

And it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

(And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

And all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

To be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child.

And, so it was, that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night.

And lo, the Angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the City of David, a Savior, Which is Christ the Lord

And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

—From the Gospel according to St. Luke.

Dark Hours Dangerous

If you retain a childish fear of the dark it may save your life, the National Safety Council said today—providing you're fearful enough to be extra careful when driving at dusk or in darkness.

The Council, in its annual Christmas safety campaign, says that about 75 per cent of the fatal yuletide traffic accidents occur during the dark hours of 5 p. m. and 7 a. m.

Darkness reduces vision and distorts perspective, the Council said. In addition, traffic is heavier in the early twilight when workers are going home. Bad weather,

haste, and holiday drinking also present extra hazards to both pedestrians and drivers.

"If drivers continue to 'Back the Attack on Traffic Accidents' by being extra careful when driving at night, America may have one of its safest and happiest Christmases," the Council said.

"During the first three-quarters of this year traffic deaths dropped 3 per cent from the same period for the previous year. If drivers can maintain this rate of improvement, more than 1,000 lives can be saved on the highway this year."

History Of Christmas

In the first few centuries of Christianity, there was no uniform celebration of Christmas, because the exact date of the birth of Christ was unknown, say researchers for "Star of Bethlehem" at the Morehead Planetarium in Chapel Hill.

Churches variously celebrated the event on January 2, March 25 or 28, April 18 or 19 and May 20. The adoption of December 25 was decreed by Bishop Liberius of Rome in 354.

This date was probably chosen because it coincided with the pagan festival of the winter solstice. The Romans observed Saturnalia, the feast of the god Saturn, between December 17 and December 24. The Germans, Gauls and Britons celebrated on December 25. The Norsemen held Yule feasts between December 25 and January 6.

In the eastern part of the Christian world, festivities similar to those of Christmas were observed on January 6 or Epiphany,

which commemorates the baptism of the Christ child.

In the Middle Ages the Church opposed the traces of paganism surviving in the popular Christmas customs, and created special Christmas masses, to be performed at midnight, daybreak and morning.

The Church also introduced nativity plays, Christmas carols and manger songs. During the Restoration period in England, the Puritans were so opposed to merrymaking that they passed a law in 1659 forbidding the observance of Christmas.

The Puritans of New England also forbade the celebration of Christmas. But these repressive measures didn't last long. The spirit of Christmas as now celebrated in English-speaking countries may partly be ascribed to Charles Dickens. Several of his writings, particularly "A Christmas Carol," popularized the festival and gave it increased jollity.

Burke Supports Nearer Route

(The News-Herald)

Burke County should go all-out in the fight to get the Canton-Charlotte Interstate Highway channeled through Elkin-Statesville-Mooresville instead of Mt. Airy-Winston-Salem-Salisbury.

For a fact, even the western route won't come through Burke, so it's easy to shrug it off and say "why bother?"

But the Statesville-Mooresville route will come some 50 miles closer to Morganton. It would feed thousands of tourists into and through Burke, along with their crop of greenbacks.

More important to Burke, though, is what it would do for industry. It would save thousands of dollars a year in shipping costs via truck. Just 50 miles difference in getting on the highway would mean that much.

Furthermore, and important to the future, it would be a tremendous aid in attracting new industry to Burke County.

So it's something worth fighting for.

The Chamber of Commerce, city and county officials plus Valdese town chiefs, are in these

Roads doesn't have to accept the route picked by the State Highway Commission—but the odds are nine-to-one that they will.

And the Highway Commission's chief engineer favors the eastern route (Mt. Airy-Winston-Salisbury).

But enough folks from Northwestern North Carolina, working solidly together, can move the mountain.

What can you do? You can get in touch with your representative, your senator, your highway commissioner. You can tell them how you feel, what you want them to do.

They do pay attention. You can work with the Burke committee headed by Oliver Webb.

Extra effort now can pay off later in extra tourist trade, savings for our present industries. It can bring new industries with new jobs and new dollars.

So a united and all-out campaign to move the Canton-Charlotte highway west is the least Burke citizens can afford.

"Twas the night before Christmas,

When all through the house . . ."



Stretch's Sketches

By "STRETCH" ROLLINS

"Dear Santa Claus . . ."



IF YOU THINK you've seen the following lines of verse before, you're right. You saw them here.

Happens to be a little ditty I composed m'self a few years ago, and I get a lot of mileage out of it around Christmas time.

And since I haven't used it for a couple of years, and what with us having to get the paper out early and one thing and another, well . . .

It's my conception of what an impatient little boy, whose newly-acquired halo is becoming a trifle irksome as he yearns to return to normal, might write in a second letter to Santa Claus along about now.

SECOND LETTER TO SANTA

Dear Santa Claus: Please don't be mad
'F I write you one more letter;
Just thought you might be kinda glad
To hear my 'havior's better.

