

The Christmas Encyclopedia

Second Edition

William D. Crump



McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers
Jefferson, North Carolina, and London

Frontispiece: Engraving from the 1880s after a work by an artist identified as "Minthrop." From Charles Wesley, *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* (New York: Dutton, 1889).

Illustration research and selection by Linda Campbell Franklin

Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Crump, William D., 1949–
The Christmas encyclopedia / by William D. Crump.—2nd ed.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-7864-2293-9 (illustrated case binding : 50# alkaline paper) ∞

1. Christmas—Encyclopedias. I. Title.
GT4985.C74 2006
394.2663'03 — dc22

2005025349

British Library cataloguing data are available

©2006 William D. Crump. All rights reserved

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying or recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Cover image ©2005 BananaStock

Manufactured in the United States of America

McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers
Box 611, Jefferson, North Carolina 28640
www.mcfarlandpub.com

tainment, and Tundra Productions. DVD: Goodtimes Home Video. 74 min.

See also *Rudolph and Frosty: Christmas in July*; *Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (song); *Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (television special); *Rudolph's Shiny New Year*.

Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer, Shines Again

See *Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (character)

Rudolph's Second Christmas

See *Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (character)

Rudolph's Shiny New Year

(1976). Made-for-television animated sequel to *Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (1964), using stop-motion puppets (Animagic).

Ashamed of his large ears, Happy, the Baby New Year, has run away from Father Time's castle on Christmas Night. Unless Happy is found, time will stop on December 31. Embarking with companions Clockwork Big Ben, a whale; One Million B.C., a caveman; Quarter-Past-Five, a camel; and Sir Ten-To-Three, a knight, Rudolph traces Happy to the Island of No Name, home of Aeon, the evil buzzard, who is Happy's captor. With half an hour remaining before midnight on December 31, Rudolph and friends foil Aeon and, with Santa's help in the (St.) Nick of time, return Happy to Father Time with a fraction of a second to spare.

Narrated and sung by Red Skelton. Featuring an original musical score by Johnny Marks. Principal voices: Frank Gorshin, Morey Amsterdam, Hal Peary, Paul Frees, Billie Richards, Don Messick, and Iris Rainer. Written by Romeo Muller. Produced and directed by Arthur Rankin, Jr., and Jules Bass. Rankin/Bass Productions. DVD: Warner Studios. 47 min.

This television special is further detailed in Rick Goldschmidt's book *The Enchanted World of Rankin/Bass*.

See also *Rankin/Bass Christmas Cartoons*; *Rudolph and Frosty: Christmas in July*; *Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer*

(song); *Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (television special); *Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer and the Island of Misfit Toys*.

Russia

In 988, Vladimir I (956–1015), grand prince of Kiev, also known as Saint Vladimir and Vladimir the Great, accepted Orthodox Christianity from the Byzantine Empire and thence introduced Byzantine culture to Russia. For nearly 1,000 years, the Russian Orthodox Church, adhering to the Julian calendar, celebrated Christmas with customs that blended Orthodoxy with Slavic agrarian customs and superstitions. In 1917, however, the Bolshevik Revolution in St. Petersburg ended czarist rule and set the stage for the rise of the Communist Party and the creation of the Soviet Union. Upon implementing its atheistic political platform, the new regime forbade most religious practices, closed many (but not all) churches, and replaced the Christmas season with a secular "Winter Festival." Despite the government's adopting the present Gregorian calendar during this period, the Orthodox Church rejected the change and retained its ecclesiastical days on the Julian calendar as before, which meant that Christmas was observed on January 7 on the Gregorian calendar (see *Christmas Old Style, Christmas New Style*). With the collapse of the Soviet empire in 1991, Russia now struggles to regain its Christmas heritage and other religious traditions, large portions of which were lost, possibly forever, during the Communist era.

Prior to the Revolution, a 39-day fast preceded the 12-day Christmas season and prohibited the consumption of any animal products. This conditional fast continued into Christmas Eve with the traditional holiday meal for the immediate family, which commenced upon sighting the first star of the evening, believed to be the Star of Bethlehem. Then followed 12 meatless courses honoring the 12 months of the year and Christ's Twelve Apostles. Typical cuisine included, among other dishes, *borscht* (cabbage soup), assorted fish, *kissel* (oatmeal with honey), and *kutya* (wheat porridge with honey and poppy seeds). Some of the *kutya* would be tossed up to the ceiling, and the amount that stuck predicted

the fate of the ne other superstitic ished the holiday winter solstice fo evil lurked in tl foretold the wea year's months, p marry in the ne assured good hea ing year, and so fo Midnight Mass, until dawn, it wa families with fri dinner.

