

# Christmas Observed in Different Ways in the World

Santa Claus is Santa Claus for children all over the world, although his name and the date of his all-important visit may vary.

In Switzerland, Santa's visit is already over for this year, said Verna Laib, fourth year student of modern languages and history. The sixth of December is the date when children put a bag on the window-sill with a letter or poem promising Santa to be good next year and listing their wishes.

In the morning, the bag is found filled with Christmas cookies and other goodies. If you have been bad, though, Santa leaves you a birch rod, sometimes with a few cookies attached. If you have been very bad, he puts you in his bag and carries you back to the wood with him, so the story goes.

Christmas proper is celebrated the evening of Dec. 24 or early morning of Dec. 25, and it is purely a family affair with few public

celebrations. One quaint Swiss custom described is the making of a wreath of pine branches the first Sunday in December, and the placing thereon of four candles. One of these is lighted each Sunday evening in December during the family carol service, the last being lighted on Christmas Eve.

There are many different customs in the various valleys.

**In Czechoslovakia**  
St. Nicholas comes on Dec. 6 in Czechoslovakia, too, but he always comes accompanied by an angel and a devil, according to legend.

The angel promises to reward good children and the devil spansks the bad with a heavy chain he carries with him. As in Canada, St. Nick comes down the chimney and fills stockings left on the window-sill with toys and goodies.

But if St. Nick gives gifts on

Dec. 6, Jesus brings them on Dec. 24. Shepherds in rural districts go from door to door announcing the birth of Christ. As in Switzerland, Christmas day is a family affair, and the main dish is always "carp."

**In Holland**  
A St. Nicholas dressed in archbishop's robes and carrying a staff, who comes by steamboat from Spain and brings with him an Arabian steed and small African helper called Peter, gladdens the hearts of Dutch children Dec. 5. If the child has been good, he is rewarded with cookies. If not, he may get a birch rod, or be carried off to Spain in the bag, and there cut up into cookies for next year's good boys and girls. Shoes are put out containing grass and carrots for the steeds.

**In Latin America**  
In the Argentine Christmas day is not widely celebrated. A creche is set up instead of a tree, but this is done Jan. 6, when gifts are also exchanged.

This day, "the day of the kings" is also a big day in Costa Rica. The creche forms the chief decoration in homes and churches, and sometimes there is a tree too.

Since there are no chimneys, there is no Santa or hanging of stockings, though gifts are given. These festivities occur in the middle of summer holidays, and people flock to the cities to celebrate Dec. 28 in an equivalent of our April Fool's day, with appropriate pranks.

Christmas moves to the traditional Dec. 25 in Jamaica where the most colorful events is the big Christmas eve market, said Millcent Knight of Brown's Town, Jamaica.

Letters are sent off to Santa months in advance because of the distance from the North Pole. Ham as well as turkey is essential to the feast, although the poorer people celebrate by simply having meat to eat at all. As in all West Indian countries, fireworks are necessary, and there are merry-go-rounds and other entertainments in the streets. There are Christmas trees and gifts are opened in the early morning. No holly is available, but poinsettias grow in profusion and are used for decorations. Just as on any holiday, beaches are crowded with merry-makers, most of whom have never seen a "white Christmas."

# Yule Legends About Flowers

There are several flowers appropriate during the Yuletide season which are connected with the birth of Christ by the legends of history.

Sainfoin, or "Holy Hay," is said to have cradled the infant Christ in the manger. The snowdrop is the flower of the Virgin Mary, and is said to be the emblem of the candles she lighted on Christmas.

According to legend, the Christmas rose was divinely created. A shepherd maid wept at having no gift to lay before the Babe in the manger. Suddenly an angel appeared to her. On hearing why the maiden wept, the angel touched the ground where her tears had fallen and, immediately the place was white with Christmas roses, which the maid gathered and laid in the manger.

The chrysanthemum is said to have appeared first on Christmas Eve near the manger as a sign to the Wise Men that they had reached the spot where the star had bidden them.

