



**The *Shared Stories of the Civil War*** project is a partnership between Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area and the Kansas Humanities Council. It features short stories created from historical letters, diaries, newspaper articles, and other materials. Similar to a reader's theater, the stories have been researched and compiled into short scripts. In commemoration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the Civil War and the recognition of events that occurred in Kansas and Missouri during this period in history, the reader's theater scripts explore themes of interest to communities on both sides of the Kansas - Missouri state line. These voices from history provide insight into how 19<sup>th</sup> century Americans struggled with determining the future of our nation and defining the meaning of freedom.

## **How to Host a *Shared Stories* Event**

### Choose a Planner

A *Shared Stories* event coordinator chooses the script topic, downloads the materials from the website, recruits readers and a facilitator, secures the event location, knows how to set up and use the microphone or other equipment needed, publicizes the event, and makes sure scripts are available for audience members at the event.

### Choose the location, date, and time

*Shared Stories* events are ideal for use in public libraries, art centers, museums, senior centers, community theaters, or classrooms. The room should be large enough so that the 6 readers can be seated together facing the audience. There needs to be at least one microphone centrally located so readers can step forward to read their parts.

### Choose readers

The local coordinator will need to recruit 6 readers to read the script out loud at the event. Each reader will be assigned a role as Narrator, Reader 1, Reader 2, Reader 3, and so on. The selection should be done in advance and a copy of the script given to the readers for practice. A practice run-through with all of the readers is encouraged. *Readers should be comfortable using a microphone and speaking in front of a group. You might think about people who serve as readers at their church, teach, or others who enjoy public speaking.*

### Choose a facilitator

At the beginning of the event, the facilitator introduces the *Shared Stories* theme (this material is available with the reader's theater script). At the conclusion of the reading, the facilitator moderates questions and comments from participants. Individuals like local historians, high school history teachers, and museum directors could serve as facilitators.

### At the event

Each audience member should receive a copy of the script, which includes an introductory essay and *Questions to Think About*, as well as a copy of the *Take Home Citations* hand-out. The facilitator opens the program by introducing the theme. Readers read the script, which is then followed by the facilitator moderating questions and comments.