



THE EAST TENNESSEE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

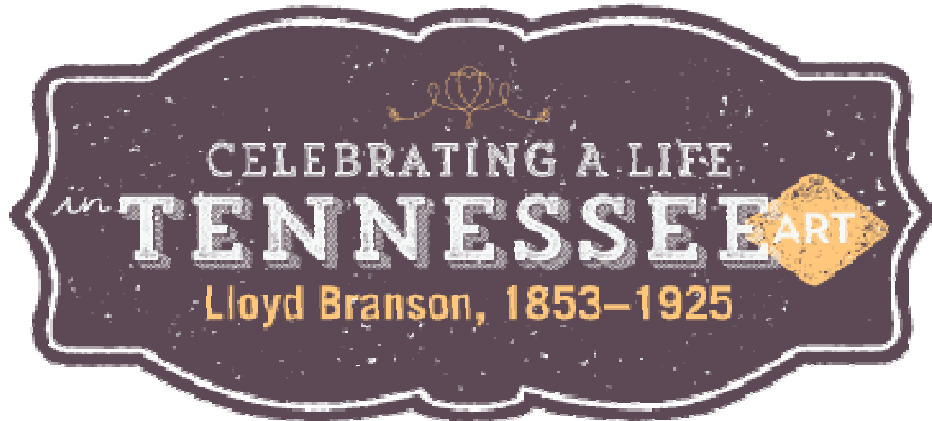
MUSEUM of EAST TENNESSEE HISTORY

Making history personal

**For Immediate Release**

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## **New feature exhibition opening at the Museum of East Tennessee History**

**WHAT:** *Celebrating a Life in Tennessee Art: Lloyd Branson, 1853-1925*, feature exhibition at the Museum of East Tennessee History

**DATE:** Open November 7—March 20, 2016

**LOCATION:** East Tennessee History Center  
601 S. Gay Street  
Knoxville, TN 37902



(Knoxville, TN) *Native genius. Boy artist.* These and other descriptors were often applied to Lloyd Branson, who grew from a precocious sketcher on his family's East Tennessee farm to an accomplished artist best known for his portraits and depictions of early Tennessee history. In a groundbreaking new exhibition, the East Tennessee Historical Society will present the first major retrospective of Branson's life, works of art, and legacy. The exhibition features an unprecedented gathering of more than 40 of Branson's paintings that tell the remarkable story of the ambitions and achievements of the artist and his region.

Lloyd Branson came of age in a community experiencing the wrenching transformation of the Civil War and the extraordinary growth that followed. The young artist's unmistakable talent opened the opportunity for him to study at the National Academy of Design in New York City, where he honed his skills and won acclaim. Branson returned to a bustling Knoxville and established a downtown art emporium with photographer Franklin B. McCrary, providing a unique vantage to both document and participate in the city's growth.

Branson vividly captures the excitement of Tennessee's Revolutionary past and early settlement in paintings such as *The Gathering of the Overmountain Men at Sycamore Shoals* and commemorates the state's part in the crisis of the Union with his striking portrait of Admiral David Farragut. Branson's design for Knoxville's flag, adopted by the chamber of commerce in 1896, evokes the pride and optimism of the rising city. Museum visitors also will view the last work of Branson's distinguished career, a portrait of World War I hero Alvin York, which Branson regarded as one of his finest accomplishments.

Branson painted numerous prominent figures in politics, business, and education, but some of his most heralded work portrayed work itself. His *Hauling of Marble*, one of several depictions of the local quarry industry, won a gold medal at Knoxville's 1910 Appalachian Exposition. Paintings of local agriculture such as *Women at Work* led the *New York Times* to declare approvingly, "Mr. Lloyd Branson takes hold of everyday life with courage." The exhibition features a rare still-life and landscapes that highlight the artist's skill as well as his love for Tennessee's natural beauty. The retrospective also explores Branson's role as a mentor and teacher to fellow artists, including Catherine Wiley and Beauford Delaney.



*Women at Work*, 1891, oil on canvas. Loaned by the Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection, Knox County Public Library

The exhibition is made possible through cooperation with the Branson Art Organization (<http://www.bransonart.org/>) and is sponsored by John Z. C. Thomas and an anonymous donor. It will be on display at the Museum of East Tennessee History in Knoxville through March 20, 2016. Following its run at the Museum of East Tennessee History the exhibit will be on view at the Tennessee State Museum in Nashville from July 2016 through March 2017.

The Museum of East Tennessee History is open 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday; 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, Saturday; and 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm, Sunday. Museum admission is \$5.00 for adults, \$4.00 for seniors, and FREE for children under 16. Each Sunday admission is FREE to all and ETHS members always receive FREE admission. The Museum is located in the East Tennessee History Center, 601 South Gay Street, Knoxville, TN 37901. For more information about the exhibition, scheduling a school tour, or visiting the museum, call (865) 215-8824, email [eths@eastTNhistory.org](mailto:eths@eastTNhistory.org), or visit [www.easttnhistory.org](http://www.easttnhistory.org).

**About East Tennessee Historical Society**

Established in 1834, the East Tennessee Historical Society is widely acknowledged as one of the most active history organizations in the state and enjoys a national reputation for excellence in programming and education. For 181 years the East Tennessee Historical Society has been helping East Tennesseans hold on to our unique heritage—recording the events, collecting the artifacts, and saving the stories that comprise the history we all share.

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