

# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume XXX, Number 2

Chicago, Illinois

October, 1969

## Bell Wiley on 'Mary Chesnut's Diary from Dixie'—Friday, Oct. 10



Bell I. Wiley

New material about one of the most remarkable diaries ever written by an American woman will be presented at our October meeting by Bell Wiley, one of the nation's preeminent Civil War scholars. Wiley will speak on the "Diary from Dixie of Mary Boykin Chesnut," written by the wife of the military aide of Confederate President Jefferson Davis.

"Mary Chesnut's diary is the frank and uninhibited recollection of military and civilian leadership during the Confederacy," Wiley said. "It is one of the most important diaries in American literature."

Initially published in 1905, Mary Boykin Chesnut's diary was first edited by Isabella Martin and Marta Avary. A second edition of the 48 notebooks was edited by Ben Ames Williams.

Mary Boykin Chesnut was the wife of a U.S. Senator from South Carolina who left the Senate when his state seceded from the Union. He served in the Confederate Provisional Congress and in 1862 joined the staff of Confederate President Jefferson Davis as military aide. Later Chesnut was an aide to Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard and attained the rank of brigadier general.

"Mary Chesnut was a person in her own right, however," Bell Wiley is careful to explain. Her father was Stephen D. Miller, also a U.S. senator from South Carolina, who educated his daughter in a private school in Charleston. It was here that she met James Chesnut, son of a plantation owner, who married her in 1840 when she was only 17. The new Mrs. Chesnut was a literate woman who spoke French and was, according to Wiley, "remarkably intelligent."

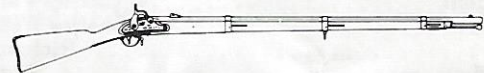
New material from the Chesnut diaries will come to light at our October 10 meeting as Wiley unveils information gathered at the South Caroliniana Library at Columbia and from other depositories.

Wiley notes that Cinda, a character in Ben Ames Williams's "House Divided," is based on Mary Chesnut. He quotes Williams as saying, "While it would be entertaining to spend an afternoon with diarists Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn, I would give a good deal to listen for an afternoon to Mrs. Chesnut."

Douglas Southall Freeman calls the Chesnut notebooks, "the most famous war diary of a southern woman." Lyman Butterfield adds, "The Chesnut diary is the best written diary by an American woman; it ranks with the diary of John Adams."

Margaret Mitchell, among others, drew upon the Chesnut diary which has proved to be a rich vein of information for those writing histories and novels of the Civil War period.

Bell Wiley, well known personally and as a scholar to most members of the Chicago Civil War Round Table, is the Charles Howard Chandler professor of history at Emory University in Georgia. He previously held teaching positions in the history departments of Asbury College, Mississippi Southern College, the University of Mississippi, Peabody College and Louisiana State University which he left to join the Emory faculty in 1949.



### 284th REGULAR MEETING

\*\*\*

Bell I. Wiley

on

"Mary Boykin Chesnut's  
Diary from Dixie"

\*\*\*

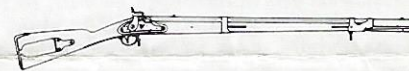
Friday, October 10, 1969

\*\*\*

Furniture Club in Furniture Mart

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.



A graduate of Asbury College, Wiley received a master's degree from the University of Kentucky and a doctorate from Yale University as well as five honorary degrees.

Wiley is the author or editor of more than a score of books, most of them devoted to the Civil War period. Included among them are "The Life of Johnny Reb," "The Life of Billy Yank," "They Who Fought Here," "A Southern Woman's Story: Life in Confederate Richmond," and "The Plain People of the Confederacy."

Our October speaker is also the author of a number of important magazine articles and book reviews on the Civil War. During World War II, Wiley reached the rank of lieutenant colonel as an Army historian.

Among Wiley's distinguishments are memberships on the National Archives Advisory Council, the editorial board of the U.S. Grant Association and the editorial board of the Jefferson Davis Association. He was an American specialist lecturer for the U.S. Department of State in 1964-66 in England, Denmark, Norway, France, Austria, Germany, Yugoslavia and Italy.

# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



FOUNDED DECEMBER 3, 1940

18 East Chestnut Street,  
Chicago 11, Illinois  
Phone: Whitehall 4-3085

## OFFICERS

President ..... Clyde Walton  
Senior Vice President ..... Dan Lapinski  
Vice President ..... Don Russell  
Vice President ..... Charles Falkenberg  
Secretary ..... Charles Wesselhoeft  
Treasurer ..... Richard Cohen  
Assistant Treasurer ..... Don Jensen  
Editor of Newsletter ..... Dick Bjorklund  
Contributing Editor ..... Dick Clark  
Official Engrosser (Printer) ..... Allen Meyer  
Judge Advocate General ..... Philip R. Davis  
Balladeer ..... Win Stracke  
Leader of the Band ..... Miles Janousek

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES (Executive Committee)

Terms expiring in 1970: S. J. Kearney, James Coulter,  
James Henry.

Terms expiring in 1971: Don Pfeuffer, Elmer Underwood,  
Marshall Krolick.

Founding Newsletter Editor: Gil Twiss, 1954-1968



Applications for Civil War Round Table fellowships are available from the CWRT fellowship committee, 18 E. Chestnut St., Chicago, Ill., 60611. Round Table members and friends may make tax-deductible contributions to the CWRT fellowship fund for Civil War research and education. Contributions may be sent to the committee at the Chestnut Street address

\*\*\*\*\*

Club members who know of the death or illness of anyone associated with the Chicago CWRT are urged to promptly contact President Clyde Walton or the CWRT through the Abraham Lincoln Bookshop, 18 E. Chestnut St., Chicago, Ill. 60611.

\*\*\*\*\*

Volume one of the series of recordings planned by the 1st Brigade Band, 3rd and 4th Divisions, 15th Army Corps, is now available. The price is \$3.98, plus shipping and mailer, which brings the total to \$4.25. If you would like one, please remit a check or money order for the latter amount, and a recording will be shipped to you as soon as our mailers arrive. This record is in hi-fi, and can be played on any monaural and stereo machine. Members of the 1st Brigade Band sincerely appreciate your interest in our cause. The purchase of this album of original Civil War period band music will help us to continue to perpetuate this historic music for this and coming generations. Send checks to Heritage Military Music Foundation Inc., Fred Benkovik, Sec'y, 1824 N. 36th St., Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208

from the  
Editor's pen



\*\*\*\*\*

Treasurer Dick Cohen announced that all dues notices have been mailed and that \$20 dues for 1969-70 is owed by each CWRT member. Send your dues in now and note the meeting dates for the year published in the Bulletin Board on the back page of this Newsletter.

\*\*\*\*\*

Here is a self-explanatory letter from our honorary member C. Norton Owen, the subject of a well-meant but botched item in the last issue of the Newsletter:

Due to age and distance I do not get to many of the Civil War Round Table meeting, and am therefore sorry to say I do not know you.

In the September, 1969, issue you have an article which mentions me very kindly. I notice there is an error in the article. The man who wrote the letter which I presented to the Chicago Historical Society was General Philip H. SHERIDAN, and not Philip H. Sherman as is stated in the article.

Us Civil War guys go in for the accuracy business, so I hope you do not object to my calling this error to your attention.

You might be interested to know that the house in McHenry built by my great-grandfather in 1837 is still (but much remodeled) used as a home by fourth generation of the Owen family. I don't think many Illinois homes can claim this distinction.

With kind regards,

C. Norton Owen

\*\*\*

The Centennial Stone, lovingly dedicated in 1965 with the assistance of former Gov. Otto Kerner and Win Stracke, has been stolen again from Centennial Park, the smallest park in Chicago in front of the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop. Engraved "Centennial, 1865-1965," the stone was a reminder to club members and all passing drunks and Near North Siders of the Civil War Centennial.

Brooks Davis, executive custodian of Centennial Park, says the theft of the stone was discovered by County Board President George Dunne, a friendly neighbor who waters the Centennial Park grass from time to time. Police from the East Chicago police district recorded the theft of the stone, the second in recent years, on their imperishable scroll.

Now the question is: Will Win Stracke again raise his voice in dulcet strains of "Centennial Park," a song that pays special tribute to the calling cards of dogs that were so fond of the missing stone.

\*\*\*

As the skies cleared on Saturday, September 6th, the 104th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Reactivated marched into the Lacon Cemetery to honor Bill Smith, a fallen member and a dearly missed member of the Chicago Civil War Round Table.

