MONTHLY CHRONOLOGY FOR 1864  

Dec. 1 - Preparing for the forthcoming battle of Nashville, the Mississippi Squadron of the Union Navy strengthens its forces along the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers to cope with the powerful rifled batteries erected by the Confederates.

Dec. 1 - Recently released after capture in Georgia, Union Gen. George Stoneman leads a raid from Kentucky, driving the Confederates out of East Tennessee and capturing Saltville and Wytheville in Virginia, destroying valuable salt works and lead mines.

Dec. 3 - Five Union gunboats engage Confederate field batteries on the Cumberland River near Bell's Mills, Tenn., silencing them and recapitulating three transports taken by the Southerners the preceding day, and return to Nashville with important information on the composition of the forces opposing Union Gen. George H. Thomas at Nashville.

Dec. 4 - The C.S.S. Shenandoah, newest of the Confederate vessels raiding the seas, captures and burns the whaling bark Edward off Tristan de Cunha in the South Atlantic.

Dec. 5 - In a message delivered at the opening of the 38th Congress, President Lincoln urges adoption of an amendment to the Constitution abolishing slavery, thus renewing his support of legislation that passed the Senate at the first session but failed to receive a two-thirds vote in the House.

Dec. 5 - Union Navy Secretary Welles, directing a fleet that had grown from 42 ships in 1861 to 671 ships mounting more than 4,600 guns in 1864, with more than 1,400 prizes to its credit, reports: "The blockade of a coast line ... greater in extent than the whole coast of Europe from Cape Trafalgar to Cape North, is an undertaking without precedent in history."

Dec. 7 - The Richmond Examiner reports: "The military drama in Georgia is drawing rapidly to its denouement. Gen. Sherman is at last approaching the coast, whither he has been traveling 23 days.

Dec. 7 - The U.S.S. Narcissus, lying off the city of Mobile, strikes a torpedo in a heavy storm, sinking within minutes as Confederate underwater explosives begin to take a heavy toll of Northern ships.

Dec. 8 - The Empress Carlota writes to the Empress Eugenie that negotiations are proceeding as to confiscated church properties in Mexico.

Dec. 8 - Rear Admiral David D. Porter, in a letter to the senior officer off New Inlet, N.C., reveals a plan to explode a vessel laden with powder near Fort Fisher, the first objective in the campaign to capture the port of Wilmington in that state.

Dec. 9 - The U.S.S. Osseo, taking part in an expedition to investigate the rumor of a Confederate ram building at Halfax, N.C., strikes two torpedoes in quick succession and sinks in the Roanoke River. The Bazely, coming alongside to lend assistance, also collides with a torpedo and goes down quickly.

Dec. 13 - A mighty Union fleet, assembled for the bombardment of Fort Fisher in North Carolina, leaves Hampton Roads, the wooden double-ender U.S.S. Sassacus towing the powder ship Louisiana, to be exploded near the fort.

Dec. 15 - Union Gen. Thomas, supported by gunboats of the Mississippi Squadron, begins attack on Hood at Nashville that results in a decisive victory for the Federals.

Dec. 18 - The U.S.S. Louisiana is towed to a point off Fort Fisher. In detailed instructions to her commander, A. C. Rhind, Admiral Porter states: "I expect more good to our cause from a success in this instance than from an advance of all the armies in the field."

Dec. 20 - President Lincoln issues proclamation calling for 300,000 additional men for service in the Army and Navy for one, two or three years.

Dec. 21 - The guerrilla leader, Col. John S. Mosby, is shot and badly wounded by Union cavalry while dinging at a home in Northern Virginia (only a matter of years from the residence near Atoka, Va., erected by the late President John F. Kennedy), but feigns death and manages to escape.

Dec. 23 - Gen. Sherman occupies Savannah after fighting his way across Georgia to the sea where he can gain the advantage of supplies brought in by ship.

Dec. 23 - President Lincoln signs a bill passed the preceding day by Congress to create the rank of vice admiral, an honor immediately conferred upon Rear-Admiral David G. Farragut.

Dec. 24 - After many days of delay caused by heavy weather, the Louisiana is exploded 230 yards off Fort Fisher, but the effect is so negligible that soldiers inside the fort continue to sleep.

Dec. 24 - Naval forces under Rear Admiral Porter and Army units under Major Gen. Ben Butler launch an unsuccessful attack on Fort Fisher that continues into the second day, after which the forces are withdrawn and returned to Hampton Roads to prepare for a second offensive against the Confederate bastion.
FURTHER ENLIGHTENMENT FROM VIRGINIA

Raymond T. Benson, affable secretary of the Harrison-Rockingham CWCC, has called attention to another monument in Virginia honoring an individual of the Civil War. Mr. Benson's communiqué came in response to two items in recent newsletters.

In May, 1962, the citizens of Dayton, Va., underwrote and erected a bronze plaque in memory of Lt. Col. Thomas F. Wildes, 116th Ohio, who personally intervened to save Dayton from destruction at the hands of Gen. Philip Sheridan. The Union commander in 1864 ordered the town burned in retaliation for the slaying of a Federal officer. Wildes risked his career to intercede on behalf of Dayton's citizens; and Sheridan revoked his order solely because of the Ohioan's pleas.

AT ITS RECENT NATIONAL CONVENTION in Richmond, Va., the United Daughters of the Confederacy conferred honorary membership on William M. Beard of the New Jersey CWCC. Judge Beard is only the third person who holds this honor in the United Daughters. (The other two are Barnard M. Baruch of New York and Sen. Richard B. Russell of Georgia.) James Robertson of the National Commission staff addressed the delegates at their "Historical Evening" program. On the following day the United Daughters voted to contribute $500 toward the publication of the papers of Jefferson Davis.

THE GEORGIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION has published a 195-page work, "Georgia Civil War Historical Markers." The fully indexed booklet provides inscriptions on and locations of more than 1,800 highway markers located throughout the state. Copies of this guide, priced at one dollar each, may be ordered from the Georgia Historical Commission, 116 Mitchell St., S. W., Atlanta, Ga. 30303.

ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19, the New Jersey CWCC will hold its fourth annual American History Workshop on the campus of Rutgers University. Earl Schenck Miers is coordinator for the day-long meeting, whose theme is "Final Triumph: The Thirteenth Amendment." Two seminars will be held in the afternoon; Dr. John Hope Franklin of the University of Chicago will be featured speaker at an evening banquet. Additional information on the program is available from the New Jersey CWCC, State House, Trenton 25.

THE FIRST OF FIFTEEN VOLUMES of U. S. Grant's papers is scheduled for publication next June, according to the current report of the Ulysses S. Grant Association. The Association is now firmly established in its new headquarters on the campus of Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.

TEXAS AT ANTIETAM

Last month Texas became the second former Confederate state to erect a new monument during the Centennial on the Antietam battlefield. The new marker, which was formally presented to the National Park Service, commemorates the valor of the 1st, 4th, and 5th Texas Infantry Regiments in the September, 1862, engagement at Sharpsburg, Md. Shown at left is the monument and Miss Donna McCauley, Miss Maryland of 1965, who was proclaimed an honorary Texan for the day in order that she might perform the unveiling. Cooper A. Ragan of the Texas CWCC was principal speaker at the November 11 program on the Antietam battlefield.