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Rocky Mount Museum Celebrates a Colonial Year
Spring and Fall Celebrations Take Visitors Back to 1791

JOHNSON CITY, Tenn.— In Piney Flats, five miles from Johnson City, history is alive at the Rocky Mount Museum and Living History Site, transporting visitors through the historic traditions of early American farm life. Through reenactments and interpretations of the every day life of the pioneers, Rocky Mount creates an interactive history that allows visitors and participants to step back into the annual events that the early settlers experienced to create a productive and successful life.

Rocky Mount is the original settlement of William Cobb, first settler of the Eastern Tennessee region. Cobb, a distinguished citizen, and his family settled Piney Flats, which is now the location of his home, the Rocky Mount Museum. Rocky Mount dates back to the 1770s, when Cobb built his family a two-story log home.

Each year, Rocky Mount Living Museum hosts special events that showcase the work and experiences of the early colonial farmer with Woolly Day, taking place in the spring season, and Spirit of the Harvest, demonstrating the fall chores and tasks. Both events are designed for

visitors to observe how spring and fall events affected farm life, while touring the historic site and revisiting early America.

“Rocky Mount views Annual Woolly Day and Spirit of the Harvest as the seasonal book-end events. We open the season with Woolly Day as all is ‘new’ again for the planting and agricultural year, commencing with the ‘birthing of the lambs’ and accompanying pursuits of processing the wool ‘from sheep to shawl’ through the seasons, to the ‘Spirit of the Harvest,’ which interprets the rewards of a successful year and the harvesting of the ‘fruits’ of the labor of the Cobb Family and friends,” said Gary Walrath, executive director with the Rocky Mount Museum and Living History Site.

Each April, Rocky Mount hosts Woolly Day, exhibiting the events that took place on the farm at the coming of spring, when farmers would prepare for the upcoming season and move past the winter months. The annual Woolly Day event began almost 20 years ago as a way to celebrate spring with the Cobb family as they prepare to welcome the warm spring months.

Woolly Day allows guests to observe springtime on the farm, as the Cobb family works to prepare through sheep shearing, spinning and weaving, cooking and gardening. Visitors will experience live reenactments of the Cobb family preparing for the growing season after fighting a cruel winter. Woolly Day also focuses on 18th century wool processing, along with other agricultural events. For children, Woolly Day also provides games and storytelling from the time period.

“With springtime being many people’s favorite season, the Annual Woolly Day at the Rocky Mount Museum is an exciting way to give visitors the chance to be a part of early America and take part in springtime farm duties, such as sheep shearing and gardening,” said Brenda Whitson, executive director of the Johnson City Convention and Visitors Bureau.

When fall brings colorful leaves and hayrides, Rocky Mount presents the Spirit of the Harvest, an annual event held in October, that features a live reenactment of the Cobb family’s celebration of the harvest season.

“The Harvest is symbolized by ‘nature’s bounty’ being prepared for winter – making of the cider and apple butter, food preparation for the winter, making of lye soap and repairs left undone from the rigors of a summer well-experienced,” said Walrath.

Spirit of the Harvest portrays the Cobb family's anticipation of a bountiful harvest in the year 1791, and gives guests an understanding of how the early settlers prepared for the harvest season. In the blacksmith shop of Rocky Mount Museum, the blacksmith interpreters are hard at work practicing their trade to prepare the crops for harvest, while interpreters portraying Cobb family members make soap, apple butter and apple cider for visitors. Spirit of the Harvest also includes craft demonstrations, storytelling, music and a tour of the historic site.

“Many people enjoy this event because it gets visitors in the mood for cider, cooler weather and spooky storytelling. Along with music and a tour of Rocky Mount, visitors will be pleased with their trip to Spirit of the Harvest,” said Whitson.

Rocky Mount Museum and Living History Site is located in Piney Flats, Tenn., five miles from Johnson City.

From March to mid-December, Rocky Mount operates from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesday to Saturday. Admission is \$6 for adults, \$5 for seniors over 60 and \$4 for children ages six to 17. Rocky Mount also offers AAA and AARP discounts. For more information, please visit www.rockymountmuseum.com, or call (423) 538-7396.

Johnson City is located in Northeast Tennessee and is the fourth largest metropolitan city in the state. Set in a region known as America's First Frontier, Johnson City is “Where the Pioneer Spirit Began”—a historically significant and culturally rich community surrounded by an abundance of unspoiled natural beauty. Johnson City has a history, which dates back more than 200 years, and its culture embraces individual creativity and encourages innovation through expression. The area is world-renowned for its modern and traditional Appalachian and bluegrass music, art and cuisine, and outdoor recreation for the whole family throughout all four seasons.

For more information on Johnson City, please visit www.visitjohnsoncitytn.com or call (423) 461-8000 or (800) 852-3392.

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