

François CABROL, the exhibition

In 1826, the Duke DECAZES and his shareholders founded the Company of Coalmines and Foundries of Aveyron. Its vocation will be to produce cast-iron from coal according to the English manufacturing process. It is situated in the valley of the Riou-Mort. The geological background is very propitious : the coal and the cast-iron which are needed can be found “on the spot” or nearby.



trad. Claudie CARO

The first blast furnace will be built in Firmy, and the first casting will take place in 1828. Due to the success of the enterprise, it will be moved very soon a few kilometers away, to another place called La Salle. That’s where blast furnaces, forges and manufactories will grow fast and create one of the first french metallurgic site in the nineteenth century.

To manage that huge firm, the administrators will choose an engineer who was born in Rodez, François CABROL. He will be the ironmaster and he grows the initial development of the activities. Except from a break, from 1833 to 1839, he will be there from 1827 to 1860. As an ancient “captain of artillery”, he perfectly controls the technics of making cast-iron. He was a talented men’s leader and manager, which helped him a lot in his functions.

The exhibition shows the main parts of his course in 15 pannels. You will discover his course with his skill to innovate, his skill at technics. For exemple, he was the only Frenchman to set a rolling-mill to create Barlow rails (from the name of the English engineer, whose invention was very important in the history of the technics for rail tracks in 1850). A major task was the building of mining railroad in 1856, from Marcillac to Decazeville. On this 20 km long road, the Viaduc of the Ady, drawn and concept by Fr. Cabrol occurred to be very interesting because of its particular architecture (unfortunately, it was destroyed).

François Cabrol was also a public man : he became the mayor of Decaze-Ville created in 1834, which was named after a deputy and departmental councilor. He chose the architect Garnaud to build the church in Decazeville (Inside, there is a “way of the cross”, a major artistic element, painted by Moreau). Several panels show its building, and the Cabrol Mausoleum as well, which is in Miramont, a churchyard of Decazeville. It’s being restaured now ; its architecture by Garnaud as well, is worthn the visit.

The exhibition also presents one of Fr. CABROL’s son, Elie. Man of salon, an artist, a writer, a painter, a travel lover and a patron, he was a donator to Decazeville : He is the one who offered the Moreau “Way of the Cross”.

Many objects can be seen in the exhibition : a bust (of Cabrol), various technical elements, Barlow rails, cable and a model of the viaduct of the Ady, recent copies on canvas of some Moreau’s paintings.

In the exhibition room, a first slide-show will tell you about the church and the Mausoleum. The musical part consists in a music composed by Boisdeffre and a text from Elie Cabrol, “Le cantique des cantiques”. Thanks to another slide-show, you can see pictures about the “blowing pipes” of the blast furnaces, last industrial element still visible near the museum. At last, a film presents “The Road of the Iron”, used to carry the iron ore from the Causse Comtal to the factories.

The ASPIB thanks you for coming, and wish you to enjoy your visit.