

SC Civil War Sesquicentennial Advisory Board Meeting

SC Department of Archives and History

10:30 A.M.

March 6, 2008

Those attending: Rodger Stroup Allen Roberson, Robin Copp, Jannie Harriot, Fritz Hamer, Steve Wise, Jeff Grigg, Rick Hatcher, Patrick McCawley, John Tucker, Marion Edmonds, Tracy Power, Faye Jensen, Bob Dodson, John McAllister, Steve Longcrier, James and Frances Strong, David Clark, and Ben Hornsby.

Rodger Stroup called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. He then asked those present to introduce themselves. After which, he gave an update on the Sesquicentennial on the national level and activities and funding of the effort in other states. He told the group that Senate Bill 104 to create the SC Civil War Sesquicentennial Advisory Board had passed the State Senate and was currently in the House Judiciary Committee. He noted that he had been asked for a financial impact statement for the legislation and that he had provided one. He also noted that the bill had been amended with no travel or per diem for members of the Sesquicentennial Advisory Board. Jannie Harriot asked that a letter be written to the Legislative Committee asking that the director of Penn Center be added to the Advisory Board.

Stroup led the discussion about the results of the seven statewide meetings to get citizen input about how the sesquicentennial should be observed in SC. Other members who had attended these meetings voiced their thoughts. Among these opinions was the need for true history, for more academic involvement, for more African American participation, for more upcountry representation, for funding from private sources and corporations, and for a marketing study to justify spending for the sesquicentennial. Discussion followed and there was agreement that there was a need to get the academic community involved even though this might be hard to achieve. Harriot reiterated the need to reach out to the African American community. Several expressed the need for upcountry representation on the advisory board. As for the suggested marketing survey there was considerable discussion with Marion Edmonds noting there was nothing to draw a comparison to and the lack of meaningful impact statements. Stroup said he had talked to Bob Becker at Clemson University and the impact depends on resources put into survey. Several members suggested that PRT should promote the sesquicentennial and Edmonds told that PRT'S promotion appropriations had been severely cut. Stroup said he would call Bob Becker and see if he had any thoughts about packaging the sesquicentennial activities to reflect economic benefits for the state.

As for fundraising, John McAllister mentioned that corporations are more likely to fund an organization if it asks for money for a specific project that has been well developed. Corporations will not fund operating expenses. He also noted that in his conversations with representatives of the corporate community that he had observed a resistance of corporations to fund projects associated with the Civil War and slavery.

Harriot said there was a reason for corporations not wishing to fund Civil War related programs as 1/3 of the population (African American) of this state did not feel anything positive about the Civil War. She added that the sesquicentennial provided the opportunity to tell the state the true story of the Civil War. Harriot reiterated the need to have additional African Americans serving on the advisory board. She also

stated that Marvin Dulaney and Burney Wright had resigned from their respective institutions and it was very important to get the appropriate person to represent these on the advisory board. Discussion followed as to how to get the African American involved in the sesquicentennial. Some African Americans mentioned who would be beneficial to the Advisory Board include Bobby Donaldson, Valerie Harrison, Michael Allen, and Andrew Billingsley. Everyone agreed that the sesquicentennial provides an excellent opportunity to educate all the citizens of the state about the Civil War, the circumstances that led up to it, and Reconstruction.

Stroup asked for discussion about the role of the South Carolina Civil War Sesquicentennial Advisory Board. The general consensus was that the South Carolina Civil War Sesquicentennial Advisory Board would be that of coordination and facilitation. One way to accomplish these goals is to have a web site where various events and programs around the state can be noted. Of course, the need for funds was expressed and Stroup said there was enough money to work through 2009. Several expressed the need to obtain a pot of money from the legislature and these funds would then be distributed to local communities on a competitive basis and would serve as seed money for projects and activities. Several organizations mentioned that could be of help in asking for money from the legislature for sesquicentennial projects include the Confederation of South Carolina Local Historical Societies, the South Carolina Federation of Museums, African American Heritage Commission, and the African American Heritage Alliance.

Various people present related a number of Civil War programs and activities that are on going. Some of these include the activities of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, civil rights tour, tours of Sherman's March through the state, and various battle reenactments.

There was agreement that the South Carolina Civil War Sesquicentennial Advisory Board should work with existing organizations in identifying on-going programs and activities. There is a need to survey and identify organizations and activities that could support the work of the Advisory Board.

Steve Longcrier, founder and executive director of Georgia Civil War Heritage Trails, Inc told how the project in Georgia to chronicle that state's Civil War history had met with much enthusiasm and success. He suggested that a similar project be developed for South Carolina. In Georgia there are several Civil War trails that are marked with interpretative signs to inform the visitor. Among these are: the Atlanta campaign, the March to the Sea, and the Jefferson Davis Heritage Trail. He suggested in South Carolina there could be the Jefferson Davis Trail, Sherman's March through South Carolina (two routes), and a geographical trail along the state's coast. Longcrier was asked about funding of the various trails. He stated that little state money had gone into them. He mentioned federal money including T 21 grants. He also suggested that the support of local communities is a key ingredient for the success of these trails.

The general consensus of the group is to tie the sesquicentennial of the Civil War to heritage tourism and to historic preservation. There is a need to take the sesquicentennial to various groups throughout the state and to raise awareness of the roles of all citizens before, during, and after the Civil War. Again, there was an awareness of a need to conduct a survey to compile a list of on-going Civil War programs and events. The Advisory Board wants to know about these on-going programs and wants to help in promoting these through a web site. The NPS has identified 60 sites associated with the Civil War in SC. These include battles, skirmishes, houses, and other sites.

After much discussion, everyone seemed to agree that an important tool in the sesquicentennial of the Civil War is a well-developed web site to promote and to educate the citizenry about the Civil War. One suggestion was to craft a Civil War and related issues reading list to be posted on the web page. The

state library might be the appropriate entity to develop this.

Other projects that should be considered for the sesquicentennial include bringing the Smithsonian's exhibit, "The Price of Freedom Americans at War," to Charleston during 2009; digitizing local materials and exhibits throughout the state, and publications including regimental histories.

The meeting adjourned at 12:40 P.M.