

NEW VIRGINIA WEBSITE TRACES ANCESTORS' MOVEMENTS ON CIVIL WAR BATTLEFIELDS

Walk In Their Footsteps Resource Brings New Dimension to Visiting Civil War Sites

Visiting a Virginia Civil War battlefield can be a profoundly moving experience, especially for visitors who have an ancestral connection to those battles. More than two million soldiers fought in the American Civil War and more of them fought in Virginia than in any other state. It follows that millions of Americans today are descendants of Civil War soldiers who fought in Virginia. Now for the first time visitors can track the movements of a soldier or regiment with the new *Walk In Their Footsteps* program.

The Virginia Sesquicentennial of the Civil War Commission has launched an interactive website that enables visitors to walk in a soldier's footsteps when visiting a Virginia battlefield. *Walk In Their Footsteps* provides a database of military regiments that served in Virginia during the Civil War and identifies the battles in which those regiments fought. It is a resource that can directly connect descendants with the places where their ancestors served and fought.

Walk In Their Footsteps also links to a wealth of history and genealogy resources. Military records, census data, birth and death records and a state-by-state listing of sources can be accessed at the click of a mouse.

"So many people have ancestors who served in the Civil War but don't know where or when they may have fought in battles," said Speaker of the House of Delegates William J. Howell, chairman of the Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission. "*Walk In Their Footsteps* is a resource that can connect visitors to the legacy of their Civil War ancestors and help them to plan a trip to Virginia to visit the battlefields where they fought."

Having identified a particular regiment of interest, a visitor can track the movements of that unit from battlefield to battlefield. The *Walk in Their Footsteps* website provides regimental histories and descriptions of battles fought and casualties sustained. An accompanying map pinpoints the location of each battlefield and offers links to available photos, illustrations, and historical narratives. A tutorial video gives step-by-step instructions on how access the information.

From Manassas to Appomattox, Virginia's Civil War battlegrounds and historic places are unparalleled in terms of sheer number. Soldiers from every state fought on these battlefields. Many of Virginia's battlefields are carefully preserved and interpreted by the National Park Service, Virginia State Parks or other organizations. Detailed maps of

troop movements allow visitors to literally cover the same ground an ancestor did in the 1860s.

Those who come to Virginia to visit Civil War sites will find a historic landscape that includes some of the best known and most interesting battlefields in America. Civil War museums examine the conflict from a wide spectrum of perspectives. The groundbreaking Virginia Civil War Trails initiative marks and interprets hundreds of sites from urban downtown settings to country back roads, revealing fascinating stories at the places where they happened. Special exhibits and events commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Civil War will take place throughout Virginia over the next four years.

"This is a great initiative by the Commission to find the intersection between the history of the war and the impact it had on real people of the time," said Del. L. Scott Lingamfelter. "If you had an ancestor, or if a friend had an ancestor, you now have the ability to 'walk where they walked, see what they saw' and begin to have a fuller sense of what this war was about - America's pursuit of freedom".

Visit www.VirginiaCivilWar.org/footsteps and start following in the footsteps of Civil War soldiers on Virginia battlefields. For more information on visiting Virginia during the 150th anniversary of the Civil War and Emancipation, visit www.VirginiaCivilWar.org or call 1-800-VISITVA and ask for a free Travel Guide.