

Department of Historic Resources

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Contact:

Randy Jones

Department of Historic Resources;

540-578-3031; Randy.Jones@dhr.virginia.gov

16 NEW STATE HISTORICAL HIGHWAY MARKERS APPROVED

—Markers cover topics in counties of Augusta, Bath (2), Frederick, Gloucester (2), Hanover, Lancaster, Loudoun (2), Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Spotsylvania and Stafford, and the cities of Suffolk and Winchester—

—Includes a marker for the site of Werowocomoco, the place where Paramount Chief Powhatan, Captain John Smith and Pocahontas first met in Dec. 1607—

[Note: The full text for each marker is reproduced at the end of this release.]

RICHMOND – Among the 16 new historical highway markers recently approved by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources are seven signs covering Civil War history, six highlighting African American history, and a sign recounting how the Declaration of Independence was saved during the War of 1812 before the British burned Washington DC.

The Civil War battles of Unison in Loudoun County, Piedmont in Augusta County, and Hanover Court House in Hanover County will each be commemorated with individual historical markers. Also, the Union army's Camp Russell, where more than 40,000 soldiers under Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan were bivouacked in late 1864, will be remembered with a marker slated for installation in Frederick County.

In Winchester a marker will recall one-time resident Mary Greenhow Lee, an “ardent supporter of the Confederacy,” in the words of the marker, who provided assistance to wounded soldiers and kept an extensive diary of life during the Civil War in Winchester. Lee was banned by Gen. Sheridan from his lines in February 1865 because of her “constant annoyance.”

Stafford County's Sherwood Forest, also known as the Fitzhugh House, will be commemorated with a marker recalling its service to the Union army “as a vantage point to watch Confederate movements south of the Rappahannock River in April-May 1863,” which included aerial observations from manned balloon launches at the site. The property was also a staging ground for Union troop movements during the Chancellorsville Campaign and served as a Union hospital during the Second Battle of Fredericksburg in May 1863.

A marker for Spotsylvania County will recount the first engagement north of the James River between United States Colored Troops and Confederate soldiers. On May 15, 1864, the USCT rushed in to battle at Alrich Farm to support the Union's 2nd Ohio Cavalry. After skirmishing with Confederates, the USCT charged and caused Confederate Brig. Gen. Thomas Rosser's cavalry to withdraw. The Department of Historic Resources plans to dedicate this marker on the Sesquicentennial of the event next year.

African American educator James Solomon Russell, born into slavery in 1857, will be honored with a highway marker in Mecklenburg County. Ordained in 1882, Russell established 30 churches and St. Paul Normal and Industrial Institute, which became Saint Paul's College in Lawrenceville in Brunswick County. "Russell urged African Americans to stay out of debt, vote, and become landowners," according to the approved marker's text.

Pioneering black physician Dr. Morgan E. Norris will be remembered with a historical marker in Kilmarnock. A Lancaster County native who started his practice in 1917, Norris was "the Northern Neck's first black physician," according to the forthcoming sign. "He opened to all races specialty surgical clinics, bringing enhanced medical care to the lower Northern Neck" and he led efforts to improve access to education for black schoolchildren in that area.

Three of the new markers underscore the importance of the Julius Rosenwald Fund to improving educational opportunities for blacks in Virginia. Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck & Company, established a fund in 1917 that helped pay for the construction of more than 5,000 schools for blacks in 15 southern states, including Virginia, during the era of segregation. The fund also provided building plans for various size schools.

Individual markers will be erected to commemorate two Rosenwald schools in Bath County, T. C. Walker School and Union Hurst School, as well as a sign for the "Huntersville Rosenwald School" in the City of Suffolk. Huntersville was one of the last of the approximately 370 Rosenwalds built in Virginia. The school was completed in 1931, one year before the Rosenwald stopped funding schools in 1932.

The marker "Saving the Declaration of Independence," to be erected in Loudoun County, will recount that U.S. State Department clerk Stephen Pleasonton was responsible for securing important government papers, including the Declaration, in the abandoned Rokeby mansion near Leesburg, likely stashing the documents in a brick vault. Secretary of State James Monroe had ordered the removal of the papers from Washington two days before British forces burned Washington D.C. in April 1814.

