

# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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November 1993

## K. Jerry Williams on "The Confederate Navy and Blockade Running in England"

by Barbara Hughett

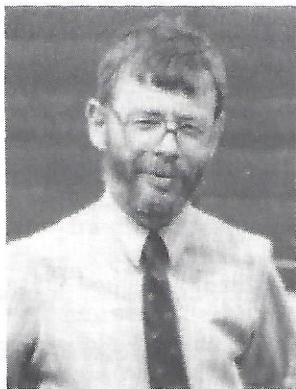
OF THE 96,600 bales of cotton produced in the American South in 1860, 12,000 were sold in America. Of the remaining 84,600 bales, 12,000 went to France and 6,000 to Germany. Nearly 50,000 bales went to Great Britain, where one-seventh of the population relied on the cotton trade in one way or another. Most of its imported cotton came to the country through the Port of Liverpool, to feed the Lancashire Mills.

At the outset of the American Civil War, because of the cotton factor, Merseyside (Liverpool and Birkenhead) was supportive of the Confederacy. So much so that United States Consul Thomas Haines Dudley reported that "a systematic plan of warfare is being carried upon the people of the United States from the Port of Liverpool." Fraser Trenholm & Co. of Liverpool served as financiers for the Confederacy throughout the war. The company financed the building of ships, blockade running, and the shipping of arms and industrial materials.

In 1861 James Dunwoody Bulloch, a Confederate agent, arrived in Liverpool, setting up offices at Fraser Trenholm. As the Confederacy had no navy, as such, he was to have vessels built in Merseyside. He signed contracts for the Laird's rams and bought the *Sea King*, later to be renamed the CSS *Shenandoah*. The last Confederate flag to be lowered at the war's end was the one aboard the *Shenandoah*, which traveled from the coast of California to the River Mersey to surrender.

After the war, the United States took the British government to court over the "Alabama claims" to deal with the damage caused to the Union by Confederate raiders from Britain. The United Kingdom was forced to pay 15.5 million dollars in compensation—an enormous amount of money in the 1870s.

This fascinating tale of intrigue and behind-the-scenes maneuvering will be brought to life when K. Jerry Williams addresses The Civil War Round Table on November 12. His topic will be "The Confederate Navy and Blockade Running in England."



K. Jerry Williams

A native of Birkenhead,



525th Regular Meeting

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K. Jerry Williams on "The Confederate Navy and Blockade Running in England"

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Friday, November 12

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Union League Club  
65 West Jackson Boulevard

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.  
\$20.00 per person

Menu: Buffet Dinner—Several Choices of Entrees and Salads



Please Note

Please make your reservation by Wednesday, November 10. Mail the enclosed postcard or call the book shop at 312-944-3085.

The November meeting is being held at the Union League Club, located at the corner of Jackson Boulevard and Federal Street. Federal Street runs north and south between Dearborn and Clark Streets. Parking is free at the General Parking lot, just south of the Union League Club.

Merseyside, Jerry Williams has been employed in the construction and shipbuilding industries in Merseyside for over twenty years. While working for Cammell Laird's Shipbuilders in 1972, he saved from destruction one of the original ledgers relating to the building of the CSS *Alabama*. In 1982 he saved from demolition 10 Rumford Place, the offices of Fraser Trenholm—in effect, the Confederate headquarters in Britain throughout the American Civil War. The building has since been magnificently refurbished.

Williams was instrumental in the establishment of  
(continued on page 3)



## ☪ OCTOBER MEETING ☪

by Barbara Hughett

The twentieth annual Nevins-Freeman Award of The Civil War Round Table was conferred on Civil War scholar and author Stephen B. Oates at The Round Table's 524th regular meeting on October 15, before 135 members and guests. This prestigious award was established in 1974 to honor individuals for their contributions to the preservation of our nation's heritage and to our understanding of the past, especially the years 1861-1865.

In his introduction of Stephen Oates, Round Table founder Ralph G. Newman said that Oates "has chronicled the difficult journey of our country along the road to racial equality with his biographies of John Brown, Abraham Lincoln, and Martin Luther King....Like others who have achieved great success by their writing and scholarship, he has been the victim of cruel and unwarranted criticism by some individuals who have neither the talent, understanding, nor concern for the main driving force of their subjects—if they, in fact, have written at all....The work of Stephen B. Oates measures up to the superb example set by the respected Alan Nevins and Douglas Southall Freeman."

The topic of Oates's acceptance address was "A Woman of Valor: Clara Barton and the Civil War," which is also the title of his book to be published this spring. Clara Barton was perhaps the most outstanding woman of the American Civil War, and was certainly the most significant battlefield nurse on either side in the eastern theater of the war. A battlefield physician, amazed at what Clara was able to accomplish in bringing supplies and medications to the battlefield, simply termed her "a sanitary commission of one."

