

## PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE FUTURE

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The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission's mission is to preserve the Commonwealth's memory and to enrich people's lives by helping them understand Pennsylvania's past. As the official history agency for the state, PHMC could not fulfill its multiple responsibilities for the Pennsylvania State Archives, The State Museum of Pennsylvania, State Historic Preservation Office, and stewardship of 25 State Historic Sites and Museums without partners, large and small, public and private. It is not coincidental that a major goal in PHMC's current strategic plan is to partner with a wide variety of other state agencies, non-profit organizations and educational institutions to fulfill our mission.

Partnerships define relationships of cooperation and mutual benefit that can be short term for very specific goals or long term to accomplish complementary missions. At PHMC we have tried to find ways to work more productively with a wide range of partners. PHMC has long standing relationships with a number of state-wide organizations with whom we continue to share funding and programmatic resources. The Pennsylvania

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Federation of Museums and Historical Organizations (PFMHO) receives grants each year to support the work of museums and historical societies through an annual conference, newsletter, and technical assistance.

A recent partnership brought PHMC and PFMHO together to work on a minority internship program in Harrisburg and Philadelphia that encourages undergraduate and graduate students of color to consider careers in museums. This program responds to a long recognized need in the museum field to attract and recruit minority students to fill positions in museums across the country. The first year was funded through a grant to the Federation from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development made possible by Representative James Roebuck. The program was managed by PHMC staff. Five interns were selected to fill two positions at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, two positions at the Independence Seaport Museum, and one at The State Museum of Pennsylvania. The Minority Internship Program has two fundamental goals: to introduce upper-level undergraduate and graduate students of diverse backgrounds to careers in museum and related fields and to raise awareness within museums about how institutional culture can create unintended barriers to professional employment of people of color. One intern described her internship as surpassing all expectations. "It has been a life changing, life enhancing experience, I have changed my career plans to include museum work." Another intern addressed the issue of bringing diversity into museums, "In 2006 people are still struggling with the lack of diversity in museums and without programs like this minority internship and people honestly wanting to attack this problem it's impossible for museums to move forward. I wanted to be part of this program because I believed in its goals." Based on the success of the first year and the positive responses of interns, PHMC and the Federation are working to obtain funding to continue this program in future years.

The Pennsylvania Humanities Council is another state-wide partner with whom we work on many different projects. PHMC has a longstanding commitment to fund the Humanities Council's Commonwealth Speakers program to make scholars available to present humanities programs for public audiences on a wide range of Pennsylvania topics. PHMC and PHC also work together on programming for Women's History Month and Black History Month as well as special anniversaries.

The Pennsylvania Historical Association is another long term partner, receiving grant funds each year to support the publication of *Pennsylvania*

research and study. Jonathan White, a Ph.D. candidate in history at the University of Maryland, consulted numerous manuscript groups at the State Archives for his dissertation on party politics in the North during the Civil War.

In the K-12 area, PHMC has partnered with Intermediate Units to administer Teaching American History grants that provide in-depth training for history teachers emphasizing the use of primary resources. The current Teaching American History grant was awarded to the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit, based in Lewisburg for a program entitled "American History in Pennsylvania: Great Documents, Great Events, Great Places." This three-year partnership includes The State Museum of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania State Archives and the Pennsylvania Heritage Society and is helping 180 social studies and language arts teachers improve student achievement in American history through strengthened reading comprehension, writing skills, understanding and interpretation.

An important partnership with WITF Inc., has produced an exceptional online resource for teachers at ExplorePAHistory.com. WITF received funding to develop an interactive web site that uses more than 2000 State Historic Markers maintained by PHMC as a starting place for stories about Pennsylvania's past and links those stories to primary sources and places that viewers can visit. Many people use the site as a handy introduction to Pennsylvania history and can also use the website to plan a road trip through links to Pennsylvania's comprehensive VisitPA.com website. The carefully researched stories on key topics of Pennsylvania history provide teachers with new information and point them to additional resources. Lessons plans and other resources further add to the value of the site as an educational resource for schools.

