



DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES
2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221
Telephone: (804) 367-2323 Fax: (804) 367-2391

MARKER PROGRAM APPLICATION FORM
FOR PLACEMENT OF A PROPOSED NEW MARKER

Before completing this application, please read the information below explaining the procedures and guidelines for the marker program. Please note that not all applications will necessarily be approved for a state marker; each must meet the program criteria as outlined below. When completed, this application and accompanying material should be sent to Peter Luebke at the Department of Historic Resources, at the address above. If you have questions, please contact Peter Luebke at (804) 482-6089.

When filling out this form, please type or print clearly; if additional space is needed, use 8.5 x 11 inch paper. An electronic version of this application is available. *Note: All submitted materials become the property of the Department of Historic Resources and will not be returned.*

- Your application packet should include the following items. (Please note that the department can only begin formal review of a proposed marker after it has received the complete application packet.): (1) a completed application form including source material; (2) a map labeled to show the proposed location of the marker. (If the proposed site for the marker is different from the actual historic site discussed in the marker's text, then please also indicate on the map the actual site as well as the marker's proposed location.)

Thank you in advance for giving due time and consideration to completing and submitting your application packet. Your interest in Virginia's history is very much appreciated, and we look forward to working with you.

MARKER CRITERIA

(Approved by the Board of Historic Resources, 8 December 1993)

The state historical highway marker program commemorates facts, persons, events, and places prominently identified with the history of the nation, state, or region. Each proposed marker text shall be reviewed and edited by the manager of the marker program and the staff of the Department of Historic Resources and, with the location, shall be approved by the Board of Historic Resources.

No marker shall be erected to commemorate a living person.

In order for an historic event to be eligible for commemoration with a marker, the event must have occurred at least fifty years ago. Likewise, a place or person must have attained its significance at least fifty years ago, although there are exceptions if the event, place, or person is of extraordinary historical significance.

The size and shape of the state marker shall be that presently in use. Only the following shall appear on the marker: the seal of Virginia; identification code; title; text; name of the Department of Historic Resources; and the year the marker was approved.

Markers shall be erected in safe locations, at or close to the places being commemorated, and where they will be visible to the traveling public. Markers shall be placed in public rights-of-way and maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation or local public works department. The marker sponsors and the manager of the state marker program, subject to approval by the Virginia Department of Transportation, shall select marker sites.

Additional Information about Topic Eligibility

Buildings, historic districts, archaeological sites, cemeteries, etc., listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and/or the National Register of Historic Places may qualify if the level of significance is state or national. Listing a resource on the registers does not automatically qualify it for a highway marker.

Churches and Cemeteries. Markers about churches typically relate to the history of the building, not the congregation. The following types may qualify for state historical markers: (1) colonial churches, (2) churches that were the first of a denomination in a locality, and (3) churches that present significant architectural qualities. Most other churches would more appropriately be noted on a local marker. To qualify for a marker, cemeteries must be listed on the registers for state or national significance or as the final resting place of someone significant in state or national history—more than the burial ground for people who fought and died in military conflicts.

Subjects of primarily local importance are not eligible for state markers. Notably, all military battles or skirmishes are not of statewide importance; eligibility will be determined by DHR staff and other scholars as necessary. Marker topics will not be presented to the Historic Resources Board when it is impossible to authenticate or verify the information to the satisfaction of DHR staff.

Exceptions to any program criteria will be determined on a case-by-case basis by DHR staff.

