

A SWITCH in TIME

MADGE ELWOOD

CORPORAL McNEW laid his whiskers on the window sill. It wasn't, he thought, military duty to play the role of Santa Claus at the garrison Christmas party. He couldn't, however, disobey his commanding officer. Nor did he want to after hearing about that vacancy for a corporal at the recruiting office in Kansas City. McNew had been born there. Marianne lived there now and only yesterday he'd heard that Marianne had been seen with a fireman.

The colonel, though, had made his role more difficult. "Er—" he'd drummed on the table with his fingers. "—I want you especially to convince my son. Make him believe that Santa Claus is really magic. My son is—er—fascinated by anything in the electrical line. He's been—er—quite disturbing. I've told him that Santa only gives presents to good boys. If you can encourage his belief, it'd help the regiment and—me."

He'd have to be a perfect Santa Claus, McNew thought. Sonny was very skeptical.

"Hello." Peeping in the window he saw the object of his worries.



Tiny lights gleamed about his whiskers.

accompanied by the regimental mascot—Henry, the goat. McNew slipped into a closet. Too late, he remembered his whiskers. The goat, as the regiment had learned, had an appetite. McNew's fears were confirmed when he emerged from the closet. The whiskers were gone, and he heard Sonny giggling. "I bet Santa Claus ain't magic."

enough to grow more whiskers. I bet he ain't magic at all. Dad doesn't know everything. Say, Daddy, I wonder if Santa Claus can see in the dark. I know how to turn off the switch—"

McNew sighed. Soldiers were supposed to be ingenious. McNew remembered some cotton fields nearby.

The band played a traditional Christmas carol. Corporal McNew stood beside a gaily decorated tree and began to distribute gifts to the children of the regiment. He called out Sonny's name. Then the lights went out.

He took a step backwards as tiny lights gleamed about his whiskers. Fireflies must have made their homes on the abandoned cotton he had plucked. McNew stepped on a package, stumbled and grabbed the tree for support. He caught a branch. Out of the darkness, he heard Sonny's voice: "Yes, Santa, here I am."

"Here—" McNew tried to hand the boy the package containing the electric train. A firefly rested on his whiskers. "Here, Santa Claus carries his own lights, you know."

"Is it magic?" asked Sonny. "And you grew more whiskers—"

McNew stumbled again, reached for support. The branch cracked and broke. Falling, he caught Sonny's hand. "Here!"

The lights went on. Sonny fled down the steps and McNew saw that the colonel was comforting a weeping boy. A corporal who'd given the colonel's son a switch for a Christmas gift would never be recommended for a recruiting job in his home town.

The annual event at last over, McNew painfully removed the cotton from his chin. His suffering was in vain.

The colonel wanted to see him. McNew hurried. His chin was sore and red, but he managed a salute. "Yes, sir."

"Did you ever act the part of Santa Claus before?"

"No, sir." McNew suppressed a sigh.

"Um—maybe that explains the fireflies and the switch." There was a curious note in the colonel's voice. McNew struggled to explain, but the colonel interrupted: "I hear you want that recruiting job in Kansas City. Under the circumstances, I've decided to recommend you. Sonny wants to visit his grandmother there and you can take care of him on the journey. His grandmother thinks that Sonny is a good boy. I expect you to—er—continue to be resourceful."

"Yes, sir." But McNew sighed. He wondered if snow could be used to advantage by a resourceful soldier in charge of an equally ingenious boy.

BUY MORE WAR BONDS

CONSERVATION FARMING

By R. E. DUNN,
Soil Conservationist

D. L. Gall, whose farm is located near Arbor church, built a diversion ditch last week between his steep pasture land and a cultivated field below. Mr. Gall said that water concentrated in the low places of the pasture and out washes through the cultivated land.

D. K. Green, whose farm is located up the Yadkin from Wilkesboro, plans to complete the clearing and grubbing of an area of upland which has been out over for lumber and get the area seeded to a pasture mixture next spring.

Ottis Holcomb, of Clingman, is terracing a field which he intends to seed to rye when the terracing is completed. Mr. Holcomb says he had this field in corn last summer and the heavy rains did so much damage that he decided he should do something to prevent the erosion in the future.

Summit Vicinity Items of Interest

Rev. Henry Smith filled his regular appointment at Yellow Hill church Saturday and Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Green visited their daughter, Mrs. V. M. Church, and Mrs. Spencer Blackburn, last week at Purlear.

Mr. and Mrs. Coy Church, of Purlear, visited their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Lee J. Church, and Mr. J. A. Keys, Sunday.

Mrs. Martha Mikeal spent Saturday night with her son, Mr. and Mrs. N. C. Mikeal.

Pfc. Burl Mikeal, who was visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Mikeal, started back to camp Friday.

