

VIRGINIA SESQUICENTENNIAL OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR COMMISSION 2014 ANNUAL REPORT



About the Commission

The Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission was created by the General Assembly for the purpose of planning programs and events to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Civil War in Virginia (2006 Acts, c. 465).

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Virginia's Sesquicentennial Commemoration

Sesquicentennial programs in Virginia examine the Civil War from multiple, layered perspectives, inviting a deeper understanding of the conflict from the points of view of soldiers, civilians, and enslaved persons. Well-established, highly successful programs that have widespread appeal are at the center of the sesquicentennial commemoration in Virginia, and include an annual Signature Conference series held at universities across the state, a robust touring schedule for the award-winning Civil War 150 HistoryMobile, new openings of the museum exhibition *An American Turning Point: The Civil War in Virginia*, and ongoing scanning and archiving of Civil War-era documents through the document digitization Legacy Project.

The sesquicentennial is truly a statewide commemoration, and local participation has been strong. Programs sponsored by the Commission have reached nearly all of the 134 cities and counties in Virginia, and local sesquicentennial committees and partner organizations are working in collaboration with the Commission to plan events and programs across the state. The Commission enhances and supports local committees by (i) providing matching funds through the Sesquicentennial Tourism Marketing Grant program, (ii) promoting local programs through a comprehensive Statewide Calendar of Events, and (iii) bringing quality exhibitions and programs directly into the community. Staff, which meets regularly with local sesquicentennial leaders, held a series of regional "Help Desk" sessions in the summer of 2014 in Richmond, Farmville, Blacksburg, Middletown, and Newport News.

Technology further extends the reach of the sesquicentennial and enables people to easily participate in the commemoration. The Commission's website is robust and dynamic, receiving hundreds of thousands

of hits each month and featuring interactive maps, video, extensive teacher resources, a news feed and marketplace, and a comprehensive statewide calendar of events that has highlighted more than 3,000 events since its launch (www.VirginiaCivilWar.org). The popular "Walk in Their Footsteps" program, another dynamic feature of the website, enables users to learn more about battles fought in Virginia, trace a regiment's engagements across the state, and add materials relating to that regiment.

Below is an update on sesquicentennial programs, events, and initiatives in 2014.

I. Signature Conference Series

2014 Signature Conference: *The American Civil War in a Global Context*

Peter N. Stearns, Conference Chair

George Mason University – May 31, 2014

The Commission held its sixth annual Signature Conference, *The American Civil War in a Global Context*, at the George Mason University on May 31, 2014. More than 400 people from 11 states attended the penultimate program in the Signature Conference series, as historians of international acclaim discussed the global impact of the Civil War in areas ranging from the cotton trade, to international abolition efforts, to changes in the future of military operations, to the implications of the Civil War as one of the first wars fought in an industrial age. Dr. Peter N. Stearns, Provost and Professor of History at George Mason University, chaired the program. A two-DVD recording of the conference was released in July, and papers from the presentations will be published in a book due in early 2015.

Response to the conference was overwhelmingly positive and, in a post-conference survey, participants highlighted the quality of the presentations and efficient organization of the conference as points of success:



President Ángel Cabrera welcomes conference attendees to George Mason University for the 2014 Signature Conference.

"The quality of the speakers was outstanding and each presentation built upon the previous one. It was evident that the focus of the program had been well designed."
– J. Mitchell, Newport News, VA

"Outstanding original research from excellent presenters." – G. Reynolds, Fairfax, VA

"Not realizing all the global aspects – from my readings and knowledge of the Civil War, this was the most enlightening conference to me personally." – P. Sheridan, Franklin, VA

"This particular topic is important to me and I am glad to see it as the focus of a day-long conference." – D. Knight, Richmond, VA

The annual Signature Conference series concludes in April 2015 with *Causes Won and Lost: The End of the Civil War*, which will be co-chaired by Gary W. Gallagher and Elizabeth R. Varon and held at the University of Virginia. Detailed information about the program can be found at www.VirginiaCivilWar.org.

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

An American Turning Point Gallery Exhibit

Curated by the Virginia Historical Society in partnership with the Commission and the National Endowment for the Humanities, the 3,000-square-foot gallery exhibition, *An American Turning Point: The Civil War in Virginia*, is divided into two parts: *Surviving War* and *Waging War*. The award-winning exhibition premiered in Richmond in February 2011, and will be installed in museums across the state through 2015. Host sites include the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley (Winchester), Lynchburg Museum, Hampton History Museum, History Museum of Western Virginia (Roanoke), William King Regional Arts Center (Abingdon), and Museum of the Confederacy (Appomattox).



Andrew Talkov explains the making of the lenticular graphic "The Face of Battle" during a gallery walk.

The exhibition was on display from June 8, 2013, to June 1, 2014, at the History Museum of Western Virginia, where it was viewed by 4,647 visitors. Both sections of the exhibit were then packed and shipped to the William King Museum of Art, where they opened to the public in early August 2014. The exhibition will be on display at the Museum of the Confederacy: Appomattox from March - September 2015. Since its debut at the VHS in February 2011, more than 122,000 visitors have experienced *An American Turning Point: Waging War* and *An American Turning Point: Surviving War*.

An array of public programs enhanced the exhibition during its run in Abingdon, including screenings of two films; a lecture by Mike Shaffer, Assistant Director of the Civil War Center at Kennesaw State University, to discuss the Civil War in Abingdon and the surrounding area; a living history program that brought to life photographic images from the Civil War; and a gallery walk led by VHS Vice President for Programs, Andrew Talkov.

The Virginia Historical Society has completed enhancements to the immersive interactive program *Journey to Freedom* with a goal toward improving overall presentation and user interaction. The revised program was installed at the William King Museum in July.

Available through links at the websites of both the Virginia Historical Society and the Commission, the *An American Turning Point* website has, since its launch in February 2010, received nearly 110,000 visitors. The site includes travel schedules for the panel and gallery exhibitions, media produced for the gallery exhibition, an online exhibition, articles related to VHS's collection of Civil War objects and manuscripts, 25 lectures and radio segments associated with the Civil War in Virginia, and links to the VHS blog.

The Virginia Historical Society has conducted 41 programs and spoken to more than 1,100 students about *An American Turning Point: The Civil War in Virginia* through VHS's online video conferencing initiative, HistoryConnects. Students watch a five-minute introductory video (*Why War?*), independently explore the virtual *An American Turning Point* exhibition online, and then classes Skype with a curator for a 30-minute Q&A session.



Journey to Freedom interactive exhibit

An American Turning Point Panel Exhibit

The panel exhibit, also entitled *An American Turning Point: The Civil War in Virginia*, began its tour on April 9, 2011, and since that time has been on display at 38 venues, with each hosting the exhibition for a two-week period. To date, it has been viewed by approximately 30,000 visitors. Reservations continue to be accepted.

III. Civil War 150 HistoryMobile

The Civil War 150 HistoryMobile is a mobile museum in a 53' expandable tractor trailer that has traveled across Virginia and beyond since July 2011. The exhibition draws together individual stories of the Civil War from the perspectives of those who experienced it—young and old, enslaved and free, soldiers and civilians. The HistoryMobile is an award-winning collaboration between the Commission, Virginia

Historical Society, Virginia Tourism Corporation, Department of Motor Vehicles, and the National Park Service.



The HistoryMobile is particularly popular with students, who comprise nearly 40% of visitors.

The 2014 tour year began at Stratford Hall in January and continued through early December, visiting schools and museums and participating in special events across the state as well as in Georgia, Maryland, and West Virginia. In 2014, the HistoryMobile traveled to 44 events and served students from 79 schools.

2014 HistoryMobile Tour at a Glance:

Visitors in 2014: 30,076

Demographics: More than 4,800 visitors reported traveling more than 50 miles to see the HistoryMobile. Visitors in 2014 hailed from 44 states and 13 countries, including Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, France, Ireland, Italy, the Philippines, Spain, Russia, Scotland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

Students: 12,854 student visitors from 79 schools

Number of events: 44

Other states visited: Georgia, West Virginia, and Maryland

Volunteers: 127

Cumulative totals since tour began: (July 2011 – December 2014)

- 134,041 visitors
- 163 events
- 97 localities



The HistoryMobile enters New Market Battlefield for the 150th anniversary of the Battle of New Market in May 2014.