But Santa, hurry up an' come—
I'm tired o' bein' good!
It's oh, so vary wearisome
Jus' doin' what I should!

I mustn't that an' mustn't this,
An' other things I must,
Or Christmas joys I'm sure to miss—
I'm 'most about to bust!

I hafta wash behind my ears,
An' shine my shoes an' such,
An' do my chores an' dry my tears
'F I hurt my self too much;

An' make my bed up every day
As neat as any pin,
An' not be cross when I'm at play
If I don't always win;

An' never pull the ole cat's tail,
Or climb the big oak tree,
An' never in my lessons fail
To make at least a "B";

An' not draw pictures on the wall,
An' not pull sister's hair,
An' not make anybody fall
On skates left on the stair;

An' not traek mud an' not make noise,
An' not make baby weep—
An' not do anything ALL boys
Do 'ept when they're asleep!

An' that's the way it is, Saint Nick,
From early morn 'til night;
I hafta act just like I'm sick—
Can't even have a fight!

So, Santa, dear, please start your trip
Real soon or—'though it's shockin'—
I'm awful 'fraid I'll make a slip
'Fore time to hang my stockin'!

From Early Democrat Files

Sixty Years Ago

December 23, 1897.

Mud, mud mud, everywhere.
The new coat of paint being put on the residence of M. B. Blackburn is adding much to its appearance.

Just in at Holsclaw's a nice lot of ladies' under vests with sleeves and union suits, cheap.

Mrs. Sarah Green of Meat Camp has gone to Knoxville, Tenn., to receive medical aid. S. M. Green accompanied her.

D. B. Dougherty will have his grist mill in operation by Thursday. His customers will be accommodated and good work is promised.

Just as we go to press we learn that Mr. Frank South of Sutherland died on Monday night.

News reaches us that David Wilson of this county, was murdered for his money near Cranberry, Mitchell county, last Saturday night. We do not vouch for this statement and hope it is untrue.

We will be around after Xmas to procure all the ivy roof lands within 12 miles of Boone, for the plant. Owners of ivy lands can get their ivy brushed free and thereby save a great expense and make grazing lands in place of ivy lands.

The death of Mrs. W. D. Clarke, which occurred at Blowing Rock on Sunday of last week was indeed a shock to her many friends. She was the soul of goodness, gentleness and kindness and was held in the highest esteem by all who knew her.

On last Thursday Vassas brothers (French) procured a lot from M. B. Blackburn for their ivy, grub plant, and the bill for the lumber was given to F. M. Hodges. At this writing, a large amount of the lumber has been delivered on the site and the company proposes to have the factory in operation by January 15. The main building will be 114 x 34 feet and it is said it will take 500 tons of ivy stools per month to keep the factory at work. This is indeed a thing of much interest to our people.

The lady who was killed near Blowing Rock on Monday of last week was taken back to Dudley Shoals, Caldwell county, by her sons for burial. The grave was dug, coffin made, and all ar-

rangements for the burial perfected at Blowing Rock, when her sons appeared on the scene with a handsome casket. She was placed within and removed at once.

Fifteen Years Ago

December 24, 1942.

J. Edgar Brown, former city mail carrier and at present clerk in the local postoffice, will become postmaster here December 31, it was learned last Friday. He is to succeed W. G. Hartzog, who has filled the post efficiently for the past eight years.

Stamp number 10 in war ration book number one will be good for the purchase of three pounds of sugar from December 16 to January 31.

The War Production Board Friday ordered work stopped immediately on the Blue Ridge Parkway in Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi, according to an Associated Press dispatch from Washington.

The Boone Tobacco Board of Trade met last Wednesday and elected officers. Those re-elected are: W. Jordan, president; Herman Wilcox, vice-president; S. C. Eggers, Secretary and Treasurer. The membership committee is composed of R. C. Coleman, S. C. Eggers and T. H. Covington. The arbitration committee: R. C. Coleman, J. L. Perkins and Fred Settle.

Price Administrator Leon Henderson announced Saturday in Washington that gasoline sales will be resumed in the east at 12:01 a. m. Monday, with the coupons of all A, B, and C ration books good for three gallons. In the case of the B and C books this is a reduction of one gallon.

Miss Laura Ruth Hagaman of Woman's College, Greensboro, and Mr. J. B. Hagaman, Jr., student at the University of North Carolina, are spending the Christmas holidays at the home of their parents, Dr. and Mrs. J. B. Hagaman.

Mr. Clopton Farthing, who is a student in dentistry at the University of Louisville, Louisville, Ky., has arrived at the home of his parents, Dr. and Mrs. J. C. Farthing, for the holidays.

Mr. Willard Beach, for several years linotype operator on the Democrat, relinquished his job here Saturday and went to West Point, Va., where he is employed by the Tidewater Review.

