

# A CHRISTMAS CAROL

From the Novella by CHARLES  
DICKENS

Adapted by TOM CREAMER

Directed by HENRY  
WISHCAMPER

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For more information related to *A CHRISTMAS CAROL*, lesson plans and activities, please visit the Goodman's Education website at: [www.goodmantheatre.org/engage-learn](http://www.goodmantheatre.org/engage-learn)

# Goodman Theatre's *A Christmas Carol* Through the Ages

BY ELIZABETH RICE

1978

To try and attract audiences to the theater during the slower winter months, future Executive Director Roche Schulfer suggests producing a Charles Dickens' classic, *A Christmas Carol*. The inaugural performance features William J. Norris as Ebenezer Scrooge, who plays the role the longest from 1978–1983, then 1985–1990.



1979

With the success of ACC the year before, the Goodman decides to continue what will become a long-standing tradition of presenting *A Christmas Carol* during the holiday season. This year the Chicago Sun-Times helps sponsor the performance.



1985

*A Christmas Carol* returns to the Goodman and William J. Norris once again takes on the role of Ebenezer Scrooge. Larry Sloan further revises the ACC adaptation, which would be used by the Goodman until 1989. Although Christa Scholtz's costumes move from the Auditorium Theatre to the Goodman, a difference in space is required to use Joseph Niemski's original set design and Robert Christen's original lighting design.

1987

Not a stranger to Christmas traditions in Chicago, retail native Marshall Fields sponsors the 10th anniversary production of ACC. Goodman Theatre also helps spearhead A Season of Concern, a fund initially developed to provide care for Chicago theater artists with AIDS-related illnesses that has expanded to help theatre artists with health-related and medical emergencies.

1991

Tom Mula replaces William J. Norris as Ebenezer Scrooge.

1993

Steve Scott passes the torch to Resident Director Chuck Smith. Smith currently is celebrating his 20th anniversary season with Goodman Theatre.



1989

Goodman Theatre Associate Producer Steve Scott directs former Goodman dramaturg Tom Creamer's new adaptation of the Dickensian classic. This adaptation still is used by the Goodman today. Scott will direct the production for the following three productions, and then again in 2011 and 2012 for the 34th and 35th anniversary productions.

1984

The only year *A Christmas Carol* is not at the Goodman, this production features an entirely new script, adapted by former Goodman Artistic Director Gregory Mosher and Larry Sloan, and recasts Frank Galati as Scrooge. Performed at the Auditorium Theatre, the 1984 production includes entirely new set, lighting, costume and sound designs, with Mosher as the director. In addition, the production features the first attempt at color-blind/nontraditional casting. This will be the norm for all future castings of ACC.

1996

Following Chuck Smith, Goodman Artistic Associate Henry Godinez begins directing *A Christmas Carol*. Henry will direct the show for six seasons, helping the show transition to the Goodman's new space in 2000.



1998

Tom Mula steps down as Ebenezer Scrooge to perform his one-man show inspired by his time in ACC, *Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol*. It will play for two seasons in Goodman Theatre's smaller space, Stage 2. Rick Snyder replaces Mula as Scrooge.



2010

John Judd takes over the role of Ebenezer Scrooge, while Larry Yando plays Dr. Pangloss in Mary Zimmerman's adaptation of *Candide*.



2000

Despite just moving into its current space from the old theater at Columbus and Monroe behind the Art Institute of Chicago, Goodman Theatre continues its holiday tradition with *A Christmas Carol*.

2006

Ebenezer Scrooge turns director! William Brown directs *A Christmas Carol* and replaces himself with veteran actor Jonathan Weir. Brown will direct the following four seasons of ACC.

2012

Goodman Theatre celebrates the 35th anniversary of *A Christmas Carol*, with Steve Scott once again at the helm.

2001

The Goodman re-envisioned *A Christmas Carol* to accommodate the larger and more flexible Albert Stage at the new theater. Set designer Todd Rosenthal creates a set that utilizes the theater's 76 feet of fly space and 12.5-foot-deep trap room. Costume shop manager Heidi Sue McMath designs a new set of costumes working with ACC veteran Robert Christen to further the spirit of Christmas in the production's details. These designs will become the cornerstones of the production, with only minor changes over the next 12 seasons.



2002

William Brown replaces Rick Snyder as Ebenezer Scrooge. Kate Buckley joins the production as its new director.

2011

Steve Scott returns to the director's chair of *A Christmas Carol*, followed closely by Larry Yando as Ebenezer Scrooge.

2007

Chicago actor Larry Yando takes over the iconic role of Ebenezer Scrooge. Other than a slight hiatus in 2010, he is the most recent actor to continuously transform into Scrooge.



2013

New Artistic Associate Henry Wishcamper inherits the directorial reins and shakes up the set by introducing a redesigned bedroom set piece for Scrooge.

# The Science of Levitation

BY KELLY REED



*Ebenezer Scrooge (John Judd, ACC 2010) flies through time as he takes a visit to his childhood. Photo by Liz Lauren.*

This year, Jacob Marley's ghost is not playing around. In contrast to years past, the ghost heralding the apparitions of Christmas past, present and future will appear on stage in a fury of smoke and noise that is more spooky than magical. The changes to this scene made by director Henry Wishcamper are so big that the production crew built an entirely new set piece for Scrooge's bedroom. Matt Chandler, the associate production manager for the Albert Theatre, oversaw the entire process of building this new piece. "We wanted to take a step in modernizing the unit while at the same time keeping it in the realm of the rest of the production," Chandler says. "We wanted to tell the story in a more dramatic way, visually, than we have in years past."

Although directors are constantly re-imagining the show like this, the production crew uses the same basic science and math concepts year after year to make changes to the set. The process of building the new "Scrooge Unit" started over a year ago, with designers discussing the artistic vision for the show with Wishcamper. After this, the designers drafted plans to bring that vision to life in the safest and most cost-effective way. Once Chandler approved the final plans, engineers and carpenters translated them into a real, live set. Chandler talks about the excitement of using math and science skills in innovative ways to

create theater. "It's the science behind it that I have always been the most excited about," he says. "There's something about being able to take all of these different things and in the end you create one massive theatrical project. In theater, you're always doing something different. There's always a different challenge, and there's always new technology."

One of the main challenges in constructing Scrooge's bedroom was that of levitation: During a pivotal scene, Scrooge's bed must rise off the floor and carry him, floating, into the air. After testing different **motor mechanics** and **simple machines**, crew members decided to build a **cable drive system** to accomplish the feat. The system starts backstage, with motorized **winches** that rotate giant **drums**, each with grooves on the outside to catch the cable as it wraps around. The cables connect to a forklift-type apparatus, which sticks through the wall and under the bed, lifting it up when the motors are switched on. This machine lifts not only the bed, but the actor moving (and jumping) on top of it. Since the bed must remain absolutely still, crew members needed to figure out how much weight in addition to the bed the lift would have to hold, as well as the **dynamic forces** acting on it as the actor jumped up and down.

Once they determined this, they could choose the right

type of **casters** to achieve the proper amount of **torque** to get the cable moving. The safety and the “look” of the scene both depend on the system starting and stopping smoothly, so the speed of the motors needed to accelerate and decelerate along a parabolic curve.

In the end, the engineers manipulated basic physics concepts — torque, **equilibrium**, acceleration and dynamic forces — to create the illusion of levitation. They used engineering techniques such as simple machines, **automation** and mechanics to build the systems that manipulate those concepts. When constructing the set piece as a whole, the production manager used math to calculate the total price of materials based on their current market price, after which carpenters used geometry to build a sturdy structure. By opening night, more than 35 people will have contributed to the unit’s construction, mostly using the same concepts they began learning in high school.

Despite the huge role math and science play in building a set, working on the backstage team does not mean you were a math geek in high school. “I hated math in high school, frankly,” Chandler says. “It wasn’t until I got to grad school and I was taking structural analysis and physics for the stage that it put [math and science] into a real context.” When physics and geometry are necessary to build an actual set piece, using them suddenly becomes less about word problems and more about treating them like the tools they are to create something spectacular. “When we sit here on opening night and think, ‘All of that work went into creating this one thing,’ it gives you that moment of ‘Awesome. I did something really, really cool.’”



