

VIRGINIA SESQUICENTENNIAL OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR COMMISSION 2011 ANNUAL REPORT



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About the Commission

The Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission, the first of its kind in the nation, was created by the General Assembly in 2006. A legislative commission chaired by Speaker of the House of Delegates William J. Howell, the Commission is charged with the planning of projects and events to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the American Civil War in Virginia. The commemoration began in 2009 with the anniversary of John Brown's Raid and runs through 2015. 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.

Commission Members

Speaker William J. Howell, *Chair*

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-Chair*

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.

From its inception, the Commission resolved to offer programs that are available to all Virginians and will sustain a lasting legacy for future generations. Virginia remains recognized as a national leader of the sesquicentennial by virtue of its strong state support, comprehensive initiatives, and inclusive approach.

Local participation in Virginia remains strong. Nearly all of the 134 counties and cities in Virginia have formed local sesquicentennial committees to work with the Commission and plan events at the local level. The Commission supports local committees by providing a matching Sesquicentennial Tourism Marketing Grant program, maintaining a comprehensive Statewide Calendar of Events, and by bringing programs directly into the community (e.g., Civil War 150 HistoryMobile, Civil War 150 Legacy Project:

Document Digitization and Access, and *An American Turning Point* panel exhibit). Staff meets with local committee representatives regionally and disseminates information through a listserv for local committee members and social media networks.

The Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, was created to oversee fundraising initiatives, and the Commission works with a distinguished Advisory Council that has been instrumental in developing goals to guide the commemoration. The Foundation Board of Trustees and members of the Advisory Council are drawn from the state's leading education, historic, and tourism institutions, including: historians; representatives from museums, battlefields, and the National Park Service; leaders in state and local government; and education experts.

Virginia's Sesquicentennial Commemoration: Programs in 2011

The sesquicentennial commemoration in Virginia began in 2009 with an inaugural Signature Conference, *America on the Eve of the Civil War*; a joint-state kickoff event with West Virginia; and the production of a two-DVD program for use in the classroom that was distributed free of charge to every public elementary, middle and high school in the state. Successful programs continued in 2010 as the Commission held the second Signature Conference, *Race, Slavery and the Civil War: The Tough Stuff of American History and Memory*. Furthermore, archivists from the Civil War 150 Legacy Project: Document Digitization and Access program began traveling the state to collect family documents related to the Civil War and Emancipation.



As battle anniversaries began and the nation turned its attention to the sesquicentennial in April 2011, programs that invite diversity and promote deeper understanding about the Civil War and Emancipation had long been underway in Virginia, serving as a model to other states. A snapshot of sesquicentennial programs in Virginia follows:

I. Signature Conference Series

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 was held at Virginia Tech on May 21, 2011, attracting over 1,300 attendees from across the United States. Special features of the conference included the presentation of the second annual Distinguished Service Award to Dr. Robertson for his commitment of time, talent, and expertise to guide the Commission's efforts, and a performance by the Stonewall Brigade Band during the lunch break. A two-DVD set of the full conference proceedings was available for purchase in early July, and the conference book will be published in February 2012. Sessions from the 2011 Signature Conference included discussions of military strategy in the eastern and western theaters as well as forgotten elements of war, like weather and animals.

Upcoming Events in the Signature Conference Series

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: April 20, 2013

2014: *Civil War in a Global Context*

Conference Chair: Dr. Peter N. Stearns

Location: George Mason University

Date: May 31, 2014

2015: *Memory of the Civil War*

Conference Chair: Dr. Gary W. Gallagher

Location: University of Virginia

II. VHS Museum Exhibition: *An American Turning Point: The Civil War in Virginia*

The blockbuster exhibition, *An American Turning Point: The Civil War in Virginia*, was on display at the Virginia Historical Society from February 4, 2011 through December 30, during which time 74,678 visitors experienced it. The statewide tour of the exhibition will begin as planned in February 2012, with the exhibition traveling to seven museums in Virginia through 2015, including the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley (Winchester), Lynchburg Museum, Hampton History Museum, History Museum of Western Virginia (Roanoke), National Museum of the Marine Corps (Quantico), William King Regional Arts Center (Abingdon), and Museum of the Confederacy – Appomattox.

