MONTHLY CHRONOLOGY FOR 1862

Dec. 1 - In a message to Congress, President Lincoln reviews the present situation of the nation, bringing this comment from the New York Times: "What the President has to say of prospective emancipation, and of the colonization of the enfranchised slaves, will not command universal assent, and we deem it very doubtful whether Congress will enact the laws necessary to carry his recommendations into effect.

Dec. 2 - In a message to Congress, President Davis authorizes 200 Medals of Honor to be prepared for presentation to officers, seamen, landsmen and marines who "most distinguish themselves by their gallantry in action and other seamanlike qualities" during the war.

Dec. 21 - Capt. Raphael Semmes, captures California steamer Ariel off the coast of Cuba with 700 passengers on board, including 150 Marines and Comdr. Louis C. Sartori, U.S.N.

Dec. 10 - Northerm press dispatches announce: "At 6 o'clock this morning 143 guns opened on the devoted city of Fredericksburg, and up to the latest moment the firing continues without interruption. Its destruction appears certain."

Dec. 11 - The U.S.S. Cairo, Lt. Comdr. Thos. O. Selfridge, sent to the Yazoo River to destroy torpedoes as a part of the drive to capture Vicksburg, is sunk by one of the infernal machines, a large demijohn of powder fired with a friction primer by a trigger line extending from torpedo pits on the bank. This is the first Union vessel to be sunk by such a device.

Dec. 12 - Burnside burls his troops against Lee at Fredericksburg and is repulsed, losing 12,700 in killed and wounded in fierce fighting below Marye's Heights that leaves the Union dead in piles.

Dec. 16 - Northern newspapers express surprise that Lee failed to put up a more serious resistance to Burnside's crossing the Rappahannock, but they explain that he doubtless considered rivers "a bad military line" and preferred the fortified ridges of hills in the rear, adopting the same course as that of the great field generals Messina and Wellington.

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Dec. 27 - With 1,800 men and four guns, Confederate Gen. Stuart makes a raid in the Dumfries area near Washington, causing considerable fright in the Union Capital.

Dec. 31 - Confederates under Bragg and Federals under Rosecrans begin fierce fighting along Stones River near Murfreesboro in Tennessee.

Dec. 31 - The U.S.S. Monitor, the ironclad that battled the C.S.S. Merrimack at Hampton Roads during the spring, sinks off Cape Hatteras with a part of its crew while en route to Beaufort, N. C.

A NATIONWIDE SPOTLIGHT ON WOMAN'S ROLE IN THE WAR is the goal of a program the National Centennial Commission now is planning. It will be carried out on a local level, and every state and county will be asked to take part.

According to James L. Robertson, Jr., executive director, the Commission is trying to formulate, on a basis of meetings held with women leaders from over the nation last June, a suggested program for all organizations to follow, in order that local commemorative efforts will have a basic uniformity.

He emphasized that the National Commission plans to have no program of its own, but instead will encourage, help plan, and coordinate local programs.

"Certainly this particular commemoration rightfully belongs at the grass-roots level," he said.

(more)
When the Fredericksburg Centennial Committee recalls this month the battle fought there in 1862, the Irish Brigade of Gen. Francis Meagher, shown here, will not go unnoticed. Dr. Thomas J. Kiernan, the Irish Ambassador, will be on hand at the opening ceremonies on Dec. 9. During the afternoon he will lay wreaths on the graves of Irish soldiers in the National Cemetery, and that night will take part in the first of a series of programs that will extend through Dec. 15. A Civil War Centennial awards dinner on Dec. 13 will be attended by Kevin Rush, counselor of the Irish Chancellery.

On Dec. 13-15, the fourth statewide Civil War Centennial Assembly will be held at Fredericksburg under the direction of the Virginia Civil War Commission. It is hoped, he added, that one day in 1963 will be set aside by Presidential proclamation to honor the women of the Civil War.

By placing the commemoration on a local basis, the director explained, communities will be afforded an opportunity not only to spotlight outstanding Civil War personalities in their particular areas, but will be able to call attention to those unsung heroes in gingham whose deeds in many respects equalled those of the men in uniform.

"Certainly we assume," he said, "that all programs honoring the women will be marked by the dignity and reverence to which they are so justly entitled. We want this commemoration to make up fully for any lack of attention that may have been the Civil War woman's lot over the years."

NEW JERSEY WILL HOLD its second annual American history workshop at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, Dec. 8. Designed especially for teachers and students, it will be coordinated by Dr. Willard Thorp, member of the State Centennial Commission and chairman of the English Department at Princeton University. Bruce Catton, distinguished Civil War author, will speak at a dinner that night.


THE BATTLE OF MANSFIELD, LA., already recalled in a program there this year, will be featured again in ceremonies next April 7.

According to J. A. H. Slawson, chairman of the De Soto Parish Centennial Committee, sponsor of the program, work on plans for the ceremonies at that time has been going on continually. At this year's observance, real sons and daughters of Confederate and Union veterans were featured.

EDUCATION'S GREAT AID

The nation's greatest boon to higher education, the Morrill (Land-Grant) Act of 1862, adopted at a time of war and uncertainty, is described in a 29-page pamphlet just prepared by the National Centennial Commission. Written by Allan Nevins, Commission chairman, and entitled "The Origin of the Land-Grant Colleges and State Universities," the pamphlet gives a detailed account of the background of the act and its results.

