

WINFIELD SCOTT SCHLEY

Rear Admiral, US Navy



Very truly yours

W. S. Schley

Rear Admiral U.S.N.

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WINFIELD SCOTT SCHLEY was born at Richfields, near the town of Frederick, Maryland, on October 9, 1839. His grandfather, John Thomas Schley, had emigrated to America from Germany in 1739. The Admiral's father, also John Thomas Schley, was successively lawyer, merchant, and farmer. He was possessed of sufficient means to give his son a thorough education, and the boy was never confronted with the necessity of performing manual labor for a livelihood. The most marked characteristics of the father—high morality, respect for the law, and an enthusiastic love of country—were inherited by the son. Nature had endowed the youth with a good constitution, and his devotion to all out-of-door sports resulted in his taking such exercise as gave him a finely developed physique.

After passing through the primary schools at Harmony Grove and Frederick, to which latter town Admiral Schley's father moved in 1848, the youth attended Frederick Academy and St. John's Academy, both at Frederick. He then entered the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, September 20, 1856, from which he was graduated four years later. His first active duty in his profession as naval officer was on board the frigate *Niagara*, which cruised to India, China, and Japan in 1860-61, primarily for the purpose of carrying back to their native land the ambassadors who had been sent to the United States from Japan in 1859.

With this brief experience in practical navy work, Admiral Schley entered upon very active duty in the conflict which began shortly thereafter between the United States and the section which was comprised in the so-called Confederacy. He was advanced to the grade of master on August 31, 1861, and served on the frigate *Potomac*. Less than a year later, July 16, 1862, Schley was commissioned Lieutenant, and in that position he saw duty on the *Winona*, *Monongahela*, and *Richmond* in the Mississippi river campaign and the engagements in the vicinity of Port Hudson, from March 16 to July 9, 1863. During this time, in common with many minor officials who

have since attained prominence in the navy, he was under Admiral Farragut, from whom he gained much by force of example. During the years 1864-66, Schley served as executive officer on the gunboat *Waterlee* in the Pacific. In 1865 he put down an insurrection of Chinese coolies in the Chincha Islands. Upon the occasion of a revolution at La Union, San Salvador, he landed one hundred men and protected the interests of citizens of the United States.

After having seen active sea service for more than six years, Schley was given a land assignment. On July 25, 1866, he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant commander; and he served as instructor at the United States Naval Academy from 1866 to 1869. The period from 1869 to 1872 found him on duty as executive officer of the U. S. S. *Benicia*, on the Asiatic station; and in this period during the trouble between the United States and the Hermit Kingdom, he took an active part as adjutant of the land forces in the capture of the forts on Kang Hoa Island on the Salee River in Korea.

Schley was then reassigned to the Naval Academy, and for the four years from 1872 to 1876, he was head of the department of modern languages in the Naval Academy. On June 10, 1874, he was promoted to the rank of commander. The conclusion of his stay at the Naval Academy in 1876 was followed by another three-years period of sea service; and while on the *Essex*, on the Brazil station, Commander Schley rescued from the Island of Tristan d'Acunha an American crew which had been shipwrecked there. From 1880 to 1883, he served as lighthouse inspector with headquarters in Boston.

One of the most notable achievements of the Admiral's career occurred in 1884, when he commanded an expedition which sailed to the Arctic Ocean and rescued from certain death Lieut. Adolphus W. Greeley and six companions, at Cape Sabine, Grinnell Land. The undertaking was from the outset a most hazardous and difficult one. Two previous expeditions, well equipped in every way, had been turned back by the ice pack, impelled to abandon the quest. Schley's entire conduct of the enterprise was thoroughly characteristic of the man. His preparations were in themselves such as to insure success, for they were marked by great thoroughness and minute attention to detail. To perfection of system, essential in its way, Schley added tenacity of purpose. When the ice pack began to close in and threatened to become as formidable an obstacle as it had proved in the case of the two previous expeditions, Schley

Arcanum of the United States; the Masonic fraternity; the United Service Club of New York; the New York Yacht Club; the Seawanaka Corinthian Yacht Club, of New York, and the Metropolitan Club of Washington. He is not identified with any political party, and has not held public office outside of his profession. In 1904 he wrote his memoirs, which were published under the title of "Forty-five Years Under the Flag."

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