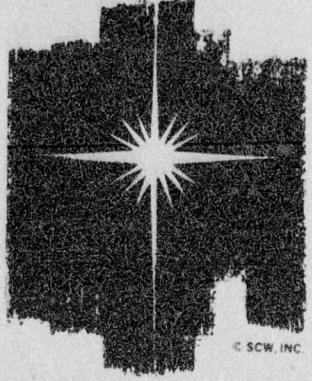


**Christmas Symbols Have Roots In History**

The star that you hang on the tip of your tree... the mistletoe that Janie fastens hopefully at the doorway, these and other symbols of Christmas have reasons for being.

Legends about the Christmas tree abound. The Druids are said to have worshipped trees for themselves thousands of years ago. Gradually the tree took its rightful place among the symbols of worship.

In Scandinavia the people once idolized trees. When they became Christians they made trees part of Christmas festivities.



Another legend holds that the first Christmas tree was seen in a vision experienced by an English missionary named Winfrid. Later he was called Boniface. It happened about 1,200 years ago when he was going through northern Germany. One day he stumbled on a group of non-believers huddled at an oak tree. They were preparing to sacrifice a little prince, Asulf, to the god Thor.



Winfrid stopped the ceremony and chopped down the oak. As the tree fell, a young fir tree appeared. Winfrid interpreted this as the tree of life, saying it represented Christ.

The custom of decorating homes with green branches actually harks back to the days before Christ's birth. Romans exchanged tree branches for good luck at the start of January. The English copied the custom, associating it with Christmas. An old English rhyme explained it this way:

"Holly and ivy, box and bay, put in the church on Christmas Day."

**A PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR**

We pray... that strength and courage be given to all who work for a world of good will... that the scourges of poverty, disease and callousness will be driven from the earth... that the spirit of the Season may live among us, for always.



**Peace on earth, to men of good will**

be aware of the angels abiding around you

Not all the angels are celestial beings, though we honor the heavenly host, especially at Christmas-time.

Angels are for all times, and for all places. Most of us have a feeling that we have a "personal angel" guarding us, a mediator with the Creator in time of stress.



But there are other angels. For example, when someone speaks rudely to you, and you do not respond with rudeness, an angel has visited you, illuminating your mind and heart with understanding. You realize that this person is troubled, is perhaps fearful, that there is a break of communications that would only be widened if you respond in kind. An angel helps to "build bridges" among humankind.

When you feel or see beauty, you are host to angels. And when you create beauty in the midst of darkness or evil, you belong with the seraphic group itself.



When you overcome the fears and doubts that assail all of us so-called "civilized" beings, if you rise to heights of achievement in spite of forces of lethargy and other self-protecting devices, you are in the company of angels.

This Christmas try to move thoughts away from self. It is so human to think of "Number One" first. We are all subject to this temptation. But this Holy Season we can make an effort to be more loving,



**GLORY... TO... GOD IN... THE... HIGHEST**

And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.

And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David.

To be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child.

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were so afraid.

And the angel said unto them: Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was

with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying:

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another: Let us now go, even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

ST. LUKE, CH. 2

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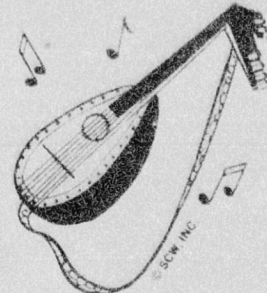
**6 Separate New Year's Days Around the World**

Six New Year's days in a year? Certainly — it depends on where you are at the time. Here they are:

1. January 1.
2. In that part of the Occident wherein the Greek Orthodox faith prevails Jan. 1 falls upon our Jan. 13.
3. A traditional Chinese New Year's celebration starts Feb. 8 and lasts to Feb. 13.
4. If you visit the country of Thailand, April 1, you'd find a great ceremonial fes-

**the musical tradition of Christmas**

The musical tradition of Christmas is believed to have begun in 129, when Telesphorus, Bishop of Rome, decreed that "in the holy night of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior, (all) do celebrate public church services and in them solemnly sing the Angel's Hymn.



Since then, literally thousands of carols have been written by such as Sir Walter Raleigh, Martin Luther, Johannes Brahms, Francis Scott Key, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Pope Pius IX.

But Christmas songs weren't called carols until well into the 13th Century, because, during most of the Middle Ages, priests and monks did all the singing inside the churches.



The people were only allowed to sing and dance outside, making up words and tunes about the birth of Christ. The French word "carole" and the Italian "carola" both mean a ring dance accompanied by singing, and from this comes our word carol.

The first American Christmas carol was written by a French Jesuit missionary named John de Brebeuf. He composed a song called "Jesus Is Born" for the Huron Indians with whom he worked in the early 1640s.



tivity underway — nothing less, in fact, than New Year's.

5. In Arab nations, the Mohammedan New Year's is celebrated Sept. 4.



The ancient custom of burning the Yule log at Christmas is preserved on many French tables in the Buche de Noel, a rich cake made in the shape of a log and then covered with chocolate and colorful icing decorations.

No French homemaker would dare set a holiday buffet table without a carefully arranged centerpiece of red roses.

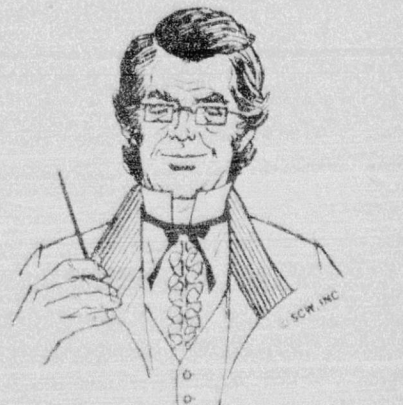


**did the moon-silhouetted face of a 19th century handyman inspire one of most famous poems?**

His eyes, how they twinkled! His dimples, how merry! His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry! His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow, and the beard of his chin was as white as the snow.

The famous lines were set down by Moore at a writing desk in his home located on a 90-acre tract in a New York City area still known as Chelsea, down on the lower West Side where the wholesale flower market now stands.

From a famous poem, probably one of the most cherished and well remembered in all of the English language.



Written almost 150 years ago by Clement Clark Moore, this poem helped create one of the great legendary figures of all time, the "plump and jolly old elf," Santa Claus (who up to that time was depicted as rather a gaunt and somber St. Nicholas whose living prototype had been an obscure ecclesiastic of the Fourth Century).

At the time, Moore was a professor of Oriental languages in the General Theological Seminary in New York.

There is no substantiated version of how Dr. Moore got his idea for this image, so different from most of those prevailing.

According to tradition, Moore read the poem to his children that Christmas Eve, although it seems more likely that the children were already in bed by the time he finished writing the poem. He probably read it the next day — Christmas Day, 1822.

The actual image of Santa Claus, or St. Nicholas as Moore called him in the first version, may have come from the moon-silhouetted face of his handyman.

Legend holds that it was on a sleigh ride over the now packed New York streets of 1822 as he and his handyman, Peter, went from the estate to Greenwich Village to deliver Christmas presents.

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Moore's "The Night Before Christmas" earned him lasting fame.

**LORD**

make me an instrument of Your peace  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love,  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is doubt, faith,  
Where there is despair, hope,  
Where there is darkness, light, and  
Where there is sadness, joy.

**O, divine master,**

grant that I may not so much  
Seek to be consoled as to console,  
To be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love,  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born  
to eternal life.

**Christmas is WONDERFUL**