



## Exchange Place

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kingsport, TN – The season of peace, joy and hope is upon us once again, and that spirit will be found at Exchange Place as the Living History Farm hosts its annual **Christmas in the Country** on **Saturday, December 7**, from **10:00 am until 4:00 pm**. Located at **4812 Orebank Road** in Kingsport, and proudly listed on the National Register of Historic Places, admission will be **\$5 for adults and completely free for children under 12** in the final public event of the year at the tradition-rich farmstead.

Vendors and demonstrators will be found on both sides of Orebank Road, offering unique, handmade folk arts and crafts such as pottery, soaps, paintings, hand-woven items, wooden ware and jewelry. Mountain City's **Vickie Price** and her family will be back with her popular wreaths, roping and greenery bundles (created with a wide variety of freshly-cut greenery), large wooden stars, and other holiday selections. A wide range of food will be available from fruitcakes and specialty breads to fried pies, freshly roasted nuts and lunch items.

This festival is always the perfect place to find the most distinctive, hand-crafted holiday gifts, decorations and stocking stuffers, but it also is true to Exchange Place's mission to educate 21<sup>st</sup> century people about their 19<sup>th</sup> century ancestors. Examples of how our pre-Civil War ancestors would have prepared for the holidays will be seen in many of our history-rich buildings. **The Eden's Ridge Hearth Cookery Society**, featuring the Junior Apprentices, will be making salsify fritters and cinnamon waffles in the Heritage Kitchen, and ginger cakes and popcorn in the Cook's Cabin. It will be a busy day for the JAs, who will be decorating a tabletop Christmas tree and making pomanders (oranges studded with cloves) in the Schoolhouse, chopping wood in the woodshed, forging iron in the blacksmith forge, and preparing the Yule Log. Since the Junior Apprentice program is self-sustaining, they will also be offering a variety of handmade and historically-inspired items for sale, including tulip poplar bark baskets, Christmas crackers, old-fashioned toys, and baked goods.

The newly-renovated Gaines Store and Post Office is now open for visitors, and costumed interpreters will be there to show you around, as well as in the original Gaines/Preston House (be sure to check out the authentic rope bed!).

As always the case, the Overmountain Weavers Guild will be in several locations around Exchange Place. Live demonstrations of weaving and spinning will be taking place on the porch of Roseland, and Cotswold fleece from our own sheep will be available for purchase there as well. The Guild will fill the middle room of our Roseland building with handwoven, handspun, knitted and other fiber items for sale.

In the Burow Museum, a very special exhibit curated by the Guild will be on display. After being stored for decades in the Exchange Place attic, "Treasures from the Preston Family" -- a wide selection of 19<sup>th</sup> century vintage clothing -- will be prominently featured. This will include such heirlooms as a christening gown, a mourning dress, a child's vest, and a cap wreath worn at James and Catherine Preston's 1847 wedding. Also, Suzanne Burow's antique drafts, along with a collection of natural dyed yarns recently on display at the Renaissance Center, will be found in the other room of the Museum, and

please note that there is no extra charge for the Burow Museum. And just outside the Burow Museum, visitors will find a red-seated carriage, perfect for a photo with that old-time feel.

Stocking stuffers and distinctive gifts can be found at the Museum Shop, located next door to Roseland. Shoppers will find ol' timey toys, oak split baskets, and a variety of items exclusive to our farmstead, like Exchange Place prints, ornaments, a cookbook of 19th century recipes, and much more.

**Birding Kingsport**, a chapter of the Tennessee Ornithological Society, will once again partner with **Wild Birds Unlimited in Johnson City** to offer bird-related information and activities for children. Not only will a wide assortment of bird feeders, seed and other specialties for our winged friends be for sale, but children can also enjoy the hands-on activity of decorating the Bird Tree, a long tradition at Christmas in the Country. Eastern Bluebirds will be a focus, and handouts will be available with instructions on how to build a nest box.

Visitors of all ages are invited to learn about incorporating herbs into holiday celebrations. A tent will be filled with ideas for decorating and creating gifts using fragrant herbs and spices familiar for centuries as well as the history of many age-old traditions and customs. Nearby young folks can dip bayberry candles or create a card out of scraps just as children might have done in 1850. Meeting the animals who call Exchange Place home year-round – Jenny, our very personable donkey; our chickens, pigs and sheep; plus our newest residents: Bliss, our American Milking Devon cow, and our mustangs Thunder and Lightning – is always an enduring treat for children of all ages.

Fiber artist **Jennifer Hanlon** returns to lead a needle-felting workshop that will allow participants to create their own “cute and cuddly” penguin. Even if you have no experience in needle-felting, do not fear, because Jennifer offers complete instructions and guidance. The cost of the workshop will vary, depending on how much you would like supplied by Jennifer, but it does include admission to the complete festival. For more information and the required advance registration, please visit her website -- (<https://www.hanlonscreativecorner.com/events>).

The **Yule Log Ceremony**, a free community tradition, is always popular and will be held near the **Cook's Cabin** beginning around **4:15 pm**, concluding the day's festivities. Originated by the Vikings, it served as a way for them to honor their gods and request good luck in the coming year. It spread to the European continent, and was eventually brought to the New World by the Pilgrims. While the Preston family may not have burned a Yule Log, we like to make it a part of our Christmas in the Country as a symbol of peace and love for our wonderful community. Since it was often decorated with evergreens and sometimes sprinkled with grain or cider before it was finally lit, we encourage everyone to bring a sprig to cast onto the fire, and also to wear fine, colorful headgear to the event, which will conclude with the singing of carols and, of course, a cup of hot wassail! Derived from the Anglo-Saxon “waes hael,” which meant “Be in Health” or “Here's to You,” wassail helps us to emphasize the spirit of health and friendship.

For more information, you may call Exchange Place at **423-288-6071**, or visit our website: **exchangeplaceton.org**.

Exchange Place is a living history farm whose mission is to preserve and interpret the heritage of mid-nineteenth century farm life in Northeast Tennessee. Exchange Place is a non-profit organization maintained and operated by volunteers and is supported by donations, fundraisers, memberships and grants.