



A SESQUICENTENNIAL
COMMEMORATION
OF THE GREAT STATE OF
DELAWARE
IN THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

Delaware Department of State

Media Release

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DELAWARE BEGINS OFFICIAL COMMEMORATION OF 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

EVENTS, ONLINE EXHIBITS, NEW WEBSITE INFORM & HELP ILLUSTRATE HOW THE WAR AFFECTED DELAWARE

(DOVER, Del.) – Governor Jack Markell issued a proclamation this week beginning Delaware’s official commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of the American Civil War. The special observance, which began with students from St. John’s Lutheran School in Dover leading the Pledge of Allegiance, was held on Tuesday, April 12 at the First State Heritage Park and Welcome Center at the Delaware Public Archives in Dover. Governor Markell also announced a new website which will serve as the statewide hub for Civil War-related events and other resources – civilwar.delaware.gov – and spoke about the work the Delaware Public Archives has done to digitize all of its Civil War-era holdings.

“The Public Archives, with the help of the State’s Government Information Center, is using technology to make available to everyone its very significant historical collection relating to the American Civil War,” said Governor Markell. “The online collection gives us great insight into the effects this conflict had on the lives of Delawareans 150 years ago. It is important that we do not forget our history and that we try to learn as much as we can from those who came before us.”

In addition to the Governor, Secretary of State Jeffrey Bullock, DNREC Secretary Collin O’Mara, and Delaware Heritage Commission Chair Richard Carter spoke about upcoming events and the importance of recognizing this anniversary and reflecting upon the past.

“The period of the American Civil War was about much more than soldiers and battles,” said Secretary Bullock. “During these five years of commemoration, we will be looking at all aspects of that era to help everyone better understand what Delaware was like at the time and the sorts of things Delawareans faced.”

The entire American Civil War collection at the Archives will be made available through its website archives.delaware.gov over the course of the next few months, but a significant part of the collection was

posted to coincide with Tuesday's announcement. What visitors to the website can now see includes military service records, photographs of Civil War soldiers, letters from soldiers to their family and friends, soldiers' diaries, and broadsides – now commonly referred to as public notices or advertisements – which were an important communication method of the day. The Delaware Public Archives also launched a YouTube video presenting some of the Civil War-era documents it has in its holdings. The video can also be found on the official 150th anniversary commemoration website: civilwar.delaware.gov.

Secretary O'Mara spoke about the importance of Fort Delaware in the Civil War and about how the Division of State Parks will be hosting a number of Civil War-themed events at Fort Delaware in the upcoming months and years.

“As we pause to commemorate this momentous event that changed the course of history, Delawareans can learn more and understand the Civil War better through these exhibits and events. At Fort Delaware, which played an integral role in Civil War history, we will provide programs for children and adults that are inclusive and contemplative. We seek to inspire a new generation to discover Delaware history by providing families and children with a variety of fun and memorable learning experiences.”

DNREC's Division of State Parks also partners with the Department of State's Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs in operating the First State Heritage Park, an “urban park without borders” in downtown Dover which includes sites such as the Old State House, Legislative Hall, the Biggs Museum, and Woodburn, the Governor's House.

In addition to the Delaware Public Archives and the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, two other Department of State agencies are actively involved in the Civil War commemoration. The Delaware Division of Libraries has created an extensive online list of reading and viewing material about the American Civil War for adults and children at <http://guides.lib.de.us/civilwar> and links the user directly to the statewide library catalog to place a hold on a book or a DVD to pick up later at their local library. The Government Information Center, in addition to helping the Public Archives put its collection online, is responsible for the creation of the new Civil War commemoration website civilwar.delaware.gov, in cooperation with the Delaware Heritage Commission.

For information on upcoming Civil War-related events, lectures, and exhibits throughout Delaware, as well as links to organizations involved in the 150th anniversary commemoration, please visit civilwar.delaware.gov.

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