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**Off the Shelf:**

An e-mail newsletter from the Prince William Public Library System  
July 15, 2011  
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By the time 2011 comes to a close, we will all know the meaning of the formerly obscure term “sesquicentennial” -- thanks to this summer’s Sesquicentennial of the Civil War commemorations. Of course, here in Prince William County, this 150th anniversary holds special significance, as the County was situated in the epicenter of the drama. What a perfect time to learn more about the significance of our history and also expose children to this turbulent period of American history.

- The premier event this summer will be the July 23rd and 24th reenactment of the Battle of First Manassas (Bull Run). Events go on all day, with various tent programs such as “Patriots in Disguise”, “Medical Advances in War”, and “The Scourge of Slavery”, and most compelling of all, a large scale reenactment of this pivotal battle. Check out all the events and details via the website at: <http://www.manassasbullrun.com/index.cfm>
- On the same weekend, multiple events involving artillery demonstrations and tours will take place at the Manassas Battlefield itself.
- For your personal commemoration of major event in our history, you may want to research your personal history by locating records relating to your Civil War ancestor. Start in the RELIC Room at the Bull Run Regional Library, where the staff will be happy to show you resources such as free access to Ancestry.com in the library. If you need extra help, take advantage of their “The Genealogy Doctor is In” program, and set up a 30 minute personal appointment with local history and genealogy librarian, Don Wilson. Call 703-792-4540 or email them at relic2@pwcgov.org/library to book a timeslot.
- For a vivid sense of living and dying in the midst of the upheaval of the battle, you may be interested in attending a “You Are There” living history program at the County’s historic Ben Lomond site on July 23rd. During the show, you are invited to experience the chaos of a Civil War hospital thanks to a first-person interpretive program. Walking through the house, you will encounter Confederate doctors, officers, clergy, wounded and dying soldiers and their relatives who struggle to cope with the sorrow, emotional turmoil, and disruption of war. There is a small ticket charge, and tickets may be obtained by calling 703-367-7872.

Many other events will be held the weekend of 7/23 and 7/24, and all summer long, not to mention for the next four years. If you don’t like crowds, however, you may want to have the “you are here” Civil War experience in the pages of a novel. “March” by Geraldine Brooks or “My Name is Mary Sutter” by Robin Oliveira, both very personal stories of strong individuals who find themselves in the midst of devastating change due to the Civil War, are recent compelling stories you may enjoy.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

We are halfway through the summer, as unbelievable as that may sound to children, and as appealing as that clearly is to adults. There is still plenty of time to take part in the library’s Summer Reading program, SummerQuest, to earn prizes and attend wonderful

programs for free. Teens can join the Wild Reads reading program, and earn entries in a drawing for prizes. Moms, Dads and grandparents can relax with a good novel or a current magazine while the kids stay cool and entertained. It's a win-win situation in these current economic times – all free, and all fun. Stop by your local branch or check out our website at <http://www.pwcv.gov.org/library> for more information about all our programs.

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