MONTHLY CHRONOLOGY FOR 1865

April 1 - Union Gen. Phil Sheridan’s Army of the Shenandoah, newly arrived after its successful movement up the Shenandoah Valley, meets Confederate forces under Gen. George E. Pickett and drives them back with heavy losses at Five Forks in the Appomattox Campaign.

April 1 - The C.S.S. Shenandoah, cruising in the neighborhood of Ascension Island, discovers four American whaling ships at anchor and captures them all, taking on board their supplies and crews.

April 1 - The Union vessel Rodolph, on duty at the entrance of Blakely River in Alabama, is sunk by a torpedo, becoming the third blockading ship to be thus destroyed in a period of four days.

April 1 - Warned by the U.S. consul at Teneriffe that the Confederate ram Stonewall has taken on coal there and headed south toward the American coast, Union vessels along the Atlantic coast are warned to be on the lookout.

April 2 - Newly returned from sick leave to take part in the final defense of Petersburg, Gen. A. P. Hill, one of the South’s veteran officers, is killed in action.

April 2 - Confederate Gen. N. B. Forrest, considered by some the war’s greatest soldier, makes last stand at Selma, Ala., but fails to stop raid of Union cavalry under Gen. J. H. Wilson.

April 2 - Admiral Raphael Semmes, commanding the South’s fleet along the James River, is notified by the Confederate government that the “greatest” economy must be exercised and French wishes considered.

April 2 - The guerrilla leader Mosby, after confirming the surrender of General Lee, calls his battalion together at the little village of Salem (now Marshall), Va., and disbands it “in preference to surrendering.”

April 26 - Although ordered by President Davis to move south and continue the war, Johnston surrenders the Army of Tennessee.

April 27 - More than 1,000 Union soldiers, many of them released prisoners on their way home up the Mississippi River, are scalded to death or drowned when the boilers of the heavily-overladen transport steamer Sultana explode in what has been described as the greatest marine disaster of all time.

April 30 - Maximilian writes Napoleon III that there is mounting fear of an invasion of Mexico from the U.S. designed to overthrow the Imperial Government.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AS WAR CONTINUES

April 14 - Gen. Johnston, recognizing a hopeless situation, requests of Gen. W. T. Sherman an armistice, which is signed four days later.

April 14 - With Union Army and Navy forces participating, Maj. Gen. Robert Anderson raises over the ruins of Fort Sumter the same flag that he, as a major commanding the fortification, lowered there when it was attacked by the Confederates on the same date in 1861.

April 14 - Grant dines at the White House, but refuses an invitation to attend a play that evening at Ford’s Theater, where the President is fatally shot by the actor, John Wilkes Booth, in a plot that also involves an attempt on the life of Secretary of State Seward, who is critically injured.

April 15 - Lincoln dies in the early-morning hours, leaving a stunned nation, and Andrew Johnson is sworn in as President.

April 16 - Emperor Napoleon III advises Maximilian that a loan of 110,000,000 francs has been obtained to pursue the war in Mexico, but cautions that the “greatest” economy must be exercised and French wishes considered.

April 21 - The guerrilla leader Mosby, after confirming the surrender of General Lee, calls his battalion together at the little village of Salem (now Marshall), Va., and disbands it “in preference to surrendering.”

April 24 - The Confederate ram Webb, commanded by the daring young officer, Charles W. Read, runs the blockade of the Red River and passes New Orleans at high speed with the United States flag at half-mast, but later is forced ashore and blown up by her own crew, members of which escape to the countryside.

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Shown at left is a recent photograph of the restored village of Appomattox, Va., where, on Friday, April 9, 1965, the Virginia Civil War Commission and other sponsors will commemorate the centennial of the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia to forces under U. S. Grant. Bruce Catton will be the main speaker at the afternoon ceremony. Also on the program are U. S. Grant, III, and Robert E. Lee, IV, who together will cut the ribbon at the dedication of the newly restored Appomattox Court House.

On Sunday, April 25, the North Carolina CWCC plans an elaborate ceremony at the Bennett House (right), where 100 years ago Gen. Joseph E. Johnston surrendered the remnants of his Army of Tennessee to William T. Sherman. Vice President of the United States Hubert H. Humphrey will be the featured speaker at the "Centennial of National Unity" program near Durham, N. C. The governors of all fifty states have been invited to attend and participate in the centennial observances.

THE NATIONAL COMMISSION is pleased to announce that E. B. "Pete" Long, research assistant to Bruce Catton and an eminent historian in his own right, has agreed to serve as compiler of the "General Works" section of the Commission's bibliography. Mr. Long joins fourteen other editors who are working on, or have completed, sections of this first annotated listing of Civil War volumes.

KENTUCKY EXPERIENCED a keen loss March 8 with the death of Paul Brannon, executive coordinator of the Kentucky Civil War Commission. Mr. Brannon, 70, had served with the Lexington agency since his 1960 appointment by Gov. Bert Combs.

SPRINGFIELD IN MOURNING

One hundred years ago next month, Springfield, Ill., endured its darkest hour. The city's most noted son, Abraham Lincoln — victim of an assassin's bullet — came home to stay. The above photographs were made in May, 1865; they show the state capitol (top) and Lincoln's home draped in mourning material.

