

Celebrate the season

Experience a pioneer Christmas with Black Creek yule excursion

Celebrate the Season

By Linda A. Fox

Chestnuts roasting on an open fire, Jack Frost nipping at your nose. All this and more heralds a good old-fashioned Ontario Christmas.

When the Christmas shopping, baking and tree-trimming are finished on the home front, families can take in a variety of festive events all around the province.

And what better place to get back into the past than at that little bit of country on the edge of the city - Toronto's Black Creek Pioneer Village.

Until December 24, the pioneer community at Jane Street and Steeles Avenue celebrates Christmas in the Village.

The Town Hall, the doctor's house, the cabinet maker's shop, and all the other village buildings are decked out in Christmas finery. In the Town Hall, you can indulge yourself decorating Christmas cookies. The cabinet maker will be hammering and shaping a variety of simple wooden toys to delight today's youngsters, just as they did in days gone by.

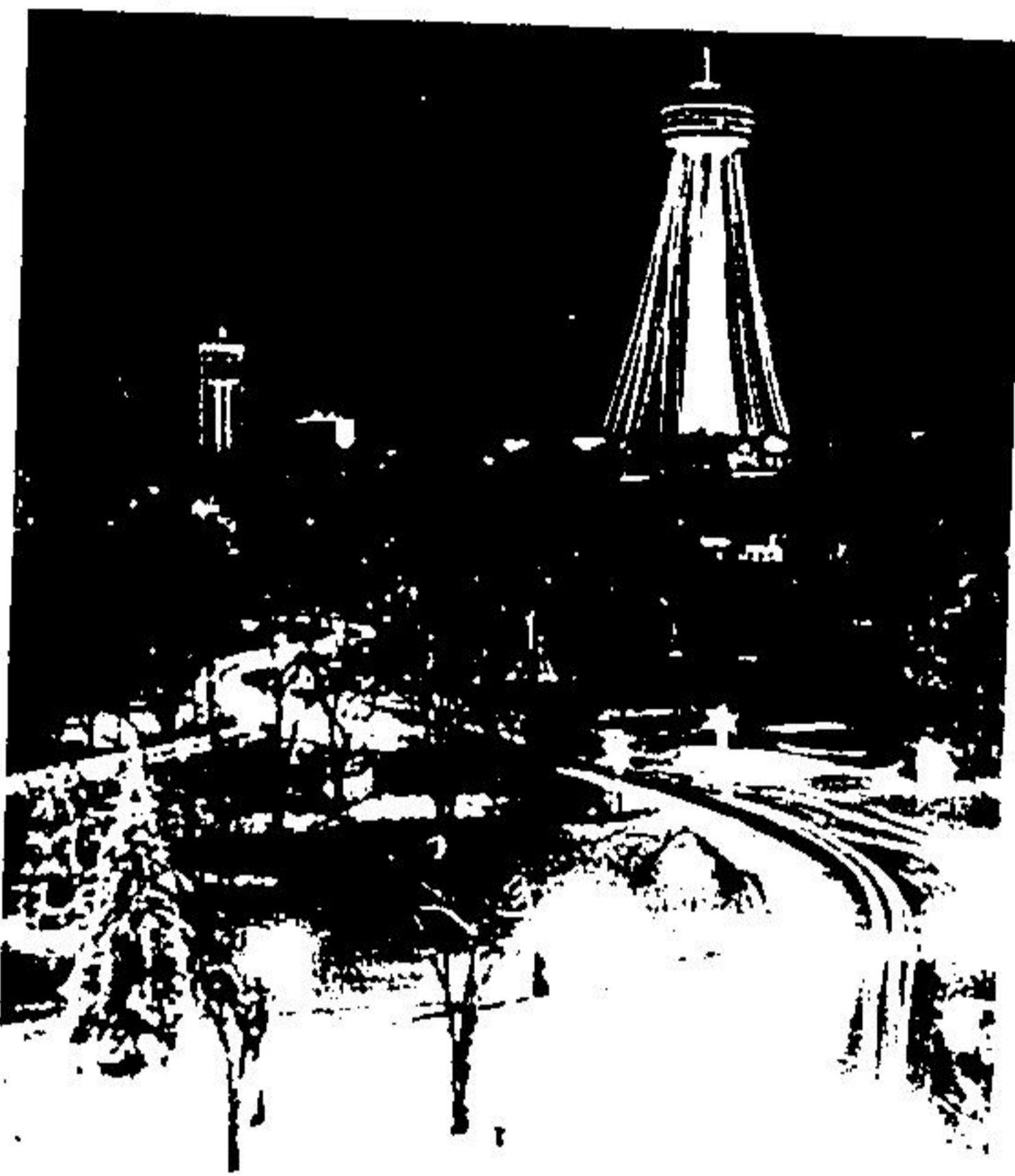
In the new Visitors Centre, toys are still the theme. A display of 19th century play-things from the Percy Bank Toy Collection will delight all. There are dolls, vehicles, animals and games that thrilled Canadian children in the last century.

