

DRAFT

THE CIVIL WAR'S FUTURE IN THE PHILADELPHIA AREA: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT

THE STRATEGIC PLAN OF THE CIVIL WAR HISTORY CONSORTIUM 2010-2014

Approved by the Executive Board January 2010

BACKGROUND

The Civil War History Consortium (CWHC) is a group of Philadelphia area institutions with collections and sites that relate to the Civil War era. Formed with consensus-approved by-laws enacted in 2002, it consists of institutions which are 501(c)(3) non-profit or governmental organizations.

CWHC membership includes a wide spectrum of libraries, museums and historical sites across the greater Philadelphia region that have materials, objects, structures, and activities related to the period between the Civil War's antecedents and its aftermath. These resources tell many stories of the abolition movement, the Underground Railroad, and the "home front" in the war effort, as well as providing critical context for the many subsequent societal changes leading to the Civil Rights movement. The Consortium has engaged in significant self-study, site survey, and market assessment research over the past four years, as described throughout the plan.

THE MISSION

The Civil War History Consortium seeks to preserve, link, and promote the stories, collections, and sites that reveal the Philadelphia region's crucial role in the United States' search for liberty and unity during the Civil War era, providing meaningful and engaging heritage and educational experiences and stimulating community involvement and economic development.

THE VISION

The Philadelphia area's Civil War era-stories, in the working out of the first great test of the constitution and the ongoing struggle for freedom, have special resonance today as the nation embraces new population groups and explores new meanings for the concept of liberty. Only in Philadelphia will visitors be able to experience the full story of the birth and rebirth of freedom from the founding of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania through the Declaration of Independence, the Revolutionary War and the drafting of the Constitution, on to the Civil War and its legacy, through the Civil Rights Movement. In sharing this heritage, the Philadelphia region will take its rightful place as the history capital of the United States, drawing additional millions of international, national, and local visitors to compelling exhibits and experiences.

Students and tourists will be connected with critical, contemporary issues through Civil War-related programming. Living history presentations, trails, tours, and exhibitions will be thought-provoking and exciting. Visitors will move seamlessly among museums, historic sites, libraries, and other resources that together explore the unfolding of the founding principles of the United States.

CHALLENGES

The past five years have seen some progress in areas identified as challenging in the 2004 strategic plan, and this progress is noted below. In general, however, the Consortium needs to continue to address these challenges.

- **Public Perception:** The Philadelphia area is known for its Revolutionary, not its Civil War, history. The latter is not featured in most tours or materials provided to visitors or in the conversations and consciousness of residents. Our experience with focus groups in our 2006 research, however, indicates that area residents and tourists alike engage eagerly with the area's Civil War history when it is presented.
- **Relevance:** Gettysburg is the place in Pennsylvania where people go to encounter the Civil War, and in the minds of most Pennsylvanians, that is where the war is made meaningful. Recent market research, however, suggests that Philadelphia has an engaging story to tell and one to which audiences can readily relate, as described more fully in the "strengths" section below.
- **Physical Resources:** Philadelphia area institutions currently have no central location for exhibitions on the Civil War or its antecedents and consequences. The sites and collections documenting and illustrating the war are scattered, often fragile and frequently inaccessible, as well as largely unknown. Sites, collections, interpretations, and presentations are rarely linked. Sites generally have very limited visitor capacity, and most potential tour routes are not visitor ready. The region's public transportation system is not developed to facilitate heritage tourism across Philadelphia County and beyond.
- **Interpretive Focus:** Although some progress has been made, many interpreters still do not fully appreciate the Civil War histories and contexts of their sites. Collecting institutions often give more attention to earlier stories and themes, focusing on the period when Philadelphia was the center of British America and, then, the new American nation's political capital. Indeed, many of these institutions are not fully aware of their Civil War-related holdings. Even the sites and collections that are more-or-less visitor-ready and have the Civil War as a key part of their potential mission rarely emphasize it.
- **Civic Engagement and Heritage Marketing:** A result of all of the above is that many Philadelphia-area residents and educators have a limited understanding at best of the impact the region had on the outcome of the Civil War, of the impact of the Civil War on the region; and of the relevance of issues relating to the Civil War with important social issues today. Similarly, the city and region's heritage marketers and packagers have little to offer or present on the Civil War in the Philadelphia region. Indeed, there is little recognition that they should have such information and material or, if so, why.

