

ROSWELL ROOTS

2025



CELEBRATING
THROUGHOUT
FEBRUARY

Presented by
Roswell Recreation,
Parks, Historic and
Cultural Affairs
Department





Roswell Roots is a community-wide, month-long festival that honors our diverse community and celebrates Black History Month. Roswell Roots aims to educate, impact, and promote cultural awareness. Programs and events focus on welcoming all community members and offers an opportunity for all ages to engage.

Events at a Glance

THURSDAY, JANUARY 30

- ▶ **INSPIRED, a Student Art Exhibit** Opening Reception at Roswell City Hall, 3 p.m. — [Page 4](#)

FRIDAY, JANUARY 31

- ▶ **Layers, A Roswell Roots Juried Exhibit** Opening Reception at Roswell Cultural Arts Center, 6 p.m. — [Page 5](#)

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1

- ▶ **11th Anniversary Bid Whist Card Party** at Roswell Adult Recreation Center Ballroom, 12 p.m. — [Page 12](#)
- ▶ **Black Experiences in Roswell** at Barrington Hall, 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. — [Page 16](#)
- ▶ **Blacktop Improv** at Roswell Cultural Arts Center, 7:30 p.m. — [Page 6](#)

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2

- ▶ **Beats + Ballads** at Roswell River Landing, 6 p.m. — [Page 7](#)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6

- ▶ **Mo' Better Blues 35th Anniversary Screening** at Aurora Cineplex, 7 p.m. — [Page 15](#)

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7

- ▶ **Ruben Studdard, The Masterpiece Tour** at Roswell Cultural Arts Center, 7:30 p.m. — [Page 8](#)

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 8

- ▶ **ROOTED with Atlanta Community Symphony Orchestra** at Pleasant Hill Church, 4 p.m. — [Page 8](#)
- ▶ **Reflections on Slavery in Roswell** Featuring John Doyle at Barrington Hall, 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. — [Page 16](#)

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education

cultural
spotlight

performance
series

local
history

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- ▶ **Super Museum Sunday** at Barrington Hall, Bulloch Hall, and Smith Plantation, 12 p.m. — [Page 12](#)

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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15

- ▶ **Art & Soul: Roswell Roots Kids and Family Celebration** at Roswell Cultural Arts Center — [Page 13](#)
 - **Squeeze the Clown** 10 a.m.
 - **Freeze Frame** 11:30 a.m.
 - **Anasi and the Colorful Kente Cloth** 1 p.m.
- ▶ **Black Experiences in Roswell** at Bulloch Hall, 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. — [Page 17](#)
- ▶ **Mack Henry Brown Commemoration** at Riverside Park, 2 p.m. — [Page 17](#)
- ▶ **Lyric & Lyre III: A Valentine's Celebration of Music and Poetry** at Roswell Cultural Arts Center, 7 p.m. — [Page 10](#)

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16

- ▶ **Denielle Wilson, Cellist** at Roswell River Landing, 3:30 p.m. — [Page 10](#)
- ▶ **Telling Our Story** at Pleasant Hill Community Center, 3 p.m. — [Page 18](#)

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20

- ▶ **Michael L. Thurmond: Author of *James Oglethorpe, Father of Georgia*** at Roswell Cultural Arts Center, 6 p.m. — [Page 14](#)

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21

- ▶ **From Slavery to Legacy - Alonzo Herndon Film Screening** at Roswell Cultural Arts Center, 7:30 p.m. — [Page 15](#)

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22

- ▶ **Open Hearth Cooking with Clarissa Clifton** at Smith Plantation, 10 a.m. — [Page 19](#)
- ▶ **Black Experiences in Roswell** at Smith Plantation, 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. — [Page 19](#)
- ▶ **Leyla McCalla in Concert** at Roswell Cultural Arts Center, 7:30 p.m. — [Page 11](#)

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23

- ▶ **Jazz Vespers** at Roswell Presbyterian Church, 4 p.m. — [Page 11](#)

INSPIRED, a Student Art Exhibit in partnership with Fulton County Schools

ON DISPLAY | January 30-March 28, Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

OPENING RECEPTION | Thursday, January 30 at 3 p.m.