The VHS offered 20 gallery walks and Banner Lectures related specifically to the exhibition or to the American Civil War in general. The exhibition has been featured in 32 newspapers and magazines (including The New York Times and the Washington Post), on six television/radio stations, and on nine digital media websites (including The Huffington Post). The complementary panel exhibition, also entitled *An American Turning Point: The Civil War in Virginia*, began touring on April 9, 2011, and has been on display at ten venues representing seven Virginia counties and three cities. It has been viewed by approximately 14,300 visitors. An online version of the *An American Turning Point* exhibition launched on August 10, 2011, and is available at www.vahistorical.org/civilwar/introduction.htm.

The American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) presented the VHS a 2011 Award of Merit for the *An American Turning Point: The Civil War in Virginia* gallery exhibition. The Leadership in History Awards is the most prestigious recognition for achievement in the preservation and interpretation of history and brings public recognition to small and large organizations, institutions, and programs that make contributions in this arena.

III. Civil War 150 HistoryMobile

The Virginia Civil War 150 HistoryMobile began its tour on July 21, 2011, at Manassas National Battlefield Park. Visitor response has been overwhelmingly positive. Visitors and hosts alike appreciate the HistoryMobile visiting small communities that may not otherwise have access to such museum resources. Visitors report that the exhibit captures their attention right away in the battlefront section by providing an immersive battle experience, and that the final section, "Loss, Gain, Legacy," offers new stories and fresh insight into how the Civil War and emancipation affected all Virginians.

The HistoryMobile has also had a positive effect on local tourism. At each event, visitors use touch-screen kiosks and get brochures and information to plan further travel. Through a partnership with the Virginia Tourism Corporation and local hosts, volunteers are onsite at each event to provide local information and direct visitors to other sites to further explore the area's Civil War history.

First Year at a Glance (July - November 2011)

18,245 total visitors from 46 states and 12 countries

2,402 students from 38 schools

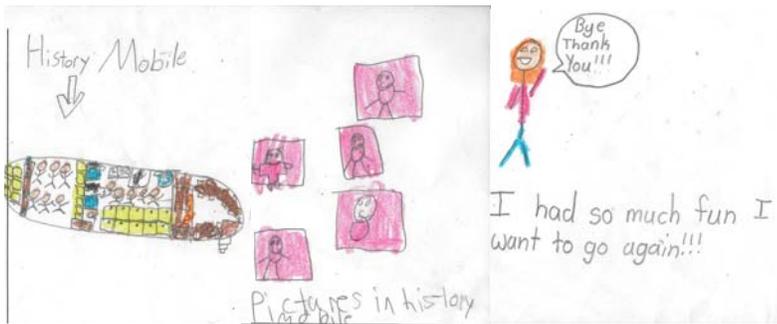
150 volunteers and Welcome Center staff

20 events, including a two-week blitz of Southwest Virginia



Photo Courtesy of Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission

Teachers have responded positively to the HistoryMobile and its companion resources. Each site host coordinates the participation of local schools, and in some instances, the HistoryMobile goes straight to the school. A new Teachers' Guide highlights relevant Standards of Learning in the exhibit, effectively extending the HistoryMobile curriculum into the classroom. The HistoryMobile will visit Richmond-area schools during the winter months.



Thank you drawings from students visiting at Natural Tunnel State Park, Duffield, VA

Sampling of Visitor Comments

"Great concept – loved the visual and hands-on applications for kids"
Soledad, CA

"A very impressive and moving presentation. Well balanced and informative. Thank you!"
Arlington, VA

IV. Manassas 150th Anniversary Commemoration

The Commission presented a 150th anniversary commemorative program at Manassas National Battlefield Park on July 21, 2011. Despite the intense heat, the event was a tremendous success with many distinguished speakers, including Governor McDonnell, Speaker Howell, Senator Colgan, National Park Service director Jon Jarvis, and keynote speaker Dr. Edward L. Ayers, President of the University of Richmond. The Army Old Guard (3rd Infantry Division), a unit that has been in existence since the Civil War and served at Manassas, closed the program with a demonstration by silent drill team in memory of those who fought during the war and in honor of those who serve today. A ribbon-cutting ceremony for the HistoryMobile was held immediately following the commemorative program.

