



ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEASTERN RESEARCH LIBRARIES

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ASERL Launches www.american-south.org Website to Commemorate Civil War Sesquicentennial

ATLANTA — (April 4, 2011) — Over the past 18 months, members of the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL) have been developing a new, collaborative web portal to provide one-stop access to materials about the American Civil War Era, 1850 through 1865. The new website, www.american-south.org, was launched today to connect users to primary-source materials held across ASERL libraries about the intellectual and cultural underpinnings of the Civil War. The site currently links to more than 3,600 digitized items, and is expected to grow to more than 5,000 items in the near future.

“ASERL libraries have vast and uniquely valuable collections relating to the American Civil War Era,” commented John Ulmschneider, ASERL’s Board President and University Librarian at Virginia Commonwealth University. “We knew the sesquicentennial would raise public interest about the War, so we developed this new website to make these once-hidden collections available for scholars, students, and the public to discover, explore, and enjoy.”

ASERL libraries are selecting and digitizing materials from their collections to contribute to this shared website. The items vary from manuscripts and letters to sermons, economic data, and other types of publications. They all share a common link: all were written and published during the Civil War Era, 1850 through 1865, and all document the intellectual and cultural milieu leading up to and defining the Era. The www.american-south.org website was developed for ASERL by the Digital Library of Georgia, and features advanced search functionalities to help users quickly discover the items they seek and to browse the collection by specific filters, including contributing library, format, and other aspects of the collection.

“As research librarians, we are delighted to see this shared collection come online,” noted Ulmschneider. “What would have been disparate, local collections now have increased public visibility and much greater utility for scholars and students, with a single, shared search tool. The www.american-south.org website will become an invaluable tool for researchers, students, and educators as we learn more about the American Civil War.”

About ASERL

Founded in 1956, the Association of Southeastern Research Libraries is the largest regional academic library cooperative in the country, with 38 members in ten states. ASERL operates numerous projects designed to foster a high standard of library excellence through inter-institutional resource sharing and other collaborative efforts. By working together, ASERL members continue to provide and maintain top quality resources and services for the students, faculty, and citizens of their respective communities. More information about ASERL can be found at www.aserl.org.