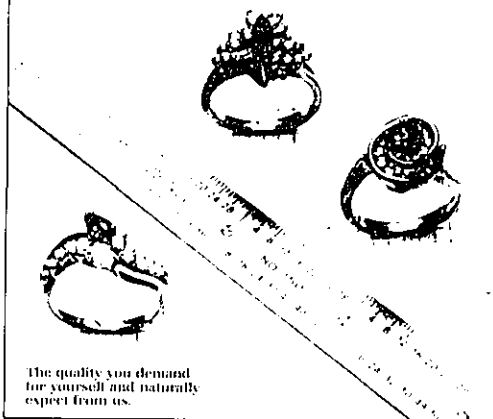


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Greenfield Village Christmas past is its present

A Victorian Santa Claus will lead a cast of characters in traditional celebrations that capture the color of Christmas past Dec. 3-31 at Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village.

Holiday visitors will be able to meet the creators of our modern image of Santa Claus as well as the jolly elf himself. Illustrator and cartoonist Thomas Nast and writer Clement Moore, who composed "The Night Before Christmas," will be portrayed.

Yuletide foods, singers and performances on antique musical instruments will provide a festive atmosphere throughout the museum's great hall. Children will be invited to play with reproductions of 19th-century toys, and everyone in the family can enjoy making their own period ornaments and greeting cards.

PREPARATIONS FOR the holiday will be shown in more than a dozen of historic buildings at Greenfield Village, showing the range of activities during the 19th century.

In the house of Thomas Edison's grandparents, cooking and family activities of an 1860s holiday will promise a

warm respite from December's chill. Candies are made in the 19th-century home where H.J. Heinz produced the first of "57 kinds" of condiments.

A rural Christmas of the 1870s is portrayed at the boyhood home of Henry Ford, decorated with ornaments of natural materials and a simple tabletop tree trimmed with handmade flags reminiscent of the centennial.

In contrast, the nearby urban home of Orville and Wilbur Wright will celebrate a Christmas of 1909. A full-size tree with paper and store-bought ornaments, surrounded by gaily wrapped presents is the centerpiece. Similar decorations deck the halls throughout.

Yuletide Evening at Greenfield Village offers another holiday experience for visitors. The after-hours event features a candlelight dinner with musical entertainment at either the Eagle Tavern or Heritage Hall in Henry Ford Museum. The highlight of the evening is a sleigh ride and walking tour through the village, with hot spiced cider as a warm ending to the occasion. Yuletide Evenings are scheduled for Dec. 1-31, except Dec. 24-25, and require advance reservations by calling 271-1620.

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