Other markers also approved in June by the Department of Historic (DHR) include the following:

- "Werowocomoco," which commemorates an internationally significant archaeological site in Gloucester County, where an "Algonquian Indian settlement

was the center of power of the Powhatan paramount chiefdom when the English established Jamestown in 1607. It was at Werowocomoco that Powhatan, John Smith, and Pocahontas first crossed paths. Recently, the site was formally dedicated to permanent preservation through an easement held by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources during a ceremony involving Governor Bob McDonnell and the chiefs of Virginia's Powhatan-descendant tribes, along with other dignitaries.

- “Lunenburg County Courthouse,” which highlights this 1827 temple-form building, inspired by Jefferson’s design for Virginia’s Capitol.
- “Poplar Spring Church,” which honors a 1723 church in Gloucester County, “one of the earliest churches in Virginia to have an organ.” It was abandoned by the end of the 18th century.

The texts for all 16 historical markers were approved by DHR’s Board of Historic Resources during its quarterly meeting on June 19.

The Virginia highway marker program, which began in 1927 with erection of the first historical markers along U.S. Rte. 1, is considered the oldest such program in the nation. Currently there are more than 2,500 official state markers, most of which are maintained by Virginia Department of Transportation, a key partner with the Department of Historic Resources in the marker program.

The manufacturing cost of each new highway marker is covered by its sponsor, except for those markers developed by DHR.

More information about the Historical Highway Marker Program is available on the website of the Department of Historic Resources at <http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/>.

Full Text of Markers:

(Please note that locations are only proposed; they have yet to be confirmed with VDOT or other officials in jurisdictions not overseen by VDOT; also, some texts may be slightly modified before installation.)

Lunenburg County Courthouse

William Howard and Dabney Cosby, who had worked for Thomas Jefferson, completed this courthouse in 1827. The second courthouse to occupy this site, it is a temple-form building employing the Doric order and was influenced by Jefferson's Roman Revival style. It originally included an apsidal rear wall. The exterior stairs were added later in the 19th century. Lunenburg’s county seat, originally located near present-day Chase City, was moved here after Mecklenburg County was formed in 1765. This town was laid off as Lewiston in 1817 and later renamed Lunenburg Court House. Two law offices (built 1842 and 1888) remain on the courthouse square.

Sponsor: Lunenburg County Historical Society

Proposed Location: Lunenburg Courthouse at 11435 Courthouse Road

Poplar Spring Church N-61

Petsworth Parish, one of the four parishes of colonial Gloucester County, was established in the middle of the seventeenth century. The first parish church was located some four miles southwest near Purtan Bay on the York River. On this site were built the second and third churches of the parish, both called Poplar Springs Church. The first one, built as an earthfast frame structure in 1677, was said to have one of the first three-level pulpits in Virginia. The second church, completed in 1723, was one of the earliest churches in Virginia to have an organ. By the end of the 18th century, the church was abandoned.

Sponsor: Gloucester Historical Committee

Proposed Location: Across from Petsworth Elementary School at about 10658 George Washington Memorial Highway in Gloucester County.

Saving the Declaration of Independence

On 22 Apr. 1814, two days before British forces entered Washington, Sec. of State James Monroe ordered government records, including the Declaration of Independence, removed to Virginia for safekeeping. They were first deposited in an abandoned mill just across the Potomac River. State Department clerk Stephen Pleasonton, believing the documents still in danger of discovery, sent them 35 miles west to Leesburg. They were secured south of town here at the abandoned Rokeby mansion, probably in its brick vault. The Declaration, the papers of the Continental Congress, and other historical government records remained here for several weeks until they were returned to Washington.

Sponsor: Bicentennial of the American War of 1812 Commission

Proposed Location: Near Rokeby on Rte 15 in Loudoun County

Dr. Morgan E. Norris (c. 1883-1966)

Dr. Morgan E. Norris, a Lancaster native and the Northern Neck's first black physician, practiced medicine at this site 1917-1964. He opened to all races specialty surgical clinics, bringing enhanced medical care to the lower Northern Neck. In 1928 Dr. Norris led a campaign to build the first brick elementary school for black children in the Northern Neck. In 1939 he spearheaded a boycott to secure free bus transportation for black schoolchildren and led the Northern Neck Progressive Association's annual fair from 1927 until 1957. He was the second black trustee of Hampton University, and the first black coroner in the state.

