

Christmas Tree Tradition Began in Riga, Latvia and Was Not Martin Luther's Tree

When searching for the history of the Christmas tree, one must go very deep into the past. The story about the first Christmas tree was a combination of many different facts, legends and customs all starting in the Baltic countries and what is now Northern Germany. The first documented use of an evergreen tree in a Christmas celebration was in Riga, Latvia, in the year 1510 according to many sources.

(PRWEB) December 13, 2005 -- 'Twas the week before Christmas and Santa's elves were preparing for this date; so let us set the First Christmas Tree legend straight. Many sources credit the first Christmas Tree to Martin Luther's walk in the forest near Riga Latvia in the year 1510. The Martin Luther Tree actually occurred several decades later, however, and was not the Riga Tree.

According to Mike Johnson, General Manager of Patricia Tourist Office in Riga Latvia, when searching for the historical beginning of the first Christmas tree, one must go very deep into the past. Just like Santa Claus one finds that the first Christmas tree was a combination of many different facts, legends and customs all starting in the Baltic countries and what is now Northern Germany. But, there is some interesting intrigue in this history, according to the organization: Christmas Archives International UK.

<http://www.christmasarchives.com>

In an email to Patricia Tourist Office, Countess Maria Hubert von Stauffer from Christmas Archives International UK wrote: "I hope that you do not mind me telling you this, but as Riga is very important in the History of the Christmas Tree, I thought it best to tell you, so that you will not have erroneous information."

The Riga tree reference and the Martin Luther Tree reference are two different references. The Martin Luther Tree was not the Riga Tree. In fact, little is known about the original Riga tree other than the fact that it was attended by men wearing black hats, and that after a ceremony, they burn the tree. This was a mixture of pagan and Christian custom, as were very many of the customs in Central Europe. The Martin Luther Tree was several decades later.

New available historical information in the museum of Riga's House of Blackheads, where the first Christmas tree was displayed, provides insight as to the documented facts of the winter traditions of the year 1510 and indicate that the tree was decorated with paper flowers and dried fruits. The tree was burned with a celebration in the square on or about the 6th of January of the new year. <http://www.firstchristmastree.com>

Riga in its efforts to re-establish the long traditions of Christmas, re-started the annual Christmas Market in UNESCO World Heritage site, Dome Square in 2001. <http://www.riga-christmasmarket.com>

Latvia is a destination reborn after 50 difficult years under Soviet Occupation. It is a must stop in your visit to the Baltic countries. <http://www.whylatvia.com>

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<http://www.latviaphoto.com/license/hrp.html>

Photos of Riga Latvia Christmas Tree and Christmas Market at Internet directory:

<http://latviaphoto.com/firstchristmastree/>

http://latviaphoto.com/firstchristmastree/black_heads_house_christmas_tree_400x275.jpg

http://latviaphoto.com/firstchristmastree/black_heads_house_christmas_tree_1516x1024wm.jpg

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