

**VIRGINIA SESQUICENTENNIAL OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR COMMISSION**  
**Report of the Commission**

Speaker of the House of Delegates William J. Howell, Chairman  
November 9, 2009

Commission members present: Speaker William J. Howell, Delegate Albert C. Eisenberg, Delegate Algie T. Howell, Jr., Delegate L. Scott Lingamfelter, Delegate Mamie E. Locke, Delegate Thomas C. Wright, Jr., John P. Ackerly III, Dr. Paul A. Levensgood, and Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr.

**Opening Remarks**

*The Honorable William J. Howell, Chairman*

Speaker Howell welcomed everyone in attendance and highlighted a number of successes of the past year: the first Signature Conference, a joint kickoff event at Harpers' Ferry, and distributing an educational DVD to every public school in Virginia.

**I. Staff Reports**

*Cheryl Jackson, Executive Director*

*Michele Howell, Grants Administrator & Project Manager*

**a. DVD for schools - *Virginia in the Civil War: A Sesquicentennial Remembrance***

Ms. Jackson reported that the DVD that Dr. Robertson produced as an instructional aid, *Virginia in the Civil War: A Sesquicentennial Remembrance*, was distributed the week of November 2 to every public elementary, middle and high school throughout the Commonwealth. Each school also received an accompanying content outline and a flier outlining sesquicentennial programs that may have special interest to educators. Ms. Jackson noted that the assistance of Secretary Morris and the Department of Education was instrumental in placing the DVD in each public school.

Ms. Jackson mentioned that staff has received numerous inquiries from private school teachers and others who would like to obtain copies of the DVD, and requested guidance from the Commission on selling the DVD through the Commission's website, and at a discount to educators. Discussion ensued and it was agreed that a discount for educators would be appropriate.

Delegate Wright made a motion that the Commission approve the sale of the DVD, *Virginia in the Civil War: A Sesquicentennial Remembrance*, at a cost of \$20.00 plus shipping and handling, with a special discount for educators. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ackerly and passed unanimously.

Ms. Jackson requested further guidance from the Commission on whether or not local committees would be allowed to air the DVD on local access channels. No consensus was reached, but the Commission agreed to revisit the question in six months. The

Commission also deferred the decision of whether or not to make the DVD accessible to educators on a password-protected area of the Commission's website.

#### **b. NEH Grant - Civil War 150 HistoryMobile development**

Ms. Jackson reported that the Commission and its project partner, the Virginia Historical Society, had recently received a Chairman's Special Award grant in the amount of \$950,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities. \$500,000 was allocated to the VHS gallery museum exhibition and \$450,000 to the HistoryMobile. Ms. Jackson indicated that the grant enables both projects to continue moving forward.

Speaker Howell asked Ms. Jackson whether or not the Commission still had a commitment from Mack Trucking to donate a tractor for this project. Ms. Jackson replied that the information previously reported on this in-kind donation was mistaken and staff is pursuing other partners.

Mr. Ackerly inquired how the decision was made regarding the division of grant monies between the museum exhibition and the HistoryMobile. Ms. Jackson responded that the original grant application submitted sought \$500,000 for each project and reviewers at NEH determined the final allocations.

#### **c. 2009 Kickoff Events**

Ms. Jackson briefly reviewed the 2009 sesquicentennial commemoration kickoff events. The first program in the Commission's Signature Conference Series - and the first major program of the sesquicentennial nationwide - *America on the Eve of the Civil War*, was held this past April and was an overwhelming success. Sales of the conference DVD have been brisk. Ms. Jackson indicated that the process of creating a written publication from the conference proceedings is much more complicated than first envisioned, and praised the many efforts of Dr. Ayers and the University of Richmond staff for producing a manuscript that has been accepted by UVA Press for publication. Ms. Jackson introduced Elizabeth Chenery, who helped coordinate logistics for the conference in April and has subsequently become familiar with the editorial process required for producing the conference publication. For the sake of continuity and efficiency, it was the consensus of the Commission to engage Ms. Chenery as an editorial assistant and logistics advisor throughout the conference series.

Ms. Jackson also reported on the success of the joint event held by the Virginia and the West Virginia Civil War Sesquicentennial Commissions at Harpers' Ferry, West Virginia in June. Attendees were treated to a screening of clips from *Virginia in the Civil War: A Sesquicentennial Remembrance*, as well as a pilot vodcast tour developed by the Commission in partnership with the National Park Service. In addition, a panel of noted historians, including Dr. Peter Carmichael, Dr. Charles Bryan, Jr., Dr. Robert Sutton, and Jim Lighthizer, held a lively discussion on the opportunities of the sesquicentennial.

