

Department of Historic Resources

(www.dhr.virginia.gov)

For Immediate Release

December 29, 2010

Contact:

Randy Jones

Department of Historic Resources;

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

12 NEW STATE HISTORICAL HIGHWAY MARKERS APPROVED

—Markers cover topics in the counties of Bedford, Brunswick, Loudoun, Louisa, Middlesex, Nelson, Northampton (Cape Charles), and Warren; and the cities of Norfolk and Virginia Beach—

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

RICHMOND – Representing the rich spectrum of Virginia history, 12 new historical highway markers recently approved by the Department of Historic Resources include signs to commemorate an Indian town noted in 1608 on a map by Capt. John Smith, events related to the War of 1812, and the childhood homes of the “Father of Colonial Williamsburg” and novelist Ellen Glasgow.

The marker “Opiscopank – Smith’s Mystery Town” will be erected near Urbanna in Middlesex County. Smith mapped Opiscopank in 1608. The site later became part of the Rosegill Plantation, established 1649. “While the Rosegill plantation later became well known, historical records are silent on what became of the Nimcock Indians who lived at the former Opiscopank,” according to the marker. “Archaeological research found evidence of Middle to Late Woodland Indian habitation at several locations on the former Rosegill plantation,” the marker concludes.

The sign “Boyhood Home of Rev. Dr. W.A.R. Goodwin (1869-1939)—‘Father of Colonial Williamsburg’” will be erected in Nelson County, where Goodwin lived from 1871 to 1885, near the town of Norwood. Goodwin, while serving as an Episcopal Rector at Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg, captivated philanthropist John D. Rockefeller Jr. with his vision of restoring the colonial capital. “Their friendship and mutual respect inspired Rockefeller to begin the city’s restoration in 1927 and to invest millions in Colonial Williamsburg. Goodwin was credited with the persistence, wisdom, and enthusiasm to preserve a Virginia historic treasure,” according to the marker.

“Jerdone Castle,” a marker slated for Louisa County, honors the house where Pulitzer-Prize-winning novelist Ellen Glasgow spent much of her childhood. “The house was begun ca. 1742 by Francis Jerdone, a Scottish immigrant,” according to the marker. It was later expanded in the 1850s with an Italianate main section. “Glasgow’s writings feature frequent references to her summers at Jerdone Castle, and in her autobiography,

The Woman Within, she describes realizing, during her time there, that writing was to be her future,” the marker states.

War of 1812 Markers

The department also approved three signs recalling events surrounding the War of 1812 for placement in Bedford County, Norfolk, and Virginia Beach. They highlight individually--

- Revolutionary War veteran Joel Leftwich (1760-1846), who “commanded a brigade of Virginia militia that marched in the winter of 1812-1813 to assist Gen. William Henry Harrison defeat the British in Ohio” and that also “helped build Fort Meigs, the largest wooden-palisaded fort in North America.” (**Bedford County**)
- Fort Norfolk, which was “constructed by 1810 to guard the Elizabeth River approaches to Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Gosport Navy Yard.” (**Norfolk**)
- A battle between the American frigate USF *President* and the British sloop HMS *Little Belt*, which “provoked disagreement about freedom of the seas” and British impressment of U.S. sailors into military service, issues that led to the U.S. declaration of war in June 1812. (**Virginia Beach**)

These signs, developed by DHR in collaboration with The Virginia Bicentennial of the American War of 1812 Commission, aim at boosting public awareness of Virginia’s significant role in the war in advance of the bicentennial.

Other markers:

The remaining markers approved for installation along Virginia’s roadways by DHR’s Historic Resources Board during its December 17 quarterly meeting are--

- “Hugh Hammond Bennett (1881-1960),” for **Louisa County**; Bennett is considered “the father of soil conservation.” “While conducting a soil survey of Louisa County in 1905, he came to understand the link between soil erosion and soil quality” and “campaigned nationally for soil conservation,” eventually leading Congress to create “a permanent Soil Conservation Service within the USDA in 1935.”
- “Brunswick Circuit,” for installation in **Brunswick County**, near Valentines; the sign recalls what is “likely the oldest Methodist circuit in America” and the “home of one of its first ministers and his family, Edward Dromgoole, known for his patriotism and vigorous preaching. Dromgoole helped found Ebenezer Academy, the first Methodist school in VA and possibly in America.”
- “Bushrod Lynn (1842-1917),” a native of Loudoun County, where the marker will be installed; Lynn, who served as the superintendent of the Virginia Penitentiary from 1891 to 1897, “instituted prison reforms that abolished work camps, known for their high mortality rates, on the railroads.” He also “advocated for establishment of the

State Farm in Goochland County to relieve prison overcrowding and provide fresh air for tubercular prisoners.”

