



EAST TENNESSEE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Making history personal

— since 1834 —

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Wednesday, April 15, 2015

Contact: Cherel Henderson  
865-215-8823  
Cherel@eastTNhistory.org

## **Blue & Gray Reunion and Freedom Jubilee**

presented by the East Tennessee Historical Society & the  
Knox County Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission in conjunction with the  
Tennessee Civil War Sesquicentennial Signature Event

**April 30- May 3, 2015**  
**Downtown Knoxville & Nearby Sites**

(Knoxville, Tenn.) Knoxville will commemorate the 150th anniversary of the end of the Civil War, April 30 through May 3. A series of programs and activities will highlight Union, Confederate, and African American perspectives, with a focus on Reconstruction, remembrance, and reconciliation.

### **About the Blue & Gray Reunion:**

Visitors are invited to explore Civil War forts, cemeteries, historic homes, museums, special exhibits, and a Civil War Exposition, as well as enjoy living history portrayals, a Blue & Gray Reunion Dinner, a play, music, and vintage base ball games as played during the 1890 reunion.



A Blue & Gray Reunion Dinner will be held on Friday, May 1, with Ron Maxwell, director of the popularly acclaimed films *Gettysburg* and *Gods and General*, as the featured speaker. Music and a short history of Knoxville's 1890 Blue and Gray Reunion will add to the evening's theme. Tickets are \$60 each and must be purchased in advance. To purchase tickets call 865-215-8883 or visit [www.eastTNhistory.org/BlueGray](http://www.eastTNhistory.org/BlueGray).

A "Peace Jubilee" on the evening of May 2 will feature events much like those that took place at the original 1890 reunion. There will be music and excerpts of speeches from the original reunion. A candlelight ceremony will give visitors an opportunity to remember an ancestor who fought in the conflict. Those without an ancestor who fought in the war may adopt an ancestor from a list available at the event. A fireworks finale will commemorate the war's end.

On Sunday, May 3, cemeteries, historic homes, and fort tours will continue in the afternoon. At 8:45 and 11:00 a.m., First Presbyterian Church will host a "Service of Remembrance, Reunion, and Reconciliation for a Nation Divided." At 2:00 p.m., a "Rededication of the Sultana Monument" will commemorate those who died in the Mississippi River explosion of the

steamboat *Sultana*, on April 27, shortly after the war's end. Many East Tennesseans, just released and on the way home from Cahaba Prison, were among the dead and the survivors from the largest maritime accident in the nation's history.

### **About the Freedom Jubilee:**

Events on May 2 will focus on the 1st U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery, with an opening ceremony and color guard, the presentation of records transcriptions to the Beck Cultural Exchange Center, a traveling exhibit, *A Glorious March to Freedom*, and a lecture by Dr. Frank Smith, executive director of the African American Civil War Memorial and Museum. The day will also include activities in Haley Heritage Square, a visit by *Roots* actor Ben Vereen, music, and children's activities. Haley Heritage Square is named for Alex Haley, who spent the latter years of his life in Knoxville and nearby Norris.

All events are open to the public, most are free of charge. There is a small suggested donation to cover transportation for the Civil War Knoxville bus tours.

### **About the Tennessee Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission Signature Events:**

A series of special programs, focusing on the subject of Reconstruction Tennessee," will be presented by the Tennessee Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission, April 30-May 1. A keynote address at the Historic Bijou Theatre, April 30, features the Fisk Jubilee Singers and a lecture by Carolyn E. Janney, Ph.D. A panel discussion on May 1, will include Drs. Todd Groce, Luke Harlow, Bobby L. Lovett, and Tracy McKenzie, with book signings to follow.

"Looking Back: The Civil War in Tennessee," presented by the Tennessee State Library and Archives, invites those with family artifacts and documents from the Civil War to bring them in for documentation and identification and advice on preservation care. To register to bring in your Civil War artifacts please call 615-253-3470 or email [civilwar.tsla@tn.gov](mailto:civilwar.tsla@tn.gov). The Commission will also present a teachers workshop and a day of student programs.

All Tennessee Civil War Sesquicentennial Signature Event programs are free and open to the public. Registration, however, is required by emailing [tn.civilwar150@tn.gov](mailto:tn.civilwar150@tn.gov) or calling (615) 532-7520.

The Civil War Signature Event is jointly sponsored by the Tennessee Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission, Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, Tennessee Historical Society, Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, Knox County Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission, East Tennessee Historical Society, and Visit Knoxville. **For the full list of Blue & Gray Reunion and Peace Jubilee events and details, please visit [www.easttnhistory.org/BlueGray](http://www.easttnhistory.org/BlueGray).**

###