

Department of Historic Resources

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For Immediate Release

October 13, 2016

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SEVEN NEW STATE HISTORICAL HIGHWAY MARKERS APPROVED

—New markers cover topics in the counties of Albemarle, King William, Madison, Northumberland, and Westmoreland; and cities of Lynchburg and Richmond—

—Two updated replacement markers were also approved for prior markers in Leesburg and Dickenson County—

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

RICHMOND – Pamunkey Indians’ assistance to Union forces during the Civil War, the presence of a strong Italian-American community in Richmond, a Blue Ridge Turnpike, and African American educational advances during the era of public school segregation are among the topics featured on seven new historical markers recently approved by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources.

The sign “Pamunkey Indians in the Civil War” will rise in **King William County**. Highlighting Pamunkey Indians’ activities, the marker will state that roughly “a dozen Pamunkey men enlisted as guides, scouts, gunboat pilots, and spies” for Union forces during Maj. Gen. George McClellan’s Peninsula Campaign of 1862. Additionally, “Women and the elderly provided intelligence, shelter, safe passage, food, and supplies for Union troops,” the marker will read. Confederate authorities punished the Pamunkey for their Union activities, according to the approved marker’s text.

The historical marker “Italians in Richmond” will relay that “Italian immigrants were a small but cohesive segment” of the city’s population by the 1850s. Artist Ferruccio Legnaioli, who employed Italian immigrant artisans, “influenced the cityscape with his ornamental designs for the facades of prominent buildings early in the 20th century,” the approved marker will read. In 1927, the Italian-American community gave the city a Legnaioli-designed statue of Christopher Columbus that was erected near Byrd Park. Between the 1920s and the 1960s “about 100 families” resided in a tight-knit “Little Italy” in North Highland Park.

In **Madison County** a sign will recall the Blue Ridge Turnpike, completed in 1853. The 56-mile turnpike ran from near New Market in the Shenandoah Valley, crossing the Blue Ridge Mountains at Fishers Gap, and

terminated at a railhead in Gordonsville. The road linked the Valley to markets in the east. After the road was damaged during the Civil War the Blue Ridge Turnpike Company abandoned it. Modern portions of two state routes, as well as roadways within Shenandoah National Park, follow alignments of the original road.

A marker planned for **Albemarle County** will commemorate St. John School, constructed 1922-1923 for African American students. “The Rosenwald Fund contributed \$700 for St. John School, while local residents donated \$500 and Albemarle County provided \$1,300,” according to the marker’s text. The Rosenwald Fund was established by Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck, and Co., who collaborated with Booker T. Washington in a school-building campaign for black communities throughout the South. The fund supported school construction and provided building plans to communities between 1917 and 1932.

In **Lynchburg**, a “Virginia Teachers Association” highway marker will honor this educational organization that traces back to the Virginia Teachers’ Reading Circle, founded by African Americans in Lynchburg in 1887. “The Reading Circle provided professional development for teachers of black students in Virginia’s public schools,” the marker will read. Later becoming the Virginia Teachers Association, “the group served black educators until it merged with the Virginia Education Association” in January 1967, the marker’s text concludes.

Two other markers were approved by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources during its quarterly meeting in September:

- In **Northumberland County**, the marker “First Baptist Church” will recall the “earliest African American Baptist congregation” in the county. It was organized in 1866 and the congregation erected “its first sanctuary” in 1892. Its present Gothic Revival-style sanctuary was completed in 1941.
- The marker “John Pratt Hungerford (1761-1833)” will rise in **Westmoreland County** to honor this officer who fought in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. Hungerford, who served as delegate and senator in the Virginia General Assembly and as a representative in the U.S. Congress, was “a brigadier general in the Virginia militia” when he “defended the Northern Neck during repeated British raids in the summer of 1814,” according to the approved marker text.

