

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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Chicago, Illinois

November, 1974

WILBUR KURTZ, Jr. ON LINCOLN, SHERMAN AND LLOYD LEWIS



Wilbur G. Kurtz, Jr.

This past April marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the death of the noted Civil War author, Lloyd Lewis. Many of those in the Round Table had the privilege of a personal relationship with Mr. Lewis as he was a Chicago newspaperman for many years prior to his untimely passing. To our younger members, he is a name to be respected alongside those of Freeman and Nevins. However, whether we knew him and want to remember or whether we didn't and want to learn, the next

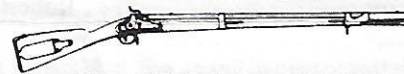
regularly scheduled meeting, to be held on November 8, 1974, should be a most rewarding evening for us all.

Our speaker will be Wilbur G. Kurtz, Jr. of Atlanta and his topic is "Lincoln, Sherman and Lloyd Lewis". In addition to discussing and evaluating Mr. Lewis' two great books, "Myths After Lincoln" and "Sherman: Fighting Prophet", Mr. Kurtz will relate his recollections of the author and the latter's relationship with our speaker's late father, the eminent historian of the Atlanta Campaign, Wilbur G. Kurtz, Sr.

Lloyd Lewis was born in Pendleton, Indiana before the turn of the century. An everyday occurrence during his boyhood years there was listening to the reminiscences of his older neighbors who had marched off to see the elephant more than thirty years before. In 1913 he graduated from Swarthmore College and immediately set out upon a career in journalism. Working first for the Philadelphia North American, he later moved to Chicago to join the staffs of this city's Record Herald and later the Daily News. While at the latter, he held the positions of drama editor, sports editor and associate editor. In 1945 he left the Daily News to become a columnist for the Chicago Sun. Mr. Lewis began the research for his biography of Sherman in 1929 and, when it was published in 1932, it was a Book-of-the-Month Club selection. He later wrote "Captain Sam Grant", the first book in his proposed four volume life of the Union Commander. When his death prevented his completion of this project, the next two volumes were written by Bruce Catton, with the last book now being finished by T. Harry Williams.

In addition to his Civil War works, Mr. Lewis also co-authored two books with Henry Justin Smith, one a history of Chicago and the other about Oscar Wilde, and also collaborated on a play with Sinclair Lewis. He lectured for the history department of the University of Chicago and was a trustee of the Illinois State Historical Library. His lovely widow, Katherine, is still a resident of Chicago and is often a most welcome and honored guest at the special events and Ladies' Nights of the Round Table.

Wilbur G. Kurtz, Jr. comes to us from Atlanta with a family tradition rich in the lore of the Civil War and the study of its



335th REGULAR MEETING

Wilbur Kurtz, Jr.

on

Lincoln, Sherman and Lloyd Lewis

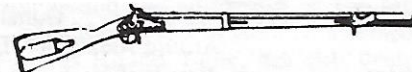
Friday, November 8, 1974

Chicago Bar Association

29 South LaSalle Street

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.



history. It was on his great-grandfather's plantation that Sherman established his headquarters after Jonesboro. His grandfather was the renowned Capt. William Fuller, the intrepid conductor who successfully pursued the locomotive "General" after it had been stolen by the Andrews' Raiders. To the pen, paintbrush and leadership of his father Atlantans owe full credit for the preservation of their city's Civil War legacy, as he devoted his life to make the story available to future generations.

Mr. Kurtz himself is a graduate of Emory University from which he received a B.A. degree in 1935 and an M.A. in history in 1936. Joining The Coca-Cola Company just before World War II, he has served as its Archivist and Corporate Historian since 1958. An author in his own right, his manuscript "Jefferson Davis and His Cabinet" won the 1936 Mildred Rutherford Award for research in the history of the Confederacy. A founder of the Atlanta Civil War Round Table in 1949, Mr. Kurtz was appointed, in 1961, a member of both the Georgia Civil War Centennial Commission and the Advertising Committee of the Advisory Council of the United States Civil War Centennial Commission. Thus it can truly be said that our November meeting will feature one distinguished Civil War student speaking on the achievements of another.



