

Department of Historic Resources

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EIGHT NEW STATE HISTORICAL HIGHWAY MARKERS APPROVED

—New markers cover topics in the counties of Chesterfield, Dinwiddie, Mecklenburg, and Tazewell; and the cities of Danville, Harrisonburg, Lynchburg, and Petersburg—

—An updated marker for Caroline Co. replaces a prior one noting the site where John Wilkes Booth was killed—

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

RICHMOND – Eight new historical highway markers approved for manufacture by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources will highlight a Danville church where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke; the origins of 4-H clubs in Virginia; and an attack by Shawnee Indians on a frontier family in present-day Tazewell County, among other topics.

In **Danville**, the “High Street Baptist Church” marker will recall the church’s founding in 1865 by emancipated African Americans. Members erected their first sanctuary in 1873, which later burned. The current Romanesque Revival-style church was built in 1901. “High Street Baptist served as a base for organizers of the local civil rights movement and hosted the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1963,” in the words of the marker, which the City of Danville is sponsoring.

A historical marker for **Dinwiddie County**, “Origins of 4-H in Virginia,” will recall that farm demonstration agent F. Southall Farrar “organized the state’s first corn clubs for boys in 1909.” Such clubs arose with the nation’s emerging agricultural extension movement to promote progressive farming methods and improve rural life. In 1910, the first canning clubs for Virginia girls were formed as well. “By the early 1920s, these organizations for children, administered by Virginia Cooperative Extension after 1914, evolved into 4-H clubs,” in the marker’s words. The sign is sponsored by Virginia Cooperative Extension.

In western Virginia’s **Tazewell County**, the “Moore Family” marker will rise to highlight an attack by “Black Wolf and a group of Shawnee Indians” on the home of militia captain James Moore on July 14, 1786. The Shawnee attack was an effort “to deter white settlement of the Ohio Valley region after the American Revolution,” according to the approved marker text. The attack resulted in the death of Moore, three of his children and a servant and the capture of six other family members, including Moore’s wife and another daughter, both of whom later died in Ohio. Eventually, two of Moore’s sons returned to reside in Tazewell County. Historic Pocahontas is the sponsor of the sign.

Five remaining markers address topics pertaining to African American history in Virginia:

- In **Harrisonburg** a marker will be erected for native son Edgar Amos Love, who co-founded while a student at Howard University Omega Psi Phi, the first fraternity established at a historically black college. An ordained minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church, Love served overseas as an army chaplain during World War I. After becoming a bishop in 1952, he worked to desegregate the church. “Dedicated to social justice, he advocated nonviolent protest against discrimination and helped lead the Southern Conference Educational Fund, an interracial civil rights organization,” according to the marker. The sign is sponsored by the Love BDD Foundation.
- A sign for Pauline Weeden Maloney (1904-1987), slated for **Lynchburg**, recalls that “she worked in Lynchburg public schools from 1937 to 1970, most notably as a guidance counselor and administrator at the all-black Dunbar High School.” Among Maloney’s notable achievements, she was elected the first black president of the Virginia School Boards Association, served as the first woman rector of Norfolk State University and as national president of The Links, a civic organization of African American women. The marker is sponsored by the Lynchburg chapter of The Links, Inc., which Maloney founded in 1950.
- The marker “Patrick Robert “Parker” Sydnor (1854-1950),” for installation in **Mecklenburg County**, recounts the life of Sydnor, who gained literacy in a freedmen’s school after the Civil War and became a renowned stonecutter and engraver who crafted grave markers from the 1890s into the 1940s. “His designs and inscriptions memorialized the lives of African Americans across Southside Virginia,” according to the marker’s approved text. Sydnor’s log cabin is listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. The Sydnor sign is sponsored by Literacy InterActives, Inc.
- A sign to rise in **Petersburg**, “People’s Memorial Cemetery,” will relay that 28 members of the city’s large antebellum “community of free African Americans purchased a one-acre tract to serve as a burial ground in 1840.” Among the hundreds of graves in the cemetery are veterans from the Civil War through World War II, and a member of the Virginia House of Delegates from the 19th century. “Numerous grave markers bearing the insignia of mutual aid societies and fraternal orders reflect the importance of these organizations to the community,” the marker will read. The City of Petersburg is sponsoring the sign.
- The “First Baptist Church (Centralia)” sign in **Chesterfield County** will recall that the church’s founding traces back to 1867. In the early 20th century the congregation built a church that incorporated elements of Gothic Revival and Colonial Revival styles. After that structure burned in 1996, it was rebuilt to original specifications in 1997. The sign is sponsored by the First Baptist Church (Centralia).

The historical marker, “Assassin’s End,” will replace and update a prior one in Caroline County about the death of John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of President Abraham Lincoln. On the morning of April 26, 1865, a 16th New York Cavalry unit tracked Booth down and cornered him and his co-conspirator, David E. Herold, as the two men slept in a tobacco barn owned by

Richard Henry Garrett. After the barn was set on fire, Booth was shot by one of the cavalry troops. The marker is sponsored by the Surratt Society.

All eight new markers and the replacement marker were approved during the December quarterly meeting of the governor-appointed Board of Historic Resources of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

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.)

