

Hanover Tavern unveils audio tour, Civil War exhibit

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H-P Staff Writer

The Hanover Tavern Foundation introduced two new attractions last week: a self-guided audio tour and an exhibit titled "Hanover County: Impact of the Civil War."

The exhibits were unveiled at a reception July 20 and officially opened July 21.

David Deal, executive director of the Hanover Tavern Foundation, said the exhibits "interpret and present the history of the Tavern and Hanover County in a new and engaging way."

In the self-guided audio tour, visitors carry a map and a small device through 13 stops in the building. At each stop, the user keys in the appropriate number and listens to a recording.

The tour includes information on the development and architecture of the Hanover Tavern, notable visitors

to the Tavern, and significant events at the property such as Gabriel's slave rebellion and the formation of Barksdale Theatre, plus much more.

After the self-guided tour, visitors can step into a room to view Civil War artifacts.

"With the sesquicentennial of the Civil War upon us, it was important that we have a Civil War-related exhibit. We wanted this exhibit to focus on people and occurrences related to Hanover County, but we wanted to leave the battles and the troop movements to the National Parks Service," Deal said.

"For this to be successful, we needed the local citizens to share their stories and family heirlooms and agree to put these objects on loan in the Tavern," he continued.

Deal said that more than 125 Civil War artifacts have been loaned to the Tavern

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Historical re-enactors present a flag on the Hanover Tavern stage. (H-P photo by Dan Sherrier)

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for the exhibit. Most of the items are local, but some came from as far away as Pittsburgh.

"The exhibit tells stories never heard and shows items never seen. It's truly unique, and it's here thanks to the enthusiasm and participation of individuals," Deal said.

"We want to grow the exhibit," he said, adding that Virginia's Civil War sesquicentennial commemoration would be lasting another four years. "We're opening now and we want to keep it fresh and change it out and so forth."

Admission costs \$7 to enter both the Civil War exhibit and the self-guided tour. Hanover Tavern members cost \$5, and children 10 and under are free.

The July 20 event also featured a brief presentation by the 15th Virginia Infantry volunteer re-enactors on the Hanover Tavern stage.

The 15th was comprised of troops mostly from Central Virginia and included three companies from Hanover County.

After a June 1861 battle near the College of William & Mary, the wife of one of the W&M professors turned her wedding gown into a blue and white silk regimental flag for the 15th, with the word "Home" sewn in.

The re-enactors recreated the scene of the ladies presenting the flag to the soldiers.

More information about the Hanover Tavern is available at www.hanovertavern.org or by calling (804) 537-5050.