

## Mistletoe, Stockings, Santa Claus

# Pagan, Christian Lore Combine In Yuletide Customs



TINY ELVES seem to dance around the sparkling objects in shop windows giggling "buy this, buy this!" It's Christmas and Americans will celebrate the festive season by spending billions of dollars on trinkets they neither want or need. Statistics show that \$3.5 billion will be spent this year on children's toys alone. Just think what the figure must be for grownups' toys. —DTH Photo by Jock Lauterer

This year when you're trimming the tree, filling Christmas stockings or hanging mistletoe — give a thought to where you got your favorite Christmas custom: chances are it goes farther back in history than you realize. In fact, Christmas itself, many historians believe, may have had its origins in ancient Greek and Roman festivities to observe the midwinter change of seasons. The use of greenery at Christmas also grew out of ancient Greek and Roman customs. Holly, for example, was a favorite decoration of the Romans, who made lavish use

### Worst Enemy In Viet Nam Is Loneliness

SAIGON, Viet Nam (UPI)—The loneliest Christmas of all will be marked by over 350,000 American soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen fighting in the jungles of Viet Nam 12,000 miles from home and their loved ones.

Christmas packages and letters from home will pour in at an astonishing rate.

Uncle Sam will make an all-out effort to see that every one of his boys eats a traditional eight-course turkey and dressing dinner on Christmas Day even in the remotest areas.

Protestant and Catholic chaplains will travel hundreds of miles by plane, helicopter, jeep and on foot to hold Christmas services for the troops. In the rear areas service clubs will be decorated, Christmas music will be played and GI's will eat the best possible Christmas dinner.

If the Communists cooperate this year as they did last, guns will fall silent across the war-torn land and no man will be forced to kill another on the birthday of the Prince of Peace.

But the continual guard cannot be lowered and for some young Americans, Christmas will be spent in a foxhole and the only turkey they will see will come in a little olive green can stamped "C-ration, individual meal, combat, turkey loaf."

On the hot white sands of the coastal plains to the north a few curly marines may find a ratty little scrubbrush pine and decorate its branches with the tops of C-ration cans and links of machine gun "ammo."

If you squint your eyes a little and ignore the 100-degree heat you can pretend that it's a snowy winter scene and the tree is beautiful.

In the rugged green mountains of the Vietnamese highlands along the Cambodian border the tough "Green Berets" mark a lonely isolated Christmas.

The tiny barbed wire-barricaded camps of the Special Forces are staffed by twelve-man American teams supervising a couple of hundred native mercenary troops.

For many of these camps any Christmas goodies will have to be parachuted to them. In many of these areas pilots flying loudspeaker planes used for propaganda purposes will make a special flight over the isolated camps to blare out a few bars of "Jingle Bells."

Christmas is a time for peace and being at home with your family and friends.

American men at war so far from home will fight their biggest battle — against loneliness — on Christmas Day, 1966.

of green boughs and garlands to honor Saturn, their god of agriculture.

While the birth of Christ was celebrated on various dates as early as the third century, the observance wasn't officially sanctioned until a century later. Pope Julius I authorized an investigation to determine Christ's probable birth date, which led to the selection of December 25th. On that date, in 353 A.D., the feast of the Nativity was first observed in Rome.

You may kiss under the mistletoe, but the ancient Druids, who called the plant "all heal," believed it had the power to miraculously cure disease and counteract poisons.

It was in heavily-forested northern Europe that decorating Christmas trees began. St. Boniface, an eighth-century monk who converted the pagans living in what is now Germany, convinced them to stop worshipping Odin's sacred oak and, instead, to adorn fir trees in their homes in tribute to the Christ Child.

A fourth-century bishop of Turkey, Saint Nicholas, was the real-life predecessor of Santa Claus. According to legend, he dropped a bag of gold coins down a chimney into a stocking which a poor girl had hung by the fireplace to dry; hence our custom of hanging Christmas stockings.

A French legend tells how the Christmas rose came into being. A little girl, accompanying the shepherds on their way to see the Christ Child, was sad because she had no gift to offer. The angel Gabriel appeared and, taking pity on the child, caused a beautiful white rose to spring from the ground. Overjoyed, the little girl plucked the bloom, which she took as a gift to the Infant Jesus.