Other custo traveling about t (Christmas carol ing the renewal themes, these carc sage of the Nativ expected rewards were not forthco bestowed curses groups, "mumme tumes as clowns, animals and ente places. (The Russ vides a vivid desc ming practices an passage from his 1869].) Christmas 1800s, and their candy dolls and figures, paper lan tree topper.

Russian folk have brought he derived from the society encompass To prevent this ur the crops, it was cu to supper" by set nineteenth centur qualities as urban end of *D'yed Mo*. Residing in the R Frost arrived at C children in a *troi* horses abreast). Hi with hat and lon resembled the St

osed Reindeer the Red-Nosed isfit Toys.

15), grand prince
t Vladimir and
Orthodox Chris-
pire and thence
e to Russia. For
ssian Orthodox
n calendar, cele-
ms that blended
ian customs and
er, the Bolshevik
ended czarist rule
of the Communist
ne Soviet Union.
stic political plat-
de most religious
not all) churches,
season with a sec-
spite the govern-
Gregorian calen-
Orthodox Church
ined its ecclesias-
alendar as before,
s was observed on
ian calendar (*see*
stmas New Style).
riet empire in 1991,
gain its Christmas
is traditions, large
t, possibly forever,

1, a 39-day fast pre-
as season and pro-
f any animal prod-
st continued into
traditional holiday
amily, which come
ne first star of the
: Star of Bethlehem.
s courses honoring
and Christ's Twelve
e included, among
age soup), assorted
honey), and *kutya*
ey and poppy seeds).
be tossed up to the
that stuck predicted

the fate of the next harvest. This and a host of other superstitions, now abandoned, embellished the holidays (they derived from ancient winter solstice folklore holding that danger and evil lurked in the winter darkness). Rituals foretold the weather for each of the following year's months, predicted whether a girl would marry in the new year, dispelled evil spirits, assured good health and fortune for the coming year, and so forth. Following Christmas Eve Midnight Mass, which frequently extended until dawn, it was permissible to serve meat as families with friends gathered for Christmas dinner.

Other customs included groups of people traveling about their villages singing *kolyadki* (Christmas carols). Originally commemorating the renewal of the year and other folk themes, these carols later incorporated the message of the Nativity. The carolers customarily expected rewards of confections, but if these were not forthcoming, the subsequent carols bestowed curses upon the household. Other groups, "mummers," donned outlandish costumes as clowns, spirits, and especially as wild animals and entertained at homes and public places. (The Russian author Leo Tolstoy provides a vivid description of Christmas mumming practices among Russian aristocrats in a passage from his novel *War and Peace* [1865–1869].) Christmas trees became popular in the 1800s, and their decorations included fruits, candy dolls and animals, walnuts, wooden figures, paper lanterns and chains, and a star tree topper.

Russian folklore holds that two spirits have brought holiday gifts. One possibly derived from the "Frost," an entity of rural society encompassing all that was bitterly cold. To prevent this unseen menace from harming the crops, it was customary to "invite the Frost to supper" by setting out food for it. In the nineteenth century, the Frost took on human qualities as urban regions concocted the legend of *D'yed Moroz* ("Grandfather Frost"). Residing in the Russian forests, Grandfather Frost arrived at Christmastime with gifts for children in a *troika* (sleigh pulled by three horses abreast). His long, red, fur-trimmed suit with hat and long, white beard somewhat resembled the St. Nicholas of Europe. In

Europe, whereas naughty children were threatened with punishment by St. Nicholas's demon antithesis, Grandfather Frost merely ignored them.

The second spirit, *Baboushka* ("Grandmother"), brought gifts on Epiphany Eve. According to legend, *Baboushka* was sweeping her house when the three Magi passed by en route to Bethlehem. When they invited her to accompany them, she refused, claiming that her housework precluded a long journey. Later, she repented and, upon collecting a few toys for the Christ Child, set out to overtake the Magi. Because she found neither them nor the Christ Child, she returned annually on Epiphany Eve to examine each sleeping child, hoping to find Jesus, then left a small gift behind. In variations of the story, all with the same conclusion, *Baboushka* either deceived the Magi or refused them lodging, or she denied asylum to the Holy Family in their flight from King Herod's soldiers.

In 1699, Czar Peter the Great established January 1 as New Year's Day in Russia. At the czar's command, celebrations included the lighting of bonfires on New Year's Eve. Homes were decked with evergreen garlands, and feasting abounded for seven additional days.

