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Moravian Women Initiate Christmas Season With Candle Tea In Brothers House

By Laurie Daltroff

The Old Salem Candle Tea is sponsored by the Women's Fellowship of the Home Moravian Church, which includes all the circles of the church and the Home Circle. The Tea started long before World War II, or as Mrs. Austin Bean said, "Most of us can't remember exactly when it began," and was first held in individual homes.

The Candle Tea has come to be an expected event in Winston-Salem, the first herald of the Christmas season. This is the only money-making project of the Fellowship and its members have welcomed the attitude of the community which makes it possible for them to raise much money, all of which goes to mission work both at home and abroad. This year the Chairman is Mrs. Williams, and her Assistant Chairman is Mrs. Austin Bean, who was Chairman last year.

Every year the Women's Fellowship move into the Single Brothers' House on the first Tuesday in December and holds the Tea for two weeks. The first Wednesday in December the women start the Children's Tea which is held from 8:30 a.m. until 1:45 p.m. on weekdays. Schoolchildren of all ages attend in groups from such surrounding cities as Greensboro, High Point, Mount Airy, and Elkin.

After the Children's Tea, the Regular Tea begins at 2 p.m. and continues until 9 p.m. People come to the Tea at the regular time in individual groups, and no reservations are taken other than for the children's groups (school organizations may only make reservations three days in advance, despite the fact that people try to make them throughout the year.)

The hostesses for the Tea are all in Moravian costumes, and range in age from first and second-graders on up. The white ribbons signify widows, the blue signify married

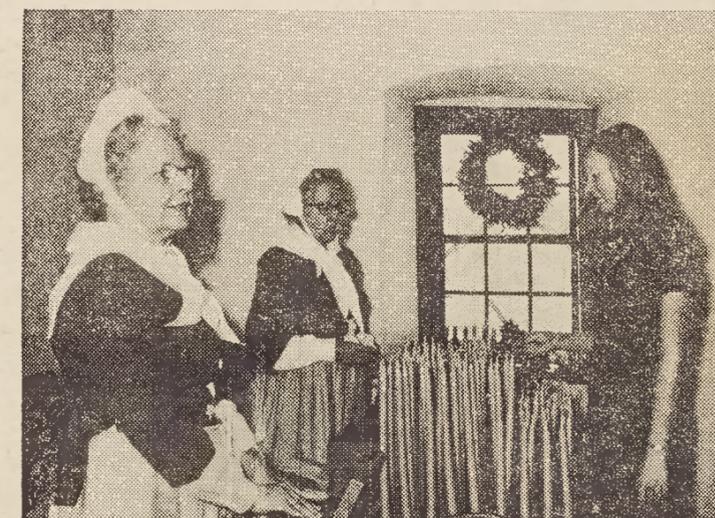
women, the pink ribbons signify single women, and very wide pink ribbons signify unconfirmed girls. One is greeted by these charming hostesses at the front door and is ushered into the hall, the Chapel, where the original organ accompanies a hostess in leading the crowd in singing Christmas carols until the downstairs hostesses are ready to receive new visitors. The people are then taken to the first basement to the Candle Room where the hostesses demonstrate the art of making candles and offer candles and Moravian dolls for sale. The dolls' clothes, by the way, are made from scraps of costumes out of the costume room.

From the Candle Room the guests are then taken to the Brothers' Kitchen and served Moravian coffee and sugarcake, and are told about the unique water system used by the Moravians. Then everyone is escorted to the subbasement where

meats were once kept, and ushered into the glory of the Christmas Putz (pronounced puts, not puttz). The Putz is a Salem tradition, portraying the Salem scene as it was in the early 1800 era. The Square, the Graveyard (with snow), Cedarhurst—which is the great stone Bishop's House by the Graveyard, and fourth street are included.

After this charming scenario the conclusion of the Tea is the Nativity Scene, displayed with lifesize, handcarved wooden figurines, and a beautiful light arrangement. There, the visitors are read the Christmas Story, after which they are ready to depart the enchanted premises for a much-improved holiday season.

By the way, the Regular Candle Tea charges an admission price which has never risen with inflation: fifty cents for adults and twenty-five cents for children.



MARGARET McCLOY OBSERVES CANDLE MAKING AT MORAVIAN CANDLE TEA.