STRENGTHS

- **Rich Collections:** As CWHC's surveys have made clear, collecting institutions in the area are rich in materials from the Civil War era. Building on the surveys and the plans outlined here, CWHC has the potential to make these materials accessible to the public in compelling ways.
- **Physical Resources:** The Atwater-Kent Museum plans to devote significant gallery space to Civil War holdings when it reopens. The Abraham Lincoln Foundation of the Union League of Philadelphia also is developing facilities to encourage study of and engagement with the history of the Civil War, and the African American Museum in Philadelphia has developed its "Audacious Freedom" exhibit to set the Civil War-era history of African Americans in Philadelphia in the context of the nation's first century. The Civil War Museum is planning to reopen during the Sesquicentennial commemoration, and there are discussions going forward with other venues and collections. Other important tourism sites, from Independence Hall to City Hall and much of Fairmount Park, can be interpreted as Civil War-era sites. Architecturally, Philadelphia is much more a mid-nineteenth- than a late eighteenth-century city. As such, it offers great, if substantially underdeveloped, opportunities for Civil War-era tourism and for visitor movement between the relevant areas and sites. Philadelphia's regional transportation infrastructure has the potential to accommodate the increased volume of visitors created by Civil War heritage tourism.
- **A Comprehensive Assessment of Sites and Programs.** Using an adaptation of a methodology developed to assess manuscript collections for their physical condition and their research value, the Civil War History Consortium commissioned an assessment of the Civil War sites and programs in the greater Philadelphia area. Conducted by Kise Straw & Kolodner, this project identified more than 600 sites, of which 400 could be identified precisely enough to map them on a geographic information system; half of these still remain. These sites are displayed online as a clickable map and a searchable database, available at the Consortium's website, <http://www.civilwarconsortium.org/>. An additional survey by an historian identified and assessed public programming at 35 institutions. From the list of 200 sites, Kise Straw & Kolodner was able to identify more than 40 that are tourist-ready or nearly so, making it possible for the Consortium to develop and market tourism offerings involving these sites on a phased, prioritized basis, beginning with those requiring the least investment.
- **Academic Attention:** Although Civil War scholarship is only beginning to concentrate on the Philadelphia area and Philadelphians during the run-up to secession, the war, or its aftermath, one encouraging new development in this area is the recent establishment of Temple University's Civil War and Emancipation Studies Center. The Center currently sponsors an annual one-day symposium in February, drawing together scholars from a range of institutions and disciplines from the greater Philadelphia area and beyond. We expect that scholarly attention to this topic will increase during the Sesquicentennial, providing access to important resources in the development of tourism offerings.

- **Multi-Faceted Stories:** The Philadelphia area has a remarkable depth of interlocking Civil War-related histories that illustrates the war on the “home front” and the region’s roles in the war within the overarching narrative of the two principal themes identified by our market research: the ongoing struggle for freedom and test of the constitution; and contributions of African Americans. This combination of histories offers the student and heritage tourist the ability to explore the many dimensions of the most popular subject in American history in one regional location. For the complete marketing reports, see the Consortium’s website, <http://www.civilwarphilly.net/marketing>
- **Existing Heritage Tourism Market:** As the most visited heritage tourism destination in the country outside Washington, D.C., and in easy driving range of a fifth of the population of the United States, the Philadelphia area has a huge potential market for its Civil War history. What Abraham Lincoln called “The People’s War” is the most written about period in all American history, and no northern city and its surrounding region were together more important to the war effort in more ways, or have more physical remains from the war era, than Philadelphia and the area around it. Capitalizing on its existing historical appeal and extraordinary Civil War-related resources, the region will significantly augment its heritage tourism draw and market share. By doing so through collaboration with the region’s many, vital, knowledgeable community development and civic organizations, the region also will foster historic neighborhoods’ investment and engagement in Civil War heritage development and its sustainability.
- **Untapped Demand:** The Consortium’s recent market study has demonstrated the potential for visitors to become engaged with the region’s Civil War stories; in fact, 25% of survey respondents who had visited Gettysburg indicated an interest in visiting Philadelphia’s Civil War-era sites in the future – a potential 500,000 visitors per year. In focus group interviews with local residents, the participants, while largely unaware of the region’s Civil War stories, quickly displayed an appetite to learn more. A web-based survey of history travelers demonstrates that the area’s Civil War story also resonates with travelers from New York to Baltimore and west as far as Gettysburg and Carlisle, offering significant economic development potential.
- **Upcoming Anniversaries/Strong Statewide Presence:** The war’s sesquicentennial in 2011-2015 give the Philadelphia area’s Civil War community the best opportunity in fifty years to claim attention and build capacity, interpretation, and audiences around this defining era in American history. CWHC member activity has already raised the profile of Philadelphia’s Civil War era-heritage among many stakeholders at the state level, and the Consortium and its partners are now at the forefront of statewide sesquicentennial planning, with the CWHC serving as the regional liaison with the statewide Civil War efforts (web site, traveling road show, publications, etc.)
- **Institutional Infrastructure:** CWHC members are well-established, highly respected institutions in their own right. They have on staff, or have access to, via their networks, the key scholars of the period as well as interpretive professionals, educators, and marketers, and can assemble teams of these professionals quickly and effectively, as needed for particular projects and initiatives.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

