

As early as 1822, the postmaster in Washington, D.C. was worried by the amount of extra mail at Christmas time. His preferred solution to the problem was to limit by law the number of cards a person could send.

Old Christmas Customs in Newfoundland



The height of celebration and enjoyment was reached at Christmas when the previous summer's fishery turned out to be a good one. Those who could afford it in the city and outports laid in provisions enough for the whole winter...

The prices of Christmas commodities in the food line were very cheap in the old days. This made earnings go a long way. Firewood was plentiful, especially in the outports, and instead of the modern stoves and ranges most houses had the open fireplace. The kitchen, the largest room in the house, was the "living" room. The floor was often covered with sawdust or fine sand from the beach. A large high-backed long seat on each side of the fireplace, called the "settle", gave room for six people. Cod-oil lamps with double bibs and wicks gave light. Pots and kettles were hung on catteralls suspended from a crane. The building of the Christmas fire was a work of art. The back-junk or Yule log was selected some days before amongst the largest trees in the forest and hauled home on the dog slide in great triumph. It lasted the 12 holidays and was the only log that had not to be replaced each day. A brand taken from it afire on Christmas night was taken outdoors and thrown over the saddle of the roof to ensure safety of the home from fire in the coming year. As soon as the sun set, flintlock Poole guns were loaded with three fingers of powder and ten or twelve volleys fired off. The fusillade continued for an hour, awakening the echoes on the hills and announcing to all that the holy and festive season was at hand.

Read more fun facts about holidays and traditions from around the world at our [Holiday Idea Blog](#)

- [4th of July](#)
- [Christmas Holiday](#)
- [Easter](#)
- [Father's Day](#)
- [Grandparents Day](#)
- [Halloween](#)
- [Mother's Day](#)
- [Secretary's Day](#)
- [Thanksgiving](#)
- [Valentine's Day](#)
- [Holiday Sentiments](#)
- [Labor Day](#)
- [Friendship Day](#)
- [Fall](#)



The poinsettia is a traditional Christmas flower. In Mexico (its original birthplace), the poinsettia is known as the "Flower of the Holy Night".

[Holiday Gifts & Gift Baskets](#) is your one-stop shop for holiday shopping throughout the year. With ideas for kids of any age and adults too, you are sure to find a great present on our site. We feature only the most unique holiday gift baskets, gourmet food, and more, with easy online ordering and toll free customer service available 24 hours a day. For our corporate customers, we have an easy to use bulk order form and we even offer several customization options and corporate discounts. Contact us for details.

Holiday Gift Ideas

- [Holiday Gift Baskets](#)
- [Christmas Towers](#)
- [Holiday Cookies Gift Bouquets](#)
- [New Year's](#)
- [Valentine's Day](#)
- [Valentine Cookie Gifts](#)
- [Valentine's Chocolate & Candy](#)
- [Adult Valentine Gift Baskets](#)
- [Valentine's Day Wine Gifts](#)
- [St. Patrick's Day](#)
- [Easter](#)
- [Secretary's Day Gifts](#)
- [Teacher's Day](#)
- [Nurse's Day](#)
- [Mother's Day Gifts](#)
- [Mother's Day Spa Ideas](#)
- [Cookies for Mom](#)
- [Volunteer Week Gifts](#)
- [Father's Day Baskets](#)
- [Graduation Gifts](#)
- [Independence Day](#)
- [Grandparent's Day](#)
- [Halloween](#)
- [Thanksgiving Baskets](#)
- [Boss's Week](#)
- [Hanukkah Baskets](#)

Certain houses were open to all the neighbors for general hospitality and every visitor was

welcomed. A large kitchen with plenty of sitting room, ample floor space for dancing and other games, a well stocked larder and a jovial, hospitable host and hostess were the main essentials of such meeting places during the twelve holidays. With the exception of keeping up the supply of wood to the wood box for the fire and cooking all work was suspended. Fiddlers and "Come-all-ye" singers were at a premium and received every possible honor and attention. Experiences and dramatic stories and incidents of cod and seal fisheries were told by tongues made eloquent by good "Jamaica", introduced by the vernacular prelude "I mind one time". Those who had quarreled any time during the year made up their differences seasoned the good feeling and shook hands. The host made it a special point to see to this. A hospitable, happy, simple people! Happy and contented in spite of the fact that in those Arcadian days there were no radios, no motor cars and no movies. A neighbor was a neighbor, not only in word but in deed. The poor, the sick and the needy were visited and helped, and the place of the modem "dole" was taken by genuine charitable help through the medium of those who were well off. The poor widows had

their 'haul of wood" and in cases that I know the Incumbent of the parish fattened a cow specially to kill at Christmas, and then killed it and sent a dinner roast to every poor family for Christmas.

The same immigrant descendents were in those years in S1, John's. Naturally they were more sophisticated. Though they lost the mummers in the middle of the last century, with their more ample means they made up for it at Christmas with arches, brass bands, processions, hunting the wren, rink skating, sleigh drives to the Inns on Topsail Road and local theatricals. Stores and shops were well decorated, especially on Water Street, with green fir and spruce, real dogberries, evergreen, and some in the imported holly and mistletoe. They had the big advantage over the outports however in the cake and poultry raffles at Lash's, Touissant's, Chauncey & Heath's, and John Foran's. They got their quarters of beef, turkey, geese and chicken by the shipload from the P.E.I. and Nova Scotia vessels arriving a few days before Christmas at Wood & Clift's wharf. The prices would be unbelievable today. The poorest could afford to get fresh beef at four pence and three pence a pound by the quarter, geese three shillings and turkeys five shillings; corresponding low

Smiling Snowman Holiday Bucket



A woven gift bag presents a refreshing scent of the tropics! We've included an indulgent array of spa products in addicting pomegranate coconut scent. Includes Body Lotion, Shower Gel, Body Butter, Bath Crystals, Body Scrub, and a Soap Bar.

Price: \$ 24.00 - \$ 34.00

[Buy Now!](#)

prices for potatoes, turnips, etc. Wages and a day's pay were about a third of what they are today, but the price of most edible commodities were less than a third, and the people were contented and happy.

I do not think that the law prohibiting "mummers" ever reached north of Conception Bay, where the murder of a man led to this restriction. The custom was kept up till the 7th of January, and at night it made outport life very lively and provocative of much innocent fun. They were welcome visitors at every home and their antics were enjoyed with delight, especially by the young people. By a widely recognized custom the house was their own once they entered, and by the same right the floor was their own for the dances. The old dances that have now all but died out were the favorites, viz: the "Sir Roger", the four- and eight-handed reel, the set or square dance, the Cotillion and the Cushion dance. The Christmas holiday games too are now obsolete, which is regrettable, because they abounded in harmless amusement. They were "Forfeits", "Hide the Button", "Hunt the Slipper", Rhyming Puzzles, "Rise the Grey Mare", "Jack's Alive", "House That Jack Built", "Priest of the Parish lost his Boots, some say this and some say that and some say my man John stole 'em", "All Around the Rule of Contrariness", etc. All these were brought from England and Ireland by our forefathers and greatly added to their pleasure and happiness' 'when toil relaxed for the time being lent its tune to play".