In other actions, the Virginia Board of Historic Resources also approved replacing two prior markers with updated texts that will better fulfill the educational goals of the marker program. One replacement marker highlights the Gen. George C. Marshall House in Leesburg; the other, “Mullins Family,” will replace an earlier

marker in Dickenson County. The marker, in the town of Clintwood, will relay that members of the Mullins family were the “first permanent settlers of European descent” in the area.

The Virginia highway marker program, which began in 1927 with 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 2,500 official state markers, most of which are maintained by Virginia Department of Transportation, except in those localities outside of VDOT’s authority.

The manufacturing cost of each new highway marker is covered by its sponsor.

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 some texts may be slightly modified before the manufacture and installation of the signs. Also locations proposed for each sign must be approved in consultation with VDOT or public works in jurisdictions outside VDOT authority.)

Pamunkey Indians in the Civil War

Residents of the Pamunkey Reservation, ten miles southeast of here, aided Union troops during the Civil War. About a dozen Pamunkey men enlisted as guides, scouts, gunboat pilots, and spies for Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan’s Army of the Potomac during the Peninsula Campaign in 1862. Women and the elderly provided intelligence, shelter, safe passage, food, and supplies for Union troops. Confederate authorities pressed Pamunkey men into service as laborers and punished others for their Unionism with imprisonment at Richmond’s Castle Thunder. After the war many Pamunkey Indians won compensation from the federal Southern Claims Commission for property damaged or taken by Union soldiers.

Sponsor: DHR

Locality: King William County

Proposed Location: intersection of King William Rd (Rt. 30) and Powhatan Trail (Rt. 633)

Italians in Richmond

Italian immigrants were a small but cohesive segment of Richmond’s population by the 1850s. Local artist Ferruccio Legnaioli, who employed many Italian immigrant artisans, influenced the cityscape with his ornamental designs for the facades of prominent buildings early in the 20th century. In 1927 the Italian-American community gave the city a statue of Christopher Columbus, designed by Legnaioli and erected near Byrd Park. From the 1920s to the 1960s about 100 families, primarily from Tuscany, resided in a tight-knit “Little Italy” here in North Highland Park. Central to community life were restaurateur Umberto Balducci’s villa, the Italian Club, and St. Elizabeth Catholic Church.

Sponsor: The Order Sons of Italy, Giuseppe Verdi Lodge #315

Locality: Richmond City

Proposed Location: Pollock Park

Sponsor Contact: Brenda Stankus, thepaintingclass@gmail.com

Blue Ridge Turnpike

The Blue Ridge Turnpike, completed in 1853, passed near here on its 56-mile route from the vicinity of New Market to the railhead in Gordonsville. Crossing the mountains at Fishers Gap, the road linked the Shenandoah Valley to markets in the east. The Blue Ridge Turnpike Company financed the \$176,000 project by selling shares of stock to individuals and to the Commonwealth of Virginia. After the road sustained heavy damage during the Civil War, the company abandoned it. Counties along the route took over maintenance about 1870. Traces of the original alignment exist along State Routes 231 and 670 and within Shenandoah National Park.

Sponsor: Madison County Historical Society

Locality: Madison County

Proposed Location: 1106 Old Blue Ridge Turnpike, Madison

Sponsor Contact: Maxwell Lacy, maxlacy@vabb.com

St. John School—Rosenwald Funded

The St. John School, built here in 1922-1923, served African American students during the segregation era. Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck and Co., collaborated with Booker T. Washington in a school-building campaign beginning in 1912. The Rosenwald Fund, incorporated in 1917, helped build more than 5,000 schools and supporting structures for African Americans in the rural South by 1932. The Rosenwald Fund contributed \$700 for the St. John School, while local residents donated \$500 and Albemarle County provided \$1,300. The two-classroom school closed during the 1950s and was later purchased by St. John Baptist Church.

Sponsor: St. John Family Life and Fitness Center, Inc.

