MONTHLY CHRONOLOGY FOR 1862

Jan. 1 – Confederate Commissioners Mason and Slidell are released from Fort Warren in Boston Harbor and placed on board the British gunboat Rinaldo.

Jan. 6 – Confederate Navy Secretary Mallory proposes provisional navy in a plan submitted to President Davis. Under its provisions, private ship owners would be permitted to participate, and 10 per cent of all prize money would go to the Confederate Treasury.

Jan. 7 – Flag Officer Andrew Foote of the Union Navy's Mississippi Flotilla makes a reconnaissance down the river preparatory to opening the campaign against Forts Henry and Donelson.

Jan. 9 – House Military Committee of Federal Congress considers ways to apportion a national income tax among the Southern states, as well as a proposal to emancipate the slaves and to offer them for hire to persons leasing Government lands.

Jan. 10 – General Burnside arrives at Fortress Monroe as the leader of an expedition reported to be on its way to North Carolina.

Jan. 11 – Commodore Joseph Smith, Union chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, notifies Lt. J. L. Worden that he has been named to command the "battery" Captain John Ericsson is building at New York. "This vessel is an experiment," the commodore writes. It will be called the Monitor.

Jan. 14 – In a surprise move, President Lincoln replaces Secretary of War Simon Cameron with Edwin M. Stanton, Cabinet member under President Buchanan.

Jan. 15 – Gen. McClellan appears before the Committee on the Conduct of the War and reiterates his conviction that he can bring the war to a close in a short time.

Jan. 19 – Flag Officer David Farragut hoists his flag on board the U.S.S. Hartford preparatory to starting the expedition that will lead to the battle of New Orleans.

Jan. 22 – A rumor that the Confederates have evacuated Manassas is denied by the newspapers.

Jan. 28 – Gen. Burnside sends word to severe damage from a storm to the fleet in which he is moving his army to the Roanoke Island area of North Carolina.

PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT MEETING in the entire five years of the Civil War Centennial commemoration will be held here in Washington January 31-February 1, when invited representatives from the various State Commissions will gather with the National Commission to discuss matters of common interest.

No rigid agenda will be followed, but included among the topics of discussion are expected to be these:

1. Work of State Commissions and their plans for the future.
2. Best methods by which the National Commission can assist them.
3. Plans of the National Commission in the field of historical publications.
5. Commemorative work in schools and colleges.
6. Public relations problems of the State and National Commissions.

On January 30, meetings of the Awards and Executive Committees will be held, preparatory to a report to the full commission.

The first session of the National Commission and state representatives will be called in the Interior Department auditorium at 2 p.m. on the 31st. Discussions will be continued next morning, with adjournment by noon.

This assembly of the national and state groups first was proposed in a letter of invitation sent out in November by Congressman Fred Schwegel, vice-chairman. It was followed up on December 18 by a letter from Dr. Allan Nevins, new chairman of the National Commission.

Replies to date indicate almost a full attendance. No limit was placed on the number of delegates State Commissions can send.
NEW MANAGEMENT TAKES OVER

At its meeting December 4, the National Commission chose as its chairman to replace Maj. Gen. U. S. Grant, 3rd, resigned, Dr. Allan Nevins, who earlier had been named a member of the agency by the White House. At the same time it appointed Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr., to serve as executive director under the new administration.

Dr. Nevins, one of the best known historians in America, twice has won the Pulitzer Prize. Native of Illinois and a graduate of the University of Illinois, he spent many years as an editor and editorial writer for New York publications and as a teacher at Cornell University and Columbia University. He is now living in San Marino, Calif., where he is retired senior research scholar for the Huntington Library.

Dr. Robertson was born at Danville, Va., was graduated from Randolph-Macon College and received his master’s degree and doctorate from Emory University. Author and editor of several books, he has been editor of CIVIL WAR HISTORY, published by the State University of Iowa, since 1959.

THE COMMEMORATION OF THE CIVIL WAR is to be made both "instructive and constructive," if the wishes of its new chairman are carried out.

In a statement issued to the nation after his appointment early last month, Dr. Nevins said the aim will be to "discourage observances that are cheap and tawdry, or that are divisive in temper, or that in any other respect fall short of expressing the magnanimity of spirit shown by Lincoln and Lee, or that fall short of honoring the heroism of the 600,000 men who gave their lives."

Accent will be placed on observances which will assist the American people to understand the "mingled tragedy and exaltation of the war," and to draw from it lessons commensurate with its importance.

In its program under new administration, the Commission will strive to:
1. Promote the publication of books and the collection of sources which will stand as a permanent memorial.
2. Make the principal events of the war, civil and military, more meaningful to teachers and students in the nation’s schools.
3. By use of mass media, give local observances a national interest and impact.
4. Enlist the support in this work of poets, essayists, novelists and composers.

The central theme in all activities, Dr. Nevins said, will be unity and not division, "for out of the brothers' war slowly emerged the basis of a firm union of hearts instead of an uncertain union of jarring political elements."

He added: "So far as we can, we shall allow the just pride of no national group to be belittled or besmirched. A host of white Southerners died for what they believed a just cause; a host of white Northerners died for what they held a sacred duty; a host of Negroes died, many in the uniform of the United States, for the achievement of freedom and human equality. We must honor them all. When we finally reach the commemoration of Appomattox, we shall treat it not as victory or defeat, but as a beginning -- the beginning of a century of increasing concord, mutual understanding, and fraternal affection among all the sections and social groups of the republic."

ACCENT STONEWALL! That will be the theme in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia this year when the anniversary of Jackson's brilliant campaign of 1862 arrives.

The Shenandoah Valley Civil War Centennial Committee recently announced that an electric map of the campaign, made available through private benefactors, will be dedicated at Harrisonburg in March. It will remain open to the public without charge throughout the Centennial.

In addition, a circle tour of the high points of the campaign, touching on nearly every battlefield and shrine in the valley, will be inaugurated the week-end of March 24-25.

REPRODUCTIONS OF 110 DOCUMENTS DEALING WITH AMERICAN JEWS in the Civil War are now offered free of charge by the curator as a service to groups planning Centennial observances.

THE FAMOUS BATTLE OF THE MERRIMACK AND THE MONITOR will be reenacted. Announcement has just been made that the Naval Amphibious Training Command will restage the contest with electrically-controlled models at Little Creek, Va., March 8-9.

MISSISSIPPI on January 15 will open its newest Civil War museum at Baldwyn, site of the famous battle of Brice's Crossroads. Admission will be free.