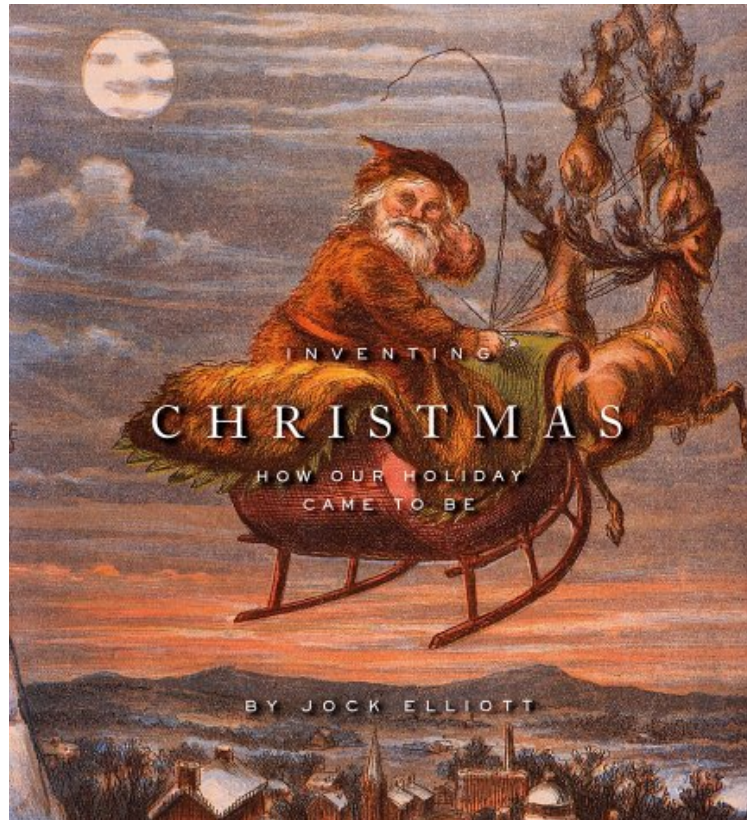


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Inventing Christmas: How Our Holiday Came to Be

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Jock Elliott : Inventing Christmas: How Our Holiday Came to Be before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Inventing Christmas: How Our Holiday Came to Be:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A WONDERFUL "COFFEE TABLE" CHRISTMAS BOOK By Steven H Propp This large-sized book is lavishly-illustrated (particularly with many "period" reproductions). The author writes in the Introduction to this 2002 book, "For most people Christmas comes but once a year. Not so for me. I have collected Christmas books for the past fifty years---books of stories, poems, and carols, books about the customs and traditions of Christmas, books of Yuletide illustrations, light hearted books for children and heavy books for scholars, even medieval illuminated manuscripts---all qualify." Here are some quotations from the book: "Did you know that when George Washington became president, there was no such thing as Christmas shopping, Christmas trees were virtually unheard of, it would be another quarter of a century before Santa Claus appeared on the scene, and the first Christmas card would have to wait for fifty years? All of these 'traditions' had yet to be invented." (Pg. 12) "The early Christian Church struggled to become established. Its leaders understood the powerful hold the midwinter festival had on pagan worshippers. December 25 was celebrated in honor of Mithra, the sun-god... Mithraism posed a real threat to Christianity; it is not surprising that, in the middle of the fourth century, the Church decreed that henceforth the 25th of December would be recognized as the Day of Christ's Nativity. The Church hoped

to draw the pagans from worship of the sun-god to worship of the Son of God." (Pg. 20)"It is surprising that Santa Claus is always associated with 'The Night Before Christmas,' yet Santa Claus is never mentioned in the poem! In captions to his pictures, Thomas Nast always referred to Santa Claus and never to St. Nick, further enriching Santa in our culture." (Pg. 47)"A Visit from St. Nicholas' was the first work of any consequence written purely for the enjoyment of children. Suddenly, Christmas was for children." (Pg. 50)0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. niceBy debbienice0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Basic once over of details of christmas past.By Thomas A. KernanA little light once over but all the details of the history of Christmas are in here so it was OK. It was delivered to me quickly in great shape.

Looks at the nineteenth-century origins of modern-day Christmas traditions, which evolved over a twenty-five year period, beginning in 1823 with the publication of Clement Clarke Moore's "A Visit from St. Nicholas" to 1848, in a volume that features an array of vintage illustrations by Thomas Nast, Everett Shinn, Arthur Rackham, and others. 10,000 first printing.

From Publishers WeeklyIf Christmas did not exist, Madison Avenue would have to invent it. Yet as Elliott shows in this beautiful book, not only is the Christmas season a time of lavish spending and entertaining, it also brings with it a flood of images and customs and totems that has come to epitomize what happiness with family and friends should look like. Not only is Elliott chairman emeritus of the advertising firm Ogilvy Mather, he is also a man who was given wonderful Christmas celebrations as a child. Over his more than 80 years, he has learned a great deal about the holiday he loves. Drawing on his collection of more than 3,000 pieces of Christmas ephemera, including such extraordinary possessions as Charles Dickens's reading copy of *A Christmas Carol*, Elliott tells the beguiling tale of how this most dual-sacred and secular-of human festivals came into being. Nodding to its earliest origins, Elliott focuses on the "invented traditions." "Most of our Christmas customs," he explains, "were invented in an amazingly short twenty-five-year period, from 1823-1848-a sort of 'Big Bang' of our Christmas." Gorgeous illustrations by Thomas Nast (who created the Republican elephant and Democratic donkey) show the invention of Santa Claus, which began with a story by Washington Irving and culminated in "The Night Before Christmas" by Clement Clarke Moore. Nast's vision became iconic, but Elliott persuades us that a trio of New Yorkers-Irving, the holiday booster John Pintard and Moore-invented the child-centered family holiday that we know today. Further chapters cover the introduction of Christmas trees and Christmas cards, Christmas carols and Dickens's influence on our understanding of Christmas. Opening this book each year deserves to be a tradition in itself. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.About the AuthorJock Elliott, Chairman Emeritus of the advertising firm Ogilvy Mather, has been collecting Christmas ephemera for over 50 years. His collection, comprised of over 3000 pieces, ranges from the first appearance of the Christmas story in the Algonquin language to Charles Dickens's reading copy of *A Christmas Carol*. Mr. Elliott lives in New York with his wife, Elly.