If you enter the Half Way House, an 1850 inn, you might pass under "the kissing hall", strategically placed in the hall! Seasonal refreshments are available here as well as hearty holiday fare - mince pie, cider and the irresistible aroma of fresh bread.

A turn-of-the-century Yule would not be complete without carollers, and Black Creek Pioneer Village has strolling minstrels weekends between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. There is also a 15-minute movie entitled "Christmas in Pioneer Times" shown on the hour each day. Black Creek Pioneer Village is open 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., weekdays; 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., weekends.

Visitors to Toronto will also want to take in some of the many Yuletide programs at the Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queen's Park.

Festive Christmas trees, decorated in the styles of ten different countries, beautify the museum. The trees are sur-



FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS NIAGARA FALLS

rounded by authentic holiday decorations and creches from each land.

On the weekend of Dec. 14/15, museum staff dressed in traditional costume will tell seasonal stories and demonstrate holiday crafts.

Closer to Christmas Day, the Irish Choral Society sings a selection of Irish ditties and carols at 1 p.m. on Dec. 22.

At the Kortright Conservation Centre on Pine Valley Drive near Kleinburg, the holiday spirit is second nature.

Every Saturday and Sunday throughout December, conservation area guides will conduct nature hikes. Beginning at 11:30 a.m., the walks entitled Let Heaven and Nature Sing, will wend their way through the park as visitors learn Christmas folklore and nature stories.

At 1 p.m. a shorter hike called We're For the Birds follows the winter theme. Guides will teach walkers about bird feeding, give recipes, and go out and actually feed the little feathered friends at boxes set up along the trails.

If you're a modern youngster, you probably think every toy comes with batteries. Well, it wasn't always so. The third

Yuletide season program at Kortright is called Batteries Not Included. At 3 p.m., Saturdays and Sundays, children can see toys powered by everything from solar power to good old-fashioned muscle power.

If it's hearty homemade goodies, carol singing and log fires you're after, the Historic Naval and Military Establishments in Penetanguishene fit the bill.

Their Traditional Community Christmas program takes place Dec. 21 and Dec. 22 at the turn-of-the-century military compound.

From the parking lot, you'll be taken to the buildings by horse-drawn sleigh. Once inside, a crackling fire will warm your toes as you settle in for some old-fashioned story-telling.

A giant tree steals the show, with ornaments made by local high school art students. Fitting in with the Christmas-of-yesteryear theme, there is also a display of Victorian postcards.

Strolling carollers and festive baked goods round out the holiday feeling.

Canada's honeymoon paradise is also a photographer's paradise at Christmas, when Niagara Falls literally lights up.

For the third annual International Festival of Lights, Niagara Falls, Ontario has joined with Niagara Falls, New York to illuminate these bordering cities with more than \$1.6 million worth of Christmas-themed light displays.

