**Department of Historic Resources**

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State Historical Highway Marker

“Richmond’s War of 1812 Defensive Camps”  
To Be Dedicated

***—Marker recalls sites of Virginia militia camps in eastern Henrico County—***

***—The marker’s text is reproduced below—***

RICHMOND – A state historical marker issued by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources highlighting Richmond’s “defensive camps” during the War of 1812 will be dedicated this weekend.

The ceremony for the marker, “Richmond’s War of 1812 Defensive Camps,” begins at 2 p.m., Sunday, March 1, at Antioch Baptist Church, located at 3868 Antioch Church Road, in Sandston.

Speakers during the dedication ceremony will include historian Stuart Butler, author of *Defending the Old Dominion: Virginia and its Militia in the War of 1812*; historian Dr. Louis H. Manarin, author of*Henrico County Field of Honor*; Lt. Col. Myron Lyman, past president of the War of 1812 Society in Virginia; Tyrone Nelson, a member of the Henrico County Board of Supervisors, and Dr. Jennifer Loux, historian with the marker program at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Sarah Pace, president of the Henrico County Historical Society, will emcee the event and the Varina High School Navy Junior ROTC will present the colors and the Henrico Concert Band will perform the national anthem.

Light refreshments will be provided by Antioch Baptist Church after the unveiling of the historical marker.

The War of 1812, fought between the U.S. and Great Britain, is called by some historians the nation’s second war of independence.

The Richmond War of 1812 marker recalls that in order “to guard against possible British invasion,” Virginia “established militia encampments in eastern Henrico County.” The defensive sites were Camp Holly Springs, ultimately under the command of Brig. Gen. Robert Porterfield, Camp Carter, under Lt. Col. John H. Cocke, and Camp Bottoms Bridge, commanded by Brig. Gen. William B. Chamberlayne.

The marker notes that none of the three camps were ever threatened by British forces during the war.

The Richmond defensive camps historical sign marks another stop on a War of 1812 heritage highway route linked by historical markers created to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the war. The signs—now numbering 19 approved, with 14 erected—result from collaboration between the Department of Historic Resources and the Virginia Bicentennial of the American War of 1812 Commission.

Each of the bicentennial signs features on one side general information about the causes of the War of 1812 and its impact on Virginia, especially the Chesapeake Bay and Tidewater regions. The signs also note that “more than 2,000 enslaved African Americans in Virginia had gained their freedom aboard British ships.”

According to the legislation enacted by the General Assembly to establish the bicentennial commission, "An estimated 70,000 Virginians served during the War of 1812. There were some 73 armed encounters with the British that took place in Virginia during the war.” The 2008 legislation also states, “The nation's capitol, strategically located off the Chesapeake Bay, was a prime target for the British, and the coast of Virginia figured prominently in the Atlantic theatre of operations.”

A 12-page booklet that lists all the historical markers in Virginia relating to the War of 1812, including each sign’s text, is available online for downloading (as a PDF) from the Department of Historic Resources’ Website ([www.dhr.virginia](http://www.dhr.virginia/)).  Here is the direct link to the publication:<http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/pdf_files/War%20of%201812%20Markers%20publicationFINAL.pdf>

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.

**Texts of the marker:**

**Richmond’s War of 1812 Defensive Camps V-53**

During the War of 1812, Virginia established militia encampments in eastern Henrico County to guard against possible British invasion. About a mile northeast of here was Camp Holly Springs (April 1813-Feb. 1815), commanded briefly by Lt. Col. (later Brig. Gen.) John H. Cocke and afterward by Brig. Gen. Robert Porterfield. Camp Carter (Sept.1814 to Feb. 1815), under Cocke’s command, stood seven miles northeast of here on Williamsburg Road. Two miles east of Camp Carter was Camp Bottoms Bridge (Sept.-Nov. 1814), commanded by Brig. Gen. William B. Chamberlayne. These encampments were never threatened by British forces during the war.

**The War of 1812 V-53**

Impressment of Americans into British service and the violation of American ships were among the causes of America’s War of 1812 with the British, which lasted until 1815. Beginning in 1813, Virginians suffered from a British naval blockade of the Chesapeake Bay and from British troops plundering the countryside by the Bay and along the James, Rappahannock, and Potomac Rivers. The Virginia militia deflected a British attempt to take Norfolk in 1813 and engaged British forces throughout the war. By the end of the war, more than 2,000 enslaved African Americans in Virginia had gained their freedom aboard British ships.