



# Apple Blossom Times

Since 1975

Winter 2014

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## Happy Holidays!

*From the desk of our President*

*Many thanks to our volunteers and everyone involved October's Candlelight Tours at the Van Horn Mansion. We had a very successful turnout and a lot of fun! We're already looking forward to a very good year again in 2015. Now as our 2014 Mansion tours come to a close, I'd also like to send thanks to everyone who has helped all year with the tours and upkeep of our beloved home. Tours return on April 5th, however the mansion is available all winter for private events. Please visit our website for more information.*

*Our trustees are also busy readying our society for the new year. New officers take positions on January 1st, and we are also working on plans for a spring Victorian Tea. We'll advertise the dates and details as soon as we have them.*

*Until our next edition, I wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!*

*Rose Schaeffer*

## Minute History

In 1911, five sailor friends met regularly to discuss boating, the lake and more. The men- Harry Shaeffer, Feber Gooding, Wilton Paull, George Starling and Captain Kenneth Hedley- met in the cabin of Hedley's yacht, The Albertha. In 1920, the friends decided to spend \$200 purchasing a vacant lot, and another \$2,800 assembling a new building: the first Olcott Yacht Club. It consisted only of the area occupied by the current Grog Room and bar.

OYC was formally incorporated in 1921 with "Cap" Hedley as the first Commodore.

The Yacht Club is still around today, one of the oldest active groups in the area. Learn more: [olcottyacht.club](http://olcottyacht.club).



## Join the Historical Society's Annual Old Fashioned Carol Sing

Sunday, December 7th  
1-4pm

Van Horn Mansion  
2165 Lockport-Olcott Rd.  
Burt, NY 14028



Bring the whole family and join us for a wonderful holiday tradition. The afternoon features carol singing in the parlor, a performance by the Methodist Bell choir, and holiday treats in the dining room. The mansion is all decorated for the holidays and we want to share it with you!

This event is open to the public, and we ask visitors to please bring a canned good, which will be donated to the local food bank. We're also seeking cookie donations from any society members interested in delivering them to the mansion! For details, see our contact information on the back of this newsletter.

# You Know Dasher, and Dance, and Prancer, and Vixen, Comet and Cupid, and Donner and Blitzen...



...the original eight reindeer pulling Santa's sleigh through Clement C. Moore's timeless Christmas poem, "The Night Before Christmas" (see next page). But do you recall the year in which Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer, led Santa's team through the fog on that long ago Christmas Eve?

Gene Autry recorded the song "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer" in 1949, which became a best-seller. In 1964, Rudolph became a legend through the Rankin/Bass stop-motion special featuring Burl Ives as the narrator. Rudolph returned in 1976 for "Rudolph's Shiny New Year", in 1998 for the animated version of the original, and in 2001 for the animated "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer & the Island of Misfit Toys".



## Recipe Rewind!

This recipe was published in  
the Newfane Health Facility's  
Cookbook, 1986.

### After Dinner Mint Pie

contributed by Lynette Price

2 cups (24 cookies) crushed cream-filled chocolate cookies  
1/4 cup margarine, melted  
1/2 cup milk  
1 7-oz. jar of marshmallow creme  
Few drops of peppermint extract  
Few drops of green food coloring  
2 cups whipping cream, whipped

Combine crumbs and margarine; reserve 1/2 cup for topping. Press remaining crumb mixture into bottom of 9" springform pan or pie plate. Chill. Gradually add milk to marshmallow creme, mixing until well blended. Add extract and food coloring. Fold in whipping cream. Pour into pan, freeze until firm. Sprinkle with remaining crumbs or garnish with mint, if desired. Serves 8.

Sadly, Arthur Rankin Jr., who with Jules Bass founded Rankin/Bass Productions, passed away earlier this year at the age of 89.

## Community Events

### Sounds of Christmas Concert

Dec. 5th & 6th | 7pm

Hess Road Wesleyan Church | 2514 Hess Rd. Appleton  
*Both nights are full of traditional and contemporary Christmas favorites. Snacks and goodies to follow!*

### Town of Newfane Holiday Light Up & Parade

Dec. 5th | 5:30pm-8pm; 5:30pm Parade

Main St. in Newfane

*Enjoy our annual lighted parade, carriage rides, refreshments and a visit from Santa. Visit the Community Center's Snowflake Village, and Candy Cane Lane & Cafe at the Newfane United Methodist Church.*

### The Living Nativity

Dec. 5th, 7th, 12th, 14th | 5:30pm-8:30pm

Grace Bible Church | 6023 Dutton Place, Newfane

*Experience a guided walk through the Christmas story and beyond. Tours take place outside, so please dress warm. Free admission; tours depart every half hour.*

### Victorian Festivities at The Babcock House Museum

Dec. 14th from 1-4pm

7449 Lower Lake Rd, Barker, NY 14012

*Enjoy Christmas carols in the library, baking in the brick oven, butter churning, refreshments, wagon rides and more!*

### Newfane Business Association's Wishing Tree

*Located in front of Family Dollar on Main St. in Newfane, a \$5 donation add your wish and a Light to the tree!. For more info. visit [facebook.com/newfanebusiness](https://www.facebook.com/newfanebusiness)*

## Sending Christmas Cards!

The first Christmas card, commissioned by Sir Henry Cole and illustrated by John Calcott Horsley in 1843 England, resembled a postcard and featured a large family enjoying a Christmas celebration. The message on the card read, "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You." Smaller drawings on either side of the main picture showed people helping the needy. About 1,000 of the cards were sold, and by 1860, the custom of exchanging Christmas cards had spread throughout Britain. The first U.S. manufactured Christmas cards were made in 1875 by German-born Boston printer Louis Prang.