Lloyd Lewis

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



FOUNDED DECEMBER 3, 1940

18 East Chestnut Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611
Phone: Whitehall 4-3085

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The only requirement for membership is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Donald E. Jensen, 335 East Woodland Road, Lake Bluff, Ill. 60044.



*from the
Editor's pen*



During a recent interview with Hollywood columnist, Norma Lee Browning, George C. Scott, the reluctant Oscar winner, was asked "If you had the time, money, and freedom to produce a dream motion picture, what would it be?" The eminent actor responded "You're going to laugh, I'd do the three days of the Battle of Gettysburg, July 1-3, 1863. I wouldn't confine it to the battle alone but to all the characters involved, even the minor ones."

Well, Mr. Scott you're right, those of us who seriously study the Civil War are laughing, not at you and your dream picture, but at the product which would probably result if Hollywood took the opportunity to make that vision a reality. The track record established in the past by the motion picture industry is what implants within us this expectation of the worst. Just a glance at a few of the Civil War "epics" turned

out by the moguls of the silver screen will illustrate the point.

John Ford's "The Horse Soldiers" was adopted from a novel loosely based on Grierson's Raid. Its plot was hopelessly contrived and its battle scenes absurd. The shame is that a great movie could have been made by merely using as the script Dee Brown's factual version of this brilliant cavalry expedition. Even more disgraceful was "Shenandoah" starring James Stewart. This cliché-ridden tear jerker was packed full of ludicrous handkerchief-grabbing incidents, such as the old "former slave saves white boyhood playmate on battlefield" gimmick. Another masterpiece was "Major Dundee", which turned Rosser's Beefsteak Raid into an unbelievable giant joust between Charlton Heston and Richard Widmark. On and on the list goes and even television has gotten into the Civil War mediocrity act. We are all still trying to forget "The Gray Ghost" in which John Mosley was depicted as a cross between Superman and Beau Brummel, and "The Americans", a series that described the horror of brother versus brother war as though the average age of the audience was five and a half.

By far, the most inexcusable faults of all these attempts at entertainment are their uniform historical inaccuracy and inattention to detail. The literature of the Civil War is rich in accurate descriptions of the events misrepresented on the screen. This country has many fine authorities on Civil War equipment and arms. Yet time after time we see Grant at Gettysburg or infantrymen wearing Spanish-American War cavalry uniforms. With all the millions of dollars the studios spend on each project, why can't any funds be spared to engage the services of a Pete Long or a Francis Lord as technical advisor?

Probably the best of this incredibly bad lot of Civil War films is the movie adaptation of Stephen Crane's classic novel "The Red Badge of Courage". Despite its brevity and the late Audie Murphy's inexperienced acting, it still managed to adequately depict the emotion and mood of that powerful book. Yet even here Hollywood cannot leave well enough alone. A recent announcement informs us that, instead of showing the original, NBC will broadcast a new "made-for-television" version on December 3, 1974. We can only wait to see if, in doing so, they will be creating another disaster such as was recently foisted upon the viewers by the Abraham Lincoln special. In that pitiful effort, a soap-opera script was made even worse by the sight of Hal Holbrook in the starring role under what must have been eighty-nine layers of ridiculous make-up. How blind and deaf must that show's producer be not to appreciate and recognize the critical acclaim our own Richard Blake has received from Lincoln students across the country for his magnificent portrayals of the 16th president.

So, Mr. Scott, you must pardon us if we do not await with baited breath the fulfillment of your dream. However, we do wish you well, for a man of your ability and disregard for the ballyhoo and commercialism of your industry is probably our best hope to bring to life one of our dreams, a movie which will truly portray the drama of 1861-1865.

