

NORTH AMERICAN FOLKLORE



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by Sherry Bonnice



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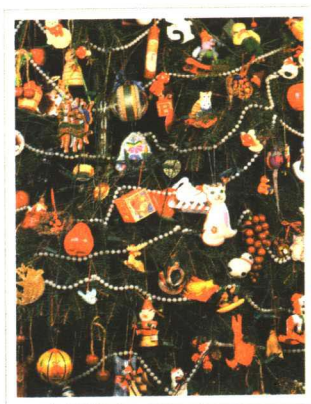
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by Sherry Bonnice

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Folklore grows from long-age seeds. Just as an acorn sends down roots even as it shoots up leaves across the sky, folklore is rooted deeply in the past and yet still lives and grows today. It spreads through our modern world with branches as wide and sturdy as any oak's; it grounds us in yesterday even as it helps us make sense of both the present and the future.



INTRODUCTION

by Dr. Alan Jabbour



What do a tale, a joke, a fiddle tune, a quilt, a jig, a game of jacks, a saint's day procession, a snake fence, and a Halloween costume have in common? Not much, at first glance, but all these forms of human creativity are part of a zone of our cultural life and experience that we sometimes call "folklore."

The word "folklore" means the cultural traditions that are learned and passed along by ordinary people as part of the fabric of their lives and culture. Folklore may be passed along in verbal form, like the urban legend that we hear about from friends who assure us that it really happened to a friend of their cousin. Or it may be tunes or dance steps we pick up on the block, or ways of shaping things to use or admire out of materials readily available to us, like that quilt our aunt made. Often we acquire folklore without even fully realizing where or how we learned it.

Though we might imagine that the word "folklore" refers to cultural traditions from far away or long ago, we actually use and enjoy folklore as part of our own daily lives. It is often ordinary, yet we often remember and prize it because it seems somehow very special. Folklore is culture we share with others in our communities, and we build our identities through the sharing. Our first shared identity is family identity, and family folklore such as shared meals or prayers or songs helps us develop a sense of belonging. But as we grow older we learn to belong to other groups as well. Our identities may be ethnic, religious, occupational, or regional—or all of these, since no one has only one cultural identity. But in every case, the identity is anchored and strengthened by a variety of cultural

traditions in which we participate and share with our neighbors. We feel the threads of connection with people we know, but the threads extend far beyond our own immediate communities. In a real sense, they connect us in one way or another to the world.

传说故事、笑话、小提琴曲、棉被、快步舞曲、抓子游戏、圣徒日游行、蛇形栅栏、万圣节服装，这些东西有什么共同之处？乍看上去似乎没什么，但是所有这些人类的创造形式都属于我们文化生活和经验中的一部分，我们有时称之为“民俗”。

“民俗”指的是一种文化传统，老百姓把这种传统作为生活和文化架构中的一部分来学习和继承。民俗可以是以口头形式传播的，就像我们在朋友那儿听到的都市传奇故事，讲述者会向我们保证那确实是发生在他们堂兄的一个朋友身上的真事；也可以是我们无意间从街上学到的曲调或舞步，或是用已有的材料做出可使用或用来欣赏的东西的方式，就像姨妈缝制的棉被。我们通常已经了解了一些民俗知识，然而却不能确切地意识到是从哪里、又是怎样得到它们的。

尽管我们可以认为“民俗”这个词指的是来自于很久以前或从很远的地方流传而来的文化传统，而事实上，我们是把它作为日常生活的一部分来利用和享受的。它常常是普普通通的，但由于其独特性，我们往往会记住并珍视它。民俗是我们与社会群体中的其他人共享的文化，我们通过这种共享来确立自己的身份特征。我们第一个与他人共享的就是家庭的特征，而家庭习俗——如共享的饭菜、祈祷和歌曲——都帮助我们建立起一种归属感。随着年龄的增长，我们也学会了从属于其他的社会群体。我们的身份特征可以是种族的、宗教的、职业的、区域性的或兼而有之，因为没有人只具有一种文化特征。然而无论如何，各式各样的文化传统都是这些特征赖以生存并得以壮大发展的支柱。我们置身于这种文化传统之中，并与邻人共同分享。我们能够感受到自己与相识的人之间的关联，然而这种关联远远超出了我们所直属的生活范围。实际上，这种关联是以某种方式将我们与世界连接在一起。

Folklore possesses features by which we distinguish ourselves from each other. A certain dance step may be African American, or a certain story urban, or a certain hymn Protestant, or a certain food preparation Cajun. Folklore can distinguish us, but at the same time it is one of the best ways we introduce ourselves to each other. We learn about new ethnic groups on the North American landscape by sampling their cuisine, and we enthusiastically adopt musical ideas from other communities. Stories, songs, and visual designs move from group to group, enriching all people in the process. Folklore thus is both a sign of identity, experienced as a special marker of our special groups, and at the same time a cultural coin that is well spent by sharing with others beyond our group boundaries.

