

Summary

Virginia Commission on the Bicentennial of the War of 1812, Richmond
October 19, 2010 and December 8, 2010



The Virginia Commission on the Bicentennial of the War of 1812, and its Brochure Work Group and the Citizens Advisory Council met on October 19 and December 8 in Richmond to plan Virginia's commemoration of the bicentennial of the War of 1812. The Ground Rules for Legislative Commissions and Subgroups and nonlegislative citizen participation was reviewed at each meeting. In September 2010, the Commission's chair was appointed to represent Virginia on the U.S. Department of Defense's National Executive Steering Committee for the Bicentennial of the War of 1812, which is coordinating the national and international commemoration of the bicentennial of the war. Collaboration with the U.S. National Park Service, state agencies and organizations, localities, and other states is being explored to ensure the availability of programs and events for citizens throughout the Commonwealth. The Commission established a budget for the bicentennial events.

Commemorative Brochure

A commemorative brochure to announce the bicentennial in Virginia was approved by the Commission. The brochure is the premiere of a more detailed and elaborate map of War of 1812-related sites in Virginia that will be designed and distributed throughout the Commonwealth to promote publicity and tourism for the bicentennial. Appropriate grants, in-kind services, and other funding opportunities are being considered by the Commission to cover publication and distribution costs of the brochure and the map.

Virginia War of 1812 Heritage Trail

With the approval of the Commission's 15 new historic markers by the Department of Historic Resources Board, legislation was approved for introduction in the 2011 Session by the Commission that establishes the Virginia War of 1812 Heritage Trail. The trail encompasses existing and new historic markers signifying, among other things, prominent Virginians and other personalities, the contributions of African Americans, the role of Native Americans, battles and water routes, cemeteries in which Virginia veterans of the War of 1812 are interred, Tangier Island, the Sack of Hampton, the capture of Alexandria, the Virginia Militia, the hiding of the Declaration of Independence, and other sites and edifices related to the War of 1812 throughout the State. The trail will be a focal point to highlight Virginia's significant role in the war and a potential economic development opportunity. Inasmuch as federal law prohibits the extension of the Star-Spangled Banner Trail to include certain points in Virginia, the Commission and U.S. National Park Service agreed to work cooperatively on other matters of mutual interest during the bicentennial, such as the Cultural Resources Diversity Internship Program and inclusion of Virginia's bicentennial activities in NPS newsletters and website.

Bicentennial Signature Events

o Montpelier: Prelude to the Bicentennial

On March 16, 2011, the Presidential Wreath Laying Ceremony for President James Madison at Montpelier will kick-off Virginia's bicentennial commemoration of the War of 1812. The Commission will attend the event and present a wreath. Following the ceremony, the Commission will be the guest of Montpelier for other activities, including a private tour of Madison's home.

o Virginia OpSail 2012

OpSail Virginia 2012 will be held on June 1-12, 2012 in Hampton Roads. Karen Scherberger, Executive Director, Norfolk Festevents, reported that Governor McDonnell has announced a \$1 million amendment to the budget to support OpSail Virginia 2012 and leverage an estimated \$80 million in support from private, foundation, and other public sector entities. Hampton Roads is one of only five U.S. ports of call to host the bicentennial event and commemorate the birth of The Star-Spangled Banner. The United Kingdom and Canada which were involved in the War of 1812, several NATO countries, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Army, and other nations with tall ships are partners in the commemoration.

- **Chesapeake Bay Tour of 2013**

In recognition of the British invasion of Hampton Roads, the Commission is planning a water tour following the Chesapeake Bay military encounters with the British on the Virginia side.

- **Legacy Symposium 2014**

Plans for a significant two-day symposium are being developed as a concluding signature event for Virginia bicentennial commemoration of the War of 1812. The Commission's Legacy Symposium will be hosted by Fort Monroe in June 2014. A steering committee and various work groups composed of representatives from relevant state agencies, business and industry, the military, public and higher education, historical societies, local governing bodies, and others will be appointed to assist the Commission in planning and implementation of the symposium.

- **Fort Meigs and African Americans in War of 1812**

Mr. Patrick Farris, Executive Director, Warren Historical Society, briefed the Advisory Council and Commission concerning the collaboration with the State of Ohio to erect an historical marker at Fort Meigs, a War of 1812 battlefield in Perrysburg, Ohio, to honor Virginia's fallen who are buried at the site. Several of the Virginia veterans were members of the Petersburg Volunteers, a company of young men from Dinwiddie, Amelia, and Chesterfield, fought in the Battle of Fort Meigs during the war of 1812, under General William Henry Harrison. The Commission determined that recognition of the sacrifices of these men was appropriate and efforts are underway to place the marker on their common burial site by 2015.

- **Commission Collaboration with Richmond Symphony**

A partnership between the Commission and the Richmond Symphony was secured at the December 8 meeting. David J.L. Fisk, Richmond Symphony Executive Director, stated that a symphonic tribute featuring period music would be held at Centre Stage in Richmond in January 2012, as a part of the Commission's launch of the bicentennial. Further, in 2014, the Symphony will participate in the Legacy Symposium at Fort Monroe, joining other Hampton Roads orchestras and symphonies, and the military bands in a spectacular musical event. The planned event will provide educational experiences and benefits for participating students that integrate and augment several academic disciplines.

- **War of 1812 Documentary, Book, and Traveling Exhibit**

Dr. John V. Quarstein, Executive Director of the Virginia War Museum Foundation, indicated that the table of contents and an outline for the book are being drafted and that the Foundation has received pledges for funding the documentary and exhibit. The documentary, which depicts Virginia's role in the war, will be supplemented by a book that can be used by students and teachers. The exhibit of War of 1812 artifacts and memorabilia will travel to specified locations around the State to engage citizens in the bicentennial.

Legislative Initiatives

The Commission voted to recommend to the 2011 Session legislation establishing the Virginia War of 1812 Heritage Trail and a commemorative War of 1812 license plate.

Next Meeting

The Commission will meet to organize and coordinate its visit to Montpelier for the Presidential Wreath Laying Ceremony in February 2011. The regular meeting schedule for the Commission and its Citizens Advisory Council will resume in the Spring.

Chairman:

The Hon. M. Kirkland Cox

For information, contact:

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