Procedure for Developing and Submitting a Marker Topic and the Approval Process

1. Research and Write the Marker Text. Research the topic by consulting multiple primary and secondary sources. Write a roughly 100-word text, following the “Highway Marker Writing Style” (see below). It is often helpful to seek assistance from local and regional historical associations and governmental entities in researching and crafting the proposed text. *Expect that changes will likely be made by department staff to the proposed text to bring it in line with program criteria and writing style.*

2. Suggest a Suitable Marker Location. The marker preferably should be placed on public land or a highway right-of-way; **if it is on private land then the department must receive the owner’s consent** for the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to access and maintain the sign. DHR and VDOT staff will evaluate the proposed location based on its historic association with the marker subject and safety. Ultimately, VDOT staff will have the final determination in approving and selecting the location based primarily on traffic safety (see below “Criteria for Marker Placement”). Be sure in your application to specify the highway route number and the physical site (e.g., U.S. Rte 11, 0.2 miles south of Virginia Rte 270) and indicate the location on a street or highway map accompanying the application. Please note if a proposed site lies within the corporate limits of a city or town. Your location suggestion will be reviewed by VDOT’s highway engineers, who are responsible for the installation and maintenance of the markers.

3. Submit Your Application Packet to DHR for Review. Follow the instructions provided in the application for completing it. All applications will be reviewed internally by DHR staff and advisors to the marker program. After reviewing a topic, the department will make a determination of whether the topic meets the marker program criteria. If the topic is considered appropriate for a state marker, the department will, pending possible further revisions to the text (see step 4), formally present the marker to the Board of Historic Resources for approval at one of its quarterly meetings. The board convenes in March, June, September, and December, and has final authority for the topics and content of all state markers. **The deadline for submitting texts for the board’s consideration is as follows:**

December 1 for the March board meeting;
March 1 for the June board meeting;
June 1 for the September board meeting;
September 1 for the December board meeting.

PLEASE NOTE: DHR staff will make every attempt to present a marker at the applicant's desired board meeting. However, scheduling depends on the complexity of the subject, the amount of additional research required by DHR staff, and the amount of revision required to the text. The department cannot guarantee that marker applications submitted by the dates above will automatically be presented at the subsequent board meeting. Marker topics are generally not presented to the Board of Historic Resources until the applicant and DHR have arrived at an agreed-upon text.

4. Work with the Department in Revising or Refining the Marker Text. Before submitting a text to the Board of Historic Resources for approval, a review committee composed of members of the board, the department, and other historians will review the text. Any major questions about the text that arise will be discussed with the sponsor, including further documentation, if necessary, to support the marker text. If changes to the text are warranted, the department's staff will work closely with the sponsor—or the sponsor's author—to produce a mutually agreed upon text. Because the department and its board bear the ultimate responsibility for what appears on a marker, they reserve the right to edit a text for accuracy, clarity, brevity, and thoroughness. Please be aware that a **marker's text must be limited to 100 words**, not exceeding 700 characters including spaces; the marker title should be approximately 15 characters.

5. Await the Final Decision of the Board of Historic Resources. The department will provide a sponsor advance notification of when the marker will be presented to the board at the appropriate quarterly meeting. **The meeting is open to the public, and sponsors may attend.** Once a text is approved, the department will send the sponsor a copy of the final board-approved text.

6. Meet with the Virginia Department of Transportation. After the marker is approved by the Board of Historic Resources, DHR will notify VDOT and ask that it arrange a meeting with the sponsor to visit the proposed marker location in order to review the site. **VDOT is responsible for approving the site**, and may select another location if the sponsor's choice is unsuitable for traffic safety reasons. (See "Criteria for Marker Placement" below for tips on selecting a location.)

7. Pay for the Manufacture of the Marker. DHR will notify the foundry that casts the marker and provide it with the final board-approved text. **The foundry will bill the sponsoring organization directly upon shipment of the marker to the appropriate VDOT district office for installation.** Markers currently cost \$1,550, including shipping, and the foundry only accepts a check or money order in payment for a marker. **In certain situations the sponsor may be responsible for covering the expenses associated with installing a sign.** The marker is the property of the Commonwealth of Virginia. In addition to the title and text, the marker will bear only the identification number assigned to it by the Department of Historic Resources, the seal of the Commonwealth, and the following signature line: "Department of Historic Resources, [date]." The name of the sponsoring individual or organization cannot be included. The marker is silver-painted cast aluminum with black uppercase and lowercase letters (the text appears on both sides of the marker) and is approximately 42 by 40 inches.