In addition to the illuminations, which continue to Feb. 22, 1986, there is a host of events planned over the holiday season, including children's concerts, arts and crafts exhibits, hockey, and midget car racing tournaments.

Among the lighting displays is the world's largest candle. The Minolta Tower is transformed into a huge candle towering 665 feet above the Niagara Gorge. The Skylon Tower gets all decked out like a Christmas tree with more than 5,000 bulbs. And the Best Western Motor Hotel becomes a huge gift-box with more than 12,000 lights.

Even the Falls themselves take on a shimmering hue, as the ice builds up and is illuminated in reds, greens and blues from the floodlights. A spectacular sight!

Just five miles south of the Falls, the historic village of Chippawa presents the world's largest music box in the town square, surrounded by brightly lit Christmas trees.

At the Joseph Schneider Haus Museum in Kitchener, a 19th-century Punch and Judy Show will get the youngsters in the spirit each weekend in December. The annual Christmas Gallery will feature gift-giving customs over the centuries.

Candlelight tours of the museum are scheduled for Dec. 27 and Dec. 30, followed by a warming cup of mulled cider.

The museum is located at 466 Queen St. South in downtown Kitchener and is open Wednesday to Sunday.

Simcoe's famous Christmas Panorama continues throughout the month of December. There are over 60 colourful displays depicting everything from nursery rhymes to the nativity scene.

At Sir Harry Oakes Chateau, in Kirkland Lake, the theme is Memories of Christmas Past - featuring displays of old-fashioned Christmas cards, decorations and gifts. This runs until Jan. 3, 1986.

All you need to do is hitch up your sleigh and join in the fun!

For more information call Ontario Travel (416/965-4008 in Toronto or toll free 1-800-268-3735) and ask for the free booklet "Winter Events".

Adopt-a-tree perfect present

Families celebrating Christmas this year can acquire a special tree that will serve as a reminder of this holiday season for years to come by "adopting" a tree of their own at the Crawford Lake Conservation Area.

More than 400 individuals, families and business firms have paid \$50 each over the two years to adopt a tree in the name of a friend or relative, as part of the Halton Region Conservation Foundation's fundraising program.

The Foundation is starting Phase II of its campaign to raise funds to recreate the pre-European Iroquois Village that stood next to Crawford Lake at Steeles Avenue just east of Guelph Line in the heart of Halton from 1434 to 1459. The date is precisely known because of the ease of dating material found in the unique layered sediment of the lake bottom.

"We've been thrilled with the response to our 'Adopt a Tree' campaign," said Foundation vice-chairman Nina Lee Craig of Burlington. "We wanted to create some way for families to contribute to the campaign and the living memorials represented by the magnificent trees of the forest around the lake. They have become very popular with people from as far away as the United States and Europe."

Everyone adopting a tree may place a numbered tag on their tree which can be chosen from among any in the lake or Indian Village area. The name of the donor, and the tree location and number, is then prominently displayed on a chart in the Conservation Centre. Each donor also receives a special certificate with their name displayed.

Magic and illusion

The Brampton Civitan Club is holding a spectacular show of magic and illusion Jan. 24 for unfortunate children in the community.

The Club is approaching business in the area to buy tickets for the underprivileged children. The show is called the Glitter of Magic and will be held at the Chinguacousy Secondary School auditorium at 1:30 p.m. and 4 p.m.

Money from the show will be used for local projects such as a sheltered workshop for mentally retarded adults and a missing children's kit.

Tickets are \$7 each and come in books of 5, 10 or 20. If you want to make a donation, call 452-8150.

Campbellville yule ideas

A unique show of crafts and gifts will be held Nov. 29 and 30 in Campbellville, Ontario. Located in the Lions Club Hall on Guelph Line (1/4 mile south of 401), the show will feature one of a kind gift items from artisans and crafts people who work in jewelry, textiles, pottery, ceramics and woodworking as well as many other media.