

Colonial Christmas returns

Historic Amis Mill launching new era with old tradition

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Editor

The Amis Mill Historic Site and Eatery near Rogersville marks the beginning of a new era in 2025, and that new era officially kicks off Saturday with the revival of an old tradition.

On Dec. 14 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Amis Mill Historic Site is merging an old holiday favorite event with a newer tradition for an all-new Amis Colonial Christmas Trading Post.

Throughout the 2010s, the Amis Mill Historic Site hosted a Colonial Christmas event highlighted by guided tours — by owners Jacob and Wendy Jacobs — of the 244-year-old Amis House.

Wendy Jacobs is descended from Capt. Thomas Amis, who settled the property at the intersection of current day Bear Hollow Road and Burem Road around 1780. Both Wendy and Jake are experts on the fascinating history surrounding the property.

The Dec. 14 Colonial Christmas revival coincides with the final trading post of 2024, which has been renamed the Amis Colonial Christmas Trading Post.

Dozens of homesteaders, crafters and artists will be on hand selling their handmade and/or homegrown products on the area beside Big Creek across the road from the Amis Mill Eatery.

Meanwhile, the eatery will reopen Saturday only as a "pop-up," featuring many of the smoked meat and cajun food menu selections that made the eatery popular in the 2010s.

Up at the house, rather than hosting the guided tours of the past, Jake and Wendy are welcoming the public for self-guided tours. Both will be on hand to offer visitors history and tales from the past, albeit in a more casual setting.

Colonial Christmas was a tradition for several years, but eventually it got to be too big for Jake to handle by himself. The Amis Mill Eatery is reopening in early 2025 with a revival of its traditional Americana cuisine, and Jake decided it was a good time to revive another Amis Mill tradition as well with Colonial Christmas.

"We've been wanting to do something, but the old events were just so time-consuming to get prepared," Jake told the Review. "That's why we've decided to go with this event, which is more of a casual walk-through, as opposed to guided tours we've had in the past. A good guided tour was 45 minutes to an hour, and we could only take about 20 people through at a time. So we thought let's just modify that to where people can come and hang out."

Jake added, "We're going to be dressed in our Colonial gear hosting people as they come through, so if they want

Jake and Wendy Jacobs

to stay and visit, we'll be happy to visit as long as they want to visit. It's more of a casual event and, coupled with the trading post, that gives people a lot of things to do. We've got some live music, and we expect to have a choir here singing Christmas carols."

The Amis Mill Eatery and historic property is located at 127 West Bear Hollow Road near the Burem Road intersection about 2 miles from Rogersville. Parking for the Dec. 14 event will be at the eatery, with overflow parking in the field between the eatery and the house.

The 1781 Amis House and 1830 log cabin will be open for a walk-through.

There's a lot to learn about the Amis property, settled by Revolutionary War hero Capt. Thomas Amis. At one time this property was the end of the Wilderness Trail for pioneers moving west, and the last place to get supplies and sleep with a roof over their heads. The list of famous historical figures who stayed there is long.

Capt. Amis built the dam and mill, a store, a blacksmith shop and a distillery, and his house was an inn for weary travelers to stop and rest. He gifted his daughter Mary and her husband, Joseph Rogers, the property that was later to become downtown Rogersville.

Among the special guests for the Dec. 14 event will be members of the local chapters of the Sons of the American Revolution and Daughters of the American Revolution, who also will be in Colonial attire.

Also in attendance will be Native American friends Walking Bear and White Horse. Both are direct descendants of Chief Dragging Canoe, who was the leading Native American chief in the area at the time Capt. Amis arrived.

Walking Bear will be displaying his pottery and candles, and the White Horse will have a display of his handmade knives.

The Amis Colonial Christmas Trading Post had 50 vendors confirmed, and several others were expected to commit to the Dec. 14 event.

Among the current vendors are: ChrisAnna Acres & 1949 Wood Creations, Wentworth Homestead, Danger Inc., Sus Sue Studio, Made from the Ranch, Willow Sweets, Kristi Ann Crafts, Stonehaven Farm Tack & Tidbits, Donna's Denim Do Overs, Mike' Leatherworks, Angel Candle Co., Olaya Tamales, Hope Helps TN, Highland Creations, Southern Flare Arts, Cat's Eye Creations, 10-A's Barn Wood Recycling, Crafty Fox Mama, Razorback, Smith's Overhome Treasures, Scarlett Dimas, Creative Crafting by Darlene, Therapeutic Care by Karen, Iron Wulf, Carolyn's Jewelry Connection, Valerie DeHart Baker, Kirk Town Creations, Soul Shopp, Cozy Cabin & Pawsome Treats Long Valley Farm, Midnight Moon Botanicals, The Wicked Spur,

Glitter Goat, Rock-n-Wood Homestead, Saved by Grace, Unicorn Goddess Gifts, Sweet Virginia, Slippery Hill Farm, C & N Farm, The Southern Cross, Hahn Homestead LLC, Valerie's Creations, DC & Paula Archer, Mt. Zoe Farm, Charlie's Wood Turning, The Blu Note Home Fragrance, Creations by Kacie, JR Creations, Heights Hill Creations, Little Young Jewelry, Walking Bear Pottery and Candles, and White Buffalo Stone Knives.

For more information about the Amis Colonial Christmas Trading Post, email jake@amismill.com.