

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Living Heritage Museum marks birthday of pioneering black educator

ATHENS, Tenn. (July 1, 2010)—Poverty. Starvation. Manual labor. Born in Reconstruction-era Virginia on July 10, 1887, James Edward “Willie” Nash overcame numerous challenges to become one of East Tennessee’s—and the nation’s—most influential black educators before his death at age 108. Throughout July, visitors to the McMinn County Living Heritage Museum are invited to celebrate his birthday by exploring a permanent exhibit honoring his educational and social contributions.

“Nash’s drive to educate himself and then to share that opportunity with other black youngsters is truly commendable,” said Lisa Chastain, curator of exhibits. “As assistant principal of Athens Academy and principal of Athens’ J. L. Cook High School, he laid the groundwork for the academic accomplishments of area students today.”

“At the Museum, we regularly partner with teachers to bring history alive for students,” said Diane Hutsell, executive director. “W. E. Nash’s legacy of learning remains strong in the relationship we share with regional educators.”

Founded in 1982, the McMinn County Living Heritage Museum is a private, nonprofit organization housing more than 7,000 artifacts in 30 permanent exhibits that represent the culture and history of Southeast Tennessee from the 1700s to 1940s. The Museum also offers several changing exhibits as well as numerous special events and programs throughout the year and is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information or to make a donation, visit www.livingheritagemuseum.com.