It should be noted that at the time of the October meeting our current treasurer, Glen Wiche was vacationing in London while his immediate predecessor in office, Jerry Edelstein, was sojourning in Italy. President Ward Smidl has assured us that there is absolutely no connection between this fact and his request for an immediate meeting of the Audit Committee.

Lowell Reidenbaugh, our adopted waif from the St. Louis Round Table, has advised that the Harper's Weekly obituary of our beloved Schimmelpfennig, reprinted in the last issue of the Newsletter, may have been in error in reporting the date of the lamented martyr's death as September 7. Lowell points out that Bud Warner, in his "Generals In Blue", sets the date as September 5. Because of the importance of this matter to historians everywhere, we have assigned Lowell to head an investigative research team to determine the correct answer.

OCTOBER MEETING

For many years the members of the Round Table have been stereotyped as being mainly interested in hearing about battles and generals. Finally, at the October meeting, this generalization was proven untrue for once and for all as sixty-nine members and their guests were completely captivated by Dr. Harold Hyman, Professor of History at Rice University. In a masterful presentation, he described and analyzed the Johnson impeachment and its relation to the recent Watergate situation.

Dr. Hyman began with a brief review of the impeachment process from its origin in the English common law to its first use in America. Impeachment, a form of constitutional revolution, developed in England as a parliamentary prerogative whereby the representatives of the people, the House of Commons, could hold high officials to account. Despite the infrequent use of the process in Britain and the colonies, the framers of our constitution included it in their document as a way to prevent the unauthorized use of power in the new form of government they were experimenting with. As Dr. Hyman stated, this abuse of office can take two forms, excess action or inaction, either being a crippling blow to the orderly function of government.

The language of the constitution provides that an officer shall be impeached for treason, bribery and high crimes and misdemeanors. It is the latter phrase that was involved in both the Johnson and Nixon controversies. Contrary to the popularly accepted view, Dr. Hyman takes the strong position that Johnson should have been impeached, convicted, and then prosecuted for criminal acts. He described Lincoln's successor as not a defender of civil liberties, but instead as a man who lusted after power, who used racial tensions to build a power base, and who used his political powers to excess. As examples, Dr. Hyman referred to Johnson's transformation of the Southern states into military districts, his use of pardon power while denying the same right to Congress, and his desire to dictatorially control the Army, the only meaningful federal institution in the mid-1860's.

It was this latter plan with regard to the Army that led to his impeachment as Johnson realized that to accomplish his purpose he had to eliminate Edwin Stanton, the hold-over Secretary of War. In attempting to do so, he violated the Tenure of Office Act, a statute he had previously taken pains to comply with. Refuting the traditional theory that the resulting impeachment was a plot by the Radical Republicans, Dr. Hyman pointed out that many liberal senators and representatives voted against the President. That decision was supported by their middle class constituents who felt that Johnson had forsaken the principle of equality under the law by his action on the Civil Rights Bill. In that situation, after Congress had passed the legislation over his veto, Johnson had instructed his attorney general not to enforce it in the federal courts.

That Johnson was not convicted, Dr. Hyman feels, was due more to the upcoming expiration of his term and the bungling of the prosecutors than to his actual guilt or innocence. However, in arguing for his acquittal, the President's lawyers had adopted a theory originally presented in 1803 in the impeachment of a federal judge. This proposition, that since Johnson had not committed an indictable offense he could not be guilty of "high crimes and misdemeanors", was more recently seized upon by the defenders of Richard Nixon. In so doing, Dr. Hyman asserts that they have continued and imbedded in the minds of America a precedent which threatens to destroy impeachment as a weapon of accountability. To so define "high crimes" as to limit it to indictable offences ignores actions of a political nature which can fatally corrode our institutions, thus rendering government inoperable. Referring back to the writings of the English common law where lies the foundation of impeachment, Dr. Hyman concludes that such a narrow limitation of this key constitutional language cannot be what our founding fathers had in mind.