Locality: Albemarle County

Proposed Location: 1569 St. John Road, Keswick

Sponsor Contact: Kelvin Hawkins, kkrhawk1@aol.com

Virginia Teachers Association

African American educators organized the Virginia Teachers' Reading Circle here at the Jackson Street Methodist Episcopal Church on 13 Aug. 1887. Established during a session of the Peabody Normal Institute, a summer course for teachers from across the state, the Reading Circle provided professional development for teachers of black students in Virginia's public schools. James Hugo Johnston, second president of what is now Virginia State University, was elected to lead the organization. Later known as the Virginia Teachers Association, the group served black educators until it merged with the Virginia Education Association on 1 Jan. 1967.

Sponsor: Virginia Education Association

Locality: Lynchburg

Proposed Location: 901 Jackson St.

Sponsor Contact: John O'Neil, joneil@veanea.org

First Baptist Church

First Baptist Church, the earliest African American Baptist congregation in Northumberland County, originated in 1866 when black members of Coan Baptist Church began holding worship services at the home of Alexander Day. They later worshiped at Howland Chapel School, built just north of here in 1867 with funding from New

York-born educator, reformer, and philanthropist Emily Howland. Revivals were held under a nearby brush arbor. Led by the Rev. Daniel Payne, pastor for more than 30 years, the congregation erected its first sanctuary here in 1892. The present Gothic Revival-style sanctuary was completed in 1941 under the guidance of longtime pastor Rev. Henry C. Roane.

Sponsor: First Baptist Church

Locality: Northumberland County

Proposed Location: 3585 Courthouse Road, Heathsville

Sponsor Contact: Carlton Lewis, cendroc7@aol.com

John Pratt Hungerford (1761-1833)

John Pratt Hungerford, born nearby, was an officer in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. He represented this area in the Virginia General Assembly for many years and served in the United States House of Representatives during the 1810s. As a brigadier general in the Virginia militia, he defended the Northern Neck during repeated British raids in the summer of 1814. Militiamen under his command attempted to destroy British naval ships carrying looted goods away from Alexandria on the Potomac River in Sept. 1814. Hungerford died on 21 Dec. 1833 at Twiford, his nearby plantation, and is buried one mile east of here.

Sponsor: Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Society

Locality: Westmoreland County

Proposed Location: Rte. 637 (Leedstown Road) at entrance to Leedstown Camp Grounds

Sponsor Contact: Stuart Butler, srtb@widomaker.com

Replacement Markers (New Texts):

Gen. George C. Marshall House

Gen. George C. Marshall (1880-1959) and his wife, Katherine Tupper Marshall (1882-1978), purchased this early-19th-century house and its surrounding four acres in 1941. They lived here during the years of Marshall's great achievements as Army chief of staff during World War II, presidential emissary to China (1945-46), secretary of state (1947-49), and secretary of defense (1950-51). The European Recovery Plan, known as the Marshall Plan, reconstructed war-torn Europe and won Marshall the Nobel Peace Prize in 1953. The Gen. George C. Marshall House, earlier known as Oak Hill and Dodona Manor, was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1996.

Sponsor: George C. Marshall House

Locality: Leesburg

Proposed Location: 312 East Market Street

Sponsor Contact: Laurie Van Hook, lvanhook@georgecmarshall.org

Mullins Family XB-13

John and Ollie (Cox) Mullins and their children, the first permanent settlers of European descent in this area, came here from North Carolina about 1829. The family lived along Holly Creek and claimed thousands of acres of land in the vicinity. Mullins's father, also named John Mullins, was reputed to have fought at the Battle of King's Mountain (1780) during the Revolutionary War. He spent his last years here with his son and died in 1849. Both father and son are buried on nearby knolls. The town of Holly Creek, later known as Clintwood, became the seat of Dickenson County in 1882. Many Mullins descendants reside in the county.

Sponsor: Dickenson County Historical Society

Locality: Dickenson County

Proposed Location: Rte. T-1009, at Rte. 83, Clintwood

Sponsor Contact: Susan Mullins, dchs1880@yahoo.com

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