

Christ's Birth Celebrated In Six Different Months

While December is now the month in which Christ's birthday is celebrated by Christians all over the world, research and study show that Christ's nativity has been celebrated in January, March, April, May, September and October by various peoples.

And although few people know it, it was for the purpose of substituting a Christian festival for pagan ones of Romans and Druids that celebrations of Christmas in December were popularized.

No historian pretends to fix the actual date of Christ's birth or the date at which Christmas became a general festival.

About all that is known is that during the fourth century the feast of the Nativity was observed in all western world churches at different dates.

The confusion resulting from celebrations in seven months of the year caused the western church authorities to meet in 340 to set

a definite date for the celebration. The eastern churches did not cooperate until the sixth century when December 25 was set as the day to be observed.

The question has arisen innumerable times as to why December was selected as the month for rejoicing. The answer is that this month was chosen in order that a Christian festival could compete with those of the pagans, because December was noted for its feasts and holidays in nearly every civilized land.

Greeks, Romans, Saxons and Scandinavians all took part in the celebration of these festivals which had originated before the birth of Christ.

From the Saxons came the ceremony of burning the Yule log. The Saxons burned great bonfires in honor of their god Thor. From the Romans came the giving of presents, for this custom has been traced

Chicago Recalls Christmas, 1804

Surely there will never be another Christmas celebration like the one in Chicago in 1804.

Captain John Whistler (grandfather of the painter who painted the famous "Whistler's Mother") was in command of the garrison at Fort Dearborn and he decided that there should be a great feast—complete with music, dancing and a splendid Christmas tree.

Soldiers from the garrison went a-hunting in the woods just north of the river and came back with a fat buck deer, some rabbits, a raccoon or two, a few wild turkeys. Added to the roasted pig (contributed by some festive-minded citizen) and the magnificent Christmas pudding, these morsels provided abundance for all. Everybody—the civilians and the military—drank a toast to Thomas Jefferson, the President of the United States.

The punch was "dizzy" and there were fifes and drums and a couple of fiddles to play for the dancing.

It was getting late when a watcher in one of the blockhouses gave a warning shout that Indians were approaching; but they turned out to be friendly Indians who came bearing gifts to the feast. They watched the white folks dance, and when the whites were exhausted, the redskins took the floor and began a wild, whooping dance of their own which climaxed Chicago's unique Christmas celebration in 1804.

Nearly half of the foreign students in the United States come here on their family's funds. The remainder receive financial assistance from private organizations in the United States. About ten percent receive aid from United States and foreign governments.

ed to the Roman Saturnalia. It may seem strange to claim that the pagan riotousness might be the forebear of the Christian holiday of goodness and love, but intermingled with that which was objectionable, were things that have gone straight to the hearts of people throughout the Christian world.



EVERYBODY WORKS HARD at the postoffice during the Christmas rush, but carriers especially have to bear a heavy load. Here William P. Boyd, Jr., rural carrier on Route 2, Waynesville, looks for a spot to deposit the stack of parcels in his arms. (Mountaineer Photo.)

Holly Superstition: It Will Determine Ruler Of House

Husbands and wives! Attention! There is an old superstition about holly that will interest you. It was a belief of the ancients that the first to bring Christmas holly into the house, either husband or wife, would be the one to rule the household during the ensuing year.

repented of unkindness and ever since has tried to make amends by distributing gifts to children at Christmas.

But don't put too much stock in the belief. Like other Christmas legends, the truth might be lost in history.

The Druids were great admirers of the holly plant. They believed that its evergreen leaves attested to the fact that it was never deserted by the sun, and was therefore sacred.

Legends have related how the crown of thorns was plaited from holly. The leaves of the plant were white until the Crucifixion, after which they turned a deep, blood red.

A holly wreath placed on the door is believed enough to frighten away even the boldest of witches.

Many thanks for giving us the opportunity to serve you in 1956. Hope we continue to be so favored in 1957. Happy holidays!

BALENTINE'S SUPERETTE
Waynesville

Christmas Does Not Change With Passing Of Centuries

"How I long to see just one more 'old-fashioned Christmas'."

These are familiar words at this time of the year. Before the Yuletide season is over, some member of the family, grandfather or grandmother, probably, is certain to pass that remark, as they have done each Christmas of the past.

And yet, if we search back into the records . . . to the turn of the century, say . . . we find that, even then, someone was wishing for "an old-fashioned Christmas." It is then that we realize that the celebration of the birth of Christ has not changed greatly with the passage of centuries. Basically, Christmas is the same, year after year. It is only the world and the people who are not the same.

He may not admit it, but when grandfather first began to raise a family, he overheard his elders musing over the changing Christmas customs and heralding the approach to "complete commercialism" of the Yuletide celebration. Even then they were worried.

No one can deny that Christmas has been greatly "commercialized" since the days of early America. Yet, so has the entire nation. In the days of our ancestors there were none of the vast trading cen-

Christmas Was Moveable Feast In Early Times

Christmas was once a movable feast. The eastern branches of the Christian church usually celebrated it in April or May, Western Europe sometime in January.

In 337 A.D., St. Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem, set out to make the date universal. With the permission of Pope Julius I, he appointed a commission to determine, if possible, the precise date of Christ's

ters and commercial marts that we know today. Our very way of life has been greatly changed with modernization. Our holidays, and Christmas is the principal one, have managed to keep abreast.

Still, without reservation, Christmas is basically unchanged in its true meaning as a celebration of the birth of the Christ-Child redeemer, come to save the world. No matter how great or how small the presents piled beneath the tree, each Christian heart never ceases to remember that Christmas is Christ's day.

Russian People Also Can Say 'Merry Christmas'

"S. Rojdestvom Kristovym."

That's what a Russian would say to you if you were in Russia on Christmas day and he wished to extend the season's greetings.

The phrase is the Russian's way of saying: "Merry Christmas."

In the past, the Russian's Christmas was closely associated with his church; but now the day is observed now that the religious life has been subjugated in the Soviet, one would have to be behind the "iron curtain" to know.

But it was not always like that. In other days, the Russian Christmas was much like the Ukrainian. There was a Santa Claus known as "Dedushka Moroz" and there were traditional gifts of red boots for children and golden slippers for young girls.

In certain parts of the country the "baboushka" (grandmother) was the legendary dispenser of gifts. According to one story, she

nativity. The theologians of the Church finally agreed upon December 25, and since the year 354 this date has been celebrated.

Members of the Greek, Russian and Ukrainian Orthodox churches in the 20th century observed the date of January 7.

As the years roll by
we realize more and more
how much it means to have
the confidence of folks like you.

It is a pleasure to wish you
a Merry Christmas.

Mr. and Mrs. Jake Schulhofer
Waynesville, N. C.

ishing you
a very merry
Christmas...

TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE
J. H. WAY, MAYOR
G. C. FERGUSON, CITY MANAGER
ALDERMEN:
HENRY GADDY — HENRY MILLER — JOE LINER

A Joyous Christmas to All

Mr. and Mrs. Kurt Gans