*The Ghost of Christmas Past appears to Scrooge. Photo by Liz Lauren.*

### Glossary

**Automation:** the use of various control systems for operating equipment with little to no human interaction

**Cable drive system:** for A Christmas Carol, it is a system comprised of metal cable, motorized winches and pulleys, which attaches to the larger set piece and is custom-built to raise and lower Scrooge’s bed

**Caster:** a type of wheel designed to be mounted to a larger object in order to make that object easier to move

**Drum:** a cylindrical container, around which a cable can be wound

**Dynamics:** a branch of physics focusing on forces and torques and their effects on motion (as opposed to studying motion without reference to its cause)

**Equilibrium:** within physics, it is when the sum of all forces acting on an object equals zero

**Force:** any influence on an object that causes it to change in movement or direction

**Motor mechanics:** a type of mechanics concerned with the behavior of objects when subjected to forces, specifically those driven by motors

**Simple machine:** a device without a motor that changes the direction or magnitude of a force

**Torque:** the tendency of a force to rotate an object about an axis, fulcrum or pivot

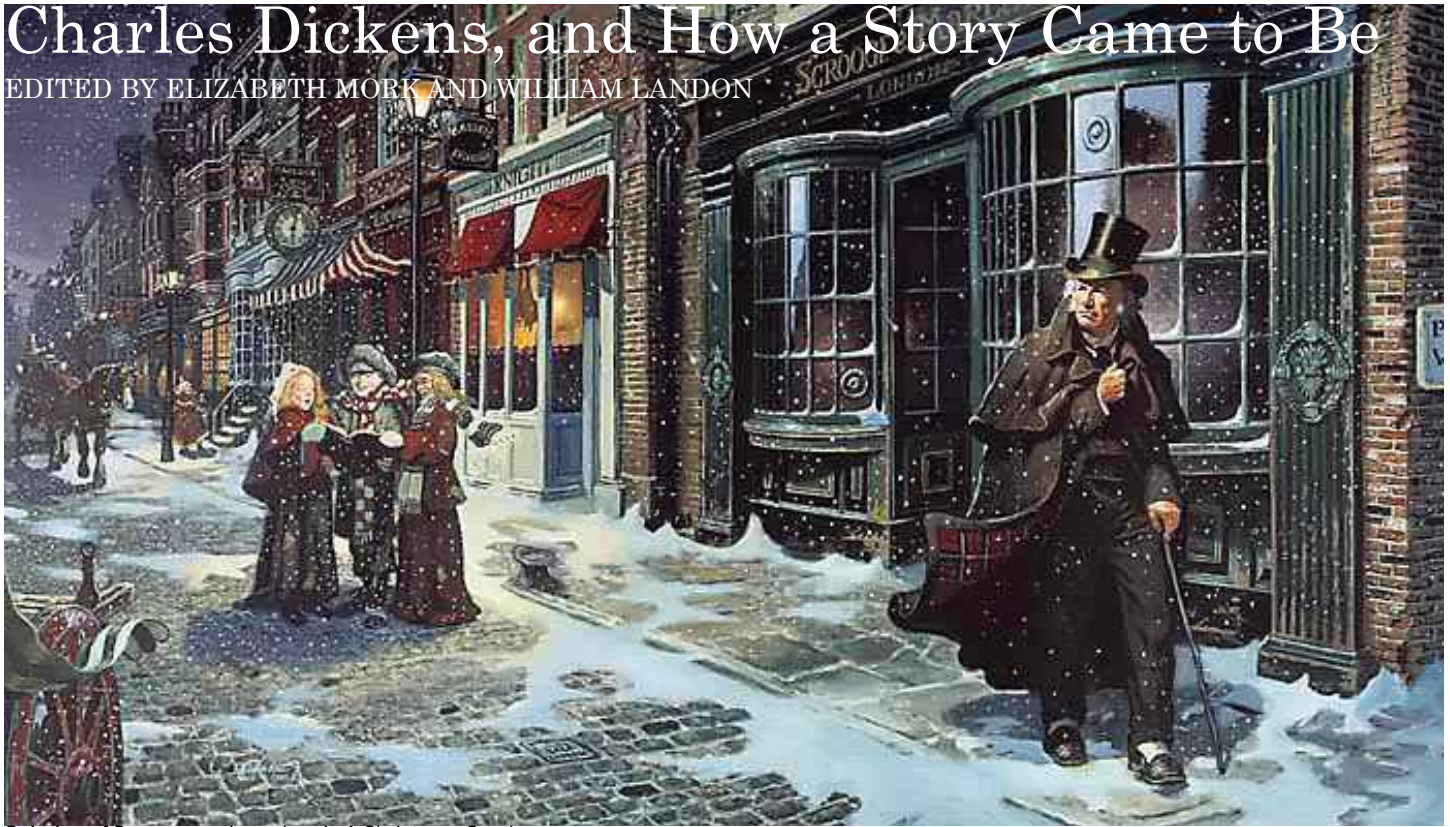
**Winch:** a device used to pull in, let out or adjust the tension of a cable or rope



To learn more about the science of A Christmas Carol, visit:  
[www.goodmantheatre.org/engage-learn](http://www.goodmantheatre.org/engage-learn)

# Charles Dickens, and How a Story Came to Be

EDITED BY ELIZABETH MORK AND WILLIAM LONDON



*Painting of Scrooge and carolers in A Christmas Carol.*

Charles Dickens was born the second of eight children in the town of Portsmouth, England, on Feb. 7, 1812. His father, John, worked as a clerk in the Naval Pay office — a job that forced him and his family to move constantly. As a result, young Dickens spent his early years in various cities in England including London.

The family moved to London just before Dickens' 12th birthday. He received some basic formal education at a private school before tragedy struck. His father, very irresponsible with the family's finances, constantly spent more money than he earned. Soon after moving into their new home, John was arrested for outstanding debt. The entire family, except for Charles, was sent to Marshalsea Debtor's Prison — a prison specifically for individuals and their family members who were unable to pay back their debt.

Charles Dickens began to work 10-hour days at Warren's boot-blacking factory. At the age of 12, he spent his days applying labels to jars of shoe polish, earning only six shillings per week — the equivalent of earning \$26 per week today — with the majority going to support his family.

After the family had been imprisoned for three months, John declared himself an "insolvent debtor," one who has insufficient funds to get out of debt. This enabled

him to release his family from jail. John removed Charles from the warehouse and promptly sent the adolescent to private school, where he did extremely well.

Three years later, when he was 15, Charles Dickens began working as a clerk in a law office. Unhappy with the position, Dickens left the profession of clerk to become a journalist and wrote most about parliamentary debates and campaign elections. He also penned humorous sketches for magazines in his free time. As his popularity grew, these sketches were compiled and published in his first book, "Sketches by Boz" (1836). They were very well received by both critics and the public. He followed this success with his first novel, "The Pickwick Papers" (1836-37), which was released in monthly installments (as were many of Dickens' works, including "A Christmas Carol"). To this day, none of his novels have gone out of print in England!

As a result of his days working in the factory, Dickens also was very interested in social reform. Throughout his works, Dickens retained empathy for the common working man and skepticism of the upper classes. Unfortunately, his climb to success took a significant downturn during the next few years. "The Old Curiosity Shop" (1840), his follow-up to "Nicholas Nickleby," was less than successful, and "Barnaby Rudge" (1841) did



A parade of Dickens characters! Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

even worse in sales.

During 1842, he toured the United States, where he enjoyed favor in all of his travels. The social issues he identified in America, however, keenly disappointed him. He upset his hosts by condemning slavery, in the spirit of the social issues he took to heart. This distaste was evident in his travelogue “American Notes,” written that same year, which highly criticized the new nation. By the fall of 1843, Dickens had lost social and financial favor.

The author was in need of a new source of inspiration. Considering Dickens’ own personal history and fierce dedication to exposing the conditions of the poor, it is

not altogether surprising where he found this muse.

#### **How “A Christmas Carol” Came to be**

“In the little world in which children have their existence, whosoever brings them up, there is nothing so finely perceived and so finely felt, as injustice.” — Charles Dickens, “Great Expectations”

#### **The Impact of the Industrial Revolution**

In 1834, the year when Dickens began writing “A Christmas Carol,” the Industrial Revolution was in full swing. The results were a mix of positive and negative on the needy population of England. The revolution caused a huge amount of low-paying, low-skill jobs to grow within

the cities. Manufacturers began hiring children in large numbers for these positions because these unprotected workers would do the job for little pay, leading to huge profits for the company. No laws protected children in the workplace. Parents forced some children into the factories before the age of 7. These young workers often labored for more than 12 hours a day. Horrifyingly dangerous and unsanitary conditions were common.

Enraged by the situation of the poor, Dickens continually chronicled these atrocities and searched for ways to change them.