The spirited question and answer period which followed Dr.

TO THE CAMP FOLLOWERS (LADIES)

The Ladies were royally entertained at our last meeting when Lenore Fleming spoke to us on Judah P. Benjamin. Lenore took us on a fascinating journey through Benjamin's versatile career — from his early law practice in New Orleans and his sad marriage to the beautiful Natalie, to his many advisory posts in the Davis cabinet, his rapid retreat through the south after the fall of Richmond, and finally his amazing rise to success as a British barrister — a superb program, we all agree!

Next month we're happy to report that we will have the other half of this talented team as our speaker. George Fleming will talk to us on "Illinois on the Eve of Civil War". A cordial invitation is extended to all the wives of Round Table Members. Our meeting place is the Book and Bottle, 17 E. Chestnut, across from the Abraham Lincoln Bookshop, at 5:30 P.M. Do try to join us. For reservations write or call Mary Ellen Wehler, 244 S. Elmwood Drive, Aurora, Illinois 60506, 896-0169.

Hyman's remarks and the many laudatory comments spoken by those present certainly establish his appearance as one of our finest meetings. We heartily recommend to future presidents that they schedule a return visit in the near future. The Reconstruction, an era of fascinating events and dynamic personalities, is a subject we have too often ignored.

The October meeting of the Salt Creek Round Table was highlighted by our Past President Jerry Warshaw and his Civil War Film Night, featuring "The General", starring Buster Keaton.

After six years of dedicated writing, our good friend, Phil Hohlweck, has passed the editorship of the Milwaukee Civil War Round Table Newsletter to John H. Thompson. Phil, who is President of his Round Table, has also been busy on the speaking circuit. In addition to visits to us last December and to Battle Creek in May, he is scheduled to appear in Louisville in February.

Our honorary life member, Dr. Bell I. Wiley, is presently spending three months as a guest lecturer at the University of South Carolina, in addition to his duties as "historian-in-residence" for this academic year at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia. On June 3, 1974 Bell received the Award of Merit from the Museum of the Confederacy for his special issue on "The Common Soldier and The Civil War" in Civil War Times Illustrated. At those same ceremonies, the Museum's Jefferson Davis Award, presented annually for outstanding work dealing with the period of the Confederate States, was presented to Thomas L. Connelly and Archer Jones for their joint work "The Politics of Command: Factions and Ideas in Confederate Strategy".

John T. Hubbell, Editor of Civil War History and Professor of History at Kent State, has written us that our 1974-1975 Fellowship Award winner, James Geary, a student of Dr. Hubbell's, has already completed three chapters of his dissertation. In addition, an article resulting from Mr. Geary's doctoral research has been accepted by the Lincoln Herald.

Robert E. Lee, Jr., great-great-great-grandson of the Confederate leader is a soldier in the United States Army. A draftee, Specialist 4 Lee is an orderly at Fort Lewis, Wash.

THE NEW BOOKS



(Compiled by Dick Clark)

Carter, Samuel III. *The Riddle of Dr. Mudd*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons [c1974]. 380 p., illus., bibliog., index. \$8.95

Hassler, Warren W. *General George B. McClellan, Shield of the Union*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press [1974, c1958]. Reprint of the original done by Louisiana State University. \$17.00

Humes, Thomas Wm. *The Loyal Mountaineers of Tennessee*. Spartanburg, S.C.: Reprint Company [1974, c1888]. 400 p. \$18.00

Kirwan, Albert Dennis. *John J. Crittenden: The Struggle for the Union*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press [1974, c1962]. 514 p. Original by University of Kentucky. \$22.50

Lindsley, John Berrian, editor. *The Military Annals of Tennessee: Confederate. First Series: Embracing a Review of Military Operations, with regimental histories and memorial rolls, compiled from original and official sources*. Spartanburg, S.C.: Reprint Company, [1974, c1886]. 910 p., portraits. \$30.00. Additional parts of the original were planned, but never came to publication.

