

Department of Historic Resources

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13 NEW STATE HISTORICAL HIGHWAY MARKERS APPROVED

—Markers cover topics in Albemarle, Buckingham, Gloucester, Hanover, Nelson, and Pittsylvania counties, and the cities of Alexandria, Hampton, Portsmouth, Richmond (4), and Suffolk, —

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

RICHMOND – Among 13 new state historical markers approved recently by the Department of Historic Resources are signs recalling the 1608 Christmas celebration of English settlers at a Kecoughtan Indian town in present-day **Hampton**, a famous colonial-era tavern still in operation in **Hanover**, and a Civil War-era hospital in **Alexandria** where black U.S. soldiers protested the denial of their rights to full burial honors in a military cemetery.

The marker “Early English Christmas at Kecoughtan” recalls when the Kecoughtan Indians gave winter shelter to 27 Jamestown explorers led by Captain John Smith after they were caught by a storm of “extreme wind, rain, frost, and snow.” They were on their way to Werowocomoco, the town of paramount chief Powhatan, when they lodged with the Kecoughtan. Well-fed with “plenty of good oysters, fish, flesh, wildfowl, and good bread,” the men celebrated Christmas with the Indians and “were never more merry,” as Smith later wrote.

The “Hanover Tavern” sign highlights this tavern which has a section dating to circa 1791, and a prior circa-1750 colonial-era tavern building. The taverns operated in Hanover Courthouse in **Hanover County** and their many notable patrons and guests included Patrick Henry, George Washington, and Lord Cornwallis, commander of British forces during the Revolutionary War. Hanover Tavern “prospered with the establishment of the stage coach line, until the railroad diverted business in the 1830s,” according to the marker. Since 1953 Hanover Tavern has housed the Barksdale Theater.

“L’Ouverture Hospital and Barracks,” slated for installation in **Alexandria**, recalls this hospital complex that opened during the Civil War in February 1864 to serve United States Colored Troops (USCT) and African-American civilians. L’Ouverture was the scene of an early civil rights action when “more than 400 patients at the hospital led a successful protest demanding that USCTs be buried in Alexandria National Cemetery

with full honors rather than being interred at the Freedman's Cemetery," as the marker reads.

Three other new signs call attention to people or places affiliated with African-American history:

- "East Suffolk School Complex" commemorates this school for African Americans built with money raised from the black community and matched by the Julius Rosenwald Fund. Rosenwald, then president of Sears, Roebuck & Co., created the fund to support the construction of more than 5,000 black schools in Southern states between 1917 and 1932, during an era of racial segregation. The East Suffolk School became a high school and graduated its last class in 1965.
- The "George Teamoh" marker slated for **Portsmouth** summarizes Teamoh's life and career. Born enslaved in Portsmouth, Teamoh escaped slavery in 1853 in New York by jumping from a ship on which he had been hired out. Returning to Portsmouth after the Civil War, Teamoh was elected to the Senate of Virginia during Reconstruction from 1869 to 1871 and was an important community leader in the city.
- In **Richmond**, "First Virginia Volunteers-Leigh Street Armory" tells about this armory building in the city's Jackson Ward neighborhood that opened in 1895 for the First Battalion Virginia Volunteers, "one of the state's several African-American militia units," according to the marker. The militia was organized in 1876, and its armory was the result of the "tireless lobbying of *Richmond Planet* editor John Mitchell Jr, among others," the marker states. The armory was later used for recreation by black troops during World War II.

Three other new markers also call attention to **Richmond's** history:

- The "Confederate Ordnance Lab Explosion" relays the story of the "massive explosion" in March 1863 that destroyed the building on Brown's Island that housed an assembly production for cartridges and other ammunition. The "ordnance laboratory and complex" employed many women and children and at least 40 people were killed in the explosion, which was set off when "worker Mary Ryan accidentally ignited a friction primer," according to the marker.
- "The Valentine Museum" and the "Wickham-Valentine House" signs each recount history relating to one of Richmond's first museums when it was established in 1898 at the bequest of Mann S. Valentine II. The Wickham-Valentine House was constructed in 1812 for John Wickham, who had helped defend Aaron Burr against treason charges in 1807. The residence served as the Valentine Museum when it opened to exhibit the archaeological and ethnographic collections of Mann S. Valentine II. Later, the museum "expanded to include the Edward V. Valentine Sculpture Studio, the house, and its garden," according to the "Valentine Museum" sign.

