

# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume XXXVIII, Number 6

Chicago, Illinois

February 1978

## THOMAS BUCKLEY ON THE CIVIL WAR AND THE MODERNIZATION OF THE NAVY

Civil War warship development within the broader context of nineteenth century ship modernization and U.S. naval policy will be the subject of remarks by Professor Thomas Buckley when he addresses The Round Table on February 10. Although focusing on the 1860's, his talk will range from the War of 1812 to the Spanish American War. He plans to include slides in his presentation.

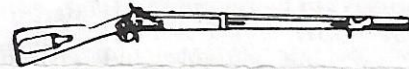
In introducing his subject, Professor Buckley points out that the Civil War at sea has received little attention in comparison to that portion of the war which was fought on land. The one portion of the naval war which has been widely studied has been the Battle of Hampton Roads, because, of course, of the dramatic appearance there of the Virginia and the Monitor, ships that were armour-plated, steam-powered, etc. Those ships and that battle are often regarded as having revolutionized naval warfare, but such a representation is not quite complete. The sudden appearance of the Monitor did not represent an equally sudden interest by the U.S. Navy in innovative warship design. That interest can be traced back to the early years of the nineteenth century. Nor did it mark an interest by the Navy in producing battleships. The Monitor and the modern ships that appeared before it were built within the guidelines of a naval policy that was more limited in scope than that of nations which built battleships. While the Civil War imposed upon the Union Navy seapower responsibilities akin to those of the big naval powers, neither the Monitor nor most of the other modern ships built during the War would reflect an intent to control the seas.



Thomas Buckley

In his remarks, Professor Buckley proposes to place the Monitor and subsequent Civil War ship modernization within the broader context of naval modernization in the nineteenth century, and within a U.S. Naval policy that did not undergo fundamental modification until much later in the century.

Presently Associate Professor and Head of the Division of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, Professor Buckley is the author of study guides for the teaching of American history and historical biography. He has also prepared articles on those subjects and on historic military sites, and has served as consulting editor for the recently published *Saint*



368th REGULAR MEETING

\* \* \*

THOMAS BUCKLEY

on

The Civil War and the  
Modernization of the Navy

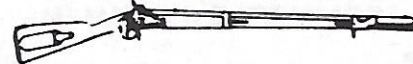
Friday, February 10, 1978

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Chicago Bar Association  
29 South LaSalle Street

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.



*Paul—Saga of An American City.* Professor Buckley, whose M.A. degree and work toward the doctorate is in history at Minnesota, is a member of the Executive Council of the Minnesota Historical Society. He is also Minnesota Chairman for the Council on Abandoned Military Posts and is organizing the program for their military history convention to be held in Minneapolis at the end of April, 1978.

It is with our deepest regret that we announce that our beloved companion, Miner Coburn, died on Christmas Day. While recently his health had not been good, he was still able to attend meetings this Fall and, in doing so, as usual enhanced the historical knowledge of all around him. Miner, who for many years was a popular high school teacher on the North Shore, joined The Round Table in 1962. In 1975, he was deservedly designated as an Honorary Life Member. Miner was a frequent speaker on Civil War subjects and in the past served The Round Table in the positions of Vice-President and Inspector General. One of our best informed members, he possessed a fine library which he has bequeathed to the Civil War and American Historical Research Center in the Chicago Public Library. Miner was also active in the Sons of Union Veterans, had served as a Director of the Illinois State Historical Society, and was the founder and advisor of the New Trier High School Civil War Round Table. We extend our deepest sympathy to his family. Their loss is most certainly shared by all of us. He shall be missed, but never forgotten.

# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



FOUNDED DECEMBER 3, 1940

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The only requirement for membership in The Round Table is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Ward C. Smidl, 1104 Whippoorwill Lane, Palatine, Illinois 60067.