### **Ragged Schools: Ignorance and Want**

Dickens' interest in education's potential to save children from poverty rapidly grew. In the fall of 1843, he personally went to several institutions known as "Ragged Schools," schools that were a direct product of the Industrial Revolution and that provided free education to inner-city children searching for answers. Dickens described one school in particular as "more than a 'ragged' place." He recalled that the children were filthy and dressed in tatters. Some had already succumbed to the pressures of poverty by becoming pimps and thieves; many had lost their innocence. The children's schoolrooms were in an equally depressing state. Dickens wrote to a friend about the experience, "On Thursday night I went to the Ragged School; an awful sight it is. I have very seldom seen in all the strange and dreadful things I have seen in London and elsewhere, anything so shocking as the dire neglect of soul and body exhibited in these children."

In a piece for the *Examiner*, he wrote, "Side by side with Crime, Disease, and Misery in England, Ignorance is always brooding." Thus the germinating image of "A Christmas Carol" was not that of the ghosts, Scrooge or even Tiny Tim, but the two "monsters," the allegorical children Ignorance and Want. Dickens had intended a tract on education for the poor, but he now decided to write a story that, he announced with justifiable hyperbole, would hit his readers over the head like a "sledge-hammer." And this is exactly what it achieved.

Dickens wrote nonstop for the six weeks following his visit. He noted that while writing "A Christmas Carol" he often "wept and laughed and wept again." At times his agitation was so great that he would "walk about the back streets of London fifteen and twenty miles many a night when all sober folks had gone to bed." During

these six weeks, he was able to turn out the story of the Christmas of 1843 in the form of "A Christmas Carol." It was, in some ways, a push for a new literary hit as well as a cry for the public's attention to a vast and deadly problem. He worked tirelessly to get the story into print by that Christmas, and he put a lot of his own money into the publication process to do so.

### **Financial Problems**

Response to "A Christmas Carol" was immediate and positive. A remarkable 6,000 copies were sold on the day of its publication. However, due to the book's moderate price and beautiful but expensive packaging, profits were lower than Dickens originally thought and of which he was in need. In 1844 he complained to a friend, "Such a night as I have passed! The first 6,000 copies show a profit of 230 pounds! And the last four will yield as much more. I had set my heart and soul upon a thousand. What a wonderful thing it is that such a great success should occasion me such intolerable anxiety and disappointment!"

### **A Universal Success?**

The popularity of "A Christmas Carol" turned the public eye back to Dickens' work, dramatically increasing the sales of his future novels. He became one of England's



*Portrait of Charles Dickens. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.*

most beloved writers and was similarly admired later in other countries, such as the United States. America had not been ready for a new Dickens book following the perceived injury of “American Notes,” but Dickens revisited America in 1867. He came for a speaking tour, during which he read excerpts from his books and acted out all of the characters. On the night before tickets went on sale in New York, a line of people stretched half a mile down the street and by morning more than 5,000 eager audience members were in line waiting. “A Christmas Carol” was the book most often requested.

### **The End of An Author's Life**

Charles Dickens died from a stroke on June 8, 1870, at the age of 58. He was mourned by peers, friends, family and the public at large. Dickens is buried in the distinguished Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey, where his grave marker still stands today. The inscription on his tombstone reads: “He was a sympathizer to the poor, the suffering, and the oppressed; and by his death, one of England's greatest writers is lost to the world.”

A story circulated after his death. A man tells of when he was in a tobacco shop and a laborer came in and flung two pence on the counter for his shag. The shopkeeper asked him why he looked so wretched. “Charles Dickens is dead,” he replied, “We have lost our best friend.”

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*Poet's Corner at Westminster Abbey, where Charles Dickens is buried.*



# Dickens' Time: Victorian London

BY JESSICA HUTCHINSON

London geography was determined by the Thames. The great river ran from west to east through the city after a dogleg north past Westminster — so, too, did the city itself, its two great thoroughfares being the Strand—Fleet Street and Oxford Street—Holborn—Cheapside.

At its core was the old City of London — known as “the City” as the century wore on — an entity consisting of the roughly square mile making up the area that had once been inside the old walls of the medieval city of London, bounded by the Thames on the south, the Inns of Court and Temple Bar on the west and the Tower in the east, with its seven gates (Newgate of prison fame being one), which had all been torn down save for “that leaden-headed old obstruction,” as Charles Dickens called it at the beginning of “Bleak House”: “appropriate ornament for the threshold of a leaden-headed corporation, Temple Bar.”

Within the City lay the Royal Exchange (the ‘Change upon which Scrooge’s word in “A Christmas Carol” is said to be so good), which was a gathering place for merchants in different trades, and the Bank of England, the financial nucleus of the nation, together with the financial offices and activities that naturally clustered around them. In fact, the term “the City” also was used to denote the financial heart of England in the way that “Wall Street” is used to describe the financial heart of the United States. In Jane Austen’s day, it was still customary for some merchants to live in the City, but as railroads thrust through it and commuting became more feasible, even poor clerks began traveling to work from fringe or suburban areas the way we are told that Bob Cratchit does from Camdentown. In the first 80 years of the 19th century, in fact, the resident population in the City dropped from 128,000 to 50,000, while greater London as a whole mushroomed from a million to more than 4.5 million people.

The fancy area of London was the West End, which lay west of Temple Bar and London’s center, Charing Cross. At the historic core of the West End lay what had once been the royal city of Westminster, with its palaces of St. James and Whitehall, along with Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament. The Treasury building was there, along with Downing Street, the Foreign Office and the Horse Guards (army headquarters). These had now become part of the larger, expanded London, and adjacent to this nerve center of government and royalty,

the ultrafashionable West End residential area of Mayfair (and later Belgrave Square and the nonfashionable Chelsea farther south) grew up. Mayfair was the location of the posh men’s clubs on Pall Mall, the exclusive shops on Bond Street and the fancy houses on the ritziest residential street in the city, Park Lane, overlooking the great greensward of Hyde Park on Mayfair’s western border. All were within a short distance of the new royal residence, Buckingham Palace.

Such was London. But what was it like to live in?

The fog in London was very real. Just why it was the color it was, no one has ever been able to ascertain for sure, but at a certain time of the year — it was worse in November — a great yellowness reigned everywhere, and lamps were lit inside even during the day. In November, December and January, the yellow fog extended out some 3 or 4 miles from the heart of the city, causing “pain in the lungs” and “uneasy sensations” in the head. It has been blamed in part on the coal stoves.

At 8 o’clock in the morning on an average day over London, an observer reported the sky began to turn black with the smoke from thousands of coal fires, presumably for morning fires to warm dining rooms and



*A recreation of London smog for a Sherlock Holmes film. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.*

bedrooms and to cook breakfast. Ladies going to the opera at night with white shawls returned with them gray. It has been suggested that the black umbrella put in its appearance because it did not show the effects of these London atmospherics. The fog was so thick, observed a foreigner at mid-century, that you could take a man by the hand and not be able to see his face, and people literally lost their way and drowned in the Thames. In a very bad week in 1873, more than 700 people higher than the normal average for the period died in the city, and cattle at an exhibition suffocated to death.

Problems were underfoot as well as in the air. One hundred tons of horse manure dropped on the streets of London each day, and a report to Parliament said that “strangers coming from the country frequently describe the streets of London as smelling of dung like a stable-yard.” Originally, many streets were not paved; by midcentury, however, the dust from the pulverized stone with which London streets were paved coated furniture in good weather and turned to mud when it rained. An etiquette book advised gentlemen to walk on the outside of the pavement when accompanying a lady to ensure that they walked on the filthiest part of it, and every major street had a crossing sweeper like Jo in “Bleak House,” who for a penny swept the street before

you made your way across it on rainy days so your boots did not become impossibly filthy. Nor was the Thames any better. London sewage, some 278,000 tons daily at mid-century, as well as pollutants from the factories along the river’s banks, was dumped untreated into the water, presumably helping to fuel the cholera epidemics that swept the city in the early part of the century. The smell was bad enough in the summer of 1858 to cause Parliament to end its session early.

There was what we would surely call noise pollution, too — the incessant sound of wheels and horses’ hooves clacking over the pavement, the click of women’s pattens on the sidewalks in the rain, the bell of the muffin man and the cries of the street peddlers selling such items as dolls, matches, books, knives, eels, pens, rat poison, key rings, eggs and china, to say nothing of the German bands, the itinerant clarinet players and the hurdy-gurdies.

The children who added their din to that of the costermongers remind us that London was an overwhelmingly young city, as we are apt to realize when we read, say, “Oliver Twist,” a city of multitudinous street Arabs, young costermongers, crossing sweepers like Jo or the mud larks who scavenged the bed of the Thames, all playing in the streets or crying their wares, holding horses for gentlemen, fetching cabs for theatergoers on rainy nights, carrying packages or opening cab doors or doing cartwheels or handstands in the street in the hope of earning a ha’penny or penny. There was no compulsory school until 1870, and children younger than 14 made up 30 to 40 percent of the population.

