

## Best Christmas Village Videos of 2014

In "YouTube years" 2014 is almost ancient. It may seem like YouTube has been around for a long time, but it began in early 2005. The earliest Christmas village video I could find was from 2006. There were very few good village videos before 2010. Then TheBigCrabCake, pammyj100, and WinterPep arrived on the scene. In my column #6 (02-10-2021) I introduced The Pioneers of Christmas village videos.

I'm going to start in 2014 with this column and take us up through 2021 eventually, with my subjective list (in my jive opinion) of each year's best videos. For each video there will be a short synopsis or critical review, highlighting the good points and mentioning what could have used improvement.



Be sure to check out all the other topnotch and timely columns on TheVillageCollector.com – the always interesting "*Just So You Know (JSYK)*" by David Spears, Brian Vaill's "*The Train Station,*" Thea Heyink's "*The Creation Station,*" "*Phil & Sue's Village*" (from England!), "*From Italy: Villaging in Europe*" by Peppe Apuleo (fascinating!), and "*Coach is Here*" by webmaster Bill Channell. Please keep visiting the Village Videos page and watch, watch, watch. There will be a new batch of village videos starting on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month! So many ideas, so little time... and not enough money.

I learned to build village displays and make videos by watching lots – I mean lots! – of YouTube Christmas village videos. Because of all the Facebook village groups to which I now belong, I can view more village videos and picture albums than ever before.

I'm now at the point where I'm rarely amazed at seeing a building or accessory I haven't seen yet. Some of the most interesting are the building rehabs or makeovers I see in a Facebook group called Village Rehabbers. I will do a future column (or two) on imagineering and makeovers.

I look for interesting vignettes or scenes or village layouts to pique my interest. What kind of figures (little people – we connect with them) and scenes can we build that convey emotion or humor or amazement or a message?

Allow me to admit up front – I'm now a village video snob!



I expect a good entertaining short and somewhat professional movie that happens to show your village. Not an upper level, moving too fast, unstabilized camera, motion sickness flyover of your amazing display that is certainly delightful to see in person. So many times, I see videos that do serious injustice and injury to the quality of the display.

Just a short rant (like a team coach) – as I watch your videos, these are the video killers that fail to get me past the first minute or two:

1. The camera turned vertical (portrait mode)! Any video in landscape mode gets me past your YouTube or Facebook thumbnail to open the video.
2. A Title or Intro to your video (gets me at least 20 seconds into your video).
3. Some good seasonal music added and not playing thinly in the background or not at all (gets me 30 seconds in).
4. Photos and short stable video clips – enough with the extended motion sickness flyovers! (can't, just can't make it to 45 seconds).
5. Camera shots down in the village at little people's level. You're creating local vignettes – let us join in.
6. Please, folks, turn the lights on in the room. The lights of your village in low light conditions look wonderful ***in person***, but your camera is not good enough to video or photograph Christmas lights well. In your video I'd like to see some village details, not a 10-minute show of blurry lights.





As we progress from 2014 all the way to 2021 in future columns, I'm going to begin each column with some reminders of the video killers from above.

My Holiday Village 2014 - 2015 (6:01)

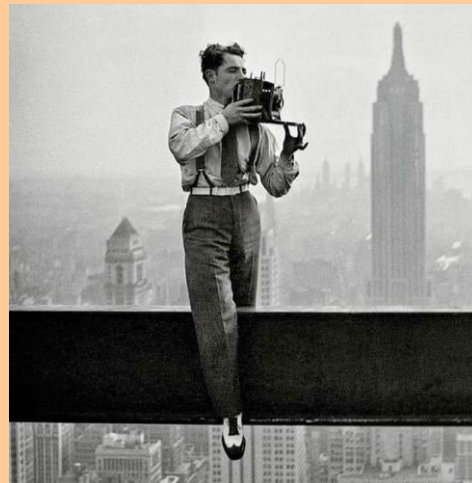
Pammyj100

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Trf\\_D\\_E6lhI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Trf_D_E6lhI)

Pammyj100 uses a template title from Windows Live Movie Make, nicely short and sweet. She begins with the first of the black-and-white photos that were her inspiration for scenes in her village display. I believe they are framed posters in her house. Notice the Ken Burns Effect on the still photos. She opens with a short video clip right down at street level, moving you along the street. She intersperses photos and clips, and by the second or third Ken Burns photo you realize the lyrics of the song are matched to scenes. The photos (some portrait, some landscape) have not been edited or cropped to match the 16:9 aspect ratio of the video clips. It took me six years to learn this!

The first song ends and now we get to see her amazing carnival, anchored by a large operating Disney roller coaster and Disney monorail. Short video clips abound for us to see the detail.

