



## COMMON BOND: A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2015

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## Formers' Corner

We are excited to begin regularly presenting short videos featuring former CHP graduate students. This is a chance to ask, "Where are they now?" as well as to hear how their experiences working at the CHP helped shape their professional careers in public history.

The first episode features Dr. Katie O'Bryan, a CHP graduate research assistant from 2008 to 2012 (M.A. 2009, Ph.D. 2013) and currently The Land Trust for Tennessee's [Glen Leven Farm](#) Education and Outreach Coordinator. Click on the image to download the video.

## Scholars

### American Democracy Project Promotes Civic Learning

To commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, the [American Democracy Project \(ADP\)](#) has invited Civil Rights luminaries to MTSU for Constitution Day 2015 (September 17) to discuss voting access then and now. We await finalizing the panel and hope the stars align for us! Barriers to voting were historically brutal, but citizens in the present-day must continue to be vigilant for voting access.

ADP national partner Fair Elections Legal Network has filed suit in Tennessee recently for students



*The League of Women Voters registers students to vote at MTSU on Constitution Day 2014. The League is a good friend and community partner of both ADP and the CHP.*

with nonlocal IDs who need to vote using university IDs. MTSU wants to ensure our students vote by having a polling place physically located on campus, in the student union, as at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. The Rutherford County Election Commission hopes the “Convenient Voting Centers” bill passes the legislature in 2016, but the pilot project for Rutherford only places a poll adjacent to campus. Our students want voting “central, not peripheral,” in the words of the National Task Force on Civic Learning.

These and other issues were included in ADP’s presentation to the statewide League of Women Voters meeting this spring. Meanwhile, ADP was awarded a prestigious National Endowment for the Humanities grant to address civil society and religious diversity at Tennessee Board of Regents community colleges. We look forward to great relationships working with our community college colleagues in the months ahead! --*Mary Evins*

## Partners

### Preparing Teachers for Tennessee History Day

**Teaching with Primary Sources** – MTSU partners with several organizations and school districts to offer professional development. Since 2009, we have partnered with the Tennessee Historical Society to offer joint workshops preparing teachers for **Tennessee History Day** (THD), a year-long event culminating in a state-wide competition at the Capitol. THD provides an opportunity for students to engage in original research through primary sources. TPS connects educators with primary sources on the **Library of Congress Web site** and supports critical thinking skills through source analysis and integration into classroom learning. Together, THD and TPS-MTSU are able to pool networks and resources to best serve participating educators.



*Sevier County teacher Rebecca Byrd describes her History Day experiences to participants at a joint TPS-MTSU/THD workshop in Knoxville.*

Every summer, THD and TPS-MTSU travel across the state together to offer workshops for teachers embarking on History Day projects with their students. Participants explore History Day topics--2015's theme was "Leadership and Legacy in History"--and practice research methods, including formulating good questions and writing thesis statements. Workshops for the 2016 History Day cycle will begin this July, with introductory workshops in Memphis, Clarksville, Cookeville, and Cleveland, and a two-day advanced workshop in Johnson City. A schedule will be available [here](#) as dates and times are confirmed. --*Stacey Graham*

## Leaders

### Surveying the Trail of Tears in Nine States

Over 175 years ago, more than 15,000 Cherokee were forced from their homes in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee to Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma. In 1987, Congress designated the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail to commemorate the Cherokees' journey. However, without a systematic survey of the Trail's extant historic buildings, little was known about the Trail's remaining built environment. In 2012, the CHP entered into a partnership with the National Trails Intermountain Region of the National Park Service to change this.



*Although it has been moved from its original location, the Fort Morrow Blockhouse in Polk County, Tennessee, is the only building remaining from a fort used for the Cherokee removal.*

Over the last two years, the CHP has been out **on the road** in nine states, **traveling the Trail's routes** and **documenting its historic buildings**. We have traveled on paved roads and many dirt roads, forded a number of creeks, and even gotten our boots muddy by walking some of the Trail, too. So far, more than 200 buildings have been identified as confirmed or possible resources. While some of these buildings have direct connection to the Trail of Tears, the majority of them simply bore witness to the removal and remain an integral part of the Trail landscape today. The final report of the survey's findings should be complete by the end of 2015. --Amy Kostine

## Upcoming

April 30-May 1: **Tennessee Civil War Sesquicentennial Signature Event**, "Reconstruction Tennessee," Knoxville Convention Center.

May 15-16: Tennessee Decorative Arts Symposium, **Belmont Mansion**, Nashville.

June 23-25: **Teaching with Primary Sources--MTSU Civil War Summer Institute**, "Reconstruction," Tusculum College, Greeneville.

## Updates

**Plowshares and Swords: Tennessee Farm Families Tell Civil War Stories** (2013), by Caneta S. Hankins and Michael T. Gavin, is now available for \$35.00 by e-mailing **Debbie Sager**.



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