

# An Improvised Christmas Dance



*Fort and Town of Victoria in mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century*

## **AN IMPROVISED CHRISTMAS DANCE**

In Victoria, British Columbia, the entertainment at Christmas had a tendency to be improvised in the early 1850s, as this extract from the reminiscences of Dr Helmcken relates:

*'No waits at night, no chimes, no bells, no Christmas carols, no pianos, in fact no musical instruments of any kind, save the bell of the Fort. On one occasion a dance and a supper were determined on, but where was the band? Nothing but Mr Tod and his fiddle existed. Mr. Tod, a good soul, peace be with him, ever ready to assist, assisted. Mr Tod had a peculiarity; when playing he would cast off a shoe, and kept time by stamping the resounding floor with his stockinged foot. However an employee came forth, 'I can help you, sirs; give me a sheet of tin.' He got it, and in a short time came back with a tin whistle, on which he played admirably. This was the band, and everyone enjoyed the dance and everything else.'*

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