

Department of Historic Resources

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TWO STATE HISTORICAL HIGHWAY MARKERS
"AMELIA PERRY PRIDE'S DORCHESTER HOME" AND "CAMP DAVIS"
TO BE DEDICATED

—Lynchburg markers highlight an "old folks home" that served impoverished former slave women and the site of a one-time Confederate mustering ground and hospital that emerged as an African-American neighborhood during Reconstruction—

—The markers' texts are reproduced below—

RICHMOND – Two state historical markers issued by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources will be dedicated as part of the scheduled festivities during the 3rd Annual Pierce Street Harlem Renaissance Festival in Lynchburg this weekend.

One marker, "Amelia Perry Pride's Dorchester Home," will recall a one-time "old folks home" for formerly enslaved women, and another sign, "Camp Davis," will highlight the site of a Confederate soldiers' camp that emerged as a refuge for freed slaves after the Civil War.

The dedication ceremony for both markers will begin at 2 p.m. Sunday, September 14, at Wayside Gospel Temple Church of God in Christ, located at 1309 Pierce Street, Lynchburg. Guest speakers will discuss each sign individually with *brief* remarks. Following the speakers' comments, there will be a procession to unveil each marker at its location along Pierce Street, where there are now – with the addition of these two markers – a total of seven historical markers along a two-block stretch.

All activities are open to the public.

Speakers for the “Camp Davis” marker will include Dr. Clifton Potter, professor of history at Lynchburg College, who will address aspects of Civil War history pertaining to Camp Davis; Hylan T. Hubbard III, who will discuss schools and education for blacks in Lynchburg during Reconstruction; and Lynchburg vice-mayor Ceasor Johnson, who will talk about the origins of Jackson Street United Methodist Church and Lynchburg’s annexation of the Camp Davis area in 1870.

Speakers for the “Amelia Perry Pride’s Dorchester Home” marker will include Scott Smith of History Tech LLC, who will discuss the Pierce Street Historic District and the location of the Dorchester House, and Dr. Tracy Richardson, principal of E. C. Glass High School, who will highlight the life of Amelia Pride.

Dr. Jennifer R. Loux, an historian with DHR’s historical marker program, will briefly highlight the history of the program, and the Soulsters from the Hill will provide a musical contribution during the ceremony for the markers.

The “Amelia Perry Pride’s Dorchester Home” sign recalls that the home was “established in 1897 by Hampton Institute graduate and Lynchburg public school principal Amelia Perry Pride.” The home “provided shelter, fuel, clothing, and food for its residents until their deaths,” in the words of the sign. Pride, who adhered to “Hampton Institute’s principle of uplifting her race through self-help,” was “a passionate advocate of African American and Virginia Indian education,” according to the marker.

The “Camp Davis” marker notes that the site was “a Civil War mustering ground for Confederate troops from Virginia under the command of Colonel Jubal A. Early.” The camp was located in a part of the city that emerged as an African American neighborhood during Reconstruction, “when Camp Davis became an important refuge for freed slaves,” according to the marker. The camp was also the site before 1870 of a Federal military headquarters, the Freedmen's Bureau’s Camp Davis School, and a black Methodist Episcopal church.

Both Lynchburg markers are sponsored by Old City Cemetery, the Anne Spencer House and Garden Museum, and the Lynchburg Historical Foundation. The markers were approved for installation as state historical markers by DHR's Board of Historic Resources in March of this year. The sponsors are covering the manufacturing costs of both markers.

Virginia's historical highway marker program, which began in 1927 with the installation of the first historical markers along U.S. Route 1, is considered the oldest such program in the nation. Currently there are more than 2,400 official state markers, most maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation, as well as by local partners in jurisdictions outside of VDOT's authority, such as Lynchburg.

Texts of the markers:

Amelia Perry Pride's Dorchester Home Q-6-30

Near this spot stood a small frame house known as Dorchester Home or Old Folks Home for impoverished former slave women. Established in 1897 by Hampton Institute graduate and Lynchburg public school principal Amelia Perry Pride (1857-1932), it provided shelter, fuel, clothing, and food for its residents until their deaths. Following Hampton Institute's principle of uplifting her race through self-help, Pride was a passionate advocate of African American and Virginia Indian education. In Lynchburg, she provided scholarships for many young women seeking higher education and established sewing and cooking schools for women and men entering vocational fields.

Camp Davis Q-6-29

Camp Davis, a Civil War mustering ground for Confederate troops from Virginia under the command of Col. Jubal A. Early, once occupied this area. At least 130 Southern soldiers died at the camp's own Pratt Hospital and were buried in Lynchburg's Old City Cemetery. The neighborhood's historically African American identity took shape during Reconstruction, when Camp Davis became an important refuge for freed slaves. Before being annexed by the city in 1870, it was the site of Federal military headquarters, the Freedmen's Bureau's Camp Davis School, headed by Jacob Eschbach Yoder, and a black Methodist Episcopal church.

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