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## **Fess Parker Donates 1954 Davy Crockett Coonskin Cap and 1964 Daniel Boone Costume to Smithsonian**

**Washington, DC – April 2004 –** In the 1950's it was every kid's dream to wear a coonskin cap, just like Davy Crockett, and one of the original coonskin caps that started the nationwide phenomenon will be preserved in the nation's capital at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Fess Parker, the star of the 1950's Walt Disney television show, *Davy Crockett*, donated the famous coonskin cap in late March during a special program held by The Smithsonian Associates. In addition to the cap, Parker also donated a buckskin jacket, fringed boots, shirt, pants, long rifle and an Arkansas toothpick knife that he used in the NBC Thursday night series *Daniel Boone*, in which Parker also starred, from 1964-1970.

The Davy Crockett television series was one of the first to enter American living rooms with the increasing popularity of the television in the 1950s. The series made Parker one of the first television icons and at the height of the Davy Crockett craze, 5,000 coonskin caps a day were sold. It is said that the popularity of the series' theme song, together with the sales of Crockett related clothing items, helped to finance the opening of Disneyland by Walt Disney in 1955.

"The coonskin cap was a must have item for children all over the country and there are many people who come up to me today and tell me they still have theirs, so I decided to donate the original to the Smithsonian and let everyone enjoy it," said Parker, who celebrates a significant birthday this August. "I hope it brings happiness to a lot of people and introduces a new generation of Americans to Davy Crockett, a timeless hero."

"A generation of Americans grew up watching Davy Crockett and his place in American folklore and as a national hero is as significant and relevant as ever," said Smithsonian historian, curator Dr. Ellen Roney Hughes. "If ever there was a figure that is immediately conjured by seeing an artifact, it is Fess Parker. You can almost hear the famous Davy Crockett song just by looking at the coonskin cap."

This year marks many celebrations for Parker, in addition to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Davy Crockett series as well as celebrating the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his family owned and operated winery located in Santa Barbara where he now lives.

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