Folklore is usually learned informally. Somebody, somewhere, taught us that jump rope rhyme we know, but we may have trouble remembering just where we got it, and it probably wasn't in a book that was assigned as homework. Our world has a domain of formal knowledge, but folklore is a domain of knowledge and culture that is learned by sharing and imitation rather than formal instruction. We can study it formally—that's what we are doing now!—but its natural arena is in the informal, person-to-person fabric of our lives.

Not all culture is folklore. Classical music, art sculpture, or great novels are forms of high art that may contain folklore but are not themselves folklore. Popular music or art may be built on folklore themes and traditions, but it addresses a much wider and more diverse audience than folk music or folk art. But even in the world of popular and mass culture, folklore keeps popping up around the margins. E-mail is not folklore—but an e-mail smile is. And college football is not folklore—but the wave we do at

the stadium is.

This series of volumes explores the many faces of folklore throughout the North American continent. By illuminating the many aspects of folklore in our lives, we hope to help readers of the series to appreciate more fully the richness of the cultural fabric they either possess already or can easily encounter as they interact with their North American neighbors.

民俗所具有的特点将我们与他人区分开来，例如某种舞步可能是非裔美洲人所特有的，某个故事是属于都市风格的，某首赞美诗是新教徒们吟唱的，某种烹调方法是法国移民的后裔发明的。民俗可以识别出我们，同时它也是我们彼此介绍的最佳方式之一。我们通过品尝他们的食品来了解北美大陆上新的种族群体，我们也可以从其他社会群体中汲取音乐的灵感。故事、歌曲以及形象化的图案在不同群体间传播，并在传播的过程中使所有人受益。因而民俗既是身份的特征、特殊群体的特殊标记，同时也是一种文化货币，通过与我们群体范围之外的人共享而实现它的价值。

民俗通常是人们在不拘形式的情形下学到的。有人，在某个地方，教会了我们那首跳绳的歌谣，然而我们可能记不起到底是在什么地方学到的，也不可能是从某本老师布置课后要读的书里看到的。在我们的世界中有正规知识的领域，然而民俗的领域却是通过共享和模仿，而不是通过正规学习来获得的。我们可以中规中矩地研习它——这正是我们现在正在做的——但是它天然的舞台却是在生活中非正式的、人与人之间的交流模式中。

并非所有的文化都属于民俗的范畴。古典音乐、艺术雕刻或长篇名著属于高层次的艺术形式，它们可能包含民俗的成分，但其本身并不是民俗的一部分。流行音乐或艺术可能基于民俗的主题和传统，但它们面对的是比民间音乐和艺术更为广泛和多样化的群体。然而，即便在流行文化和大众文化的领域里，民俗也一直不断地在边缘地带崭露头角。电子邮件不是民俗的一种——但电子邮件里的笑脸却是；大学足球不是民俗的一种——但我们在体育场中掀起的阵阵人浪却是。

本系列书探讨了北美大陆上民俗文化的众多方面。民俗作为文化的一个组成元素，人们或者已经拥有，或者在平时的交往中会轻易地碰到。通过对生活中民俗文化各个方面的解读，希望能够帮助读者更充分地品味民俗文化的丰富性。



The Christmas season pulls together many traditions; some have their roots in Christianity, while others come from more ancient practices.



The Christ Child

The Gift of Light

圣子基督

光明的礼物



At the heart of Christmas is the Christ Child.

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”
(Luke 2:6–12)

“他们在那里的时候，她（玛利亚）的产期到了，就生了头胎的儿子。她用布把他包起来，放在马槽里，因为客店里没有地方。在附近的（伯利恒）野地里有牧羊的人，夜间接着更次看守羊群。有主的使者出现在他们旁边，主的荣光四面照着他们；牧羊的人就甚惧怕。那天使对他们说：“不要惧怕！我报给你们大喜的信息，是关乎万民的；因为今天在大卫的城里，为你们生了救主，就是主基督。你们要看见一个婴孩，包着布，卧在马槽里，那就是记号了。”



Christmas is the holiday of giving. This spirit of generosity and benevolence is rooted in the legend of a lowly stable. There, more than 2,000 years ago, the Christ Child was born, bringing to earth the gift of everlasting life.

Rooted in this biblical account, Christmas is an ancient holiday; it has been celebrated in many ways for many years. Our Christmas celebrations today are far different from those of 500 years ago, or even 100 years ago. Today Christmas is a commercial season that puts money in the pockets of businesses and department stores across North America—but the Christmas season continues to honor the divine gift of the Christ Child.

Christmas is the time of the year when most people remember those they love with special keepsakes. They share tokens of gratitude with persons who provide a year of services. Gifts and cards are sent to friends and family who are far away. Donations are contributed to those in need. People everywhere experience the joy of giving.

