



# An American Colonial Christmas

If you must have the whole truth, there really was no Christmas in the very early Colonial days—at least among the Puritans. And when you go back to the history of those days and of those exceedingly brave old fellows that built the town of Plymouth you can understand how there would be a strong feeling against Christmas.

Time was then reckoned according to the old style. So that January 2 was December 25 to the colonists. That particular day found them busy constructing their first buildings and having to guard against Indians, as well.

Bradford's note in his famous "Log Book" records the first Christmas Day as follows:

"The day call'd Christmas Day, ye Gov call't them out to worke (as was used) but ye moste of this new company excused themselves, and saide yt went against their consciences to work on yt Day. So ye Gov. tould them that if they made it matter of conscience he could spare them till they were better informed. So he led away ye rest and left them; but when they came home at noon from their work he found them in ye street at play openly, some pitching ye bar, and some at stool ball and such like sports. So he went to them and took away their implements and tould them it was against his conscience that they should play and others work." (Stool ball was a game where balls are driven from stool to stool.)

There is another brief note concerning the first Christmas among the Puritans. Twenty men were left on shore as guard and the rest returned to the ship, the celebrated Mayflower. Jones, the captain, had his mind on the return voyage and the necessary supplies for it. That very morning he had refused to give out beer, lest the supply should not last. Beer took the place of tea, coffee, milk or chocolate to the Puritans and meant much to them. However, the captain relented at night, and as Brad-

ford and his men were resting about the fire in the cabin he gave out beer in abundance, in remembrance of the festivities at home. The poor Pilgrims were still confined to the ship's provisions, and so continued until summer, when their crops came in.

A year later, when seven houses and four public buildings stood in the little town of Plymouth, their crops were in, furs and lumber were stored for export to England, and a peace treaty had been signed with the Indians, there came a season of great rejoicing. It was then that Thanksgiving was instituted. For two centuries its celebration was confined to New England, then later the day became general, to be observed by our entire country.

The Pilgrims felt that the observance of Christmas was anti-Christian—the day having been selected by the pope. In addition, in England there was on that day much license and excess, which was another reason for opposing the celebration of that special day. For at least fifty years the Pilgrims used to display great simplicity on that day to show their complete disregard for it.

In 1659 Massachusetts Bay made a law forbidding the celebration of Christmas under penalty of five shillings. Plymouth, however, never had such a law. Gradually the prejudice melted away and Christmas came to be celebrated everywhere.

In old New York (New Amsterdam then) the celebration of New Year's day was similar to our present celebration of Christmas. Since the time of Stuyvesant, the Dutch and English observed New Year's day by exchanging presents, receiving calls, and with much noise, somewhat like our old noisy Fourth of July. The young men went from house to house firing guns as salutes, until a crowd had collected at some outlying home or farm and all would fire at a mark. This noisy activity was prohibited by statute later on, on account of the damage done.

Stage coaches (with four or six

horses), all piled full of people, visited gayly from house to house. Substantial food was served with wine, bowls of milk punch, pitchers of egg-nogg. Cakes, special New Year's cakes, were baked and delivered by the baker's apprentice singing a carol.

Washington Irving gives us a faint idea of an old Dutch tea party, such as might have happened at New Year's, in his "History of New York." "The company assembled at three and went away at six.—The tea table was crowned by a huge earthen dish well stored with slices of fat pork, fried brown, cut up into morsels and swimming in gravy.—Sometimes the table was graced with immense apple pies, but it was always sure to boast an immense dish of balls of sweetened dough, fried in hog's fat and called dough nuts, or oly koecks.

"The tea was served out of a majestic Delft tea pot, ornamented with paintings of fat little Dutch shepherds and shepherdesses tending pigs.—To sweeten the beverage a lump of sugar was laid beside the cup and the company alternately nibbled and sipped with great decorum, until an improvement was introduced by a shrewd and economic old lady, which was to suspend a large lump directly over the tea table by a string from the ceiling, so that it could be swung from mouth to mouth, an ingenious expedient which is still kept up by some families in Albany."

We think Mr. Irving grew a bit satirical toward the end, but then he was apt to do that.

The general observance of New Year's day was celebrated in endless reams of poetry printed in the newspapers and delivered by carrier. The following sample continued on indefinitely, and may as well conclude our story:

"The day devoted is to Mirth  
And now around the social hearth  
Friendship unlocks her genial springs  
And Harmony her lyre now strings,  
While Plenty spreads her copious  
board  
And piles and crowds the festive  
board."

## Gifts for Children You can make



Quite naturally the children will want to make gifts to each other. Undoubtedly there is more love and affection tucked into the made gift than any other. Among the gifts that a child can make are those done with "tied dyeing." This process comes from the Orient, where the bandana handkerchief first got its name.

A true bandana handkerchief was tied expertly by a Hindoo girl, who was called a Bandhani, and then dipped into red dye. When the string was untied a pattern in white on red was found to have been wrought.

Squares of muslin or linen are the first requirement. If a child does not like to hem, white handkerchiefs already hemmed may be used. Two or three colors of dyes should be made up, each a strong color. Pint Mason jars will do to keep the dyes in. Dilute the dye in small bowls, a bowl for each color.

The process of tying the handkerchief may be done in one or two ways. Fold the square and pick up a portion in the fingers. Wind string tightly around this "point" of cloth, and tie and cut the string. Several points can be tied in one square. Each time all four thicknesses are caught, that the little pattern thus formed will be repeated four times. After experimenting you will find out how to pick up the cloth so as to produce a square, a circle, or an oblong shape.

The other method suggested is to wind the point and, without tying and cutting the string, proceed to the next point. This is the method used in the Orient, the unwinding, when one comes to that, being greatly facilitated.

This part, the winding, takes the

most patience on the part of the children.

The dyeing is more thrilling. Dip and wring it out until almost dry. Then dip the tied points in different colors, in such combinations that you thing will be pleasing. From experience the writer suggests a few color schemes. Red, orange and yellow will be gay. Pinks and lavenders combine nicely. Blue and blue greens and green will be effective. Remember that, except where tied, one color will "run" into another, sometimes resulting in a muddy or unpleasant color.

Now wring out all the liquid you can and untie the knots, taking great care not to let one point touch another. Your pattern made by the points is often amusing and surprising. Be sure to hold the square until dry over heat, if it is available, as for instance the radiator, the oven or the register. If hung on a line while wet, or laid on at radiator, streaks will result, spoiling nice work. When quite dry press out.

When working with dyes, other gifts suggest themselves. A half dozen handkerchiefs, each a different color in pastel tints, make a dainty present. A large silk handkerchief can be tied and dyed for a scarf. Picot the edges of a yard and a half of crepe de chine and tie and dye it. A very stunning scarf will result.

Children can make cunning Christmas cards by pasting Christmas seals on corresponding cards, and lettering a simple greeting beside or under the seals. Of course if they want to draw or paint the necessary decorations, so much the better. The result, though not perhaps perfect in

execution, will please the recipient none the less.

Scrap books on stiff muslin, pink or blue, with "nicked" edges, are pretty gifts for children and can be made by children. Color pictures from magazines and ads, pictures of animals, or of children playing games, all these are interesting and can be prettily arranged on the pages.

For the kiddies who are fond of dolls or animals the mother who has imagination can make several unusual gifts, by making characters from story books. Using the illustration of that old favorite as a guide, Peter Rabbit himself can step out of the pages, stuffed with cotton and wearing his little jacket of blue. Also there's "Br'er Rabbit," Joel Chandler Harris has so kindly created for us.

Among the characters for dolls for wee maids are many, many well-known girls. Little Red Riding Hood seems to come first. Then there is Alice in Wonderland, and Little Miss Muffet, and the Queen of Hearts, and Old Mother Goose, and ever so many others to be found in the Mother Goose rhymes.

And, lest we forget, there's Puss in Boots and the Little Pig who went to market, and Old Mother Hubbard and her dog.

For several of these characters an ordinary doll can be used, and properly costumed. Some young folks will enjoy crepe paper dollies, especially if they can be dressed and undressed.

And don't let's forget a Rabbit slumber dolly for the littlest fellow. It is made of a woolly scarf. Fold the scarf double, fringes together. At the other end pull out two long pieces for ears, and tie with string. Make a nose of thread, and shoe buttons for eyes. Stuff the head with cotton, tie again for the neck. Short pieces for paws are tied next. Then the long sides are sewed up, stuffed with cotton and sewed up under the fringe. A gingham apron is a good dress for this rabbit. What could be nicer to cuddle, hug, and sleep on?

**CHRISTMAS GIFTS**

**LADIES' STORE**

**FOR HER**

- Dresses
- Coats
- Lingerie
- Dry Goods
- Silk Hose
- Blouses
- Shoes
- Shippers
- Hats
- Corsets
- Sweaters
- Bath Robes

**MEN'S STORE**

**FOR HIM**

- Shirts
- Ties
- Hosiery
- Shoes
- Collars
- Underwear
- Bath Robes
- Suits
- Overcoats
- Handkerchiefs
- Work Shoes
- Work Clothes
- Hats

**FOR THE KIDDIES**

- Baby Things
- Shoes
- Dresses
- Dresses
- Hose

**FOR BOYS**

- Suits
- Overcoats
- Shirts
- Ties
- Hose

**FOR GIRLS**

- Dresses
- Undies
- Coats
- Shoes
- Hosiery

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MR. MAN—Santa offers a suggestion in selecting your wife's Christmas presents. He advises Electrical necessities—from MacDonald's Electric Shop. The very things she wants—needs for the comfort of your home.

Santa was just here—dropped a big bag of brand new Electrical Appliances. Let us aid you in your choice.

**Suggestions**

- Hot Point Irons, 6-lb.....\$6.75
- Majestic and Star
- Rite Heaters.....\$5.00 and up
- Curling Irons.....\$2.75 and \$3.00
- Waffle Irons.....\$9.00 and \$15.00
- Christmas Tree Strings .....\$2.50 set

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