The Historic Marker program is an excellent example of a traditional state history program that has continued to evolve into an important public history program for the Commission. While other states have discontinued marker programs, PHMC's program has remained active and very popular. Finding new ways to use the marker information through ExplorePaHistory.com is one of the ways that PHMC has been able to bring the marker program into the 21st century. Another has been in looking at new topics and issues that make the markers responsive to the issues and ideas that are of importance to Pennsylvanians. Because the marker process involves public nomination of people, places and events, the markers provide an important forum for discussing topics of both celebration and contrition. Each year about 60 to 80 markers are nominated by organizations

*History* and an annual conference on Pennsylvania History. PHMC also has a special relationship with Penn State Harrisburg and their public history courses. Many PHMC employees serve as adjunct faculty and visiting lecturers at the university, helping to prepare students for positions in public history positions.

Education programs at all levels are important to the work of PHMC. The Keystone Internship Program each year funds approximately 12–15 interns at Commission programs, sites and museums. PHEAA and the colleges and universities who participate also help defray the costs of supporting students to do substantive internships in the areas of public history, archaeology, collections management, historic preservation, archives and museum work. Intern projects in 2006 included researching and analyzing state historic preservation programs; creating walking tours of a historic site; developing Girl and Boy Scout education programs; processing archival collections; processing an archaeological collection. In addition to their individual projects, the Keystone Interns participated in weekly seminars and field trips that provided an overview of the agency's operations and the many different aspects of public history. During the year, the Commission also welcomed other interns, both paid and unpaid, who developed internships outside the formal Keystone Intern Program—working at historic sites or under the umbrella of other programs.

The Scholars in Residence program supports research in the collections of PHMC that often results in publications and dissertations that further understanding about Pennsylvania's past. During 2006–2007, seven scholars, selected by a review panel, participated in the residency program. In addition to placing scholars who apply to pursue their independent research projects, PHMC also seeks sponsorship for research on specific topics. The Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Professions, for example, is interested in funding scholars to conduct research on environmental or conservation history in Pennsylvania through the Scholars in Residence program. Resident scholars work in a variety of areas. Last year, for example, William Campbell, a Ph.D. candidate at McMaster University, used the Sequestered Baynton, Wharton and Morgan Papers (1725–1827) to understand the complex politics underlying the 1768 Treaty of Fort Stanwix through the day-to-day relationships among Philadelphia merchants, Indian agents and Crown representatives. Venetia Guerrasio, Ph.D. candidate in history at the University of New Hampshire, used the Records of the Anatomical Board to reconstruct how undertakers procured unclaimed bodies for medial

and individuals who are required to submit thorough documentation for the proposed subject. These nominations are reviewed by a panel of historians to determine whether or not the marker meets the criteria of state or national significance and usually about one half are accepted. The nomination process and the discussions of significance involve an ongoing and public debate about what is historical and how history is written. The community-supported dedication ceremonies accompanying the installation of these familiar blue and gold markers are often moments of community pride, personal accomplishment, and public discussion.

Historic Preservation provides many opportunities for PHMC to work with other state and national agencies, local governments and community organizations. As Pennsylvania's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Commission works closely with the National Park Service to manage the National Register of Historic Places program in Pennsylvania, the federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit program, Certified Local Government program, and environmental reviews of federally-funded programs. At the state level, BHP partners with DCED's Main Street programs and DCNR's Heritage Parks. With the state Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration, PHMC maintains CRGIS, a web-based geographic information system that helps communities manage their historic resources and locates historically sensitive architecture and archaeology to aid planners and to alert developers to avoid these areas. Non-profit preservation advocacy groups, like the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Preservation Pennsylvania, and Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia, work together with the SHPO to preserve Pennsylvania's built and archaeological past.

For more than twenty years, PHMC has provided funding opportunities to a wide variety of non-profit organizations and public agencies throughout the Commonwealth to enhance existing programs and encourage new projects. Funding for operating support, public history and education programs, collection management, conservation, historic preservation and organizational development have helped raise tens of millions of additional dollars in matching and private support.