The second black-and-white inspiration photo shows us nuns in bumper cars. Bingo! A video clip of the same – the purposeful mutilation or “repurposing” of a piece to reach the desired effect. Previous bumper car occupants were removed and nun figurines with their lower extremities removed by a rotary dremel tool inserted into cars. Oh my!



The third black-and-white inspiration photo appears (the iconic skyscraper lunch) and takes us to the golf course adjacent to the carnival. It becomes apparent she has painted her D56 Village Animated Track black to make it into a macadam cart path.

A few short clips later we're shown an operating drive-in movie theater and then her imaginative zoo. Then, bingo! An animated football game appears – repurposed and repainted from a skating rink! She also repainted D56 figurines so it's her beloved Steelers against the evil Eagles. Are you impressed with her creativity yet? Holy moly!

Other than some black bars on the photos, this one's a classic, folks.

She also gave us a second video which gives you extra looks at her layout, more time to study details.

My Holiday Village 2014 - 2015 "STILL LIFE" (3:07)

Pammyj100

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRcfGapnOAs>

This next 2014 video takes advantage of something from my column #24 (11-17-2021) – Is there something never seen before?



2014 Caddington Square Christmas Village (6:02)

Mastersullivan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0B7QaYMM84g&t=205s>

This is our first introduction to Roy Sullivan's incredible homemade people mover! After you've seen it, I know you want this for your village display.

Both the title scene and short ending scene are shot under low light to show us the colors at evening. This was just short enough.

Comprised of all short video clips, he takes us down inside his village, with a few overview shots. The camera is very steady with just a few handheld scenes. There is animation everywhere, and lots of detail.

At the end, he wishes us Merry Christmas with a slide that needed 16:9 aspect ratio correction.



Nancy builds her Christmas Village - 2014 (Timelapse) (9:13)

Don Bouc

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQOXLuhe2S4&t=6s>

Nancy's gigantic Dickens Village timelapse video is a classic! 21 days reduced to 6 minutes, in the title. It has almost 360,000 views. The "trap door" in the center for reaching buildout areas is intriguing. We do get 3 minutes at the end of detailed still



pictures (ugh, black bars from no 16:9 aspect ratio conversion) which take us down into the village scenes. The music is wonderfully matched to the activity and scene.

Christmas Village 2014  
bosmailman

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pI1ZvbfYELU&t=101s>

This was bosmailman's second village video (yes, he's a mailman!). He does a video every two years. It begins with a great intro with a starry sky, train steam, train whistles and then the title. Enough that you now want to see what follows.

He has probably the cleanest Christmas in the City layout, extremely well lighted so that you can see all the details. He uses very short video clips, shot on a steady well-oiled tripod, for wider angle scenes. Then he uses photos with Ken Burns motion to bring us down in the villagers' level. He added sound effects to help put you into the scene, with moving people and cars via pulled clear nylon fishing line for the only animation needed.



Small error: A video clip of skaters with sound is shaky and fuzzy – handheld camera. There are no black bars – everything is converted to 16x9 aspect ratio. The background music is soothing! Most transitions are fades (virtually unnoticeable), and he turns the page to transition to a new section of the city. You feel as if you are in his village. At the end he returns us to the

starry sky and train steam for musical credits and wishes us a Merry Christmas. Definitely a 5 star ★★★★★ video!

Helen's Christmas Village 2014  
marvpat74

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ODjYY3uC8g&t=112s>

This is marvpat74's last village video of five total. Their first was in 2008! The video is built from almost all photos with great lighting & color. Each photo looks like a painting. I asked in the comments how he did his lighting to make each photo look so good, and he responded, "I have three overhead incandescent lights which require me to correct the white balance in Photoshop. I use no flash. Each shot is a time exposure on a tripod. I try to shoot from a close position at a low angle. The camera is a Nikon D90."



There is plenty of time to study details. The video is framed in the 4x3 aspect ratio of photos but there are small black bars in each still. The transitions are all quick fades, and there are a few slides with falling snow, used sparingly just for effect (it obscures details). There is one video clip of a train in the portrait mode (with huge black bars). If the black bars were eliminated from the video, it would be close to perfect.



Christmas Village Display 2014/15 - Lemax houses, Department 56 models, trees, snowmen, and figurines

Martin Treasure

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHreZVXf7M&t=0s>

Martin has a very helpful village display building site called [www.christmas-village-displays.com](http://www.christmas-village-displays.com) which hasn't been updated in a long time. The site is very helpful if you're a novice. The video has some audio problems – too loud (turn down the volume bar) and some distortion.