In addition to the Hanover Tavern sign, three others focus on events during Virginia's colonial-era or commemorate places with a history tracing back to that period:

- A **Gloucester County** marker commemorating "Gloucester Hall" encapsulates the history of this storied but now vanished house, built circa 1660, "where Bacon's Rebellion effectively ended with the fatal illness of its leader, Nathaniel Bacon, in 1676," as the marker states. The house also served as the first Virginia residence of Royal Governor Francis Howard, baron Howard of Effingham and was also home to Col. Thomas Pate who represented Gloucester County in the House of Burgesses.
- "The Greenwood-Afton Rural Historic District" highlights this portion of **Nelson** and **Albemarle** counties where Scots-Irish settled in the 1730s. The district's "settlement routes expanded into prominent roads and turnpikes," in the marker's words, and linked the Shenandoah Valley with eastern Virginia. The district contains the Blue Ridge Tunnel that was engineered by Claudius Crozet, who also supervised its construction. When completed in 1858, it was the longest tunnel in the U.S. The Blue Ridge Parkway, constructed in the 1930s, also passes through the Greenwood-Afton district, which was listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places in 2011.
- "Hickey's Road" recounts this 100-plus-mile road that was "first laid off by court order in 1749" from Halifax County through Pittsylvania County before it terminated at the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. "The road played a major role in European settlement in Southside Virginia in the 18th and 19th centuries," according to the marker.
- A sign for Robert Bolling in **Buckingham County** honors the life of this "prolific writer" and one-time member of the House of Burgesses. Bolling "published many poems as well as a treatise on wine-making," according to the marker. He died on the eve of the American Revolution, "while participating in the Virginia Convention of July-Aug. 1775," as the marker states.

All 13 markers were approved by DHR's Board of Historic Resources during its June 21 quarterly board meeting.

The Virginia highway marker program, which began in 1927 with the erection of the first historical markers along U.S. Rte. 1, is considered the oldest such program in the nation. Currently there are more than 2,400 official state markers, most of which are maintained by Virginia Department of Transportation, a key partner with the Department of Historic Resources in the historical marker program.

The manufacturing cost of each new highway marker is covered by its respective sponsor, except for those markers developed by the DHR as part of a nearly decade-long program to create new markers that focus on the history of women, African Americans,

and Virginia Indians. Markers originating with DHR are funded by a federal transportation grant.

After the precise location for each marker has been approved by a VDOT representative or a local public works official, and each marker's sponsor has paid for the cost of manufacturing the sign, the marker will be ready for installation.

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:

(Please note that locations are only proposed; they have yet to be confirmed with VDOT or other officials.)

East Suffolk School Complex K-332

Between 1926 and 1927, African Americans raised \$3,300 toward the East Suffolk School, which opened with T. J. Johnson as principal. In addition to public money, the Julius Rosenwald Fund also provided \$1,500 to assist the effort. Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck & Company, established the fund in 1917 and helped pay for the construction of more than 5,000 schools for African Americans in 15 southern states. In 1939, at the request of the local community, the Works Progress Administration's "Pump priming" program funded the addition of the County Training School, later known as East Suffolk High School, with the first class graduating in 1940. The last class graduated in 1965.

Sponsor: East Suffolk High School Alumni Association

Locality: Suffolk County

Proposed Location: 134 South 6th Street, Suffolk

Gloucester Hall NA-10

Near here stood Gloucester Hall (built ca. 1660s), where Bacon's Rebellion effectively ended with the fatal illness of its leader, Nathaniel Bacon, in 1676. In 1684, this house served as the first Virginia residence of Royal Governor Francis Howard, baron Howard of Effingham, whose wife, Lady Philadelphia Pelham Howard, died there in 1685. Col. John Pate, a member of the Council of State, built the house on his 2,100-acre plantation, including 1,141 acres that his uncle Richard Pate had patented in 1650. Col. Thomas Pate inherited the plantation in 1672. Both Richard Pate and Col. Thomas Pate represented Gloucester County in the House of Burgesses.