PHMC has a special relationship with the county historical societies that help preserve the history of each of Pennsylvania's 67 counties. In partnership with the PFMHO and the PHC, the Commission is working to develop the Association of Pennsylvania County Historical Societies (APACHS) as a

forum for these historical organizations to work together to strengthen their programs and share strategies for sustainability.

PHMC is looking at ways to be a better partner. As The State Museum of Pennsylvania, celebrated its 100th anniversary (2004–2007), it undertook an extensive master planning process in 2005 to chart a direction for its next 100 years. Established at the turn of the twentieth century and occupying a state of the art 1960s building, the time seemed appropriate to plan much-needed building renovations and updated exhibitions around a new vision that will carry the museum through the next century. Rather than thinking of exhibitions as limited to the building, a broader vision for the State Museum has opened up new possibilities for the museum to function in a key position within the Commission as part of a network of museums and historical societies that we serve.

Each year, the Bureau for Historic Preservation selects a year-long theme that kicks off in May during Historic Preservation month. This thematic approach provides a way for a number of PHMC bureaus to link what they are doing and reach a larger public through combined press and outreach. The theme of Farmland Preservation in 2004 has resulted in an agricultural context project that is being implemented in partnership with Professor Sally McMurry of Penn State University. The first region is now available online at [www.phmc.state.us](http://www.phmc.state.us) and other regions will be added as they are completed. The theme for 2007 is Archaeology and will be accompanied by programming and projects that include a web site, updated brochure on Pennsylvania archaeology, presentations at conferences such as the PHA annual conference in October 2007, field schools and excavations, and articles in *Pennsylvania Heritage* magazine.

Themes for future years include: 75th Anniversary of the WPA (2008); Industrial History to coincide with the 150th anniversary of Drake Well and the beginning of oil production in Pennsylvania (2009); African American history in Pennsylvania (2010); and Civil War Sesquicentennial (2011–15).

Themes such as the Civil War provide a large and complex historical agency like PHMC with opportunities to partner among our internal Bureaus as well as with outside partners. The State Archives has launched a multi-year project to preserve the Civil War Muster Rolls that document the service of Pennsylvanians. With a Save America's Treasures grant and funding from the Pennsylvania legislature, these original documents are being preserved so that they will be available to future researchers who are interested in the Civil War as it was seen and experienced by Pennsylvanians on the field of battle.

Previously, Scholar in Residence James Weeks produced a guide to all of PHMC's Civil War related collections; the guide will soon be available on the agency's website.

PHMC is also working closely with a number of other state agencies on Civil War related projects that utilize historical and cultural resources. Together with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development's tourism office, PHMC is a partner in creating a program of Civil War Trails entitled, "Prelude to Gettysburg." The goal of the project is to interpret the Gettysburg battle in a broader context that includes stories of women and children under siege, African Americans in defense of Pennsylvania, commerce and daily life, as well as battles and troop movements. The process for developing the signage and related programming has been remarkable for its commitment to engage community members in identifying historical characters, places, and events. The participating communities include Carlisle and Mechanicsburg, Harrisburg, Chambersburg and Mercersburg, York and Hanover, the Susquehanna River towns of Columbia and Wrightsville, and Gettysburg. A number of these communities have successfully sought recognition as Preserve America Communities and are now eligible to seeking funding for preservation and tourism related projects under that program. The signage system, which will be installed in 2007, is being funded through transportation funds and will be linked to PHMC's existing State Historic Markers related to the Civil War.

Another initiative funded by DCED involves community history organizations and tourism bureaus in the Underground Railroad Colloquium in an effort to develop a multi-site, multi-partner *Quest for Freedom* Heritage Trail for Pennsylvania. PHMC has been an active partner with DCED in supporting work on this project. Twelve communities participated in monthly meetings of the Colloquium to develop new research, tours and programs on Pennsylvania's Underground Railroad heritage from Erie to Philadelphia. While many local communities are very interested in doing research on Underground Railroad related sites and stories, many lack the resources and expertise to translate the information they have gathered into meaningful interpretations, visitor experiences, or marketable products. The program uses heritage tourism to link sites throughout Pennsylvania and to develop a more comprehensive and inclusive story that will resonate with visitors while maintaining the highest standards of authenticity and historical accuracy. The Colloquium tapped leading national scholars and practitioners as



