

SC Civil War Sesquicentennial Advisory Board Meeting
SC Department of Archives and History
10:00 A.M.
March 23, 2011

Those attending: Allen Roberson, Courtney Tollison, Bernie Wright, Jannie Harriot, Eric Emerson, Marion Edmonds, Claude Sinclair, Ted Gragg, Eloise Verdin, Corky Huey, and Michael Allen. Guests attending: Steve Longcrier and Lonnie Randolph. Staff attending: Mary Katherine Marshall and Ben Hornsby.

Eric Emerson welcomed everyone for coming and opened the floor for nominations for chair of the group. Bernie Wright nominated Jannie Harriot and Marion Edmonds nominated Eric Emerson. Eric Emerson was elected chair; Jannie Harriot, vice-chair; Courtney Tollison, secretary; and Michael Allen, treasurer. Jannie Harriot made a motion that the four officers serve as an executive committee. Mary Katherine Marshall suggested that a fifth person be added and Jannie Harriot amended her motion to allow for a fifth person to serve with the officers as an executive committee to consider issues between meetings. The motion passed and Jannie Harriot nominated Allen Roberson to the fifth position and he was elected unanimously.

Eric Emerson brought up the issues of the official South Carolina Civil War Advisory Board's web site and stated that he would like for the web site to be more interactive. There was considerable discussion about the web site including format and hosting possibility. Michael Allen suggested that the National Park Service Civil War web site and that of the Ft. Sumter/Ft. Moultrie be viewed. There was general agreement that the web site should contain a disclaimer and the web site should not endorse anything. Marion Edmonds said the web site should be a conduit for information. Eric Emerson will work with Mary Katherine Marshall to get additional bids and will report those findings to the executive committee which will choose a vendor. There was general agreement that the web site should be easy to update, easy to add links, and that the site should be attractive, informative and appealing.

The next item of business was April 12 and plans for the kick off of the beginning of the Civil War. Michael Allen noted that the National Park Service will take a leading role in the event. Among the plans are numerous events including formal program with various state and national figures at Ft. Sumter, encampments at various locations around the city, various lecture series, concerts at White Point Gardens, and special dramatic performances. Ft. Sumter will feature a number of re-enactors from both sides and the observances at Ft. Sumter will serve as a template for other National Park Service Civil War sites. The National Park Service will issue a new handbook on the Civil War and its causes. Senator Glenn McConnell will speak at an early commemoration at Ft. Johnson.

There was considerable discussion about the image South Carolina would project during the April 12 kickoff events. There was agreement that South Carolina be presented and represented in the best possible light. Jannie Harriot suggested that Michael Allen was one of the people who should respond to media requests for interviews. Other members

of the advisory board will be available for comments and will participate on panel discussions and respond to various speakers and presentations.

Claude Sinclair gave an update on the activities of the re-enactors coming to Charleston for the April 12 event. He reported there would be 300 re-enactors at Ft. Moultrie and 70 at Ft. Sumter. He noted re-enactors were coming from various parts of the U.S. as well from Europe. There will be an encampment at Patriots Point. En-enactors will also be present at the Ft. Johnson observance.

Michael Allen noted that various national dignitaries had turned down the invitation of the NPS to participate in the Ft. Sumter observance. He noted that Mayor Riley, Chief Hunt, and Bernard Powers would be present as well as an eight grade History Day student in addition to musicians and others.

Jannie Harriot stated that the advisory board should work to make sure an accurate interpretation of the Civil War was presented for the next four years during the time of the commemoration. She said the advisory board should be reaching other students.

Eric Emerson reported that the marker dedication in Charleston on December 20 to Institute Hall where the Ordinance of Secession was signed went well.

In new business Eric Emerson asked what should be the role of the advisory board for the remaining years of the sesquicentennial observance. Michael Allen replied that the first priority to be the revamping of the sesquicentennial web site to make it more user friendly and interactive. Other recommendations were developing a Face Book page and establishing a Twitter account. Steve Longcrier voiced his support for these proposals and suggested that many people, not just young ones, are using social media today. The consensus is the need to keep the Civil War Sesquicentennial before the citizens of the state and keep them informed about possibilities for programming as well as the exchange of information and ideas. Other ideas were to craft editorials for state and local newspapers and to assist other groups in developing programs for their areas when Civil War-related events occurred there. Some of the specific events mentioned are the fall of the Sea Islands, Sherman's march through the state, and River's Bridge.

Marion Edmonds noted that was not much academic programming relating to the sesquicentennial the group and the need to reach the academic community and ask for its help in developing meaningful and beneficial learning experiences. Jannie Harriot noted some of the efforts of the African American Heritage Commission including the work of Professor Abel Bartley, Alada Shinault-Small and others. Ted Gragg suggested that the group work with Chris Amer about the two cannons found in the Pee Dee River and thought to be from the Confederate gunboat, CSS Pee Dee.

Eric Emerson asked if there were anything tangible that the South Carolina Civil War Sesquicentennial Advisory Board could leave behind for future generations. Publishing of Civil War stories and events was mentioned. Ted Gragg suggested that each member host an event and publish something. A compilation of all the materials would be made.

A suggestion was made to seek corporate support and hire a professional to conduct oral histories relating to the Civil War. Other suggestions were to get on the annual meeting programs of the Association of Counties and the Municipal Association and to work with the county libraries as well as the State Library. The message needs to be that the Civil War happened all over the state. The challenge is how to engage South Carolina in this exercise. It was suggested the group also needs to work with historical societies, historical commissions, and the state's educational television network. Courtney Tollison asked that all major Civil War sites in the state be identified.

Eric Emerson asked if there were Civil War related sites around the state that merit historical markers. Again, the discussion returned to the need for an improved sesquicentennial web site as well as written materials. The question is how to fund activities. Jannie Harriot noted a number of possible monetary sources including accommodations tax, regional tourism boards, convention and visitors' bureaus, and hospitality tax.

Marion Edmonds again stressed the focus of the group should be digitally or electronically whatever was undertaken. With South Carolina historic sites as well as Civil War sites the approach should be with Apps. He also suggested that the sesquicentennial exercise should be recorded and the various participants debriefed. He suggested the product of this exercise should be placed in a time capsule so there would be something left for the bicentennial of the Civil War.

Eric Emerson noted that he had spoken at an observance to mark the sesquicentennial of the state flag. He explained the various symbols on the current flag and their history. He suggested for the flag to be historically accurate the crescent moon position should be changed. He noted that one of his predecessors had been involved with the design of the flag and changed the positioning of the crescent moon. Claude Sinclair reported that a correct flag had been designed. The consensus was that Eric Emerson should write a story about the evolution of the state flag. Several members of the board suggested that legislation be introduced to have the state flag reflect its original historical design and that this board pass a resolution to the General Assembly requesting such action. Marion Edmonds and Jannie Harriot suggested that the history of the state flag be diligently researched before further action. Eric Emerson said he would think about the flag issue. Courtney Tollison said she had several research assistants who could assist with flag research.

Eric Emerson suggested that the board should meet quarterly and suggested late July about the time of the Battle of Manassas and well before the fall of the Sea Islands in November.

The meeting adjourned at 12:38 P.M.