CWHC members plan to achieve the organization's goals and objectives in four strategic areas: 1. Civic Engagement; 2. Heritage Development; 3. Research and Education; 4. Building Support; and 5. Sustaining the Heritage Development Program.

1. CIVIL WAR AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Goal:

Using the overarching theme of "slavery and civil rights" as both the cause and outcome of the Civil War, encourage area residents, especially students and educators, to explore the often still unresolved issues of contemporary society such as

- Military conscription
- Women and economic/labor issues
- Immigration, and migration, and changes in the immigrant "pecking orders" following the war
- Family life
- What is the American democracy? How does it work? Who's in, who's out?

Year 1 Objectives

- a) Using a combination of community conversations and oral history interviews, explore the issues with representatives of population groups whose connection with the Civil War is not always fully understood, such as African Americans, descendants of immigrant soldiers, more recent immigrants, and members of communities of conscience. Disseminate stories from these interviews via WHYY and other print, broadcast, and/or online media.
- b) Conduct a week-long teacher workshop in Summer 2010 on the African American experience, "The Path to Freedom."
- c) Develop an implementation plan for further collection of personal Civil War stories and for products -- exhibitions, public programming, works of art, etc. -- based on the "What does the Civil War mean to you?"
- d) Develop a proposal to the National Endowment for the Humanities for an "outdoor exhibition" using transit posters at regional rail stations, bus kiosks and other locations to showcase local stories and collections on the "What does the Civil War Mean to You?" theme

Year II Objectives

- a) If funded, execute the implementation plan and "outdoor exhibition" project cited above
- b) Facilitate the collection of stories of "What Does the Civil War Mean to You" via the CWHC and/or statewide website.
- b) Coordinate work among CWHC member institutions to develop public programming to link the launch of the Civil War sesquicentennial with the civic engagement questions
- c) Support the launch of the Union League's heritage center with complementary programming that will encourage audiences to reflect on what the Union League's contributions to the Civil War have meant to them

Years III-V Objectives: Continue to work with CWHC partners to engage their members and other audiences in the region with programming that links today's audiences with the great questions of the meaning of freedom and quality and the Civil War's role in both framing and answering those questions.

2. CIVIL WAR HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT

Goals:

- Continue to evaluate the potential market for Civil War tourism in the Philadelphia area, including analyzing tourist interests, leveraging existing history programs, identifying new marketing opportunities and strategies, and determining necessary implementation resources.
- Continue to assess the current Civil War-related offerings in the region and the needs to be addressed at different levels to make the period a meaningful part of heritage tourism in the Philadelphia area. The levels of analysis include individual sites, tour development, transportation, and marketing.
- Create plans to link and develop sites, exhibitions and programs on a coordinated, prioritized basis and identify ways to help meet logistical, transportation and other infrastructure needs; work together to implement these plans.

Year 1 Objectives

- a) Convene a military affairs subcommittee to coordinate programs employing uniformed living historians with other member activities. Develop plan for annual living history events in Fairmount Park or other venues, tying these events to explorations of Philadelphia's home front, its position as a center for troop muster and transportation, etc., as well as daily life for area residents during the Civil War and the underlying theme of "What Does the Civil War Mean to You?"
- b) Develop self-guided tours of visitor-ready sites and landmarks, including maps, building on the existing prototype tours on the Civilwarphilly.net websites
- c) Begin to provide help to sites to enhance their Civil War-related interpretation, with special attention to supporting the efforts of Consortium members who are

planning exhibitions and major events during the Sesquicentennial commemoration

- d) Identify a site and coordinate among CWHC members for provision of staffing, complementary programming, and marketing outreach for one or more visits of the Civil War Road Show being developed by the Pennsylvania Heritage & Museum Commission
- e) Continue to contribute regional content and to encourage members and others to list programs and events on the statewide calendar at <http://www>.
- f) Develop a multi-year funding proposal to support marketing of the region's Sesquicentennial programs in conjunction with the Greater Philadelphia Tourism & Marketing Corporation

Year II Objectives

- a) Work actively among members and other partners to develop a comprehensive calendar of programs and events, and to cross-market these offerings among member audiences
- b) Implement marketing proposal if funded
- c) Begin facilitation of tours and site visitation through interpretation, programming, and infrastructure development.