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

The Civil War 150 Legacy Project, 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, continues to be highly successful. Two archivists lead the program, dividing the state into eastern and western regions to ensure coverage of the whole state.

Statistics from the Legacy Project include:

- 24,555 total scans – 21,999 scans in 2011
- 543 donors – 482 donors in 2011
- 75 scanning events held in 67 localities in 2011
- 15 private scanning events for donors who had a large amount of material.

The Legacy Project has been received positively and localities are eager to host scanning events. Scanned documents are posted on the Library's website and consideration is being given to publishing selections. For more information, see: <http://www.virginiamemory.com/collections/cw150>.

VI. Connecting with Technology

The Commission makes full use of technology to connect people, stories, and places. The website is robust and dynamic, featuring interactive maps, video and audio podcasts, extensive teacher resources, news feed, and a full statewide calendar of events.

In spring, the Commission launched a Civil War regiment database, *Walk in Their Footsteps*, which has subsequently received thousands of hits and elicited tremendous feedback. Users can plot a customized "Battle Plan" travel itinerary to "walk in the footsteps" of their ancestors as they fought through Virginia. The program has been so successful that the Virginia Tourism Corporation has adopted "Walk in Their Footsteps" as its sesquicentennial marketing campaign. See www.VirginiaCivilWar.org/footsteps.

The *Civil War 150 Calendar of Events* app was launched in the fall for iPhone users that has been downloaded hundreds of times. An Android version is in development. Consideration is also being given to making an app derived from *Walk in Their Footsteps*.

VII. Sesquicentennial Marketing Program Grants

The Tourism Marketing Grant program, which is administered by the Virginia Tourism Corporation in collaboration with the Commission, has completed seven grant cycles. Funds are available on a 1:1 matching basis with a maximum award of \$5,000. To date, the Commission has awarded \$109,594 that has been matched by \$187,044 for various sesquicentennial projects. The grant program has proven to be very successful in providing seed money to localities to prepare for the sesquicentennial commemoration. Grant recipients from 2011 are listed below:

Winter 2010 (Round 4)

Falls Church Local Sesquicentennial Committee

"City of Falls Church Civil War Trails Interpretive Markers"

- Amount of award: \$5,000; amount matched by recipient: \$8,000
- The funds will be used to finance five Civil War Trails signs for the City of Falls Church.

Lynchburg Local Sesquicentennial Committee

"Virginia Civil War Trails Marker for Union POW Camp Site"

- Amount of award: \$1,500; amount matched by recipient: \$1,500
- This grant will support a new Civil War Trails Marker for Lynchburg that will be located in an area of the city known as mid-town, and will designate the site of the Prisoner of War Camp occupied during the Civil War.

Fairfax City/Fairfax County Local Sesquicentennial Committees

"Fairfax Courthouse Civil War Trails Marker"

- Amount of award: \$1,500; amount matched by recipient: \$1,500
- Funds will purchase a Civil War Trails marker for the landmark Fairfax County Courthouse where several significant Civil War events occurred; a small portion of the request will be used for a promotional component to increase visibility on partner websites/internet.

Fauquier County Sesquicentennial Committee

"Fauquier County Battlefield and Civil War Trails Project"

- Amount of award: \$5,000; amount matched by recipient: \$8,000
- Grant funds will be used to enhance the Civil War Trails program in Fauquier County; to produce a map brochure which locates and interprets the County's existing CWT sites, historical markers, and battlefield sites; and to promote these sites.

Spring 2011 (Round 5)

Washington County Local Sesquicentennial Committee

"Entertain Your Sense of History: Abingdon's 2011-2012 American Civil War Commemoration Program"

- Amount of award: \$1,844.60; amount matched by recipient: \$1,844.60
- Funding will be used to attract local, state, regional, and national attention to the history surrounding the time of the American Civil War in Abingdon, VA, with commemoration programs and promotions that present a balanced view of the local history and the culture of that era, like a Barter Theatre play and historically-correct outdoor events set in the beauty of the Blue Ridge Highlands.

Chesterfield County Local Sesquicentennial Committee

"Virginia Civil War Trails Enhancement Project"

- Amount of award: \$5,000; amount matched by recipient: \$5,000
- Chesterfield County plans to encourage visitation to its sites by enhancing its Civil War Trails program with two additional signs that detail the Civil War military strategy of the Bermuda Hundred

Campaign; by producing a new Civil War brochure to guide visitors to seven county and two National Park Service sites; and by providing website and print advertising in Civil War Traveler.