#### **d. Local Sesquicentennial Committees**

Staff held regional informational meetings for local sesquicentennial committees over the summer and found there is a lot of energy and interest being generated for the commemoration. Local committees continue to update information on the Then/Now interactive map on the Commission's website. Staff encouraged local committees to build on Commission projects when developing local programming and when submitting grant applications to the Commission's tourism marketing grant program. Review of local committee grant applications will be done mid-November 2009 with recommendations reported to the Executive Committee in December.

#### **e. Project Review Team**

A Project Review Team had been formed to advise the Commission on the development and build out of the content for the *Civil War 150 HistoryMobile*. The Project Review Team is also consulting on the development of a Teacher Staff Ride program as well as a regimental history database tentatively titled, "Walk in Their Footsteps." Recommendations of the Project Review Team will be presented to the Commission in the coming months.

#### **f. Federal sesquicentennial legislation**

Legislation to create a sesquicentennial commemoration commission at the federal level has recently been introduced and will continue to be monitored by staff.

#### **g. Development Report**

Ms. Howell updated the Commission on development efforts. To date, the Commission has raised over \$1.2 million to offset the State's financial contribution for sesquicentennial programming. In addition to the \$950,000 NEH grant, substantial support has been committed by prominent corporations and foundations. A \$25,000 grant from the Roller-Bottimore Foundation purchased all of the servers, scanners and required infrastructure for the Commission's document digitization effort, *The Legacy Project*, which is being developed in partnership with the Library of Virginia.

## **II. The Legacy Project: Document Digitization and Access - Library of Virginia**

*Dr. Sandra G. Treadway, Librarian of Virginia*

*Lyndon H. Hart, III, Director, Description Services Branch*

Dr. Treadway and Mr. Hart provided a status update on *The Legacy Project: Document Digitization and Access*. Mr. Hart summarized the project objectives and reported that beta test visits to Danville and Winchester were very successful, with over 800 images scanned. Further, a number of local committees have expressed interest in participating in the project. Based on this success, Library staff requested that the Commission allocate \$262,226 to fund Phase I of the project - collection of images statewide. The funding will

provide salary support for two restricted positions at the Library of Virginia and travel expenses for the first two years of the project.

Mr. Ackerly made a motion that the Commission approve funding for full implementation of Phase I of *The Legacy Project: Document Digitization and Access*, in the amount of \$262,226. The motion was seconded by Delegate A. T. Howell and passed unanimously.

Dr. Treadway thanked the Commission and indicated materials collected during the beta test visits can be accessed on the Library of Virginia's Virginia Memory web page at [http://www.virginiamemory.com/collections/collections\\_a\\_to\\_z](http://www.virginiamemory.com/collections/collections_a_to_z), under "Civil War Legacy Project."

### **III. Sesquicentennial Marketing Program - Virginia Tourism Corporation**

*Richard Lewis, National Public Relations Manager*

*Sean McCarthy, Research Director*

Staff from the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) reported on Commission-funded marketing and tourism research activities to date. Mr. Lewis reported that the main goal for the sesquicentennial marketing plan is to reach out to the general public as well as those interested in history and heritage tourism in general, and encourage them to come to Virginia for the sesquicentennial. Mr. Lewis stated that it is well established that heritage tourists stay longer, spend more, and therefore generate greater tax revenue than the average leisure traveler.

Mr. Lewis described the Civil War media tour held for 17 travel journalists in September, noting that it was a big success and has already generated several news stories. Mr. Lewis also reported that the VTC has received nine applications so far in the second round of sesquicentennial tourism marketing grants.

Mr. McCarthy reported on the marketing research conducted by the VTC and funded by the Commission. Survey results show that 22% of the target markets say that Civil War historic sites are significantly important when choosing travel destinations in Virginia. Additionally, one in seven tourism dollars come from travelers interested in Civil War history. Based on these and other figures, the VTC suggests a three-tiered marketing strategy aimed at Civil War Travelers, History & Heritage Travelers, and Leisure Travelers to capture the largest audience possible during the commemoration. Additional information on the VTC marketing research report can be viewed on the Commission's website.

### **IV. 2010 Signature Conference - "Race, Slavery and the Civil War: The Tough Stuff of American History"**

*Dr. Cassandra Newby-Alexander, Dr. Charles Ford, Dr. William Alexander, Norfolk State University Host Committee leaders*

Ms. Jackson presented the program proposal for the second Signature Conference to be chaired by acclaimed historian, Dr. James O. Horton and hosted by Norfolk State

University (NSU) on September 24, 2010. The conference program will be divided into a morning and afternoon panel discussion with renowned Civil War historians, including Pulitzer Prize-winning author, Dr. James McPherson. Discussions in the morning will focus on the history of race, slavery and the Civil War, while afternoon discussions will focus on the memory and interpretation of the same. The NSU host committee representatives gave an overview of the university's goals for the conference program, which will be held in the L. Douglas Wilder Performing Arts Center, and described a number of exciting additional activities the committee is planning in partnership with area museums, historical sites, and tourism bureaus to highlight the university and the greater Norfolk area's Civil War assets.

Del. Lingamfelter made a motion to approve the 2010 conference proposal. The motion was seconded by Del. A. T. Howell and passed unanimously.

**V. 2011 Signature Conference - "American Military Strategy in the Civil War"**  
*Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr., Conference Chair*

Dr. Robertson reviewed plans for the Signature Conference to be held at Virginia Tech May 21, 2011. Dr. Robertson will serve as conference chair and planning is well underway. Thus far, seven historians have accepted the offer to participate. Additionally, the Stonewall Brigade Band has agreed to provide noon time entertainment for the conference, which will be held in Cassell Coliseum.

Del. Lingamfelter made a motion that the 2011 conference proposal be approved in concept. The motion was seconded by Del. A. T. Howell and passed unanimously.

**VI. Partnership with Virginia State Parks and Capitol-to-Capitol Trail**  
*Joe Elton, State Parks Director, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation*

Mr. Elton briefly updated the Commission on the information kiosks developed and installed throughout the state for state park system visitor use. Mr. Elton offered to let the Commission add Civil War-related information to the existing kiosk system. Partnering with the state parks and using existing infrastructure, rather than developing new kiosks, will save approximately \$600,000.

Del. Lingamfelter made a motion that the Commission work collaboratively with the state parks and Imperial Multimedia to incorporate its web-based resources on the existing kiosks in the state park system, the Capitol Trail and on [www.virginiaoutdoors.net](http://www.virginiaoutdoors.net). The motion was seconded by Mr. Ackerly and passed unanimously.

Per Speaker Howell's request, Richard Lewis agreed that the Virginia Tourism Corporation would collaborate with this partnership by sharing the VTC's hotel, restaurant, lodging, and reservation data.

More information on the park system information kiosks can be found at <http://www.virginiaoutdoors.net>

## **VII. Anniversary of the First Battle of Manassas (July 21, 2011) - Local Planning**

*Ed Clark, Superintendent, Manassas National Battlefield Park*

*Creston Owen, Chairman, Virginia Civil War Events, Inc.*

Mr. Clark reported on plans to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First Battle of Manassas on July 21, 2011. The National Park Service (NPS) is coordinating with Commission staff and the Prince William County local sesquicentennial committee on plans for events and activities surrounding the anniversary. In addition, each 6<sup>th</sup> grade student in Prince William County will visit the battlefield in 2011.

Mr. Clark invited the Commission to participate at the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary event to be held at Manassas National Battlefield Park in July 2011, which will be national in scope. In response to questions, Mr. Clark affirmed that a request for funding was not attached to the invitation.

Del. A.T. Howell made a motion that staff work with the National Park Service to develop a commemorative program at the Manassas National Battlefield Park to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First Battle of Manassas. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ackerly and passed unanimously.

Mr. Owen reported on the activities of a new nonprofit corporation, Virginia Civil War Events, Inc. A sesquicentennial headquarters will be opening soon in downtown Manassas, and plans are underway for a week-long event in July 2011 that will feature reenactments, living history demonstrations, speakers, art, music, and other historical commemorations and activities. Mr. Owen indicated that it is imperative that Manassas take advantage of the opportunities to capitalize on its Civil War history and increase visitation to the area, much as Gettysburg has done. Additional details on this event and other related activities can be found at <http://www.manassascivilwar.org/> and at <http://www.virginiacivilwarevents.org/>.

### **Other Business**

Mr. Bill Thomas of Hampton University introduced himself and asked to speak with Del. Lingamfelter following the meeting.

Mr. Ackerly asked that staff draft a letter of congratulations from the Commission to the Civil War Preservation Trust and the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation on the recent preservation of 209 acres at the site of the Third Battle of Winchester.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.