

MAY DAY PROGRAM

Tradition

The custom of celebrating the first of May with the gathering of flowers dates back, certainly to the Roman Floralia or Floral Games. There are other ancient May Day celebrations, such as the Druid feasts in honor of Bel and the phallic festivals of India and Egypt, but these seem rather for the purpose of sacrifice and are in no way connected with flowers.

In England in the sixteenth century it was customary for the middle and lower classes to go out at a very early hour in the morning to gather flowers and hawthorn branches, which they brought home about sunrise to the accompaniment of music and with great joy and merriment. By a natural transition of ideas, they gave the hawthorn bloom the name of May; they called the ceremony "bringing home the May"; they spoke of the expedition to the woods as "group a-maying."

Not content with a garlanding of their brows, their doors, and their windows, these merry people had in every village a fixed pole, "as high as the mast of a vessel of a hundred tons", on which each May morning they suspended wreaths of flowers, and around which they danced almost the whole day. The May-pole had its place equally with parish church or parish stocks. The Puritans had the May-poles uprooted, but after the Restoration they were re-erected and the appropriate rites re-commenced with great gusto.

The custom of having a Queen of the May, seems to be a relic of the heathen celebration; this maid appears as a living representative of the goddess Flora, whom the Romans worshipped on this day. Chambers in "The Book of Days" says, "Be it observed the May Queen did not join in the revelries of her subjects. She was placed in a sort of bower or arbour, near the May-pole, there to sit in pretty state, an object of admiration to the whole village. It must have been rather a dull office, but doubtless to the female heart it had its compensations."



From the looks of the picture above, we'll have the members of the pageant in stitches this afternoon. Those stitches in time that have provided costumes for most of the participants were administered by the above group, (left to right) Lou Myatt, Sara Burts, Dottie Covington, Dottie Smith and Bet Epps (wielding a wicked needle behind the machine.) Photo courtesy of Twin City Sentinel.

Synopsis

Once upon a time, when May Days were still young and when the earth was soft and green and budding, there lived a wonderful lady named Mother Goose. She lived in a land of people who truly loved her because she was so good and kind to them. This was not a land of mortals, however, but a land of story-book people, a land of children and grown-ups who danced on the soft, green earth and sang songs all day long to the wind and the birds and the flowers.

It happened one May Day that two mortal children were found asleep in the forest of Mother Goose land by two of her children, Little Bo Peep and Little Boy Blue. The little mortals had been covered with leaves by two friendly robins. The Mother Goose children were quite upset that mortals should be found on that particular day because that was the May Day on which Mother Goose was to send a new Queen of the May to be crowned by King Cole. It was a wonderful event and all the people in the land would be there to see it. What would they think if they should find these mortal children here? Little Bo Peep quickly hid the children behind a bush just as King Cole and all his court came into the May Dell. Oh, what a wonderful sight!! All the Mother Goose people came from every corner of the land to await the new Queen and her court—there was the Old Woman who lived in a shoe and all her children, Mistress Mary and all her dancing flowers, Jack and Jill (poor Jack still had his head in a bandage), the Three Blind Mice who were as impudent as ever, old Humpty Dumpty and the King's Men, Jack-Be-Nimble and Georgie Porgie and the children who danced around the May Pole.

Suddenly there were three bright, clear trumpets sounded throughout the forest! All the folk knew this to be the announcement of the Queen's coming. As the beautiful Queen descended in the sunlight, all the people fell to the ground awestruck. The Queen and her lovely court took their places on the hillside and a crown of sparkling diamonds and rubies was placed on the Queen's head. All of Mother Goose land rejoiced with more singing and dancing, for the Queen was so beautiful and she smiled so sweetly at them. Yes, it was a happy day for the Mother Goose folk and they returned home that May Day, their ears still ringing with the happy tunes of the forest.

MAY DAY COMMITTEES

Chairman: Betsy Boney, Kinston.

Vice-Chairman: Jane McElroy, Glencoe, Illinois.

Nomination: Sara Clark, Reidsville; Nancy Wray, Reidsville; Mary Jane Hurt, Charlotte.

Publicity: Janie Morris, Mocksville; Joyce Privette, Dayton, Ohio.

Costumes: Dottie Smith, Benson; Betty Ann Epps, Gastonia.

Dances: Ione Bradsher, Greenville; Polly Harrop, Charleston, W. Va.

Properties: Ruby Moye, Maury; Katherine Ives, New Bern.

Program: Margaret Carter, Rocky Mount; Virginia Summers, Kings Mountain.

Music: Elizabeth Price, Monroe; Peggy Sue Taylor, Newton.

Finance: Katherine Ballew, Marion.

Entertainment: Ann Mills, Morehead City; Susan Johnson, Charlotte; Joyce Brisson, Lumberton; Claire Craig, Charlotte.

Wee Blew Inn: Dot Massey, Kinston; Dot Arrington, Rocky Mount; Miriam Bailey, Fair Bluff; Betty Biles, St. Joseph, Missouri; Claire Phelps, Scarsdale, N. Y.; Gerry Hancock, High Point; Ruth Lenkoski, Springfield, Mass.

Grateful acknowledgment to:

Montaldo's—for the dresses; Miss Green—for help and ideas; Morgenroth's—for the flowers; and Mr. Lawrence and his assistants—for the properties; to Doug Lee—for sound effects.

PAGEANT CHARACTERS

Babes in the Woods — Agnes Bowers, Sally Tarry

Robins — Sara Burts, Dottie Covington

Bo Peep — Mary Bryant

Little Boy Blue — Helen Brown

Ole King Cole — Ann Carothers

Pages — Connie Purvis, Marion Ellis

Jack — Tootsie Gillespie

Jill — Ione Bradsher

Miss Muffet — Ann Pleasants

Tommy Tucker — Lou Myatt

Jack Be Nimble — Carolyn Taylor

Jack Horner — Peggy Watkins

Humpty Dumpty — Martha Hershberger

Mary Quite Contrary — Elizabeth Price

Farmer's Wife — Nancy Wray

Three Blind Mice — Ann Wicker, Beth Kitrell, Betty Griffin

Old Woman in the Shoe,— Joan Hassler

Georgie Porgie — Bitsy Green

Flowers — Jane McElroy, Polly Harrop, Ann Lanier, Lila Fretwell, Frances Horne, Joyce Privette

Children — Eaton Seville, June Elder, Clinky Clinkscales, Ann Pleasants, Ann Carrington, Helen Creamer

May Pole Dance — Agnes Bowers, Sally Tarry, Eaton Seville, June Elder, Clinky Clinkscales, Ann Pleasants, Ann Carrington, Helen Creamer, Peggy Watkins, Martha Scott, Lou Myatt, Bitsy Green.