Bill's daughter Virginia, Mrs. Frank Hopkins, accompanied by Bill's wife Eleanor, laid a wreath in honor of all the fallen Veterans of America's past. Ron Knaus of the 104th gave a eulogy for Bill, followed by a memorial volley.

Later in the afternoon, Robert Walter of the 104th and the Chicago Civil War Round Table fulfilled one of Bill's last wishes by presenting a check to help perpetuate the Lacon Old Settlers Days Festivities.

\*\*\*

Pepperdine College in Los Angeles, Cal., has honored Henry B. Bass of Oklahoma with an honorary degree. Bass, a friend of many Chicago roundtablers, is often among those participating in the Chicago CWRT battlefield tours.

Lloyd Miller will speak on "The Second Day of Gettysburg" at an upcoming meeting of the Louisville Civil War Round Table. Lloyd, incidentally, was unintentionally omitted from the list of 1968-69 contributors to the Fellowship Fund published in the last issue of the Newsletter. He is, as most members know, the most substantial contributor to the Fellowship Fund, the one who has made grants to scholars possible in recent years. We join with Fellowship Fund Chairman Arnold Alexander in paying tribute and thanks to Lloyd Miller for his generous contributions over the years.

\*\*\*

Okan Uya, recipient of this year's fellowship from the Chicago CWRT, spoke on his favorite subject, Robert Small, at a meeting of the Madison Civil War Round Table. Uya, of the University of Wisconsin, is developing new material on Small, who commanded a Confederate gunboat and successfully navigated it to the safety of Union lines.

\*\*\*

Hurricane Camille in August took a severe toll at Beauvoir, the last home of Jefferson Davis on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Damage estimated at \$500,000 was done by Camille to the superintendent's home, administration building, Confederate barracks, old chapel, library, the museum and other structures including the office in the yard where Jeff Davis wrote "Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government." In the wake of the disaster an appeal for funds has been made by the Jackson (Miss.) Civil War Roundtable which asks that contributions be sent to its Beauvoir Restoration Fund, P.O. Box 3396, Jackson, Miss.

\*\*\*

CWRT Member Isadore M. Fixman, 63, was among 78 passengers who died when an Allegheny Airlines jet crashed near Indianapolis after being struck by a small private plane. In addition to his CWRT membership, Mr. Fixman was a director and co-founder of Freedom Hall, a collection of items tracing the history of human freedom housed in Oak Park Temple.

\*\*\*

Some CWRT members recalled last month that Gov. Richard B. Ogilvie faced a task not unlike that of Civil War Gov. Richard Yates in selecting a replacement for the late Sen. Everett McKinley Dirksen. Sen. Dirksen, like Sen. Stephen A. Douglas who died during the Yates administration, was a popular legislator with considerable standing in Washington. Yates selected Orville Hickman Browning, who aided President Lincoln during the difficult war years.

\*\*\*

Chicago CWRT members are encouraged to contribute material to this Newsletter regularly. Contributions should be sent to Dick Bjorklund, Editor, Chicago Civil War Round Table Newsletter, 18 E. Chestnut St., Chicago, Ill. 60611. Suggestions for material include book reviews, photos of Civil War relics and sites, travel items on Civil War battlefields and monuments, comments on current events involving Civil War history and personal notes.

\*\*\*

Chicago CWRT member E. B. (Pete) Long is the bibliographer of general works appearing in "Civil War Books: A Critical Bibliography," published by the Louisiana State University Press. Bell I. Wiley, our October speaker, is an editor of the volume, and John T. Hubbell, our September speaker, is a bibliographer of books on economic and social studies of the Union.

\*\*\*

Ralph Newman, a founding CWRT member and owner of the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop, has become a "commuter" to Australia where he is supervising the Lincoln exhibit.

## TO THE LADIES—

Elmer Underwood, a veteran member and officer of the Chicago CWRT, will speak at the meeting of the Camp Followers on Friday, Oct. 10, on "The Role of Women in the Civil War." The meeting, held in the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop, 18 E. Chestnut St., Chicago, will begin with cocktails at 5:30 p.m. followed by Elmer's talk at 6 p.m. and dinner later. Underwood will discuss the status of women during the war and the way they affected the course of the conflict. He will pay special attention to the role of women as doctors and nurses during the Civil War.

Reservations, which are NOT to be made through the book shop, should be arranged with Mrs. Robert (Betty) Walter, 2009 S. 22nd Ave., Broadview, Ill., 681-0588.

