

MOUNT AIRY, N.C. — Descendants of the famous Siamese Twins will hold their 30th annual reunion July 19-20 in Mount Airy with a mix of public and private events.

More than 200 family members are expected to attend the gathering, which celebrates the lives of Eng and Chang Bunker, conjoined identical twins who toured the world to much fanfare in the 1800s before settling into northwest North Carolina and raising two families and 21 children.

The twins originally located to Wilkes County before marrying sisters and putting down roots in neighboring Surry County in a farming community just outside Mount Airy.

Over the past decade, the reunion has drawn the attention of officials at the Thai embassy in Washington and in their native Thailand, which was known as Siam in those days.

Delegations from the Thai embassy in Washington and the Province of Samut Songkhram in Thailand will attend the reunion to participate in a private signing of a Sister Cities agreement between Mount Airy and Samut Songkhram.

Public activities over the two days include guided tours of the Siamese Twins Exhibit at the Surry Arts Council, which is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Guests are encouraged to visit the twins' gravesite at White Plains Baptist Church anytime.

A free documentary on the twins' lives will be shown on Friday at 1 p.m. at the Earle Theater on Main Street. The Earle also hosts a free presentation by Bunker descendants about their recent trip to Thailand. That presentation takes place Friday at 11 a.m.

The reunion is chaired by Surry Arts Council executive director Tanya Jones, a great-great-granddaughter of Eng Bunker. Jones estimates there are more than 1,500 descendants of Eng and Chang, who lived from 1811 to 1874.

Expected to attend are Chang's great-granddaughter, Alex Sink, who narrowly lost the 2010 Florida gubernatorial race, along with local leaders and government officials.

"Eng and Chang were very bright and resourceful and overcame so much in their lives," Jones said. "Scholars find their lives interesting and worthy of study. Descendants who decide to pursue studies related to the twins are unbelievably passionate about it and we love having them come to the reunion and share their research. There are a lot of amazing stories."

To learn more about Eng and Chang Bunker and the Bunker Reunion Weekend, go to www.SurryArts.org/SiameseTwins or email Tanya Jones at tanya@surryarts.org.

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CONTACT:

Craig Distl
craigd411@gmail.com
704.466.3744

<https://media.visitnc.com/Thai-Officials-to-Attend-Reunion-of-Siamese-Twins-Descendants-in-Mount-Airy>