

Harpers Ferry Park Hosts John Brown and Civil War 150th Anniversary Kickoff

By Marsha Wassel and Stacy Humphreys

(**photo here:** Dr. Robert Sutton and Dr. Charles Bryan Jr. of the Virginia Historical Society outside the Stephen T. Mather Training Center, June 25, 2009. Dr. Bryan is holding the sword of his ancestor that fought in the American Civil War.)

In conjunction with the 150th anniversary year of John Brown's Raid on Harpers Ferry, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park hosted the official kickoff of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War on Thursday, June 25. The day was filled with events featuring Civil War organizations and national partners.

Special guests from the Virginia and West Virginia Civil War Sesquicentennial Commissions, representatives from Journey Through Hallowed Ground, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and Robert G. Stanton, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Policy, Management and Budget toured the Harpers Ferry Battlefield. During the tour Civil War Trails President Mitch Bowman unveiled the first Civil War Trails marker at Bolivar Heights, followed by a bus ride to School House Ridge area of the battlefield where Civil War Preservation Trust President Jim Lighthizer transferred 176 acres of battlefield land to Harpers Ferry Park.

Harpers Ferry Middle School hosted the group for the premiere *Of the Student, By the Student, For the Student*, a program created, developed and sponsored by The Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership at the request of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), in conjunction with Harpers Ferry National Historical Park and Harpers Ferry Middle School. The program consists of six innovative vodcasts about John Brown created by the students at the middle School.

Following lunch the group convened at Stephen T. Mather Training Center for a joint meeting of the Virginia and West Virginia Sesquicentennial Commissions. Chief Historian of the National Park Service, Dr. Robert Sutton attended the joint meeting and participated in a panel discussion entitled "Opportunities of the Civil War Sesquicentennial: Understanding Our Past, Embracing Our Future." Dr. Sutton leads the WASO working group coordinating the Civil War 150th (CW150) project for the NPS. Participating WASO functions include cultural resources, education and interpretation, partners, communications, public affairs, OCIO as well as the Office of Tourism. The Office of Tourism is undertaking the formation of a cooperative marketing coalition to engage the public on the theme: "Civil War to Civil Rights: Experience Your America."

For more information on the vodcasts go to <http://www.nps.gov/hafe> From QUICKLINKS click on John Brown Raid Vodcast.

For information about 150th Anniversary of John Brown's Raid go to www.johnbrownraid.org

Visit the National Park Service's CW150 website at www.nps.gov/civilwar