

COLLEGIATE CHRISTMAS

Why do college students look forward to the Christmas season? Why is there a feeling of happiness and general excitement in the air? Is it because the holidays provide a break in the usual routine of classes, lectures, notebooks, and tests? Yes, surely all students would agree that they are welcome to take a brief pause in their busy schedule...

The other word foremost in the minds of most people at this time of year is remembrance. What is Christmas other than the remembrance of the birth of Jesus Christ? Without the celebration of His holy birthday, our Christmas would have no meaning to us as Christians.

The re-uniting of a widely scattered family, the warm glow that spreads through a person when he has done something that makes someone else happy, the singing of carols, the giving and receiving of gifts, the remembrance of the lowly birth of the exalted Saviour of the world—all these things are Christmas.

CHRISTMAS AND TRADITIONS

The anniversary of the Birth of Jesus the Christ has been celebrated in many ways and at many different times of the year. It has been observed in April, May, November, as well as December. This is due to the fact that we do not know the exact time of the Birth of Christ. However, December is a good time to celebrate His Birth. It is the advent of the winter solstice, or the beginning of light. The shortest day of the year comes in December, and the days begin to grow longer toward the last of the month.

In Shakespeare's time Christmas was celebrated for 12 days during which the people stopped work and spent their time making merry and feasting.

The Puritans caused Parliament to prohibit any festivity whatsoever. Later the celebrations were revived but confined to Christmas Day.

The Colonial South gave Christmas its warmest welcome. The Southern people approached Christmas in a leisurely way. Christmas Eve was the beginning of the joyous celebration which continued until the Yule Log burned after New Year's Day.

The first work that was done on a Southern Plantation was the selection of the Yule Log which was called the "Christmas Backlog." This ritual was a happy one. The superintendent of workers led his best men to the swamps and selected the hardest cypress tree to be found. The tree was cut to fit the fireplace "up at the great house." Then the tree was taken to the river where it was to be water-logged for 12 months.

When Christmas morning dawned on a Southern Plantation, the Yule Log was hauled into the huge fireplace and lighted. As soon as the log began to glow, the master of the house was up and about his business of making eggs. This he appeared to do every year. Christmas Eve was a Negro driver sounded a call on a huge drum to greet him with "Servant Master, Merry Christmas to you and de family, Sir."

Each servant was given a glass of egg-nog and then dismissed until after breakfast. Just after breakfast the servants assembled to "git Christmas" translated this meant gifts to the servants. Their gifts consisted of fruit, nuts, candy, new toys, warm clothing, extra allowances of meat, rice, molasses, coffee, sugar, and flour for Christmas dinner.

Meantime the Yule Log kept burning until it finally fell in half. One piece was kept to light next year's Yule Log. The other was taken into the yard and laid on the path between the kitchen and the house. This was all that was necessary. Around the plantation the news was flashed, "de backing done burned in two and done been laid out." Christmas was over and work resumed.

Through the ages many customs and rare spirits have come to brighten the Yuletide season. Francis of Assisi led his gift in song and bequeathed us the first true Christmas Carol. Martin Luther receives our thanks for the first stardew Christmas Carol. St. Nicholas, patron saint of the poor, remembered little children and gave us Santa Claus (I believe in him, don't you?) John H. Riden, an English artist, painted and inscribed the first Christmas card (keep sending them).

The Christmas greens that make our homes pungent and fragrant have a tale to tell. Holly, which typifies winter, probably came from the word "holly" since it was known as the "holly tree" and was used by the Romans in religious festivals. Legends have arisen that say the red berries represent the blood of Christ with its promise of Eternal Life and the holly wreath the crown of thorns. To us these things symbolize the Christmas which should always be remembered during the celebration of the Nativity because it is recorded "Thou shalt call His name Jesus for he shall save His people from their sins."

The Ivy symbolized good will. The laurel and the bay trees are emblem of the festive spirit. The pine tells of love that never dies. The mistletoe today stands for romance but in early times it was associated with witchcraft. The Druid priests cut with golden shears and used it in their sacrifices. It was never allowed to touch the ground but was caught in a white cloth to ward off evil spirits.