Free copies are available in quantity on request at Centennial Headquarters, 700 Jackson Place N.W., Washington 25, D. C.
RENO BURIAL MYSTERY

Union Gen. Jesse L. Reno's burial arrangements are now a source of wonder among Civil War historians. The Union officer was killed in the battle of South Mountain on Sept. 14, 1862. Where he was buried has remained a mystery until recently when the superintendent of Oak Hill Cemetery at Georgetown here in Washington revealed that Reno was interred there on April 9, 1867.

But where was his body during the four and a half years between his death and the Georgetown interment? Concerted research by a handful of historians so far has netted nothing. Anyone with the answer is asked to notify 100 YEARS AFTER.

ILLINOIS, the state that sent the Union President to Washington and the Union victorious general to Appomattox Court House, recently paid tribute to the memory of its veterans who served in the war. In a program sponsored by the Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Association in Chicago, sons and daughters of Union veterans appeared in uniform and took part in wreath-laying ceremonies.

THE ST. MARY'S PARISH CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE IN LOUISIANA wants the public to know it is aware the Confederate battle flag was square instead of rectangular.

Among the Committee's Centennial plans, it was announced in October that a 9-by-12-foot Confederate flag would be flown from a flagpole to be erected in front of the courthouse. Since then, letters from as far away as England have come in calling attention to the rectangular dimensions.

"Following the course of least resistance," explained David H. Stiel, Jr., chairman, "we decided upon the less-confusing-to-the-general-public rectangular banner, which in truth is a corruption of the Naval Jack authorized by the Secretary of the Confederate Navy on May 26, 1863."

TENTATIVE PLANS FOR THE CENTENNIAL OF THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG call for a four-day program beginning on July 1 with an address by the Governor of Pennsylvania and ending July 4 with an address by President Kennedy. July 2 will be devoted to an official parade and to rededications by individual states. On July 3, a symbolic commemoration of Pickett's charge will be held.

EFFIE MONA MACK, who writes history about Nevada, would like for that state to have "its full measure of recognition" for the part it played in the war.

She cites that, while no fighting took place in Nevada, 13 forts and camps were located there, and that soldiers from these stations kept open the only transcontinental road and guarded gold and silver from local mines going forward to the U. S. Treasury.

"But Nevada's most important contribution to the Civil War," she writes, "was its premature assumption of statehood to give President Lincoln three congressional votes needed to adopt the 13th Amendment."

A VISITOR CENTER AND MUSEUM now is under construction at Fort Pulaski in Tennessee. When completed next summer, it will have 20 exhibits telling the running story of the military activities on Cockspur Island from the period prior to the war up to the present. In other improvements at the fort, the road system and parking area have been done over this year under the direction of Ralston B. Lattimore, National Park Service superintendent.

HOW MANY BOOKS IN THE U. S. ARMY LIBRARY pertain to the Civil War? According to the latest compilation, published in a 51-page catalog, the answer is 688.
GETTYSBURG CENTER

This new $1,000,000 visitor center, featuring an indoor-outdoor auditorium and a wing housing the famous "Gettysburg Cyclorama" finished in 1884 under the direction of the French realist painter, Paul Philippoteaux, recently was dedicated at the Gettysburg National Military Park.

It stands just north of the Copse of Trees that served as a focal point for Pickett's charge in 1863, a point that since has become known as the symbolic "High Water Mark of the Confederacy."

The center was dedicated on the 99th anniversary of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Conrad L. Wirth, director of the National Park Service, was the principal speaker.

THE WASHINGTON COUNTY (Ark.) HISTORICAL SOCIETY, which has been carrying on Centennial observances in its area on a $3 membership fee, is another group that can be cited for variety.

Among its activities, it has sponsored a series of booklets on the Civil War, prepared for publication 52 war-time letters written by two brothers from that area, arranged markers in the battlefield park at Prairie Grove in readiness for the battle anniversary on Dec. 7, supplied speakers for civic clubs and schools, and made plans for an observance of the centennial of the battle of Fayetteville next April 18.

'TENNESSEE IN THE CIVIL WAR' is the title of a new film strip just produced by the State Centennial Commission, Library and Archives Building, Nashville.

Col. Campbell H. Brown, executive director, reported that requests for the film already are coming in, even though it has just been released. Copies were made available to the State Department of Education for use in schools.

A 28-minute film, it reviews the war in Tennessee, laying stress on the circumstances leading up to that state's entrance into the Confederacy and surrounding the installation of a reconstruction program by Andrew Johnson before his departure for his inauguration as Vice President.

CAROLINIANS WHO FOUGHT

Louis Manarin, Duke University graduate and Ph. D. candidate in history, who helped edit Lee's wartime papers for the Virginia Commission, is now in Washington going through archives in the nation's capital in order to compile and edit a roster of all North Carolinians who fought in the Civil War.

Shown here with his wife, who is assisting him, his work for the North Carolina Commission will require that he examine the compiled military service records of every man in each of the three branches of the Confederate service.

The completed roster, expected to entail years of work, will be published in an estimated 10-volume set. It will correct mistakes made in a roster prepared in 1882 by John W. Moore and found to be largely inaccurate.