圣诞节是一个给予的时刻，慷慨和慈善的精神来源于一个卑贱的马厩的传说。两千多年前，就是在那里诞生了基督耶稣，给世界带来了永生的礼物。

据圣经记载，圣诞节是个很古老的节日；很多年来人们以不同的方式来庆祝它。我们今天的圣诞节就和五百年前，甚至一百年前的圣诞节非常不同。今天，在整个北美洲，圣诞节就是一个往商行和百货店的口袋里塞钱的商业活动期。虽然如此，圣诞节仍然在继续向圣子基督的神圣礼物表示敬意。

圣诞节是一年中大多数人用特别的礼物向他们所爱的人表达思念的时刻。他们向那些服务了一年的人们表示感激；他们给远在他乡的朋友和家人寄去礼物和贺卡；给需要帮助的人捐款。人们处处都在体会着给予的乐趣。

■ crèche: 圣婴降诞马槽的模型，基督教会圣诞节所陈列的马厩模型。除卧在马槽里的婴儿基督外，还展示玛利亚和约瑟，有时还附有牲口。



Although Christmas is recognized as the birthday of Jesus Christ, historically, Jesus probably was not born on December 25th. (In fact, he may have been born in the spring.) Early Christians, however, sought to unite the celebration of Christ's birth with other older celebrations.

These festivals are rooted in ancient beliefs. The winter solstice, the shortest day of the year, falls around December 21—and early cultures feared this time of short days and long, dark nights. They wondered if they might be punished by losing the sun forever. Their winter solstice rituals were intended to “call the sun back.” Torches and candles shone brightly at these celebrations, and feasts and games added to the fun. Gifts were given, but back then it was the rich who gave to the poor and the slaves. This happy occasion brightened the lives of those who served their masters throughout the year.

A crèche¹ is a scene made to represent the Nativity, the birth of Jesus. The story of Saint Francis's first crèche led to the creation of miniature nativities as a popular part of the Christmas celebrations in homes and churches throughout North America and the world. Today, live nativities are also popular, especially on Christmas Eve.

圣婴降诞马槽的模型是用来描绘基督降生场景的一种模型，圣方济创造第一个圣婴降诞马槽的模型的故事使圣诞节在家里或在教堂里摆设这种模型的做法在整个北美洲和整个世界广泛流行。今天，现场的基督降生表演仍很普遍，尤其是在平安夜的时候。

虽然圣诞节被认为是圣子基督的誕生日，但在历史上，基督可能不是诞生于12月25日（事实上，他可能是在春天出生。）。然而，早期的基督徒努力要把庆祝基督诞生和其他更为古老的节日庆典结合起来。

这些节日来源于一些古老的信仰。冬至——也就是一年中最短的一天——大概是12月21日前后，在早期的文化里，人们害怕这个白天很短，夜晚很长的時候。他们担心可能会受到惩罚并永远失去阳光。他们在冬至这天举行的仪式本意是想“召回阳光”。在这些仪式上到处都是明亮的火把和蜡烛，为了增添乐趣还会举办盛宴宴会和做游戏。还会发礼物，但那時候是富人给穷人和奴隶们发礼物。这一欢乐的时刻也就让那些伺候了主人一整年的人们变得快乐无比。

In the early Christian era, another religious belief vied for popularity with Christianity. Many Romans worshipped Mithra¹, a Persian savior-god. His birth was celebrated on December 25th, and the festival was called the “Birthday of the Unconquered Son.” There were many parallels between Mithra and Jesus, and in the fourth century ad, Christians adopted Mithra’s birthday as Jesus’.

There were good reasons for doing this. Like the earlier solstice celebrations, Jesus’ birth was also associated with light. A light had shone around the angels who appeared to the shepherds telling them the good news of his birth, and a brilliant star guided the Magi² on their journey to worship the newborn king.

Today, Jesus the “Light of the World” is symbolized by the glowing candles of Christmas. Many churches hold candlelight services on Christmas Eve; people light candles in windows and on tabletops; and even the bright lights that decorated houses and trees are symbols of the divine light that came to earth.

在基督教的早期，还有另外一个宗教信仰和基督教竞争。很多罗马人信奉密特拉神——一个波斯人的救世主。人们在12月25日这一天庆祝他的诞生，这个节日被称为“不可战胜之神的生日”。密特拉神和基督有很多相似点。公元4世纪，基督徒就把密特拉神的生日当成了基督的生日。

这样做的理由很好。和早期的冬至庆典一样，基督的诞生也和光明有关。那位出现在牧羊人面前的主的使者就是被光环笼罩，是他告诉牧羊人有关基督诞生的好消息，而且也是一颗特别明亮的星星指引着东方三博士长途跋涉去敬拜那个刚刚出生的主。

今天，圣诞节燃烧的蜡烛就是基督“世界的光明”的象征。平安夜里很多教堂都会举行烛光仪式；人们在橱窗和桌面点燃蜡烛；甚至在室内和树上装饰的明灯都象征着降临到这个世界的圣光。

■ Mithra: 波斯的太阳神。12月25日原来是波斯太阳神，即光明之神，密特拉的诞辰，是一个异教徒节日，同时太阳神也是罗马国教众神之一。

■ Magi: 指的是当初去寻找初生基督的三位博士，古波斯祭司。

■ Francis of Assisi(1181-1226): 阿西西的圣方济是意大利第13世纪的圣人。他在格里赛奥小镇首创了基督降生在马槽的布置。到如今，马槽的摆设在全世界各地传扬着圣诞的喜悦。