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New York State Museum Civil War exhibit wins Award of Merit, exhibit extended



This collar, inscribed "J.S. Glenn/ GLENN/ Montgomery Co NY," is tangible evidence of New York State's period of slave-holding. Slave collars were typically used

as a means to control slaves, especially those who resisted their masters. It is part of the exhibition "An Irrepressible Conflict: The Empire State in the Civil War" at the New York State Museum. Photo: New York State Museum.



ALBANY, NY.- The New York State Museum, a program of the New York State Education Department's Office of Cultural Education, has received an Award of Merit from the American Association of State and Local History (AASLH) for its groundbreaking exhibition commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, *An Irrepressible Conflict: The Empire State in the Civil War*. The 7,000 square-foot exhibit, which opened on September 22, 2012 in Exhibition Hall, is now extended through March 23, 2014.

"The New York State Museum continues to be a jewel for all New Yorkers to share," New York State Board of Regents Chancellor Merryl H. Tisch said. "The exhibition features hundreds of important historical artifacts and objects that tell the story of New York State's role in the Civil War. The Board of Regents is proud of Museum Director Mark Schaming and his team at the State Museum. They truly deserve this award."

"This Award of Merit is an acknowledgment of the State Museum team and the collaborators who developed this remarkable exhibit," State Education Department Commissioner John B. King, Jr. said. "The exhibition offers an unparalleled opportunity to learn about the American Civil War. Every New Yorker – indeed every American should understand this defining event in American history that continues to shape the nation. The exhibit provides that understanding in a deep and meaningful way."

For 68 years, the AASLH has bestowed Leadership in History Awards to establish and encourage standards of excellence in the collection, preservation, and interpretation of state and local history in order to make the past more meaningful to all Americans. By publicly recognizing superior and innovative achievements, the Award of Merit serves as an inspiration to others in the field.

"We are especially honored that the American Association of State and Local History has recognized *An Irrepressible Conflict: The Empire State in the Civil War* with a 2013 Award of Merit," said State Museum Director Mark Schaming. "This powerful exhibition that tells the story of the American Civil War from the New York and national perspective is unique, enlightening and memorable. The State Museum is grateful to the AASLH for this nationally significant award."

An Irrepressible Conflict: The Empire State in the Civil War is open through March 24, 2014, in Exhibition Hall. As the wealthiest and most populous state, the Empire State led all others in supplying men, money, and matériel to the causes of unity and freedom. New York's experience provides significant insight into the reasons why the war was fought and the meaning that the Civil War holds today. The exhibition includes a brass collar worn by a slave in Canajoharie, New York, the earliest known photograph of human rights champion Frederick Douglass (on loan from the Onondaga Historical Association), Abraham Lincoln's 1860 life mask (New-York Historical Society), a steel plate made for the USS Monitor (Hudson Mohawk Industrial Gateway), handmade artifacts produced by Confederate prisoners at Elmira Prison (Chemung County Historical Society), and a Ku Klux Klan robe from Greene County, New York.

In addition, the poster for *An Irrepressible Conflict: The Empire State in the Civil War* has won an honorable mention in the American Alliance of Museums 2013 Museum Design Competition. The poster was created by State Museum designer Craig Gravina. The poster can be seen here: <http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/PRkit/2013/irrepressibleconflict/index.html>.

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