Christmas in the Big House, Christmas in the Quarters

Pat McKissack ; Fredrick McKissack; John Thompson

Christmas in the Big House, Christmas in the Quarters — Early. On a Virginia plantation in 1859, the slaves work hard to get the Big House ready for Christmas, and to prepare their own Quarters for the "Big Times" also.

Santa Claus may visit American children, but in Syria, children receive Christmas gifts from the smallest camel of one of the Three Wise Men. Babouschka, a grandmotherly figure, brings presents in Russia, while in Sweden, Jultomten, a gnome who rides a sleigh, does the honors. Syrian children receive gifts from a camel of one of the Three Wise Men, reportedly the smallest one in the caravan. And in Italy, a kindly old witch named La Befana leaves gifts for children. Can you name any reindeer facts?
Perhaps if the McKissacks had shown the contrast between Christmas and the rest of the year more clearly, rather than assuming that their readers would all understand the evils of slavery, their book might have been more successful. It’s tricky to reclaim traditions from an unhappy past. The line between glorifying aspects of slave culture and seeming to ignore the brute evil of slavery is thin. Unfortunately, the McKissacks have stepped over. (Historical fiction/Picture book. 8-13).

It’s Christmas 1859 on a Virginia plantation. The family in the Big House and the slaves in the Quarters prepare for their celebrations. It is a happy time for everyone. Families are united. Feast are prepared. Singing and dancing are seen everywhere. Christmas is one of the most popular feasts among Christians all over the world. However, customs and traditions dier greatly in various countries. And the UK is in the top list of the countries celebrating Christmas abundantly. Most families have a Christmas Tree in their houses. The process of the tree decoration is a beautiful family occasion. Many people in the UK also use holly, ivy and mistletoe to decorate houses, oces, shops, etc. The whole country with its cities, towns and even small villages is decorated with big Christmas lights. Being a religious feast, Carol services and Nativity In the Quarters, the slaves danced the cakewalk, where whoever wins gets a cake. The dance started by slaves poking fun at the white folk doing the minuet. They added a lil of their dancing from the time before,& made a new dance.Â According to Patricia and Frederick McKissack in Christmas in the Big House, yes This book leaves the reader with a dangerously happy outlook of what it meant to be a slave. Did slave owners invite their slaves into their home and shower them with (albeit hand me down) gifts? Was there no sense of community within the slaves own quarters, that they only felt joy when invited into their masterâ€™s home for Christmas? Were slaves really deep down happy people, but would be happier if they were free?
"Christmas in the Big House" is the second Christmas episode of the NBC sitcom The Facts of Life, aired in the show's sixth season. For the Christmas season, Blair and some of her snobby friends plan on putting on a Christmas show at a home for boys. Her Christmas spirit quickly changes when she discovers that it is really one for convicts. The Big House is filled with warmth, colorful decorations, and yummy food...but there is talk of war and a sense that times may be changing. In the quarters where the slaves live, conditions are poor, dirty, and cold, but the slaves are filled with hope for better times ahead, and they sing songs of freedom. Moving deftly between two worlds, this beautifully illustrated book is a historical tale as well as a holiday treat. Get this book.