

VIRGINIA SESQUICENTENNIAL OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR COMMISSION 2010 ANNUAL REPORT



Background

The Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission was created in 2006, the first of its kind in the nation, for the purpose of preparing for and commemorating the sesquicentennial of Virginia's participation in the American Civil War. The Commission is charged with:

- Planning commemorative programs and activities that are designed to involve all citizens and result in a positive legacy and long-term public benefit;
- Encouraging civic, historical, educational, economic, and other organizations throughout Virginia to organize and participate in activities to expand the understanding and appreciation of the significance of the American Civil War; and
- Providing technical assistance to localities and nonprofit organizations to further the commemoration of the sesquicentennial of the American Civil War.

Members of the Commission are:

Speaker William J. Howell, *Chairman*
Del. T. Scott Garrett
Del. Algie T. Howell, Jr.
Del. Johnny S. Joannou
Del. Mark L. Keam
Del. L. Scott Lingamfelter
Del. Thomas C. Wright, Jr.

Sen. Charles J. Colgan, Sr. *Vice-Chairman*
Sen. R. Creigh Deeds
Sen. John S. Edwards
Sen. Janet D. Howell
Sen. Mamie E. Locke
John P. Ackerly, III
Dr. Paul A. Levensgood
Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr.

Virginia is recognized as the national leader of the sesquicentennial by virtue of its strong state support, comprehensive initiatives, and inclusive approach. At least 26 other states have established planning commissions, although only a few have received funding. The American Association of State and Local History (AASLH) plays a coordinating role and Commission staff participates in quarterly conference calls with representatives from other states to share information and seek ways to work collaboratively. In the absence of a federal commission, the sesquicentennial commemoration nationwide is being led by each state individually, with strong grassroots participation at the local and regional level.

Local participation in Virginia remains strong. Nearly all of the 134 counties and cities in Virginia have formed local sesquicentennial committees to plan events at the local level and work with the Commission. The Commission supports local committees through a matching grant program, Statewide Calendar of Events, and by providing programs within the localities such as the *Civil War 150 Legacy Project: Document Digitization and Access* and the *Civil War 150 HistoryMobile*. Staff meets with local

committee representatives regionally and disseminates information through a listserv for local committee members, Facebook, and Twitter.

The work of the Commission is enhanced by the efforts of the Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation that was established in 2007 to raise private funds in support of the sesquicentennial commemoration. The Foundation's Board of Trustees is comprised of: William J. Howell (*Chair*), Charles J. Colgan (*Vice Chair*), Dr. Charles F. Bryan, Jr., J. Alfred Broaddus, Dr. Irvin E. Hess, Algie T. Howell, Jr., Eddie N. Moore, Jr., and Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr.

Virginia's Leadership in the Sesquicentennial Commemoration - Year Two (2010)

The sesquicentennial commemoration in Virginia began in 2009 with an inaugural Signature Conference, a joint-state kickoff event with West Virginia, and the production of a two-DVD program for use in the classroom as a supplemental teacher resource that was distributed free of charge to every public elementary, middle and high school in the state. In 2010, the second of a very successful annual Signature Conference series was held, the *Civil War 150 Legacy Project: Document Digitization and Access* began statewide, and all projects continued to develop on schedule. Highlights from the year are below:

I. Signature Conference Series

2010 Signature Conference: "*Race, Slavery and the Civil War: The Tough Stuff of American History and Memory*"

Dr. James O. Horton, Conference Chair

The 2010 Signature Conference, *Race, Slavery and the Civil War: The Tough Stuff of American History and Memory* was held at Norfolk State University on September 24, 2010 and was a resounding success. The conference boasted over 1,500 attendees from 23 different states and several different countries and received excellent press coverage from every major news outlet in the Commonwealth. Additionally, C-SPAN and History Channel filmed the conference to air at a later date. Governor McDonnell gave highly-lauded opening remarks that stressed the importance of understanding the central role that slavery played in the Civil War.

