

Ephrata Cloister Holds Candlelight Service

EPHRATA (Lancaster Co.) — On Christmas day in 1751, the members of the Ephrata Cloister had a celebration, but the gathering that evening had nothing to do with the holiday. Instead, celibate Brothers and Sisters joined married couples to welcome new community mem-

bers with a special fellowship gathering called love feast. During this year's holiday season, Ephrata Cloister will again return to that special evening of activity in 1751 as part of the annual Christmas Candlelight Tours on December 26, 27, January 2, and 3. These special tours begin every half hour from 6:30 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. each evening. Reservations for the tours are required.

"Although guests to these tours will not actually partake of the fellowship meal, they will be enlisted to help prepare for the gathering," says Michael Showalter, museum educator. These special tours are performed by the Cloister Chapter of Student Historians of Pennsylvania, local junior and senior high school volunteers who take on the roles of early residents of the Cloister.

Each year Showalter, who serves as advisor to the group, searches the historic records and writes a new script about some events in Ephrata's history. He then directs the 25 students in their performance to bring history to life. "This is a great way to tell the stories of Ephrata Cloister, and an important tool in teaching young peo-

ple about our heritage and our responsibility for its preservation," notes Showalter.

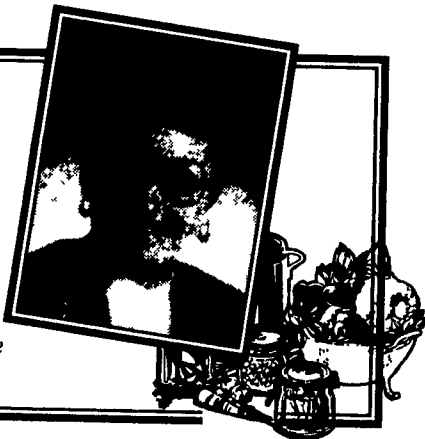
Visitors to these award winning tours will not be getting the usual look at the historic site, but instead, the elements of one event. This year's story centers on the love feast gathering and how it helped to symbolize the idea of community. Founded in 1732 by Conrad Beissel, Ephrata Cloister is one of America's earliest communal societies. Gathered in unique European style buildings, the community consisted of celibate brothers and sisters, and a married congregation of families.

Reservations for Christmas Candlelight tours are required and can be made by calling the Visitor Center beginning December 1st. Admission for these special tours is \$6.00 for adults, \$5.50 for senior citizens, and \$4.00 for youth age 6-12. A special dinner and tour package is also available by calling the Restaurant at Doneckers (717) 738-9501. Individuals wishing more information about the tours, reservations, or individuals with disabilities who need special assistance should call (717) 733-6600.

Consuming Thoughts

by
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Holidays may be the best time for enjoying friends and family, but they're the worst time for getting sick.

Following are a few suggestions for avoiding a nasty bout of food poisoning:

- Don't let any perishable foods containing meat, poultry, or eggs sit on a buffet table for hours on end. Put out only what you think will be consumed in an hour or so, leaving the rest refrigerated. Never let any of these foods stand at room temperature for more than two hours.

- If you will be feasting on rare roast beef, cook it to an internal temperature of at least 145 degrees. Before serving the pan drippings, heat them to boiling. If gravy or drippings are kept for a second meal, boil them a few minutes before serving.

- Be careful with the pasteurized eggnog, too. Either keep it on ice, or make sure that only what will be consumed within two hours is left out at room temperature.

- In any food preparation, but especially with foods containing meat, poultry, or eggs, keep your hand and the utensils you use

scrupulously clean. Be sure to wash utensils well between uses, especially if you have used them with raw meat or poultry. The same goes for counter surfaces.

- Thaw your holiday meat or poultry in the refrigerator, not at room temperature. Never stuff poultry ahead of time or with warm stuffing. For the ultimate in safety, bake stuffing separately from the bird. Stuffing the bird should also be refrigerated separately after cooking.

Here are some hints on how to buy holiday foods:

- In buying any poultry for roasting, the USDA grade mark is especially important. U.S. Grade A Poultry will have no skin cuts or tears that could allow the meat to dry out during roasting.

- About turkey: Self-basting turkeys have been injected with butter or oil or a combination of the two. The label will tell you.

- Whether to buy fresh or frozen poultry is strictly a matter of what fits best into your plans — how long you plan to keep it, how much storage space you have.

- Ducks and geese are holiday favorites. Buy U.S. Grade A to make sure they have no skin cuts

or tears and are well filled-out and meaty. Also, remember that these birds have more natural fat than other poultry so don't be surprised if there's more fat in the roasting pan than you're used to.

- About roast beef: The designation "Prime rib" doesn't necessarily mean anything unless you see the USDA grade mark that says "USDA Prime" or "US Prime." If it says "USDA Prime" or "US Prime" you can be sure that you have a tender, juicy piece of meat because it will have abundant marbling — tiny flecks of fat within the learn.

Servings per pound:

- Turkey: 2 1/4 servings per pound.

- Chicken: 2 servings per pound.

- Goose: 1 1/2 servings per pound.

- Duck: 1 serving per pound.

- Rib roast: slightly less than 1 serving per pound.

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