consultants as well as sharing the expertise of participant organizations. Barbara Schaffer Bacon presented the Americans for the Arts model of *Animating Democracy*, developed as a tool to discuss difficult subject matter and interpret community history. Sandy Lloyd and Rich Sauter shared techniques for story development and interpretation developed by the Benjamin Franklin Institute (Benstitute) for Philadelphia's popular *Once Upon a Nation* tours. Howard Dodson, executive director of the Schomburg Center of the New York Public Library, eloquently stressed the importance of crafting a narrative of Pennsylvania's story and "getting the story right." The Colloquium identified the following categories of activity as contributing to the Underground Railroad story in Pennsylvania: resistance and civil disobedience; flight and fugitives; legal and constitutional issues; and abolitionists. The colloquium process has served as a means of identifying existing Underground Railroad entities and providing a framework to ensure that accurate and consistent information is presented to visitors as part of a regional and statewide interpretive plan.

The 150th anniversary of the Civil War beginning in 2011 presents an ideal opportunity to strengthen our current partnerships and to develop new ways to work together in the state to mark important anniversaries that have the potential to engage the public in historical thinking. PHMC received an NEH consultation grant to convene a statewide meeting to begin planning for the anniversary in 2011–2015. Entitled "Telling New Stories from Old Collections," the grant supports scholars to help us rethink how Civil War collections can tell broader stories about themes of slavery and freedom, the war's impact on local communities, women and the home front, and memory and commemoration. The consulting historians are Edward Ayers, University of Virginia; David Blight, Yale University; James O. Horton, The George Washington University; and Elizabeth Leonard, Colby College. Principal partners in this effort are The Pennsylvania Humanities Council, Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, the Philadelphia Civil War History Consortium, and Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

The project has been designed to include an initial meeting on the topic of slavery and freedom with Dr. Horton, regional meetings in Harrisburg, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh, and a concluding meeting with the remaining consultants and representatives of institutions from around the state. The consultation process will help identify themes that can be featured in statewide Civil War projects, articulate standards for high quality programming, build a framework for a coordinated Pennsylvania



Sesquicentennial, and develop consensus about programming priorities and audience needs statewide.

Pennsylvania can claim a pivotal role in the Civil War. The first state north of the Mason Dixon Line, Pennsylvania citizens contributed goods, services and human capital for the war effort. Between 1861 and 1865, approximately 362,000 Pennsylvanians fought for the Union, more than any other state except New York. Approximately 8,600 African-American from Pennsylvania volunteered; German-speaking soldiers such as the 74<sup>th</sup> regiment from Pittsburgh served, as well as the 116<sup>th</sup> regiment consisting largely of Irish from Philadelphia and known as the "Irish Brigade." In addition, as many as 2,000 Pennsylvania men volunteered for the Confederacy. Women entered the paid workforce in the absence of male family members and participated in volunteer relief efforts in nearly every community. Pennsylvania's rich farmland served as the breadbasket for the Union Army and the burgeoning iron, steel, coal, and oil industries of Pennsylvania provided the resources necessary to Union victory.

Pennsylvania can also provide national leadership in adopting a broad interpretive approach to the Civil War and its long term impact on both Pennsylvania and American history. Previous anniversaries of the Civil War have coincided with important changes in American life. The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil war in 1911–15 coincided with national efforts at reconciliation between north and south, along with an intensifying of Jim Crow practices and injustices. The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1961–1965 coincided with, though largely ignored, the Civil Rights movement and attempts to fulfill the promises of freedom. In 2011, Pennsylvania and the nation have the opportunity to tell 150 years of history rather than simply chronicle four years of battles.

The upcoming Civil War Sesquicentennial is an opportunity to interpret the Civil War in Pennsylvania using new approaches and asking new questions of traditional collections. We anticipate that this initiative will help inform programming around the state and result in new insights into the Civil War era for a wide variety of audiences throughout Pennsylvania. We also hope that it will be an opportunity to strengthen existing partnerships around the state and to model new ways of working together in the future.