The rose, together with the poinsettia and desert flower, continues to play an important role in the holiday season. In many countries of Europe, people still believe that all the trees break into blossom for a few moments at midnight on Christmas Eve. The most popular flowering plant for Christmas, according to the florists, is the poinsettia, brought to the U.S. more than 125 years ago from Mexico by

### Santa Claus Isn't Really A Litterbug

NEW YORK (UPI)—Santa Claus is not a litterbug but the estimated 400 million pounds of wrapping paper, boxes, ribbons and tags adorning the gifts he delivers are potential litter, reports Keep America Beautiful.

When added to the nearly 50 million trees and countless wreaths and other decorations this litter potential is greater than at any other time of the year, KAB said.

Allen H. Seed Jr., executive vice president of KAB, said most people properly dispose of their Christmas litter but enough are careless to add clutter to the otherwise decorative season.

"Even more important than its blemish on the holiday season, Christmas litter is a major fire hazard in the home and can cause accidents on streets and highways," said Seed.

He urged everyone to exert extra care in disposing of Christmas refuse so as not to mar the holiday glitter with litter.

Dr. Joel Poinsett.

One of the most revered Christmas customs is the reenactment of Christ's birth with a crèche or Nativity Scene. This custom was popularized in the 13th century by St. Francis of Assisi. At a time when few books were available, and most people could not read anyway, St. Francis dramatized the Nativity in 1224, to help the people of Greccio, Italy, understand the meaning of Christmas. Villagers took the parts of Mary, Joseph, and shepherds.

Live animals were figure of the Christ Child was used, and a life-sized wax placed in the manger.

Christmas carols can also be traced back to St. Francis. Originally a "carol" signified a dance rather than a song, and it was St. Francis who led the villagers in joyous dancing around the Nativity Scene.

One of our most recent customs, the exchanging of Christmas cards, began in England in the 1840's. Christmas cards were first introduced in the

United States by Louis Prang, a German immigrant who settled in Roxbury, Massachusetts. Often called the "Father of the American Christmas Card," Prang printed his first "Seasons Greetings" in 1873.

No matter what your favorite Christmas custom — from holly to jolly Old St. Nick — you'll probably agree that the Yuletide is full of surprises — and not only in the gifts you'll find under the tree on Christmas morning!

# CHRISTMAS IN AMERICA

## Toys (Millions Of Them) Toot, Toddle Into Yuletide

NEW YORK (UPI)—An estimated 380,230,000 toys will toot, thump and toddle their way into children's hands and hearts this Christmas, emptying parental pockets to the tune of nearly \$1.384 billion.

That's what the Toy Manufacturers of the USA, the nation's toy trade group, predicts for 1966, its 21st straight record-breaking sales this year.

Toy prices in this billion-dollar business, whose dollar volume doubled from \$1.2 billion in 1955 to \$2.4 billion last year, will stay mainly under \$30, the toymakers said.

Affluent adults can provide \$25,000 worth of childish glee with a mammoth marionette show from F A O Schwarz, of course, or splurge \$6,000 for an electric "Levi the Levitator" life-size magician from Hess' in Allentown, Pa.

But most toys will cost an average of \$3.65 each, and inflation won't torpedo toyland until next year, an association spokesman said.

"We expect a fantastic season, but fewer fads" said Jerome Friar, association president. "There won't be any wild surge for a toy everybody has to have."

Batman, however, will still spell "holy profits" in his first yuletide sales test, industry insiders agreed. At F A O Schwarz, vice-president and chief buyer Ernest Thauer, admitted to having "many sleepless nights" over the store chain's order of 800,000 5-inch Batmobiles from Corgi toys in England.

"I couldn't forget those 200 dozen Davy Crockett caps we were stuck with when that fad died," Thauer shuddered. The Batman duo did prove dynamic, though—the store now expects the \$4 car to lead all other items with over a million selling by Dec. 24.

Other companies also will cash in on the comic strip craze. Ideal Toy is marketing a "Captain Action" doll who switches from Superman to Steve Canyon and seven other heroes with a flick of the cape, and Chain toys offer a "talking Peanut bus" with a chattering Charlie Brown and company.