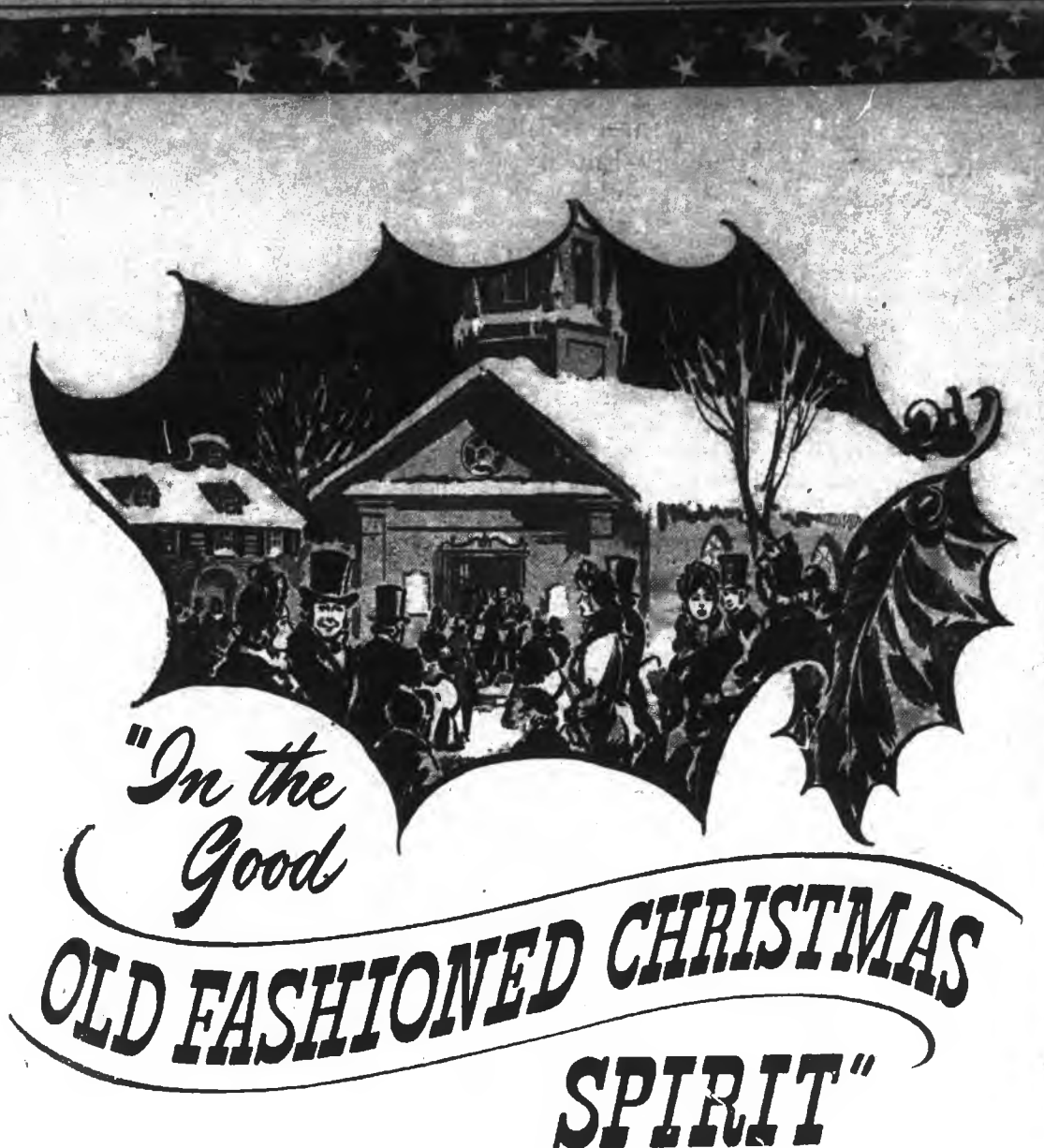
Mr. Lynn Church, who has been working at Gastonia, is now visiting his uncle, Mr. Steve Church, during Christmas.

Mr. and Mrs. Aldrien Green visited Mrs. Green's uncle, Mr. Lee J. Church, Sunday afternoon.

Mr. Johnson Church spent Sunday night with his brother, Mr. Coy Church, of Purlear.

BUY MORE WAR BONDS

This is a family war. Put your War Bond buying through the payroll savings plan on a family plan, which means figure it out yourself.



The people of these United States have observed 167 Christmases since the Declaration of Independence . . . and before that, there were about 175 years of pioneering, during which, amid all sorts of odds, the families within this land's shores celebrated the merry holiday.

This wartime Christmas finds us with much to be solemn about—much to fight for, and much to pray for. But there have been Christmases before . . . when things seemed even darker for us.

So with the true American spirit of fortitude, inner gaiety and deeply rooted faith, we're going to celebrate this December 25th in the good old fashioned Christmas spirit.

Holly in our windows; festively trimmed trees; remembrances for everyone—especially the children—Christmas carols—and above all, Christmas services in Church, where we'll bow and extend the season's greetings to friends and neighbors.

That's Christmas, American style! That's the way our fighting men around the world like to think of it. That's the way they, too, will spend next Christmas—at home—if each of us does everything in our power to speed Victory!

Spainhour's

It's Another



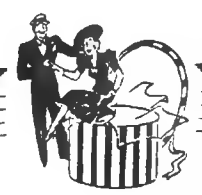
From the times of our forefathers, America has enjoyed a traditional Christmas. It has always been and will always continue to be a festive season of good fellowship and good cheer. It is a time for remembering friends and loved ones, one to give thanks for those blessings which America enjoys.

Although our lives have been affected by circumstances and events within the past months, the spirit of Christmas remains unchanged. From the pleasures of the Yuletide season today we gain strength with which to meet the problems of tomorrow. From the thoughtfulness of those whom we hold dear, we obtain a sense of well being and a desire to create greater achievements.

The American Christmas must remain traditional regardless of conditions and events. It is our obligation to keep alive the glorious customs that have been the predominating factor of the American Christmas for many, many years.

Let us be happy and considerate of others this Christmas so that we may obtain the greatest enjoyment the season offers. This is our Christmas.

WARMEST GREETINGS



Band Box Cleaners

Mrs. S. B. Moore, Owner B. Moore, Manager