



LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

Sandra Gioia Treadway
Librarian of Virginia

Ordinance of Secession to Be on Display on April 16

Contact: Janice M. Hathcock

For Immediate Release

804-692-3592

The Library of Virginia houses a unique and important document related to Virginia's Civil War history—the Ordinance of Secession. The Ordinance will be on public view at the Library of Virginia from 9:00 AM to 5 PM on Saturday, April 16, 2011. In addition to the Ordinance of Secession, the Library will display archival records that document the emancipation of African Americans by Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and passage of the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Among the items on view will be the journal of the 1864 Virginia Constitutional Convention that banned slavery and cohabitation records that formalized marriages between enslaved African Americans.

On April 17, 1861, after months of debate, the Virginia Convention of 1861 voted 88 to 55 to repeal Virginia's ratification of the Constitution of the United States, effectively withdrawing from the Union. For final approval, the secession referendum had to be submitted to the electorate for their ratification on May 23. Secessionists carried the day and Virginia was officially out of the Union. Members of the convention, on June 14, signed a specially created parchment text of the Ordinance of Secession. In May 1861, the secretary of the Virginia Convention commissioned a skilled Richmond artisan, William Flegenheimer, to inscribe a ceremonial copy of the Ordinance of Secession on parchment, which was signed by 142 members.

Flegenheimer's parchment disappeared from Richmond in 1865 during the final chaotic days of the war when Charles W. Bullis, a United States soldier from New York, carried it home with him. In 1887, his widow sold the Ordinance of Secession to a collector. Following the death of the collector and his son, the original document was returned in 1929 to Richmond, where it was authenticated and placed in the collection of the then-Virginia State Library.

The display of the Ordinance of Secession and the Emancipation items is part of the *Second Annual Civil War and Emancipation Day: The 150th Anniversaries* sponsored by the Future of Richmond's Past, a partnership of nearly 20 organizations. Participating museums are offering free admission and special programs on April 16.

###

800 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

www.lva.virginia.gov

804.692.3500 *phone*
804.692.3976 *tyy*

About the Library of Virginia

The Library of Virginia (www.lva.virginia.gov), located in historic downtown Richmond, holds the world's most extensive collection of material about the Old Dominion and has been a steward of the commonwealth's documentary and printed heritage since 1823. The story of Virginia and Virginians has been told in many ways since 1607. At the Library of Virginia it is told through more than 110 million manuscripts and more than 1.9 million books, serials, bound periodicals, microfilm reels, newspapers and state and federal documents, each an individual tile in the vast and colorful mosaic of Virginia's experience.