

By J. C. R.

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CHRISTMAS TRADE HEAVIEST IN YEARS SURVEY REVEALS

Chicago, San Francisco and Kansas City Report Tremendous Increase in Holiday Buying. St. Louis Reports December Business Thirty Per Cent Over 1933. Shop Keepers of Nation Carry Optimistic Smiles.

Chicago—The swiftest flow of Christmas spending in years is swirling in on the nation's merchants.

A survey Sunday showed Christmas trade in many cities was at the highest pitch since 1929 or 1930, and ranged as high as 33 1-3 per cent above last year.

Department stores and mail order houses bristled with bullish enthusiasm, and predicted even sharper gains as the holiday approaches.

In Chicago, in San Francisco, and in Kansas City, the question—"how good is Christmas business?" brought the unanimous answer: "Best in years!"

And with the burst of trade came increased employment, all along the line, with 500 department and gift store employees added recently in Kansas City.

Washington, with its influx of New Deal workers, made claim to leading the nation in improvement in Christmas sales over last year, with a general 25 per cent gain over the same week a year ago.

Good in Texas

In Dallas, Clifton Linz, president of the Retail Merchants Association there, said increased sales "thus far are substantially better than the same period in 1933, and have virtually wiped out talk of hard times."

In St. Louis, where business is 25 per cent ahead of last year, merchants reported that a striking feature of the season is the appeal better quality goods has made to the customer.

San Francisco, where the gain has already been from 10 to 20 per cent, looked for a "buying boom" before Christmas which would shatter records of several years.

Salt Lake City department store managers reported Christmas business was 25 to 40 per cent better than last year and that buying began ten days sooner than in 1934.

Stores Crowded

Estimates of the gain this year over 1933 in Minneapolis ranged from 10 to 25 per cent with all executives reporting stores crowded with shoppers.

The same story was told by Indianapolis store managers with a report that "luxury lines and toys are selling more readily" than last year.

Many stores in Portland, Maine, were caught short of help in the unexpected increase in Christmas business, with estimates of the first week's buying set as high as 30 per cent more than last year.

Frank I. Mayfield, president of the Scruggs-Vandervoort-Barney Co. in St. Louis, said Christmas sales the opening week were about 25 per cent above last year's and that the "most noticeable tendency is that people are buying better merchandise than last year."

Leon Mandel, of Mandel Brothers in Chicago, said "we are very much encouraged by improvement in the Christmas business so far this year. Apparently we will have the best Christmas business since 1930."

MRS. BLACKBURN DIES AT AGE OF 78

Great Aunt of Sheriff Howell and Sister-in-Law to Late Manley B. Blackburn Buried at Todd Saturday. Five Children Survive.

Mrs. Rhoda Blackburn, age 78 years, prominent resident of the Todd community, died at the home of a son, Mr. Ed Blackburn, with whom she had been living, on last Thursday.

Funeral services were conducted from the home by the Reverends C. F. Wright, P. L. Smith and H. L. Winkler on Saturday and interment was in a neighborhood cemetery.

Surviving are five children: W. E. Blackburn, Morganton; Marvin Blackburn, Elizabethton, Tenn.; E. D. Blackburn, Todd; Mesdames Sally Ray, Oxford, Pa., and Cleo Hopkins, Elizabethton, Tenn.

Mrs. Blackburn was the former Miss Rhoda Howell and was a great aunt of Sheriff A. Y. Howell of Watauga County. She was married to Mr. Alex Blackburn, eldest brother of the late lamented Manley Blackburn of Boone, and had been widowed for about six years. She was prominent in her home community, where she was surrounded by a host of friends.

Princess Comes Home



New York—Princess Alexis Mdivani, former Barbara Hutton of the American Woolworth millions, is at home for a visit. She denies that there has been a rift between the prince and herself.

NIGHT FIRE RAZES SPROLES DWELLING

Heavy Losses Incurred as Blaze Destroys Boone Home of Mrs. Elizabeth Sproles. Home Unoccupied. Origin Not Yet Determined.

The ten-room frame dwelling of Mrs. Elizabeth Sproles is in ashes as the result of an early morning blaze Monday, the origin of which has not been determined. The fire was sounded at 2 o'clock a. m., but before the volunteer department had reached the premises, the flame had made such headway that there was no chance of saving the dwelling.