Sponsor: The Kilmarnock Museum

Proposed Location: 16078 Mary Ball Road, Kilmarnock, in Lancaster County

James Solomon Russell (1857-1935)

James Solomon Russell was born enslaved on 20 Dec. 1857 on the nearby Hendrick Plantation. After emancipation, he attended Hampton Institute and St. Stephen's Normal

and Theological School and was ordained in 1882. As a religious missionary, Russell established nearly 30 churches. He also founded the St. Paul Normal and Industrial Institute (Saint Paul's College) in Lawrenceville in 1882 and was its principal until 1929. In 1892, Russell became Archdeacon for Colored Work in the Diocese of Southern Virginia. Inspired by Booker T. Washington, he started an annual farmers' conference in 1904. Russell urged African Americans to stay out of debt, vote, and become land owners.

Sponsor: James Solomon Russell Memorial Committee

Proposed Location: Intersection of US Route 1 and Palmer Springs Road (State Road 712), in Mecklenburg County.

Huntersville Rosenwald School

The Huntersville School was built in 1930-31 as a Rosenwald School. The Julius Rosenwald fund provided \$1,000 toward the construction, with contributions from African Americans and the local government provided the rest of its \$7,000 cost. Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck & Company, established the fund in 1917 and helped pay for the construction of more than 5,000 schools for African Americans in 15 southern states. The Huntersville School was one of the last built in Virginia, as the program ended in 1932. It included classroom space for four teachers and was named for its first principal, Joseph S. Gibson.

Sponsor: Karyn L. Childs

Proposed Location: At 6123 Town Point Rd., in Suffolk.

T. C. Walker School

T. C. Walker School, which opened in 1930, was named for Thomas Calhoun Walker a former slave from Gloucester County who became the first African American attorney in Virginia. It cost \$4,600, and was underwritten with \$500 from the Julius Rosenwald Foundation, \$505 from the local African American community, and \$3,595 from the county. Virginia Turner was one of the longest serving teachers at the school, which had two classrooms, a kitchen, and library and remained open until 1965. This Rosenwald School was one of more than 5,000 built in 15 states between 1917 and 1932 to teach African American children.

Sponsor: Renee Lewis-Cammock and Cliff Gilchrest

Proposed Location: At 1633 T. C. Walker Road, Millboro, in Bath County.

Union Hurst School

Union Hurst, a school for African Americans, was built near here on Pine Hurst Heights Road between 1924 and 1925. The school was built with the assistance of the Julius Rosenwald Fund, a program that helped build some 5,000 schools for African Americans in 15 states. Bath County and the African American community also contributed money

for its construction. Teachers at the school included Booker T. Poteat and Nellie L. Perry. A high school room was added in 1932. In 1945, the high school portion was closed and students were bused to Covington in Alleghany County. The school closed in 1965.

Sponsor: Perlista Y. Henry and Cliff Gilchrest

Proposed Location: Along VA 615, one mile west of Hot Springs in Bath County.

Werowocomoco

The site of Werowocomoco is located nearby at Purtan Bay. This Algonquian Indian settlement was the center of power of the Powhatan paramount chiefdom when the English established James Fort in 1607. Captain John Smith was brought to Werowocomoco as a captive in December 1607 where he met the Powhatan leader Wahunsonacock and his daughter Pocahontas. Archaeologists working closely with present-day members of Virginia Indian tribes investigated the site from 2002 to 2010. They documented that Werowocomoco was an extensive settlement, including trenches defining an area of restricted access or sacred space, from the 13th century through the early 17th century.

Sponsor: DHR

Locality: Gloucester

Proposed Location: Near Werowocomoco (on Route 17 or SR 606), in Gloucester County

Battle of Hanover Court House

The Battle of Hanover Court House, also known as the Battle of Slash Church, took place here on 27 May 1862. Union Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan dispatched Maj. Gen. Fitz John Porter to deal with reported Confederate forces on the Union flank. About noon, Porter's men encountered Confederate Col. Lawrence O'Bryan Branch's men here at Dr. Joseph McKinney's farm, in the first phase of the battle. After pushing them back, Porter then became vulnerable to attack from Confederates a mile west at Peake's Station. Porter managed to blunt that attack and held the field at the end of the day.