8. Hold an Unveiling Ceremony. NOTE: The process for ordering and manufacturing markers is determined by a number of variable factors including the work load of this agency and VDOT, as well as manufacturing and shipping delays arising at the foundry; thus, **DHR cannot be held responsible for meeting local deadlines for any planned dedication event.** For that reason, if a sponsoring organization or individual desires to hold an unveiling ceremony, the Department of Historic Resources **should be notified and consulted well in advance** about the schedule in order to coordinate the with the foundry and VDOT the marker's timely arrival and installation prior to a ceremony. Scheduling of a ceremony should only be fixed by the sponsor after DHR and the foundry can confirm a realistic shipping date for a marker. DHR also asks that it be included in the dedication ceremony so that one of our representatives can attend and make a few brief remarks. Usually, the department in consultation with the sponsor sends out a press release to local media announcing the marker ceremony.

Highway Marker Writing Style

To ensure stylistic consistency among state markers, DHR staff will revise and edit draft texts. The goal is to provide as much accurate and interesting information as possible in a limited space. Sponsors can assist us by following these suggestions when writing their drafts.

- Aim for 90 to 100 words; it is better to be a little long than short
- Spell out numbers less than 10, otherwise use Arabic numerals (one, two, etc., but 10, 237, 10,000, etc.).

- Do not use honorary titles such as Mr. and Mrs., but **do use** and abbreviate occupational titles and ranks (the Rev., Col., Maj. Gen., Dr., etc.).
- Use military style for dates; abbreviate months (7 Dec. 1941).
- Do not use commas before or after Jr., Sr., II, etc. (e.g. James Brown Jr. was secretary of the board).
- Write nicknames as follows: Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson.
- On Civil War subjects, write "Civil War," not "War Between the States." Give an individual's rank at the time of the event being discussed on the marker.
- On Seven Years' War subjects, write "Seven Years' War," not "French and Indian War."
- On first use, give a person's full name as he or she used it or as it is best known (e.g. Alexander Graham Bell; Maggie L. Walker), but on subsequent use only the last name.

For advice on writing concisely and vigorously, refer to the *Elements of Style* by William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White. DHR uses the 14th edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* as its authority on copy style. Markers are intended to present historically accurate information in as objective a fashion as possible. Therefore, markers will not editorialize or assign value judgment to events or people. Unless there is sufficient documentary evidence to establish authenticity without question, no "firsts" or other superlative terms will be used. As markers are intended to be permanent features of the landscape, please also avoid making observations in the text about current conditions of buildings or land. The text should be submitted with the understanding that it will likely undergo further editing and revision by DHR staff in consultation with the sponsor or original author.

Criteria for Marker Placement

To ensure that highway markers are accessible to motorists and can most effectively educate the traveling public, the Virginia Department of Transportation assumes the responsibility of approving the site for a new marker and maintaining it once it is erected. (Please note that a few local jurisdictions handle the maintenance of the markers, since they are responsible for maintaining the roadways in their locality. Also, in some jurisdictions the sponsor could be responsible for paying for the installation of the sign.) The final location of the marker is based on the following criteria:

Safety. It is expected that travelers will need to pull off the road to read the marker, and then reenter the highway; they must be able to do so conveniently and safely. Hence, markers must be placed so that they do not block drivers' lines of sight when making turns or create traffic hazards when travelers stop to read the marker.

Markers also must be placed where they are least likely to be struck by motor vehicles or otherwise endanger motorists or the markers. Curves, industrial or commercial intersections, congested areas and similar hazardous places should be avoided whenever possible.

Visibility. The marker should be placed in a safe but relatively high-traffic area, so that it can be read by the largest possible number of travelers. Given the choice between a secondary road and a primary road, the marker will be placed on a primary road. Markers are not permitted on interstate or other limited access highways, except in rest areas.

