

VIRGINIA SESQUICENTENNIAL OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR COMMISSION



Strategic Plan

Adopted November 28, 2007

Purpose:

The Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission was established by the General Assembly in 2006 for the purpose of preparing for and commemorating the 150th anniversary of Virginia's participation in the American Civil War.

The Commission has the following statutory powers and duties:

1. Plan, develop, and carry out programs and activities appropriate to commemorate the sesquicentennial of the American Civil War.
2. Encourage interdisciplinary examination of the American Civil War.
3. Facilitate balanced activities related to the American Civil War throughout Virginia.
4. Encourage 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.
5. Provide technical assistance to localities and nonprofit organizations to further the commemoration of the sesquicentennial of the American Civil War.
6. Develop programs and facilities to ensure that the sesquicentennial commemoration of the American Civil War results in a positive legacy and long-term public benefit.
7. Encourage the development and conduct of programs designed to involve all citizens in activities that commemorate the American Civil War.
8. Report annually to the General Assembly and the Governor on the interim activity and work of the Commission.

Goals:

Diversity: The commemoration will be inclusive of, and meaningful to, all Virginians, particularly:

- Diverse racial and ethnic groups
- Citizens who are new to this country and those who do not have a hereditary link to the American Civil War
- Young people and others seeking to understand the relevance of the American Civil War to today's society.

Inclusiveness: The commemoration will seek to portray a fair and balanced story of Virginia's participation in the American Civil War that includes African-American, Union, and Confederate perspectives.

Statewide Accessibility: The commemoration will be statewide, involving all localities and encompassing all Civil War-related institutions, museums, battlefields, parks, and facilities.

Education: The commemoration will include a strong education component designed to ignite a renewed interest in Virginia's historical heritage. Opportunities will be provided to re-examine the lessons of the past and the legacies of the Civil War to understand how they affect the present and only continue to shape our future.

Permanence: The commemoration will imprint Virginia history and leave a positive and rich legacy well beyond 2015.

How we will get there:

Coordination: The Commission will coordinate and monitor: (i) programs and activities at museums, battlefields, parks, and events throughout the state; (ii) local sesquicentennial committees; (iii) other states' sesquicentennial commissions; and (iv) commemorative events and planning at the national level.

(1) The Commission will lead the coordination and provide support of existing museums and sites, in lieu of building a new museum for the sesquicentennial. The Commission will promote Civil War museums and sites through (i) its interactive website; (ii) development of specialized maps and brochures; and (iii) films and computer kiosks at Welcome Centers and locations throughout the state to make it easy for visitors and citizens to identify destinations and plan their visit throughout the Commonwealth.

(2) The Commission will request each locality in Virginia to form a sesquicentennial committee to plan commemorative events at the local level and will provide technical assistance as needed. Local committees may be composed of persons that may include, but not be limited to: representatives of the local governing body; departments of tourism and economic development; education community; local Civil War-related museums and

battlefields; Civil War interest groups; and other related service organizations and volunteer groups. Each locality will be encouraged to hold roundtable community discussions about goals and directions for the commemoration.

(3) The Commission will monitor other states' sesquicentennial planning and activities, maintaining contact with them and sharing information.

(4) The Commission will monitor planning at the national level, including the federal sesquicentennial commission and national grassroots organizations.

Signature Events and Activities: The Commission will sponsor signature events and activities to commemorate the sesquicentennial of the American Civil War consistent with the stated goals. Such events may include: Signature Conferences and Tours (see addenda, p. 7-16), law school symposia, and films. In addition, the Commission will support two statewide exhibitions: (i) a two-part museum exhibition that will open at the Virginia Historical Society in 2011 and thereafter travel for three years to Roanoke, Abington, Norfolk, Fredericksburg, Lynchburg, and Winchester; and (ii) a tractor-trailer exhibition ("HistoryMobile") featuring key artifacts and documents, together with high tech maps and displays that will visit localities throughout the state and travel out-of-state to promote Virginia Civil War 150 tourism.

Themes: The Commission will develop themes to (i) unify the statewide commemoration and (ii) link exhibitions and events throughout the Commonwealth that are endorsed by the Commission. The traveling exhibition, the "HistoryMobile", and all other Commission-sponsored signature events or activities will amplify these themes. In addition, micro-grants may be made available to localities that support the themes through programs or exhibits.

Technology: Technology will be used to support and enhance all aspects of these goals. In particular, the Commission's website and kiosks located throughout the state will provide interactive information designed to inform, engage, and pique the interest of visitors.

