



# *The History of the Christmas Stocking*

The tradition of hanging Christmas stockings above the fireplace has been around for years. But where did the idea for Christmas stockings come from? Here are a few stories about the origin.

- According to the legend, the nobleman became hopeless after the death of his wife and foolishly squandered his fortune. Eventually, he and his three daughters had to move to a peasant's cottage and lived a life of misery. The three young daughters could not get married without dowries, money and property given to the new husband's family.
- The generous St. Nicholas set forth to help them. Wishing to remain anonymous, he threw three small pouches of gold coins down the chimney where they landed in the stockings the young women had hung by the fireplace to dry. The next morning, the three sisters found the gold coins inside their stockings which allowed them to get married and they lived happily ever after.
- Dutch children left their wooden shoes by the fireplace filled with straw for Santa's reindeer along with a treat for Santa. The next morning, the children would find treats for them in place of the reindeer food.
- Folklore says that an orange in the stocking represents the gold left by St. Nicholas. Finding an apple indicates that the stocking owner has been good during the year while someone who has been naughty will find a piece of coal in their stocking.
- In the early 1800's, the first mention of Christmas stockings being hung near a chimney occurred in the popular poem "Visit from St. Nick" which contains the famous line... "The stockings were hung by the chimney with care in hopes that Saint Nicholas soon would be there".

Whatever legend you choose to believe in, the exact origin of the Christmas stocking is not as important as the tradition of finding those special treats inside on Christmas morning!