Members of the Camp Followers report they enjoyed the program on "Ladies in Lincoln's Life," presented by Miner Coburn at the September meeting.

Our Brooks Davis spoke Sept. 11 on his favorite subject—Perryville-before the Civil War Roundtable of Decatur.

\*\*\*

The Decatur CWRT Newsletter carried this excerpt from a letter from our member Alan Aimone, now a librarian at West Point:

"It's about time I pop up again. I am now the rare book cataloger for West Point Military Academy Library. The job entails describing military, scarce books, and anything in print written by or about West Pointers. The job is like treasure hunting every day. The library has been in existence since the Revolutionary War. Such items as Casey's drill manuals in presentation gold binding, the original Confederate map of Gettysburg used for lithographing are examples of some of the items I come across almost every day.

"Although I am still reading and collecting Civil War my collection and interest is 'disgressing' to the American Revolution. Many sites, camp grounds (New Windsor Cantonment, General Washington's last winter camp), and battles abound in the Orange County region."

\*\*\*

This item of interest appeared in the Newsletter of the Civil War Round Table of San Francisco:

Here's an interesting article from Med. Ann. 1:62, Nov. 7, 1874:

"The case report was related by Capt. L. G. Capers, after the War Between the States. During a battle on May 12, 1863, Capt. Capers, M.C., saw a young soldier fall. Examination showed a compound fracture of the left tibia, from which the rifle ball had ricocheted and amputated the left testicle. Just then a young woman came running from a fine mansion about 100 yards to the rear, requesting aid for her daughter who had been shot in the left side of the abdomen, between the umbilicus and the anterior spinal process of the ilium, presumably with penetration of the uterus. There was no exit wound. Dr. Capers treated the young woman over the next several months until she recovered. Some 6 months later, he was called to see her again, to find her abdomen greatly enlarged, and, 278 days after she had been shot, he delivered her of a fine boy of 8 pounds. Not until after his examination of her did the Captain give credence to her insistence on being a "Virgo Intacta." Three weeks later, he found the infant's scrotum swollen and containing a hard object. Capt. Capers operated, extracting a battered minie ball. He then located the young soldier who had recovered, "who at first was most skeptical," but who visited the girl, and 4 months later, married her. Several years later the Captain received a letter from them stating they were happily married with 2 more children, but that the first most resembled the father."

## THE NEW BOOKS



Auer, John J., ed. **ANTISLAVERY AND DISUNION, 1858-1861: Studies in the Rhetoric of Compromise and Conflict.** Prepared under the auspices of the Speech Association of America. Gloucester, Peter Smith, 1868. \$6.75

Bontemps, Arna, ed. **GREAT SLAVE NARRATIVES.** Boston: Beacon, 1969. \$7.50. Paper \$2.95

Cairnes, John E. **THE SLAVE POWER: Its Character, Career, and Probable Designs; being an attempt to explain the real issues involved in the American contest.** N.Y.: Negro Univs. Press, 1969. Reprint of the 1862 ed. \$8.25

Chittenden, Lucius E. **INVISIBLE SIEGE: THE JOURNAL OF LUCIUS E. CHITTENDEN, APRIL 15, 1861-July 14, 1861.** San Diego: Americana Exchange Press, 1969. ltd. 1500 copies. \$17.50

Collins, Winfield H. **THE DOMESTIC SLAVE TRADE OF THE SOUTHERN STATES.** Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat [1969]. Reprint 1904 ed. \$6.50

Downey, Fairfax. **STORMING OF THE GATEWAY: CHATTANOOGA, 1863.** N.Y., McKay, Paper \$2.45. (Hardcover 1960)

DuPont, Samuel Francis. **SAMUEL FRANCIS DU PONT: A SELECTION FROM HIS CIVIL WAR LETTERS,** ed. by John D. Hayes. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Pr., [1969]. 3 vols. boxed. \$45.00

Foner, Philip S. **FREDERICK DOUGLASS, A BIOGRAPHY.** N.Y.: Citadel, [1969]. Paper \$2.95

Fox, Charles K., compiler. **GETTYSBURG.** South Brunswick, N.J.: A.S. Barnes, [1969]. (Selections from H. J. Hunt, E.P. Alexander, A.J.L. Fremantle, J.O. Imboden). 89p. \$3.95

Harris, Norman D. **THE HISTORY OF NEGRO SERVITUDE IN ILLINOIS and of the slavery agitation in that state, 1719-1864.** N.Y.: Negro Univs. Pr., [1969]. Reprint of author's thesis. \$11.50

James, Jasper E. **LETTERS FROM A CIVIL WAR SOLDIER.** Ed. by Vera Dockery Elkins. N.Y.: Vantage [1969]. \$3.00

Osofsky, Gilbert H., ed. **PUTTIN' ON OLE MASSA: The Slave Narratives of Henry Bibb, William Wells Brown and Solomon Northrup.** \$10.00

Page, Thomas Nelson. **THE OLD SOUTH: ESSAYS SOCIAL AND POLITICAL.** N.Y.: Haskell House, 1969. Reprint 1892 ed. \$11.95

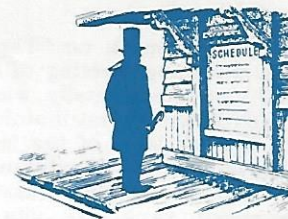
Scott, Henry Lee. **MILITARY DICTIONARY.** N.Y.: Greenwood Press, [1968]. Reprint of 1861 ed. \$19.00

Snetsinger, Robert J., ed. **KISS CLARA FOR ME.** State College, Pa.: The Carnation Press, 1969. \$7.50. Collection of letters of Jos. Whitney of Lake Zurich, Illinois, before and during Civil War.

U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission. **THE CIVIL WAR CENTENNIAL: A REPORT TO THE CONGRESS.** 69p., illus., bibliog. Washington: GPO, 1969. \$2.25

\*\*\*

The extraordinary Atlanta Cyclorama is scheduled to be given a total rehabilitation and is to be housed in a fine new structure. A new sound-track has been done that gives us a foretaste of excellence. Victor Jory does a tremendous job of narration, and Sam Wilhoit, who acted as director-producer, has prepared new music and sound effects. The whole recaptures in a very moving way July 22, 1864, and can be had on a compatible stereo album for \$5.98 from the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop 18 E. Chestnut, Chicago, Ill. 60611 (25¢ for handling, and from Illinois residents the usual 30¢ tax).



## BULLETIN BOARD

### FUTURE MEETINGS

*October 10:* Bell I. Wiley on "Mary Chesnut Diary"

*November 14:* Thomas L. Connelly on "Lee and the War in the West."

*December 12, January 9, February 13, March 13, April 10, May 8 and June 5*—Programs to be announced.

All meetings are held on Friday nights in the Furniture Club in the Furniture Mart. Mark your calendars now for all meetings for the 1969-70 CWRT program year.



Illinois Central Railroad officials told Chicago newspapers that the old freight house at the river east of Michigan did not house the body of Abraham Lincoln when the fallen President came through Chicago on the way to burial in Springfield. The freight house, soon to give way to a new building development, survived the Chicago fire and was standing when Lincoln's body passed through the city. "The I.C. handled the funeral train through Chicago," an I.C. official said, "but as far as we know the body never left the train."

\*\*\*

Members may wish to join the Civil War Round Table Associates, P.O. Box 7388, Little Rock, Ark. 72207, which publishes the Civil War Round Table Digest. Memberships, which include subscriptions to the digest, are \$7.50 per year.

\*\*\*

Elmer Gertz, prominent attorney and past president of the Chicago Civil War Round Table, is a candidate for the state constitutional convention from the 13th state senatorial district. Elmer's publicity releases mention his membership in the Round Table. And one of the political groups backing his candidacy put up a billboard urging a vote for "a philosopher"—that's Elmer Gertz.

\*\*\*

From the Newsletter of the Civil War Round Table of the District of Columbia comes this list of grounds that the State of Georgia in 1864 deemed insufficient to exempt a man from Confederate service:

General Debility-not valid unless far advanced; Slight Deformity; Deafness, unless excessive; Impediment of Speech, unless of aggravated character; Heart Disease (organic), unless definitely obvious and apparent; Functional Disturbance of Heart Action, said to be relieved by camp life; Rheumatism, if simply muscular without swelling or contraction of joints; Epilepsy, must definitely be proved as it was too easy to feign; many other afflictions which would rule a man out today, such as myopia, loss of one eye or one or two fingers. The instructions specified that if individuals appearing before the examining board did not then and there present satisfactory evidence of the complaint for which exemption was claimed, they should be enrolled.