# The History of Christmas: Many of Our Traditions Began in the 19th Century

By Robert McNamara, 19th Century History Expert (from [history1800s.about.com](http://history1800s.about.com))

The history of Christmas traditions changed enormously in the 19th century, when most of the familiar components of the modern Christmas including St. Nicholas, Santa Claus, and Christmas trees, became popular.

In the early 1800s, Christmas celebrations only vaguely resembled the holiday season of the present day. But by the century's end, Christmas traditions had become established to the point where Santa's very existence was proclaimed in a legendary newspaper editorial.

## Washington Irving and St. Nicholas in Early New York

Early Dutch settlers of New York considered St. Nicholas to be their patron saint and practiced a yearly ritual of hanging stockings to receive presents on St. Nicholas Eve, in early December. Washington Irving, in his fanciful *History of New York*, mentioned that St. Nicholas had a wagon he could ride "over the tops of trees" when he brought "his yearly presents to children."

The Dutch word "Sinterklaas" for St. Nicholas evolved into the English "Santa Claus," thanks in part to a New York City printer, William Gilley, who published an anonymous poem referring to "Santeclaus" in a children's book in 1821. The poem was also the first mention of a character based on St. Nicholas having a sleigh, in this case pulled by a single reindeer.

## Clement Clarke Moore and The Night Before Christmas



Perhaps the best known poem in the English language is "A Visit from St. Nicholas," or as it's often called, "The Night Before Christmas." Its author, Clement Clarke Moore, a professor who owned an estate on the west side of Manhattan, would have been quite familiar with the St. Nicholas traditions followed in early 19th century New York. The poem was first published, anonymously, in a newspaper in Troy, New York, on December 23, 1823.

Reading the poem today, one might assume that Moore simply portrayed the common traditions. Yet he actually did something quite radical by changing some of the traditions while also describing features that were entirely new.

For instance, the St. Nicholas gift giving would have taken place on December 5, the eve of St. Nicholas Day. Moore moved the events he describes to Christmas Eve. He also came up with the concept of "St. Nick" having eight reindeer, each of them with a distinctive name.

## Charles Dickens and A Christmas Carol

The other great work of Christmas literature from the 19th century is *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. In writing the tale of Ebenezer Scrooge, Dickens wanted to comment on greed in Victorian Britain. He also made Christmas a more prominent holiday, and permanently associated himself with Christmas celebrations.

Dickens was inspired to write his classic story after speaking to working people in the industrial city of Manchester, England, in early October 1843. He wrote *A Christmas Carol* quickly, and when it appeared in bookstores the week before Christmas 1843 it began to sell very well. It has never been out of print, and Scrooge is one of the best-known characters in literature.

## Santa Claus Drawn by Thomas Nast

The famed American cartoonist Thomas Nast is generally credited as having invented the modern depiction of Santa Claus. Nast, who had worked as a magazine illustrator and created campaign posters for Abraham Lincoln in 1860, was hired by Harper's Weekly in 1862. (continued on page 4)



"I am the Ghost of Christmas Past."





(continued from page 3) For the Christmas season he was assigned to draw the magazine's cover, and legend has it that Lincoln himself requested a depiction of Santa Claus visiting Union troops.

The resulting cover (left), from the Harper's Weekly dated January 3, 1863, was a hit. It shows Santa Claus on his sleigh, which has arrived at a U.S. Army camp festooned with a "Welcome Santa Claus" sign.

Santa's suit features the stars and stripes of the American flag, and he's distributing Christmas packages to the soldiers. One soldier is holding up a new pair of socks, which might be a boring present today, but would have been a highly prized item in the Army of the Potomac.

Beneath Nast's illustration was the caption, "Santa Claus In Camp." Appearing not long after the carnage at Antietam and Fredericksburg, the magazine cover is an apparent attempt to boost morale in a dark time.

The Santa Claus illustrations proved so popular that Thomas Nast kept drawing them every year for decades. He is also credited with creating the notion that Santa lived at the North Pole and kept a workshop manned by elves.



**Prince Albert and Queen Victoria Made Christmas Trees Fashionable**

The tradition of the Christmas tree came from Germany, and there are accounts of early 19th century Christmas trees in America. But the custom wasn't widespread outside German communities.