Presenters and topics at the 2010 Signature Conference included:

James O. Horton: "The Great American Contradiction: Slavery in the United States"

James McPherson: "Slavery, Freedom, and the Union Navy"

David Blight: "John Washington: How, When, Where and Why Emancipation Happened"

Spencer Crew: "The Role of the Underground Railroad as a Cause of the Civil War"

Bruce Levine: "The Myth of Black Confederates"

Edna Greene Medford: "The Quest for Black Rights in the Midst of War"

Ira Berlin: "African American Soldiers and the Struggle for Equality"

Dwight Pitcaithley: "Addressing the Causes of the Civil War in Public History"

Harold Holzer: "The Image of the Emancipation Proclamation in Art and Memory"

Jean Fagan Yellin: "Harriet Jacobs in the Refugee Camps"

Cassandra Newby-Alexander: "Waterways to Freedom: The Underground Railroad in Hampton Roads"

2011 Signature Conference: "*Military Strategy in the American Civil War*"

Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr., Conference Chair (Virginia Tech - May 21, 2011)

The Commission's third annual Signature Conference will be held at Virginia Tech on May 21, 2011 and will feature noted historians discussing all aspects of military strategy in the American Civil War, along with elements of the war that affected strategy and tactics. In addition, the Stonewall Brigade Band will perform during the lunch break. A tentative schedule is below:

Session I: "*American Military Strategy and the Civil War: An Overview*"

Speakers will set the tone for the 2011 Signature Conference, discussing the Civil War's military strategy over time. Presenters: James I. Robertson, Jr., Dennis E. Frye, and Richard J. Sommers

Session II: "*Military Strategy in the Eastern Theater*"

Award-winning historians specializing in topics like the the Army of Northern Virginia and relations between military leaders will explore military strategy in the Eastern Theater of the war. Presenters: Gary W. Gallagher, Joseph T. Glatthaar, and Richard J. Sommers

Session III: "*Military Strategy in the Western Theater*"

Speakers will compare and contrast strategy and tactics in the Western Theater of the war with the previous session. Richard M. McMurry, Stephen E. Woodworth, and William C. Davis

Session IV: "*Forgotten Elements of the Civil War*"

Speakers will remind us all of forgotten elements of the war that influenced Civil War military strategy more than we remember, such as weather and horses. Presenters: James M. Bowen, William C. Davis, and James I. Robertson, Jr.

Upcoming in the Signature Conference Series:

Each conference will be preserved both on DVD and in print. The publication from the 2009 Signature Conference, *America on the Eve of the Civil War*, has been published and is available for purchase through UVA Press. All of the Commission's publications and DVDs are for purchase through the website: www.VirginiaCivilWar.org.

Below is a tentative schedule for the remainder of the conferences in this acclaimed series:

2012: *Leadership and Generalship in the Civil War*

Conference Chair: Lt. Gen. John W. Knapp

Location: Virginia Military Institute

Date: March 22, 2012

2013: *The Home Front in the Civil War*

Conference Co-Chairs: Dr. Scott R. Nelson and Dr. Carol Sheriff

Location: College of William and Mary

Date: TBD

2014: *Civil War in a Global Context*

Conference Chair: Dr. Peter N. Stearns

Location: George Mason University

Date: TBD

2015: *Memory of the Civil War*

Conference Chair: Dr. Gary W. Gallagher

Location: University of Virginia

Date: TBD

II. Sesquicentennial DVD for Schools: *"Virginia in the Civil War: A Sesquicentennial Remembrance"*

Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr., Alumni Distinguished Professor in History at Virginia Tech worked with Blue Ridge Public Television to create a film for schools, *"Virginia in the Civil War: A Sesquicentennial Remembrance."* In November 2009, the two-DVD set was provided free of charge to every public elementary, middle, and high school in the Commonwealth, as well as to each public library system and every local sesquicentennial committee. Hundreds of copies have subsequently sold through the Commission's website. In 2010, the program was nominated for a 2010 Emmy Award in the category of informational instructional programming. It won two Telly Awards, which recognize excellence in public television, in the categories of "education/academic use" and "history/biography."

