

# Prince William / Manassas releases Civil War brochure

By [BENNIE SCARTON JR.](#)

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A free map and guide to area museums, historic sites and Civil War Trails markers is now available to the public.

The "Civil War Heritage Trail," developed by the Prince William County Office of Historic Preservation, was recently unveiled at the National Tourism Week Volunteer Luncheon sponsored by the Prince William County/Manassas Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The brochure is part of the County's Sesquicentennial Commemoration of the Civil War. The 150th anniversary events have begun with a series of speakers at the Manassas courthouse.

The county will commemorate the event with the state and the Virginia Civil War Trails.

Guest speaker Rob Orrison, who serves as the site manager for Brentsville Courthouse Historic Centre, introduced the comprehensive guide, which will help visitors find their way to 25 different historic sites and Civil War Trails interpretive signs within the county.

It is available at key sites around the county, including Manassas National Battlefield Park, the Manassas Visitors Center and at the Convention and Visitors Bureau at 8609 Sudley Road, Manassas.

Among the 25 sites and interpretive trails markers are: Occoquan, Williams Ordinary in Dumfries, Haymarket, Buckland, Bristoe Station Battlefield, the Haymarket Museum, the Manassas Museum System, Leesylvania State Park, Prince William Forest Park and Ben Lomond Historic Site.

The project started with the county's office of historic preservation staff, which spent seven years finalizing the research and the Civil War trails signs in the county.

At the same time, the county set about preservation efforts to restore the county's historic properties including Rippon Lodge, Ben Lomond Manor House and the Brentsville site.

The county has invested heavily in the projects to preserve, protect and interpret these sites over the past decade.

According to Brendan Hanafin, director of historic preservation, the brochure represents an important step in revealing the region's history to both local residents and visitors.

"We owe a debt of gratitude to our government, who enabled the preservation, and to our volunteer Mark Trbovich, president of the area's Historic Preservation Association, who had the vision for the county's own brochure," Hanafin said.

At the initial meeting of the county's Civil War Sesquicentennial meeting in November 2007, the idea for the guide was proposed. It won a Preserve America Grant for initial interpretation and the project was under way.

All the work was done in house with design and copy by Preservationist Heather Hambrey who began work in the fall of 2008.

The brochure also includes a timeline of regional history and personal stories of area residents. Dangerfield Newby, a free African-American, attempted to purchase his wife Harriet who was enslaved at Brentsville Courthouse. He would not succeed in freeing her as Newby joined John Brown's movement and was killed at the raid on Harper's Ferry. Harriet's letters are poignant reminder of the pain inflicted by the conflict.

According to Sharon Cavileer, Visitors Bureau interim director, "The Prince William Civil War Heritage Trail is a tribute to both Union and Confederate soldiers and civilians as well as a remarkable journey for the visitor. By telling the stories of real people and real events at these perfectly preserved places, our history comes alive. It's a great reason to spend an extra day or two in the county and Manassas and pay tribute to our past."

Staff writer Bennie Scarton Jr. can be reached at 703-369-6707.