



**1864 – 2014:  
The Year of Suffering  
and Perseverance**

1864 was arguably the most challenging and decisive year of the conflict—for the nation and, specifically, for Vermont. The enormous casualties suffered by Vermonters in the Wilderness and the rest of Grant's Overland Campaign would define the state for the rest of the 19th century. The St. Albans raid brought the war home in a different way. It was also the year of a critical presidential election. And so the year may serve as a reminder that although Vermonters sometimes think of themselves as isolated or insulated from some external forces, they are always vulnerable to powers and influences from beyond their borders.



**1865 – 2015:  
The Year of Reckoning  
and Reckoning Deferred**

The war transformed the nation, yet left much unfinished business. Even after slavery was defeated in this long and bloody war, African Americans would endure another hundred years and more violence before gaining full civil rights through the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and 1965 Voting Rights Act. Americans can learn much about this unfinished business by examining the troubled history of how the Civil War has been remembered. Previous commemorations, especially during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with aging former combatants shaking hands across battle lines, symbolized the reunion of white north and white south at the expense of disenfranchised black Americans.

Vermont  
**CIVIL WAR**  
SESQUICENTENNIAL

*We hope the Sesquicentennial events will reflect a generation of new scholarship, broader institutional collaboration, and local community engagement.*

*Framework accepted by the Vermont Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission. May 18, 2010*

*Chair: Mark Hudson, Director, Vermont Historical Society.*

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**CIVIL WAR**  
SESQUICENTENNIAL

**2011 – 2015**

*Framework for  
Vermont's 150th  
Commemoration  
of the Civil War*



October 2010

# Vermont CIVIL WAR SESQUICENTENNIAL



## 1860/61 – 2010/11: The Year When Democracy Was Tested

The theme for this year could focus on the Secession Winter of 1860/1861 and the near collapse of the American political system following decades of escalating conflict and failed compromises over the issue of slavery. 2010/2011 may be an appropriate period to examine the debate about slavery both nationally and in Vermont and to reflect on the question of how fundamental disagreements can and should be resolved in a democratic political system.



## 1862 – 2012: The Year of Higher Moral Purpose

The campaign of 1862 began in the east with defeat on the Peninsula and ended with defeat at Fredericksburg. By year's end the Union Army had been organized into a massive fighting force and it had become apparent that victory over the Confederacy would be enormously difficult and costly. Lincoln redefined the purpose of the war in the Emancipation Proclamation, articulating a new moral underpinning to the call for sustained national sacrifice. Under this mantle of higher purpose and vision, the Land Grant College Act, championed by Vermont Congressman Justin Morrill, was passed by Congress and signed by President Lincoln.



## 1863 – 2013: The Year of the Citizen Soldier — War, Politics, and the Home Front

Vermont soldiers distinguished themselves at the Battle of Gettysburg in July 1863. And two critical developments that year affected which citizens would become soldiers. The military began to draft eligible men, leading to substantial upheaval in Vermont, including rioting in West Rutland, and African Americans were allowed to enlist for the first time, including many from Vermont. The theme for this year could focus on the changing circumstances of Vermont's citizen soldiers and those they left behind—from the experiences of Vermonters who fought at Gettysburg and elsewhere during the Civil War, to the stories of Vermonters who have served overseas in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere today.

For the next five years Vermont has the opportunity to share its Civil War history with visitors and Vermonters during the 150th anniversary of the Civil War. Many states, National Parks, history museums, and historical organizations are planning exhibits, events, scholarly efforts, and commemorations, and Vermont is among them.

The Vermont Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission, chaired by Vermont Historical Society Director Mark Hudson, is leading the state-wide efforts to develop, coordinate, and market Vermont's Civil War Sesquicentennial activities.

In recent months the commission has worked to develop a Framework for Vermont's 150th Commemorations of the Civil War. The purpose of the framework is to suggest themes that might guide the development and scheduling of events and programs that address Vermont's involvement in the Civil War—including how Vermonters impacted the outcome of military actions and ideological thought—and with equal importance—how Vermont's involvement impacted those remaining at home in Vermont during and after the war years.

The commission invites your participation!

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## Framework for Vermont's 150th Commemoration of the Civil War

*Vermont's 2011 – 2015 Civil War commemorations provide the opportunity to better understand not only how the Civil War fundamentally changed American society, but also how the war's legacy continues to play itself out today. A thoughtful reconsideration of the war and its continuing impact can be timely, relevant and illuminating.*

**For more information,  
to learn how you can become involved, or to  
share your plans, please contact  
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