The Christmas tree first gained popularity in British and American society thanks to the husband of Queen Victoria, the German-born Prince Albert. He installed a decorated Christmas tree at Windsor Castle in 1841, and woodcuts of the Royal Family's tree appeared in *The London Illustrated News* in 1848 (right). Such illustrations, published in America a year later, created the fashionable impression of the Christmas tree in upper class homes.



The first electric Christmas tree lights appeared in the 1880s, thanks to an associate of Thomas Edison, but were too costly for most households. Most people in the 1800s lit their Christmas trees with small candles.

**The First White House Christmas Tree**

The first Christmas tree in the White House was in 1889, during the presidency of Benjamin Harrison. The Harrison family, including his young grandchildren, decorated the tree with toy soldiers and glass ornaments for their small family gathering. (continued on page 5)

This menu for a New England Thanksgiving dinner is taken from a letter written in 1779 by Juliana Smith to her 'Dear Cousin Betsey.'



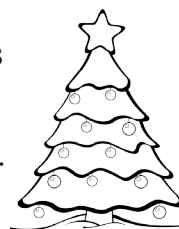
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|---------------------|----------------|
| Haunch of Venison   | Potatoes       |
| Roast Chine of Pork | Raw Celery     |
| Roast Turkey        | Mincemeat Pie  |
| Pigeon Pasties      | Pumpkin Pie    |
| Roast Goose         | Apple Pie      |
| Onions in Cream     | Indian Pudding |
| Cauliflower         | Plum Pudding   |
| Squash              | Cider          |

**Newfane Historical Society's Christmas Dinner, Meeting and Officer's vote**

**Wed. Dec. 17th**  
6pm dinner | 7pm meeting

Bring a dish to pass

Looking forward to celebrating with our members!



(continued from page 3) Other presidents continued the tradition of having a Christmas tree in the White House, and over the years it has evolved into an elaborate and very public production.

**Yes, Virginia, There Is a Santa Claus**

In 1897 an eight-year-old girl named Virginia (pictured right) in New York City wrote to a newspaper, the *New York Sun*, asking if her friends, who doubted the existence of Santa Claus, were right. An editor at the newspaper, Francis Pharcellus Church, responded by publishing, on September 21, 1897, an unsigned editorial. The response to the little girl has become the most famous newspaper editorial ever printed.



The second paragraph in particular is often quoted:

*Yes, VIRGINIA, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! How dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dreary as if there were no VIRGINIAS.*

Church's eloquent editorial asserting the existence of Santa Claus seemed a fitting conclusion to a century that began with modest observances of St. Nicholas and ended with the foundations of the modern Christmas season firmly intact.

**What Do You Want To See In Future Newsletters?**

Please send ideas & comments to us (contact info. is on the back of this edition). You can also send the names of people you'd like us to keep in our prayers, and any special announcements related to society members and their families.

**Membership Application**

*For new members and renewals*

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please list your birthdate (not year):

Month \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be interested in learning about or becoming a volunteer?  Yes  No

*Our membership year begins on January 1st and ends on December 31st.*

Annual Membership Dues (Check one):

- Family Membership \$10.00
- Individual Membership \$10.00
- Life Member \$100.00

Tear off this portion and mail with a check to: Newfane Historical Society c/o Rosemary M. Miller 3531 Ewings Rd. Lockport, NY 14094

Please make all checks payable to (or to the order of):  
Newfane Historical Society

**Or visit our website and join online: [www.NewfaneHistoricalSociety.com](http://www.NewfaneHistoricalSociety.com)**

# Calendar

For more details, please visit our website.

Nov. 30th- Advent Begins

Dec. 5th- Town of Newfane Holiday Light Up & Parade

Dec. 6th- St. Nicholas Day

Dec. 7th- Old Fashioned Carol Sing at The Van Horn Mansion

Dec. 16th- Hanukkuh Begins

Dec. 17th- Trustees Christmas Dinner & Meeting

Dec. 24th & Dec. 25th- Christmas Eve & Christmas Day

Dec. 31st- New Year's Eve

Jan. 1st- New Year's Day

Jan. 19th- Martin Luther King Day

# 2014 Officers & Trustees

**President:** Rose Schaeffer

**Vice President:** Bill Neidlinger

**Secretary:** Janet Capen

**Corresponding Secretary:** Melissa Schaeffer

**Financial Secretary:** Rosemary Miller

**Treasurer:** David Steggles

### Trustees:

Vicki Banks

Judy Dingleday

Steve Goodman

Jill Heck

Kevin Luckman

Chuck Manhardt

Terry Manhardt

Bill Ott

Pat Ryan

Craig Schaeffer

Mindi Schaeffer

George Updegraff

# Contact Information

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Newfane, NY 14108

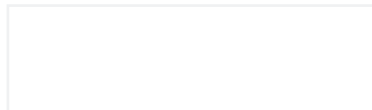
**Country Village Museum**  
2685 West Creek Rd.  
Newfane, NY 14108

**Van Horn Mansion**  
2165 Lockport-Olcott Rd.  
Burt, NY 14028

[www.NewfaneHistoricalSociety.com](http://www.NewfaneHistoricalSociety.com)

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# Season's Greetings!



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