Loss of Three to Five Thousand

The house was unoccupied at the time of the conflagration, was a comparatively new building and excellently constructed. The loss has been estimated at from three to five thousand dollars, little or none of which is covered by insurance.

There had been no recent fires in the building and it is thought that the blaze might have been the result of deprecations committed by night prowlers.

Avery Balsams to Be Used at White House

Santa Claus will come to the White House this year under two trees transplanted from Avery County, according to a story in last week's Avery Herald, which continues:

"Arrangements were completed this week to take two symmetrical balsam firs from Avery County to the White House lawn where they will serve as Christmas trees during the Yuletide holidays.

"E. C. Robbins, nationally known nurseryman, has received the contract for the two trees which were to be taken to Washington late last week by L. C. Clark of Newland.

"One of the trees is to be taken from the picturesque home of Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Ray of Newland, and the other is coming from the attractive lawn of Charles Baird, county attorney.

"The entire section for hundreds of miles around had been combed for the past several months for trees which would suit the purpose (the best Christmas trees in the country), and the honor fell to Avery County.

"Clark and a crew of workers were starting to remove the 25-foot trees with enough sod so that they could be transplanted to the White House lawn and live. It was estimated that each tree would weigh at least three tons."

Wataugans Will Attend Baptist S. S. Conference

Mr. S. C. Eggers, local transportation organizer for the Baptist Sunday School Conference, which is to be held in Raleigh January 1-4, is anxious that Watauga County make an excellent showing at the meeting.

Mr. Eggers states that North Carolina churches believe that this will be the greatest Sunday School convocation held in the world in 1935, and if attendance exceeds that of the four previous conferences, it will be the largest Sunday School gathering ever to have been held in the world.

An attendance of 5,000 outside of Raleigh is expected by officials, and Mr. Eggers urges a full delegation from Watauga. Those who intend going from Watauga are asked to communicate with Mr. Eggers.

MITCHELL SOLON TO SPONSOR BILL FOR GAS EXECUTIONS

Capital Punishment Under Discussion in Capital City Following Triple Orgy of Death in Electric Chair. Opponents to Death Penalty Take Advantage of Agitation. Other News from the State Capital

By M. R. DUNNAGAN (Special Correspondent)

Raleigh, N. C.—Capital punishment in all of its gruesomeness has been under discussion extensively in recent days and is expected to reach to the 1935 General Assembly in some fashion, following electrocution of three white men at State's prison last week and soon after electrocution of three negroes.

Also, Dr. C. A. Peterson, Spruce Pine, Mitchell County legislator, has said he will introduce a bill to provide for lethal gas chamber executions. In place of the present electric chair. A few states have the gas chamber. Some still have hanging on the gallows, while the majority have the electric chair.

Bascom C. Green, 44, his son, Lester, 22, and his son-in-law, Robert E. Black, 26, paid the death penalty last Friday for murder of T. C. Barnes, cashier of a Taylorsville bank, about a year ago, when the three men and Mike Stefanoff, foreign born, held up the bank. Stefanoff had previously been electrocuted. A few weeks before three negroes were electrocuted for murder.

Brings Up Age-Old Question

These electrocutions and Dr. Peterson's proposal will bring up the whole matter of capital punishment, with the likely suggestion that it be abolished. People generally, except those who come in contact with one of the first degree capital crimes—murder, arson, rape and burglary—apparently think the death penalty should be abolished. When they or members of their family become victims, they become ardent advocates of capital punishment, usually.

People who oppose capital punishment often dub it legalized murder and say it should not be permitted. They forget the crime often, as well as the aim of the law to prevent a person given to murder, or the other crimes, from again preying upon society, but the abolitionists can stir up lots of sentiment.

FUNERAL HELD FOR LANTA ADA HODGES

Former Watauga Girl Thought to Have Been Victim of Foul Play. Funeral at Smithport Monday. Body Found Near Baltimore, Md.

Funeral services were conducted at Smithport Baptist Church in Ashe County Monday for Lanta Ada Hodges, former resident of Watauga County, whose lifeless body was found near Baltimore, Md., the week previous. An uncle, Rev. E. C. Hodges, of Boone, conducted the services and was assisted by Reverend Blackburn. Interment was in that community.

