



Christmas at Stephenson House

Decorations during the
Candlelight Tours

feature small sprigs of holly placed in each window pane of the 1820 section, as well as vases of holly, boxwood, and ivy in each room. These decorations are simple but show a custom practiced in the United States and England during the early 19th century.

We do not know how the Stephenson family celebrated Christmas or if they celebrated the holiday at all. The Stephensons were active members in the Edwardsville Presbyterian church, which was established in 1819. In early America, members of the Presbyterian faith tended to shun any observances of Christmas in an effort to separate their faith from the

practices of the feast and saint days celebrated by the Roman Catholic Church. Other denominations that excluded Christmas celebrations included Puritans, Mennonite, Amish, Baptists, Methodist, Quakers, and Congregationalists. Changes in Presbyterian attitude regarding Christmas celebrations slowly began to take place in the 19th century but the majority of church members continued to follow earlier doctrine well into the 20th century. It is not known whether the Stephenson's view on Christmas was open to a simple holiday celebration or if they adhered to the stricter doctrine.

The Christmas customs represented during the Candlelight Tours are historical. They are general representations of customs practiced in America when the Stephenson family lived in Edwardsville. These customs may not have been practiced by the family, or their servants, because of religious beliefs but they were familiar with them.



Rupert

Rupert is depicted as the mischievous brother or servant of Father Christmas. He visited children prior to Father Christmas to discover who had been naughty or nice. Naughty children were chastised and warned to be good or the consequences would prove unpleasant. Traditionally this character is dressed in old, dirty clothes with a flaxen beard.



Our decorations are simple and based on extant Christmas illustrations and writings by travelers visiting America in the early 1800s.

Admission Fees

Adults \$10
Children (6-12 years) \$5
Free for children under 5
years old

All tours are self-guided.

Wassail and treats served in the kitchen.

For More Information: 618-692-1818



Experience an 1820s Christmas during this candlelight event. Historically-garbed docents discuss the rich history of the house as guests take a self-guided tour through the festively adorned rooms.

Enjoy a cup of hot wassail, a sweet treat, sing a carol by the pianoforte, play a game of whist, and dance a country reel as Stephenson House ushers in the holiday season.

Stephenson House will not be open during the day on Friday, Saturday or Sunday.



1820 Col. Benjamin Stephenson House



November 25 & 26

6-9 p.m.

409 S. Buchanan • Edwardsville • Illinois