Sampling of Comments from HistoryMobile Visitors

"You all have put so much thought into the HistoryMobile, especially the first room. It made my kids ask the serious questions about the confusion and horrors of war ... powerful stuff." Visitor from Durham, NC

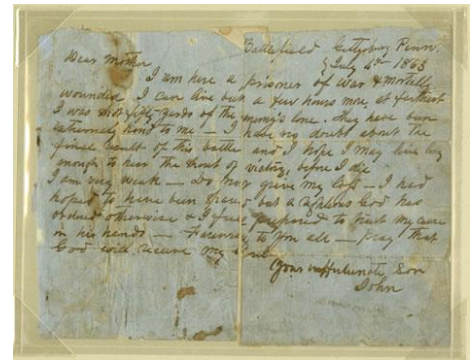
"Thank you for making it a great day for Peasley's sixth grade students as well as Bethel's fourth graders. We are thrilled that almost 600 people could benefit from this amazing program in a little over six hours!" Teacher from Gloucester, VA

"A great job of capturing the many stories of the Civil War, especially the slave couple's story." Guest from Frederick, MD

"Fantastic! What a wonderful way to bring history to life! Kids will love it! Thanks for coming." Visitor in Chesapeake, VA

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

The Civil War 150 Legacy Project was created as 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. Archivists from the Library of Virginia spent much of 2010 and 2011 traveling the state to scan privately held collections. The Legacy Project is now in its final phase, which focuses on cataloging and providing access to the documents, with only a few regional scanning events held each year. Four scanning events were held in 2014, with nine donors generating 624 documents scanned and added to the project.



Letter from Pvt. John Winn Moseley to his mother, informing her of his mortal wound and imminent death. Scanned in Buckingham County, VA.

Legacy Project statistics:

Total number of scans: 32,747

Total number of donors: 708

Most materials scanned by the CW150 Legacy Project have been fully cataloged and are available on the Virginia Memory website (www.virginiamemory.com/cw150). The website includes a total of 1,687 catalog records for more than 32,000 images scanned.

Making History: Transcribe was launched online by the Library of Virginia in 2014. This site provides an opportunity for volunteers to transcribe CW150 Legacy Project, as well as other Library of Virginia, materials online. To date over 450 CW150 Legacy Project manuscripts have been transcribed, and the Library of Virginia also has two volunteers transcribing Legacy Project materials. *Making History: Transcribe* can be accessed at www.virginiamemory.com/transcribe.

V. Sesquicentennial Tourism Marketing Program Grants

The Sesquicentennial Tourism Marketing Grant program, administered by the Virginia Tourism Corporation in collaboration with the Commission, has completed 17 grant cycles. Funds are available on a 1:1 matching basis with a maximum award of \$5,000. To date, the Commission has awarded

\$247,229.46, which has been matched by \$337,777.81, bringing a total of \$585,007.21 to the marketplace to fund projects related to the sesquicentennial. Grant recipients from 2014 are listed below.

Round 17 (Approved January 2015)

Winchester-Frederick County Sesquicentennial Committee and Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation

Civil War Trails Markers: "Recalled to Life—History Reclaimed at Third Winchester"

- Amount of award: \$5,000; amount of match from recipient: \$5,400
- Project includes four Civil War Trails markers for a newly restored area of the Third Winchester Battlefield. The markers will not only describe pivotal, previously uninterpreted events of the battle, but they will also be part of a new trail section that will tie together older trails on the battlefield, providing a more cohesive experience for visitors.

Montgomery County Tourism Office and Montgomery County 150th Committee

The Town of Christiansburg During the War, Civil War Trails Marker

- Amount of award: \$1,400; Amount of match from recipient: \$1,400
- Project will place a Civil War Trails marker in downtown Christiansburg to detail the importance of the town during the Civil War and will include Montgomery White Sulphur Springs hospital, the Battle of Seven Mile Tree, and the second largest disbandment of the Confederate Army in Virginia.

