



No More Grouching

MI Editor: A number of readers weighed in on the stuffed bird, incorrectly identified as a quail, held by Pvt.

John D. Hays of the 62nd Pennsylvania Infantry (Winter 2015, Page 47). After the dust cleared, *MI* declared that it was in fact a ruffed grouse.

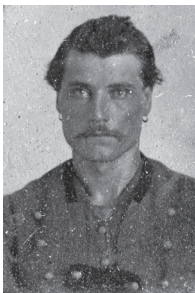
Further evidence to support this determination comes from Pat Brown of Sanford, N.C. She provided a detail that no one else did: The Pennsylvania state bird is... drum roll, please... a grouse.



something said around there that they was glad that Abe was killed. It would not for them to talk that way around where the solders are. They had some make the same expression here in this town, and they got a ball put through them before they had the chance to so the second time. There has been ten or twelve shot in this town, since Abe was killed, for saying they was glad it happened. The best way is for a man to keep what he thinks to himself, especially these times. I for one am sorry it happened. For I think if it had not happened that peace would have been declared inside of three months. But now it is hard to tell when it will end. I am afraid it is going to prolong the war for sometime yet."

Assassination Sympathizers Were Not Alone

MI Editor: Collector Paul Loane's unusual albumen of a group of Union men in Chattanooga, Tenn., wearing tin plaques with the words "Assassin Sympathizer" as a punishment for cheering at the news of the death of President Abraham Lincoln prompted Director Michael Telzow of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum to share a letter on a similar matter in Memphis. Cpl. Jackson Thompson of the 7th Wisconsin Light Artillery reported to a friend, "Sarah, you said that there was



Tintype in a *carte de visite* mount of Jackson Thompson, Wisconsin Veterans Museum collection.

something said around there that they was glad that Abe was killed. It would not for them to talk that way around where the solders are. They had some make the same expression here in this town, and they got a ball put through them before they had the chance to so the second time. There has been ten or twelve shot in this town, since Abe was killed, for saying they was glad it happened. The best way is for a man to keep what he thinks to himself, especially these times. I for one am sorry it happened. For I think if it had not happened that peace would have been declared inside of three months. But now it is hard to tell when it will end. I am afraid it is going to prolong the war for sometime yet."

On Kate M. Duncan at Gettysburg

The identification of the photograph of nurse Kate M. Duncan (Winter 2015) on Page 5 and again on Page 14 is stated as having been taken at Gettysburg in July 1863. Mrs. Duncan's memoir of her service in *Our Army Nurses*, Page 453, clearly refers to service at Patterson Park Hospital only for a year starting in September 1862. She recounts her change of assignment from Ward 15, Typhoid cases, to Ward 1, surgical cases. It is in that context that she says, "I was there when the battle of Gettysburg was fought..." This is also plainly the meaning of her statement that she did not have time to change clothes for a week, "after the wounded began to arrive." That is: she was in Baltimore working in the surgical ward at Patterson Park when wounded from the battlefield of Gettysburg began to arrive, not that she was at Gettysburg.

The photo caption on Page

14 indicates there is a scratched identification on the reverse of the tintype reading "Kate Duncan/ Gettysburg, July 1863," and the image as shown on Page 14 bears a paper label reading "General Hospital." The 1900 census of Emmetsburg, Iowa, however, records her birthdate as 1840. In the photo she looks much more like the image published op-



posite her memoir in 1895, and probably contemporary with it—roughly age 55 rather than 23, as she would have been at the time of the battle. Her clothing, and that of the other figures, is also decidedly postwar. I don't doubt the personal identification, but I think there is some wishful thinking in the statement of location and date.

Steve Rogers Ithaca, NY

MI Editor: Thanks to Steve for his observations, and also to Bill and Glenna Jo Christen of Warren, Mich., for similar comments. The date etched on the back of the plate is very likely 1883 or 1888. The original determination of an 1863 date prompted a misreading of Duncan's memoir and a failure to consider her age and clothing style. We sincerely regret the error. *MI* is committed to accuracy and setting the record straight.

Details About the Guerilla Leader Fort

Immensely enjoyed the Spring 2015 issue. On Page 35 appeared an article by Bryan Flanagan with a *carte de visite* of 1st Lt. Jacob C. Skirvin, 7th Indiana Cavalry. The action wherein Skirvin lost his life happened very near where I happen to live in southwest Tennessee. Mount Pleasant is actually a small settlement in Mississippi two miles south of the Tennessee state line. The Memphis & Charleston Railroad is today the line of the Norfolk-Southern on the Tennessee-Mississippi border.

The referenced "guerilla leader, a captain named Fort" was actually Capt. Dewitt Clinton Fort. In his memoir, *14 Letters to a Friend*, Fort describes the encounter, in which he states that he himself was wounded. His account states that "the veteran Union lieutenant lost his life" but he did not know his name. Fort gave the date Sunday, April 2, for the skirmish. He says his force consisted of 43 men. I believe this is the same encounter Flanagan describes, though I could not locate it in the *Official Records*. Fort was born club-footed, yet he possessed great upper body strength, and was by all accounts a consummate horseman.

He and his brother, Thomas Henry Fort, are both listed as members of the Confederate 2nd Missouri Cavalry. Fort stated that in fall 1862 he joined Blythe's 2nd Mississippi Partisan Rangers, served briefly under Gen. James R. Chalmers, followed by service with Willis' Cavalry, Waul's Texas Legion, and finally Company G of the 2nd Missouri Cavalry. I don't believe Fort and his brother were guerillas.

David Smith Somerville, Tenn.