Years III-V: Implement, assess progress on, and adjust as necessary the regional plan for Civil War Heritage Development.

3. RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

Goal: Continue to fruition the analysis of both the region's Civil War-related asset base and the stories and themes available for use in interpretation, study, and presentation of the region's Civil War-related history.

Year I Objectives:

- a) Review collections, literature, and interpretive strategies to present stories
- b) Develop reading lists and collections of online resources appropriate for students and the general public
- c) Develop and place on its website a list of area speakers and living historians who can provide classroom activities and presentations for community and cultural groups
- d) Work with departments of education at the statewide and regional/local level to identify the needs of K-12 educators for standards-based resources for teaching the Civil War
- e) Work with education departments of partner organizations to develop site-based and classroom-based activities to illustrate Civil War themes and meet educational standards

Year II Objectives

- a) Continue development and implementation of interpretive and educational materials.
- b) Incorporate new offerings into reading lists, online resources, and roster of speakers
- b) Evaluate interpretive materials and programming in support of themes and identify additional applications of these or new themes

Years III-V Objectives: Assess efforts in Years I and II and develop additional activities and programs as needed.

4. BUILDING SUPPORT

Goal: Educate key stakeholders about the value and potential of Philadelphia's Civil War heritage. Stakeholders will include consortium members and colleague institutions, tourism officials, tourism providers, community development and civic organizations, funders, government officials, educators, the media. They will need to be addressed on a prioritized, phased basis.

Year I Objectives:

- a) Develop a communications plan based on the initial work of building stakeholder support;
- b) Use the results of the marketing plan to develop the message; and
- c) Continue to build the active support of historic sites, collecting institutions, funders, government and tourism officials

Year II Objectives:

- a) Using the communications plan, marketing plan and the collateral materials, secure the active support and participation of tourism providers and the media; and
- b) Continue outreach to government and tourism officials as well as collecting institutions and historic sites.

Years III-V Objectives: Communicate with educators while continuing outreach to those reached in Years I and II, taking advantage of opportunities provided by the Abraham Lincoln bicentennial and the Sesquicentennial.

5. SUSTAINING THE CIVIL WAR PROGRAM

Goal: Develop the funding and organizational capacities necessary to carry the program forward.

Year I Objectives:

- a) Continue to review and reassess the appropriate organizational structure for the Consortium going forward – as an independent 501(c)(3) organization or as an informal consortium incubated by one of its members or another organizational stakeholder.
- b) Revise the committee structure to reflect the nature of any funded work; and

- c) Develop productive relationships at staff and board levels among CWHC members.

Year II Objectives:

- a) Continue fundraising for research and development;
- b) Begin fundraising for implementation;
- c) Explore development of dues or other support for basic operations, using the PACSCL model (which supports a minimal central staff with dues income) and/or
- d) Identify an institutionalized operations base for the implementation and ongoing assessment work.

Years III-V Objectives:

- a) Continue research and implementation funding; and
- b) Effect the organizational transition either to an institutionalized base or to full-scale consortium operations.

CONTEXT

The Civil War History Consortium represents a long overdue recognition of the importance of the Philadelphia area's roles in the Civil War. The war was a turning point in American life, and Philadelphia was a pivotal force in the war's outcome – as a transportation hub that served as the point of departure to the Confederacy of many Union troops and supplies, as a supplier of men, money, and matériel, as a manufacturing center, a hospital center and a major source of charitable contributions. The home of the largest free black community in the North, it was active in the struggle for freedom and the recruitment and training of African American troops. At the same time, conflict raged here, as the region had deep connections through marriage and money to the South. The stories are deep and complex and tell strikingly of the profound ways that the Civil War affected, and continues to affect, every American life.

Much of the material and intellectual heritage that reveals this story remains extant in CWHC member collections and historic sites throughout the region.