KING STREET

By ROB RIVERS

CHRISTMAS is a day of homecoming,—an ingathering of youngsters from schools and colleges, and of relatives and their families from the far reaches of the country. . . . It is a time when the family reunites in a symphony of happiness and good cheer . . . when there's a candle in the window, and a flame on the hearth and woodsmoke in the air, and the pungent smell of a holiday kitchen.

IT'S A TIME of selfishness and power politics, and of distrust and avarice, of business, and of commerce and mass production, and the quest for gold. . . . It's a time of hurry and haste and confusion and tension, and of weariness and rest.

IT'S CHRISTMAS TREES, blazing and shining with garlands of bright lights. . . . It's good neighbors saying hello and Merry Christmas and telephone calls from those away hoping we're happy. . . . It's mounds of Christmas cards from folks we know and have known bringing messages of cheer. . . . It's letters to Santa Claus and the eager faces of the little children as they scan the chimney opening and wonder if Santa will be squeezed too much when his big tummy's forced into the fireplace. . . . And there are letters like this: "I'm writing because I'm scared you will miss me again. . . . I have five sisters and four brothers and mommy hasn't got any money, and daddy's job has played out . . . and we don't have much of anything at all. . . . We live upstairs now." . . . And there are tears and broken dreams and skimpy living in a land of wasting crops.

IT'S CROWDED STREETS, busy shoppers, blue noses pressed against toy shop windows, it's rain, sunshine, clouds and shadows. . . . It's good food, rich wine, warmth and cheer. . . . It's Judea, and Bethlehem and Joseph and Mary and the trek across the hills, when Caesar sent out his tax notice. . . . It's the inn—crowded with politicians and their consorts, and feasting and merriment. . . . It's the stable and the Babe, and the birth of hope.

CHRISTMAS IS FIRECRACKERS, fast automobiles, airplanes and stilled wheels in the factory and mill. . . . It's the great bells in the lofty towers of the cathedrals, sounding the messages of peace, and the call from the belfry of a country church down the road. . . . It's gifts, and love and friendship and peace for a spell. . . . It's good friends, worn volumes, laughter and respect one for another.

IT'S FEAR and distrust and lack of direction as great nations eringe behind bristling armaments. . . . It's guided missiles and man-made satellites, and nuclear weapons. . . . It's bombers, jets, submarines, marching men, and college and university men and women concentrating on techniques of wholesale human destruction, in a glorious world in which there is so much for which to live. . . . It's the primitiveness of the jungle, the hate of the savage, the snarl of the tiger, brought up-to-date. . . . It's the lust of Napoleon, the greed of Alexander, the viciousness of Hitler and the irresponsibility of a lynching party, as the world envisions another maelstrom of blood and of fire, and of the carnage of death. . . . It's hate rampant and love incarnate.

IT'S THE FAITH OF A LITTLE CHILD and the doubts of frustrated old men. . . . It's the birthdate of our Blessed Lord, the ministry of the Prince of Peace, and the glow of hope which has lighted the centuries. . . . It's tinsel and glitter, lavishness, frugality, generosity and greed. . . . It's millions of voices singing songs of praise and deliverance. . . . It's merriment and frills and furbelows, and packages underneath piles of bright ribbon. . . . It's shouted Merry Christmas greetings along the streets and in the shops. . . . It's folks wanting to know how's the family. . . . It's shepherds keeping watch over their flocks and the glorious chorus of the Heavenly hosts.

IT'S CHRISTMAS . . . and its beginnings, and its everlastingness, and the Nazarine, and the words which glow even in the darkest night. . . . It's the toll and the travail, and the hesitancy, the fear, the interludes of rapture and joy, the faltering steps of the maimed, and the march of the strong, as the travelers move, with uncertainty and doubt, and faith and hope, toward His star.

So This Is New York

By NORTH CALLAHAN

Christmas in New York is a many-sided thing. It is a time of splendor such as only this city can offer, yet it is also a time of simplicity because so many of us come from small towns or the country and at this time of the year especially, our minds and hearts return to childhood scenes. Mine for instance was mainly that of a cozy country home and a farm which furnished all the delights that any Christmas needs—or needed then, at least. Among the many joyous activities was that of going into the fields and woods, hunting for and cutting down the Christmas tree. Its arrival in the midst of the delicious food preparations was a gala thing, and later it served as the festive center of a celebration replete with real stockings filled with apples and oranges and simple stick candy among the few little toys, and all before a cheerful roaring fireplace before which we dreamed and thought also of Him for whom this holiday was named.

Here, Christmas is a far cry from that boyhood home. New York is a wonderland of bright lights and gay colors. In many sections of the far-flung city, colorful overhead lights festoon the streets much as they probably do

Impressions of the Season: making our way along 5th Avenue with the children and trying to see just a sampling of the many merry things. . . . listening to Prof. Thomas F. Robinson at the New York Historical Society tell interestingly of Christmas customs in the United States. . . . chatting with (Continued on page eight)