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Rickman Store celebrates 85 years

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A community-wide open house celebration featuring a full day of entertainment and cultural events will mark the 85th anniversary of the historic Rickman Store from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. on Saturday, March 6.

Festivities begin at 10 a.m. with a Barter Day in remembrance of the first exchange at the store. On March 3, 1925, the store's first customer, Ms. Eva Bryson, traded three eggs for a spool of thread. Last year's bartering event was a great success and rekindled the tradition of exchanging goods without money. Everyone is invited to bring items to trade. Included will be a children's table for youngsters to learn about fair negotiations.

At 11 a.m. the Nikwasi Dulcimer Players will join the celebration. The Nikwasi Players have been among the most dedicated supporters of the Rickman Store.

At noon, stories about area mountain life and traditions will be shared by Gary Carden and Dave Waldrop. Storyteller, playwright, and novelist, Gary Carden has deep roots in the Cowee Community where he spent summers at his grandmother's farm.

The afternoon will feature even more music at 1:30 p.m. when the band "Deep Woods Frolic" performs and provides a great opening for a Music Jam where everyone is invited to bring an instrument and join in the celebration until 4 p.m.

The T.M. Rickman General Store was built by John Hall in 1895. It was purchased by Tom Rickman in 1925. A year later Tom married Fannie Holbrook who became his partner in business and life until her death in 1982. Tom Rickman continued operating the store until 1992. The store changed hands twice after Mr. Rickman, and in August 2007, The Land Trust for the Little Tennessee purchased the store for preservation.

Located on Cowee Creek Road, seven miles north of Franklin by Hwy NC 28, next to the Cowee Elementary School, the Rickman Store has become a focal point for cultural, educational, and entertainment activities designed to preserve and honor the traditions of the Cowee-West's Mill Historic District and Cowee Community.

For more information on the celebration and the day's events, contact Elena Carlson at carlsonelena@yahoo.com.

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