Location. Ideally, the marker should be placed as close as possible to the site it commemorates. Sometimes, however, because of traffic conditions, the remoteness of the site, or other reasons, the marker must be placed some distance away.

Cost efficiency. It is more cost effective to place the sign at an existing turnout or wide shoulder rather than construct one. Sometimes, however, it is necessary to clear a pull-off area, because markers cannot be read from a moving vehicle.

Placement on private property. State markers are usually placed in VDOT rights-of-way or on public property. Under special circumstances they may be placed on private property (usually because of highway conditions) if the owner gives VDOT, in writing, access rights for maintenance purposes.

**Virginia Department of Historic Resources
Historical Highway Marker Information**

This information form is designed to provide the Virginia Department of Historic Resources with the necessary data to be able to evaluate this potential marker topic.

Proposed Marker Topic:

Proposed Physical Location of Marker:

(Please attach a map showing the proposed location for the marker. Also, review “**Criteria for Marker Placement**” for more information on how to determine an appropriate site.)

Physical address (e.g., 2801 Kensington Avenue, U.S Rte. 1, 3 miles east of Richmond):

City or County where proposed marker would be located:

Location of event being commemorated or site associated with topic, *if the marker will not be placed at the actual historic site.* (If the two sites are different, please be sure to indicate each one on the map submitted as part of the application package.):

How far away (e.g., yards, miles) is the historic site from the proposed marker site (if applicable):

Why can't the marker be placed at the historic site discussed in the marker (if applicable)?

Is the proposed marker associated with a “mitigation” agreement stemming from a federal 106 environmental review project? If so, please provide details about who is involved with the project and the appropriate project codes.

Proposed Text for the Marker: (Please consult the “Highway marker Writing Style” for details. It is often helpful to seek assistance from local and regional historical associations and governmental entities in researching and crafting the proposed text. Please remember that changes to the submitted text are likely to be made by this department’s staff, the marker editorial committee, and/or members of the Board of Historic Resources when deemed necessary so that the marker’s text conforms to the marker program criteria and writing style. To provide assistance in drafting text, examples of recently approved marker texts are available from DHR upon request.)

Bibliographical Sources Consulted. A minimum of three sources is required. **Please photocopy and attach each source.** Each bibliographical source listed below should include the following information: author, title, and publisher, the publisher's location [City and State], and date of publication.):

Sponsor Information (For more than one sponsor, please use a separate sheet. If the author of the text is different from the sponsor, please provide that person's contact information in the space provided below.)

(Name)	(Organization)	
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(Address)	(City) (Zip Code)	(State)
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(Email Address)

(Daytime telephone including area code)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

By signing this agreement you confirm that you have funding to pay for a state historical highway marker (\$1,550). In certain situations the sponsor could be responsible for expense associated with installing a sign. The sign is the property of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

• • Signature required for processing all applications. • •

In the event of organization sponsorship you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person: _____

Daytime Telephone: () Email address: _____

Author's Information (If the author of the text is different from the sponsor, please provide that person's contact information here.)

(Name)	(Organization)	
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(Address)	(City) (Zip Code)	(State)
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(Email Address)

(Daytime telephone including area code)

NOTE: If the marker proposed is on a specific property or references a specific physical property, the Department of Historic Resources needs the property owner's information and signature prior to reviewing the proposal. Please provide the same below:

Mr. Mrs.
Ms. Miss

(Name)	(Firm)	
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(Address)	(City) (Zip Code)	(State)
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(Email Address)

(Daytime telephone including area code)

Property Owner _____ Date: _____
Signature: _____

Notification

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for the department to confer with or notify local officials of proposed markers. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator or City Manager.

Mr. Mrs. Dr.
Miss Ms. Hon.

(Name)

(Position)

(Locality)

(Address)

(City)

(State)

(Zip Code)

(Daytime telephone including area code)

If you wish to have an unveiling/dedication ceremony, please provide a proposed date for the event: