

Christmas at Cornwall Saturday, December 7th, 2019

The Friends of Cornwall Iron Furnace are introducing a new “Christmas at Cornwall” event this year on Saturday, December 7. This new family-friendly day will begin at 10 a.m. and close at 4:00 p.m. and will feature some of the best of the Cornwall community. Hopefully it will be a great way for you and your family to begin the holiday season.

As in years past, Cornwall Manor will partner with us in providing access to their wonderfully restored buildings. They are also hosting their “Cookies, Carols, Crafts & More” event in the morning at Freeman Community Center. Here is a list of activities available on the campus of Cornwall Manor:

- “Cookies, Carols Crafts & More”, which will include the singing of Christmas carols, sale of homemade cookies and crafts and holiday gift wrapping by donation
- Tours of the public areas of the 19-room Buckingham Mansion
- Tours of the historic 1881 Sarah Coleman greenhouse
- Tours of the 1860s Paymaster’s Office (with a visit from Santa Claus, aka Irvin Muritz)
- Model railroad display of the Cornwall area complete with scale models of the major buildings, located in the stable

At the Cornwall Iron Furnace horse-drawn wagon rides (or a Cornwall Manor bus, if you prefer) will take visitors along Boyd Street to the end of Minersvillage. A tour guide will point out the famous Cornwall mine as well as the furnace manager’s house, stable, abattoir, blacksmith and wagon shops, the miners’ boarding house, Minersvillage store and some of the older homes in the village. Visitors may also tour a private home in the village which will be decorated for Christmas. Michael Weber, a qualified geologist, will be on hand at the furnace site to talk about the various minerals which were found during the mining operation.

Back at the furnace, children will have a visit from the Belsnickel, a Pennsylvania German Christmas custom that would have occurred in and around the Lebanon County area. This tradition has its roots in the folklore of the Palatinate region of southwestern Germany along the Rhine, the Saarland and the Odenwald area of Baden-Wurtemberg. However, unlike the jolly Santa Claus, the Belsnickel is a giver of gifts only to good children; naughty children would be punished. Rick Brouse of East Petersburg, Lancaster County, will portray the Belsnickel, a role he has played at the Landis Valley Village & Farm Museum for many years.

The museum store will be open for business and a local craftsman will also be selling handmade kitchen-related gift items such as cutting boards, cookie cutters, potholders, wooden spoons and more. No holiday visit would be complete without seasonal refreshments, including lots of cookies. Craft projects for the children will also be available.

Historically, the furnace operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week, irrespective of holidays. From 1829 to 1861 the furnace was in blast during Christmas every year except 1831 (there are a few other years in this period for which we do not have information). For most of the furnace workers during that

period Christmas day was a workday. In that tradition, guides will offer guided tours of the furnace throughout the day.

If you get hungry for lunch, it can be purchased at the Cornwall Manor Café or in local restaurants.

Tickets will be sold in advance and on the day of the event at the Cornwall Iron Furnace Visitor Center. The cost is \$8 for adults, \$7 for senior citizens and AAA members and \$4 for youth (ages 13-17); ages 12 and under are free. Please call the furnace at 717-272-9711 and check the website at www.cornwallironfurnace.org for more updated information, including parking around the area.