

Scholars

Blogging to Share Our Research on Southern Communities

Southern Rambles has been up and running for a year! The goal of the blog is to reflect the diversity and depth of the CHP's many community-based initiatives. We're proud that the blog had about 12,000 views in its inaugural year.

Both staff and graduate students contribute regularly to *Southern Rambles*, which provides a great opportunity for our students to share their research and enhance their portfolios. In fact, our most popular blog post in 2014 was written by Lydia Simpson, a Ph.D. student who is completing her dissertation on a rayon mill village near Rome, Georgia, that was active from 1929 to 1976.

Lydia's post, "[Riverside Village: Evolution of a Mill Town in Southern Appalachia](#)," combined the story of her family's ties to Riverside Village, her research into how the village changed over time, and her interest in the preservation of this historic community. Both current and former residents used the blog's comment feature to share their own memories of growing up in the village.

Lydia is now looking into developing a crowd-sourcing application in order to capture more responses from community members. "It also confirmed for me that I needed to be on the ground in Rome," she says, "working directly with this very vibrant community, to gain a deeper understanding of the village's recent past, its relationship to the community, and the potential for larger-scale preservation and interpretation projects about industrialization in the region."

We look forward to continued synergy between the blog and our students' research. Be sure to follow *Southern Rambles* and give us your feedback. —*Antoinette van Zelm*



Partners

The Sesquicentennial of Reconstruction



The [Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area](#) is pleased to join with several state and local partners to sponsor the 2015 Signature Event, "[Reconstruction Tennessee](#)," from April 30 to May 1 in Knoxville.

Dr. Caroline E. Janney, professor of history at Purdue University and author of *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (2013), will deliver the event's keynote address at the Bijou Theatre on April 30. Living history, addresses by local dignitaries, and a special performance by the internationally acclaimed Fisk Jubilee Singers round out the program.

Roundtable discussions by renowned Civil War experts on the topic of Reconstruction in Tennessee will feature Todd Groce, president and chief executive officer of the Georgia Historical Society; Bobby L. Lovett, professor emeritus at Tennessee State University; Luke Harlow, professor of history at the University of Tennessee Knoxville; and Tracy McKenzie, professor of history and department chair at Wheaton College.



The "Reconstruction Tennessee" Signature Event is free and open to the public, but reservations are recommended. To learn more or to register, e-mail tn.civilwar150@tn.gov or call 615-532-7520. For more about the Heritage Area's ongoing projects related to Reconstruction, see "[Reconstruction: The Time That Shaped the Tennessee of Today](#)" on our blog. —*Laura Holder*

Left: Old Gray Cemetery in Knoxville is the final resting place of a number of Reconstruction figures, such as Governor William G. Brownlow.

Leaders

Trials and Triumphs Digital Collection

The Center for Historic Preservation and Walker Library have created an online digital collection on the history of the “Jim Crow” era of segregation in Tennessee. Spearheaded by CHP director Dr. Carroll Van West, *Trials and Triumphs: Tennesseans' Search for Citizenship, Community, and Opportunity* received funding from the Tennessee Board of Regents, which allowed for statewide field research and the creation of a mobile interface that works easily on hand-held devices. For me and my colleague Leigh Ann Gardner, crisscrossing the state to meet with more than twenty potential contributing repositories was the best part of the project. We went to public libraries, cultural centers, and archives in search of unique artifacts and documents that could be captured in digital form to tell powerful stories of African American Tennesseans between Reconstruction and the end of World War II.



Turn of the Century Nurses, circa 1900s, Beck Cultural Exchange Center. Taken before a cloth backdrop, this posed group portrait shows a group of African American and white women wearing high-collared, long-sleeved blouses, white nurses' pinafores, and white caps. They have what appear to be Red Cross emblems on the left sleeve, which suggests that they may have been in training for the public health service or other early efforts of the American Red Cross.

[Accompanying Lesson Plan](#), courtesy of Teaching with Primary Sources—MTSU

Many colleagues across the state helped us create *Trials and Triumphs*. One of them, Knoxville's Robert Booker, knows how rich photographs can be in providing historical detail that is difficult to glean from words. Author of two books and many photographic exhibitions, Booker is the longtime curator and archivist at the Beck Cultural Center in Knoxville. A graduate of Knoxville College, he is also a civil rights advocate who once served in the Tennessee General Assembly. Riding downtown, we crossed into the Old City on a street named in Booker's honor—a placeholder for the fact that when he was young, it was a thriving African American business district.

Be sure to visit *Trials and Triumphs* to learn more. —Susan Knowles

Upcoming

Through Feb. 26: The Heritage Area's "Free at Last! Emancipation and Reconstruction in Tennessee" Traveling Exhibition, Customs House Museum and Cultural Center, Clarksville.
<http://customshousemuseum.org/temporary-exhibits/the-emancipation-proclamation>

February 25 & 26: "Exploring the History of Labor in the United States," [Teaching with Primary Sources—MTSU Workshop](#), East Tennessee History Center, Knoxville, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. EST.

April 15-18: [National Council on Public History Conference](#), Sheraton Nashville Downtown (Session on CHP's Community-Based Preservation on April 18, 10:30 a.m.-Noon).

April 30-May 1: [Tennessee Civil War Sesquicentennial Signature Event](#), "Reconstruction Tennessee," Knoxville Convention Center.



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