*from the  
Editor's pen*



Rare indeed is the man who can attract the attention of the press on two separate occasions one hundred thirteen years apart. Yet such is the story of Lt. Col. William Shy. His first brush with fame came ironically on the day of his death, December 16, 1864, the second day of the Battle of Nashville. Hood's battered Army of Tennessee had retreated the prior night to a new position where it dug in to

await the pleasure of George H. Thomas. The left flank of this new Confederate line was anchored on a hill beside the Granny White Pike. Atop that hill, along with the other troops of Bate's division, was the 37th Tennessee and its commander, the twenty-six year old Shy.

When the Federal attack was delivered, the Southerners made a determined stand, but the result was inevitable. Hopelessly outnumbered, flanked and almost surrounded, they were forced to give way in a retreat that quickly became a rout. Left behind on the hill was the young Lt. Col., killed by a minie ball which entered his head above the right eye. Yet he was not destined to be forgotten in death. His gallant defense of the previously anonymous eminence had not gone unnoticed. Almost immediately, it was christened, by both Federal and Confederate alike, Shy's Hill. And so it is called today.

Shy's body was recovered and buried behind the family residence in Franklin, Tennessee. Those who attended the funeral no doubt prayed that here the mortal remains of the brave officer would find eternal peace. But such was not to be.

On Christmas Day, 1977, Mrs. Ben Griffith, the current owner of the estate, notified local authorities that the grave of William Shy had apparently been disturbed the night before. On investigating, the sheriff and coroner confirmed that the earth had been freshly turned. Thus began as bizarre an adventure as Dan Lapinski's search for Booth's body. Digging down, the officials were shocked to find the headless torso of a man, wearing what appeared to be a tuxedo, sitting on top of Shy's casket. Removing the body, which was also minus a few limbs, the sheriff immediately announced, in all his wisdom, that a murder had been committed and that the killer had attempted to conceal the body by burying it in Shy's grave. The macabre story quickly attracted headlines across the country.

State anthropologist William Bass was called in to determine the cause of death. This worthy immediately requested a further search for the skull and limbs. Returning to the gravesite and his digging, the intrepid sheriff soon discovered the missing items as well as a previously unnoticed hole in the top of Shy's cast iron coffin. Ignoring this latter bit of information, Dr. Bass reported that the body's condition indicated a time of death between two months and a year before its discovery, and, further, that the victim was a white male between 26 and 29, 5 feet 10 inches tall and 170 pounds. Cause of death was stated as a blow above the right eye.

Immediately the forces of law and order were mobilized to identify the unfortunate victim. However, after several days of record searching, no missing person could be matched to the body. However, as the authorities reviewed the description provided by Dr. Bass (26 years old, 5'10", white male, 170 lbs., hole above right eye), a light began to dawn. It did fit one individual involved in the case—William Shy. A closer look at the "tuxedo" revealed a civilian clothing style popular in the 1860's. Then someone remembered the hole in the casket. Back to the gravesite raced the sheriff to do what he had neglected to do before, look inside. Sure enough, it was empty. The final piece of the puzzle was provided by the embarrassed Dr. Bass, who suddenly remembered that cast-iron coffins result in remarkable cases of body preservation.

And so Dr. Watson, the Sherlock Holmeses of Middle Tennessee have solved the mystery. No modern murder, just plain old grave robbers looking for Civil War relics. Breaking into the grave and casket, they had pulled the body out. Finding that Shy had not been buried in uniform, they left him sitting on his coffin and piled the dirt back in. Thus, we leave Lt. Col. Shy where we, and they, found him, back in his grave, searching in death for the peace that, by reason of his brave deeds in life, he certainly deserves.

## January Meeting

"Benjamin Franklin Butler, Beast or Benefactor?" was the question considered by Sherman Lavigna when he addressed 72 members and guests at The Round Table meeting on January 13. The answer, he concluded, is "Benjamin Franklin Butler, Beast and Benefactor."

