



Quality Bakery

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Time Not Constant  
In the Celebrations  
Of Christ's Nativity

While December is now the month in which Christ's birthday is celebrated by Christians all over the world, research and study show that Christ's nativity has been celebrated in January, March, April, May, September and October by various peoples.

And although few people know it, it was for the purpose of substituting a Christian festival for pagan ones of Romans and Druids that celebrations of Christmas in December were popularized.

No historian pretends to fix the actual date of Christ's birth or the date at which Christmas became a general festival.

About all that is known is that during the fourth century the feast of the Nativity was observed in all western world churches at different dates.

The confusion resulting from celebrations in seven months of the year caused the western church authorities to meet in 340 to set a definite date for the celebration. The eastern churches did not cooperate until the sixth century when December 25 was set as the day to be observed.

The question has arisen innumerable times as to why December was selected as the month for rejoicing. The answer is that this month was chosen in order that a Christian festival could compete with those of the pagans, because December was noted for its feasts and holidays in nearly every civilized land.

Greeks, Romans, Saxons and Scandinavians all took part in the celebration of these festivals which had originated before the birth of Christ.

From the Saxons came the ceremony of burning the Yule log. The Saxons burned great bonfires in honor of their god Thor. From the Romans came the giving of presents, for this custom has been traced to the Roman Saturnalia.

It may seem strange to claim that the pagan riotousness might be the forbear of the Christian holiday of goodness and love, but intermingled with that which was objectionable, were things that have gone straight to the hearts of people throughout the Christian world.

Santa Affected  
By Restrictions

It's difficult to understand, but the genial spirit of Christmas, Santa Claus himself, hasn't always had it easy. There have been occasions when laws or traditions or regulations have put certain curbs on the old gentleman. Here are some examples:

In Newark, N. J., Santa is required to pass a stiff physical examination before he can serve in a department store. And even then he is barred from kissing any of the children who perch upon his knee.

In Charleston, S. C., charity Santas have been forbidden to make a pitch on public streets on the grounds that children flocking in to see them may create a traffic



hazard. And in Washington a few years ago, when the postmaster general was asked to print a Santa Claus stamp at Christmas time he rejected the proposal with a scornful, "I should say not!"

Outside the U.S.A., Santa has had trouble, too. In Montreal, Canada, an influential organization fought against holding of the city's annual Santa Claus parade on the ground that it was "merely a display of grotesque and vulgar buffoonery." A prominent journalist in Rio de Janeiro fostered a movement to do away with Santa Claus (Papa Noel) in Brazil and substitute a toy-bearing grandfather Indian. In Mexico City the minister of education recommended that the Aztec god Quetzalcoatl, instead of St. Nick, should bring gifts to children.

In the field of opinion, Santa has encountered some detractors. A Prof. Ivan E. McDougle, sociologist at Goucher college, Baltimore, declared: "The Santa Claus myth has lived too long. Parents should substitute philosophy"—whatever that is.

A Toronto psychiatrist got in his blast. "It should be made clear to children," he said, "that Santa Claus is not necessarily a real man any more than any other character out of a story book."

Christmas of 1804  
Was Chicago's Best

Surely there will never be another Christmas celebration like the one in Chicago in 1804.

Captain John Whistler (grandfather of the painter who painted the famous "Whistler's Mother") was in command of the garrison at Fort Dearborn and he decided that there should be a great feast—complete with music, dancing and a splendid Christmas tree.

Soldiers from the garrison went a-hunting in the woods just north of the river and came back with a fat buck deer, some rabbits, a raccoon or two, a few wild turkeys. Added to the roasting pig (contributed by some festive-minded citizen) and the magnificent Christmas pudding, these morsels provided abundance for all. Everybody—the civilians and the military—drank a toast to Thomas Jefferson, the President of the United States.

The punch was "dizzy" and there were fifes and drums and a couple of fiddles to play for the dancing.

It was getting late when a watcher in one of the blockhouses gave a warning shout that Indians were approaching; but they turned out to be friendly Indians who came bearing gifts to the feast. They watched the white folks dance, and when the whites were exhausted, the redskins took the floor and began a wild, whooping dance of their own which climaxed Chicago's unique Christmas celebration in 1804.



SHIRT-SLEEVED SANTA... It's not a common subject for discussion, but Santa Claus sometimes does take off his coat and just lounge around in his beard and shirt-sleeves. However, this is not standard procedure, and it's mighty few Santas you see sitting on a park bench in New York.



Among the myriad problems which beset parents at Christmas time are the many questions from the small-fry about Santa Claus. And the business of telling Junior or his little sister the truth about the jolly old gentleman in the red suit is really a major task.

However, the situation is bound to arise, and when it does, it does something to your heart strings—so you draw the little ones close and cast about for the best explanation.

Oddly enough, the true story is best—and the easiest to tell. So why not just tell the little ones this?:

St. Nicholas (or Nicolas) is Santa Claus' real name. He lived in Asia Minor and was the beloved bishop of the Greek church of Myra in Lycia. He is the patron saint of the young, and in some European countries a person dressed as a bishop still assembles the children and distributes gifts of nuts, sweetmeats and other nice things to the good boys and girls.

Children loved St. Nicholas and trudged along beside him as he trudged the dusty roads of the Lycia countryside, bringing fruit and candy to the sick and needy.

One of many stories told of his goodness concerns a poor and honest man and his three good and beautiful daughters. The father was unhappy for poverty prevented his giving the customary dowries to his daughters, and for this reason they could never have suitable husbands.

One night a bag of coins was tossed in at the man's window. The next night the act was repeated. But on the third night the father watched, and the anonymous giver was detected. The jolly bishop stood with the third bag of coins in his hands. The father was very proud and would not accept the money. The good bishop begged the poor men to accept the gifts and use them for his daughters' dowries, requesting that his name never be revealed.

At last, the father accepted the money for his daughters, but he could not keep the name of the generous bishop secret — so the legend of the goodness of St. Nicholas was further spread and strengthened.



EVERY time we hear a Christmas carol, we're going to think of you. It's folks like you, our customers, who have been so considerate in the years past that make our Holiday complete. So when that day rolls around again, we'll think of you, and wish you a very Merry Christmas!

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