**REALISM SELLS**  
Despite the money in manufactured make-believe, the toy-

makers insist that realism is important to their trade.

Julius Cooper, head of product development for Ideal, said "Space toys won't sell now because the child doesn't see Daddy taking off for work in rockets every morning. He'd rather have a tiny Mustang—he wants to stay down to earth."

Realism also repels, however, and war toy sales should slip as the Viet Nam efforts spirals, buyers reported.

Thauer said the toys that bang and blast in boys' hands this year will represent "violence far removed" as in spy, cowboy, or knightly weapons. One television ad is pitching "laughs for the entire family" when they "hit the bomb and watch the front of the house fall away," but this bomb and dart gun are aimed at a "fall-apart master spy" and not a Viet Cong guerilla.

Scattered "special forces target games" and jungle-warfare equipment will appear, but even Hasbro toys, whose "GI Joe" doll figure has sold 10 million since 1964, does not expect its new "Green Beret" version to outstrip its leading Army and Navy dolls of earlier vintage.

The reality of race will also be skirted. GI Joe's vinyl face necessarily reflects the racial

melting pot, since it blends the features of all Medal of Honor winners, including Negroes, American Indians, and Orientals. But other manufacturers find, like Ideal's Erwin Benkoe, vice-president at Ideal, that "Negro and other racial dolls simply don't sell."

**COLOR'S COMING**  
Other color-experimentation will explode under the Christmas tree, primarily in preschool toys. Research and development departments in many outfits plan to ditch pastels for primary colors, having found that red and yellow outrank the traditional pink and blue with the under-six set.

Many passive push-button toys also will be replaced, by those that "give the child more to do, more chance to use his imagination" said Bernard Loomis, vice-president for national sales for Mattel toys.

"You always have to watch for return to the basics," said Loomis. "You can make a buck, but you can't build a business on fads."

The basics, Thauer explained, are "the toys the child never outgrows — the Teddy bear that becomes a mascot, or the toy cars that even a man collects."



A TOUCH of greenery for the door is always in order this time of year, even in Chapel Hill. The custom stems from the pagan practice of worshipping Odin's sacred oak. St. Boniface, in the Eighth Century, was the first to use greenery to celebrate Christmas. —DTH Photo by Jock Lauterer

## A Greeting-Filled Sack Bends Mailman's Back

NEW YORK (UPI)—Count 'em. They run into the billions, the numbers of Christmas cards U.S. families send.

The Greeting Card Association estimated that 3.5 billion Yule cards will be mailed this year, the largest number ever exchanged — some 400 million more than were sent during the 1965 holiday season.

The postage bill? Approximately \$175 million, for the nation's 56 million households the association added.

Just how much Americans will spend on the cards themselves the association won't estimate. "The figures are too nebulous," says Stephen Q. Shannon, association director.

The association did add that Christmas greetings make up about 50 per cent of the total card business, that on the average each family sends 75 cards, and that this year the religious theme is stronger than ever. Even the U.S. Post-Department takes note of the season with issuance of a Christmas stamp, a Madonna and Child, 30 per cent of the card designs are on the religious theme, with the Madonna by far the most popular.

Shannon said there are about 50,000 designs in cards

this year, yet the primary Christmas symbols still dominate. Among the most popular are Santa Claus, holly and poinsettia, nostalgic winter scenes, bells, candles, Christmas tree ornaments, animals and birds, jolly snowmen, candy canes, Christmas trees, travel scenes, mail boxes and the fireplaces.

One growing trend is the urbane design to go with our urban population growth, reported the American Artists Group, Inc., made up of hundreds of painters, illustrators and designers.

Some of the results show in such as the cards painted by Frank Lacano, who hails the new concert halls springing up, or by Bernard Kaplan, who created a contemporary "stained glass" window reflecting the surge of the city beneath the multi-angular patterns of streets and skyscrapers.

The artists group also noted that the war in Asia is reflected in design—cards dealing with the theme of peace, goodwill, and the brotherhood of man.

