



THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR CENTER

At Historic Tredegar

ISSUE NUMBER 8
Fall 2006

Two-Part Event Precedes Grand Opening



J. Alfred Broaddus, Jr., Chair of the Capital Campaign Steering Committee, addresses the reception for donors.

A Very Special Gathering

It was a party! What could be more fitting for The American Civil War Center than to throw a party that included period music and uplifting period oratory under a tent on a beautiful Richmond fall evening. It was the first of two events to mark the opening of Richmond's newest museum.

On the eve of the dedication and opening of the new exhibit at The American Civil War Center, more than 200 friends of the Center gathered to enjoy a reception and to receive the appreciation of the Center's leadership for their generosity, faith, and untiring support during the decade-long incubation of this unique project.

J. Alfred Broaddus, Vice Chair of the Center Board and Chair of our Capital Campaign, welcomed the guests and expressed thanks for their support. He told the crowd that this was an occasion to celebrate the success of the capital campaign and to celebrate what that had made possible.

"Tonight we see the adaptive reuse of the historic gun foundry and we unveil a comprehensive interpretation of the American Civil War," he said, adding "Your generosity and the hard work of the board, volunteers and staff of the Center has made all this possible."

Broaddus recognized the volunteers on the Campaign committee and singled out key staff members involved in the fundraising effort for special recognition.

Next, Broaddus introduced six men who had contributed to the development of the exhibit and



John H. Motley, Chair of the Board of Directors was Master of Ceremonies at the Dedication.

called them "some of the most acclaimed historians of our time:" Ed Ayers, Charles Dew, John Fleming, John McCardell, Jim McPherson, and Emory Thomas.

"(This opening) represents the fulfillment of a dream that the three central perspectives on the story of the Civil War can be told at the same time, in the same place, with respect, and with scholarly integrity."

--Daniel P. Jordan, President of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation (Monticello)

"These men have worked tirelessly on the content of the exhibit," he said, adding that each of them would be in the galleries to talk to guests about the exhibit at the conclusion of the program.

Broaddus then invited the guests to celebrate our nation by stepping back in time to experience three poignant Civil War moments. The first was Lincoln's

Gettysburg address, delivered by actor Ed Whitacre. For those who had only read this stirring message framing the war for the Union, Whitacre's delivery brought it to life and set the stage for the next presentation, a Frederick Douglass recruiting speech delivered by actor Gordon Timothy. You could almost hear the hair rising on people's necks as Douglass' words exhorted the black community

"Lord, we stand here on land where instruments of war were made, which were used for aggression and defense in this city, state, and nation in a Civil War that ended just 141 years ago. . . . The scars still live in our souls and in the soul of this city. And this, Lord, is why this is more than a museum for us—it is a place of hope. . . . Help us to honor all who have died, so that we this day might be one united nation and city, united for the benefit of one another and for our children and our children's children."

—Invocation, The Reverend Benjamin P. Campbell, Pastoral Director, Richmond Hill

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Congratulations to historian **Edward L. Ayers**, who has been appointed the next president of the University of Richmond, effective July 1, 2007. He has been advisor to our public programming, *In the Cause of Liberty* exhibit content, and web-based learning program. At present Dr. Ayers is Dean of the College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Virginia.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



H. Alexander Wise, Jr.

Dear Friends:

On October 6 we dedicated *In the Cause of Liberty*, our permanent exhibit in the revamped Gun Foundry at historic Tredegar. Many of you were present for that memorable event, which had the feeling of a church picnic moved into the parish hall in a thunderstorm.

It was truly a special day. For the Center's leadership it was an extraordinary moment—a moment of gratitude to those of you who funded our first phase, a moment of pride in the accomplishments of the team of professionals who have carried this project to completion. Several of the Center's key staff members are listed in this newsletter, but let me take this opportunity to thank a person very special to me, and essential to this project, my valued lieutenant David Dutton. He deserves much of the credit for what has been built. David is moving on, with our best wishes, to start his own business.

If the planning and development stage was like negotiating a mountain range, we've now descended to the challenging new environment of operations. We must simultaneously focus on the day-to-day happenings and visitor services and also look to the future and consider how to maximize the Tredegar site. We are gratified by the acclaim the new exhibit has received in such national publications as *The Washington Post* and *The Wall Street Journal*. Visitors are coming not only from Virginia, Maryland, California, Illinois, and Missouri, but also from Germany, the UK, Sweden, New Zealand, and Australia. Visitors' reactions to our exhibit have been overwhelmingly positive.

Still, we must prove that we can draw people in the necessary numbers and build up our constituency of supporters. We need and welcome your help with this. If you appreciate having our nation's pivotal event presented from multiple perspectives, come visit our exhibit, bring your friends and family, tell your associates about us, and participate in our programs. Give us your ideas for future programs and for marketing. And please help to sustain the Center by making a donation and/or joining us as a member.

