

## XMAS CUSTOMS OF ANCIENT ORIGIN

There is no land without its Christmas. The season is celebrated in every country and Christmas is cherished by the children of the world as the day of days. We are so accustomed to the Holiday season in its modern form that we scarcely stop to wonder when, why and how the quaint and pleasing customs connected with it originated.

Merry Christmas, Santa Claus, holly, mistletoe, gifts, Christmas trees, plum puddings, and all the things that mean Christmas to us have been handed down from the past ages. Pagan and Christian customs so ancient and remote that they have lost their original significance play a part in modern festivities. But the origins of these customs are no less interesting because they come from long ago.

The name Christmas meant originally "Cristes masse," a church festival of Christ. It is the English name for the season that commemorates the birth of Christ, but it is known that a festival was celebrated at this time of year long before it became the symbol of the Nativity. Among pagan peoples it was customary to hold carnival at the time of the winter solstice.

The pagan festivals were celebrated with music and dancing, revels and fetes, that hardly would seem in keeping with the day as we know it. Yet, many of those customs have been incorporated into our own Christmas celebrations.

No one knows when the first Christmas was observed. The pagan festival is very ancient; so old that there are no records to fix the date. The first Christian celebration is like-wise obscure. The reason for confusion arises from the fact that early Christians were opposed to birthday celebrations and that of Christ was not excepted. It is believed that in the Eastern church December twenty-fifth was not observed as Christmas until the time of St. Chrysostom, who lived in the 4th century, although it was celebrated much earlier by the western church. For a long time there was no uniformity with respect to the date. Some held the festival in May, others in April or January.

The celebration of December 25 became increasingly common throughout the Christian world during the 4th and 5th centuries.

The first English Christmas celebration of which we have record was held by King Arthur in the city of York in 521 A. D. Throughout the middle ages the day was a popular holiday observed by rich and poor alike. In the days of Queen Elizabeth, festivities lasted over a week.

No other Christmas symbol has a greater hold on the youth of the world than the character of Santa Claus. Probably he originated in

Holland and was imported to this country by the early Dutch settlers. As St. Nicholas or San Nicolas, he is the patron saint of children, a jovial, portly person who has found his way into the hearts of little folks and is cherished by them lovingly. According to popular myth, Santa Claus is supposed to swoop down from the North driving his reindeer hitched to a sleigh laden with gifts for good children. Possibly the character of Santa Claus has descended from St. Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in the 4th century. In Catholic countries he is regarded as the special patron of the young and proximity of his feast day to Christmas may have given rise to a connection between the two.

The idea of having Santa Claus come down the chimney may be explained by an old English custom. It was supposed to bring good luck to sweep the chimney at that time.

There are hundreds of legends concerning the origin of the Christmas tree. Some attribute it to Martin Luther, who wishing his wife and children to realize the beauty of the snow covered forest, brought a little fir tree into the room and covered it with candles to resemble a snow laden tree.

Another older German legend makes Saint Winifred the inventor of the idea.

This little tree, a young child of the forest, shall be your holy tree tonight. It is the wood of peace, for your houses are built of fir. It is the sign of endless life for its leaves are ever green. See how it points to Heaven. Let this be called the tree of the Christ Child; gaber about it, not in the wild woods but in your homes; there it will shelter no deeds of blood, but loving gifts and rites of kindness!

### COMMUNITY PROGRAM ATTRACTS LARGE CROWD

Directed by teachers of grade and high school, children presented a delightful program at the Cascade Locks high school Friday night, when they met Santa Claus face to face. The program, presented under joint auspices of the Eagles and the Parent-Teacher association, attracted a crowd that filled the high school auditorium.

The children were presented with a sack of nuts, oranges, candy and apples after the program. There were ample sacks for all and none went away disappointed.

Parent-Teachers have presented programs every Christmas for the past several years. The program Friday night probably drew the largest crowd that has attended a community tree since the association commenced the enjoyable task of providing yuletide cheer for the children.

Send the Chronicle to friends.

### They Jurer's Leniency Costs 10 Days in Jail

Chicago—Twelve good men and true, including John A. Morrison, failed from a moral point to deliver on the evidence against James H. Morrison, charged with a \$1,000 swindle. The foreman called for a vote. There were nine responses of "guilty" and two for acquittal.

"And you, Mr. Morrison?" inquired the foreman.

"Guilty as the devil, but give 'em a break," Morrison answered with a resounding hiccup. For four hours after the others and agreed on a guilty verdict the jury Morrison held the jury in a deadlock. Cold towels and harsh words were of little avail.

The other jurors, weary and desperate, finally resorted to Judge Cornelius J. Harrington their inability to agree on a verdict. Morrison leaned heavily on two of his mates and hissed at the bench.

"Give the guy a break," he muttered. Then he hiccupped.

Under questioning, eleven jurors told the court why they hadn't been able to reach a verdict.

"That's contempt of court," said Judge Harrington sternly.

"Guilty as the devil," responded Morrison.

"Ten days in jail," directed the judge, "and thank you, gentlemen."

### Marital Kiss Unknown in Sixty-Year Marriage

Athens, Tenn.—Mrs. Nancy Mary Ann Trammell West, who says that she never kissed her husband during nearly sixty years of married life, saw her first movie here and then exclaimed: "Ain't it a sight the things folks think up now a days—kissin' and huggin' like that."

Mrs. West, who has lived in the mountains of North Carolina all of her life, is the mother of 14 children, including triplets and twins.

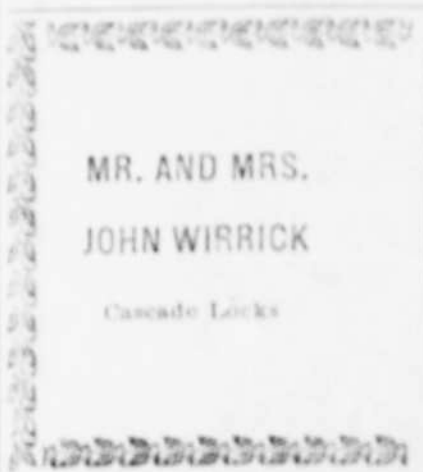
### Big Game "Fixed"

Not long ago in Africa, many big game hunters had their lions "fixed" for them. The fixer would kill an antelope, inject poison and place it in a good spot at daybreak. Lions feeding on the meat became partially paralyzed. The hunter would then "accidentally" arrive on the scene and quickly shoot them before his unsuspecting friends realized that the beasts could neither fight nor run.—Collier's Weekly.



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