- “USS Iowa,” for installation in Norfolk; the *Iowa*, commissioned in 1943, served in conflicts in Pacific and Korea and was mothballed in 1958. “Recommissioned in 1984 and homeported at Norfolk, Iowa served in multiple operations during the Cold War. Turret Two exploded on 19 Apr. 1989, killing 47 crewmen.”
- “Warren County High School and Massive Resistance,” slated for placement near Warren County Middle School; the marker highlights the former county high school’s role in the Virginia’s effort to fight school integration with Massive Resistance. It was “the first school in Virginia shut down under the state’s Massive Resistance strategy.” The school was integrated in February 1959.
- “Cape Charles Colored School,” to be erected in the town of Cape Charles (Northampton County); the sign commemorates this Julius Rosenwald-funded school that “opened about 1930 for African American children in Cape Charles during legalized segregation.”

The Virginia highway marker program, which began in 1927 with the installation of the first historical markers along U.S. Rte. 1, is considered the oldest such program in the nation. Currently there are more than 2,200 official state markers, mostly erected and maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation.

The manufacturing cost of each new highway marker is covered by its respective sponsor, except for those markers developed by the Department of Historic Resources as part of the nearly decade-long program to create new markers that focus on the history of women, African Americans, and Virginia Indians. Markers created by DHR are funded by a federal Transportation Enhancement grant.

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:

Hugh Hammond Bennett (1881-1960)

Hugh Hammond Bennett, “the father of soil conservation,” joined the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Bureau of Soils in 1903. While conducting a soil survey of Louisa County in 1905, he came to understand the link between soil erosion and soil quality. Inspired by this insight, Bennett campaigned nationally for soil conservation. Congress created a permanent Soil Conservation Service within the USDA in 1935; Bennett was its first chief. It was renamed the Natural Resources Conservation Service in 1994. Where others had failed, Bennett brought soil erosion into the public consciousness and made soil conservation a national priority.

Sponsor: USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service

Proposed Location: 214 Fredericksburg Avenue, Louisa, (on the grounds of the Louisa County Historical Society)

Jerdone Castle

Much of Jerdone Castle's original 1,100 acres is submerged under Lake Anna. The house was begun ca. 1742 by Francis Jerdone, a Scottish immigrant. Jerdone's descendant, Sarah Jerdone Coleman, and her husband, Gen. Clayton Coleman, built the main Italianate section with its characteristic cupola in 1853. Frank T. Glasgow, the father of author Ellen Glasgow, purchased the house in 1879 and the family used it as a summer residence until 1887. Glasgow's writings feature frequent references to her summers at Jerdone Castle, and in her autobiography, *The Woman Within*, she describes realizing, during her time there, that writing was to be her future.

102 words

Sponsor: John J. Beardsworth, Jr., Bumpass, VA

Proposed Location: 1779 Moody Town Road, Bumpass

Brunswick Circuit

The Brunswick Circuit, established in 1773 by Robert Williams, is likely the oldest Methodist circuit in America. It extended from Petersburg south into North Carolina, and became known as "the cradle of Methodism in the South." By 1776, the remarkably popular circuit had grown to over 1500 members. Nearby is Canaan, home of one of its first ministers and his family, Edward Dromgoole, known for his patriotism and vigorous preaching. Dromgoole helped found Ebenezer Academy, the first Methodist school in VA and possibly in America. Canaan was an important hospitality and educational stop for Methodist preachers, including the first American Methodist Bishop, Francis Asbury.

Sponsor: The Old Brunswick Court Foundation

Proposed Location: Near Valentines

Bushrod Lynn (1842-1917)

Bushrod Lynn was born in Loudoun County in 1842 and lived here at East Lynn. From 1891 to 1897, Lynn served as superintendent of the Virginia Penitentiary. During a period characterized by harsh prison conditions, Lynn instituted prison reforms that abolished work camps, known for their high mortality rates, on the railroads. He advocated for establishment of the State Farm in Goochland County to relieve prison overcrowding and provide fresh air for tubercular prisoners. In 1905, Lynn was elected to the Senate of Virginia, representing Loudoun and Fauquier counties. Lynn died in 1917 and is buried in Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond.

Sponsor: Georgia Ravitz and Peter Basser

Proposed Location: East Lynn, home of Bushrod Lynn (19955 Airmont Road, Round Hill, VA 20141)

USS Iowa

Commissioned in 1943, USS Iowa (BB-61) led the world's most powerful battleship class. In Oct. 1943, Iowa was modified at the Norfolk Navy Yard, adding the only bathtub on a battleship for President Franklin D. Roosevelt's trans-Atlantic voyage to meet with Allied leaders. Iowa fought in the Pacific and Korea, returned to Norfolk in 1952, and was mothballed in 1958. Recommissioned in 1984 and homeported at Norfolk, Iowa served in multiple operations during the Cold War. Turret Two exploded on 19 Apr. 1989, killing 47 crewmen. This point was dedicated to them on 19 Apr. 1990; Iowa was decommissioned in Oct. 1990.

