

## **Learning with Public Purpose GRAND CANNON – HISTORIC TOUR**

Cannon County, Tennessee; FACILATORS: Carylee Caputo and Connie Lorance

GRAND CANNON is a student driven historic tour of Cannon County, Tennessee. Established in 1832, Cannon County is a rural community with very little manufacturing, but, it is very rich in history, culture, and beauty. Often looked down upon by its wealthier, neighboring counties, it was the aim of this project to raise “pride of place,” and give our students and community members a true sense of where they come from—and to be proud of it.

Last year’s tour began with students choosing seven historic sites in the county that were easily accessible. They then sought the help of the property owners and local historians to gain knowledge to enhance the visits to these sites. They gathered stories from community members, family, local newspapers, and local history books. Stories ranged from a very early settler shooting a bear that was trying to steal her meat, to the one and only hanging in the county. After learning that Colonel Forrest had rested his men at one of the sites, student contacted a local re-enactor to appear at the site, entertaining the tour members with stories of his raids. Later at the memorial to Lt. Colonel John B. Hutchinson, a Civil War hero who fell in battle, the same re-enactor appeared in full dress uniform, guarding the flag draped memorial.

The tour took place on 2005 on a hot August Saturday, with approximately 40 people who each paid \$25.00 to participate. Student storytellers dressed in period clothes greeted them and helped them board two hay wagons for the journey. Also on board were student guitarists who played both for singing and enjoyment. The itinerary included three historic houses, the aforementioned memorial, the earliest grist mill in the county, the oldest cemetery in the county, and the oldest established church in the county.



A gourmet picnic lunch, prepared by Family and Consumer Science students, was served under the trees at Valhalla Farms, the beautiful estate of Jim and Jean Keathley.



Each member of the tour received a copy of the stories related on the trip, and photos taken by a student photographer. Everyone said that they had learned a lot and had enjoyed the entire day.

In 2006, we are planning to take three hay wagons, explore the history and beauty of Short Mountain, and enjoy a sharecropper picnic lunch at the lovely home of Gerald and Marcia Melton.

For more information on this project please contact Carylee Caputo at [clcaputo@dtccom.net](mailto:clcaputo@dtccom.net).