Sincerely,

H. Alexander Wise, Jr.



At the Grand Opening of the exhibit, Union and Confederate re-enactors shake hands at the end of the conflict.

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to fight for freedom and take its place in history by supporting the Union.

Next, actor Erin Thomas recited General Lee's General Order Number Nine, revealing his dedication to duty and nobility of spirit as he dismissed and thanked his soldiers.

The three actors appear in films that begin and conclude the exhibit.

The highlight of the evening was the unveiling of a huge banner displaying the title of the new exhibit, *In the Cause of Liberty*. Broaddus remarked that historians have taught us the great tragedy and the great irony of the Civil War was that Union soldiers, Confederates, and African Americans were all fighting for deeply held values—each group for a different interpretation of liberty. He said, "*In the Cause of Liberty* is the first exhibit anywhere to tell the story of causes and consequences of the war on a national scale and to weave together the three great component threads: Union, Confederate, and African American."

Board Chair John Motley and President Alex Wise then released the yellow banner that slowly

unfurled in the twilight. But *In the Cause of Liberty* shone bright.

Guests were then invited to visit the galleries to preview the exhibit while the party continued in the tent.

The Dedication Ceremony

The next morning's plans called for 400 people to assemble for a dedication ceremony that was to include a color guard, two choirs, and speeches by various dignitaries and historians in the same tent as the evening before. It did not work out that way.

In driving rain, the tents diverted the deluge but could not prevent the rivulets that flowed beneath them. Attempts to avoid the deluge were futile as gusting wind chased coattails and inverted umbrellas. Some 200 guests braved the weather.

No one said it better than A.A. Milne: 'It rained, and it rained and it rained.'

The ceremony was moved inside, and guests stood shoulder to shoulder in the museum store and at the entrance to the galleries to listen to the Dedication. There was no opportunity to plan or

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Highlights of the Exhibit *In the Cause of Liberty*

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rehearse. The color guard presented the colors and erected them at the entrance to the galleries.

In spite of the roar of falling water and the dense humidity from dripping umbrellas and wet clothing, the ceremony proceeded. It began with performances by the One Voice Chorus, which sang selections from the Civil War era to set the scene. Later the Greater Richmond Children's Choir, directed by Hope Armstrong Erb, contributed songs of reflection and inspiration.

As the typhoon raged, we were transported by the music, inspired by the color guard, and moved by the invocation; edified by the Honorable Ellen Robertson of Richmond City Council, Virginia's Secretary of Administration Viola Baskerville, and former United States Secretary of the Treasury John Snow; uplifted by Dan Jordan, President of Monticello; and challenged by James McPherson of Princeton University.

The children concluded the program singing "The Storm is Passing Over" just as the rain ceased and the sun appeared: surely a good omen for the future of the new exhibit.

The Grand Opening

The exhibit opened to the public on October 7, 2006.



Banners throughout the exhibit reveal the hearts and minds of the people involved.



H. Alexander Wise, Jr. with his wife and three of their four children at the Dedication.



Films explore the causes and legacies of the Civil War.

"We must never forget that great principles were at stake—principles that were played out in personal, local, and concrete terms that ran through families, villages, towns, cities, and religious, and racial groups. . . . I am confident this center will serve as an important source of understanding of the greatest division in our nation's history, an understanding that should help us in the eternal quest for a greater sense of national unity and purpose."

—The Honorable John W. Snow, former United States Secretary of the Treasury

"The Center also helps preserve faithfully the legendary Tredegar Gun Foundry, a consequential site before, during, and after the war, as well as a towering legacy of (its owner) Joseph Reid Anderson. We salute the Gottwald family for preserving the building before today."

—Daniel P. Jordan, President of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation (Monticello)



The Greater Richmond Children's Choir contributes to the Dedication Ceremony.



Am I right? Visitors check answers to questions posed in the exhibit.



A William Joseph Fortier pipe is one of many artifacts borrowed from across the nation. Artifact courtesy the Museum of New Hampshire History, Concord, NH. Photo by Taylor Dabney.

Left: Activities for children are available in the Home Front Gallery.

"Several years ago when I was first asked how I would describe this project, three words immediately came to mind: conflict, challenge, and change. . . . Today, tomorrow, and every day, I challenge each of you in your own way to determine what liberty means to you. This will be the true measure of the impact of this Center on its visitors."

—The Honorable Viola O. Baskerville, Secretary of Administration, Commonwealth of Virginia

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visit our website at www.tredegar.org

Who Does What at The American Civil War Center?

Anedra Wiseman Bourne

Director of Marketing, develops and implements the Center's marketing efforts including advertising, public relations, media, and community outreach.

Jennifer Gaudio

Curator, manages the Center's collection, seeks, requests, and cares for objects borrowed from other collections and maintains the exhibit's display cases.