Butler grew up in the mill town of Lowell, Massachusetts. There he observed the deplorable conditions of the workers. This experience gave him both a lifelong sympathy for the lower classes and a fear of poverty. Failing to get into West Point, a fact over which he remained bitter all his life, Butler decided on a career in law and was admitted to the bar in less than two years. One of his earliest legal efforts was on behalf of the mill girls in their fight for shorter hours. He sought a ten hour day law in the legislature, and finally won an eleven and one-quarter hour day. His victory brought him many enemies, but he had also made a name for himself. He prospered, gaining a reputation as a shrewd lawyer with a good trial technique.

In 1851 Butler was elected to the Massachusetts legislature, and in 1858 to the state's senate. In both houses he was always at the center of every major issue. In 1860 he served as a delegate to the Democratic Convention, and although he went committed to Breckinridge, he stayed with Jefferson Davis for 50 ballots, an ironic fact considering Davis' later intense hatred for Butler.

At the outbreak of the War, Butler, only a colonel in the militia, connived to become a brigadier general. To avoid the violence in Baltimore, Butler's Massachusetts Brigade went by ship to Annapolis in order to reach Washington. His troops were the first to arrive in the capitol and he was given command of the Department of Annapolis. Unsatisfied, however, he captured Baltimore and held sway over the state of Maryland. Official Washington, fearing his actions might push the state into secession, was not happy and re-called Butler. However, Lincoln did make him a major general and sent him to Fort Monroe. There, he gained further public notice for his announcement that since Virginia had seceded and was a foreign country, runaway slaves were to be considered contraband of war and would not be returned.

Butler yearned for military action, but proved inept as a battlefield leader. He did manage to capture some under-construction forts, at Hatteras Inlet, however, which pleased Lincoln and the North. Subsequently, he was given leave to recruit troops in Massachusetts, and while there learned he was to take command of New Orleans.

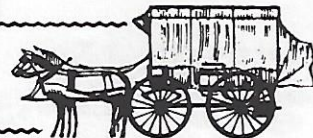
As commander, Butler took stringent measures. He demanded oaths of allegiance from everyone. Most eventually gave them, but those who didn't lost belongings, were imprisoned, or were executed. Snubs by southern women led Butler to issue General Order 28, the notorious women order which said that any female insulting or showing contempt for U.S. officers or soldiers would be regarded and treated as "a woman of the town plying her avocation." This, and the imprisonment and hangings he used to rule the city, earned him the nickname "Beast". His firmness did restore order and discipline to the city, and his efforts at sanitation kept the yellow fever death toll down. In Lavigna's opinion, however, Butler created a deep, lasting hatred for the Yankees which split the North and South for four generations.

Butler was also accused of profiteering at New Orleans, but nothing was ever proven. The most publicized accusation was the theft of silverware which led to another nickname, "Spoons". Lavigna pointed out that Butler did profit from legal cotton and land deals which today would probably be considered conflicts of interest.

Butler was finally removed from command in New

*Continued*

## The SUTLER'S WAGON



FOR SALE: *Civil War Times Illustrated* (monthly) April 1959 (Vol. 1, No. 1) through August 1975 (Vol. 15, No. 5). Total of 175 issues plus 10 indices—\$175. Contact C.J. Shields, P.O. Box 148, Frankfort, Ill. 60423.

FOR SALE: Dyer's *Compendium of the War of the Rebellion*, 3 vols., 1959 edition by Yoseloff—\$70.; Esposito's *West Point Atlas of the Civil War*—\$65.; Miller's *Photographic History of the Civil War*, 10 vols. in 5 books with slip cover, 1957 edition by Yoseloff—\$60. Contact Marshall D. Krolick, 332-5060 (day), 498-3126 (night).

### *January Meeting continued*

Orleans. Washington never gave any reasons for doing so although there is speculation that Britain and France, appalled at the women order, urged his removal. Back in command at Fort Monroe, Butler still sought to prove himself militarily, but remained unsuccessful. He did, however, gain attention and build himself politically by using Negro troops in battle. At Bermuda Hundred his army was invested by Beauregard and although he was not technically bottled up, Butler nevertheless received his third nickname, "Bottles." At Fort Fisher he suffered his final military defeat and was relieved by Grant.

His military career over, Butler returned to a profitable and successful law practice. He molded his thinking with the Radical Republicans and in 1866 was elected to Congress. As a freshman representative, he led the action to impeach Johnson. He also became the outstanding liberal of the day, advocating the rights of the Negro and the poor, women's suffrage, easy money, and the eight hour day. One of Butler's more notable successes was getting an anti-Ku Klux Klan bill through Congress. After several unsuccessful attempts to become governor of Massachusetts, Butler was finally elected in 1881 and spent his two-year term maneuvering for the presidency. However, he failed to obtain the needed support, was soundly defeated, and retired from politics.

In summation, Lavigna concluded that Butler was a "Beast" in his harsh treatment of southerners and in thereby prolonging the division between North and South. However, he was a "Benefactor" to the Negro, the poor, and the oppressed, promoting and helping to achieve rights now taken for granted.

The National Archives is now offering for sale a portfolio of twelve Civil War portraits done by the famous photographer, Matthew Brady. The 12 x 18-inch photographs, suitable for framing, include such subjects as Lincoln, Grant, Sherman, Walt Whitman, and Clara Barton. The cost of the portfolio is \$7.00 by mail, or \$5.00 if purchased directly at the Archives. To order this portfolio, write to the cashier (NEPS), National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C. 20408. All checks should be made payable to the National Archives Trust Fund.

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The house in which Mary Todd Lincoln lived with her family from 1832 until 1839 has been restored, and is now open to the public. The twenty-room brick home, located on West Main Street, in Lexington, Kentucky, was originally built as an Inn in approximately 1803. Mrs. Lincoln's father purchased the house in 1832 and resided there until his death in 1849. The property is now owned by the State of Kentucky, and was restored under the auspices of the Kentucky Mansions Preservation Foundation, organized in 1969 by Mrs. Louie B. Nunn, the wife of the then Kentucky governor. The State now leases the House to the Foundation, which is in charge of maintaining it.

# THE NEW BOOKS



(Compiled by Dick Clark)

Adams, Henry. *Letters of Henry Adams*. Edited by W.C. Ford. 2 vols. Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint. Reprinting of 1930 ed. \$60.00

Barnard, George N. *Photographic Views of Sherman's Campaign*. Preface by Beaumont Newhall. New York: Dover Publications, 1977. Paper. Fine reproduction on glossy paper. \$4.00 30 cm.

Berry, Mary Frances. *Military Necessity and Civil Rights Policy. Citizenship & the Constitution, 1861-1868*. Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1977. \$8.95

Blake, Henry N. *Three Years in the Army of the Potomac*. St. Clair Shores, Michigan: Scholarly Press, 1977. \$22.00. Reprint of 1865 printing.

Boyd, Cyrus F. *The Civil War Diary of Cyrus F. Boyd, Fifteenth Iowa Infantry 1861-1863*. With new introduction by E.B. Long. Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint, 1977. \$12.50

Confederate States of America. Congress. *Journal of the Congress of the Confederate States of America 1861-1865*. 7 vols. Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint. \$305.00

Connolly, J.A. *Three Years in the Army of the Cumberland*. Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint. \$19.00. Original of 1959.

Crawford, Richard, editor. *The Civil War Song Book*. New York: Dover Publications. Paper, \$5.00

Duke, Basil W. *History of Morgan's Cavalry*. Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint. \$30.00. Reprint of the Indiana University print of 1968.

Dunning, William A. *The British Empire and the United States*. Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint. \$20.00. Original of 1914.

Early, Jubal A. *War Memoirs*. Edited by Frank E. Vandiver. Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint. \$26.00. Reprint of the Indiana University print of 1968.