CURRENT STATUS

While conducting explorations of future exhibitions, educational forums, and public tours, CWHC completed an initial survey of the region's Civil War artifact, art, library, and archival collections with funding from the Phoebe Haas Trust. The results are even more remarkable than anticipated and underscore the unrealized potential of revealing Philadelphia's Civil War heritage. This was followed by self-study and a community conversation, funded by the Phoebe Haas Charitable Trust, in 2004.

With funding from the Heritage Philadelphia Program, the Consortium commissioned a survey of historic sites and programming and a market awareness study, both of which are available online at the Consortium's website, <http://www.civilwarconsortium.org/>, and which demonstrate unparalleled possibilities for expanding heritage tourism in the Philadelphia region. The study identified nearly 200 existing Civil War-related sites, of

which more than 40 are tourist-ready or nearly so; 35 organizations with Civil War-related programming; and an audience of both local residents and “history travelers” within a two-hour driving distance with an appetite for the region’s Civil War destinations. This research also identified themes and presentations that resonate with these audiences – themes that make compelling connections with critical issues of the present day.

By capitalizing on the Civil War-related resources in the area, the story of freedom’s achievement in Philadelphia will not be limited to the nation’s founding. Added to the colonial and the revolutionary stories will be those from the Civil War through Civil Rights. These are critical stories for the nation and need to be told.

VALUES

The values most important to the CWHC and its constituents are:

- **Inclusion:** We are committed to including the histories of all segments of society that participated in the Civil War, whether on the battlefield, in the home front, or by equipping and financing the war effort, caring for the wounded, or providing schools and support for former slaves in the defeated Confederate States. We are committed to including in our interpretations and presentations the diverse perspectives of the participants in the war. We are intent on including as well the war’s causes and consequences, connecting the war’s history to the nation’s, making it relevant to people, who may not have ancestors who participated in the war, but who nevertheless are concerned about issues today that trace back to the war. We are committed as well to joining communities throughout the region in shared efforts to reclaim and engage their Civil War histories in ways that foster community awareness and pride and encourage heritage development. These commitments reflect our shared belief that heritage development is first a tool for community development and enrichment, not simply a means of highlighting a few prominent sites and collections or serving tourists.
- **Authenticity:** Everything the Consortium and its members produce will reflect the highest standards of professionalism, will draw on the best available knowledge and practice, and will preserve and feature the materials surviving from the war honestly, carefully, realistically. Such attention to the content of what we produce or offer is the fundamental justification for our effort. Our dedication is to the continuing value of the Civil War stories, sites and collections in our collective care.
- **Collaboration:** We are committed to working together on particular initiatives, whether under the auspices of the Consortium, of the Civil War Museum of Philadelphia, of The Abraham Lincoln Foundation Heritage Center, or of other partner institutions. Further, we are seeking out and working with partners beyond the region in order to connect the Philadelphia area’s Civil War stories with the nation’s. To this end we have reached out, especially, to the National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg, the Gettysburg Battlefield Park, the Pennsylvania Museum & Historical Commission, and the Department of Tourism’s Civil War Trails

initiative -- and the other museums and sites in Pennsylvania and neighboring states that share in the telling of the region's Civil War history. We understand that we shall accomplish much working together that would be beyond the scope and capacity of individual Consortium members and allies, and that such collaboration is critical for the success of the development of the Philadelphia area's Civil War heritage or realization of the economic and community enhancement potentials of this development. Indeed, our collaborative, phased, prioritized approach to Civil War-era heritage development is gaining national recognition and helping to secure the Consortium a number of important strategic allies.

- **Use of technology:** We recognize that sophisticated use of technology is essential for the successful presentation of what we offer to tourists, students, scholars, and others drawn to or potentially interested in Philadelphia's Civil War history. We shall measure success by the engagement and interest of users, the effectiveness of the communications, and the depth and variety of uses, as well as by the numbers of users of relevant websites, exhibition interactives, educational support materials, documentaries, marketing materials, and other technology mediated or assisted presentations and offerings.
- **Linkages:** We believe we must develop our individual activities related to the Civil War, its antecedents and consequences in ways that are mindful of and link with what other institutions in the region are doing on these same subjects. We are committed to linking interpretations, infrastructure development efforts, program and educational offerings and marketing activities for the region's Civil War history. To inform this work we have linked information about the region's Civil War-related collections and sites, building on the survey work we have already done, on our website. We also are committed to working with the region's community development and civic organizations and reaching beyond the region across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the states of New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland in order to extend the value of and the participation in the region's Civil War heritage.