WASHINGTON, D.C.
CIVIL WAR CENTENNIAL COMMISSION

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS ON EVE OF WAR

Dec. 4 - President Buchanan, in his annual message to Congress, says: "The long continued and intemperate interference of the Northern people with the question of slavery in the Southern states has at length produced its natural effects. Many a matron throughout the South retires at night in dread of what may befall herself and her children before the morning. Should the apprehension of domestic danger, whether real or imaginary, extend and intensify until it shall pervade the masses of the Southern people, then disunion will become inevitable."

Dec. 5 - Reports the New York Herald: "No one could have listened to the debate in the Senate today without a conviction that the Union is just on the verge of dissolution."

Dec. 6 - The South Carolina House passes a bill authorizing the Governor to call into service 10,000 volunteers.

Dec. 10 - Secretary of the Treasury Cobb resigns and returns to Georgia to take part in the secession movement.

Dec. 11 - Four hundred men are reported to be strengthening the fortifications at Fort Sumter.

A PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION... ringing church bells... companion programs at the tombs of Generals Grant and Lee... special religious services everywhere... appropriate ceremonies at military academies... a South Carolina observance of the Star of the West incident that brought the first firing of the war.

These are among the vehicles the National Commission is leaning upon to attract national attention to January 8, 1961, the opening day of the five-year Centennial of the Civil War.

"This date will officially launch an event that most Americans of today have been waiting for all their lives," said Karl S. Betts, executive director. "We visualize it as a solemn occasion, one of dignity designed to awaken the people of this nation to the great domestic and international benefits and privileges we enjoy as a result of this conflict between our forefathers a century ago to settle on a political pattern that has been a boon to all mankind."

The President's proclamation is expected to call on all peoples of the Nation to participate in the many observances over the next five years that Centennial Commissions already organized in 43 states are working out. This will make clear the purpose of the occasion, but the tone for the day will be set by the ringing of church bells at 11 o'clock that morning. All denominations have been asked to take part and, if possible, to shape their programs on that date to touch on the religious significance of the war.

Plans for the programs at the tombs of the two great leaders who fought in the war still are indefinite, but they are expected to take place at virtually the same hour. At Grant's tomb in New York, West Point cadets will be on hand, while at the tomb of Lee at Lexington, Va., the ceremonies will be assisted by cadets from nearby V.M.I., often referred to as "the West Point of the South."

Charleston, S.C., is well advanced with its plans for the observance of the Star of the West incident. A three-day program of both a religious and historical nature is scheduled, culminating with ceremonies to call proper attention to January 9, 1861, the date on which the vessel tried to get into Charleston harbor to reprovise Fort Sumter.
RESCUE OF A SHIP

Shown here on the right, still on its original carriage, is a 32-pounder gun that once roared over the cotton fields along the winding Yazoo River. It was raised recently from the "Cairo," a Union ironclad sunk near Vicksburg Dec. 12, 1862, by a crude water mine placed there by Confederates during the vicious campaign by Federal gunboats to take the Mississippi.

The pilot house also has been brought to the surface. A campaign, directed by a non-profit organization known as "Operation Cairo," now is under way to accumulate through public subscription enough funds to raise the entire vessel. Among backers of the move is the Mississippi State Centennial Commission and Mayor John D. Holland of Vicksburg.

Maj. Gen. U.S. Grant, 3rd, chairman of the National Commission and a contributor to the effort, wrote Mayor Holland recently: "As this project has very real significance and is an important contribution to the suitable observation of the Civil War Centennial, we are most gratified that it has been undertaken, and especially that it has your indorsement and backing."

THE STRONGEST CRY YET FOR THE TELEVISION INDUSTRY to give the Centennial its full support has been received from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, the organization that presents the annual "Emmy" awards. Its membership includes producers, actors, writers and technicians of all types.

The action was taken in a resolution, presented by Harry Ackerman, Academy president, in which it is pointed out that the Centennial "commemorates an occasion precious to our American heritage -- the war that, in temporarily dividing this country, finally made it indivisible; the conflict that today makes it possible for the United States to face the Communist threat as one nation."

Meanwhile, a national campaign to encourage the television industry to support the Centennial is developing largely under the direction of Mort R. Lewis of Hollywood. As a part of it, Round Tables are urged to write network presidents asking for Civil War programs.

ELEVEN MORE ACRES ARE READY TO BE ADDED to the Gettysburg battlefield. In the heart of the battle area, they have been purchased by the War Library and Museum and Pennsylvania Commandery, both of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion, and will be presented to the U.S. Government as a part of the park there during the commemorative exercises at Gettysburg in July, 1963.

THE AMERICAN NATIONAL RED CROSS, in publicizing its services to the armed forces, is calling attention to Clara Barton and her work during the Civil War. It is also featuring the Civil War Centennial on the back of its 1961 speakers' kit.

ALL POSTS OF THE JEWISH WAR VETERANS have been asked to cooperate in the preparation of a national shrine sponsored by that organization. Included in the program will be a nationwide search for graves of Civil War veterans, North and South, buried in Jewish or national cemeteries. As another feature, the Department of Georgia and South Carolina is planning to place a marker at the graveside in a Paris cemetery of Judah P. Benjamin, at one time Confederate Secretary of State.

THE ATLANTA CENTURY, a full-page account in modern newspaper language of what went on in the election of 100 years ago, has been made available in mat form to other newspapers of the country by The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Written by Norman Shavin and Mike Edwards, it's free, with the only stipulation that it must be used in toto.

A ONE-ACT PLAY-WRITING CONTEST on the theme of the Civil War has been opened by the District of Columbia Recreation Department to both professional and amateur writers. The three winning plays will be produced locally. For details, write Mrs. Maud Howell Smith, 4000 Cathedral Avenue, N.W., Washington 16, D. C.

LOUISIANA'S CENTENNIAL COMMISSION is now busily planning its program. At a recent meeting, State Senator Sylvan Friedman of Natchez was elected chairman and Dr. T. Harry Williams, professor of history at Louisiana State University, vice chairman. Each parish will be encouraged to organize its own Centennial Committee.

ROCHESTER, N. Y., through the efforts of a combination of patriotic groups, has been engaged for some time in active planning for the Centennial, reports Grover C. Scott, executive secretary-treasurer of the Sons of Union Veterans. Several events already have been observed, and a drive is under way to give proper attention to others.