Many traditions and customs have grown up around the Christmas story. May their number be increased! We shall hear many people say that Christmas is the best time of the year. I'll agree with them but not in the sense that Christmas has been hurt. It isn't what it used to be. It is better. Why is it the greatest season of the year? There is but one answer "and the angel said unto them, Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:10-11).

PROSPECTUS

Before the excitement of the Christmas holidays has had time to wear off, G-W students will again be facing the ever dreaded semester exams. Even before they are back into the groove, the students will be charged with the task of recalling all that which they have been confronted with throughout the semester.

Needs to say, very few G-W students will become overly studious during their vacation. They will just relax for a night before the exam and hope that the psychology book was right when it said that a fact one learned is never really forgotten. Surely if they glance over the exam paper long enough, the answer will come. After all it's a cinch that after a student has been in the office eleven weeks and has stared at it for not all that long the night before the exam, he must have really "learned" everything there was to know.

If this be the formula, someone should warn those "suckers" who study for a day. But is that the right formula? Only time (and grades) will tell!

Choir Renders Moving Presentation of Handel's Messiah

The Gardner-Webb Chorus and the Central Methodist Church Choir of Shelby presented the Messiah Sunday, December 6, at 7:30 P. M. in the Bolling Springs Baptist Church. Mrs. Nettie Rayle Oddy was director.

Stephen Morrisett, former professor of Greek and Bible at Gardner-Webb was organist. Soloists were Miss Sybil Queen of Shelby, soprano; Miss Saunders, contralto; the Forest City Baptist Church, contralto; Charles Byers of Shelby, tenor; Jerry F. Jolley of Bolling Springs, bass.

The church was filled to capacity despite inclement weather. There were many visitors from nearby towns. That the oratorio was given a warm reception is due to several factors, one of which is the beauty of the work.

The Messiah expresses with simplicity and sincerity the noblest aspirations of mankind as no other oratorio has done. It exerts a profound and moving effect on the hearer and re-impresses with the spiritual significance of Christmas as exemplified by Christ's birth.

The most expressive passages of Hebrew literature are clothed with a flawless contrapuntal skill and are interwoven into sublime melodies. Handel had superb technical skill in choral writing, and he also possessed thorough knowledge of the limitations and possibilities of the human voice. In his Messiah he exploited the possibilities to their fullest.

The choir, under Mrs. Gidney's direction sang with vigor and assurance. Their diction was clear and precise, and their singing showed unity, balance and technical precision. Among the choruses sung, "For Unto Us a Child is Born" showed a nobility of expression and their rendition of the "Hallelujah Chorus" showed that they had a thorough mastery of the technical difficulty.

The four soloists presented their numbers exceptionally well. Miss Queen sang with ease and assurance the difficult coloratura passages in "Rejoice Greatly, O Daughter of Zion." Her solo passages in the aria, "Come Unto Me," revealed ample breath control.

Miss Saunders possesses a luscious contralto voice. Her singing showed ease, and she displayed musicianship, understanding and feeling. The aria, "He Shall Feed His People," was a restful contrast to the more brilliant and ornate arias preceding it.

Mrs. Byers had a difficult position to fill, but he did this in a highly satisfactory manner. The tenor recitative, "Comfort Ye, My People," and the ornate aria, "Every Valley Shall Be Exalted," occur immediately after the orchestral overture at the beginning of the oratorio. He established a high standard of excellent solo portions of the Messiah at his rendition of these arias. He sang with flexibility and smoothness. He possesses a lyric legato voice which he uses advantageously.

Mr. Jolley sang the bass recitative, "Thus Saith the Lord of Hosts," and the aria, "But Who May Abide," with rare emotional depth and fervor. The members make happy demands on Mr. Jolley, but he met these demands factually. The dramatic impact of the words "Behold He Shall Come, Saith the Lord of Hosts" was felt by the hearer.

Mr. Morrisett, the organist, made an inestimable contribution to the entire oratorio. His musical training, broad knowledge of the possibilities of the instrument, and thorough musicianship gave his instrumental rendition of the Messiah life, character, substantially, and animation.