FREE | Roswell City Hall, 38 Hill St.

Roswell Roots presents **INSPIRED**, a vibrant student art exhibit with Fulton County Schools celebrating African American heritage! This year's theme, African Americans and Labor (organized by Association for the Study of African American Life and History), invites you to explore the powerful legacy and contributions of African American culture through the eyes of local student artists.



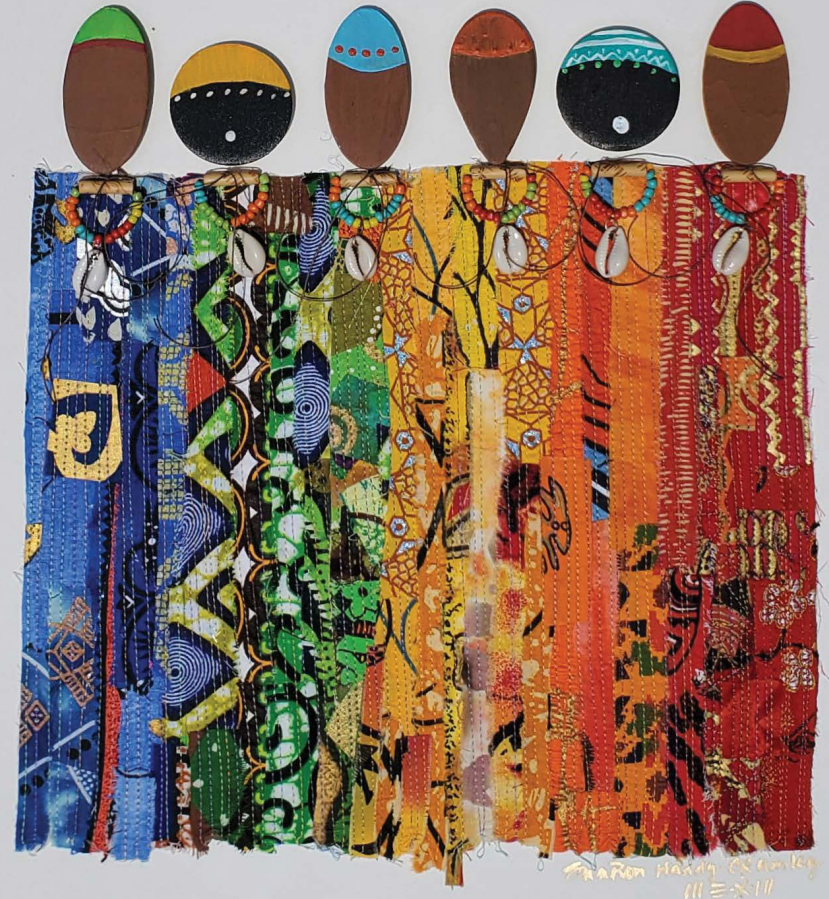
Layers, a Roswell Roots Juried Exhibit

ON DISPLAY | January 31-March 28, Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

OPENING RECEPTION | Friday, January 31 at 6 p.m.

FREE | Roswell Cultural Arts Center, 950 Forrest St.

The **Layers** mixed-medium exhibit will showcase pieces in a variety of styles focusing on the layers of local Black American Artists origins, traditions, dreams and experiences that shape the messages conveyed through art.



PERFORMANCE SERIES

Blacktop Improv

Saturday, February 1 at 7:30 p.m.

Roswell Cultural Arts Center, 950 Forrest St.

Tickets \$10 General Admission

The nation's leading African-American comedy troupe, **Blacktop Improv**, is bringing clean, clever comedy and riotous laughter to Roswell. This group of longtime friends and collaborators boasts six internationally known standup comedians among its ranks, some who have appeared on BET, HBO and Comedy Central. Tried, true and funny, guaranteed to make you giggle.



Beats + Ballads

Sunday, February 2 at 6 p.m.

Roswell River Landing, 245 Azalea Dr.

Tickets \$20 | Door \$25 | General Admission

Beats + Ballads is an open-mic jam session that brings together music lovers for an unforgettable night of live music, storytelling, and community. Set against a backdrop of soulful melodies and powerful narratives, this event celebrates the artistry and diversity of local, emerging talent. Whether you're a performer or a passionate listener, **Beats + Ballads** offers a vibrant space to connect, share, and be inspired. Join us for an experience where the beats are moving, the ballads are grooving, and the vibes are unmatched!



