

## THE CHRISTMAS PICKLE TRADITION

I was intrigued when I recently learned of the Christmas Pickle tradition. A friend of mine introduced me to the story. At first, I questioned why someone would want to put a pickle on their tree. After I heard the story, I thought what a cute idea! I couldn't believe I never heard of the story before, especially since I lived part of my childhood in Germany. I missed the opportunity of sharing the story of the pickle with my two sons, but not all is lost. One day, but not too soon, I'll be able to share the pickle story with my grandchildren.

When I first decided to design this new Christmas tree ornament, I thought how cute it would be to include the pickle on the tree. I decided to venture on the internet and check out what other interesting information I could find regarding the Christmas Pickle story. It is believed by Americans that the Christmas Pickle tradition came from Germany. The ornamental pickle with a green bow is placed deep inside the Christmas tree as a decoration on Christmas Eve. As the story goes, on Christmas morning, the first lucky child that finds the pickle on the tree will receive an extra present from St. Nicholas (Santa) and will have good luck for the rest of the year. It is also said if a family couldn't afford an extra gift; the lucky child would be the first to open their present on Christmas morning.

There are a few other suggested origins of the Christmas pickle.

One version of the story says that it was a marketing strategy for selling German glass ornaments. In 1890s, Woolworth department store was the first to sell these ornaments. Although the Christmas Pickle story may not have come from Germany, it has since been exported from the United States and is now on sale in the country traditionally associated with it.

Another origin, came from a young man by the name of John Lower of Bavaria, Germany.. He and his family emigrated here in the United States. While fighting in the American Civil War, Private Lower was captured in April 1864 and taken to the prison camp in Andersonville, Georgia. As the story goes, on Christmas Eve the starving prisoner begged a guard for a pickle. The guard, taking pity on the private, gave him a pickle. Mr. Lower later gave credit to the pickle for saving his life. After returning home to his family, he began the tradition of hiding the pickle on the Christmas tree.

And then there is the story that comes from Berrien Springs, MI. It is a medieval tale of two Spanish boys being saved by St. Nicholas when they were trapped in a barrel of pickles by an innkeeper. Berrien Springs calls itself the Christmas Pickle Capital of the World where they celebrate with an annual Christmas Pickle Festival in the early part of December of each year.



*Be sure to find the pickle and  
Happy Stitching!! ☺*