Seeking to eradicate Christmas, the Communists established a secular Winter Festival during the last half of December as a period devoted to feasting, fantasy, fireworks, and parades. During his rule (1929–1953), dictator Joseph Stalin declared New Year's Day as a national family holiday instead of Christmas and replaced the Christmas tree with the New Year's tree in 1935. Grandfather Frost, now appearing in either blue or red, was retained to bring gifts on New Year's Eve instead of Christmas Eve, and two more figures were added to complement him. One of these, *Snegurochka* ("Snow Maiden"), was based on a secular legend about a childless, elderly couple who, desiring a child of their own, fashioned a little girl out of snow. Although she achieved mortality and became their daughter during the winter, she melted as spring approached but returned annually with the winter snows. Snow Maiden, portrayed as a beautiful young girl with blond braids, white fur hat, blue robe or short fur coat, and knee boots, became Grand-

father Frost's granddaughter who assisted him on his rounds. A youth portrayed the other figure, New Year's Boy, who depicted the freshness of the new year, and his costume bore the numerals of that year. Secular equivalents to Mary, Joseph, and the Christ Child, groups comprising Grandfather Frost, Snow Maiden, and New Year's Boy made public appearances throughout the country, the most notable of which was at the annual New Year's children's festival held at the Palace of Congresses in the Kremlin. Adults imbibed vodka on New Year's Eve, champagne on New Year's Day, and feasted on suckling pig, *karavay* (round bread), and *baba* (round coffeecake). Few could afford such luxuries as caviar, smoked fish, and other roast meats. For many older Russians, the holidays extended until January 14, New Year's Day on the Julian calendar.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, although New Year's celebrations have continued to dominate the holidays, Russians have incorporated the "Catholic Christmas" into the season. Thus the holidays begin on December 24 (Gregorian calendar), with Christmas observed on January 7 (Julian calendar), and extend through January 14, New Year's Day (Julian calendar). Still popular are the children's festival in the Kremlin and other parties; Grandfather Frost and Snow Maiden; and

gift exchanges, which may occur at Christmas as well as the new year. The Museum of Folk and National Arts in Moscow sponsors "The Christmas Gift," an exhibit of traditional toys and gifts that were commonly found prior to the Revolution. Typical cuisine is returning to that of former centuries, such as *borscht*, *blini* (small pancakes served with sour cream, caviar, and smoked salmon), fish, *baba*, *kissel*, and *piroshki* (turnovers stuffed with meat, fish, chicken, eggs, and vegetables). Thus *Sviatki* (Christmas season) is resurfacing and changing, as manifested by the appearance of Christmas trees, Nativity scenes (novelties to Russia), the adoption of Western traditions such as Santa Claus decorations and American and English carols (*kolyadki* only occasionally appear in stage performances), and the increasing attendance at Christmas Eve Midnight Mass. The latter is a service of many hours that compels the worshippers to stand during its entirety, with peripheral benches reserved only for the aged and infirm. Then follows *Krestny Khod* ("Walking with the Cross"), a candlelight procession that forms outside around the church as the congregation bears religious symbols.

"Merry Christmas" is *S Rozhdestvom Khristovym*.

See also Epiphany; Ukraine.

Tradition sta of Patara, a c serving as a near Myra, h bishop at a r dubbed the "I the rank of a have been qu charity and n the point of received unde automatically Nicholas.

Tradition on December St. Nicholas's tially rested a Myra, with th that church t Kiev in Russia occupation of desecrate Nich southern Italy Church of St Nicholas's reli Greek Orthod where some we ter church sul the relics to the ing, New York

St. Nichol and acts of cha places to adopt he supposedly r return their st earned the title ing the Middl Nicholas mira three young bo had murdered, salting tub. (L depicted him a standing beside a tub.) Another voyage to the H a violent storm when they invol remains came to people were cu upon his name. become the pati

S

Saint Andrew's Day

See Advent

Saint Barbara's Day

See Advent

Saint John's Day

See The Twelve Days of Christmas (time period)

Saint Kitts and Nevis

See West Indies

Saint Lucy's Day

See Advent

Saint Nicholas

(?304-?345). Archbishop of Myra in Asia Minor (now Demre, Turkey) and popularly accepted as the personage on whom the mythical Santa Claus is based.

With the exception of a few fairly certain facts, virtually everything written about St. Nicholas is based on legends. He is known to have lived during the fourth century and was present at the Council of Nicea in the year 325.