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## Children's Literature Sets Theme for the Historic Odessa Foundation's Christmas Holiday Tours

ODESSA, DE -- Sept. 5, 2007 -- The Tailor of Gloucester, Peter Rabbit, and the two bad mice Tom Thumb and Hunca Munca will take up residence this holiday season in the Historic Houses of Odessa's Wilson-Warner House, as part of the Historic Odessa Foundation's 2007 Christmas Holiday Tours.

From Nov. 23 through Dec. 31, this year's 2007 Christmas Holiday Tours, organized by the nonprofit Historic Odessa Foundation will feature:

- **"Tales of Beatrix Potter,"** which will set the Wilson-Warner House as the stage for holiday recreations of scenes from some of Beatrix Potter's most beloved tales
- **"Family Trees Exhibit,"** a display of Christmas trees decorated by families and community groups showcasing their favorite books and works of children's literature and include a tour of the period rooms of the Brick Hotel
- **"Holiday Ornament Crafts"** that ties in to the Tales of Beatrix Potter and has children, with the help of their families, make and decorate their own Christmas tree ornaments
- **"Wollerton Dollhouse Collection,"** a magical collection of dollhouses dating from 1910 to 1980, donated to the Historic Odessa Foundation by Gail Wollerton Corby and Amanda Corby and on display in the Corbit-Sharp House

The Historic Houses of Odessa will also be participating in a one-day event on Dec. 1, 2007 – The 43<sup>rd</sup> annual **Christmas in Odessa**, organized by the Odessa Women's Club and featuring tours of up to eight private homes in the village of Odessa, including the historic properties owned and operated by the Historic Odessa Foundation.

For the past 20 years, the Historic Houses of Odessa, an enclave of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century structures located in the village of Odessa, Del, has been the setting for interpretive scenes from classic children's literature every holiday season. Each year the literary theme is different and never repeated and this year's theme, the **Tales of Beatrix Potter**, will see the newly restored Wilson-Warner House (c. 1769) made over to delight children and adults alike with enchanting scenes from several of Beatrix Potter's tales including *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, *The Tailor of Gloucester* and *The Tale of Two Bad Mice*. A recreation of Beatrix Potter's studio will also be on display.

"Beatrix Potter was a great conservator and preservationist," says Brian Miller, a Historic Odessa Foundation assistant curator (and Middletown High School art teacher). Upon her death in 1943, Beatrix Potter left 4000 acres of land to England's National Trust including 15 farms, cottages and many local areas of beauty. "This year's theme was inspired by her classic children's tales, but also ties in with her conservancy efforts and those of the Historic Odessa Foundation, which oversees the preservation of some of Delaware's most historic buildings."

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Keeping in the spirit of Christmas and to celebrate children's literature and a love of reading, the **Family Trees Exhibit**, in the Brick Hotel (c. 1822), sponsored by the Historic Odessa Foundation and the Corbit Calloway Memorial Library, will showcase up to 40 trees designed and decorated by families and organizations with themes inspired by their favorite children's book. By exhibiting the trees in these beautiful period rooms a new and larger audience will be exposed to the preserved beauty of Odessa, its architecture, historic importance and natural charm. Families will also be able to participate in the **Holiday Ornament Crafts** by creating their own Christmas tree ornaments based upon Beatrix Potter's "Tailor of Gloucester."

Rest assured Potter's "Two Bad Mice" will not be ransacking the magical collection of dollhouses donated to the Historic Odessa Foundation by Gail Wollerton Corby and Amanda Corby and on display throughout the Historic Houses of Odessa's Corbit-Sharp House (c.1774) as part of the Christmas Holiday Tours. The result of Ms. Wollerton Corby's parents, the late Mr. and Mrs. William Wollerton, the **Wollerton Dollhouse Collection**, features regional dollhouses dating from 1910 to 1980 and showcases the passion for collecting model houses and miniature wooden furniture that the Wollerton's possessed. An accomplished woodworker, Mr. Wollerton made dozens of pieces of reproduction period furniture for the model houses he built, along with some miniature metalwork pieces that include chandeliers.

"We're delighted to be able to offer the community an opportunity to experience and participate in Delaware's history through celebrating children's literature and the holiday season," says Debbie Buckson, executive director of the Historic Odessa Foundation. "We hope that we can inspire children take away a life-long love of reading."

In addition to the Historic Odessa Foundation's season-long Christmas Holiday Tours, the 43<sup>rd</sup> annual **Christmas in Odessa**, organized by the Odessa Women's Club and featuring eight beautifully decorated, traditional and contemporary private homes, will be open for tours on Saturday, Dec. 1, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. The Christmas in Odessa tours will also include all the Historic Houses of Odessa and will feature a Christmas craft sale, antique sale and seasonal, fresh cut greens sale in the Odessa Fire Hall; ongoing refreshments, concerts and activities will fill the day. Profits from the one-day event will benefit local students for college scholarships, the local library and educational activities. Tour prices include \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door, \$5 for children 12 and under, and free for children under six. For more information on Christmas in Odessa, call 302-378-4900 or visit [www.christmasinodessa.com](http://www.christmasinodessa.com).

For information on the **Historic Odessa Foundation's Christmas Holiday Tours** call 302-378-4119, or visit [www.historicodessa.com](http://www.historicodessa.com). Admission to the Historic Odessa Foundation holiday tours include \$10 for adults; \$8 for groups, seniors and students; \$3 for children five to 11, children under 5 are free.

Open from March through December, Thursday through Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., the Historic Odessa Foundation offers tours to the public, families, groups and schools of its landmark properties that house the foundation's collection of more than 4000 objects and furnishings that span an interpretive period in regional decorative arts from 1760 through 1850 and provide a backdrop for a variety of educational programs for schools that include 18<sup>th</sup> Century Cooking, the Apprenticeship System and 18<sup>th</sup> Century School Days among others.

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The Historic Houses of Odessa is an enclave of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century structures located in the village of Odessa, Del. between the Appoquinimink River and U.S. Route 13. The historic buildings along with a well-documented collection of more than 4000 objects and furnishings are owned and operated by the nonprofit Historic Odessa Foundation, and offer a unique picture of Delaware's colonial period in a rural village that played a vital part in America's commercial history. For information on the Historic Houses of Odessa, public tours of the properties, and the foundation's Living History Education program, call 302-378-4119, or visit [www.historicodessa.org](http://www.historicodessa.org).