

## Christmas festival

The institution of the festival of the birth of the Savior is attributed by some authorities to Pope Telesphorus, who died A.D. 138.

In the early days of the Christian religion it was one of the most movable feasts, being often confounded with the Epiphany and celebrated by the eastern churches in April and May. In the Fourth century the urgency of St. Cyril of Jerusalem obtained from Pope Julius I. an order for an investigation to be made concerning the day of Christ's nativity. The result of the inquiry, made by theologians of the East and the West, was an agreement upon the twenty-fifth of December.

As told in the gospel of St. Luke, Christ was born in the night. Therefore, divine service is performed on the night of December 24-25. It is the custom in Roman Catholic churches to usher in Christmas day by the celebration of three masses, one at midnight, the

## Red, green set Yule scene

The traditional colors of the Christmas season are red and green. Yet these colors have meant different things to different people over the ages. Color has been used as the symbol of abstract ideas from time immemorial.

In early and medieval Christian art colors had a mystic or symbolic meaning. Red indicated passion. In its good sense it was a symbol of divine energy and love and the creative power of the Holy Spirit; in its bad sense it was a sign of hate. In that meaning it became an emblem of Satan.

Emerald green is often the symbol of hope and growth in many Christian paintings.

Colors played an important role in medieval magic and superstition. For example, the famous "philosopher's stone," which the alchemists thought would turn base metals into gold and cure all diseases, was thought to be colored red.

Red was also a favorite curative color in more recent superstitions.

In Indonesia, the people think a piece of bright red coral will keep its owner's teeth in good order, and there are people everywhere who are sure a person owning a ruby will live to a ripe old age.

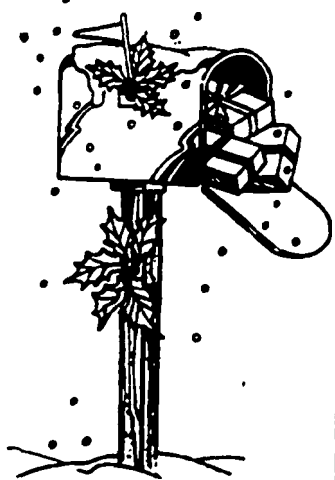
Green was a sacred color among the ancient and medieval Egyptians who wore it as a symbol of hope and the joy of spring. The Muslims carried this symbolism throughout the Middle East, and the faithful, on returning from the pilgrimage to Mecca, wear a green turban.

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May all good things come your way this holiday season.

from everyone at

**Sweet Grass Conoco & Sweet Grass Tire**



second at early dawn, and the third in the morning. This custom dates from the sixth century.

Preparatory to Christmas the bells are rung at midnight throughout England and the continent. After the solemn celebration of the mass in the churches of the continent, which are magnificently adorned for the festival, it is customary for the worshippers to partake of a collation.

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## Christmas games

Mistletoe. Hang it up. Form a circle. A slipper is required. Also a nice, slippery floor. The first player slides the slipper. He tries to land it under the mistletoe. If he fails another makes the attempt. If he succeeds there is a lively scramble. It concerns the young lady toward whom the slipper points. She must seize it and get away before caught. Then the guests are given humorous gifts (previously wrapped), and are admitted (one at a time) to the Christmas room to deposit them in the stockings.

Another jolly game is played with Christmas stockings, a number of which are previously hung up.

These are placed in a separate room and the name of the person for whom each is intended is concealed upon it.

Another Christmas stocking game calls for a huge stocking of tough tissue paper filled with toys of all kinds. Each guest is blindfolded, given a light rod or cane, turned three times around and told to hit the bag. The first to break the stocking gives the signal for a general scramble, each guest being supposed to get one of the trinkets or souvenirs thus scattered.

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## Season's 'firsts' are traced

Shepherds watched, angels sang and wise men traveled far to behold the miracle of the first Christmas.

Since that holy night a multitude of legends and customs, both religious and secular, have developed as part of the holiday. Each legend was once told, each custom once observed for the first time, and though origins of many traditions are now lost in time, other Christmas "firsts" have been recorded for posterity.

There are historical Christmas "firsts," attested by church records and by scientific research into the early years of Christianity, as well as "firsts" of later history and "firsts" that blend fact with myth.

### Setting the date

December 25 was first assigned as the date for the celebration of the Nativity in about the year 320 A.D. Since the New Testament was written as religious instruction rather than history, the exact date of Christ's birth is not known.

The present day was selected as a means of unifying the observances of Christmas, "the mass of Christ."

### Hanging stockings

The story of the first Christmas stocking is associated with the real St. Nicholas, a fourth century bishop known for his many kind deeds. Wishing to present an anonymous gift to help the daughters of an impoverished merchant, he threw a bag of gold down the chimney, where it fell into a stocking hung up to dry.

The legend is reflected in today's custom of tucking "gold"—an orange or tangerine—into the toe of a Christmas stocking.

### Trimming trees

Trimmed Christmas trees first appeared in the United States probably during the American Revolution.

Hessian soldiers with the British forces started the practice to relieve their nostalgia for their homeland.

An early diary, written at Fort Dearborn, Ill., in 1804, relates the practice of trimming the Christmas tree with ornaments of the time.

### At the White House

The first national community Christmas tree in the U.S. was placed on the White House lawn in 1923, while Calvin Coolidge was president. The tree was a spruce from Coolidge's native state, Vermont.

In the following year Coolidge presided at a ceremony under the sponsorship of the American Forestry association, to urge the use of living Christmas trees.

### At the Round Table

Traditionally, the first Christmas feast in England was held at the Round Table of King Arthur. While the specific date is undetermined, references to the famous king in medieval legends have been traced back to as early as 600 A.D.

### Of wreaths

Using wreaths as decorations at

Christmas may be traced to the customs of Advent season, the four Sundays before Christmas—a time of preparation for the coming of the Christ child. Traditionally, the Advent wreath is made of evergreen branches interlaced with red ribbons. It holds four candles. One candle is lit at dusk on the first Sunday of Advent, two the next Sunday, three the next and four on the last Sunday before Christmas. The wreath may be placed on a door, set on a table or hung from the ceiling.

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**We will CLOSE at 2:00 pm Dec. 23rd for our employee party and remain CLOSED December 24 & 25**

**MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

**FROSTY FREEZ**

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