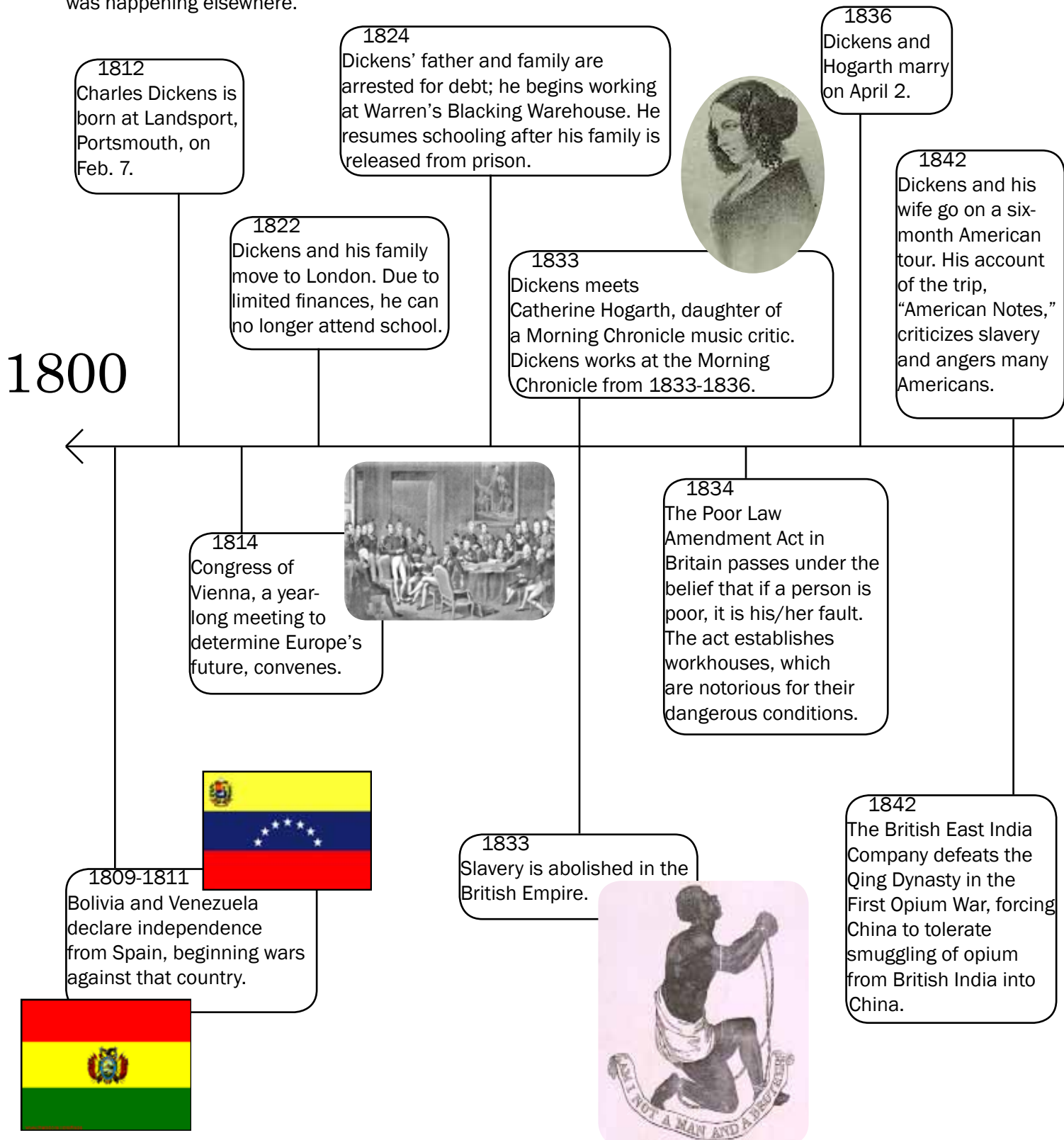


*A cobblestone street. Courtesy of New York Public Library.*

# Dickens' Time: A Global Perspective

BY WILLIAM LANDON AND ELIZABETH RICE

The timeline below details important events in Charles Dickens' life as well as happenings in Great Britain and around the world. As you look over the timeline, consider how Dickens' life relates to what was happening elsewhere.



1853

Dickens gives his first staged reading of "A Christmas Carol" before 2,000 people at a benefit for the Birmingham and Midland Institute, a pioneer of adult scientific and technical education.



1869

Exhaustion and illness force Dickens to return home from an English tour of "A Christmas Carol," after delivering 74 of a planned 100 readings.

1870

On June 9, after a day of work on his novel in progress, "The Mystery of Edwin Drood," Dickens dies. He had presented a total of 444 readings of "A Christmas Carol" in Great Britain and the United States.

1900

1848

Seneca Falls Convention for women's rights is organized in New York; Manifesto of the Communist Party published in Germany.

1864

Taiping Rebellion in China ends; death toll is an estimated 20 million civilians and soldiers.



1861

The American Civil War begins.

Following the Crimean War, the Emperor of Russia abolishes serfdom, or "enforced labor."



1865

American Civil War ends; death toll is an estimated 620,000 soldiers and undetermined number of civilians; Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution abolishes slavery in the United States.



# From the Industrial Revolution in Dickens' London to the Information Revolution in Today's America

BY TERESA RENDE

When Charles Dickens was born in 1812, Great Britain, and indeed the entire world, was entering a time of great change. From the mid-1800s onward, society moved toward an increasingly global economy. Improvements in transportation and communication resulted in more countries being able to sell their agricultural goods and raw materials at an international level. The industrial era was evolving quickly, and many countries sought to benefit immensely from it, while others fell behind because of their inability to participate.

No other nation matched Britain's success in industrialization. The success Britain held from the late 1700s through the 1800s actually pushed other countries out of the competition. Countries including China and India experienced periods of de-industrialization as certain industries, such as the textile markets, became obsolete when compared to the cheap, high-quality and swiftly produced British textiles. As such, these non-Western countries suffered the plight of growing populations and decreasing household income. Furthermore, the prosperity and technological advances of Western nations allowed them to travel more often, meaning Western folk were spreading new goods, religions and diseases abroad, while using their advanced weaponry to further their own agenda in foreign countries.

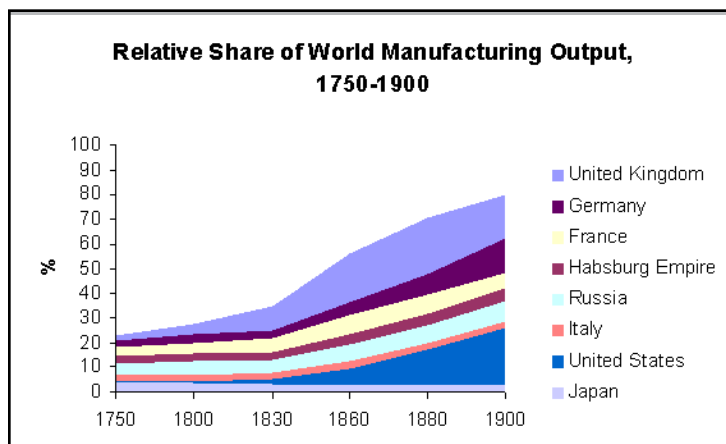
Emerging philosophies of free trade and "international peace" (influenced primarily by the prosperity that

Relative Shares of World Manufacturing Output, 1750-1900						
	1750	1800	1830	1860	1880	1900
(Europe as a whole)	23.2	28.1	34.2	53.2	61.3	62.0
United Kingdom	1.9	4.3	9.5	19.9	22.9	18.5
Habsburg Empire	2.9	3.2	3.2	4.2	4.4	4.7
France	4.0	4.2	5.2	7.9	7.8	6.8
German States/Germany	2.9	3.5	3.5	4.9	8.5	13.2
Italian States/Italy	2.4	2.5	2.3	2.5	2.5	2.5
Russia	5.0	5.6	5.6	7.0	7.6	8.8
United States	0.1	0.8	2.4	7.2	14.7	23.6
Japan	3.8	3.5	2.8	2.6	2.4	2.4
Third World	73.0	67.7	60.5	36.6	20.9	11.0
China	32.8	33.3	29.8	19.7	12.5	6.2
India/Pakistan	24.5	19.7	17.6	8.6	2.8	1.7

Per Capita Levels of Industrialization, 1750-1900 (relative to U.K. in 1900 = 100)						
	1750	1800	1830	1860	1880	1900
(Europe as a whole)	8	8	11	16	24	35
United Kingdom	10	16	25	64	87	100
Habsburg Empire	7	7	8	11	15	23
France	9	9	12	20	28	39
German States/Germany	8	8	9	15	25	52
Italian States/Italy	8	8	8	10	12	17
Russia	6	6	7	8	10	15
United States	4	9	14	21	38	69
Japan	7	7	7	7	9	12
Third World	7	6	6	4	3	2
China	8	6	6	4	4	3
India	7	6	6	3	2	1

Chart by Paul Kennedy from *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*. New York: Vintage Books, 1987



Graph illustrating World Manufacturing Output, 1750-1900. Data from Paul Bairoch. Courtesy "TwoOneTwo," Wikimedia Commons.

followed international trade), only added to the economic situation that aided a number of Western nations. This is not to say that international peace served as the standard. There was, in fact, the same fancy for conquest that European nations had exhibited in the past. As industrialization pushed on, the focus of conquest changed dramatically. Differing from the many Napoleonic battles of the late 1700s and early 1800s, conquest battles of mid - to late 1800s were characterized by the overthrow of many less developed nations. Interstate battles still existed, but they were shorter and more internally isolated than were conquest and territorial battles of prior decades. Historian Paul Kennedy explains that, "In the year 1800, Europeans occupied or controlled 35 percent of the land surface of the world; by 1878 this figure had risen to 67 percent, and by 1914 to over 84 percent."

Changes in international banking and the concept of “credit” also gave advantages to certain nations during this period. The new practice of amassing resources in a short time and winning any given conflict quickly moved the focus away from long-term military mobilization. Simply being a “wealthy nation” was not enough to ensure success. Instead, a country had to have a well-balanced economy with healthy credit, international trade and, most importantly, a national stake in industrialization. The combination of these varied factors made Britain more powerful than any nation in the world.

Of course, industrialization brought with it many horrors, even for Britain. One of the major themes of *A Christmas Carol* is the pitiable life of Britain’s poorest citizens. The people working in the factories that made Britain such an industrial powerhouse were, themselves, often powerless and penniless. The children Ignorance and Want in *A Christmas Carol* speak to the especially sour situation poor children faced in London in the 1800s and the seemingly endless cycle of poverty. Although London had free schools in the 1800s, they were known as “Ragged Schools,” free institution run through charity, in which the poorest children received religious instruction and a rudimentary education. These did little more than prepare the children for a life of labor themselves, and many children couldn’t attend these schools as, until child labor laws were enacted, they were expected to work as soon as physically able. Compulsory education wasn’t enacted in London until 1870, the year Dickens died.

In America, common schools developed in the late 1700s and continued on through most of the 1800s, giving way to a more regional education system in the 1900s. America’s public schools were based off the Prussian common school system, the Prussian belief being that all children needed a certain set of basic academic skills to live in an industrialized world, and that the nation would benefit if all people had these basic skills. The kingdom of Prussia was one of the first countries in the world to introduce tax-funded and compulsory primary education, though post-primary education (what we would now think of as high school) was only available to the very wealthy in those times.

The basic skills often taught in American common schools included “the three Rs” (reading, [w]riting, and [a]rithmetic), history, geography and math. Championed by Massachusetts’ Horace Mann in 1830s, common schools sprang up across the nation, first in the north, then nationwide, throughout the 1800s. Compulsory education laws followed at the state level, eventually becoming a federal mandate in 1918. The public school system that developed in America was intended to give every child the basics, but much like London, the system was not developed in such a way that every child has the opportunity to become a scholar or an academic.

Seth Godin, an American author and tech entrepreneur, describes it fantastically in his education manifesto, “Stop Stealing Dreams.”

“A hundred and fifty years ago, adults were incensed about child labor.

Low-wage kids were taking jobs away from hard-working adults. Sure, there was some moral outrage about seven-year-olds losing fingers and being abused at work, but the economic rationale was paramount. Factory owners insisted that losing child workers would be catastrophic to their industries and fought hard to keep the kids at work—they said they couldn’t afford to hire adults. It wasn’t until 1918 that nationwide compulsory education was in place.

Part of the rationale used to sell this major transformation to industrialists was the idea that educated kids would actually become more compliant and productive workers. Our current system of teaching kids to sit in straight rows and obey instructions isn’t a coincidence—it was an investment in our economic future. The plan: trade short-term child-labor wages for longer-term productivity by giving kids a head start in doing what they’re told.

Large-scale education was not developed to motivate kids or to create scholars. It was invented to churn out adults who worked well within the system. Scale was more important than quality, just as it was for most industrialists.”



*Inside The Octagonal Schoolhouse, built in 1827 a historic stone octagon-shaped school building located in the hamlet of Boquet in the western part of the town of Essex, New York. Photo by Bryan Nelson Elder.*

Godin poses that the American education system is failing our students because it is succeeding in its original intention: to produce predictable, obedient, testable factory workers in a nation that no longer depends on factory jobs. We still have systems that constantly test students' ability to memorize facts and data, despite student access to the Internet, which can pull up facts instantaneously. We've experienced a complete shift in economy, from one that produced things to one that produces thoughts, and yet we haven't adjusted our education system to match it. Godin continues,

"The next century offers fewer new long-lasting institutions (we're seeing both organized religion and the base of industry fading away), to be replaced instead with micro organizations, with individual leadership, with the leveraged work of a small innovative team changing things far more than it ever

would have in the past. The six foundational elements [competition, the scientific method, property rights, medicine, consumption, and jobs] are taken for granted as we build a new economy and a new world on top of them.

Amplified by the Web and the connection revolution, human beings are no longer rewarded most for work as compliant cogs. Instead, our chaotic world is open to the work of passionate individuals, intent on carving their own paths. That's the new job of school.

Not to hand a map to those willing to follow it, but to inculcate leadership and restlessness into a new generation."

We've moved far past the Industrial Revolution and into the information revolution. What do you think is next for the education revolution?

# Victorian Etiquette

BY JESSICA HUTCHINSON

In Victorian England, strict social rules determined interactions between men and women. Some of these might play into relations in “A Christmas Carol,” and might differ by class, but many, as you will see below, span social status. Think about it: Are any of these rules, or variations of them, still followed in the United States today? Which?

## The Gentleman

1. In riding horseback or walking along the street, the lady always has the wall.
2. Meeting a lady in the street or in the park whom you know only slightly, you wait for her acknowledging bow. Then and only then may you tip your hat to her, which is done using the hand farthest away from her. You do not speak to her — or to any other lady — unless she speaks to you first.
3. If you meet a lady who is a good friend and who signifies that she wishes to talk to you, you turn and walk with her if you wish to converse. It is not “done” to make a lady stand talking in a street.
4. In going up a flight of stairs, you precede the lady (running, according to one authority); in going down, you follow.
5. In a carriage, a gentleman takes the seat facing backward. If he is alone in a carriage with a lady, he does not sit next to her unless he is her husband, brother, father or son. He alights from the carriage first so he may hand her down. He takes care not to step on her dress.
6. At a public exhibition or concert, if accompanied by a lady, he enters first in order to find her a seat. If he enters such an exhibition alone and ladies or older gentlemen are present, he removes his hat.
7. A gentleman is always introduced to a lady — never the other way around. It is presumed to be an honor for the gentleman to meet her. Likewise (and it is the more general rule, of which this is only a specific example), a social inferior is always introduced to superiors — and only with the latter’s acquiescence.
8. A gentleman never smokes in the presence of ladies.

## The Lady

1. If unmarried and younger than 30, she is never to be in the company of a man without a chaperone. Except for a walk to church or a park in the early morning, she may not walk alone, but should always be accompanied by another lady, a man or a servant. An even more restrictive view is that “if she cannot walk with her younger sisters and their governess, or the maid cannot be spared to walk with her, she had better stay at home or confine herself to the square garden.”
2. Under no circumstances may a lady call on a gentleman alone, unless she is consulting that gentleman on a professional or business matter.
3. A lady does not wear pearls or diamonds in the morning.
4. A lady never dances more than three dances with the same partner.
5. A lady should never “cut” others — that is to say, fail to acknowledge their presence after encountering them socially, unless it is absolutely necessary. By the same token, only a lady ever truly is justified in cutting someone: “a cut is only excusable when men persist in bowing whose acquaintance a lady does not wish to keep up.” Upon the approach of the offender, a simple stare of silent iciness should suffice, followed, if necessary, by a “cold bow, which discourages familiarity without offering insult,” and departure forthwith. To remarks: “Sir, I have not the honor of your acquaintance” is a very extreme measure and is a weapon that should be deployed only as a last resort.

# Contemporary Etiquette

BY AENEAS HEMPHILL

Etiquette doesn't just refer to those old Victorian customs. The idea of politeness and its practice comes from a desire to ensure others are treated with respect in social situations. What this looks like changes based on the prevailing values of the time. With our current technology, we have an unprecedented capacity to share across cultures and generations. Some rules have become more flexible and others have been made irrelevant, but all the while, we are developing a set of norms that fits for the complexity and variance we see every day. In this sense, the customs we create aren't so much for show as they are an attempt to achieve an ethical way of interacting with others. For this reason, the rules may be more subtle and often less formal or restrictive. Think about the kind of etiquette you encounter on a day-to-day basis. Where do these rules come from? What do they mean? Are they actually helpful or just annoying? What new types of etiquette would you like to see that you don't often? Below are some examples, collected from conversations I've had around the Goodman.

## In-Person

- Holding the door has become so prevalent that not doing so can be considered rude. This is especially the case when someone doesn't have a free hand or would have difficulty getting the door him- or herself. A quick "thank you" will do for acknowledging the favor.
- Physicality still makes up a significant part of etiquette. A person's eye contact, posture or quality of voice all can affect how others see them. The strength of a handshake might make or break an interview. Many have different criteria for who they hug and under what circumstances. Even the amount of space between people tells a story.
- On public transit, it is appreciated if those who are young and able give up their seat to older riders, who might have difficulty when no seats are available.
- If the train is so crowded that the exit is blocked, the most acceptable way to create space is stepping out of the train temporarily until the other riders have departed.
- On escalators, those willing to ride stay on the right. Those walking pass on the left. Failure to keep these divisions can lead to major frustration for those wanting to pass, especially when one can hear a train coming.

## In Writing

- Without facial expressions or voice, misunderstanding can easily occur. Emoticons are one solution, but these are tricky. They can help the reader understand the intention of a message, but they also can mislead.
- Email is very useful in professional situations and can be less intrusive than a phone call. This can be

formal or casual, depending on the intended reader. Email communication can be frustrating if the other person does not check often or has the tendency to procrastinate. With the increasing prevalence of smart phones, many assume the person they're contacting always is connected to their email, but this is not always the case.

- Texting is the preferred form of communication in certain situations. It allows quick responses, without occupying a person's time the way a phone call would. It can be less of an interruption, which is especially useful if you know the person you are communicating with is busy. Texting is often casual, but many still value proper spelling. Overused shorthand can make texts indecipherable.

## Social Media

- On Facebook, the very act of friending and unfriending can have real implications. Although some feel that whatever is on your wall is your responsibility, the News Feed has a way of making everyone's business your own. Others see it as an accessible forum for discussion or argument with their peers. Notions of civility and dignity always apply, as nothing on Facebook is truly private.
- Twitter often can seem like an amplified News Feed. Since tweets have the potential to reach a wide group of followers, practicing good tweeting, retweeting and replying etiquette can go a long way. Tweets were designed for a specific purpose and with a specific character limit. If the message is too long for a tweet, it is best not to send multiple tweets. Many will see this as clogging their feed. Similarly, when replying to another person's tweet, tag it so that the conversation stays between those directly involved, rather than all followers.

# Christmas Around the World

BY ELIZABETH RICE



*A Christmas Tree display in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Photo courtesy of Silvio Tanaka.*

Christmas is a holiday both unique and familiar to many. Cultures across the globe share similar traditions, especially with the influx of world travel and immigration, while maintaining local customs at the same time. For many Christian countries, the Advent season is a prevalent lead-up to the Christmas celebration, while the Feast of the Epiphany (Jan. 6) is often the more important holiday. Perhaps the most common custom across the board is spending the holiday with friends and family members. In “A Christmas Carol,” Charles Dickens highlights many of the Christmas customs in Victorian England. How do they compare to the traditions of some countries across the world? How do they compare to your own family’s traditions?

## **Ethiopia**

For many Ethiopians, Christmas, or Leddad (birth of Christ), is a purely religious holiday. Ethiopian Orthodox Christians follow their own calendar, which is close to the Julian calendar, and therefore celebrate Christmas on Jan. 7 rather than Dec. 25. Leddad is not the most important holiday. In fact, many people call it Genna, after the ball game many play only once a year during Christmas afternoon. Christmas celebrations include processions with religious objects from churches carried through the street for the community to see. Many participate in an all-night vigil on Christmas Eve, singing and praying. On Christmas morning, they attend Mass, where religious dances are performed. Ethiopians do not

exchange gifts during Christmas.

## **Mexico**

The Christmas season begins Dec. 16 in Mexico with Las Posadas. Posada is the Spanish word for inn. During the nine days leading up to Christmas, a procession winds its way through town with statues of Mary and Joseph. The townspeople recreate Mary and Joseph’s journey in Bethlehem searching for an inn. Procession members knock on doors and are turned away by the inhabitants, symbolizing the way Mary and Joseph were turned away. After the initial refusal, the procession is welcomed into a party. This goes on until Christmas Eve. The procession is automatically invited in but told that the only room in the “inn” is in the stable. The statues then are placed in a Nativity scene, and statues of the Baby Jesus and shepherds are added. Adults then will hang piñatas filled with sweets and small toys for children to take turns breaking open with sticks. At midnight, families will attend Misa de Gallo, or Midnight Mass. Misa de Gallo translates into Mass of the Rooster, because legend has it the rooster was the first animal to announce the birth of Christ at midnight. In Mexico, children generally receive their gifts on the Feast of the Epiphany, Jan. 6 — the day the three kings, or Magi, brought their gifts to Jesus. It is known as El Día de los Reyes or Three Kings Day.

## Sweden

In Sweden, the Christmas season begins with St. Lucia's Day on Dec. 13. The eldest daughter of the family dresses in a white gown and red sash and wears a wreath with candles on her head as she brings her family special buns for breakfast. Although many stories exist of how this custom originated, one suggests that it commemorates St. Lucia, who helped Christians hiding from danger during ages of persecution. St. Lucia would go to their hiding places at night by lighting the way with candles on her head. Swedes often use straw to decorate their houses during the holiday. This reminds them that Jesus was born in a stable. Often, a straw goat will guard the Christmas tree; it is thought to protect the family from evil. Christmas dinner often consists of a smorgasbord of ham, pickled pigs' feet and dried codfish. For dessert, they bake pepparkakor – cookies very similar to gingerbread.

## Philippines

Occupied by both Spanish and American forces over the course of its history, Filipinos mix customs from both these cultures, along with rituals of their indigenous people, to create unique Christmas rituals. Like in Mexico, the Christmas season begins on Dec. 16 with the first of a series of early morning Masses called Misa de Gallo. Not to be confused with Midnight Mass, Filipinos attend Mass starting at 4 a.m. for the nine days leading up to Christmas. Bells ring, bands play and firecrackers are lit to remind everyone to go to church. They also will attend a Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. Gift giving, Christmas carols, Santa Claus and Nativity scenes are essential parts of the Filipino Christmas, just like they are in the United States. When decorating for the holiday, citizens of this tropical country often use fresh flowers. The most important decoration is the parol, a star-shaped paper lantern lit with a candle or electric light.

## Poland

Close to 90 percent of Poles identify as Roman Catholic; thus, many follow Catholic rituals during the Christmas season. Traditionally, Poles will fast on Christmas Eve until the first star is sighted in the night sky. Before the Wigalia, or vigil meal, many families will share an opłatek among them. Similar to the communion wafer at church, the father of the household will break the opłatek and share the pieces with all present, bidding members to be at peace with one another. Carp, pike, almond soup,

beet soup, poppyseed cake and ginger cake are all familiar dishes served at the Christmas Eve dinner.

## Australia

Australians share many of the same traditions as people in England and the United States. However, Christmas falls during the summer there, since Australia is located in the Southern Hemisphere. Many families spend the holiday at the beach or barbecuing outdoors. Santa Claus even can be seen sunbathing and surfing.

**No wonder Santa can get it done all in one night.  
He has help!**

Many countries have some sort of Santa Claus figure. Although not all are jolly, fat men, most have beards, wear red garments and bring gifts to good little children. The following is a comprehensive list of the Santa Clauses of the world and what countries they hail from.

**Christkindel** — Also known as Christ Child, he brings gifts for children in southern Germany

**Kriss Kringle** — In the United States, based off of the German Christkindel, or Christ Child, who brought gifts for children, brought over by German immigrants

**Père Noël** — France

**Father Christmas** — England

**Papai Noel** — Brazil

**St. Nicholas** — France, Netherlands, Germany, Czech Republic and Slovakia

**St. Basil** — Greece

**Grandfather Frost** — Russia

**Jultomten** — Sweden

**Weihnachtsmann** — northern Germany

**Hoteiosho** — Japan, a Buddhist god of good fortune said to have eyes on the back of his head to watch all the good children

**Babbo Natale** — Italy

**Julemand** — Denmark

**Female Versions of Gift Givers**

**Baboushka** — In Russia, baboushka means grandmother in Russian

**La Befana** — Italy



To learn more about Christmas traditions around the world, visit:  
[www.goodmantheatre.org/engage-learn](http://www.goodmantheatre.org/engage-learn)

# How to Celebrate the Reason

BY ELIZABETH GOTTMANN



*A mother introduces her children to Scrooge for the first time at Goodman Theatre, December 2010. Photo by Teresa Rende*

Escaping the commercial imagery and appeal of Christmas is hard. Undoubtedly, getting presents, drinking eggnog and singing “Frosty the Snowman” are all fun things to do. Yet there are those who wish to celebrate a more traditional Christmas.

One of the main differences in celebrating a more spiritual Christmas versus a more “Santa-Esque” Christmas is the time of year in which you begin celebrating. The Christmas season in America generally begins on Thanksgiving. As Thanksgiving has nothing to do with Christmas in origin, Thanksgiving’s association with Christmas has been its position as the start of the Christmas shopping season. During this shopping season, we decorate and throw parties; the Christmas season then ends on, well, Christmas, after all the presents have been handed out and the big dinner is done.

To a more religious group, though, the Christmas celebration actually begins on Christmas. In my family, we begin the celebration with midnight Mass on the night of Christmas Eve. About an hour before midnight, the entire congregation gathers in a dimly lit church and sings spiritual psalms. As midnight approaches and the church bells ring, a statue of infant Christ is placed in the manger to symbolize birth, and the Mass begins. Celebratory songs are sung and everyone is joyous in the

holiday that has now begun.

The next morning, instead of waking up and rushing to open presents, my family once again returns to church. We still give each other gifts, but the tradition is much different than most people’s. About a week before Christmas, we gather up in the car and drive to the local dollar store. We scatter and find the most perfect gifts we can for one another; each person picks out one present per family member. On Christmas Eve night, we open our gifts and laugh together as some people open packages of electrical tape or a loofah. It’s never about the quality of the gift — it’s simply about being together.

The Christmas celebration continues until the Epiphany, which can be celebrated as the day the three Magi visited Christ. During Epiphany, we mark our doors in chalk as a blessing and walk around our home burning incense, sprinkling holy water and saying prayers. The date of Easter is officially announced at church and we begin to spiritually prepare for the next season. These are the Christmas memories and traditions I hold dear to my heart and that I celebrate with my community. Not everyone has to celebrate Santa or go shopping to have Christmas cheer. For some, like me, a spiritual celebration is more of a gift than anything wrapped under the tree.

# A History of Spirits

BY WILLIAM LANDON



Marley's ghost, from Charles Dickens, "A Christmas Carol." Illustration by John Leech. London: Chapman & Hall, 1843. First edition.

Charles Dickens called it a "ghostly little book," and that wasn't far from the truth. The famous spirits in "A Christmas Carol" helped to serve the messages of the novella and have become a major part of our modern interpretations of the tale. The four ghosts have undergone various interpretations as the story has been produced for stage, film and television. Although the spirits of Jacob Marley and the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Christmas Yet to Come may appear differently dozens of times, their message and purpose remain the same.

Dickens was not the first writer or storyteller to make use of a ghostly presence, either. He was most likely influenced by centuries of earlier English storytellers. Shakespeare's powerful ghosts and spirits come to mind — the Ghost in "Hamlet" and Ariel in "The Tempest," among others, served as intervening forces in mortal

lives in his plays. And it wasn't just Shakespeare! Ghosts and spirits have been used in storytelling in Western and Eastern cultures for hundreds of years. They can be found in everything from American folktales to ancient Asian and European religious texts. Why are they a part of so many cultures, and what could their purpose be? When you think of many ancient American, African or Asian indigenous cultures, you may think of a "witch doctor" or "medicine man." They are shaman, spiritual healers thought to be able to travel between the physical and spiritual worlds. They heal by maintaining the balance between those two worlds. Calling on their connection to the ancestors to rid a patient of illness or negative energy, it is in part because of these powerful social figures that many of these cultures have such a close link to ghosts and spirits.

Christianity takes a different stance on these beliefs; Catholic and Protestant priests are thought to have communication with the spiritual world and Christians believe Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and other religions all share a profound reverence for the dead, placing a great importance on the role of ancestors and souls.

As such, ghosts can be connected to the concept of an afterlife. This is, however, not the only way in which ghosts appear. Many Native American and Southeast Asian folk stories, for instance, use ghosts as benevolent or malicious nonhuman forces. Spirits also can be manifestations of an environment, such as a forest spirit, as well as the immortal form of ancestors who have died recently or long ago. Some are spirits of those who have passed away, but others, as they're found in belief systems and folk religions, are special beings who existed before humans and will exist after them. They serve a similar purpose to Dickens' Christmas ghosts: they know more than mere humans and can do things that humans cannot. Although you can look into just about any religion and find evil spirits that are sent to harm and harass humankind, many ghosts serve as guardians. And the idea of the guardian spirit isn't just confined to worshippers in Bali or India: there's no doubt you've watched a holiday film or a TV episode that features a character's guardian angel.

But the ghost stories told around a campfire tell of people who died of sad or mysterious

circumstances, with unfinished business, and horrify the living. They serve a purpose as well. Think of Scrooge's first reaction to the ghost of Jacob Marley, or his visit with the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. Ghosts remind Scrooge, on one hand, that we don't live forever. We might see them as a reminder of death, or a representation of the unknown. They might be strange, and we don't necessarily understand who they are or what they want. Regardless of their purpose, they can be frightening because of one question that might plague him: How can something exist that is no longer living?

Ghosts are frequently used as warnings. Parents might tell a ghost story about a haunted forest or an old haunted house, in an effort to scare children away from that place. Native Americans craft ghost stories about swamps to prevent people from wandering into them and drowning. Colonial Americans, well aware of the dangers of the new American wilderness, used folklore to scare their children and friends away from the "haunted" woods.

Ghosts and spirits are supernatural. They don't follow the rules of what we think of as the "natural" world. They have powers; they do not die. Ghosts and spirits, whether human, angel, demon or something else, all have one thing in common: They are our attempt to find ways to explain the unexplainable, whether it be why nature behaves the way it does or what happens to people after death. For many living in modern society, this is the stuff of myth and legend. For others, ghosts are as real as any human being. Dickens used them as sentient metaphors to explore a person's past, present and future, as well as to look at why society behaves the way it does. He wanted these spirits to allow people to look at their actions and the world around them from an outside view. What do your ghosts do for you?

## Haunted Chicago

Halloween has passed, but Chicago is still full of ghost stories. It is a city of the Great Fire, of theater fires, of mobsters and gangs, and of colonial battles with American Indians. Many consider it to be the most haunted city in the Midwest. Think about places around Chicago that are spoken of as haunted. Maybe you have heard stories about these places. Choose one and do more research. Why do you think this place might be seen as haunted? Who believes it, and is there proper evidence one way or the other? Do you believe in ghosts? Finally, can you think of any other Christmas ghost stories? What about ghost stories around other holidays?



*Scrooge confronts the Ghost of Christmas Future in a past production at the Goodman. Photo courtesy Liz Lauren.*

# How the Consumer Stole Christmas

BY ELIZABETH GOTTMANN



*A Coca Cola truck displaying it's classic Santa imagery. Courtesy of "Husky," Wikimedia Commons.*

The word "Christmas" literally means "Christ's Mass." It originated as a celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, a birth that many still celebrate today. What Christmas has come to mean in American culture and media, however, is much different. How the birth of Jesus Christ became a secularized celebration of spending can be explained through a rapid progress of marketability and consumer spending, combined with the adaptation of pagan symbols and Dutch folktales. How this evolution shifted the holiday was surely a complex and layered process, but certain events are landmarks of this Christmas transformation.

One might assume that Christmas has always been a celebration that took place in the United States, but this is untrue. The United States became a sovereign nation in 1776 after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Christmas did not become a national

holiday until President Ulysses S. Grant declared it so about 100 years later in 1870. Christmas traditions, however, had been brought over by Europeans many years prior.

In Europe, the folktales of a Sinterklaas had been told for a long time. He would ride in on a horse and visit houses. Children would leave carrots in their shoes for Sinterklaas' horses to enjoy, and he would leave presents (mainly some kind of candy) in the shoes in return. Sinterklaas also was said to have a group of playful helpers. When Christianity reached the Netherlands, Sinterklaas' folktale was celebrated and associated with the bishop, Saint Nicolas. Saint Nicolas left money in chimneys for women who were without a dowry, which was essential in marriage arrangements at the time. These tales combined and created America's modern Santa Claus, a man with a group of elf helpers

that brings presents to children down through a chimney. Instead of the carrots for the horse, it has become cookies for Santa. No more horses either — magical reindeer are much more fantastical. When Santa first reached the United States, his image was that of a thin, normal-looking man. Images of Saint Nicolas were of a statuesque bishop who didn't always wear a red robe. Our modern image of Santa came to be the same way that many of our modern images are generated — by artists.

In the 20th century, while writers and artists such as Washington Irving, Clement Clark Moore, Thomas Nast and Katherine Lee Bates began to artistically create Santa's home, wife, workshop and overall story, one man cemented the image of Santa in our minds forever. Haddon Sundblom created the image of Santa Claus we know today to be used in a marketing campaign for Coca-Cola. The friendly, plump and jolly face was seen enjoying a Coke and wearing a red coat with white trim (Coca-Cola's trademark colors). Coke sales skyrocketed, and it did not take long for more companies to jump on the bandwagon. Soon images of Santa were everywhere. The epicenter of this Christmas market was New York — and for good reason. New York, named New Amsterdam when the Dutch first settled it, was a hub of Dutch traditions, folklore and Sinterklaas, the model for the modern Santa Claus. Big stores including Gimbel began

having Santa characters take gift requests from eager children as their parents shopped. Santa became the grand finale in the Macy's Christmas Day parade. The Yule log, Christmas tree and mistletoe became symbols for the season — traditions also brought over by the Dutch and other European nations. Soon a medley of secularized carols and Christmas specials became season staples. Before long, everyone had somebody to celebrate on Christmas, and it was not (necessarily) Jesus Christ.

The transformation of Christmas into a more secular, consumer holiday is not all negative, though! In present-day America, many of the messages associated with Christmas are accessible to those not wishing to partake in a religious celebration. Messages that encourage time spent with family, charity and peace are told through the lens of Christmas; it has become a time of family and friend togetherness, regardless of religious affiliation. Those wishing to celebrate Christmas in a more traditional, religious way still do so. A main success that Christmas accomplishes is bringing people together in a loving and joyous way. It is a time for all people to come together and bask in the things that connect us. The joy of Christmas time is a transcendent feeling that, even with a little bit of marketing coercion, many are proud to celebrate.



Santa Claus arrives, accompanied by his elves, on his sleigh pulled by reindeer at the climax of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City on November 27, 2008. Courtesy of "tweber1," Wikimedia Commons.

# Theatre Etiquette

## *With Santa Claus*

What should I wear?

Definitely dress nicely but comfortably; try business casual. No tank tops, ripped jeans, etc. Baseball caps or hats must be moved once you enter the theatre. The Goodman is air-conditioned so be sure to bring an extra sweater or dress warmly.

What should I bring?

Only what you really need. Electronic devices such as **PSP, Nintendo DS, smart phones, and laser pointers** are not permitted during the show. If it makes noise or is distracting, please refrain from having it out in the theatre. A purse, bag, or backpack is fine. School supplies are not necessary. Remember that you are here to sit back, watch and enjoy, so don't bring anything you don't need.

(Please remember):

**No smoking, and  
no eating or drinking**  
while inside the theatre.

What if I need to leave the theatre during the show?

Only if it is an **emergency**. Otherwise, it's very disrespectful. Make sure to use restrooms before the show, or wait until intermission.

Have respect for other audience members.

This means **no talking during the performance, no feet on seats, and no kicking.**  
(For your safety and others'!)



How should I respond to what's going on on the stage?

Honestly but appropriately. If you find something funny, then laugh—but don't laugh for five minutes straight or laugh so hard that you need to leave the theatre. Theatre is very different from watching a movie at home. Always remember that you are in a room full of people who are there to watch the performance. They can hear your responses just as well as you can hear theirs. Most important, the actors can hear and see you. They will appreciate any appropriate feed back but might be extremely offended if it is inappropriate. Whether you enjoy the play or not, you owe **respect** to the actors for having given it a try.

What to do before the show:

When your class arrives, your teacher will let the Education staff know how many people are in your group. It is a good idea to arrive at least 15-20 minutes before the performance.

**If you are late**, often you will not be allowed to enter the show until after intermission. Once your group is called, an usher will lead you to your seats and hand you a program.

Please promptly sit where you have been assigned. Remember that the show needs to begin on time and everyone needs to be seated.

What to do during Intermission:

Most plays have a **15 minute** intermission. This gives you time to stretch your legs, walk, use the restroom, get water and discuss the play with your friends.

We do ask that if you are sitting on the main floor that you remain downstairs and if you are sitting in the mezzanine that you remain upstairs. There are restrooms on both floors. When intermission is over, the lights in the lobby will **flash several times**; that is your cue to get back to your seat because the performance is about to begin!

What to do after the show:

There will be a post-show discussion immediately following the performance. Members of the **cast** will come out on stage and **answer your questions**. Feel free to ask anything that's on your mind about the show, but please remember to be respectful.

And remember the Golden Rule of Theatre-going:

**Theatre artists are paid professionals.**

When you enter a theatre, you are entering their work space. Respect their work as you would have them respect **yours**.

**Enjoy the Show!**

# Reading Your Ticket

As a patron of the theatre, it is important to know how to read your ticket and find your seat. Generally, seats for all performances in the Goodman's Albert Theatre are assigned seating, so be sure to know how to be able to find your seat. When you come with your school, you will be ushered to a section where you and your fellow students can sit and enjoy the play together.

Below is a seating chart– a map of all the seats in the Albert Theatre – and an explanation of how to read your ticket. If you have any problems, ask an usher for help. They're here for you!

This will guide you to the lobby door closest to your seat — aisle numbers are on plaques that hang above the doors to the theater

The section of the theatre you will be sitting in: Main Floor or Mezzanine

This is your seat number, located on the edge of the bottom seat cushion

The row where your seat is located, noted in a letter on the side of the end seat of each row

Day and date of performance

Curtain time

Play you are seeing and its author

## Goodman's Albert Theatre

Albert Ivar Goodman Theatre—Main Floor

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Albert Ivar Goodman Theatre—Mezzanine

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8

Stage

# Writing Your Response Letter

After you have seen the show and discussed your responses in the classroom, it's time to let us know what you thought! Your response letter plays an important role at Goodman Theatre. All of the letters we receive are forwarded to our artists, and you may get a response!

Pick one of the artists involved with *A Christmas Carol* whose work was particularly memorable to you—an actor, designer, the playwright or the director—and write that artist a letter describing your experience at the show and your feedback about his or her work. Be honest and ask any questions that are on your mind.

Send us your letter within one month of seeing the show, and we'll forward it on to that artist!

Important information to include:



- Your name, age and school
- Your mailing address (where a response may be sent)

**Here is a great student letter we received in response to *A Christmas Carol*:**

Dear Goodman Theater,

I would personally like to thank you for the great opportunity to watch and live in your production of *A Christmas Carol*. I haven't seen a play in years, and I felt that this was a phenomenal performance, well worth watching.

In class, we wrote our own mini adaptations of scenes and even learned and performed some ourselves. I am interested in acting, but I don't feel I have what it takes. Watching your production was like learning those very skills: the actors' body discipline during the freeze moments, the children being very meticulous in their roles despite their age, even the accent detail in the characters' speech and the difference in Belle's; they were all well-taken notes on my part.

I can't say I had a favorite part; I sincerely enjoyed it all. There was a balance among comedy, action and serious moments. The staging, props and characters vs. stages dancing. Superb! Thank you!

Sincerely,  
A CPS Student

Send your letters to:  
Education and Community Engagement  
Goodman Theatre  
170 North Dearborn Street  
Chicago, IL 60601

Or email us at:  
[education@goodmantheatre.org](mailto:education@goodmantheatre.org)

Goodman Theatre Education & Community Engagement is also online! Check us out on Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/goodmaned>

Or Twitter:

<http://twitter.com/GoodmanEd>

Or on our blog at:

<http://goodmantheatre.org/blog>

We love hearing your thoughts, so don't be afraid to drop us a line, comment, tag us in a note, @reply, or retweet us. Also check out our online educational resources for more information regarding the play you've seen, or anything else you'd like to know about how our programs (and theatre) work!

Keep checking in for updates online!