Ginger LaPrade

is Administrative Assistant to the President, H. Alexander Wise, Jr., and Office Manager.

Celia Luxmoore

Director of Development, leads capital and annual fundraising and edits some of the Center's publications.

Keith Nelson

Manager of Retail and Visitor Services, orders, catalogs and oversees the content and staff of the museum's store.

Sara Poore

Director of Education, oversees the education programming including school tours, outreach education programs, teacher workshops, and community programming. Sara is the staff advisor for the digital history learning companion, currently under development with the University of Virginia Digital History Center.

Robert Sarofeen

the newly appointed Chief Operating Officer, coordinates all site operations, finance, human resources, procurement and contracting.

Adam Scher

Director of Museum Services, leads curatorial, interpretive, and retail operations.

H. Alexander Wise, Jr.

President, oversees the content, programming, and external relations of the Center.

Calendar

FORTHCOMING PROGRAMS of The American Civil War Center at Historic Tredegar

November 15, 2006

Atlanta History Center, Atlanta GA

The Roads from Appomattox: Alternative Paths to Reconciliation after the Civil War

This program brings together three eminent scholars to discuss different visions of how the country could be healed after our nation's most traumatic conflict. Richard Blackett, Josiah Bunting, and Taylor Sanders will present visions of Frederick Douglass, Ulysses Grant, and Robert E. Lee, respectively. The audience will have an opportunity to discuss which vision won out, why, and what were the consequences.

January 16, 2007

New York Historical Society, New York, NY

The Roads from Appomattox: Alternative Paths to Reconciliation after the Civil War

Seminar with Richard Blackett, Josiah Bunting, and Taylor Sanders

Dialogues

Union, Home, and Freedom Dialogues

Quarterly at The American Civil War Center, beginning first quarter of 2007

March 23-24, 2007

Conference at Virginia Historical Society, Richmond VA

In the Cause of Liberty: How the Civil War Redefined American Ideals

Keynoted by James M. McPherson, Princeton University, with presentations by leading historians

July 25-27, 2007

Teacher Workshop, Richmond VA

In the Cause of Liberty

In partnership with the Gilder Lehrman Institute—lead historian will be Edward L. Ayers, University of Virginia



James M. McPherson

Most participants on both sides of the American Civil War, South as well as North, professed to be fighting for the heritage of Liberty bequeathed to them by the Founding Fathers. Supporters of the Union and Confederacy alike wrapped themselves in the mantle of 1776. The tragic irony was that each side interpreted this heritage in opposite ways. And at first neither side included the slaves in the vision of liberty for which they fought. But the slaves did; and by the time of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address in 1863, the North also fought for what Lincoln there called "a new birth of freedom."

The war transformed the meaning of liberty in America, and the complex nature of that transformation still affects us today.

When Abraham Lincoln was elected president in 1860 with no electoral votes and scarcely any popular votes from the 15 slave states, many Southern whites saw him as a potential George the Third who would govern without their consent. They supported a secession movement to declare their independence from what they denounced as "oppressive Yankee rule." Leading secessionists proclaimed that "The same spirit of freedom and independence that impelled our Fathers to the separation from the British Government" would impel the "liberty-loving people of the South" to separation from the United States Government.

To Northerners, for whom Abraham Lincoln was the most eloquent spokesman, it was the Union, not the Confederacy, that represented the true ideals of 1776. The republic established by the Founders as a bulwark of liberty was a fragile experiment in a 19th Century world bestrode by kings, queens, emperors, Czars, and petty dictators. Many Europeans looked upon the United States as a radical experiment that would collapse sooner or later, as had two French republics during the lifetime of many Americans.

If the Confederacy succeeded in splitting the country in two, it would set a fatal precedent until the United States fragmented into a multitude of petty, squabbling autocracies.

Freedom for the slaves was not part of the liberty for which the North fought in 1861. But black leaders like Frederick Douglass foresaw that a war against what they called a slaveholder's rebellion must become a war against slavery itself. And so it proved. Many slaves saw the Northern war for Union as a potential war for emancipation as soon as Douglass did, and well before most Northern whites did, and these slaves did their part to make it so by escaping into Union lines, by ones and twos, and dozens and hundreds from the beginning of the war and forcing on the Lincoln administration a series of decisions. Step by step these decisions moved toward the kind of war Douglass had urged, a war to abolish slavery.

Punctuated by the Emancipation Proclamation midway through the war and the 13th Amendment at its end, the war for Union transformed the American understanding of liberty. The new birth of freedom for the one-third of the Southern people who were black came under the auspices of the Union cause—not as a gift from the North, but as an achievement earned by African Americans themselves.

These stories are told right here in The American Civil War Center. These are stories that all Americans need to know.

Excerpts from McPherson's Address at the Dedication of the Exhibit, October 6, 2006

Historian's Corner