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ALONG FACILITY ROW

This columnist has been able to learn the Christmas plans of most of the Gardner-Webb faculty. The Allen Burrites and Ce-Ce Pata to kick off the holidays by taking in the Ice Capades in Charlotte. That if any tickets are left when they get there. Mrs. B. refuses to procure tickets in advance. Mrs. B., while she does not want the day of the week plan to see the Ice Follies revealed in a Baptist paper, says that Mr. B. gets no Christmas present if she and Ce-Ce do not see the Ice Follies. The B.'s plan to spend most of the holidays in Wingeate and Mt. Glead.

The Paul Stacy may visit relatives, but will be home on West Marion Street, Shelby, during most of the holidays.

Mr. Jim Henson plans to turn Nimrod during the holidays and to follow the roping of some rabbit hounds in pursuit of cottontails. He will operate out of Route 3, Forest City. Mr. Henson's Christmas menu will probably feature fried rabbit, stewed squirrel, and baked possum.

Mr. S. L. Lamm reports that he and George J. G. will be in Memphis. By here, I assume he means the seat of culture, learning, and bee-keeping in Cleveland County.

The Hubert Dixons too, like the Burrites, plan to see the feminine forms glide in the spotlights at the Ice Capades. Later they'll go to the border and spend a few days at Sumner, S. C., then back to LC for Christmas.

Mr. F. B. Dedmond's plans call for spending Christmas at 519 Salisbury Avenue, Mocksville, N. C. After Christmas he will "shirley" head for the top of the mountain.

The Kentucky natives will spend Christmas in the Blue Grass State—Miss Abbie Miller on 2608 Yeatch Street, Owensboro, Kentucky, and the Thirten Obolons at Winchester, Kentucky.

Miss Elizabeth Mabes plans to do that Christmas shopping in Memphis, Tennessee, but she'll spend Christmas at her home in Ackerman, Mississippi.

Miss Louisa Crow will likely be at home in Bolling Springs during the holidays—that is, unless Santa can bring plane tickets to California so that one's children can come home.

She might visit the nieces and nephews there.

Miss Helen Davis may visit in South Carolina, but will be in Bolling Springs most of the holidays.

Miss Kathryn Copeland will spend Christmas at 2824 1/2 Street, South, Art. 124, Arlington, a Virginia.

The Lawson Allens will spend Christmas at home in Bolling Springs. President and Mrs. Elliott may be in the States for the holidays, according to Dr. Elliott, "enjoy it!" Dr. and Mrs. Poston plan to spend a few days in Jonesboro, Georgia, and then come home in Bolling Springs for Christmas.

Dean and Mrs. J. O. Terrell will visit in Leicester and Bryson City for about a week, but will spend the holidays in the Bolling Springs.

The Mike Gordons will spend Christmas at Marion, where, according to Mr. Gordon, "anytime one's children come home is a 'special time.'"

The coaches and their families will be out of town during the holidays. The Harris family in Winston-Salem (1121 South Hawthorne) and Ridgecrest and the Blackburns in South Carolina. However, the Blackburns will spend most of their time in Bolling Springs. Coach Blackburn hopes to take in the Dixie Classic in Charlotte during the holidays.

Mrs. Dorothy Hamrick plans to spend the holidays interviewing students and making plans for the second semester's registration. Dr. Gillette and family will spend in Bolling Springs, expecting some of their children to drop in.

Mrs. Nina Lifer has no special plans for the holidays, but will spend the gathering at her home—6 Bolt Drive, Shelby. Mrs. H. S. Pelter, 525 S. Washington St., Shelby, will have daughter Vicki home from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she is doing graduate study in Microbiology.

Mrs. John Mark Pollock will be at home in Trenton, North Carolina. Two such families will be participating during the holidays. Dean Hott will stay close to home as the Hotts await a new arrival in the family. The West Walters (as yet) have no special plans "except stay home and get ready for the baby which is due around the first of February."

No January Pilot

Because the Pilot staff, along with their fellow classmates, will be actively engaged in final exams during January, there will be no issue of The Pilot in January. The staff feels it would be wise to spend all their time preparing for the exams in order that they might all be enrolled in school during second semester. We advise that you get your subscription for this year's issue which will be combined with the Valentine issue. Until February the Pilot makes each of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.