

JOIN THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE IN RINGING "BELLS ACROSS THE LAND: A NATION REMEMBERS APPOMATTOX"

News Release from **Fort Vancouver National Historic Site**

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VANCOUVER, WA -- Fort Vancouver National Historic Site will join other units of the National Park Service, partners, and community organizations in a commemorative bell ringing in conjunction with the national "Bells across the Land: A Nation Remembers Appomattox" event at 12:15 p.m. PST on Thursday, April 9, 2015.

For the past four years, the National Park Service and many other organizations and individuals have been commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War and the continuing efforts for human rights today. On April 9, 1865, Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant met Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee to set the terms of surrender of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia.

In conjunction with a major event at Appomattox Court House National Historical Park, the National Park Service and its partners invite communities across the nation to join in this commemoration. The bells will ring first at Appomattox at Noon PST (3:00 p.m. EST) on April 9, 2015. The ringing will coincide with the moment the historic meeting between Grant and Lee in the McLean House at Appomattox Court House ended. While Lee's surrender did not end the Civil War, the act is seen by most Americans as the symbolic end of four years of bloodshed.

After the ringing at Appomattox, bells will reverberate across the country. Churches, temples, schools, city halls, public buildings, historic sites, and others are invited to ring bells precisely at 12:15 p.m. PST (3:15 p.m. EST) for four minutes (each minute symbolic of a year of war). If you have access to any such organizations, please encourage them to participate.

At Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, the bell ringing will take place just north of the reconstructed fort at 1001 E. Fifth St., and will be followed by an artillery salute by costumed Union soldiers representing the First Oregon Volunteer Cavalry, one of the units that served at the post during the Civil War.

"Fort Vancouver National Historic Site is honored to participate in this commemoration," said Superintendent Tracy Fortmann. "As an important US Army post that was familiar to officers and soldiers, both Union and Confederate, and as a fort garrisoned during the Civil War, Fort Vancouver connects the Pacific Northwest to the Civil War and the march toward civil rights. The National Park Service actively interprets the site's military history as well as its fur trade past, and this event gives us another meaningful occasion to do so."

"Many Union officers and several Confederate officers had served at Fort Vancouver prior to the Civil War," said Greg Shine, chief ranger and historian, "and Civil War veteran officers and soldiers returned to the fort and served here for decades afterward."

"Lee's surrender on April 9, 1865 also has particular connections to Fort Vancouver," said Shine. "That afternoon, three generals who had served at Fort Vancouver as young officers -- Ulysses S. Grant, Phillip H. Sheridan, and Edward O.C. Ord -- met just outside the town of Appomattox Court House, and Ord and Sheridan informed Grant of Lee's presence in a nearby farm house."

"How are you, Sheridan?" Grant asked.

"First-rate," Sheridan replied.

"Is General Lee up there?" continued Grant, with a nod toward the town. Sheridan used his arm to accompany his answer. "There is his army down in that valley, and he himself is over in that house waiting to surrender to you."

"Come let us go over," Grant said.

Exchange between Grant, Sheridan and Ord, as quoted in Campaign to Appomattox available online at: http://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/civil_war_series/6/sec6.htm#1

"Additionally, of the fourteen Union officers known to have been present in the room of the McLean House where Lee's surrender took place," Shine said, "at least four of them had served at Fort Vancouver prior to the war. These officers included Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, Maj. Gen. Phillip H. Sheridan, Brig. Gen. Rufus Ingalls, and Maj. Gen. Edward O.C. Ord who commanded Fort Vancouver at the start of the Civil War. The lone Confederate officer accompanying Gen. Lee, Lt. Col. Charles Marshall, was the uncle of Gen. George C. Marshall, commander of Vancouver Barracks in 1936-8 and the namesake of today's Marshall House on Officers Row," said Shine, "so several interesting connections exist to this important date and location in our nation's history."

Individuals and organizations are encouraged to join the event virtually. The bell-ringing at Appomattox will be streamed live online at 12 Noon PST (3:00 p.m. EDT). The live stream is provided by MAGPI and the University of Pennsylvania at: <http://video.magpi.net/videos/livestreams/page1/>

Distance learning opportunities for students grades 5 through 8 will also be streamed online and through distance learning programs. The program, entitled "A New Birth of Freedom" will explore the significance of the surrender at Appomattox Court House and the rise of the Civil Rights movement from this momentous event. The same program will be held at twice, once at 6:45 a.m. PST (9:45 a.m. EDT) and again at 11:30 a.m. PST (2:30 p.m. EDT). The latter program concludes with the bell-ringing event.

A flyer for these opportunities is available. A Teachers' Resource Packet also provides curriculum materials for schools interested in participating. For more information and links to these resources, go to: www.nps.gov/civilwar/civil-war-to-civil-rights.htm.

The end of the Civil War has different meanings to different people. Each organization interested in participating may customize this idea to its own situation. We ask participants to ring bells across the nation as a gesture to mark the end of the bloody conflict in which more than 750,000 Americans perished. Some communities may ring their bells in celebration of freedom or a restored Union, others as an expression of mourning and a moment of silence for the fallen. Sites may ring bells to mark the beginning of reconciliation and reconstruction, or as the next step in

the continuing struggle for civil rights.

Share your story and help us write history!

Schools, parks, and communities from all over the country will be participating in this event. Share how you observed it with #BellsAcrossTheLand2015. Stories will be compiled to see how each one helps build our national story: <https://storify.com/Bells2015/bells-across-the-land-2015>. Please join us in the historic commemoration.

Let bells ring across the land!

More Info:

<http://www.nps.gov/civilwar/civil-war-to-civil-rights.htm>

<http://www.nps.gov/fova/learn/news/bells.htm>

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