Sponsor: A.J. Pate

Locality: Gloucester County

Proposed Location: East side of West-bound US 17, north of SR 610

Greenwood-Afton Rural Historic District GA-47

The Scots-Irish settled the Greenwood-Afton area in the 1730s, linking the agriculturally rich Shenandoah Valley with eastern Virginia. Settlement routes expanded into prominent roads and turnpikes. In the 1850s the railroad arrived, with Claudius Crozet's

Blue Ridge Tunnel becoming the longest tunnel in the United States when it opened in 1858. The depot villages of Greenwood and Afton followed, drawing wealthy residents who built elaborate estates. Skyline Drive and the Blue Ridge Parkway, constructed in the 1930s, furthered the bucolic appeal of the region as a tourist destination. The area was officially designated as the Greenwood-Afton Rural Historic District in 2011.

Sponsor: Western Albemarle Association

Locality: Nelson County

Proposed Location: First Afton Mountain Overlook, next to markers W-218 and W-219

Hanover Tavern ND-14

John Shelton opened the first tavern at the permanent site of Hanover Courthouse about the 1750s. The current tavern's earliest segment dates from about 1791. The tavern prospered with the establishment of the stage coach line until the railroad diverted business in the 1830s. An essential component of the social life of Hanover County, the taverns attracted many important people, including Patrick Henry, Lord Cornwallis, and George Washington, among others. Several enslaved African Americans from the tavern complex were accused of participation in both Gabriel's Rebellion of 1800 and the Easter Plot of 1802. In 1953, the Barksdale Theater was established here.

Sponsor: The Honorable and Mrs. Christopher Peace

Locality: Hanover

Proposed Location: 13181 Hanover Courthouse Rd.

Hickey's Road L-47

Hickey's Road, first laid off by court order in 1749, followed this general path. Named after John Hickey, a merchant who operated a store at its western limits and peddled his wares along its length, the road stretched more than 100 miles from Halifax County, past Mt. Airy and Chalk Level in Pittsylvania, and into Chatham before proceeding westward to the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. A major thoroughfare and home to many stores and ordinaries, the road played a major role in European settlement in Southside Virginia in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Sponsor: Betty S. Camp; Thomas Carter Chapter, National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution; Milly I. Casey; Henry Corbin Chapter, National Society of Colonial Dames of America XVII Century; James River Chapter, National Society of the DAR; H. Victor Millner, Jr.; Pittsylvania County Historical Society; Shirley Primiano; Margaret Smith; Virginia Society DAR Regents' Club, District III.

Locality: Pittsylvania County

Proposed Location: Intersection of 40 and 927

Robert Bolling (1738-1775) O-99

Robert Bolling, member of the House of Burgesses, lived near here at his home Chellowe. A prolific writer, he published many poems as well as a treatise on wine-making. In 1766, Bolling precipitated a crisis when in an article in the *Williamsburg Virginia Gazette* he accused prominent legislators of showing favoritism in allowing their friend, and accused murderer, John Chiswell bail. Lt. Gov. Francis Fauquier instructed a grand jury "to punish the Licentiousness of the Press" and indict Bolling, but it refused.

Bolling died in Richmond while participating in the Virginia Convention of July-Aug. 1775.

Sponsor: Bolling Family Association

Locality: Buckingham County

Proposed Location: Intersection of US 60 and VAQ 632

The Valentine Museum SA-99

The 1892 bequest of Mann S. Valentine II, creator of Valentine's Meat Juice health tonic, established the Valentine Museum as one of Richmond's first museums. He sought to create a museum devoted to the art, history, and culture of the world. First headquartered in the Wickham-Valentine House, the museum expanded to include the Edward V. Valentine Sculpture Studio, the house, and its garden. The museum's collection of Richmond history includes photographs, rare books, fine art, costumes, objects, and textiles. This extensive collection serves as a resource for exhibitions, research, education programs, tours, and publications.