Fundraising: The Commission will partner with private entities, foundations, and corporations to support the programmatic aspects of the commemoration period. Such partnerships will be designed to support the goals of the commission, and further the educational opportunities offered by the commemoration. Support will include gifts, grants, donations, in-kind contributions, and bequests to the Commission through its nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization.

Proposed Timetable:

2007 milestones

- Establish themes
- √ Commission meetings: Portsmouth, Williamsburg, Fredericksburg
- √ Begin fundraising and grants application process

- √ Convene Advisory Council; Receive and process its report; Use feedback to determine workgroup structure
- √ Contract with Web developer/programmer
- √ Begin development of interactive website for commemoration period, content for brochures, other publications, etc.
- √ Monitor commemoration planning activities in other states and at the federal level; Establish liaison with each.
- √ Form workgroups, begin meeting, and establish workplans
- √ Hire Development Officer
- √ Contact each locality to request formation of a sesquicentennial committee and establish liaison with state commission.
- √ Work with museum community, parks, and appropriate local, state, and federal agencies to plan and coordinate activities related to the commemoration (e.g., Department of Historic Resources, Department of Education, CWPT, etc.)
- √ Begin planning for Commission-sponsored exhibitions and events

2008 milestones

- Commission meetings: Winchester, Lexington, Appomattox, Manassas
- Continue workgroup meetings
- Convene local committee liaisons to discuss commemoration plans, goals, and themes
- Convene Advisory Council to receive feedback on plans to date
- Continue fundraising and grant application process
- Launch interactive portion of website
- Develop grant program to museums and localities (if any) and begin award process
- Film "Ask an Expert" questions and answers
- Implement plans for computer kiosks, films, brochures, maps, etc.
- Begin planning for digital document preservation project
- Continue planning for Commission-sponsored exhibitions and events
- Continue to work with museum community, parks, and appropriate local, state, and federal agencies to plan and coordinate activities related to the commemoration (e.g., Department of Historic Resources, Department of Education, CWPT, etc.)

2009 milestones

- Commission meetings: Harper's Ferry, Arlington, Ft. Monroe, Roanoke/Blacksburg
- Signature events: Launch of conference series in spring ("The Coming of the War" - University of Richmond)
- Launch of Signature Tours at Harper's Ferry, West Virginia - June 25-26
- Implementation of digital document preservation project
- Continue to revise and monitor website, kiosks, films, brochures, maps, etc.

2010 milestones

- Commission meetings
- Signature events: Conference series ("Slavery and the Civil War in America"), Tours (Southwest Virginia, Northern Virginia)
- Launch computer kiosks and travel information
- Implement nationwide marketing campaign
- Continue to revise and monitor website, kiosks, films, brochures, maps, etc.
- New state map is published by DMV with Civil War 150 themes

2011 milestones

- Commission meetings
- Signature events: Conference series ("The Secession Crisis and Beginning of the War"); Tours (First Manassas and Balls Bluff; Southside Virginia)
- Museum exhibition opens at VHS (mid-February)
- Beginning of HistoryMobile tour
- Ongoing monitoring of events; keeping calendar of events current

2012 milestones

- Commission meetings
- Signature events: Conference series ("The Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of the Potomac"); Tours (Valley Campaign, Peninsula Campaign, Seven Days' Battles, Second Manassas, Fredericksburg)
- Museum exhibition travels
- HistoryMobile travels
- Ongoing monitoring of events; keeping calendar of events current

2013 milestones

- Commission meetings
- Signature events: Conference series ("Women and the American Civil War"); Tours (Chancellorsville, Richmond, Hampton Roads)
- Museum exhibition travels
- HistoryMobile travels
- Ongoing monitoring of events; keeping calendar of events current

2014 milestones

- Commission meetings
- Signature events: Conference series ("Diplomacy and the Civil War"); Tours (Overland campaign, 1864 Valley campaign)
- Museum exhibition travels
- HistoryMobile travels Ongoing monitoring of events; keeping calendar of events current

2015 milestones

- Final Commission meetings; Commission expires July 1, 2015
- National culmination event (Appomattox) - April 9, 2015 ("One Nation Indivisible")
- Signature events: Conference series ("The Promise of Freedom: the Legacy of the Civil War"); Tours (Petersburg, Appomattox)
- Museum exhibition travels
- HistoryMobile travels
- Ongoing monitoring of events; keeping calendar of events current

DRAFT