

## The Survival Podcast

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### A Survivalist View of Christmas

Today we're going to do a very different type of show than what we normally do. If you were here when I did "A Survivalist's View of Thanksgiving," this is going to be a lot like that show. This show isn't going to be how to store things, how to get rid of debt, how to invest in things, how to protect your money, or about the political or economic threats that are out there, or flu pandemics. This is Christmas. This is a special time of year. And regardless of your religious affiliation, if you're an American then Christmas probably means something to you, even if you don't celebrate the traditional Christian tradition of Christmas, or if that's maybe a lesser part of what you celebrate.

Christmas in America has become an institution that brings families together. Many times it brings members of families together that don't even really speak or see each other much during other times of the year. And with that comes a certain level of healing. And as you're going to hear today, there's actually quite a bit of healing that's been done in the United States as our country developed from the holiday of Christmas.

Now, I think one of the things that most people probably don't get, and if you heard the Thanksgiving show, it's kind of in a very similar fashion. People tend to believe that there's always been a Christmas in America. That it's just as American as apple pie, and mom, and baseball, and everything else. And that the Pilgrims probably came over here and had Thanksgiving, and sort of like we do. Maybe they did a little—instead of shopping they did a little gathering for some Christmas gifts in the forest and then celebrated Christmas just a few weeks after Thanksgiving the way we do right here today.

Well, the reality is that at one time, believe it or not, Christmas was banned. It was banned as being a holiday of decadence. And it started in the 17th century when a big wave of religious reformers actually took over England and they banned Christmas in England. And it wasn't until Charles II came into power that he brought Christmas back with a stroke of his finger or his pen as the king of England. But the Puritans that came to America, that landed in Plymouth were even more Puritanical than these people that had gotten this ban of Christmas done in England. And as crazy as it sounds today, there was a lot of support for this type of thing.

So when they came to America, of course they didn't celebrate Christmas. Now the people that were down at the Jamestown Colony, not much further into the future, they actually did kind of celebrate Christmas. So at the time that we were first establishing colonies in North America from England, and from Holland, and from some of the other countries, there were spots where Christmas was celebrated and there were spots where it wasn't.

Eventually we got to that thing called the American Revolution where we threw the English out and we disassociated ourselves from the crown, and we became the United States. Actually these United States, as it was referred to at the time. Our first republic of 13 colonies that became 13 states.

When that happened, as you might imagine, Americans decided that there would be no Christmas. Right? Not really like, okay, let's ban Christmas again. It was just that that's an English thing. It's an English holiday. We don't do English anymore. You know? We're now our own country. But that didn't last. I guess Christmas is just too much into the hearts of men and women, and it means too much as a celebration, either be it religious or a celebration of family.

So what began to happen is Christmas kind of began making a comeback in the early 1800s. But the holiday celebration of the 1800s of Christmas isn't something you would recognize today. It was very rowdy, very boisterous. It was something that was probably a lot more like a New Year's Eve celebration than what we think of as a Christmas celebration. So it wasn't everybody peaceful around the table, enjoying a Christmas dinner, it was people out in the streets drinking, and getting drunk, and carrying on, and getting rowdy, and carousing, and doing all that type of stuff.

Well, right about that time there came on the scene an author that many people have never heard of. His name was Washington Irving and he looked at the situation and what was going on. The reason it was like this rowdy carnival holiday, and all this attention was going on, and a lot of people ended up in jail during this thing, was because again we tend to have short memories in the United States. But in the 1820s, we had fought a revolution; we had a few years of true independence. Basically the War of 1812 up into 1814 was a second Revolutionary War. The country was still an infant. And in the 1820s, we had gangs, street gangs and thugs, and Mafia types. We had a big division between the classes: the wealthy and the poor. We had unemployment; we had rising crime rates. Sound familiar? That was going on then too.

And Washington Irving looked at this and said, "This holiday could be something that brings people together instead of something that puts people apart." Now, he was a best-selling author at the time, so if he wrote a book, people would read it. And he wrote a book called *The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent*, which was a series of stories about the celebration of Christmas in an English manor house. And it talked all about these ancient traditions: family meal, hanging stockings, all kinds of things. Many of the things that we do today as these ancient traditions that had been handed down for years and years and years.

Here's the funny thing. Mr. Washington Irving had never probably seen any type of celebration like that. Much of what he described had actually never really been anybody's tradition. This one author actually created a huge portion of the tradition of Christmas that we celebrate today. Because when people read it, and it said this is what Christmas was about—when people are in a time of peril, a time of strife, a time of struggle what do they do? They like to go back to the safe, peaceful traditions

If you think about it, one of the best-watched shows the first month after 9/11 were reruns of shows like *I Love Lucy* and *The Honeymooners*. People waxed nostalgic. They went back, they

wanted a simpler, more peaceful time. And into this same type of fray, this same type of struggle of a new nation trying to find itself, deeply divided between North and South. This was way before the Civil War, but those divisions were in place already. And Mr. Irving looked at this as an opportunity to bring something special to America.

And in fact, before the Civil War, the North and South were divided on more than things like slavery. They were divided on things like Thanksgiving and Christmas. If you remember the Thanksgiving show, I told you that the South celebrated Christmas and the north celebrated Thanksgiving. And the South looked at Thanksgiving as some damn Yankee holiday. Didn't make sense to them. They just didn't celebrate Thanksgiving. And the North also looked down at the South with this Christmas thing and said what's the deal with this? I mean some of the first states that actually officially recognized Christmas as a legal holiday were Alabama, Louisiana, and Arkansas. All right? And this was in the period of time like 1836, 1838, that period of time.

