

## Civil War 150 Years Ago

- Dec 8** CSS Sumter seizes Northern merchant ship Eben Dodge in the mid-Atlantic
- Dec 9** Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War established by the U.S. Senate  
Engagement at Chusto-Talasa (Bird Creek), Indian Territory (now Oklahoma)
- Dec 11** Disastrous fire in Charleston, South Carolina
- Dec 23** Skirmish at Dayton, Missouri
- Dec 26** United States releases Mason and Slidell, ending Trent affair  
Engagement at Chustenahlah, Cherokee Nation, Indian Territory (now Oklahoma)
- Dec 27** Skirmish at Hallsville, Missouri
- Dec 30** U.S. government suspends the use of gold and silver for redeeming paper money

## Christmas in Georgia 1861

At Fort Pulaski, Georgia, Confederate defenders faced a developing Union siege. But the people of Savannah had sent many boxes of foods, and the troops wanted for nothing. "Fine day here," wrote Private John Hart of the Irish Jasper Greens. "Plenty of fighting and whisky drinking." Meanwhile the Union troops encamped on Hilton Head Island, spent most of their Christmas digging trenches, but were given some time off in honor of the day. Private Charles Lafferty, of the 48th New York, wrote his sister, "We had a merry Christmas down hear. We bought sassiges ... and hoe cake and build a fir and cooked our sassiages. That is the way we spent our Christmas." Confederate General Robert E. Lee, who had been sent to see to the coastal defenses, was inland at his headquarters at Coosawatchie, South Carolina. "I cannot let this day of graceful rejoicing pass without some communication with you," he wrote his wife Mary. "I am thankful for the many among the past that I have passed with you, and the remembrance of them fills me with pleasure. For those on which we have been separated we must not repine. Now we must be content with the many blessings we receive." He bemoaned the confiscation of their home in Arlington, and the relics it contained, many from George Washington's family home at Mt. Vernon. But, he wrote, "they cannot take away the remembrance of the spot, and the memories of those that to us rendered it sacred. That will remain to us as long as life will last, and that we can preserve."