

Spirit Of Giving Lives In Quebec's Colorful Tradition

The traditional spirit of giving that's world-wide at Christmastime takes on a special form and meaning in French Quebec. This year, as every year, will see the enactment of a masquerade known as "La Guignolee," to benefit all the poor of Quebec.

"La Guignolee" was begun by the first French colonists who settled in Quebec. But historians date the custom to the Druidic rite which cele-

brated the arrival of a new year: the cutting — with golden scythes — and the gathering of mistletoe that grew in the sacred forests.

Dress Like Trappers

The French version of "La Guignolee" has been kept

alive for modern Quebec by such organizations as the St. Vincent de Paul Society. It involves a door-to-door collection for the poor by "Les Guignoleurs."

Since 1901, the role of "Les Guignoleurs" has been played by members of the Commercial Travelers Club of Quebec, Inc.

These modern businessmen dress like the Canadian trappers of old, with their red knit caps and colorful sashes. Singing the song of "La Guignolee," they approach each householder with a long, red

woolen stocking, to be filled by gifts for the poor.

"Les Guignoleurs" of early Quebec had a very different method of attaining their goal. Arriving at the homes of the villagers, they sang a song that asked for a contribution or threatened the abduction of the eldest daughter of the household.

Fights Did Happen

The master and mistress of the house, or someone representing them, then opened the door and allowed "Les Guignoleurs" to enter.

Gifts were placed in a bag

and later emptied into a cart that followed along behind them through the village, accompanied by a swarm of children and dogs.

Sometimes, when two different groups of "Les Guignoleurs" met, a fight ensued and the treasures of one cart would fill up the cart of the winners.

Aiding the Needy

Originally, food and clothing as well as money was collected. But for the past twenty years it has been only money, and the generous people of Quebec have contributed as much as \$30,000 for the poor.

The money is deposited in a bank, and cheques are issued to the parish priests of the city who use the money to aid all the needy, regardless of religious denomination.

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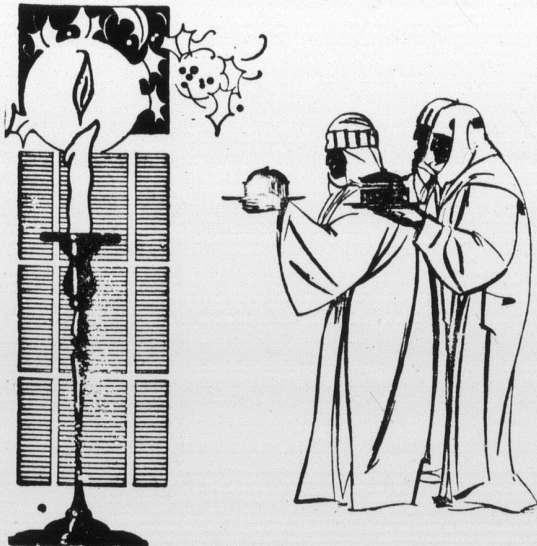
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HISTORY PROVES IT—

For the children, this is the very best Christmas that ever was. The adults agree — but still, they look back a little wistfully at the Christmases of yesteryear, with nostalgic thoughts of "a good old-fashioned Christmas," or of a special Christmas memory.

Memories enhance the seasonal joys, and with good reason, for Christmas is a memorable time. Since the first Holy Night, some of the most important events of both religious and secular history have taken place at the Christmas season.

A look at the past reveals momentous occasions, joyous or poignant, as well as many of the little things that give bygone times living meaning — and all taking place on or about Christmas Day.

December 25, 600 A.D.

Traditionally, the first Christmas feast in England was held at the Round Table of King Arthur. The actual date is unknown, but references to this legendary king have been traced to 600 A.D.

December 24-25, 1620

December 1620 marked the landing of the Mayflower at Plymouth Rock. A site for the first home in the new settlement was selected on Christmas Eve, and on Christmas

BRINGING GIFTS

At the heart of the holiday fun and feasting there glows the spirit of giving. The Wise Men sought to honor the Christ Child with rare and precious gifts — gold, frankincense and myrrh. Thus, to give of the best at Christmas is a time-honored tradition.

All may rejoice in the opportunity to give generously to please family and friends with "just what they wanted," and to share with the less fortunate.

Yet the best Christmas gifts are still those that come from the open heart as well as the open hand, and the warmth of a friendly smile, the words of a cordial greeting add priceless meaning to the most elaborate of gifts.

"Happy Christmas to all,
and to all a good-night."

Day construction began.

December 25, 1776

On December 25-26, 1776, George Washington crossed the Delaware. He surprised, and put to rout, Hessian sol-

diers employed by George III.

The surprise attack was greatly assisted by the fact that the Hessians were sleeping off the effects of their Christmas celebrating!

THE PINATA

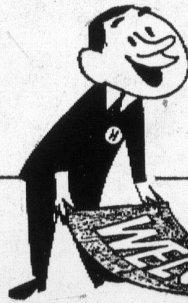
The pinata game is a favourite one in Latin America. Why not make one for your Christmas party in Canada?

The pinata is a cheap pottery jar filled with candies and decorating in some interesting and amusing way. A substitute for pottery might be a very strong paper bag or a cardboard box. Candy, nuts, and prizes placed inside should be wrapped and then the top sealed. In our picture we have a bag decorated with a Santa mask. Many other ideas may be used e.g. wrapped as a large Christmas present.

The pinata should be hung on a long rope, the ends of which are held as high as possible by two people standing on chairs. They pull the rope taut or let it down as they try to keep it from getting broken.

The children, beginning with the smallest, take turns being IT. He is blindfolded and given a long tight newspaper roll. He is turned around three times and then allowed to break the pinata, if he can. Several tries and then the next one takes a turn.

When the pinata is finally broken everyone scrambles to get his share. A special prize should go to the one who finally breaks the pinata as he will be delayed in taking off his blindfold.



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