Surviving is the father, Mr. R. L. Hodges, well known in Watauga, where he was reared, six brothers and six sisters: Gurney Hodges, of West Jefferson; Robert Hodges and Otis Hodges, North Fork, Va.; Charlie W. Hodges, Raven's Ford, N. C.; Howard W. Hodges, Franklin, N. C.; John Hodges, Rugby, Va.; Mrs. Lester Cox, Shulls Mills, N. C.; Mrs. W. G. Dillinger, Keith Square, Pa.; Mrs. E. E. Taylor, West Jefferson; Hazel, Adeline and Mildred Hodges, of Rugby, Va.

According to such meager information as The Democrat could secure, the body had apparently been dropped from a car near Baltimore, and the official verdict was that she had met a death of violence. No particulars, however, are available as to how she was supposed to have been slain.

Miss Hodges was an admirable young lady and a member of the Smithport Baptist Church. She had, it is understood, been employed in Baltimore.

Doughton Works to Aid Local Potato Growers

Attorney Wade E. Brown, chairman of the Watauga County Agricultural Committee, is in receipt of a letter from Congressman Robert L. Doughton in which it is stated that he is exerting every effort in trying to find out what can be done in Washington for the relief of mountain potato growers.

Mr. Doughton says he has had the matter up for several days with the Relief Administration and the Department of Agriculture, and that he will communicate further with the committee shortly.

Through Mr. Doughton the organization is endeavoring to stabilize the potato market.

For Social Justice



Detroit, Mich.—The Rev. Charles E. Coughlin, Radio Priest, has launched a new party. Its name is American Union for Social Justice. He has issued invitations for members in every county, city, town and state. The enrollment is without fee and supported only by voluntary contributions.

DEATH COMES TO MRS. J. P. BOOGHER

Aged Resident of Blowing Rock Succumbs to Attack of Pneumonia. Body Taken to St. Louis for Interment. Six Children Survive.

Mrs. John P. Boogher, 85, for the past twenty-six years an esteemed summer resident of Blowing Rock, died at her home there Tuesday after an illness of four weeks. Direct cause of her demise was given as pneumonia.

The body is being taken to St. Louis, Mo., for interment, and is being accompanied by two daughters, Misses Ethel and Elise Boogher of Blowing Rock and St. Louis. Four other children are listed among the survivors: J. Silver Boogher, Kansas City, Mo.; Ernest H. Boogher, Seattle, Wash.; Mrs. A. W. Stone, Tampa, Fla.; John P. Boogher, St. Petersburg, Fla.

Mrs. Boogher, who was born in Baldwin County, Alabama, in 1849, was well known to many Watauga County people, particularly in the region about Blowing Rock, where the deceased lady spent the most of a quarter of a century of her life. She and her daughters, Misses Ethel and Elise Boogher, have for years operated one of the most popular hostleries on the mountain top, and she enjoyed a well deserved popularity with the traveling public as well as the natives of this section. Her kindly and charitable disposition, together with other characteristics possessed only by Christian womanhood, caused her to be held in general esteem.

Watauga Experiences First Heavy Snowfall

Preceded by an eight-inch snowfall, Watauga County experienced the coldest weather of the season Thursday night when mercury in the vicinity of Boone dropped close to the zero mark, readings of from 3 to 6 above having been reported. High winds accompanied the frigid wave and whipped the heavy snowfall into drifts in every sheltered nook and cranny. Highway maintenance forces were kept busy Monday night and Tuesday keeping the lanes of transportation open and traffic has proceeded without interruption.

The snow began to fall Sunday night, continued through Monday and scarcely abated during the day Tuesday, although greatly lowered temperatures prevailed. Wednesday morning the sun broke out and by noon rapidly rising temperatures were beginning to melt the snow on the sunny side of buildings.

Last Returns From Red Cross Roll Call

The Red Cross Roll Call drive, which closed Thanksgiving Day, has been described as an unusually successful one, more than two hundred members having been secured. This represents an increase of more than 100 per cent over last year.

Chairman J. D. Rankin gives the following list of members turned in from Blowing Rock: Dr. C. H. Berryman, Glenn Coffey, Mrs. H. C. Hayes, Mrs. J. H. Winkler, Martha Teidenan, Dr. Mary Warfield, Mrs. Lloyd Robbins, Mrs. David Milton, Mrs. Norma Gragg, Dave P. Mast, Mrs. Gene Story, W. W. Williams, Paul Bingham, Russell Henson, W. D. Farthing, Winfred Winkler, Smith Hamlet, Mrs. W. L. Holshouser; Mrs. Dean Bingham, Boone.