Edgar Amos Love (1891-1974)

Edgar Amos Love, son of a Methodist minister, was born in Harrisonburg in 1891. On 17 Nov. 1911, while a student at Howard University, he co-founded Omega Psi Phi, the first fraternity established at a historically black college. The organization later expanded beyond the United States. Ordained a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church, Love served overseas as an army chaplain during World War I. He became a bishop in 1952 and worked to desegregate the church. Dedicated to social justice, he advocated nonviolent protest against discrimination and helped lead the Southern Conference Educational Fund, an interracial civil rights organization.

Pauline Weeden Maloney (1904-1987)

Here lived Pauline Maloney, known as Lynchburg's "first lady of education." A graduate of Howard University, she worked in Lynchburg public schools from 1937 to 1970, most notably as a guidance counselor and administrator at the all-black Dunbar High School. During the 1970s she was elected the first black president of both the Virginia School Boards Association and the National School Boards Association Southern Region. In 1977 Maloney became the first woman rector of Norfolk State University. She served as national president of The Links, Inc., a civic organization of African American women, and she founded the Lynchburg chapter in 1950.

Patrick Robert "Parker" Sydnor (1854-1950)

Born enslaved on one of William Sydnor's plantations in Halifax County, Patrick Robert "Parker" Sydnor became literate at a freedmen's school after the Civil War. A preacher and farmer in his youth, he began crafting grave markers in the 1890s and remained active until the 1940s. Sydnor won renown as a skilled stonecutter and engraver who made his work widely

accessible. His designs and inscriptions memorialized the lives of African Americans across Southside Virginia. His home, the nearby Patrick Robert “Parker” Sydnor log cabin, is listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places.

High Street Baptist Church

In 1865 emancipated African Americans withdrew from First Baptist Church, where they had worshiped from the balcony, and founded a congregation later known as High Street Baptist Church. Members erected their first sanctuary here in 1873. Fire destroyed that structure and its replacement, constructed in 1878. The present Romanesque Revival church was built in 1901. High Street Baptist served as a base for organizers of the local civil rights movement and hosted the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1963. Pastor Lendell W. Chase was president of the Danville Christian Progressive Association, which coordinated nonviolent protests against segregation and discrimination.

First Baptist Church (Centralia)

In 1867, the African American members of nearby Salem Baptist Church separated and founded Salem African Baptist Church. The new congregation held worship services under a brush arbor before constructing a building here on a one-acre tract deeded in 1869 by members of the mother church. The congregation soon changed its name to First Baptist Church (Centralia). Early in the 20th century, members erected a large new sanctuary incorporating elements of the Gothic Revival and Colonial Revival styles. Razed by fire in 1996, this structure was rebuilt to original specifications in 1997. In 1963, the growing congregation moved two miles east.

People’s Memorial Cemetery

Twenty-eight members of Petersburg’s large community of free African Americans purchased a one-acre tract to serve as a burial ground in 1840. Subsequent acquisitions of adjacent land created a cemetery complex later known as People’s Memorial. Buried here are slaves, an antislavery writer whose grave is listed on the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, a 19th-century member of the Virginia House of Delegates, veterans of the Civil War through World War II, and hundreds of other black residents. Numerous grave markers bearing the insignia of mutual aid societies and fraternal orders reflect the importance of these organizations to the community.

Origins of 4-H in Virginia

F. Southall Farrar, farm demonstration agent for Southside Virginia, organized the state’s first corn clubs for boys in 1909. Such clubs, a feature of the nation’s emerging agricultural extension movement, had originated in the Midwest to promote progressive farming methods and improve rural life. Farrar’s initial recruits, 100 Dinwiddie and Chesterfield County boys, each grew one acre of corn and, on average, outproduced local farms by more than three times. In 1910 Ella Agnew established the first canning clubs for Virginia girls. By the early 1920s, these organizations for children, administered by Virginia Cooperative Extension after 1914, evolved into 4-H clubs.

Moore Family

Black Wolf and a group of Shawnee Indians attacked militia captain James Moore’s nearby home on 14 July 1786 during a campaign to deter white settlement of the Ohio Valley region

after the American Revolution. They killed Moore, children Alexander, Rebecca, and William, and servant John Simpson. Six others were captured and taken toward Ohio. Children John and Margaret died during the journey. Moore's wife, Martha, and daughter Jane were killed near Chillicothe, Ohio. Daughter Mary and Martha Evans were sold near Detroit and were later rescued. Sons James, captured by Shawnee two years earlier, and Joseph, absent that day, returned to live in this valley.

Replacement Marker:

Assassin's End

This is the site of Locust Hill, Richard Henry Garrett's farm. Early on the morning of 26 April 1865, a 16th New York Cavalry detachment cornered John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of President Abraham Lincoln, and his co-conspirator, David E. Herold, as the two men slept in Garrett's tobacco barn. Herold gave himself up, but Booth refused to surrender. The barn was set on fire, and Sgt. Boston Corbett shot the assassin, still inside. Booth was laid on the porch of the Garrett house and died about sunrise. The house and barn stood a short distance from this spot.