The film features high-definition footage and commentary from dozens of noted historians. Designed to be used by teachers in the classroom, the DVD is divided into nine 20-minute modules that focus on the background of the war, military campaigns, the African-American experience, leading Virginia personalities, the common soldier, home front activities, and legacies of the war for all Americans. The program has received high praise from teachers and general audiences alike.

III. Museum Exhibition: *"An American Turning Point: The Civil War in Virginia"*

An American Turning Point: The Civil War in Virginia, one of the Commission's Signature Projects, received the National Endowment for the Humanities' Chairman's Special Award in the amount of \$950,000, the highest level grant bestowed. The exhibition was distinguished for its unique ability to bring multiple perspectives of the Civil War to multiple audiences in multiple formats, its nationwide reach, and its ability to serve as a model to other states.

An American Turning Point: The Civil War in Virginia has four components: (i) a 3,000-square-foot gallery exhibition to be shown at the Virginia Historical Society in 2011, then at seven regional museums in Virginia from 2012 to 2015; (ii) the *Civil War 150 HistoryMobile*, an interactive mobile exhibition in a 53-foot expandable tractor-trailer, which will travel throughout the U.S. from 2011 to 2015; (iii) a panel exhibition designed for smaller museums and libraries; and (iv) an online resource that combines aspects of the gallery exhibition with public programming opportunities and activities for the general public.

The gallery exhibition explores personal experiences and poses questions to visitors that challenge conventional wisdom. It is thematically organized and can be broken into two major parts: "Waging War" and "Surviving War." In addition to interactives and high-tech components, the exhibition will also highlight over two hundred artifacts. Major themes of the exhibition include:

- "Why Did the Civil War Happen?"
- "Who Was the Traitor and Who the Patriot?"
- "Who Freed the Slaves?"
- "How Did Civilians Suffer?"
- "Why Richmond?"
- "The First Modern War?"
- "Speed or Strength?"
- "Victory or Death at the Crater?"
- "Men of Color to Arms?"
- "The Deadliest Enemy?"
- "War or Murder?"
- "Did the Civil War End at Appomattox?"

In addition, there will also be a battlefield simulation created in partnership with the Kernstown Battlefield Association which will incorporate soundscape, visual imagery and objects that support the idea of the horror and impact of battle, including a reproduction of a skull that was retrieved at the Wilderness battlefield.

One of the Virginia Historical Society's most important Civil War holdings - Private Robert Knox Sneed's drawings and writings - will also be featured during the exhibition. Visitors will be able to select a month and day during the Civil War to see Private Sneed's drawing and diary entry for that particular date.

IV. *Civil War 150 HistoryMobile*

The *Civil War 150 HistoryMobile*, a high-tech, museum-quality exhibition housed in a 53' tractor-trailer that will travel throughout Virginia and the nation, is on schedule to debut on July 21, 2011 at the 150th Anniversary Commemorative Event at the Manassas National Battlefield Park. Key advances in 2010 were:

- Donation by Volvo of the use of a tractor for the *HistoryMobile* for the duration of the sesquicentennial commemoration period. The tractor, manufactured at the New River Valley Plant in Dublin, Virginia - - the world's largest Volvo manufacturing plant - - will be environmentally friendly and the safest on the market.

- Development of a partnership between the Commission, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) to provide staffing and tour management of the *HistoryMobile* while it travels throughout the Commonwealth. VTC will hire staff to provide tour management services, and DMV will hire a Logistics Manager and drivers responsible for routing, permitting, driving, and travel logistics of the *HistoryMobile* and the Volvo tractor. All staff will work at the direction of the Commission.
- Award of design-build contract to Riggs Ward and ExPlus, both Virginia companies.
- Script development by John Hennessy, Chief Historian with the Fredericksburg/ Spotsylvania National Military Park, who was subsequently awarded the Commission's first annual Award of Excellence in recognition for his voluntary service as lead exhibit planner. Staff of the Virginia Historical Society are also working on development of the *HistoryMobile*, which will present an interactive and immersive exhibition that reinforces the geographic dispersal of war in Virginia, wherever possible giving visitors the opportunity to explore and interact with stories from their own region. The main components of the storyline for the *HistoryMobile* will include:

Why War?

