

**Depot Details-
December 2020**
Official Newsletter of
Copley Historical Society



**Wishing all health,
prosperity and happiness
in the New Year.**



A Moment with Margaret

A cherry hello! I hope everyone is healthy and staying safe.

It looks like we may be seeing a light at the end of a long, dark tunnel. We are thankful for that.

I have missed seeing you all. Unfortunately, we have had to put everything on hold till, hopefully after the new year.

Just want to touch base with everyone and wish you all a Peaceful and Merry Christmas and a better New Year.

May the Light of Christmas shine in your lives as we reflect on the Birth of our Savior; the true meaning of Christmas.

Margaret



***If you don't
believe it, see the
article in the right
hand column>>>>***

In 2018, we printed "Christmas in the 19th Century." We believe it is only fitting to reproduce the article as we experience a year like never before with traditional holidays minimized or not at all. We hope this will put today's times into perspective.

Christmas in the 19th Century

Americans did not even begin to conceive of Christmas as a national holiday until the middle of the last century.

The Christmas that Americans celebrate today seems like a timeless weaving of custom and feeling beyond the reach of history. Yet the familiar mix of carols, cards, presents, trees, multiplicities of Santa's and holiday neuroses that have come to define December 25th in the United States is little more than a hundred years old.

(Continued on back page)

If COVID 19 hasn't taken enough, the scammers step up! The below is from Summit County Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh:

As we move through our new normal of living within a pandemic, criminals are taking advantage of this opportunity by trying to scam you! Scammers look to prey on your vulnerability and emotion in order to gain access to your personal information. Now is the time to pay close attention to emails, phone calls, and even text messages, to make sure you don't become a victim. This is especially true now with many of us receiving stimulus checks from the federal government. I have compiled a list of some of the current scams related to the COVID-19 Pandemic:

- **IRS Scam:** There have been multiple reports of an IRS COVID-19 Stimulus Check phone scam. Remember, the IRS will never call and ask for personal or financial information. For additional information on possible IRS scams go to: <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/tax-scams-consumer-alerts>
- **COVID-19 Cures:** Do not click on or respond to any offers for a COVID-19 vaccine, cure, or treatment via emails, online ads, or unsolicited sales.
- **COVID-19 Supplies:** Only purchase products and supplies from reputable companies. Research any deals and avoid companies whose customers have complained about not receiving items.
- **VPN Cyber Threat:** With many of us working remotely, cyber attackers are likely to target home & work internet connections.
- **"County" utility calls:** Summit County Emergency Management reports there have been calls from spoofed 643 numbers related to utility payments. These calls are not actually Summit County numbers and should be ignored.
- **Dominion Energy:** Scammers are going door to door posing as Dominion Energy representatives and threatening to disconnect service unless payment is collected. The utility will never call, text or email customers to request personal information. All company employees carry a photo ID card. Residents can call Dominion Energy at 800.362.7557 to report a suspected scam.

Summit County residents can report scams to the Better Business Bureau of Akron at 330.253.4590. You can also report and review known scams at <https://www.bbb.org/scamtracker>.

The holiday's new customs and meanings helped the nation to make sense of the confusions of the era and to secure, if only for a short while each year, a soothing feeling of unity.

In colonial times, Americans of different sects and different national origins kept the holiday (or did not) in ways they carried over from the Old World, Puritans, for instance, attempted to ignore Christmas because the Bible was silent on the topic. Virginia planters took the occasion to feast, dance, gamble, hunt and visit, perpetuating what they believed to be the old Christmas customs in English manors. Even as late as the early nineteenth century, many Americans, churched or unchurched, northerners or southerners, hardly took notice of the holiday at all.

The Civil War intensified Christmas' appeal. Its sentimental celebration of family matched the yearnings of soldiers and those they left behind. Its message of peace and goodwill spoke to the most immediate prayers of all Americans. Yet northern victory in 1865 as much as the war situation itself determined the popularity and shape of the America's Christmas. Now unchallenged in the sphere of national myth-making and in control of the publishing trade, customs and symbols of Yankee origin and preference came to stand for the American Christmas.

As early as 1832, Harriet Martineau had identified what would become one of the most familiar symbols of the American Christmas. She had 'little doubt' that the Christmas tree would 'become one of the most flourishing exotics of New England'. By the 1850s, many Americans, not just New Englanders, had fallen in love with the German custom. Some had seen Christmas trees for the first time when they had toured Germany and then recreated their experience of German Christmas celebrations for friends at home. Others viewed them first-hand in the homes of German Americans. The media introduced the custom even more widely, inspiring Americans throughout the nation to adopt the tradition as their own.



As the tree gained prominence in front parlours, it also assumed a place in the market. During the 1850s, town squares began to bristle with trees cut for seasonable profits. Seamlessly, the 'German-ness' of the tree receded as it became an icon of an American festival and, to some, an index of acculturation. Even in the homes of 'the Hebrew brethren', 'Christmas trees bloomed', noted a Philadelphia newspaper in 1877. 'The little ones of Israel were as happy over them as Christian children'. By 1900, one American in five was estimated to have a Christmas tree.

At first, the decoration of these fragrant evergreens reflected the whim of folk tradition. Celebrants added nuts, strings of popcorn or beads, oranges, lemons, candies and home-made trinkets. However, widely-read newspapers and ladies' magazines raised the standards for ornamentation. (One suggestion: cotton batting dipped in thin gum Arabic then diamond dust made a 'beautiful frosting' for tree branches.) Homely affectations gave way to more uniform and sophisticated ones, the old style overtaken by the urge to make the tree a showpiece for the artistic arrangement of 'glittering baubles, the stars, angels, etc.'.

The rise of Christmas cards revealed other aspects of the new holiday's profile. R.H. Pease, a printer and variety store owner who lived in Albany, New York, distributed the first American-made Christmas card in the early 1850s. A family scene dominated the small card's centre, but unlike its English forerunner (itself only a decade older), the images on each of its four corners made no allusion to poverty, cold, or hunger. Instead, pictures of Santa, reindeer, dancers and an array of Christmas presents and Christmas foods suggested the bounty and joys of the season.

Excerpt from *Christmas in America* by Penne Restad who is a lecturer in American History at the University of Texas in Austin. (OUP, 1995).