by
Dr. Peter John Dines, Ludwigsburg
Garth Eliassen, Independence, Oregon
Dr. Peter Fenn, Ludwigsburg
Joy Hudson, Houston, Texas
Katie Hudson, Houston, Texas
Renate Kienzler, Ludwigsburg
Gerlinde Kumpf, Vaihingen/Enz
Eric Orton, M.A., Worcester
Gerald Williams, B.A., München

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Illustrationen
GUS, Fleet, Hants.
Hartwig Habelmann, Erligheim

Fotos
Jürgen Kienzler, Ludwigsburg
Gottfried Kumpf, Vaihingen/Enz
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The story of the Christmas tree

What would Christmas be like without a tree to decorate our homes and public places like, for example, Trafalgar Square in London? But why do we have them?

The story is told that Boniface of England, an early Christian saint, was travelling in Germany. He was telling the people there about his beliefs. One day he rested under a huge oak tree. People had been killed under that tree as offerings to the gods of the pagans.

Boniface chopped the tree down and as the oak fell a little fir tree suddenly started to grow in its place. So Boniface used this tree as a symbol of his religious message.

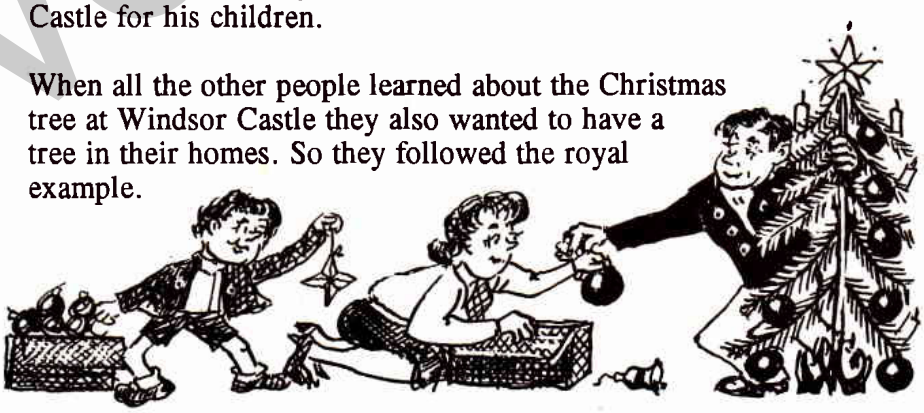
At first trees were not decorated. But about 1530 when Martin Luther was walking home on a clear Christmas Eve he noticed millions of bright stars in the sky. He thought that they were so beautiful that when he reached home he tied candles to the branches of a fir tree.

In those days people did not chop down the trees. They just decorated them where they stood.

German and Dutch people who emigrated to distant countries like America kept up their Christmas tree tradition and sang the famous carol "O Tannenbaum" when the candles were lit.

It was Queen Victoria's German husband Albert who brought the Christmas tree to England. He had a tree put up at Windsor Castle for his children.

When all the other people learned about the Christmas tree at Windsor Castle they also wanted to have a tree in their homes. So they followed the royal example.



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White Christmas

Did you know that "White Christmas" is the song which has sold the most records. It was written by Irving Berlin and was first recorded by "Bing the Sing", Bing Crosby, back in 1942. Over 130 million recorded versions have been sold.

White Christmas

1.
I'm dreaming of a white Christmas
just like the ones I used to know.
Where the tree-tops glisten
and children listen
to hear sleigh-bells in the snow.

2.
I'm dreaming of a white Christmas
just like the ones I used to know.
Where the tree-tops glisten
and children listen
to hear sleigh-bells in the snow.

3.
I'm dreaming of a white Christmas
with every Christmas card I write.
May your days be merry and bright
and may all your Christmases be white.

4.
I'm dreaming of a white Christmas
just like the ones I used to know.
May your days be merry and bright
and may all your Christmases be white.

5.
I'm dreaming of a white Christmas
with every Christmas card I write.
May your days be merry and bright
and may all your Christmases be white.

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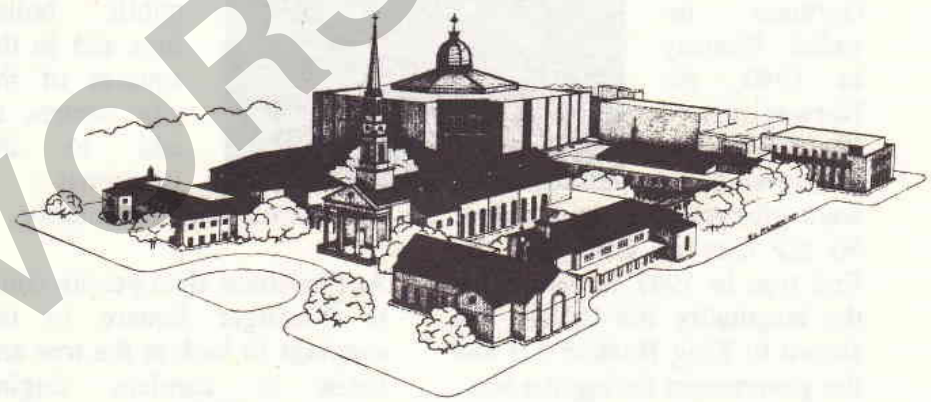
candlelight service at church. Sometimes we eat dinner out and sometimes I cook a simple meal here at home. Then we open our presents. When the children were little we opened our gifts on Christmas morning, but since the magic of Santa is over we enjoy the leisure of having our tree on Christmas Eve and sleeping a bit later the next morning.

All Christmas morning the women spend their time laughing and preparing the Christmas feast. Our menu is pretty much the same as when I was a child: turkey and cornbread dressing, gravy, cranberries, green beans, several kinds of potatoes, herring salad, squash, rolls, coffee or tea. And, of course, many desserts.

After dinner we talk, play games and sometimes watch a ball game on television. Often friends and neighbours stop by.

Since everyone but my husband has another week of vacation we manage to fill the time until New Years's Day with more relaxing, more gatherings with friends and more fun. It is always a little depressing to me to put all the holiday things away and go back to the classroom.

I hope my family will remember our Christmases here in Houston as warmly as I remember those in the Hill Country. We are trying to keep the real meaning of Christmas where it should be - on Jesus and the good news of His birth.



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Winter wonderland

1.
Sleigh bells ring,
are you listening?
In the lane
snow is glistening.
A beautiful sight,
we're happy tonight,
walking in a winter wonderland.

2.
Gone away is the bluebird,
here to stay is the new bird
that sings a love song
as we go along,
walking in a winter wonderland.

3.
In the meadow we can build a snowman
and pretend that he is Parson Brown.
He'll say, "Are you married?"
We'll say, "No, man!
You can do the job
when you're in town!"

4.
Later on we'll conspire
as we dream by the fire
to face unafraid
the plans that we made
walking in a winter wonderland.

5.
In the meadow we can build a snowman
and pretend that he is Parson Brown.
He'll say, "Are you married?"
We'll say, "No, man!
But you can do the job
when you're in town!"

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But then suddenly the scene changed again. Another Christmas, this time at the firm where Scrooge had been an apprentice. "It's old Fezziwig!" he cried, pointing at an old man in a white wig.
"Fezziwig the boss! Dear old Fezziwig!"
Fezziwig was celebrating Christmas with the young Scrooge and several other apprentices. The office had been made into a party-room. The desks had been pushed to one side, a fiddler was playing, and everyone was dancing - Mrs. Fezziwig, the housemaids, and other friends and relatives of the family.
On a table there was delicious food - cold meat, mince pies, beer. Scrooge realized how well his old boss had treated everyone. Fezziwig's employees were happy and his house was joyful. Scrooge had forgotten all this. A tear rolled down his cheek as he thought of his own bare office and his clerk, Bob Cratchit.

Then another change. Scrooge himself again, even older this time, though still a young man. His face had now started to look hard and greedy, and there was some cruelty in it. A beautiful young woman was talking to him. "We must part," she said sadly. "You no longer love me. All you love now is money and profit."

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The scene changed again to a family celebrating Christmas. A beautiful young girl sat smiling by a comfortable roaring fire. Scrooge thought it was the same girl as before. But then he realized that this was her daughter. The mother, his old love, was sitting opposite. She was now a friendly, slightly fatter woman of middle-age. A real mother. There was a tremendous noise in the room, for several half-grown children were tumbling around, playing boisterously, as their mother looked on with a kind smile.
Then the father came home with his arms full of Christmas presents. The children immediately surrounded him, shouting joyfully, laughing, and pulling at the presents. "Not till tomorrow," said the father, "off to bed, all of you." And one by one the children shuffled off upstairs, and the living-room became quiet and peaceful. The father put an arm around mother and daughter. "Merry Christmas to you both," he said, and kissed them.
How Scrooge would have loved a daughter like this! How he would have loved such children and such a happy house. But there were only his lonely rooms and his bare, cold offices.

"Why are you torturing me like this?" he asked the ghost.
"Don't blame me," the ghost replied. "These are simply shadows of the past, of your own past. They are in your heart, whether you want to feel them or not."
Then the hand waved, they flew again through the blackness, and suddenly Scrooge found himself alone in his bed again. His eyes closed, and he sank into a heavy sleep.

Chapter 5: The Ghost of Christmas Present

Scrooge woke up just as the mantlepiece clock struck one. He was wide awake at once and expected to see the second ghost already in his room. But no visitor was to be seen. The room was not completely dark, though. A strange light seemed to be coming from somewhere. But no ghost. Scrooge waited, getting nervous... Ten, twenty minutes passed. Still nothing. He decided to get up and find out exactly what the strange light was. It appeared to be shining from his sitting-room. He got up and went to the door. He had already started to open it, when a strange voice called his name, and told him to come in. He opened the door. A magnificent sight

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Questions on part III:

1) When did Santa's holiday begin?
2) Why did they have to stop for a night in Germany?
3) What did the Claus family call their new car?
4) What was the first thing the Austrian custom's officer did?
5) Why did he do that?
6) What was the weather like when they got to Italy?
7) Name three things that Santa and his family did in Venice.
8) What happened after they had been wind-surfing?
9) What had they forgotten to bring with them?
10) What is a fancy-dress party?
11) Who did they meet there?
12) What happened when the Americans went to get their camera?
13) Who wrote down the story?
14) Where is Santa now?
15) Did you see him last summer?
    If you did, write a short story about what happened.

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Dear Santa,

I don't know if you can bring me this, but I don't want anything except a happy family. They have been fighting lately. My brother is not very nice sometimes. We all need to settle down a lot. I just think it might help a little. Bye.

Sincerely,

Jemmy B.

Dear Santa,

I will leave some milk and cookies on the table. I will hear all the bells ringing like music to my ears. Bring anything you want to bring me for Christmas. Be sure to come to my house.

Love,

Ayman N.

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Happy Christmas

- Happy Christmas, John
- Happy Christmas, Julian.

1.
So this is Christmas
and what have you done?
Another year over,
a new one just begun.

2.
And so this is Christmas,
I hope you have fun!
The near and the dear ones,
the old and the young.

A very Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year.
Let's hope it's a good one
without any fear.

3.
So this is Christmas
for the weak and for the strong,
the rich and the poor ones,
the world is so long.

And so Happy Christmas
for black and for white,
for yellow and red ones,
let's stop all the fight.

Chorus:
A very Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year.
Let's hope it's a good one
without any fear.

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Gift buying begins in earnest

flocking	strömen
retailers	Einzelhändler
bargain	Gelegenheitskauf
browsing	sich umsehen
suburban	vorstädtisch
malls	Einkaufszentrum
jam	drängen
liquidation	Ausverkauf
virtually	tatsächlich
doughnuts	ringförmige Krapfen

Christmas in Australia

celebrations	Feierlichkeiten
turkey	Truthahn
recipes	Rezepte
raisins	Rosinen
sultanas	Sultaninen
cinnamon	Zimt
thoroughly	gründlich
lid	Deckel
yarning	klönen

Jimmy the Cat

meantime	Zwischenzeit
fairy story	Märchen
favourite	Lieblings-
Lord Mayor	Oberbürgermeister
perform	aufführen
occasion	Gelegenheit
performance	Aufführung
determined	entschlossen
parts	Rollen i.Theater
gestures	Gesten
acrobatics	Kunststücke
rehearsals	Proben
Boxing Day	zweiter Weihnachtsfeiertag
tickling	kitzeln
lead	(Hunde-) Leine
merchant	Kaufmann
offended	beleidigt
lately	in letzter Zeit
relieved	erleichtert
dress rehearsal	Kostümprobe
cue	Stichwort
crouching	zusammengekrümmt
staring	starren
trapped	gefangen
strangle	erwürgen
garment	Kleidungsstück
mortuary	Leichenschauhaus
contain	enthalten
drug addict	Drogenabhängiger

Homeless recall Christmas joy, sorrow

Daisy BB gun	Luftdruckgewehr
assembly line	Montageband
deposit	Pfandgeld
plasma	Blut
robin	Rotkehlchen
beaded	mit Perlen verziert
disabled	körperbehindert
settlement	Abfindungssumme
shelter	Unterkunft
inmates	Gefängnisinsaßen
embarrass	in Verlegenheit bringen
forgery	Urkunden-fälschung
cuddle	schmusen
Salvation Army	Heilsarmee
hobo	Landstreicher
dumpster	Müllcontainer
razors	Rasierer
bandana	großes Halstuch
makeshift	provisorisch
scattered	verstreut

A Christmas party - for the needy

migrant worker	Wanderarbeiter
Hispanic	spanisch sprechend
efforts	Anstrengungen

Holiday means togetherness

boughs	Zweige
ribbons	Bänder
reunion	(Familien-) Treffen
clam chowder	Muschelsuppe

B. Vocabulary - Poems

The Christmas Stocking

Hang up the baby's stocking!

stocking	Strumpf
dimpled	mit Grübchen
Why!	Sieh da!
blessed	gesegnet
cram	vollstopfen
goodies	Süßigkeiten
clean down	ganz runter

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