Mrs. David Milton, in addition to her regular dollar membership, made a donation of \$19.00.

BOONE SHOPS ARE AGLOW AS HOLIDAY SEASON ADVANCES

Merchants Have Vied With One Another in Making City an Ideal Christmas Shopping Center. Aggressive Publicity Program, Coupled With Financial Improvement, Bodes Greatly Increased Trade.

Windows resplendent with decorations synonymous with the holidays; bright light, evergreens and artificial snow providing a background for the display of every sort of gift. St. Nicholas could crave with which to fill his bag, the shops of Boone are all set for what their proprietors believe may be the largest Christmas trade enjoyed in this city since the depression placed a finger in the retail jackpot.

Merchants have outdone themselves this year in providing Christmas wares, and whether an individual gift list requires an automobile, a radio or a five-cent doll, or most anything in between, it can be adequately filled in the old home town.

Advertising Lineage Increases

Further than that, the business men are telling folks about their merchandise this year with increased advertising lineage and direct mail pieces, a supreme effort being made to convince the most skeptical that Boone is the logical shopping center not only for Watauga County but for people in adjacent sections of the bordering counties.

The Democrat today carries messages from a large number of the business houses of the town, designed especially to facilitate the work of Christmas shopping, and a large number of other business houses will come forward next week with offerings which—by their nature—are most profitably publicized later.

It is hoped that the mountain people will take advantage of the opportunities being offered them by the progressive merchants of Boone, do their shopping early and economically, and by all means trade at home.

FIRE FIGHTERS TO REVAMP TOYS

Children of Town Who Have Discarded Toys Asked to Donate Them to Needy Ones. Banquet for Department Next Tuesday.

Children of the community and the outlying communities as well who have toys which have passed their day of usefulness or which have been discarded, are asked by Pat McGuire, chief of the local fire department, to tender them to the destitute children for Christmas. Mr. McGuire asks that the toys be brought to the city hall or to him personally as early as is possible in order that they may be repaired in ample time to make glad the hearts of other children on Christmas morning. Those finding it inconvenient to go to the city hall may communicate direct with Mr. McGuire.

At the same time it is announced that local firemen will be hosts to the Blowing Rock Fire Department at a banquet at the Daniel Boone Hotel on next Tuesday evening.

Boone Youths Arrested By Federal Officers

North Wilkesboro.—Bill and Cecil Bumgarner, giving their residence as Boone, were arrested and placed in jail here Thursday night by Federal Revenue Agents Leonard Roupe, J. C. Fortner and L. T. Jones on charges of transporting liquor on which Federal taxes had not been paid.

The young men were carrying six gallons of liquor in their car when they were apprehended by the officers. Their car was confiscated. Preliminary hearing was held before U. S. Commissioner J. W. Dula and bond was fixed at \$500 each.

BUSINESS HOUSES...

who for one reason or another do not carry Christmas messages in The Democrat this week, are reminded that the next issue goes to press as usual the afternoon ahead of the date line—December 19th—and will reach practically all county readers on the 20th, thus allowing three more shopping days after the offerings are before the people.

The publishers are anxious to go as far as is possible in preparing ads and relieving the shop-keepers of this extra burden when desired.

AN OPINION REVERSED
On occasion this column has voiced disapproval of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration...

But mercury has skidded down the thermometer's tube to the zero regions... the western blast carries a bitter sting... Mother Earth is cloaked in white...

There are hundreds and hundreds of good-for-nothing husbands and fathers, whose indigence and general carelessness deprive lots and lots of families of daily bread and bare necessities of life...

WOULST THOU ADMINISTER?
Mrs. Thomas O'Berry, carina of the North Carolina Relief Administration, was somewhat flabbergasted...

If there resides amongst these blue mountains a highly-trained social worker... one who has an unlimited knowledge of those peculiar technicalities which surround the dispensation of cotton blankets, rancid beef, doubtful eggs, and denim overalls...

FIFTH SUNDAY MEETINGS
Mr. S. C. Eggers, promotional committee chairman of Three Forks Baptist Association, announces that a number of Fifth Sunday meetings are being contemplated for December 30.