

The Story of the Christmas Tree  
... author unknown

The Christmas tree came into general use in comparatively recent times. The custom began in Germany and was first mentioned in an anonymous chronicle in 1605. There is a story, however, that Martin Luther started the custom much earlier, putting candles on an evergreen to represent the stars on Christmas Eve.

Another story tell of Saint Boniface when he was a missionary in Germany in the eighth century. He was trying to stamp out the pagan rite of sacrificing people to the oak tree. He lead his followers into a forest at yule time. Showing them a fur tree, he said it pointed straight upward to the Christ child. "Take this tree into your homes," he said, "as a sign of your new worship. It lives when the earth is darkest and has no sign of blood. Celebrate God's power no more in the forest with shameful rites, but in the sanctity of your homes with laughter and love."

By the beginning of the ninetieth century, all Germany had adopted the Christmas tree. The custom soon spread to most countries of northern Europe, but is still unusual in Italy, Spain, and Latin America. The date of the first Christmas tree in the United States has been given as 1804 at Fort Dearborn in Illinois, but research has failed to substantiate it; the date now accepted is 1832 in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Merry Christmas !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Here we are again with another year coming to a close. Christmas is just around corner with the new millenium soon to follow! We look back on the century passing and forward to promise of a new one to come. This new year brings challenges to be overcome. Our annual stamp show will soon be just around the corner as will the others in the surrounding cities and states. There will be new stamps issued by the Post Office and old ones to be found with our favorite dealers. So have a great holiday season and look forward to better new year.

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Matt Benward, President NPS

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\* NASHVILLE STAMP NEWS \*  
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October Project  
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As many of you know October is stamp collecting month. To promote the hobby the Nashville Philatelic Society places stamp exhibits in many of our local libraries. This year had many members help. The club would like to thank everyone who helped and a special THANK YOU goes to Tony Ramirez who organized this project for the last several years.

Nashville Stamp Show 2000  
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Our stamp show will be held at the Clarion Inn Airport at 733 Briley Parkway located near the I-40 exit on March 11-12, 2000. We will need volunteers to help with show. Please let Dave Bodkin know in you can help. This year we have organized several committees to keep things going smoothly. They are the Show committee headed by Dave Bodkin; the Publicity committee headed by Tom Tribke; the Exhibit committee headed by Bob Picirilli; the Cover and Program committee headed by Steve Popick; and the Stamps committee headed by Marie Farmer. All these committees have several members, but they could always use more help. If you would like to be on one of these committees, please contact the Chairperson.

New Members  
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S. Thomas Burnett  
Milburn Davis  
Shannon Von Mann  
Ricky E. Wright

The Volunteer State  
Philatelic Gazette

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Marie Farmer

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Tony Ramirez	First Vice-President
David Bodkin	Second Vice-President
Rachael Von Mann Jr.	Vice-President
Tom Tribke	Secretary
Bob Picirilli	Treasurer
Marie Farmer	Delegate-at-Large

Meetings: Second and Fourth Mondays of each month. Buy and swap at 5:30 p.m., Business meeting a 6:45 p.m., and Program at 7:00 p.m.

Meetings are held at the Inglewood Branch Library, 4312 Gallatin Road, Nashville, Tennessee 37216.

Kids under 17 get a FREE stamp packet at their first attendance. Ages 6 and up are WELCOME!

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When Do You Celebrate Christmas?  
... author unknown

December 25 of course, you will answer, a bit irritated. However, it is not so definite.

Some years ago, four churches in Vicksburg (Michigan) rebelled against the increasing commercialism of this Christian feast. By the way of protest they celebrated Christmas in the month of July. However, they could not part from the traditional white Christmas and had piles of artificial snowballs made.

There are really some unlucky people that cannot celebrate Christmas at all, not in December or any other month for that matter. The international date line is drawn somewhere in the middle between Asia and America at or near the 180 degrees meridian. On this border the calendar skips one day. Passengers of a cruise ship, that crosses the date line on Christmas Day decorated the ballroom in vain and Christmas Day became second Christmas Day.

Even more peculiar is the situation for two islands off the coast of Alaska. The inhabitants would be able to holler their mutual Christmas greetings, were it not for the fact that because of years of changes, the islands each celebrate Christmas on a different day.

In England in 1752 a change was made in the centuries old calendar to make it the same as on the continent. Regardless of protest this change was put through, so that England had to drop 12 calendar days and the December 25th all at once became the January 6th in the new calendar, which caused much disapproval by the population. So the authorities were forced to decree that because of this calendar change everyone could celebrate Christmas twice in 1752.

And it can be worse. A small parish in Louisiana celebrates Christmas when we collect Easter eggs. The reason for this is simply a shortage of time. The local population earns their living from trapping muskrats. This trapping season is very short, but they will have to live off that income all year. So there is no time for festivities. But in March or April they catch up and then celebrate Christmas with all their might.

Are you still sure now that we are doing it right when we cut the turkey on December 25th, including decorating the tree, lighting fireworks and exchanging presents?

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TO: