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November 2023

Famous Kentucky Christians Club E-newsletter

The President who made Christmas a legal holiday in the United States had links to Kentucky



Ulysses S. Grant was the 18th president of the United States. He was born in 1822 in Ohio. From 1836-1837, he went to Kentucky's Maysville Academy and lived with his Uncle Peter in Maysville. The kids at the school nicknamed him Toad. On June 28, 1870, Pres. Grant signed a bill that made Christmas a legal holiday in America. Before that some states even fined people for celebrating Christmas. The president hoped Christmas would help unify the country after the Civil War.

The General Grant Tree

This tree is a Giant Sequoia tree in King's Canyon, California. President Calvin Coolidge named the tree and made it the "National Christmas Tree" in 1926. President Dwight Eisenhower declared the tree to be a National Shrine in 1956. Every Christmas a wreath is laid at the tree to honor American soldiers who have died in battle serving our country. The tree is a "living memorial" to them. Sequoias are redwood trees, the largest trees that grow on earth. This one is 267 feet tall and it has a circumference (the distance around the tree) of 108 feet. Some people think the tree is 3,500 years old. That means that it has been living on the earth since before David killed Goliath.

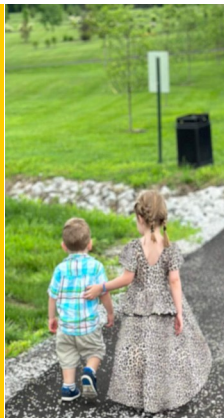


Thomas Nash drew this in 1863



Thomas Nash is famous for drawing cartoons about life and politics. This cartoon shows a man who is away from his wife on Christmas Eve. The man is a soldier in the Civil War. The wife is praying for her husband. The husband is praying for his wife. Christmas is a time when families are supposed to be together. Even this Christmas, sadly, some families are separated because of wars and other hardships.

Visit the Kentucky Faith & Public History Education Project Walking Trail—Open and free during daylight hours at 616 Clintonville Rd, Paris, KY 40361



“Kentucky for Christmas”

Since the 1970's “Kentucky for Christmas” has been an advertising slogan in Japan. Christmas Eve is the busiest day of the year for Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurants in Japan. A “party bucket” filled with fried chicken is a popular Christmas dinner. Would you like to eat Kentucky Fried Chicken on Christmas?

The real meaning of Christmas

There would be no Christmas without the Christian religion because Christmas is the day we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem (now part of Gaza) 2023 years ago. The baby was born while his parents were in Bethlehem to pay their taxes. Because there were no beds in any of the hotels, Jesus was born in a barn. Then, to celebrate and announce His birth, an angel appeared to some shepherds who were spending the night outside with their sheep. The Bible records this: “An angel of the Lord stood before them (the shepherds) and the glory of the Lord shone around them and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. For behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.’” You can read the whole story of Jesus’ birth in the book of Luke.