

SC Civil War Sesquicentennial Advisory Board Meeting

SC Department of Archives and History

11:00 A.M.

November 12, 2008

Those attending: Rodger Stroup, Allen Roberson, Robin Copp, Jannie Harriot, Fritz Hammer, Steve Wise, Jeff Grigg, Bob Dodson, Marion Edmonds, David Clark, Sarah Garrod, Armand Derfner, Alex Moore, Randy Burbage, Claude Sinclair, Rick Hatcher, John Tucker, Steve Longcrier, Tracy Power, Kate Boyd, Abel Bartley, and Ben Hornsby.

Rodger Stroup called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone and asked everyone present to introduce himself or herself. He then noted that the legislation creating the Advisory Board passed the General Assembly. He had been asked for a fiscal impact statement concerning the cost of the legislation. The legislation as passed provides no per diem or mileage for members. Stroup also noted that no political appointees have been made to the Board.

Stroup asked Fritz Hamer to introduce Kate Boyd who is a digital collections librarian at the University of South Carolina. She told about on-going work where the library is working to digitize documents around the state. At present there are four scanning centers around the state. They are Clemson University, the University of South Carolina, College of Charleston, and Coastal Carolina University. At this point most of the project work has been to digitize manuscripts. With the World War I exhibit, map collections and photographs were used significantly. From the seven statewide citizen meetings, there was a consensus the Board should undertake collecting Civil War stories, materials, and artifacts that abound in the state but are unknown. Boyd believes the digital project would be a good fit for the Board. Boyd also mentioned that USC was initiating their own Civil War project by digitizing manuscripts, photographs, and rare Civil War books. She said at the current time the USC project does not link to other databases. Stroup sees a need to offer information found on various web sites and to link these while finding a way to work together. Another possibility suggested is SCIway.

Stroup asked Ben Hornsby who had listened in on two conference calls arranged by the American Association for State and Local History with states that have some sesquicentennial efforts under way to report on their progress. Stroup first noted that Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia are well under way in planning for the sesquicentennial, as these states have been able to obtain funding for the effort. Hornsby reported that states currently involved in some degree of planning for the sesquicentennial are: Arkansas, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. There are some common themes in the planning efforts at this point; these are lack of funding due to economic decline, development of web sites, tourism efforts, especially Civil War trails, inclusive efforts to involve all components of the community, development of exhibits, both traveling and permanent, symposiums, mission statements and logos, educational materials, "Under told stories," and community outreach efforts. At this time Arkansas, North Carolina, Virginia, and South Carolina have web sites.

Stroup asked John Tucker for an update on plans for Charleston sesquicentennial activities including the signing of the Ordinance of Secession and the firing on Fort Sumter. Tucker said plans were just beginning to take shape. He mentioned that groups interested in helping with these observances need to get together for planning purposes to calculate the cost for these observances. He mentioned that the

SCV camps are particularly interested in assisting with the fireworks display for the firing on Fort Sumter. He further mentioned that plans were underway to mark the two hundredth anniversary of Fort Moultrie as a permanent fort in 2009.

Rick Hatcher noted the National Park Service was functioning on a continuing resolution and Bob Dodson noted that the emphasis of the NPS at present was planning for the 100th anniversary of it, which takes place in 2016. He also noted the agency would be getting a new director as well as a new secretary of the interior. Both agree there will be observances for the signing of the Ordinance of Secession and the firing on Fort Sumter. Another related matter will be the opening of the Hunley Museum, which is slated to open in 2014.

Stroup then said he wanted to ask the group a tough question. Should the group continue to meet and work on the sesquicentennial observance? Initially, there was considerable discussion about on-going Civil War efforts. Some of these include College of Charleston Lincoln seminar, USC Southern Studies symposium, the need for the development of a sophisticated web site for sesquicentennial activities and programming, tourism impact statement, and exhibition by the SC State Museum and the Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum for the sesquicentennial.

Various members responded to the question. Tucker thinks it would be appalling for the state where the Civil War began to do nothing. He points out that the signing of the Ordinance of Secession and the firing on Ft. Sumter will be observed in some fashion. Dodson believe the group should continue to meet, as the observance should be a collaborative effort. Randy Burbage thinks the group serves as a networking mechanism and there is a need for everyone to work together. He also thinks that Senator Glenn McConnell wants objectives for the sesquicentennial spelled out with costs and responsible parties brought to the General Assembly before there would be any funding. Derfner suggested the group focus on working to get the political appointments named.

The next phase of discussion was how to tie sesquicentennial activities to tourism with the hopes of showing how it would help the economy. Marion Edmonds noted that PRT had taken a 17.5% cut since July 1. There is no money for brochures and other traditional means of promotion. Edmonds said the new tourism efforts would be done electronically. Sarah Garrod thinks the sesquicentennial effort should be focused on a well-done web site and she added the SC Digital Library project reaching out to find and record Civil War documents and artifacts found in small institutions around the state would be a significant step in this development.

There were many other ideas expressed for sesquicentennial involvement and projects. Among these were the publishing of regimental histories, publication of the SC House Biographical Directory, biographies of African American Reconstruction legislators, tours/trails such as USC Beaufort does, and a sesquicentennial project involving the Gullah/ Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor. It was also suggested that the group should work with the SC National Heritage Corridor and work to involve its director, Michelle McCollum in the sesquicentennial effort.

Another idea mentioned was the need for education about the period leading up the Civil War, the War, and Reconstruction. The group was reminded that this was the top priority that came from the meetings around the state with citizens. Several suggested that a well-developed web site with much information could be a legacy of the effort. Harriot noted that education was indeed a significant goal of the effort, but she wants some publications produced, as the web is not accessible to many of the state's citizens. Stroup said he would talk with Don Stewart about getting the teaching of American history teacher summer institutes for 2009 and 2010 to focus on the Civil War. Another possibility is the Gullah

Institute at Penn Center.

In summary, Stroup said we need to continue working to record current Civil War programming and activities and help to publicize these. He also suggested that the group should be thinking of how it can assist the two major Charleston events (signing of Ordinance and firing on Fort Sumter). Tucker reiterated the need to develop a schedule of the major events in the state that should be observed for the sesquicentennial and the appropriate means for noting them.

Charles Towne Landing was suggested as a possible meeting site for some time in February.

The meeting adjourned at 12:40 P.M.