

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

intstone, Bar-xie and Dixie, ick, and Wally Jones, Judy's , who would plains the rea-e man realizes his daughter. Blanc, Henry lvin, Don Mes-n, Janet Waldo, Mark Evanier. l by Steve Lum-s. VHS: Turner

Christmas Car-

on animated car-m *The Yogi Bear* s from Hanna-yndication from Yogi, that series , Snagglepuss the .. Additional Yogi des.

g in Jellystone ne, Yogi Bear and by the revelry of toon characters, e-puss, Augie Dog-ho are attending : Jellystone Lodge. series of mishaps mit in an attempt the owner, to sell with Herman is n's young brat of a istmas as much as the Christmas Eve use of his attitude, company compared

hrockmorton also to whom Yogi and guised as Santa and ually she takes pity e and shares Christ-ell. When they both undeserved gifts,

Christmas means something more to them than before. Mrs. Throckmorton donates the lodge as a year-round vacation spot for the orphans, and Santa himself arrives with the ideal gift for Yogi, a picnic basket.

Voices: Sue Allen, John Borks, Daws Butler, Paul DeKorte, Darlene Lawrence, Edie Lehmann, Ida Sue McCune, Don Messick, Marilyn Powell, Michael Redman, Andrea Robinson, Marilyn Schreffler, Hal Smith, John Stephenson, and Janet Waldo. Written by Willie Gilbert. Produced by Lewis Marshall. Directed by Ray Patterson. Hanna-Barbera Productions. VHS: Turner Home Entertainment. 98 min.

See also **Hanna-Barbera Christmas Cartoons; Yogi Bear's All-Star Comedy Christmas Caper.**

Yule

Midwinter celebration observed by pre-Christian Celtic and Germanic tribes of northern Europe. Whereas some believe that Yule extended from mid-November until the end of January, others hold that it originally commenced in November but switched to the time of the winter solstice through contact with, and influence from, the Roman Empire. Another view is that the festival originally centered around the winter solstice.

"Yule" derives from *Jul*, which in turn is thought to derive from several sources, including the Germanic *Giul* and the Saxon *hweol* (both meaning "wheel"); the Germanic *Geola* ("feast"); and "Jolnir," an alternative name for Odin or Woden, king of the Norse gods, to whom sacrifices of boars were made at this time (a boar symbolized Freya, Norse fertility goddess, who rode in a chariot pulled by a boar). Yule celebrated fertility and the rebirth of life and the sun, the latter visualized as a return of the "burning wheel" at the winter solstice.

Yule was a time for bonfires, a symbol of the returning sun in the heavens and the promise of spring, and for revelry and clamor to repel evil spirits which were believed to inhabit the winter darkness. It was a time for divination and magic; a time when Odin, riding upon his white, eight-legged steed Sleipner, descended to collect the souls of Viking warriors slain in battle to his palace, Valhalla;



A relatively short Yule log is being dragged to the fire in an Elizabethan-era scene in Harper's New Monthly Magazine, December 1884.

a time when Odin's son Thor rode through the skies in a chariot pulled by two billy goats, Gnasher and Cracker; and a time for feasting. Because heavy November snows barred livestock from grazing, large numbers of cattle were slaughtered for feasts and for sacrifices to Odin. Hence, St. Bede the Venerable (673?-735), the English Benedictine monk and historian, referred to November as *Blotmonath* ("Blood Month"), and the entire season paralleled the abandon of the Roman Saturnalia.

From the fifth century onward, the Christianization of northern Europe gradually witnessed local Yule customs merging with those of Christmas, and by the eleventh century, Yule and Christmas had become synonymous holidays. The formerly venerated gods had fallen away, but other vestiges of Yule remained, including boisterous revelry and the Yule log with its associated superstitions.

The Yule log is thought to have evolved from the Zagmuk, a New Year festival of ancient Sumer. According to Sumerian mythology, the supreme god, Marduk, annually saved the world from dying at year's end by defeating the monsters of chaos in the underworld. The burning of wooden effigies of those monsters was believed to assist Marduk in his task; hence, primitive Yule logs.

Recalling those midwinter bonfires of past ages, the Yule log of the Middle Ages slowly burned all during the 12 days of Christmas, lest evil befall the house or hall wherein the flame prematurely died. To burn a log for this duration generally required an entire tree trunk,



A Victorian Yule scene, with a very big Yule log (obviously the bottom of a pollarded tree like those still standing). From Robert Chambers, ed., *A Book of Days* (London and Edinburgh: Chambers, 1879).

which was placed headlong into the fireplace and advanced as needed, with the remainder occupying a large portion of the room. Traditionally, each family selected their own Yule log for the following season on Candlemas, February 2, a day that, until the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), had officially ended the Christmas season in the Roman Catholic Church. Logs often were of ash wood in memory of a legend holding that the Christ Child was first washed and dressed by an ash wood fire; alternatively, logs cut from fruit trees became tokens of the fertility of the land. Logs could also be of oak, olive, or birch wood. The log was never bought. It was laid up to dry during the spring, and a piece of the previous year's log was saved to light the new log, the latter act symbolically cycling the light of life from one year to the next.

Because of the belief that spirits of family ancestors became manifest in the glowing embers, a libation of wine poured over the log beforehand honored their memories, and all who touched the log first purified themselves by washing their hands. A ceremony invoking blessings for Christmas and the coming new year customarily preceded the lighting, the tra-

dition in some locales requiring that the log first be dragged around the exterior of the house or hall a specified number of times to dispel any evil.

In medieval England, tenants often presented Yule logs to their landlords, who in turn furnished their meals for as long as the log burned. On the same note, slaves in the antebellum United States were granted rest from their work for this duration; to prolong the burning, slaves first soaked the log in water.

A number of other customs and superstitions surrounded the Yule log, including the following:

A person casting a headless shadow from the light of the fire would die within one year.

In certain parts of England, the log was banded or hooped with strips of the same tree. As each band snapped, the master of the house was expected to furnish his guests with a fresh bowl of cider or liquor. The bands were often associated with pairs of lovers, and the order of the snapping bands predicted the sequence of their weddings.

Upon beating the log, one could see evil spirits departing in a shower of sparks.

A barefoot person, squinting person, or a flat-footed woman approaching the log brought bad luck.

Ashes from the log, if placed in fruit trees, improved the crop yield, and if placed under the bed, prevented lightning from striking the house.

Today, the custom of burning a Yule log still exists in Europe and the United States, albeit on a much smaller scale than in earlier days. Instead of continuously burning a log for 12 days, the trend is to burn the log only during Christmas Eve and Christmas Day; alternatively, some prefer to burn their log for a brief period on each of those 12 days. In France, the Yule log survives only as a log-shaped cake, the *bûche de Noël* ("Christmas log").

See also **Saturnalia**; **Superstitions**; **The Twelve Days of Christmas** (time period); **Winter Solstice**.

Yule Log

See Yule

Ziggy's Gi

(1982). M
toon based or
created by To

Respon
tas for charity
fraudulent fir
Company. Do
policeman int
the ring, Zigg
deeds, such as
his empty ket
Christmas tu
man. Ziggy's
Mrs. Ostblom
and cop also t
of Christmas

This pr