

2024 Solstice Greetings

European Culture can be traced back at least 20,000 years as witnessed by Lascaux Cave Paintings in the Dordogne Region of France.



Seemingly this painting was done by the light of a reflected fire when days were short and weather cold. These people were far more aware of the changes in their environment as they spent most of their time out in the open hunting and gathering for their survival.

They would have observed the changing arc of the Sun over the course of the year (highest: Summer Solstice; middle: Equinox and lowest Winter Solstice). We modern humans are substantially less aware, as we live inside climate-controlled dwellings intent on our TV and other screens: the new “Electronic Hearth” named by Marshall McLuhan.



Over time traditions grew. If it is dark and grim outside, perhaps a roaring bonfire would cheer everyone up. This Solstice Ceremony became a part of several European cultures, specifically the Pan-Scandinavian and Germanic feast of Yule, celebrated in part by burning an exceptionally large Yule log which would last the entire celebration.



This ceremony is still wildly practiced in many parts of Europe and, as pictured, by the Son's of Norway at Poulsbo Washington as well as in several other US locations.



Many of these Pagan Ceremonies, which predate the Christian Era by several millennia, were later subsumed into Christmas traditions. Haakon Haraldsson, aka 'Haakon the Good,' King of Norway from 934 to 961, was an early Christian convert. During his reign he presided over fierce contentions between the followers of the Nordic gods and the newly converted Christians (which dispute is depicted in the image above).

Unlike some other early Christian rulers, Haakon did not oppress his 'heathen' subjects. He allowed his subjects to celebrate Yule in Nordic tradition or Christmas as they chose.



However, he made two stipulations which were passed into Law: 1) that Yule and Christmas be celebrated on the same day, and 2) that at each celebration, every free man be provided with a substantial minimum of ale, with such celebrations to continue as long as the ale lasted.

**Best Solstice Wishes: December 21, 2024, at 09:22 UTC,
Celebrated with the Traditions and Libations of your choice.**