Comprised 100% of short video clips, the video was made with a steady video camera on a tripod. There are lots of earlier Lemax facades on display. He matches song references to a choir nicely with a great transition to a video clip of a choir. There is ample opportunity to check out details in the village display. At the very end, he transitions to low light scenes so that you can see the beauty of village lights. And at the end he pans inward to the rotating tree's Christmas star. No black bars anywhere in this 16x9 aspect ratio video!



Frozen Christmas Village 2014

Don Wolford

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SgAHEfi9szA>

Don started in 2012 by marrying a Disney Park village display with a music synchronized light display. If you've ever sat in your

car, tuned your FM radio to the right channel, and watched a house's Christmas light show then you know what I mean.



A retired engineer, he is still the only village video maker that I know who does this. I marvel at his productions. He makes some of his own animated rides and updates the park every year. You won't see much detail, but you will be highly entertained by the light show synchronized with the music.

Mercy Tiara's Christmas Village 2014

MercyTiara

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqLQ4\\_KKodQ&t=29s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqLQ4_KKodQ&t=29s)





Mercy has a popular YouTube channel with over 27,000 subscribers devoted to scrapbooking, so she has a designer's eye and talent. She uses all short video clips to show us the details and vignettes inside her village. It's a small village but you're sure you got to see every detail! The camera is hand-held and as steady as I've ever seen, but she needed a tripod or gimbal to fully steady and professionalize the video. It's still 9 minutes of village viewing time well spent.

My Favorite Things Christmas Village 2014

John Fitz

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gV8B-v3zib4&t=6s>

I've watched John Fitz over the years, and he always has different and unique displays, with mixed brands, and videos that are fun to watch. Instead of soothing Christmas instrumentals, he has more of a rocking sound. This video is mostly short clips, shot from a tripod, with a few nice photo stills using the Ken Burns panning effect. He assembles, well, unusual vignettes with his figurines – placing him in the “haven't seen that before” category. He's willing to try unusual scene transitions, some interesting and some that shouldn't have been used. There were two “oops!” photos shot in portrait mode with black bars on the sides, but that was a minor transgression.



Lemax Village & Carnival Christmas Display 2014  
Adel Acena

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FoGRWz7vO6A&t=9s>

Okay, I like big villages, and this one is fun to watch. This video is all built from short video clips. The camera gets shaky sometimes and the focus zooms can get distracting, but there are lots of close-ups that take us down into the villagers' level. Here's a chance to see lots of detail and gain new ideas. The Lemax Christmas Sock Hop animated piece was very popular in 2014 videos!

If you like animation her winter carnival is full of moving pieces. There are lots of figurines and pieces she shows that you may have never seen before. At the end of the video, you see the immensity of the village, built around a full-size Christmas tree. Nice ending scene!



Steve's Christmas Village 2014

Steve F New Zealand

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YX96664Sbs&t=184s>

Steve F is amazing, and his videos are bar setters. This video is classic Steve F, with a great cinematic intro (rut-row! Black bars on the unadjusted photo), lots of how-to including stable video tricks, and a personalized welcome. The videography and music are excellent.



He tends to over-rely on reasonably well-hidden Lemax spotlights; I would prefer additional room lighting to better see his carefully crafted vignette details. He green screened the family in at the end, and there is a nice scrolling of credits and equipment used to make the video.



Christmas Village 2014

Kathryn Riley-Cuglietta

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tPvDkkMKk8>

Kathryn starts us off with twinkling stars and her intro. Her village has amazing detail. The video clips are obviously hand-held, as steady as that video can be (a tripod or gimbel is always better). The flow of the videography is excellent through the detailed vignettes. This was my first time seeing EZ Streets although there were no moving cars (?).



She mixes brands and different figurines very well in her scenes, with some surprise figures. I could use more room light to view the amazing details that her village obviously has. She definitely takes us down into the villagers' level with her scene. And, what a nice ending!

Extraordinary Miniature Christmas Village (HD)

Larry in Bristol

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTP7r4k2Juw>



The opening scene (no title) shows us the word "extraordinary." The camera work appears to be professionally done, with good videography, the camera obviously on a tripod, good attention to detail, and good lighting. In this instance I enjoy the excellent



use of personal narration in describing her village. The second half of the video devolves into a darkened light show, with a few zoom-in closeups.

In my next column on The Village Collector, we're going to look at my best Christmas village videos of 2015. I'm out of words and I'll try to do better next time.

Questions, comments and/or suggestions are always welcome. You can contact me at: [jpetersgolfpro@gmail.com](mailto:jpetersgolfpro@gmail.com), 419 Washington Avenue, Newport, KY 41071.