The association said that contrary to a fairly general supposition, the history of

Christmas cards is not centuries old. The first known card was designed and sent by John Calcott Horsley, a painter and illustrator, to his friend Sir Henry Cole, the inaugurator and the first director of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. That was Christmas, 1843.

It was not until 1846, however, that one thousand copies of the Horsley design were lithographed, hand-colored and sold by Felix Summerly's Treasure House in Bond Street. Sir Henry had set up the art shop in order to improve the taste of his contemporaries.

The first American cards were published in 1875 in Roxbury, Mass., by Louis Prang, a noted lithographer. The association said the first known card had a central illustration depicting the conviviality of the season. Small panels in the design to the left and right showed the charitable acts of "clothing the poor" and "feeding the hungry."

Inevitably the greeting on the card was destined to become the most popular Yule message ever composed — "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You."

## All You Need For Christmas Status Symbols Is Money

NEW YORK (UPI)—Dreaming of a status symbol Christmas? All you need is money.

For the "visible evidence of superior rank," as author Vance Packard has described the term, is more visible than ever this year in the stores and specialty shops.

How about a ski slope in your own backyard? It's 121 feet long comes with lights for skiing at night, and has a plastic surface so there's no snow shoveling involved. Price, \$100,000.

Or, for clanking around the house, there are authentic suits of armor, one of them German, circa 1540, with helmet and visor and "all finger, hand and elbow joints in working condition," for \$6,500.

For her, a necklace with round, marquise and pear-shaped stones set in platinum, for \$170,000.

Or in case this necklace is grabbed up already, a diamond and emerald drop necklace is available at \$57,500, and an all diamond bracelet for \$18,500.

Also for her, a Leo Ritter-designed Russian sable coat for \$25,000 or a Jacques Kaplan - designed chinchilla blanket for \$5,000.

Or for the do-it-yourself female, there's a tool chest from France, with decorations in jewels and sequins. Included for \$400 are vicuna working gloves and apron. Or goggles for cycling or skiing, with mink border, are only \$12.50.

Tired of the paper shopping bags? One from Portugal, at \$250, is beaded with rhinestones and pearls and has a gold frame.

Want to get away from it all? All sorts of charter your own villa plans are offered at

a mere \$200 a week but for real status, charter an island with accommodations for 35 persons, and a private yacht, for \$5,000 per week. Or, go on a shooting safari to Africa, 22 days for \$3,600.

These are just a few of the many often costly and often off-beat gifts for the person who has everything else, spotted in a tour through stores and Christmas catalogs.

Baby can have in his Christmas collection anything from a set of serling diaper pins at \$5.50 to a carriage blanket, in any fur, ranging in price from \$175 to \$500 "depending on whether baby was born with a silver or bold spoon in its mouth," said furrier Kaplan.

Or, there's a formal christening apparel set from Spain for \$550 and a cradle in white molded wicker from Germany

for \$285. For the men, there's a fur "blotter" for the desk, done in either jaguar or leopard, for \$1,500.

Or, for him, there's a baby grand piano in white wood, which doesn't play piano music, but does open up into a cabinet with bar, serving cart, hi-fi and stereo set, record player and television, for \$1,850.

For his jacket, there are 14-k gold buttons, at \$90, and the "millionaire's diary," bound in black pigskin, stamped in 18-k gold, and including facts on yacht brokers, polo meets, racing stables, and clubs of interest "to the favored few," for \$25.

For the canine seeking status, a split level indoor dog house imported from Italy sells for \$119 and a mink

blanket cape comes with it for \$90.

For the collector, one store is offering the complete Vanity Fair, 32 volumes bound in purple and silver, at \$1,000.

There are of course those well-publicized "his" and "hers" side by side bathtubs for \$4,000. Also for the house are mink and cashmere Christmas stockings for \$50 each or mink and jewel-trimmed Christmas tree decorations sprinkled with silver dust for \$10 each.

A French-made silver-plated duck press, resting on marble base, costs \$410.

For the gourmet, canned tiger meat from India is prepared in mushroom sauce, at \$2.49 a can. Or, there's a complete wheel of Swiss chese, three feet in diameter, weighing 180 pounds, at \$243.