

the First Christmas

HE who first wrote the name, wrote it at the end of the list—below every other name. He was a Roman officer, charged with the duty of the census in the district about Bethlehem. All day long the line of tired pilgrims had filed before the desk. At last the wearying record was completed; the officer set himself to reviewing the columns. Then, suddenly, a shadow fell across the page. He turned impatiently toward the doorway to see the figure of a stalwart man outlined against the setting sun, a child in his arms.

“I could not come earlier,” he said. “The child was born last night.”

“You are at the inn?” the officer asked.

“No, we arrived too late; the babe was born in a manger.”

“Your name?”

“Joseph.”

“Of what tribe?”

“The tribe of Benjamin and David. We are the descendants of kings,” he added.

The officer did not look up. The world was full of the sons of former kings—and now there was no king but Caesar, lord of the earth by right of war.

“Your wife’s name?”

“Mary.”

“And the child’s?”

“Jesus.”

The voice of the big man was soft, as though fondling the syllables.

“It means the Savior of his people.”

The officer merely nodded.

“Jesus, son of Joseph, of the tribe of Benjamin,” he wrote and closed the book. It was the last name on the list.

From *The Transmitter*, November-December, 1963, as quoted in *The Medicovan*, December, 1964

INTERCOM

Vol. 12, No. 6 December, 1965

Published monthly by and for the staff, faculty, employees and friends of The Duke University Medical Center.

Please address all correspondence for the Intercom to: Office of Public Relations, Box 3354, Duke University Medical Center, Durham, North Carolina/27706.

Editor.....Virginia Swain

Editorial Committee.....Landon Ruffin, Nina Waite, Ruth Dailey, Neil Bucklew, Barbara Elwell and Elon Clark

**Duke University Medical Center
Durham, North Carolina 27706**