Introducing the themes of the exhibit—soldier, civilian, slave—and provoking the question, "Why War?" It will be shown outside the *HistoryMobile*, which frees up considerable space inside.

Battlefront

This is intended to be a powerful immersion experience that will convey the human experience of battle in its intensity and tragedy.

Homefront

Embedded into a home-like environment will be both digital and manual interactive screens, asking visitors: "What Would You Do?" A series of real-life dilemmas that faced Virginia's civilians will be presented, allowing visitors to make choices based on the information available at the time.

Slavery

A reproduction of quarters used by slaves will be part of the Homefront experience, portraying the broad experience of slavery amidst war across the Commonwealth—those who stayed, those who fled, those who were impressed to serve, etc. Again, visitors will be faced with choices—an extension of the "What Would You Do?" program introduced in the Homefront space.

Loss-Gain-Legacy

This segment will feature faces and stories of Virginians and those who came here to create a powerful environment within which to explore the profound impact of the war on Virginia, the end of slavery and reunification of the nation, and the enduring (and controversial) legacy of the war.

V. Civil War 150 Legacy Project: Document Digitization and Access

The Civil War 150 Legacy Project, which is a partnership between the Commission and the Library of Virginia to identify, scan, and catalog documents located in Virginia that are related to the Civil War, began in earnest in 2010. Two archivists were hired to lead the program, dividing the state into eastern and western regions to ensure coverage of the whole of Virginia. Staff are working through the Commission's extensive network of local sesquicentennial committees to publicize scanning events and provide the space and volunteers at no cost to the Commission.

Thus far, there have been 14 scanning events yielding 3,000 images with 44 events scheduled over the next seven months. Staff has scanned some very interesting items including the Keiffer family papers which consist of letters written by John Keiffer, a Union soldier's father from Pennsylvania, to another son and daughter-in-law in Virginia. John Keiffer, an extremely vigilant parent, followed his soldier son's unit during the Civil War writing to his other son with updates. Staff has also scanned a letter dated January 1, 1861 from a man in Texas writing to a relative in southwest Virginia stating there was "considerable excitement" in Texas regarding secession and he wanted to know what Virginia was doing. Another interesting find came in Prince George County with the scanning of the Cole Family papers. The letters are from the Cole Family to the federal government requesting compensation for property damaged during the Civil War. Interestingly, it was a former slave of the Cole family who itemized the property damage for the family in one of the letters.

The Legacy Project has been received positively and localities are eager to host scanning events. Scanned documents are mounted on the Library's website: (<http://www.virginiamemory.com/collections/cw150>).

VI. Federal Enhancement Grant Project: Sesquicentennial and Scenic Byways Promotion

The Commission has partnered with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC), Virginia Wineries, Civil War Trails, and the Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT) in a statewide promotion of sesquicentennial tourism and scenic byways.

Ten percent of the federal funds that VDOT receives must be used for non-motorized projects. Federal transportation enhancement funds are administered by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), which receives roughly 150-200 applications per year, in turn awarding grants to approximately 100 projects. For FY2011, the CTB set aside approximately \$3,000,000 in grant money for a statewide initiative aimed at promotion of the scenic byways program and the sesquicentennial of the American Civil War.

The main components of the partnership initiative include:

- (1) Acquisition of unprotected battlefield land in the Piedmont and south-central portions of Virginia in partnership with the CWPT;
- (2) Development of smart phone GPS-enabled applications for visitors to download and use in touring Virginia's Civil War battlefields;
- (3) Working with Virginia Civil War Trails to update maps and install gateway markers in the state's Welcome Centers; and

(4) Establishing interactive multimedia centers in Welcome Centers throughout the state that coalesce information from the (i) Scenic Roads in Virginia map, (ii) Then/Now map on the Commission's website, and (iii) map of Virginia wineries.