So by the time the Civil War came around, and even immediately after the Civil War of course, we looked at this holiday while wounds were healing, while people had just killed brother against brother, and said well, that's a Southern thing or that's a Northern thing. But those two holidays quite simultaneously began to be spread as the nation healed itself, and rebuilt itself, and brought itself back together.

And young men and young women that would go to college in the North began to bring the tradition of Thanksgiving to the South. And the South began to learn and embrace the tradition of Thanksgiving. And at the same time, the opposite effect was happening and the tradition of Christmas was being spread more into the North. And in time the churches took up the mantra of yeah, we should celebrate Christmas. It's the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ that we're celebrating.

Now we can debate on whether or not that Christ was actually born on December 25th, and the answer is He probably wasn't. If you read the gospels in time of a census, and it's actually quite cold in that region in December. If they were going to be doing a census where Joseph was taking Mary to the land of his birth for the census, they would have done it in the spring. So it's probably not when Christ was born, but it doesn't matter. That's when we've chosen to celebrate it if we're of that particular type of faith, because no one really knows the day of the birth. So that's when it was. So churches got on board with it. Sunday schools started teaching it. And into this came one of our most beloved creations: Santa Claus.

Santa Claus brought a magic to Christmas that children could expect. And you know? Call me crazy, but I believe in Santa Claus and I think most Americans do in a way. Santa Claus brought a spirit that was encouraging the giving of gifts, a spirit of anticipation. And again, we have to look at what was going on with the whole Saint Nicholas, Santa Claus type situation.

Again, you have to put yourself into the position of these people. The Civil War had just ended. People were still hungry; fields had been burned during the war. It was a time not of plenty, but of struggle for both the North and the South. The entire industry of slavery had been dissolved. And of course that was the right thing to do, but it did not go without its consequences. You had an agricultural community devastated in the South because the workers weren't there to do the

work in the same way that they were before. And you had an entire group of people that had been freed into a life where there weren't really a lot of opportunities.

So in the cold darkness of winter, and we were still coming out of the grips, folks, of the Little Ice Age here. It was a much colder, darker wintry time when people should be holding on to things. When people should be cherishing the little that they had, what came to America was a spirit of giving. Giving to the children first, and then it spread to giving to your fellow man. And as the holidays of Christmas and Thanksgiving infiltrated our nation, it healed. And we became more of a singular nation because of the two of them and they really cannot be separated in that role.

We live in a politically correct world today where we say the holidays. When we say the holidays we mean Kwanzaa, Ramadan, Hanukkah. And no disrespect to those faiths or those traditions. But that's not what the holidays used to mean. The holidays was an all-encompassing time at one time in America. And it meant America's holidays. And it was Thanksgiving and the period between Thanksgiving and Christmas where we'd have a huge feast and then we would prepare for six weeks for a joyous celebration and a spirit of giving at Christmastime. And those two were the holidays.

And what does this teach us today as modern survivalists? It teaches us that the things that we fear, the things that we face, the hard times, the hard economies, the riots, the gangs, the class warfare is absolutely nothing new. And that these holidays brought us through a time when they were actually far worse. And that today, we need to view them, as people with a modern survivalist philosophy. as something that can continue to do the same thing.

You know, they say there's a time to beat your plowshares into swords, and a time to beat your swords into plowshares. Meaning that there is a time for war, and there is a time for peace. Well, I believe that every year there comes a few times that are times for peace. If your family is struggling, it's still a time to stop, pause, and just be. If you are concerned about some of the things that are happening in the world, it's a time to just let it go. And just be, and just share.

And if you do that, you'll realize that no matter what life challenges come your way, there are a few things that are really important. And they're probably the people around you, near you, or even geographically separated from you now, but they're close to you in blood and in family. And you'll realize that those things are far more important than what the stock market does today.

I'm not going to look at the Dow Jones Industrial average today. I could give a rip where it goes today. I don't really care. I suggest that you don't bother looking at it either. I won't be on Google Finance today seeing what's going on around the economic world. I won't be listening to any type of alarmist radio. Won't be tuning in to hear anybody tell me how bad the government is. I know how bad our government is, I don't need to worry about it today and neither do you.

What we need to do today is we need to look back across the over 200 years of history, when this nation was formed by a group of farmers, and hunters, and merchants that collectively came together and then created the greatest experiment ever done in the world of democracy. And

created the most free republic ever known under the sun. And even though we've strayed from that initial wisdom, it is still with us and we connect back to those very first Americans, who fought not one war for their independence, but two and began to collectively heal and bring their nation together, and become one people under the holidays of Thanksgiving and Christmas. And even a polarized new nation, each taking it's own holiday eventually blended the two together to create what is honestly one of the most magical times of year. A time of year when the stingiest among us realize it's not good to be a Scrooge and we go out and we give of ourselves. That's what Christmas is for the modern survivalist.

There's only one bit of serious note that I'd like to request from you today. If you haven't done anything for our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines that are overseas, please consider doing something today. It won't get to them by Christmas they won't care. They'll simply know that you did. It's those guys that make us able to sit here and complain about the problems that we have with our government. It's those guys that make all of this possible. It's those guys that let a man like me have the freedom to speak my mind on a daily basis to those of you who wish to listen to me.

Again, I really want to point out though that what this time of year should be about for everybody is a simple pause. Yesterday I talked to you about setting goals. If you started doing that, great, put the book away. It'll be on December 26th. From the time you hear this podcast today until December 25th ends and you go to sleep with your family, just be with them. Just be who you are, just be there for them; put the priority there. Take time, pause, and realize that's a big part of living the life you want, if times get tough, or even if they don't.