

# Origin of Christmas customs explained

While the exact origin of the practice of kissing under mistletoe is not known, there are several popular stories about it.

The Druids of ancient Britain paid it more than lip service — they thought it could heal disease, neutralize poisons, and protect against witchcraft! They wore charm bracelets and rings made of mistletoe and fastened the plant over their doorways to ward off evil spirits.

A Scandinavian tale involves Frigga, the goddess of love and beauty. Researchers report that Frigga first made mistle-

toe an emblem of love and granted some lucky man a kiss beneath its branches — beginning a smacking good custom.

Of course, the Christmas tree is a center of attraction in most homes during the Yuletide season — a place of honor, incidentally, for thousands of years before Christ's birth, evergreen trees were revered by German tribesmen as symbols of immortality. When the pagans were converted to Christianity, they transferred their feelings for the evergreen to the new religion.

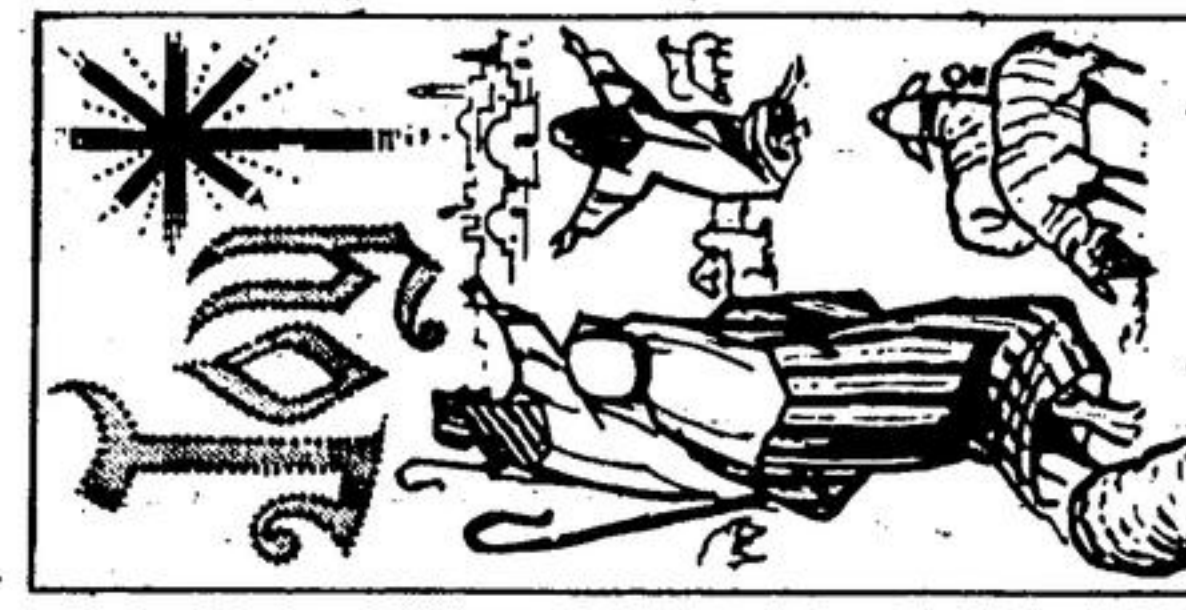
The first persons to put lights on a Christmas tree was Martin Luther. Walking home one night shortly before Christmas, the Reformation leader felt a strong tie between the starry night and the love of God. At home he placed candles on a little evergreen tree to help his children experience the same wonder of God's heavens. The custom grew and spread through Northern Europe, then to America.

Although the custom of decorating the Christmas tree did not originate in America, the practice of playing Christmas music with feet did — less than half a century ago. Play-

er piano enthusiasts pumped out such festive tunes as Silent Night, and O Little Town of Bethlehem. Today, with the help of modern players that can be repaired by the use of a regular piano, the accomplished customer is having a thrilling contact with thousands of homes across the country.

And why not? It doesn't take long for a Pianola to become the center of your Christmas festivities. The time honored feeling of togetherness is fostered by friends and family gathered around a modern player, singing any one of dozens of universally loved Christmas songs, along with hundreds of other music roll favorites.

The combination of lively feet and music, continuing to day as people play and sing around their player, pianos all over the country, began with early "crois". The word "crois" means to dance in a ring, and the man who popularized the practice was the beloved St. Francis of Assisi. To bring the Christmas message vividly and directly to his 15th cen-



**WELCOME WINDOW**

Let your picture window welcome holiday guests to your home. Place a candle, a wreath or a spray of evergreen in the window, remembering at the same time that too much of any of these will spoil the effectiveness of your window. The children might enjoy trying a stained-glass effect with easily washed off colorings and artificial snow sprays. A real treat for children is working with luminous paints. They enjoy admiring their handiwork on those snowy, blowy nights.

Our Christmas wish: that your heart shares the blessed joy of the shepherds.

**K. ROSZELL**  
**SHOPE**

# Noah's ark once favorite toy for Puritan homes

"Oh, the wonderful Noah's ark! It was not found in the woods, as they say, but was put in a washing tub, and the animals were crammed in at the roof, and needed to have their legs well shaken down before they could get in, even there — and then, ten to one but they began to tumble out the door, which was but imperfectly fastened against it!