The VTC is overseeing the partnership's development of multimedia travel solutions in the Welcome Centers, and issued an RFP, held interviews, and plans to have a contractor on board in January 2011. The first phase of implementation is scheduled for July 2011, to coincide with the 150th Anniversary of the First Battle of Manassas.

VII. Sesquicentennial Marketing Program Grants

The Tourism Marketing Grant program, which is administered by the VTC in collaboration with the Commission, has completed three rounds of grants with the fourth round closing December 15, 2010. Grants are available on a 1:1 matching basis with a maximum award of \$5,000. Thus far, the Commission has awarded \$55,000 in grant money that has been matched by \$120,000 for various sesquicentennial projects. The grant program has proven to be very successful in providing a small amount of seed money to localities to prepare for the sesquicentennial commemoration.

Grant recipients to date have been:

April 2009 (Round One)

Shenandoah County Sesquicentennial Committee

"Caring for the Wounded: Shenandoah County's Civil War Story"

- Amount of award: \$1,300; Amount of match from recipient: \$1,300
- Project will enable visitors to learn more about the history of the Mt. Jackson hospital facility that was able to house and care for 1,500 wounded soldiers at a time.

Washington County Sesquicentennial Committee

"Washington County Sesquicentennial Tourism Marketing Program"

- Amount of award: \$2,500; Amount of match from recipient: \$4,160
- Install Civil War Trail interpretive markers: one at the approximate location of the home of Landon Boyd, a local prominent African-American citizen during the American Civil War era and another at the Washington County Courthouse detailing the effects of Union Major General George Stoneman's Raid.

Fredericksburg/Stafford Joint Sesquicentennial Committee

"The Crossing"

- Amount of award: \$2,500; Amount of match from recipient: \$3,000
- Project will commemorate and interpret the 10,000 slaves who crossed the Rappahannock to freedom during the spring and summer of 1862.

Richmond Metropolitan Sesquicentennial Committee

"Richmond-Petersburg Civil War Sesquicentennial Website"

- Amount of award: \$2,500; Amount of match from recipient: \$25,000
- Development of a website (www.OnToRichmond.com) that will be the primary destination for information and resources about visiting the Richmond/Petersburg Region throughout the Sesquicentennial period.

December 2009 (Round Two)

Harrisonburg-Rockingham Local Sesquicentennial Committee

"Expansion of Civil War Trails Interpretive Signage in Downtown Harrisonburg"

- Amount of award: \$5,000; Amount of match from recipient: \$5,700
- Construction of three new Civil War Trails Markers highlighting the history of the Confederate General Hospital, Woodbine Cemetery and the site of Hill's Hotel.

Page County Sesquicentennial Committee

"Discover Page County's Unknown Stories . . . the American Civil War - A Historical Driving Tour Brochure and Map"

- Amount of award: \$1,924.50; Amount of match from recipient: \$1,924.50
- Production and printing of driving brochure that highlights historical sites throughout Page County

Gloucester County Sesquicentennial Committee

"Gloucester County Civil War History Initiative"

- Amount of award: \$3,425.00; Amount of match from recipient: \$3,425.00
- Marketing for the new Civil War Trails site in Court Circle, which holds monuments of Confederate soldiers and African-American Union soldiers.

Norfolk Sesquicentennial Committee/Virginia Arts Festival

"Rappahannock County"

- Amount of award: \$5,000; Amount of match from recipient: \$30,865.00
- Marketing to support Norfolk premiere of a concert opera, *Rappahannock County*, that uses lyrics, music and projected visuals to explore the sociological and psychological impact of the Civil War on a community in Northern Virginia.