PERFORMANCE SERIES

Ruben Studdard, The Masterpiece Tour

Friday, February 7 at 7:30 p.m.
Roswell Cultural Arts Center,
950 Forrest St.

Tickets \$32.50/\$29.25 for
Seniors, Students and
Military Personnel

Winner of American Idol Season 2, and Platinum recording artist, **Ruben Studdard** will headline Roswell Roots 2025 with *The Masterpiece Tour*. Experience the soulful sound that has made the "Velvet Teddy Bear" a hit-maker on the R&B and Gospel charts in the intimate setting of the Roswell Cultural Arts Center.



LAVAHI in Concert

Thursday, February 13 at 7 p.m.
Roswell River Landing,
245 Azalea Dr.
Tickets \$30.00

*Presented by Steve's Live Music,
Roswell Arts Fund, and Friends of
Mimosa Hall & Gardens*

LAVAHI's acrobatic scatting, compelling chords, and art of improvisation set her contemporary sound apart from the norm of the mainstream. She has been featured at venues such as Blues Alley, Bethesda Blues and Jazz, City Winery, Dizzy's, and St. James Live!, and has even stepped into the world of acting via musicals and stage plays. In addition to chart-topping collabs with an eclectic range of artists, LAVAHI has also released her own solo singles and is set to unveil new music soon.



ROOTED

with the Atlanta Community Symphony Orchestra

Saturday, February 8 at 4 p.m.
Pleasant Hill Church, 725 Pleasant Hill St.
FREE

Rooted celebrates Black heritage and the profound impact of Black musicians on classical music. This unique event, a collaboration between Pleasant Hill Church, Roswell's oldest Black church, and the Atlanta Community Symphony Orchestra, features gospel spirituals by the Pleasant Hill Praise Team and works by esteemed Black composers. Special guest cellist Ismail Akbar from Spelman College will perform, joined by students from Midtown High School, blending generations in an unforgettable musical tribute.



PERFORMANCE SERIES



Lyrics & Lyre III: Lyrics of Love Edition

In Celebration of Valentine's Day

Saturday, February 15 at 7 p.m.

Roswell Cultural Arts Center, 950 Forrest St.

Tickets \$22.50 | Reserved Seating

Ashlee Haze returns to Roswell for the 3rd iteration of Lyrics & Lyre, a concept performance where theatrical poetry meets music. This year is a special **Valentine's Day Edition: Lyrics of Love**. This will be an intimate performance that explores devotion and adoration through art. We will also explore self-love and love in the context of community. The evening will feature performances by poets Ashlee Haze & Jon Goode with musical accompaniment and stellar solo performances by some of the finest local musicians. Join us for a night of thoughtful art and prepare to be transformed by the power of love.

Denielle Wilson, Cellist

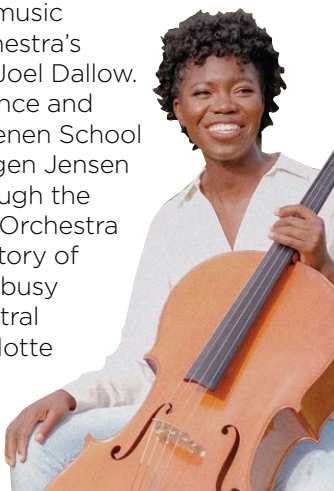
Presented by Roswell Music Club, Roswell Arts Fund, and Friends of Mimosa Hall & Gardens

Sunday, February 16 at 3:30 p.m.

Roswell River Landing, 245 Azalea Dr.

Tickets \$35.00

Denielle Wilson, a Lithonia, GA native, started her music career with five years in the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's Talent Development Program, studying with cellist Joel Dallow. She received a Bachelor's degree in Cello Performance and Music Education from Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music, with her primary mentors being Hans Jørgen Jensen and Wei Yu. She received her master's degree through the Diversity Fellowship with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music. Ms. Wilson teaches the cello and manages a busy performance schedule in solo, chamber, and orchestral settings throughout the Atlanta, Chicago, and Charlotte metropolitan areas.