Round 16 (Final approval January 2015)

Warren County Sesquicentennial Committee

Front Royal-Warren County Civil War Trail Driving Tour Brochure and Interpretive Marker

- Amount of award: \$3,250; amount of match from recipient: \$3,250
- Warren County's sesquicentennial committee will develop a new Civil War Trails interpretive marker to interpret the Battle of Guard Hill, along with a comprehensive Civil War Trail Driving Tour brochure.

Round 15 (Approved August 2014)

Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Tourism

Salem Raid—"Narrow Escape at Island Ford Bridge" Civil War Trails historical marker and Civil War signage for Visitor Center

- Amount of award: \$1,700; amount of match from recipient: \$1,700
- Signage will be created, including a Civil War Trails historical marker describing the escape of 2,500 Union raiders at Island Ford Bridge, as well as an interior display at the Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Tourism that highlights the events of the Civil War in the area.

Dinwiddie County Sesquicentennial Committee

Marketing Dinwiddie's Commemoration of the Civil War Sesquicentennial

- Amount of award: \$3,069.50; amount of match from recipient: \$3,069.50
- Grant funding will be used to support advertising and marketing of activities and events related to Dinwiddie County's commemoration of the Civil War Sesquicentennial, specifically to the 2014 Speakers Series.

Round 14 (Approved April 2014)

Lynch's Landing Foundation (a Virginia Main Street Program) and Lynchburg Sesquicentennial Committee

A Walking Tour of Downtown Lynchburg in the Civil War

- Amount of award: \$4,800; amount of match from recipient: \$4,800
- The Walking Tour of Downtown Lynchburg in the Civil War introduces visitors to the historic locations and people of Lynchburg's war hospitals, business district, and James River front via a printed brochure and website.

Abingdon Convention and Visitors Bureau and Washington County Sesquicentennial Committee
Civil War 150 HistoryMobile and "An American Turning Point" Exhibition Promotion

- Amount of award: \$5,000; amount of match from recipient: \$5,000
- The Washington County Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee, William King Museum, and the Abingdon Convention and Visitors Bureau are preparing an advertising initiative and marketing campaign for the Civil War 150 HistoryMobile and traveling museum exhibition, *An American Turning Point: The Civil War in Virginia*.

Hanover Tavern Foundation and Hanover Sesquicentennial Committee

North Anna Battlefield Park Civil War Trails Marker

- Amount of award: \$1,600; amount of match from recipient: \$1,600
- Grant funds will be used to produce, install, and market a Civil War Trails marker at the North Anna Battlefield Park in Hanover County, Virginia.

Belle Grove, Inc., and Winchester/Frederick County Sesquicentennial Committee

Eye of the Storm: 150th Anniversary Commemoration of the Battle of Cedar Creek

- Amount of award: \$4,924; amount of match from recipient: \$5,549.75
- The project requests funds for local partners to advertise in local, regional, and national publications to promote commemoration events associated with the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Cedar Creek, and to participate in a trade show that will help market the events.

Round 13 (Approved January 2014)

City of Fairfax Office of Historic Resources

Virginia Civil War Trails Marker at the City of Fairfax Cemetery

- Amount of award: \$1,400; Amount of match from recipient: \$1,400
- Grant funds will be used for the design, fabrication, and installation of a Virginia Civil War Trails marker at the City of Fairfax Cemetery. Funds will also be used for the design and publishing of a self-guided walking tour/map of the cemetery, which will be available both in print and as a downloadable PDF from various websites.

Town of Abingdon

Abingdon and Washington County's 2014 American Civil War Commemoration Project

- Amount of award: \$2,448.50; amount of match from recipient: \$2,448.50
- Funds will be used to install a new Civil War Trails interpretive marker that describes the home front experiences of citizens in Abingdon, and to reprint and distribute a brochure, *The Washington County, Virginia Home Front During the American Civil War*.

Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation

Civil War Trails Markers: "War and Peace in the Valley—A Farm at the Crossroads of History"

- Amount of award: \$5,000; amount of match from recipient: \$5,400
- Project includes four Civil War Trails markers to interpret the Huntsberry Farm (a new Civil War site) on the Third Winchester Battlefield. These markers will tell the story not just of the battle, but also of the farm and family that were caught up in the maelstrom—as well as the story of the historic Great Wagon Road and smaller lanes that made the farm a "crossroads of history."