Oates said that Barton's story is as compelling as any he has ever encountered. "This story has a tragic national context. It has a sympathetic and original lead character. It has a wartime love affair with a married officer on Hilton Head, powerful friendships and family ties, a sometimes obdurate medical bureaucracy, plenty of battlefield action seen from a unique perspective, and a compelling plot. A passionate, driven, conflicted woman overcomes the fearful odds against her serving on the battlefield and in going there, invades a hitherto all-male domain and changes it dramatically and changes it forever."

When the war began, she wanted to be a soldier and probably would have been were it not for proscriptions against her sex. Her father was a soldier; he raised her, was her mentor, and she deeply idolized him. In 1861 Clara was one of a handful of women working at the U.S. Patent Office. Her annual salary was \$1700—over four times the amount a school teacher could earn at that time. An unmarried woman, Clara equated marriage with death—"the end of my selfhood," as she put it.

She felt pulled to do something to honor the flag, yet held back "by the iron hand of propriety" that insisted she needed to be "a lady." Since battlefield nursing was at that time an all-male enterprise, she formed a support group with friends and relatives in three states and began funneling medical supplies to battlefield hospitals. In 1862 she went home to Massachusetts to see her dying father and told him of her desire to serve her country at the battlefield hospitals. His advice was "Go, by God, daughter. If that's what you want to do, go." He gave her his Masonic pin for a good-luck piece.

She experienced her first trial by fire at the Battle of

Cedar Mountain, which one doctor called "the Battle of Slaughter Mountain." Clara was aghast at what she saw: "men with arms and legs blown away, faces mangled, stomachs open and intestines hanging out, laying on the floor in their own filth and blood, crying out for water or a merciful bullet." Causes of infection were misunderstood at that time. Surgeons operated in blood-stained coats and didn't even wash their hands. Appalled at the filth in the hospitals, Clara and her assistants cleaned the floors themselves.

She continued her work throughout the war, distinguishing herself especially for her work during the bloody Battle of Antietam in September 1862. Known among the troops as "the angel of the battlefield," Clara served at or near battlefields in the most significant campaigns in the East—and was often under fire. Her wartime experiences included a romance with John J. Elwell, chief quartermaster of the 10th Army Corps, at Hilton Head, South Carolina. It was, it seems—for him at least—the love of his life. He wrote passionate letters to Clara after his wife died in the 1880s.

By 1864 there were thousands of women serving as nurses on the battlefields. Clara Barton had helped clear the way to bring them there. After the war, her activism continued. In 1865 she went to Andersonville, site of the infamous Confederate prison in Georgia, to identify and mark the graves of the Union dead. Thanks to her initiative, the names of nearly 13,000 Union prisoners who died there are saved from oblivion.

She went on the lecture circuit and thought enough of herself to demand the same pay as her male counterparts— included among whom were such luminaries of the day as Mark Twain. And she got it: equal pay for equal time. She talked about what a liberating experience the war was—that the American woman was fifty years in advance of where she had been prior to the Civil War. Women had come out of their homes during the war and into jobs in war-related industries. "The Civil War," Oates noted, "began as a white man's war and ended up as an integrated war in every sense of the word."

In 1877 Clara Barton founded the American Association of the Red Cross and served as its first president. She was a battlefield nurse in Cuba during the Spanish-American War, when she was in her seventies. "But it was the Civil War," Oates observed as he concluded his address, "which captured her imagination, the Civil War to which she kept returning in her reminiscences, in her speeches, and in her dreams. And when she lay dying at the age of ninety, I think that her mind leaped back to that troubling time in 1861 and 1862 when she wanted so much to go serve the flag but couldn't because of societal restrictions on her because she was a woman, because the last words she ever uttered were, 'Let me go. Let me go!'"

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### Williams (continued from page 1)

the American Civil War Trail of Merseyside, which details over twenty sites of importance. He has written articles on the American Civil War and Confederate activities in England for magazines and professional journals, and lectures internationally. He addressed the international conference of The Confederate Historical Association of Belgium in May 1992, and has appeared on radio and television programs in England and America.

## The New Books

Compiled by C. Robert Douglas



Hauptman, Laurence M. *The Iroquois in the Civil War: From Battlefield to Reservation*. Syracuse U. Press. 1993. \$29.95.

Heleniak, Roman J. & Lawrence Hewitt, eds. *Leadership During the Civil War: The 1989 Deep Delta Symposium—Themes in Honor of T. Harry Williams*. White Mane Publ. Co. 1992. \$29.95.