Sponsor: DHR

Proposed Location: Near the McKinney house at the intersection of 301 and 651 in Hanover County.

Battle of Piedmont

The Battle of Piedmont was fought here on 5 May 1864 between Union troops under Maj. Gen. David Hunter and Confederates under Brig. Gen. William E. "Grumble" Jones. Hunter, moving toward Staunton, found Jones's men posted in a strong position near the village of Piedmont. The outnumbered Confederates held their position through the early afternoon until Jones created a gap in his line. Hunter and Col. Joseph Thoburn, seeing

the opportunity, attacked. Union troops captured nearly 1,000 Confederates. Jones was killed, and with the Confederates retreating, Hunter proceeded to Staunton.

Sponsor: DHR

Proposed Location: Near intersection of 608 and 778 in Augusta County

Battles of Unison

On 24 Oct. 1862, Union Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan, following Pres. Abraham Lincoln's orders, began marching the Army of the Potomac from Maryland into Loudoun County to get between Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia and Richmond. Lee directed his cavalry chief, Maj. Gen. J. E. B. Stuart, to block the advance and give the Army of Northern Virginia time to march from the western side of the Blue Ridge and protect Richmond. From 31 Oct. through 3 Nov., Stuart delayed McClellan south of here until Lee could concentrate his infantry in Culpeper County, and Lincoln replaced McClellan.

Sponsor: DHR

Proposed Location: Unison in Loudoun County

Camp Russell

The earthen fortification on the hill to the north was part of Union Camp Russell, constructed during the Civil War. It extended almost five miles along Opequon Creek from the Front Royal Pike to Cedar Creek Grade Road and was named after deceased Brig. Gen. David A. Russell. More than 40,000 Union soldiers of Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan's army occupied the camp in Nov.–Dec. 1864, including future U.S. Presidents Col. Rutherford B. Hayes and Capt. William McKinley. When Confederate Lt. Gen. Jubal A. Early's army withdrew from the Shenandoah Valley in 1864, Union Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant ordered Sheridan's men elsewhere.

Sponsor: DHR

Proposed Location: Rte. 522, 4 miles south of Winchester in Frederick County

Sherwood Forest

Sherwood Forest, also known as the Fitzhugh House, was built in the first half of the 19th century on land formerly belonging to Mary Ball Washington. It served the Union army in several capacities during the Civil War, most importantly as a vantage point to watch Confederate movements south of the Rappahannock River in April–May 1863. A site for balloon launches and a telegraph station, Sherwood Forest also served as a staging ground for the Army of the Potomac's I Corps during the Chancellorsville Campaign. During the Second Battle of Fredericksburg in May 1863, the Fitzhugh House became a hospital for wounded I Corps soldiers.

Sponsor: DHR

Locality: Stafford County

Proposed Location: Near the house near the intersection of Route 3 and Route 621 in Stafford County

Mary Greenhow Lee (1819-1907)

Mary Greenhow Lee, who lived in this house, is best known for the extensive diary she kept to record daily life in Winchester during the Civil War. An ardent supporter of the Confederacy, she provided assistance to wounded Confederates throughout the war and funneled supplies to the army. On 23 Feb. 1865, Union Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan banished Lee from his lines because of her “constant annoyance.” Lee left her home in Winchester and departed the Shenandoah Valley. After the Civil War she settled in Baltimore and operated a boardinghouse.

Sponsor: DHR

Locality: Winchester

Proposed Location: 132 North Market Street, Winchester

USCT at the Alrich Farm

The first combat in the Civil War between United States Colored Troops and Confederates north of the James River occurred here. On 15 May 1864, Confederate Brig. Gen. Thomas Rosser pushed forward a cavalry detachment along Catharpin Road to determine the position of the Union army. His men encountered—and pushed back—the 2nd Ohio Cavalry. To support the cavalry, the nearby 23rd United States Colored Infantry hurried forward to the intersection of Catharpin Road and Orange Plank Road. After skirmishing with the Confederates, the 23rd charged and caused Rosser to withdraw.

Sponsor: DHR

Proposed Location: Intersection of Rte. 621 and Rte. 612 in Spotsylvania County