Phillips, Stanley S. *Excavated Artifacts from Battlefields and Campsites of the Civil War, 1861-1865*. Lanham, Maryland, 1974. Published by the author. [vi] 191 [i] 18 pages, illus. \$15.00

Quarles, Benjamin. *Allies for Freedom: Blacks and John Brown*. New York: Oxford University Press, [1974]. 244 p., illus. \$7.95

Schildt, John W. *Drums Along the Antietam*. Chewsville, Maryland: Antietam Publications, 1974. \$10.00. A history of the Valley of Antietam Creek.

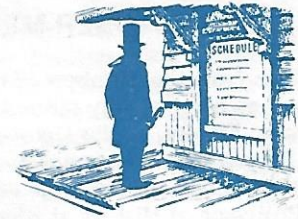
Shaara, Michael. *The Killer Angels*. New York: McKay, [1974]. \$8.95. A novel about the four days of Gettysburg.

Researchers from Duke University have now made five trips to take underwater photos of the hulk of the U.S.S. Monitor, recently located off Cape Hatteras. North Carolina Governor James Holshouser has nominated the site of the wreck as the first United States Marine Sanctuary. Granting of such status by the Department of Commerce would do much to protect the site from looters.

There are still living 257 ladies who draw government pensions as widows of Civil War soldiers. Their average age is eighty-nine and more than twenty are over one hundred. The oldest, at 117, is Mrs. Angela Davolos Moran of Polanco, Mexico. Her husband, Henry Moran, was wounded in June of 1861 at Harper's Ferry while a member of the 12th New York Militia. He moved to Mexico in 1874 where he resided until his death in 1925. Mrs. Moran receives a total of \$125.00 per month from the government, as does the oldest Confederate widow, Lula Lewis of Ola, Arkansas, who is 105.

The ranks of the Round Tables has lost one and gained one in the State of Texas. The CWRT of Waco went out of existence on May 31, 1974, while The Rolling Plains Civil War Round Table has recently been formed in Wichita Falls.

BULLETIN BOARD



FUTURE MEETINGS

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

November 8: Wilbur Kurtz, Jr. On "Lincoln, Sherman and Lloyd Lewis."

December 13: Shelby Foote, topic to be announced.

January 10: William C. "Jack" Davis on "The Battle of New Market."

February 14: Gordon Whitney on "The Battle of Nashville."

March 14: Frank Rankin on "The Orphan Brigade."

April 11: Harold Simpson on "The Texas Brigade, Lee's Grenadier Guard."

May 1-4: Annual Battlefield Tour to Richmond.

May 9: Ralph G. Newman on "The Last Full Measure of Devotion - Abraham Lincoln's Incredible Funeral."

June 13: Ladies Night, Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner, and Installation of Officers.

Every Monday: Informal noon luncheon meetings at LaSalle Hotel Coffee Shop; all members welcome.

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David Meerse, a winner of our Fellowship Award several years ago, was the author of "Origins of the Buchanan-Douglas Feud Reconsidered", an article which appeared in a recent issue of the Illinois State Historical Society Quarterly.

Ralph Newman, co-chairman of our Research Center Committee, has confirmed that the project has received its first gift of a literary collection. Edith Davis, sister of our late member, Philip R. Davis, has, on behalf of Phil's family, donated all of his books to the Chicago Public Library with the stipulation that those volumes dealing with Lincoln or the Civil War shall be placed in the Research Center when the facilities are completed.

The American Civil War Round Table of the United Kingdom is, this year, celebrating its twenty-first anniversary. At its recent dinner meeting in London, the guest of honor was Major John Selby, former instructor at the Royal Military Academy, who has recently completed a biography of Stonewall Jackson. The menu for that evening consisted of food popular at the time of the Civil War.