Ford, Worthington Chauncey. *A Cycle of Adams Letters, Eighteen Sixty-One to Eighteen Sixty-Five*. 2 vols. in 1. Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint. \$30.00. Original of 1920.

Fuller, J.F.C. *The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant*. Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint. \$23.00. Reprint of University of Indiana print of 1968.

Hood, John B. *Advance and Retreat*. Personal Experiences in the U.S. and Confederate Armies. Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint. \$19.00. Reprint of the Indiana University edition of 1968.

Johnson, Curt and Mark McLaughlin. *Civil War Battles*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1977. \$12.95

Jordan, Thomas and J.P. Pryor. *The Campaigns of Lieut.-Gen. N. B. Forrest, and of Forrest's Cavalry*, with portraits, maps and illustrations. Dayton, Ohio: Morning-side Bookshop, 1977. \$22.50. Back in print.

Kunhardt, Dorothy Meserve and Philip B. Kunhardt, Jr., and the Editors of Time-Life Books. *Mathew Brady and His World*. Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, 1977. \$19.95

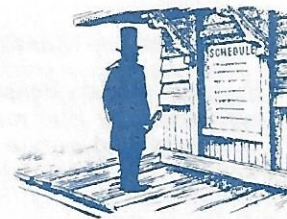
Livermore, Thomas L. *Numbers & Losses in the Civil War in America, 1861-1865*. Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint. \$11.00. From the University of Indiana reprint of 1968.

Longstreet, James. *From Manassas to Appomattox*. Memoirs of the Civil War in America. Edited by James I. Robertson, Jr. Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint. \$36.00. From the University of Indiana reprint 1960.

McClellan, Henry Brainerd. *I Rode with Jeb Stuart: The Life and Campaigns of Major General J.E.B. Stuart*. Introduction and Notes by Burke Davis. Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint, 1977. \$23.00. From the Indiana University printing of 1958.

McGinnis, Ralph Y., editor. *Quotations from Abraham Lincoln*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1977. \$12.95

## BULLETIN BOARD



### FUTURE MEETINGS

Regular Meetings are held at the Chicago Bar Association, 29 South LaSalle, second Friday in each month except as noted.

February 10: Dr. Thomas Buckley on "Naval Modernization and the Civil War".

March 10: Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr. on "Civil War Chaplains".

April 14: Marshall D. Krolick on "Brandy Station".

May 3-7: Annual Battlefield Tour to Chancellorsville, Wilderness, Fredericksburg, etc.

May 12: Kenneth Carley on "The Sioux Uprising of 1862".

June 9: Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner and Installation of Officers.

Every Monday: Informal noon luncheon meetings at Wieboldt's Men's Grill, 9th Floor, State and Madison; all members welcome.

Last Tuesday of each month: Informal noon luncheon meetings at Caravelle Motel, River Road and Bryn Mawr Avenue, Rosemont; all members welcome.

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In the December issue of the Newsletter, we noted that the Neiman-Marcus Christmas Catalog was offering, for a mere \$30,000.00, an all-expense paid, guided, seven-day tour of the "Land of Lincoln." We are shocked to learn that of the 515 items offered in the Catalog, the "Lincoln Land Safari" is the only one that has not been purchased. Among the items that did sell were a \$130,000.00 lynx fur coat, his and hers matching electricity-generating windmills costing \$16,000.00 each, and hundreds of \$50.00 eleven foot poles (for the things you wouldn't touch with a ten foot pole). Not willing to admit defeat, Neiman-Marcus has announced that the Lincoln Land Trip will continue to be available. However, the statement by the spokesman for the Department Store went on to say that they do plan to cancel the offer in the event of the death of the tour's guide. This statement is somewhat disconcerting to The Round Table, as the guide in question is our own member a veteran Lincoln actor, Dick Blake. For Dick's sake, we hope that the trip will remain available for many years to come.

# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

VOLUME XXXVIII, DIRECTORY NUMBER

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FEBRUARY 1, 1978

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