Leyla McCalla in Concert

Saturday, February 22 at 7:30 p.m.

Roswell Cultural Arts Center, 950 Forrest St.

Tickets \$32.50/\$29.25 for Seniors, Students and Military Personnel

Leyla McCalla started performing with the Grammy Award-winning Carolina Chocolate Drops before leaving to focus on her solo career. Her international concert tour in support of her current album *Sun Without the Heat*, makes its Metro-Atlanta stop at the Roswell Roots 2025 festival. Daughter of Haitian emigrants and activists, McCalla draws inspiration from her past and present – her music vibrates with three centuries of history and influences from around the globe. Her stunning mastery of the cello, tenor banjo and guitar coupled with her skill as a singer and songwriter, she produces a distinctive sound that reflects the union of her roots and experience.



Jazz Vespers

Sunday, February 23 at 4 p.m.

Roswell Presbyterian Church, 755 Mimosa Blvd.

FREE

Let us take you to jazz heaven with soul-stirring sounds of **Jazz Vespers**. Immerse yourself in the rich, timeless tradition of Vespers, reimagined through the divine rhythms and harmonies of jazz. Join the Atlanta Jazz Chorus and Quartet, led by the visionary Dr. Dwight Andrews—Pastor of First Congregational Church and celebrated Professor of Music at Emory University—for an evening where sacred liturgy meets the effervescent spirit of jazz.



EDUCATION EVENTS

11th Anniversary Bid Whist Card Party

Saturday, February 1 at 12 p.m.

Roswell Adult Recreation Center, 830 Grimes Bridge Rd.

Tickets \$15

The Kings and Queens Chapter of the American Bridge Association and Roswell Roots are proud to host the **11th Anniversary Bid Whist Card Party**. The game of Whist, a precursor to bid whist and bridge, has been around since the 1700s, when it was a favorite of London gambling houses. During the Civil War, African Americans were introduced to the game and were said to have put the “bid” in Bid Whist. Space is limited, advance purchase required. To reserve a spot call 770-714-4266. Boxed lunch and refreshments included in admission price.



Super Museum Sunday

Sunday, February 9 at 12 p.m.

Barrington Hall, 535 Barrington Dr. | Bulloch Hall, 180 Bulloch Ave. | Smith Plantation, 935 Alpharetta St.

FREE

Barrington Hall, Bulloch Hall and Smith Plantation will have extended hours as part of **Super Museum Sunday** for Georgia Historical Society’s annual Georgia History Festival. Visitors will have the opportunity to see each of the historic sites in an open-house format to learn more about the experiences of those who lived in Roswell during the 19th century and beyond.



Barrington Hall



Bulloch Hall



Smith Plantation

Art & Soul: Roswell Roots Kids and Family Celebration

Saturday, February 15 at 10 a.m.

Roswell Cultural Arts Center, 950 Forrest St.

FREE

Enjoy a fantastic, free family day filled with performances, activities, and fun. The lobby will be lively with interactive activities and roaming entertainment, while Center Stage hosts a lineup of top children’s performers. A perfect way for young children and their families to experience the spirit of Roswell Roots 2025.

Schedule of Events

10 a.m. • SQUEEZE THE CLOWN

Enjoy the music, magic, and imagination of Squeeze the Clown, performed by Tanne Award-winning Meredith Gordon. A founding member of Humorology Atlanta and a part of Clowns Without Borders USA. Squeeze the Clown brings joy and inspiration through a blend of Motown soul, circus flair, and Buster Keaton charm.



11:30 a.m. • FREEZE FRAME!

Prepare for a “cool” science show with Big Thinkers Science Exploration’s Freeze Frame! Get hands-on with dry ice experiments, create plumes of foggy carbon dioxide, and even catch dry ice bubbles in your hands. This kid-friendly show brings science to life with engaging demonstrations that are as fun as they are educational.