"Consider the noble fly, a size or two smaller than the elephant; — all triumphs of butterfly! — all triumphs of art! Consider the goose, whose feet were so small, and whose balance was so indifferent that she usually tumbled forward and knocked down all the animal creation.

"Consider Noah and his family, like idiotic stoppers; and how the leopard stuck to the tails of the larger animals used gradually to resolve themselves into frayed bits of string.

Thus Charles Dickens recalled Christmas memories, that old-time Christmas favorite, Noah's Ark. It was a favorite through several centuries in Europe for good reason. It was approached a "Sunday toy" in those homes where, with strict austerity, the kite, the cock-horse, spinning-top, horn, lead soldiers, bat and ball, doll, whirling and other playthings had to be put away.

The Noah's Ark alone could be tolerated in Puritan homes. For it was deemed religiously educational. After the family had gone to arduous service in church and had its dinner, the Ark — looking remarkably like a canal boat such as the children had seen in nearby waterways — came to rest upon a Mount Ararat in the parlor.

Cameos, lions, horses, all manner of creatures were brought forth or humbled out unceremoniously, if parents weren't watching closely, to be arranged in pairs and paraded in the drama of the Flood, after father or grandfather, or some other elder had given a solemn oration on the subject, with an pertinent reading from the Old Testament.

Originally, the figures of the pairs of animals of Mr. and Mrs. Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth were carved from wood.

**Mobby Award**

Christmas ornaments, particularly the large ones, are sometimes beautiful. Children can provide out figures for both children and adults, with care and help the extra and the decorated look out of lights are flimsily wired and the reach of children.



**Christmas Wishes**

Holiday life is a house filled with gleaming, the happy lit of welcoming voices. May this be yours on Christmas.

**Acton Firefighters' Association**  
The Careful and Here a Happy, Fire-Safe Christmas!

**First greeting card in 1843**

It was the "Golden Age of Christmas." The personal change of good wishes, visiting homes to test a friend's good health, carol singing, bringing in the Yule log and great family dinners were all in vogue.

A new book was published in 1843, "The Christmas Greeting," by Henry F. Johnson, a Bostonian. It was the first of a series of books on the subject of Christmas greetings.

**Christmas cheer**

Switch off the Christmas tree lighting when you go to bed or whenever you leave your home.

**CHRISTMAS CHEER**

May your holiday be as cheerful and happy as a child's Christmas Eve dream.

**GAC INTERNATIONAL**  
FINANCE CORPORATION, LTD.

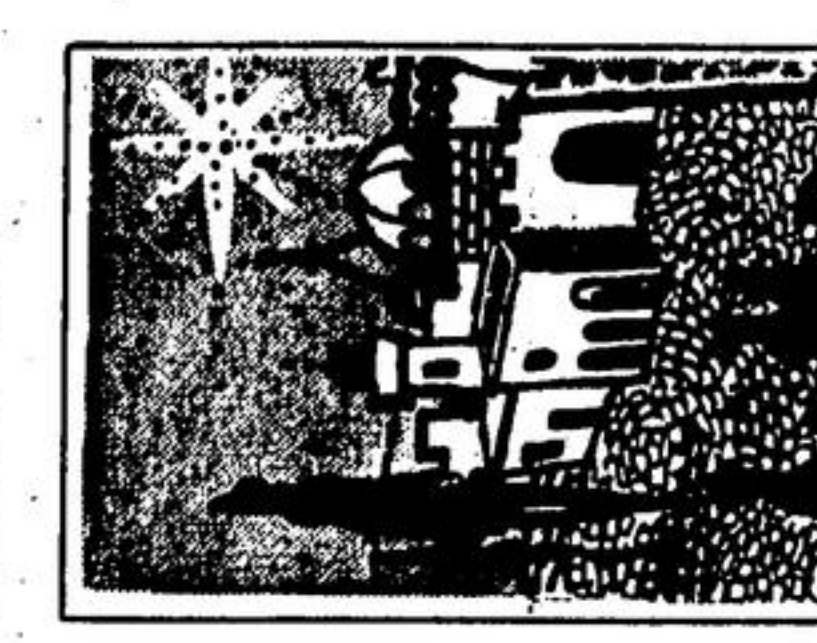
LOANS UP TO \$5,000

**CHRISTMAS GREETINGS**

On this joyous holiday celebrating the birth of the Holy Child, we wish that you may be filled with peace and gladness, comforted with hope, and surrounded by your loved ones.

**Cameo Shoppe and Esquire Men's Wear**

FROM THE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF



**Elizabeth-10 Beauty Lounge**

A Star to guide them on their way. Wise Men came bearing gifts. Today the wonder gloves anew, with gifts of joy to gladden every heart. May yours be a blessed Christmas.

**Christmas Greetings**

We pause 'mid the holiday bustle to count our many blessings, and to express deep appreciation for the patronage you have given us. To you and yours, our fondest Christmas greetings!

FROM HENRY and GEORGE

**ACTION MOTORS**

YOUR IMPERIAL DEPT. DEALER

TELEPHONE 853-1290

**We wish you a Merry Christmas**

All year long, we're grateful for our fine friends and customers. At Christmas, we're especially happy to express our greetings, thanks and good wishes.

MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

**I.G.A. FOODS**

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