francisco, California	
GORHAM, George Congdon	4
Swarthmore, Delaware, Pennsylvania	
BASSETT, Effie E.	17
Washington, DC	
BASSETT, Effie E.	17
GORHAM, George Congdon	4

Gorham 1867 cartoon

