

# Holiday Traditions

a horse. Good children received gifts from St. Nicholas, while the others received punishment doled out by the servant. Children looked forward to rare treats of gingerbread cookies and oranges, which were only provided on this special occasion.

The tradition of Twelfth Night is English in origin, and was brought to Liberty Hall in the 1800s.

The 12 nights of Christmas — December 25 through January 6 — are based on an old Roman pagan holiday titled “Satarina.” The English, whose society during that era was stratified, were cognizant and concerned about the peasant revolt that became the French Revolution, and turned the holiday into a social release.

During the 1800s, the traditions of many cultures began to come together in America to form the current ones we now celebrate. The poem, “The Night Before Christmas,” was published and Santa Claus began to take on the image of a jolly man in a red suit (it’s also around this time that his horse is transformed into eight reindeer.) In 1848, the Christmas tree became popular. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were one of the first to have a tree in Windsor Castle, and English nobility followed suit. The tradition spread to the American upper class, however, they were smaller tabletop trees. By 1898, the Victorian-era heralded larger trees, which were displayed in the parlor with big candles, crystals and American flags. Fireplace mantles were festooned with greens and different décor, similar to the décor that is used today.



The tradition of a Twelfth Night Cake, later known as a King Cake, became popular in the 1800s and contained a small object, such as a coin or bean, hidden inside. The servant who found the item became “King” of the household for the 12 days of Christmas. On the table are masks and programs used for the celebration.