

### Asking A Question...

What was it like—there in the stable in Bethlehem?

How would I have felt if I had been there; if I had been looking through the soft brown eyes of a sleepy ox or the squinted, wind-burned eyes of a poor shepherd? Would I have known; could I have known who this small, new child really was?

I know from the Bible, from stories, that this was a miracle that a Savior had come, but I want to know what it was like—there in that stable in Bethlehem.

I want to know whether the air was quiet or electric with the immensity of the birth of God's Son. I want to know if the donkeys calmly slept with their legs stiff with standing or if they watched and wondered and felt the miracle.

If I had been there, would I have been afraid of the strange, bright light of the star streaming through the cracks in the roof; would I have been awed and disbelieving; or would I have fallen on my knees in the dust and thanked God?

It happened so long ago. It is in the Bible and on preacher's lips at Christmas, but it happened so long ago. The shepherds and the oxen and the donkeys are lucky—they were there.

They could know, if they would. They could know how the air felt because they made it that way. We make our air at Christmas full of bells and laughter and "Silent Night". I wonder if it really was a silent night. I wonder what it was like—there in that stable in Bethlehem.

### Finding An Answer...

Why is Christmas?

Store windows become decorated with silver trees and display jeweled compacts. People buy comic Christmas cards and spend nickles to play "Silent Night" on a juke box in a smoke bar.

We tell our little brothers and sisters to be good or a mystic person called Santa Claus won't come. This threat made them angels last year, so why not try it again.

We do all these things and in doing them we have found the answer.

Why is Christmas? Because we want it. We made it for ourselves so we could get cashmere sweaters and make our younger brothers and sisters be good.

We made it for ourselves so we could have a holiday and forget term papers and sign-out rules. We made it for ourselves so we could wear our new red taffeta dress to the egg nog party on Christmas Eve.

We want it. We have made it for ourselves. We have found the answer.

## The Salemite



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I bet you don't know what I want for Christmas.

Sue Harrison

## Christmas Poem

By Sandy Whitlock and Mary Mac Rogers

'Twas the week before vacation, and all through Salem C.,  
Every creature was stirring, even the roaches and me;  
The decorations were hung in the dorms with care,  
In hopes that the judges soon would be there;  
One night all the Salemites were snug in their beds,  
While visions of last minute tests filled their heads,  
And Heidbreder in her kerchief and Gramley in his cap,  
Were about to settle their brains for a long vacation nap,  
When out on the campus there arose such a clatter,  
All sprang from their beds to see what was the matter.  
And what to their wondering eyes should appear  
But a broken-down car, and eight girls so dear,  
With a tiny little driver, so lively and fit,  
They knew in a moment it must be Alison Britt!  
More rapid than jets her followers they came,  
And she whistled and shouted and called them by name:  
"Now, Connie! now, Sally! now, Betsy and Sue!  
On, Donald! on, Bebe! on Laura and Lou!  
To the depths of the catacombs, to the cold damp walls!  
Now, dash away, dash away, dash away, all!"  
They yelled at each other, but went straight to their work,  
They finished the Christmas issue and turned with a jerk,  
Alison sprang to the car, and to the staff gave a whistle,  
And away they all drove to "The Sun" like a missile,  
But we heard them exclaim ere they drove out of sight,  
"Merry Christmas, Salemites, and to all a good-night!"