Summer 2011 (Round 6)

Harrisonburg-Rockingham Local Sesquicentennial Committees

"Battles on the Home Front"

- Amount of award: \$5,000; amount matched by recipient: \$6,650
- Funding will leverage marketing dollars and create a marketing brochure and map to draw visitors to Harrisonburg and Rockingham County during the 2012 commemorative year. These marketing items will provide tourists to the region with a convenient tool for visiting key sites. The diversity of sites will help to tell a full story of the Civil War in Central Shenandoah Valley.

Williamsburg-James City-York Local Sesquicentennial Committees (Regional collaborative)

"Williamsburg Civil War Brochure"

- Amount of award: \$5,000; amount matched by recipient: \$6,000
- Funds will assist with the cost to produce additional printing of the new destination brochure promoting the Civil War experiences in the Williamsburg, Jamestown, and Yorktown area, as well as the eastern region of Virginia.

Giles County Local Sesquicentennial Committee

"Giles County Civil War Sesquicentennial Project"

- Amount of award: \$5,000; amount matched by recipient: \$5,000
- This award will support advertising to market Giles County as a year-round travel destination through the promotion of activities created in observance of the 150th anniversary of the American Civil War.

Hanover County Local Sesquicentennial Committee

"Hanover County Guide to Civil War Sites Brochures"

- Amount of award: \$3,000; amount matched by recipient: \$3,000
- Hanover County will compile a comprehensive listing of publicly-accessible Civil War-related sites in an easy-to-use brochure to promote diversity, education/awareness, and to help increase tourism revenues in Hanover County.

Franklin County Local Sesquicentennial Committee

"Marketing Materials and Plan for General Jubal Anderson Early's Homeplace"

- Amount of award: \$5,000; amount of match from recipient: \$5,000
- Funds will contribute to: the development of moveable, internal interpretive panels which relate to Gen. Jubal Early and the Homeplace to tourists, students, and Civil War enthusiasts; improvements to website (www.jubalearly.org); finalization of signage for Gen. Jubal Early Homeplace as part of the Civil War Trails program; brochure printing and distribution; and marketing the Homeplace as a destination for visitors during the sesquicentennial.

Fall 2011 (Round 7)

Loudoun County Sesquicentennial Committee

"Loudoun County's 'Rallying Point'"

- Amount of award: \$5,000; amount matched by recipient: \$5,000
- A partnership of non-profit and for-profit organizations led by Morven Park seeks funding for printing a brochure and for marketing and advertising a program called "Rallying Point," which will encourage increased visitation to Loudoun County's Civil War Sites during the sesquicentennial commemoration.

Staunton-Waynesboro-Augusta Sesquicentennial Committees, partnering with SVBF

"Shenandoah at War' Mobile Website and Mobile Application"

- Amount of award: \$5,000; amount matched by recipient: \$9,500

- Project will produce a mobile version of the "Shenandoah At War" website and a mobile smartphone application, designed to provide tools for the increasingly smartphone-equipped traveler that will help guide them to Civil War and other visitor destinations in the Valley.

Brunswick County Sesquicentennial Committee

"Brunswick County Courthouse Civil War Trails Marker"

- Amount of award: \$1,300; amount matched by recipient: \$1,300
- The funds will be used to place a Civil War Trails marker on the historic Brunswick County Courthouse Square to tell the story of why court records were not destroyed during a Union raid on the Town of Lawrenceville in the spring of 1864 during the Civil War.

Looking Ahead to 2012

Virginia will continue to lead the way in the nation's commemoration of the Civil War with 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:

- 2012 Signature Conference, *Leadership and Generalship in the Civil War*, to be held at VMI on March 22.
- 150th anniversary of Stonewall Jackson's Valley Campaign, a program co-hosted with the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation on June 9.
- Special "Fireside Chat" program commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, held at the University of Mary Washington on September 22.
- Exhibits that travel the state and beyond, including the Civil War 150 HistoryMobile and *An American Turning Point: The Civil War in Virginia* gallery and panel exhibitions, along with the Civil War 150 Legacy Project document digitization program.
- 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>.