Heller, J. Roderick II & Carolyn Ayers, eds. *The Confederacy is on Her Way Up the Spout: Letters to South Carolina, 1861-1864*. U. of Georgia Press. 1992. \$19.95.

**Former President Marshall Krolick** will speak to the Union League Civil War Round Table luncheon at noon on Friday, November 19—the 130th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Among the topics he will cover is "Lincoln's Address and its Ramifications." For information and to make reservations call 312-427-7800, extension 266.

**Former President Glen Wiche** will present a paper at the fourteenth annual Illinois History Symposium, to be held in Springfield on December 3-4. His topic is "From Albion's Shore to the Illinois Plains: The Literature of the English Prairie Settlement in Illinois."

**Former President Richard McAdoo** addressed the Twin Cities Civil War Round Table in Minneapolis on October 19. His topic was "Civil War Artillery."

**Former President William Sullivan** addressed the lunch-time Union League Civil War Round Table on October 26, on "The Irish in the Civil War."

**Zetna Andrews, a founder of the Jackson (Mississippi) Civil War Round Table** and longtime friend of our Round Table, has written to thank us for our flowers and good wishes during her hospitalization last spring, and for the gift we had presented to her, via Jim Woodrick, during our battlefield tour to Vicksburg. Zetna is recovering from a broken hip and assures us she is feeling much better.

The history of The Round Table, *The Civil War Round Table: Fifty Years of Scholarship and Fellowship*, by Barbara Hughett, is available for \$30 per copy. You may purchase the book at the monthly meeting or order it from Morningside Bookshop, 260 Oak Street, Dayton, Ohio 45401 (1-800-648-9710). Add \$2.50 for postage and handling.

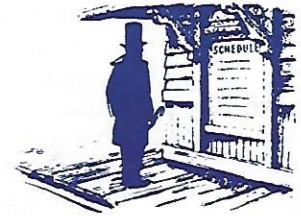
### Schimmelfennig Boutique

In addition to The Round Table history, the following items are available at each monthly meeting:

Lapel pins \$3.00 each, two for \$5.00  
Mugs \$2.00 each, two for \$3.00  
Meeting tapes \$7.00 each  
Civil War Buff posters \$10.00 each

Proceeds from the sale of these items go to support the programs of The Civil War Round Table.

## BULLETIN BOARD



### FUTURE MEETINGS

Regular meetings are held at the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, 350 North Orleans Street (Buttons, 15th Floor), the second Friday in each month, except as noted.

*November 12:* K. Jerry Williams on "The Confederate Navy and Blockade Running in England"  
(This meeting will be held at the Union League Club.)

*December 10:* Paul I. Klinger on "The New Mexico Campaign"

*January 14:* Harold Holzer and Mark E. Neely, Jr., on "Civil War Art"

*February 11:* Robert Remini on "Henry Clay, Slavery, and the Coming of the Civil War"

*March 11:* General Gordon R. Sullivan on "The Wilderness"

*April 8:* Major Frank K. McKenzie, USMC, on "Combined Operations Against Charleston"

*May 5-8:* Annual Battlefield Tour—Shenandoah Valley

*May 13:* Robert K. Krick on "Lawyers, Politicians, and Clerks: The Regimental Command of Lee's Army"

*June 10:* Stacey Allen on "New Discoveries at Shiloh"

### New Members

James W. Jacobs, 99 Meadow Place, Barrington, IL 60010, 708-832-7088

Neville C. Keller, 1514 Jonquil Terrace, Chicago, IL 60626-1215, 312-664-7200

Bjorn Skaptason, 3833 N. Wilton #3, Chicago, IL 60613, 312-871-0664

Ralph Walter, 1251 G. Fletcher, Chicago, IL 60657, 312-477-9708

### Changes of Address

David Carlson, 1235 S. Highland Avenue, Clearwater, FL 34616

Robert Girardi, 8625 W. Foster #2B, Chicago, IL 60656, 312-625-7225

Alvin Kantor, 401 100th Avenue NE #205, Bellevue, WA 98004-5454, 206-454-0147

John McCoy, 190 W. Elizabeth Drive, Schererville, IN 46375

Joseph Wiseshart, 1994 Westview Lane, Round Lake Beach, IL 60073, 708-740-7601

### Update (continued from page 2)

— \$20,140 to the Valley Conservation Council for a corridor planning project in the counties surrounding the McDowell Battlefield.

— \$16,000 to the Society of Port Republic Preservationists to design an interpretive exhibit on the final days of Stone-wall Jackson's Valley Campaign at Port Republic.

— \$33,000 to Rutherford County (Tennessee) to develop an interpretation plan for the greater battlefield area surrounding Stones River National Battlefield.

— \$2,900 to the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table to conduct the Virginia Civil War Heritage Preservation Conference in March 1994.