Sponsor: The Valentine Museum

Locality: Richmond

Proposed Location: 1005 East Clay Street

Wickham-Valentine House SA-100

Attorney John Wickham (1763-1839) lived at this location beginning in 1790. A prominent lawyer, he helped defend Aaron Burr against treason charges in 1807. Alexander Parris designed this neoclassical house built here for Wickham in 1812. Wickham's family, including second wife Elizabeth and nineteen children, lived here until 1853. More than fifteen enslaved African Americans worked in the house. Entrepreneur Mann S. Valentine II (1824-1892) purchased the property in 1882 and displayed his archaeological and ethnographic collections here. In 1898, the house was opened as the Valentine Museum.

Sponsor: The Valentine Museum

Locality: Richmond

Proposed Location: 1015 East Clay Street

DHR-Sponsored Markers

Confederate Ordnance Lab Explosion SA-101

In 1861, during the Civil War, Confederates established an ordnance laboratory and complex on nearby Brown's Island. Workers there, many of them women and children who were forced to find employment because of the economic disruption occasioned by the war, assembled cartridges and other ammunition. Despite Col. Josiah Gorgas's stringent safety guidelines, on 13 Mar. 1863, worker Mary Ryan accidentally ignited a friction primer, resulting in a massive explosion that destroyed the building. Richmond residents, responding to the "terrific report," found a scene of horror, with many victims "burnt from head to toe." Ryan, and at least 40 others, died from the explosion.

Sponsor: DHR/TEA

Locality: City of Richmond

Proposed Location:

Early English Christmas at Kecoughtan WY-108

From 30 Dec. 1608 to 5 Jan. 1609, Capt. John Smith and his party of 27 men, their journey from Jamestown to Werowocomoco temporarily halted by “extreme wind, rain, frost, and snow,” lodged with the Kecoughtan Indians at their town near here. The group celebrated Christmas with the natives with “plenty of good oysters, fish, flesh, wildfowl, and good bread.” Smith later wrote that the English were “were never more merry” and “never had better fires in England than in the dry, warm, smoky houses of Kecoughtan.”

Sponsor: DHR/TEA

Locality: City of Hampton

First Virginia Volunteers-Leigh Street Armory SA-102

In 1895, the City of Richmond opened the Leigh Street Armory for the First Battalion Virginia Volunteers, one of the state’s several African American militia units. Organized in 1876, they had received praise and acclaim for their service. The opening of the armory had been the result of the tireless lobbying of *Richmond Planet* editor John Mitchell Jr., among others. Closed in 1899 after the Volunteers disbanded, the armory served the community of Jackson Ward as a school for African American children. During World War II, African American troops used the building as a recreational space. After the war it became a school until it closed in 1954.

Sponsor: DHR/TEA

Locality: City of Richmond

Proposed Location: 122 West Leigh Street

George Teamoh Q-8-x

A member of the Constitutional Convention of 1867 and the Senate of Virginia from 1869 until 1871, George Teamoh was born enslaved in Portsmouth where he spent most of his early life. A skilled laborer, he served as a ship’s carpenter and caulker in the Tidewater area. After his family was sold away from him, he escaped from slavery in 1853 by jumping ship in New York while hired out on a mercantile voyage. He resided in Massachusetts until the end of the Civil War when he returned to Portsmouth and became an important community leader. Teamoh died sometime after 1883.

Sponsor: DHR/TEA

Locality: Portsmouth

Proposed Location: Near 404 Green Street, Portsmouth near Teamoh’s home

L’Ouverture Hospital and Barracks E-134

Named for the Haitian revolutionary, L’Ouverture Hospital opened in February 1864 near the Freedmen’s barracks in Alexandria to serve sick and injured United States Colored Troops (USCT). Designed by the U.S. Army, the hospital complex could accommodate 600 patients and occupied the space of a city block. Besides USCTs, the hospital also served African American civilians, many of whom had escaped from slavery and sought refuge in Alexandria. In December 1864, more than 400 patients at the hospital led a

successful protest demanding that USCTs be buried in Alexandria National Cemetery with full honors rather than being interred at the Freedmen's Cemetery.

Sponsor: DHR/TEA

Locality: Alexandria

Proposed Location: block between 1300 Duke, 1300 Prince, 200 S. Payne and 200 S. West Streets

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