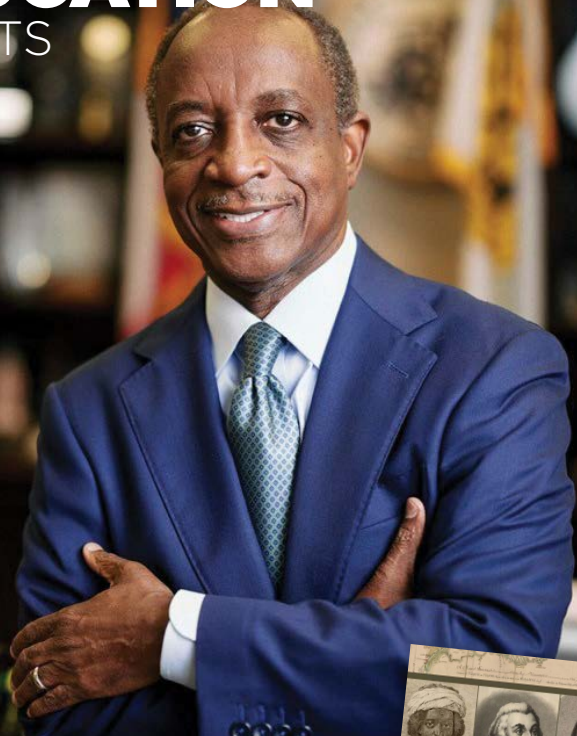
1 p.m. • ANANSI AND THE COLORFUL KENTE CLOTH

Acclaimed children’s performer and author Jerry G. White brings his book to life in this engaging performance. Meet Anansi the trickster, a character beloved in folklore worldwide, as he weaves his colorful tale with music, dance, and master storytelling. Books will be available for purchase and signing after the show.



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EDUCATION EVENTS

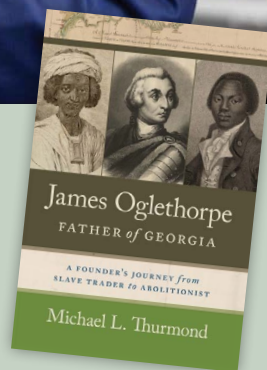


Michael L. Thurmond, author of *James Oglethorpe, Father of Georgia*

Presented by Atlanta Authors, a program of Friends of the Roswell Library, in partnership with Roswell Cultural Arts Center and Bookmiser

Thursday, February 20 at 6 p.m.
Roswell Cultural Arts Center, 950 Forrest St
FREE

The book *James Oglethorpe, Father of Georgia* uncovers Oglethorpe's evolution from slave trader to abolitionist, propelled by intellectual relationships with two formerly enslaved black men. A compelling storyteller, **Michael L. Thurmond** is also the author of *Freedom: Georgia's Antislavery Heritage and Black Men and Women in Athens History*. As the Chief Executive Officer of DeKalb County, Thurmond has served in the Georgia Legislature, as Director of Georgia's Division of Family and Children Services, Georgia Labor Commissioner, and as Superintendent of DeKalb County Schools.



CULTURAL SPOTLIGHT SERIES

Mo' Better Blues 35th Anniversary Screening

Thursday, February 6 at 7 p.m.
Aurora Cineplex, 5100 Commerce Pkwy.
Tickets \$3.00



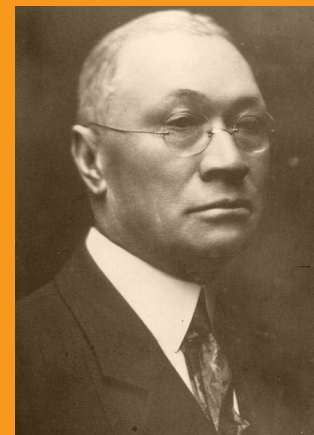
Celebrate 35 years of *Mo' Better Blues*! Join us for a special anniversary screening of Spike Lee's iconic jazz drama, starring Denzel Washington in a soulful journey through love, friendship, and the high notes of ambition. Relive the rhythm, romance, and unforgettable style of this timeless classic. It's an experience that only gets better with time. Rated R by the Motion Picture Associations.