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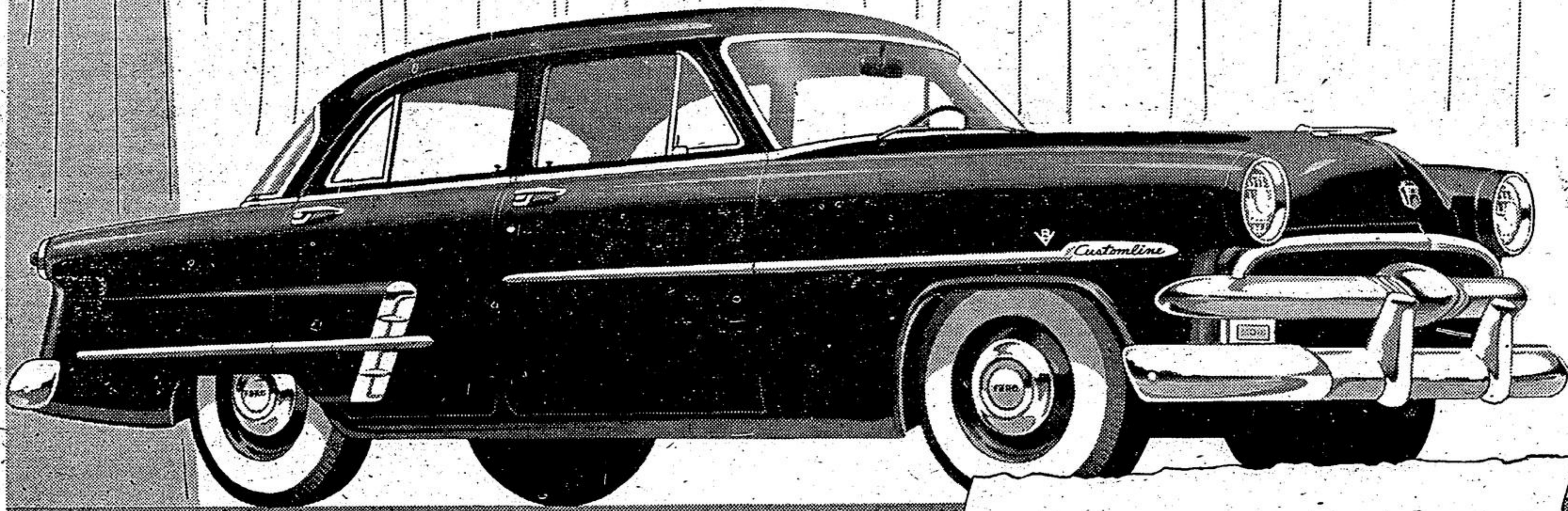
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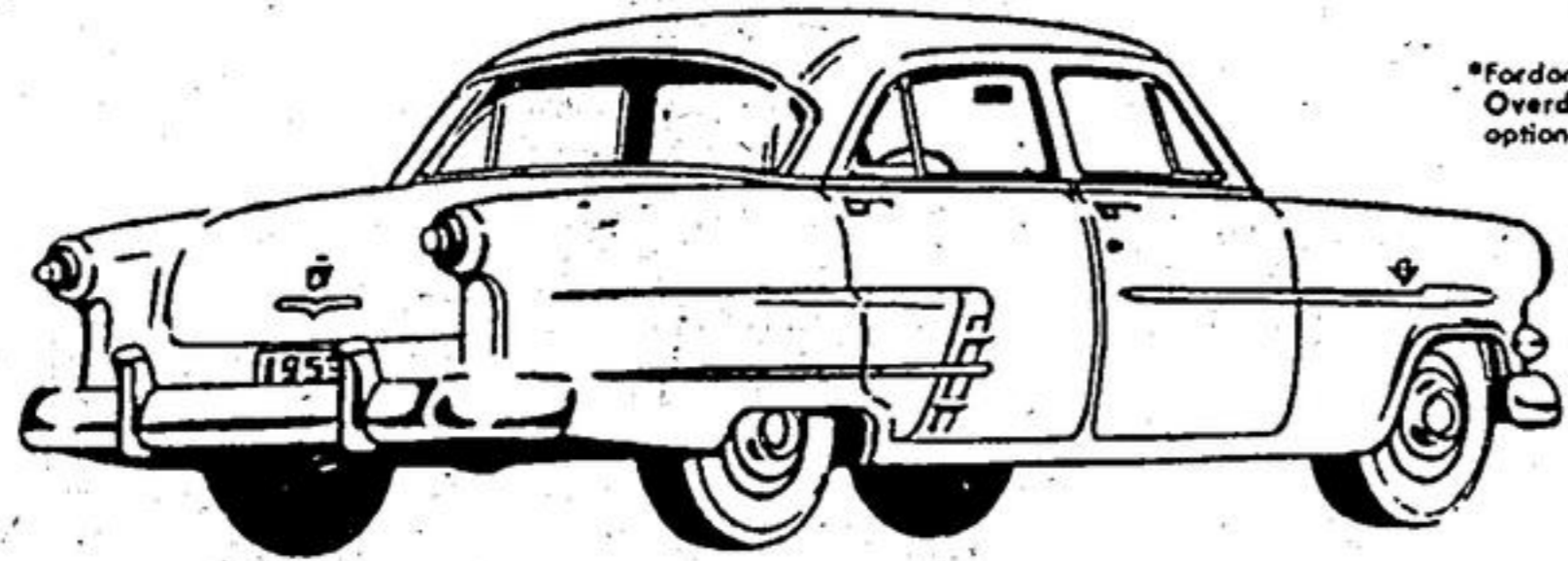
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