

# Civil War Trail signs unveiled commemorating Haymarket historic events

By E. BRUCE DAVIS  
 Observer staff

At 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 6, the Town of Haymarket will be formally recognized for its most crucial role in determining the outcome of the Civil War.

Two Civil War Trail signs will be unveiled, commemorating the historic events that took place in Haymarket and the people who served, suffered and died there.

The ceremony will mark the 142nd anniversary of the Nov. 5, 1862, burning down of the town by the federal troops under the command of General Adolph Von Steinwehr.

"One sign is called 'Civilian Hardship,' and it will address action that took place all around Haymarket," said Mark Trbovich, a member of the Bull Run Civil War Round Table. "It will mention the prominent generals: Lee, Jackson, Longstreet, Custer and Von Steinwehr, who graced the town."

The 17th and 8th Virginia Regiments, which included Haymarket men and others who were trained in town, also will be honored on this sign as will the members of the 11th Alabama Infantry who died during a measles epidemic near St. Paul's Church.

It will further recognize the burning down of the town, which Von Steinwehr ordered two days after the bushwhacking of a federal soldier. Apparently only three houses were left standing, and St. Paul's Church was gutted.

The second sign addresses the Gettysburg Trail of JEB Stuart and his men. A chance encounter with Federal General Hancock's troops in Haymarket caused him to change his route to Gettysburg. He had been called General Robert E. Lee's eyes, so the resulting eight days the two were without communication may have cost the Confederacy its chance to prevail in the Battle of Gettysburg.

Some historians believe that had Stuart made it to Gettysburg on time, Lee could have chosen a vantage point with a much better chance for success. Instead, Lee did not send out his cavalry because he was waiting to hear from Stuart.

The Civil War Trail signs, which will be displayed at the end of a stone walk adjacent to the historic museum, are long overdue for a town with such vital history. They became a reality because a number of people worked to acquire them for the town.

Trbovich and Prince William County's Historical Manager Brandon Hanafin took a drive out to Haymarket on a cold morning last February.

Trbovich had the idea for a trail sign for Stuart's Haymarket en-



Michelle Neal-Heard standing in area next to the Museum where the signs will be placed. E. Bruce Davis / the Bull Run Observer

counter, but he didn't want it in front of a commercial establishment.

He and Hanafin were delighted to find the town had a historical museum, a perfect spot for the sign. The late Sarah Turner asked them to come to a monthly meeting, and in April, Trbovich and Hanafin had connected with the Haymarket Historical Commission.

Chairperson Michelle Neal-Heard and the other commission members were excited about the prospect of Civil War Trail Signs in Haymarket; therefore, Neal-Heard proposed the idea to the town council for budget approval. The Haymarket Historical Commission funded the Civil War Trail Signs, which should draw interest from local residents and tourists.

"Tourism is the third largest industry in Virginia," stated

Trbovich. "Over a million Civil War Trails fliers are circulated a year."

Some enthusiasts make a tour of the trails, traveling from stop to stop by motor coach. It is anticipated tourists would help support the shops within the town.

"I hope this will bring more people to the museum," said Neal-Heard. "Through tourism I hope people will see Haymarket as more than a little town. The next step is for the museum to bring in more artifacts."

The signs will describe what happened here in the Civil War and that both sides were here. Families lost their homes and had to provide food and shelter. The church was used as a hospital, and many caught diseases."

Trbovich is responsible for preparing the text on the JEB Stuart

sign. Neal-Heard, Ellie Ivancic, Natasha Sigorsky and Sheila Jarboe worked as members of the Haymarket Historical Commission with Trbovich to write the text of the "Civilian Hardship" sign.

Mitch Bowman, executive director of Virginia Civil War Trails, will be unable to attend the ceremony, but he is clearly excited about Haymarket's signs.

"Those signs will complete the 350th Civil War Trail sites in Virginia," he said. "And they will be grouped and linked with more than 100 sites, beginning with Manassas in Virginia and continuing through Maryland into Pennsylvania, and portions of West Virginia, and they tell the story of the Gettysburg invasion and retreat."

The unveiling of the signs will be handled and witnessed by the members of the Haymarket Historical Commission, Mayor David Taylor and Trbovich.

Speakers at the ceremony will include Gainesville Supervisor John Stirrup, Neal-Heard, Taylor and Susan Gray, the Virginia Civil War Trails Region Four chairperson and curator of the Fairfax Museum.

Trbovich will be the last to speak prior to a bugler playing "Taps" to honor those who died in Haymarket during the Civil War. After the ceremony, everyone will proceed to the front of the museum, where war relics will be on display. Beverages and finger foods will be served nearby.

"I would like to see at least 100 show up for the ceremony," said Neal-Heard. "We're making programs and are sending out invitations, as well as advertising the event."

For more information about the Civil War Trails signs and related information, go to [civilwartrails.org](http://civilwartrails.org) or call 1-888-CIVIL WAR and 1-888-248-4597.



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