



Christmas Tree:

Since I'm not Cliff Clavin, I have provided links to some really good web sites that do a far better job than I at detailing the history of the Christmas Tree. Follow the links and enjoy:

<http://www.christmastree.org/history.cfm>

<http://www.christmas-tree.com/where.html>

<http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Noel/angl/sapin.htm>

<http://www.christmasarchives.com/trees.html>

Christmas Wreath:

Evergreen plants, such as holly, ivy and pine, which stay green all year, have long been used to create holiday wreaths. Such greens as holly, ivy, and mistletoe have special meaning since they not only stay green, they bear fruit during the harsh winter months. Anciently people symbolized these plants to represent the promise of new or everlasting life. The people of northern Europe and the Romans decorated their homes with evergreen boughs during their winter festivals. Sprigs of holly would also be exchanged as tokens of good will for the coming new year.

Advent Wreaths originated as folk traditions of the people of northern Europe. In the deep of winter candles were lit on circular shaped bundles of evergreen. Both the evergreen and the circular shape symbolized everlasting life. The candle light gave the people comfort at that darkest time of the year, as they looked forward to the warm days of spring. Traditionally an advent wreath consists of four candles, three purple and one rose colored. The three purple candles symbolize hope, peace and love. They were lit on the first, second, and fourth Sundays of Advent. The rose candle, symbolizes joy and was lit on the third Sunday. By the sixteenth century advent wreaths were being made much as we know them today.

Santa:

About 270 AD in a little sea coast town in Turkey, a boy named Nicholas was born to wealthy parents. Nicholas always enjoyed using his money to help people. When he was nearly 50 years old he decided to become a pastor. Ministers at that time wore long red coats (to remind people of the blood of Jesus shed for them) with a white stole around the neck (white for purity and the yoke shape as a reminder of being a servant). For 22 years Nicholas watched over his church. He loved having children sit on his lap while he told them stories about their heavenly father and gave them little gifts. It is said that a man in his church went bankrupt and in order to pay his bills the man was going to have to sell his three beautiful daughters into slavery - a common practice in that region in those days. Nicholas found out about this and in the dead of night went to the





mans house quietly and tossed a bag of gold into the open window. One story says that the bag landed in a stocking that had been hung by the fire to dry. (We can only presume he took this approach in secret so that the man could not refuse the money out of pride). After his death in 342 AD many Christians began to follow the example of Saint Nicholas in giving anonymous gifts to the poor. It became popular to dress up like him on December 6 (the date of his death) and hand out gifts to children. It wasn't until 1820 that a dentist by the name of Clement Moore wrote a poem called "Twas the Night Before Christmas" for his sick child to cheer him up on Christmas Eve. The poem told of St. Nick who lived in the North Pole and drove a sleight pulled by 8 flying reindeer. He described Santa as a jolly old elf whose tummy shook like a bowl full of jelly. Forty years later Thomas Nast drew a cartoon picture of St. Nicholas with the red suit and rosy cheeks, white beard and a sack full of toys.

Candy Cane:

According to legend, there was a candy maker who wanted to invent a candy that was as testimony to Jesus. First, he used a hard candy because Christ is the "rock of ages".

My theory is that women put candy on the trees to entice their husbands to stop watching football and help out with the decorating. The first attempt to motivate their husbands was with bottles of beer, but the branches wouldn't support them. *Not to mention that is a tremendous waste of a precious resource!* That was followed by roast beef sandwiches which lead to their pets mauling of the trees.

Christmas Candle:

The first Christmas candle use can be traced to Germany. Along with originating the tradition of the Christmas tree, Germany is believed to have been the first country to place Christmas candles on the boughs of the tree.

One use of the Christmas candle is the celebration of Advent. Advent is a season for celebrating the birth of Christ. It begins four Sundays before Christmas. An advent wreath consists of an evergreen wreath and four candles. Generally, the candles in the wreath are lit during a family moment of prayer or before a meal. The first week of Advent only one Christmas candle is lit. The second week, two are lit. The third week, three and the fourth week all four candles are lit.

In Ireland, a Christmas candle is lit as a symbol relating to hospitality relating to the welcoming of Joseph, Mary and Baby Jesus. In Finland, it is a tradition of some families to place a candle on the grave of their loved ones during Christmas celebrations.





In Germany and France a Christmas candle (wax or electric) is usually placed in a window, or several Christmas candles may adorn the Christmas tree.