From Slavery to Legacy - Alonzo Herndon

Film screening and panel discussion

Friday, February 21 at 7:30 p.m.
B-Side Studio at Roswell Cultural Arts Center, 950 Forrest St.
FREE

Alonzo Herndon was Atlanta's first Black millionaire and was influential in shaping today's landscape for Black entrepreneurs. He was born into slavery, but ended up creating an enduring legacy. This film was created by NexXt Productions, Inc. as part of the Entrepreneur NexXt Door series telling the stories of diverse and inspiring entrepreneurs. After the screening enjoy a lively discussion with the film's creator Dr. L. Gregory Henley, Doug Hooker (Atlanta Regional Commission, Midtown Connector Park Project) and Rev. Christopher M. Todd (Zion Missionary Baptist Church).
Rating: NR





BLACK EXPERIENCES IN ROSWELL Barrington Hall

Saturday, February 1 at 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m.
Barrington Hall, 535 Barrington Dr.
FREE

Join a guided tour at **Barrington Hall** that delves into the **Black experiences in Roswell** from its early days through post-emancipation. Discover the untold stories of the enslaved individuals and their significant contributions to the historic estate. Gain a deeper understanding of their lives, resilience, and enduring legacy in shaping the community.

REFLECTIONS ON SLAVERY IN ROSWELL Barrington Hall

Featuring John Doyle
Saturday, February 8 at 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m.
Barrington Hall, 535 Barrington Dr.
FREE

In this half-hour theatrical presentation, actor **John Doyle** plays a man who reflects on the lives and experiences of the enslaved people of Roswell, from their shared history in coastal Georgia to their daily lives before, during and after the Civil War. He touches on themes of the interconnected lives of all people in this small town and how enslaved people tried to maintain some agency over their own lives.

BLACK EXPERIENCES IN ROSWELL Bulloch Hall

Saturday, February 15 at 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m.
Bulloch Hall, 180 Bulloch Ave.
FREE

Explore Black history in Roswell with a guided tour at **Bulloch Hall**, where stories of the enslaved and their families come to life. Learn about their pivotal roles and experiences, both before and after emancipation, and uncover how their legacy continues to influence the present. This tour offers a fresh perspective on Roswell's past.



MACK HENRY BROWN COMMEMORATION

Saturday, February 15 at 2 p.m.
Riverside Park, 575 Riverside Rd.
FREE

Join members, friends, and supporters of the Equal Justice Initiative, **in remembering Mack Henry Brown** at the historical marker erected in his memory at Roswell's Riverside Park. The marker opens dialogue about the legacy of lynching in an effort to bring truth telling, healing, and reconciliation to our community. Join us for a moment of reflection and remembrance at the site of this crime nearly 90 years later. The marker is located in Riverside Park near the Vickery Creek pedestrian bridge.

Telling Our Story GroveWay Community Group, Inc.

Sunday, February 16 at 3:00 p.m.
Pleasant Hill Community Center,
725 Pleasant Hill St. Roswell, GA, 30075
FREE (Donations to GroveWay Community Group accepted)



Stories told by past and present residents through their personal experiences growing up in the GroveWay Community in Roswell, along with music that helped the community stay connected. This is a free event. Donations to GroveWay Community Group are welcome and greatly appreciated.



BLACK EXPERIENCES IN ROSWELL Smith Plantation

Saturday, February 22 at 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m.
Smith Plantation, 935 Alpharetta St.
FREE

Experience the history of Black lives in Roswell with a tour at **Smith Plantation**. This tour highlights the lives of the enslaved who worked and lived on the estate, shedding light on their daily challenges and contributions. The tour also traces their journey beyond emancipation, revealing stories of perseverance and community growth.

Open Hearth Cooking with Clarissa Clifton

Saturday, February 22 at 10 a.m.
Smith Plantation, 935 Alpharetta St.
FREE

Clarissa Clifton, a living history interpreter, demonstrates open-hearth cooking using traditional 19th century southern recipes centered on Black and African food ways. Clarissa explains the methods of cooking over an open fire using traditional cast iron cookware and nineteenth century utensils.

Please note that this is for educational demonstration purposes only. Food will not be provided to participants due to food safety regulations.





Roswell Roots Committee Members

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Nancy Bishop
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COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



RUBICON STUDIOS



Roswell Roots, celebrating its 24th year, is made possible by the City of Roswell, Recreation, Parks, Historic and Cultural Affairs Department, the Roswell Roots Committee, and our community partners and vendors.

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