Sponsor: Veterans Association of the USS Iowa

Proposed Location: Hughes Drive, Norfolk Naval Station

Boyhood Home of Rev. Dr. W.A.R. Goodwin (1869-1939)—“Father of Colonial Williamsburg”

Born in Richmond in 1869, William Archer Rutherford Goodwin lived in Norwood from 1871 until he entered Roanoke College in 1885. Goodwin's childhood education and strong religious background helped shape his adult endeavors. While he was an Episcopal Rector at Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg, his vision of restoring the colonial capital captured the interest of philanthropist John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Their friendship and mutual respect inspired Rockefeller to begin the city's restoration in 1927 and to invest millions in Colonial Williamsburg. Goodwin was credited with the persistence, wisdom, and enthusiasm to preserve a Virginia historic treasure.

Sponsor: Nelson County Historical Society

Proposed Location: Intersection of Norwood Rd (Rt. 727) and Chapel Lane (Rt. 626) in Norwood

Opiscopank – Smith's Mystery Town

In 1608, Capt. John Smith mapped Opiscopank near here as an Indian town where a chief lived. Oddly, his narratives did not mention visiting the town or how he learned about it. In 1649, Ralph Wormeley patented 3,200 acres here that included “the Indian Townes of old & new Nimcock, bounded N.W. upon Rosegill Cr.” While the Rosegill plantation later became well known, historical records are silent on what became of the Nimcock Indians who lived at the former Opiscopank. Archaeological research found evidence of

Middle to Late Woodland Indian habitation at several locations on the former Rosegill plantation.

Sponsor: DHR

Proposed Location: Route 227 South of Urbanna Creek, Urbanna

Warren County High School and Massive Resistance

Warren County High School, a Public Works Administration project, was constructed in 1940. In 1958, the local NAACP chapter, led by James W. Kilby, won a federal suit against the Warren County School Board to admit African Americans for the first time. In response, Gov. James Lindsay Almond Jr. ordered it closed in Sept. 1958, the first school in Virginia shut down under the state's Massive Resistance strategy. Following the 1959 Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals ruling that Massive Resistance was unconstitutional, a U.S. Circuit Court ordered it reopened. On 18 Feb. 1959, 23 African American students walked up this hill and integrated the school.

Sponsor: Warren County Public Schools

Proposed Location: public right-of-way adjoining Warren County Middle School

Cape Charles Colored School

Constructed in 1928, this school opened about 1930 for African American children in Cape Charles during legalized segregation. The building was constructed with contributions from the local African American community, the State Literary Fund, and the Julius Rosenwald Fund, established in 1917 to build schools for African American students in the rural South. Staffed by three teachers and a principal/teacher, the school housed grades one through seven, and was a center for educational, social, and cultural events for the African American community. Under Principal Jesse L. Hare, the school closed in 1966 when Northampton County Schools were consolidated four years before their integration.

Sponsor: *DHR* (Proposed by Tevya W. Griffin, Cape Charles Rosenwald School Restoration Initiative)

Proposed Location: Town right-of-way along Old Cape Charles Road, (Route 641), at the site of the school

War of 1812

Joel Leftwich (1760-1846)

Within a few miles of here lived and died Joel Leftwich, militia general, legislator, justice of the peace, and Revolutionary War veteran. In the War of 1812, he commanded a brigade of Virginia militia that marched in the winter of 1812-1813 to assist Gen. William Henry Harrison defeat the British in Ohio. While there, Leftwich's men helped

build Fort Meigs, the largest wooden- palisaded fort in North America. In the summer of 1814, he also commanded a militia brigade that marched to the outskirts of Baltimore to assist in protecting Washington and Baltimore from further British threats.

Sponsor: Leftwich Family Association

Proposed Location: Intersection of Route 43 and Route 460

War of 1812 Elizabeth River Defenses

President George Washington authorized the construction of 19 coastal defense fortifications in 1794. Nearby Fort Norfolk, which mounted 37 guns, and Fort Nelson, armed with 10 cannon, were constructed by 1810 to guard the Elizabeth River approaches to Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Gosport Navy Yard. Additional defensive works, Forts Barbour and Tar, were later added and a blockhouse was built on Craney Island. Because Craney Island was successfully defended against the British on 22 June 1813, Forts Norfolk and Nelson never fired their guns during the war. Only Fort Norfolk survived as a relic of this conflict.

Sponsor: DHR

Locality / Proposed Location: Fort Norfolk area

President-Little Belt Affair

British impressment of United States sailors into military service prompted the 44-gun frigate USF President, commanded by Comm. J. Rodgers, to cruise along the coast in this area watching for British warships. The President encountered the 20-gun HMS Little Belt off the Chesapeake Capes on 16 May 1811. When the British sloop did not identify its purpose, the two ships began exchanging broadsides. The Little Belt was badly damaged and the engagement ended. This naval duel provoked disagreement about freedom of the seas and impressment that resulted in the U.S. declaration of war in June 1812.

Sponsor: TBD

Proposed Location: First Landing State Park

###