

## **THE THIRD ROTATION:**

### **(SC-130-90): 8th Michigan Volunteer Cavalry Regiment**

Organized at Mount Clemens, this regiment was sent to Kentucky once recruiting was completed in May 1863. Their job was to chase General John Morgan--whose rebel raiders were terrorizing Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana--out of the state. Before the regiment left for Kentucky the ladies of Mount Clemens gave the men a silk battle flag painted with the regiment's name in gold. Since this is a Tiffany flag, with the regiment's name embroidered in white--not painted in gold--it does not match the description of the Mt. Clemens flag. However, it is the only flag in the collection for the 8th Cavalry. It could be that the description erred and this tattered remnant is all that is left of that "valuable silk standard."

When Morgan threatened Cincinnati, the 8th rode to defend the city. Children and young girls thronged the villages, waving flags, throwing bouquets and singing "Rally Round the Flag, Boys, Rally Once Again" as the regiment rode through. Morgan was defeated and his surrender took place under one of the fluttering company guidons (not the regimental standard displayed here) of the 8th Michigan Cavalry. Morgan had been greatly feared and the flag he was captured under was carried in triumph through Cincinnati. Sadly, its bearer could not resist the appeals of young ladies for souvenirs and the flag was soon cut almost entirely to pieces and given away.

The war was far from over for the 8th. The regiment would endure long treks, in one four month period marching over 3,000 miles. They moved deep into Tennessee and Georgia and 4 July 1864 found them fighting near Atlanta. Their regimental flag was carried to the front line of battle. An officer from another regiment rushed up and ordered the flag from the field, saying "it would be the means of killing more of our men than it was worth, as it only afforded a target for the rebels to shoot at." Here was a rare recorded case in which the dangers of carrying the flag were fully recognized and prudence won the upper hand.