



**ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT**  
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**NEWS RELEASE** *for Immediate Release*

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**Civil War Trails Blazes a New Path for History Travel in St. Mary's County**

**Leonardtown, MD** - Civil War Trails, Inc. has teamed up with the St. Mary's County Museum Division, Visit St. Mary's MD, Historic Sotterley and the Maryland Department of Conservation and Recreation and to revamp all six Civil War Trails sites in St. Mary's County.

Earlier this month, the first of six new signs was installed at Historic Sotterley, officially launching the effort which is scheduled to be completed before the fall travel season. Sotterley's new Civil War Trails sign tells a "fuller story," which now includes information about the former enslaved men who served with distinction in the United States Colored Troops. Together, the group will thoroughly research the five remaining sites in the county and produce new signs for each. In addition, the team will shift sign locations to improve accessibility and wayfinding.

The Civil War Trails program connects visitors to more than 1,200 sites across six states. The program's signature signs bring the modern landscape to life as visitors stand in the footsteps of soldiers, citizens and those fighting for their freedom. Each Civil War Trails site is marketed internationally by state tourism offices, destination marketing organizations and municipal partners. "Every day, we deliver economic development by the carload," said Drew Gruber, Executive Director of Civil War Trails. "Places off the beaten path, personal stories, experiences and unique amenities are exactly what our visitors are after - and St. Mary's County delivers in every category."

The Civil War Trails program continues to experience record visitation each year, providing a strong return on investment and revenue for local jurisdictions. "The best way to learn about the Civil War is by traveling Maryland's five Civil War Trails," says Tom Riford, Assistant Secretary, Maryland Department of Commerce Division of Marketing, Tourism, Film and the Arts. "Maryland's trails have inspired travelers from around the world to leave the interstates and take the state's scenic and historic routes to battlefields and beyond to places such as Sotterley Plantation. These travelers then visit our cities and towns where they shop, dine and spend the night thereby creating some of the economic impact which helps to save each Maryland household more than \$1,140 per year."

Civil War Trails is part of the extensive menu that the St. Mary's County Department of Economic Development, the St. Mary's County Museum Division and Visit St. Mary's MD, the county's destination marketing organization, offers to visitors. "Learning about Civil War history is one of the many experiences our visitors can have in St. Mary's County. With a vast history,

amazing waterfront, unique festivals and boundless opportunity, we invite everyone to experience St. Mary's County for themselves.” said Jason Aul, Executive Director of Visit St. Mary’s MD.

To compliment the work being done throughout St. Mary’s County, the Maryland Office of Tourism is reprinting its popular Civil War Trails map-guides. In addition, Civil War Trails, Inc. has launched a GPS-enabled page on their website to aid travelers. For more information, please contact Civil War Trails, Inc. at 757-378-5462. Connect with us on social media @civilwartrails #openairmuseum.

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