

Major exhibit opens in Richmond about America's Turning Point

- February 1st, 2011

The pathbreaking Civil War 150th anniversary exhibition *An American Turning Point: The Civil War in Virginia* opens at the [Virginia Historical Society](#) in Richmond, Virginia on Friday, February 4.

An American Turning Point is not a top-down study of battles and generals. It is an exhibition that engages visitors in the experiences of the people who lived or fought in Virginia during the war.

From 1861-1865 Virginia stood at the center of a military and social revolution. How we define freedom, liberty, patriotism, and nation today is directly related to the experiences of the generation that waged and survived the American Civil War.

Diverse experiences reflected

The exhibition is distinguished for its unique ability to bring multiple perspectives of the Civil War to multiple audiences in multiple formats.

Pictured above left is a painting of a slave auction provided courtesy of the Virginia Historical Society. Finished in 1862 by English artist Lefevre James Cranstone, it shows the commercial base upon which the institution of slavery rested.

After exploring why the Civil War happened, the exhibition is divided into two sections: *Surviving War* and *Waging War*. Civilian experiences are told in *Surviving War* with the military events that produced them as a backdrop. In *Waging War*, the military experience and its impact on the home front is the story line.

Virginia Sesquicentennial Commission

This 3,000-square-foot exhibition features more than 200 objects and 17 state-of-the-art audiovisual programs. It is sponsored by the [Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission](#).

An American Turning Point – The Civil War in Virginia is one of the commission's signature projects and received the National Endowment for the Humanities Chairman's Special Award in the amount of \$950,000. The project has a nationwide reach and serves as a model to other states.

The exhibit will stay in Richmond through December and from 2012 and 2015 will travel to Roanoke, Abingdon, Lynchburg, Winchester, Quantico, Hampton and Appomattox.

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