Delegates to the National Commission's Eighth National Assembly (May 1-4) will have an opportunity to visit these and other historic buildings in the Illinois capital. Persons planning to attend this final Centennial convention are urged to apply at once for room reservations.
JAMES ROBERTSON, executive director of the National Commission since December, 1961, has announced his forthcoming resignation. On or about June 15 Dr. Robertson will relinquish his Commission duties to become Associate Professor of History at the University of Montana.

In a letter sent to each member of the National Commission, Robertson stated: "Let me assure you that this resignation is the result solely of my desire to resume full-time academic life. A very successful Civil War Centennial will conclude for the most part with our Eighth National Assembly in Springfield, Ill. My presence in Washington thereafter is not needed for the Commission's final tasks. The University of Montana made me an attractive offer to join the faculty on the Missoula campus. I welcomed the opportunity to return to the classroom, where my heart lies.

"I cannot take leave of my Washington duties without expressing deep gratitude for the confidence, encouragement and assistance given me by you and other members of the National Commission. Working with you and other wonderful people connected with the Centennial has been a thrill I shall never forget. I can but hope that my efforts have been worthy of the trust and affection which I have received. Surely few persons could be as blessed with warm friendships as has been my fortune these past three and a half years."

CALIFORNIA'S LEGISLATURE has adopted a resolution declaring the second week of April as Appomattox Centennial Week in California. On the actual centennial date of Lee's surrender, a number of public exercises will be held. One will take place in Sacramento under the auspices of the California CWCC -- which agency was largely responsible for the resolution recently approved.

SPECIAL CEREMONIES are planned for the first week in April in Asheville, N. C., which was a key point in western Carolina for both sides during the Civil War. Exhibits and special programs will extend over a number of days. More complete information on these observances is available from Col. Paul A. Rockwell, chairman of the Buncombe County Centennial Committee, 142 Hillside St., Asheville.

"CAMP FORD, C. S. A.," is the title of a slim volume just published under the auspices of the Texas Civil War Centennial Advisory Committee. F. Lee Lawrence and Robert W. Glover are coauthors of this study, which recounts in detail the history of one of the Confederacy's most notorious prison camps. Information and copies of the volume may be obtained from the Texas Committee, P. O. Box 2276, Capitol Station, Austin.

NEW MONUMENT AT BENTONVILLE

Sen. Ralph W. Yarborough (D-Tex.), a member of the National Commission, was principal speaker at a March 21 observance marking the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Bentonville, N. C. This three-day engagement was the last serious attempt made by Confederates to stop Sherman's march through the Carolinas. The battle ended with a futile charge by some 1,000 Texas cavalrymen. During the battlefield program Sen. Yarborough dedicated a monument to the memory of the Lone Star soldiers. The marble tablet was authorized and placed on the field by the State of Texas. Other notables who took part in the program included Mrs. Quentin Gregory, President General of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and John A. May, National Commander of the Sons of Confederate Veterans. The ceremonies were under the direction of the North Carolina CWCC.
The program at the National Commission's Eighth and final assembly in Springfield, Ill., will contain many of the nation's foremost historians. The trio pictured above is but illustrative of the roster of distinguished participants who will speak during the May 1-4 convention. Dr. Frank E. Vandiver (left) of Rice University will discuss the mammoth project now underway of publishing the papers of Jefferson Davis. Dr. Vandiver is general editor of this undertaking and a biographer of "Stonewall" Jackson. Presiding over a panel treating of Civil War and Lincoln scholarship will be Dr. T. Harry Williams (center), Boyd Professor of American History at Louisiana State University. Dr. Williams is best known for his biography of P.G.T. Beauregard and a study of Federal military command, Lincoln and His Generals. At right is Dr. Avery O. Craven, Visiting Professor of History at the University of Wisconsin. A recognized authority on the immediate pre-Civil War period, Dr. Craven will direct what should be a very stimulating panel discussion on causative factors of the Civil War. He is author of a number of works, including The Coming of the Civil War and The Growth of Southern Nationalism.

Other participants recently added to the Springfield Assembly include Shelby Foote, E. B. Long, Win Stracke, Gwendolyn Brooks and Fred Schwengel. Noted actor Van Heflin will head the Tuesday, May 4, program at Lincoln's tomb.

THE RICHMOND CWCC has voted to conclude its activities by June 30 of this year. Before its expiration, however, this Virginia committee plans a number of publications for nationwide distribution. One such work will be Gen. Godfrey Weitzel's report of occupied Richmond. Weitzel commanded the Federal troops who secured the city in April, 1865. Louis Manarin is editing the report. Also in production by the Richmond Committee is a collection of historical sketches on military units from Richmond and adjoining areas, a large map of wartime Richmond itself, and a continuation of work toward a usable index to the 52-volume "Southern Historical Society Papers."

THE FAUQUIER COUNTY (VA.) CWCC has asked for patience from those who showed interest in the publication by that agency of "The Years of Anguish." This volume, mentioned in January's bulletin, will not be ready for distribution until some time this spring. However, advance orders are now being taken.

EXHIBITION TO CLOSE

The Mariner's Museum in Newport News, Va., announced last month that on April 15 it would dismantle its very popular gallery, "Sea Power in the Civil War." This exhibition has been open to the public since the beginning of the Centennial in 1961. It includes a diorama, models of the "Monitor," "Merrimack," "Hunley," "Hartford," and other vessels, as well as prints, paintings, and many artifacts from naval activities of the Civil War period.

Would-be visitors should make plans to see this exhibit before its April 15 closing.