Spotsylvania County Economic Development and Tourism

150th Anniversary Wilderness and Spotsylvania Courthouse Reenactment and Living History Weekend

- Amount of award: \$5,000; amount of match from recipient: \$5,000
- Funds will be used for (i) designing and airing a cable TV commercial for the 150th commemoration, (ii) creating and releasing of an iPhone/iPad tour app of Civil War destinations near Spotsylvania Courthouse, and (iii) trade show banners.

Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Tourism

Civil War Trails Markers for Australia Hot Blast Furnace and Lucy Selina Cold Blast Furnace—Suppliers to the Ironmaker of the Confederacy

- Amount of award: \$2,600; amount of match from recipient: \$2,600
- Civil War Trails interpretive markers will be designed and installed that describe the Australia Hot Blast Furnace and Lucy Selina Cold Blast Furnace—Suppliers to the Ironmaker of the Confederacy.

Bed and Breakfasts of Historic Shenandoah Valley (BBHSV)

The BBHSV Social Media Marketing Project

- Amount of award: \$2,510.36; amount of match from recipient: \$2,510.36
- Funds will be used for the Historic Bed and Breakfasts of the Shenandoah Valley to finance their social media marketing project, which will engage Internet users and spark consumer interest in historic lodging and attractions in nearby areas.

Fauquier County Department of Economic Development, Bull Run Civil War Roundtable, and Fauquier Sesquicentennial Committee

Auburn Battlefield Civil War Trails Marker

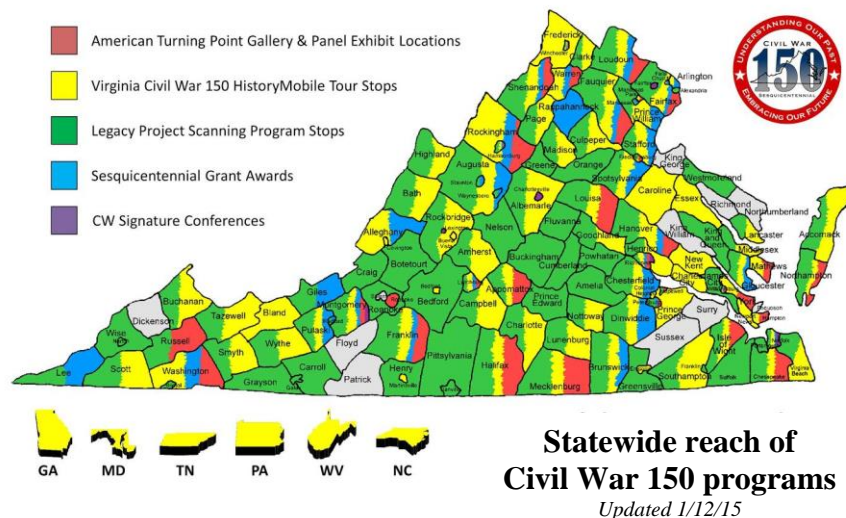
- Amount of award: \$1,240; amount of match from recipient: \$1,360
- Funds will be used to produce and install Civil War Trails signage at Auburn Battlefield, located in Fauquier County.

Looking Ahead to 2015

The 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War occurs in 2015, bringing many sesquicentennial programs to a close. The work of the Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War continues through June 2016. Upcoming programs include:

- 2015 Signature Conference, *Causes Won and Lost: The End of the Civil War*, to be held at the University of Virginia on April 18.
- Sesquicentennial Finale Concert, narrated by James I. Robertson, Jr., to be held at the State Capitol on Memorial Day.
- Sesquicentennial Leadership Recognition Awards program to recognize excellence in local sesquicentennial programs in Virginia.

- 150th anniversary programs marking key events, including those in Petersburg, Richmond, Sailor's Creek, Appomattox, and Caroline County.
- More than 40 scheduled HistoryMobile events through November 2015.
- 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>.



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