

SC Civil War Sesquicentennial Advisory Board Meeting
SC Department of Archives and History
11:00 A.M.
December 10, 2009

Those attending: Eric Emerson, Marion Edmonds, Robin Copp, Michael Allen, Bob Dodson, Allen Roberson, Bernie Wright, John Tucker, Jannie Harriot, and Ben Hornsby.

Eric Emerson asked John Tucker to give an update on plans for various Charleston events during planned for December 2010 and April 2011. He mentioned how the Lowcountry committee was working with various communities and municipalities to gain their support and financial backing. He noted the scholarly programs planned for December 2-4 and April 8-17. He noted that the South Carolina Historical Society is planning an exhibit and had been given a copy of the Ordinance of Secession, which it will display as well as the Secession Banner. Various persons spoke about the need to put the Civil War in the appropriate context and the need to include the 54th Massachusetts in the planning.

It was also pointed out that the fall of Port Royal in the fall of 1861 should be noted and various people from Charleston had met with the Beaufort people to encourage them to observe this significant event. Also, Beaufort will be working to mark its 300th anniversary (founded January 17, 2011). Emancipation Day (January 1, 1863) should be commemorated as well as the life of Robert Smalls. Steve Wise, Larry Rowland, and the Mayor of Beaufort should lead this effort. Michael Allen remarked that the founding of Penn Center, originally known as Penn Normal and Industrial School and established in 1862, should be observed.

Marion Edmonds, representing PRT, stated that 2011 would be the most important year for SC to observe the commemoration. He stated the media was very interested in knowing about plans and an English television crew was especially interested in knowing about Ft. Sumter. He noted that Hunting Island State Park was near Penn Center and Port Royal and would possibly be available to stage and host events relating to the sesquicentennial activities. Georgetown should also be encouraged to participate in the sesquicentennial.

Tucker said everything was on schedule for the *Hunley* submarine's museum to be open for the sesquicentennial of its sinking (February 17, 1864).

Allen Roberson noted that the Confederate Relic Room and South Carolina Military Museum was continuing to make plans to note sesquicentennial. Among its activities are the restoration of early battle flags, and the exhibition of the McRae papers which document ties between the South and England during the Civil War. He also reported on plans for Columbia's observance of the meeting of the Secession Convention. Plans call for an observance in the old First Baptist Church where the Secession Convention first met. There will be a PowerPoint presentation on some of the signers of the Ordinance and the Ordinance of Secession will be on display. John Sherrer of Historic Columbia is

also planning some walking tours which will highlight Columbia's Confederate history. Roberson of the nominating committee had attempted to get in touch with Robert Rosen and ask him to serve as chair; however, he had been unable to reach him but he would continue to try. All seem to think Rosen is the appropriate choice as he is a private citizen.

Michael Allen expressed concern that Virginia's effort for the sesquicentennial observance was getting so much press and South Carolina's very limited coverage. He said it was important for South Carolina to mount an observance as the Civil War started here, and it gives all South Carolinians an opportunity to learn about their history, and the sesquicentennial provides an opportunity to go out and collect the many stories that South Carolinians have pertaining to the Civil War.

The next item of discussion related to the money being held by the War Between the States Heritage Commission. Everyone wanted to see if these funds could be tapped for the sesquicentennial commemoration. The consensus was to ask that Marion Edmonds look into the possible use of these funds.

Various sesquicentennial projects around the state were discussed. Roberson mentioned that the Southern Maritime collection was being inventoried and that Kate Boyd of USC was working on the digitization of newspapers there and was hoping to expand that project to other institutions around the state. Emerson noted the December (2010) and April (2011) symposiums being planned by the Lowcountry Sesquicentennial Committee. The group felt that all the projects were worthwhile and served as means of providing new information to the general public about the causes of the Civil War, the War years, and Reconstruction.

Bernie Wright stressed the importance of developing an in depth web site for the sesquicentennial so that school children could be exposed to the information as well as do research from it. Much discussion followed about using National History Day and Teaching American History to reach this objective. Strengths and weaknesses of these programs were debated. There was also a need expressed to get colleges and universities actively engaged in working on the sesquicentennial commemoration. There was much debate as to the best means of reaching school children electronically as new mechanisms are constantly being developed. Edmonds was asked to bring in technical people who have the expertise to address this issue.

Discussion followed about how South Carolina was missing an opportunity to bring in tourists and revenue as a result of the sesquicentennial. History is one of the great assets of the state and the state needs to capitalize on that fact as well as South Carolina was the first state to secede and the Civil War began here. Edmonds noted again that South Carolina's prominent role in the Civil War came early and that people throughout the world are already beginning to ask about the state's plans for the commemoration with the desire of coming to participate in these activities. There was a consensus that the commemoration should be well planned and be an inclusive observance. Jannie Harriot mentioned the importance of family reunions and Tucker remarked that the observance is

an opportunity to show the new South Carolina and to improve the state's image. It was noted that the various tourism districts around the state should be involved in promoting and developing sesquicentennial projects and observances.

Edmonds noted the importance of the group working with the legislature to find funds for the sesquicentennial observance. A position paper outlining the state's role in the Civil War as well as noting the educational opportunity for the sesquicentennial was suggested. This concise document would be developed and given to each legislator. Harriot noted the board should work with the legislative black caucus. She also noted that Dr. Bernard Powers of the College of Charleston would be presenting a paper on the role of African Americans in the Civil War at the statewide meeting of the South Carolina African American Commission in January.

The final idea expressed was a legislative breakfast. Emerson will work to establish a date and get on the legislative calendar.

The meeting adjourned at 1 p.m.