## Christmas Prayer

By Ann Mixon

Dear Lord, we thank Thee  
For all the small things of Christmas as well as the large.  
For the scent of Moravian cookies and sugar bread.  
For the beauty of the Moravian star, and the nativity scene.  
For the excitement and anticipation of Christmas, the excitement of the banquet and dance, the anticipation of going home.  
For the spirit of giving to the orphans who have so little of what we take for granted: home, loving parents, doting relations, pretty clothes.  
For our "peanuts" because they make us realize that a gift doesn't have to be expensive to give pleasure.  
For the help, so many of whom we never see, but who nevertheless serve us all year.  
For our favorites and friends whom we love and remember, especially at Christmas.  
For the feeling of reverence that comes over us at Senior Vespers, at the "Messiah", at Dr. Rondthaler's reading of the "Christmas Carol" and at our midnight services at home.  
Oh Lord, we ask Thy forgiveness,  
For feeling these things so strongly only at Christmas.  
For not always appreciating the staff as we should;  
For seldom giving, for always taking;  
For so seldom feeling reverence, so often trying to be flippant and sophisticated.  
Help us, Lord, to overcome these faults.  
Help us to live outside ourselves.  
Help us to destroy the mirrors that reflect only ourselves.  
Bless, O Lord,  
Dr. Gramley who always remembers us with a Christmas card;  
The faculty who are always so willing to help us outside of classes;  
The staff who work so hard for us;  
Our roommates who endure so much;  
Our families who only think the best of us, never the worst.  
God bless us, so that we might continue to try to do Thy will.



By Sally Reiland

Mrs. Claus bounded out of her snow bank quite early that morning. As usual, she brushed the snowballs out of her hair and the icicles from her teeth. But the frost just couldn't be combed from her breath.

"How frigidly wonderful," she thought! The frosty breath would be just the thing to trim her Christmas Spirit with! Yes, this was the first day of the Christmas rush—the day that she always made Christmas Spirit, the after-Thanksgiving dessert of the world.

Skiing down to the igloo marked "Mrs. Santa's Kitchen—Home of the Best in Christmas Spirits," Mrs. Claus wondered just what recipe she would use this year. In retrospect, she remembered that last year's atmosphere was not quite as light as it might have been.

After glancing through every icy recipe in her book without inspiration, Mrs. Claus felt twice as conquered as Northpolarian. Whatever would the world do without the taste of Christmas Spirit?

Suddenly, three poached ice bergs for breakfast later, the big flake fell. She was absolutely snowbound by the idea! She would contact one of her husband's helpers, and she knew just the one to pick. He was president of a small college in North Carolina, and was always writing definitions of things—college girls, liberal arts educations, and the like. Absolutely the best reporter that Clausiad Press had ever had on the icetorial staff, and she had heard Mr. Claus say so himself! Surely this man would be able to settle her problem! Surely, he would have a definition of what Christmas Spirit should be!

Hopping the fastest toboggan down to the Pole Booth to place the call, Mrs. Claus was in a frenzy of snowspiration. He must—absolutely must—have the recipe she needed!

Her brow and hands were covered with tiny quivering ice balls of nervousness by the time she got the number dialed. Whatever would she do if the polophone wires were down in the storm, or if Dale didn't have the necessary information?

Only a few minutes later, she was talking to him in short frosty breaths.

"Yes! . . . Yes! . . . For blizzards' sakes, yes! Of course I can catch the next sleigh to North Carolina if you really have what you say you have! . . . And don't forget to meet me on the chimney of Corrin Refectory . . . Snow you then!"

And so she arrived. And so the campus too was snowbound by her idea, for never before had it seen such activity.

First, 331 girls were assembled according to the Clausiated Press identification of a Salem Girl. To these were added some 30 understanding faculty members, several boxes of Thanksgiving memories and 15 pounds of Christmas anticipation, along with a package of University Dates (carefully chopping those who refused to attend the approaching dance.)

After the basic ingredients had settled, some several million New Year resolutions were tossed with First Semester deficiencies and placed in the oven to ferment, after which process the combination was added to the original mixture.

Next, countless beautifully-wrapped packages of spices marked "For my Peanut," "Dad," "Mom," and "With love to Tom" were taken from the dorm cupboards and placed in the campus bowl. January bill complaints were boiled to nothing with undone tests and term papers; while the Christmas Putz and Senior Vespers were folded in with the Y Orphanage party to constitute the flavoring.

After creaming and combining all ingredients in such a way, the mixture was poured into a Salem-shaped container lined with dorm-decorating crepe paper to keep the whole works from sticking.

Later, when it came out of the Moravian oven, it was iced with dreams of White Christmases, and decorated with Mrs. Claus' frosty breath.

And Mrs. Claus was very pleased with her work when she climbed back into her snow bank that night. For she knew that by now pieces of the best Christmas Spirit she had ever made were being distributed everywhere as the Salemites went home for Christmas!