Richmond, Fredericksburg and Shenandoah Sesquicentennial Committees (Regional collaboration)

"American Civil War Tour in Virginia: International Pow Wow"

- Amount of award: \$5,000; Amount of match from recipient: \$5,000
Promotion of a regional Virginia Civil War travel itinerary to international travelers during the U.S. Travel's International Pow Wow, a three-day gathering of travel buyers from more than 70 countries.

August 2010 (Round Three)

Montgomery County Sesquicentennial Committee/Radford Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee

"Civil War Trails Interpretive Sites in the Town of Blacksburg and City of Radford"

- Amount of award: \$2,600; Amount of match from recipient: \$2,600
- Design and installation of two interpretive Civil War Trails markers - one at Westview Cemetery and one at Glencoe Museum - generating educational tools and tourism for the community.

Arlington County Sesquicentennial Committee

"Arlington Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Travel Package"

- Amount of award: \$5,000; Amount of match from recipient: \$17,625

- Creation and marketing of a travel package that will entice visitors to travel to Arlington and use their Arlington hotel as a hub for experiencing Civil War sites in Northern Virginia and the national capital region

Chesterfield Sesquicentennial Committee

"Chesterfield County Sesquicentennial Legacy Project"

- Amount of award: \$5,000; Amount of match from recipient: \$5,000
- Design and installation of Civil War Trails signage at two Chesterfield County Civil War park sites (The Bluff at Dutch Gap and Point of Rocks Park); reprinting of the Bermuda Hundred Driving Guide; purchase of four weather-proof brochure holders for county Civil War sites; printing of a redesigned Chesterfield County Heritage Alliance brochure featuring the county's Civil War sites; and advertisements in co-ops with partners.

Augusta-Staunton-Waynesboro Sesquicentennial Committee/Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation (regional)

"Community at War: Augusta County, Staunton, and Waynesboro during the Civil War Interpretive Kiosk"

- Amount of award: \$4,500; Amount of match from recipient: \$5,000
- Built on a successful SVBF-Augusta County Historical Society Civil War interactive CD project, a free-standing interpretive kiosk will be created that includes wayfinding information for Civil War sites in the region and acts as a southern gateway into the Shenandoah Battlefields National Historic District.

Williamsburg-York-James City County Sesquicentennial Committee/Greater Williamsburg Chamber and Tourism Alliance (regional)

"Williamsburg Civil War Sesquicentennial Website"

- Amount of award: \$5,000; Amount of match from recipient: \$5,000
- Development, launch, and marketing of a new, regional website (www.WilliamsburgCivilWar.com) that will highlight the Historic Triangle's rich Civil War history, promote Civil War related programs and events, and unique dining and lodging opportunities. The website will also be connected to ongoing destination marketing efforts associated with Greater Williamsburg's tourism marketing community.

VIII. Looking Ahead to 2011

As the nation turns its attention to the sesquicentennial in 2011, Virginia will continue to lead the way through strong programs that invite discovery and present the story of Virginia's participation in the Civil War from multiple perspectives: Union, Confederate and African-American; battlefield and home front; slavery and freedom; and causes of the war and its enduring legacies. Look for:

- July 21, 2011: 150th Anniversary Commemorative Event at the Manassas National Battlefield Park, co-hosted by the Commission and the National Park Service. Dr. Edward L. Ayers, President of the University of Richmond, will deliver remarks. Governor McDonnell is scheduled to attend the event and has invited President Obama.
- Launch of *Walk in Their Footsteps* application that will enable people to see places that their ancestor's regiment served in Virginia during the Civil War, and then to easily plan visits to those sites. Visitors will be able to print out a "Battle Plan" of Civil War sites in Virginia that they wish to visit in person, literally walking in their ancestor's footsteps.

- 2011 Signature Conference, "Military Strategy in the American Civil War," chaired by Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr. and held at Virginia Tech on May 21.
- Hundreds of programs and events throughout the state sponsored by local sesquicentennial committees, local museums, and historical societies. For more information, see the Statewide Calendar of Events: <http://www.virginiacivilwar.org/committeeevents.php>