

SOUTHERN PINES

TOURIST

VOL. IV, No. 5. SOUTHERN PINES, N. C., FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1906. 5c. COPY. \$1 YEAR

THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

Clear, cold weather—very cold for Southern Pines, in spots—has marked the holiday season and made visitors from the North feel at home, except that a little snow would have made the season seem a bit more like the real thing.

A gentleman who keeps his eyes open discovered a sizeable cake of ice that had formed in some exposed place and brought it triumphantly into the Tourist office to show that the South could, on occasions, produce even this commodity, but the very fact of its rarity tells the story. Southern Pines has a cold snap now and then, but it is only a fragment broken off some blizzard that locks the North, hand and foot, in its icy grasp.

Southern Pines had a few frozen pipes Monday morning, but, in most cases, the noonday sun thawed them out and cheated the plumber. The mercury fell to 15 or 16 above zero Monday morning, but that was vastly different from 20 or 25 below, lasting in some cases for a week.

Then, however cold the morning may be, there are several hours at mid-day when the air is not at all uncomfortable, and persons who do not enjoy extreme cold may spend a portion of each day out of doors.

Christmas Sunday was fittingly observed in all the churches, good congregations being present, the pastors of the several churches occupying their own pulpits and preaching sermons appropriate to the day.

Late Monday afternoon the Tourist made a tour of the town and found everybody busy, the shops full of eager buyers and a general air of good feeling pervading everything and dominating everybody. It mattered very little what kind of shop it was, the whole force seemed to be on the jump. Arthur J. Thomas reported that his business just about equaled that of last year. J. L. Smith & Son were so busy that the Tourist man had to drop into a trot and ask his questions while trying to keep up with Mr. Smith as he hurried from the sugar barrel to the candy counter. "How's business?" quoth the grocer. "Well, how does it look? Been this way all day. Have not had time since dinner to get my overcoat off." The

Tourist caught Flint leaning against a counter to get his breath. His word was: "The store has done one-third more business this Christmas season than last. Mrs. Hayes reported herself about even with last year, possibly a little better. Wells is doing as well this year as last, and the final figures may show that this season has exceeded last. Patch & Richardson have done a fine business, certainly equal to, and they think better than last season. In answer to the question, "How's business?" Mr. Kapitzke replied, "Fine, couldn't ask anything better."

While all the stores were doing a good business, the News Depot was, of course, the Mecca of most shoppers. No matter where else they went their shopping was not complete until they had seen what Hayes had to offer and all the floor space was crowded almost every hour of the day. A large force of clerks was kept busy from early

forenoon until late at night attending to the wants of customers. It was a good natured crowd, as befitted the season of good will and fine fellowship. The News Depot never gave its patrons such a large, varied and well selected stock before and Mr. Hayes sold as many goods the "day before" as last year. Indeed, with the exception of a few days last week, the past month has shown surprisingly good figures, fully equal to other seasons. Eaton's dainty parlors were filled with seekers after the things in which the shop deals, and all were pleased with the store, stock and bargains. Mrs. Sanderson was offering many things that make acceptable gifts and did a good business.

On the whole, the Tourist was much pleased and somewhat surprised to be led to the conclusion that the Christmas business had been at least equal to that of last year. With some it was better, with some about the same, with one or two there may be a slight falling off, but, on the whole, those who have been feeling and talking blue in regard to the prospects of the present season will do well to revise their opinions.

It is doubtful if there are quite as many people in Southern Pines as last year at the same time. It

will be remembered that the early part of last season was the best and those who are in position to form reliable judgments believe that the present season will prove to be one of the best Southern Pines has known. The last time Major Gattis, the popular Traveling Passenger Agent of the Seaboard Air Line, was in the Tourist office he voluntarily expressed his conviction that the present season would be an excellent one, a big one, as he put it.

Each year it is harder to get people to leave their homes until the holiday joys and family reunions are over; ready then they are for a trip to the South, especially if the weather in the North is of sufficient severity to render the milder climate of the South attractive. This winter the weather is doing its full duty by the South, in that everything seems to indicate that the North is to have a normal winter and everybody knows what that means.

Just now the South is having such cold as it rarely suffers, Raleigh beating its record for nineteen years and Southern Pines recording one of its lowest temperatures, but it will soon be over, and even while it lasts the air is dry and lacking in the penetrating chill that makes cold weather doubly cold in moist climates.

The holidays have used the Tourist very well. A large number of new subscriptions have been received, scarcely one old subscription has dropped out, work has been plentiful, the Tourist's Christmas cards, late on the market, have had a fine sale, and calls for the booklet have been steady and large, both at the office and by mail. One dealer in town has been stocked up three times since the book was issued. To all its patrons and friends the Tourist extends the compliments of the season.

The Blue and the Gray

At a recent meeting of the committee of the local Blue and Gray Executive Committee it was decided to hold a second campfire and reunion this year, and Thursday, March 28, was selected as the date. The details are yet to be worked out, but everybody will be glad that this popular event is not to be omitted this season.

SIGNIFICANT CONTRACT

After February 1 next the American Bank Note Company will manufacture all United States postage stamps. Under a contract made public recently the concern must deliver 27,000,000 stamps daily six times a week.

The American Bank Note Company made the first postage stamps used by the Government and held the contract up to thirteen years ago. At that time the Government went into the business itself by manufacturing the Columbian issue, and down to this day the Bureau of Printing and Engraving has turned out all stamps. According to Warren L. Green, president of the Bank Note Company, the Government decided to employ a private institution again because it can do the work cheaper.

The Government is to pay the American Bank Note Company \$.055 for each thousand stamps, which is two mills less than the estimate of the Bureau of Printing and Engraving. It will get ten cents a thousand, however, for special-delivery stamps.

It might be interesting to some of our readers to enter into a computation, based upon the foregoing contract, in favor of the American Bank Note Company.

Daily output	27,000,000
Weekly output	162,000,000
Yearly output	8,424,000,000
Government pays for this output at 5½ c. per thousand	4,633,200
Government gets from sale of these stamps	168,480,000
Profit after paying the cost of the same to the American Bank Note Company	163,846,800

It might be interesting to know how this very large fund is distributed resulting in an annual deficit. It is a matter of public notoriety that mail transportation is out of all proportion to the value of the service rendered. In 1865 we paid for such service \$6,246,884. In 1904 we paid \$69,200,197, which is proof positive that mail transportation is greatly excessive, and the Postoffice Department is victimized by the railroads in a manner that is becoming offensive. The Government could equip its own trains and run them for much less money. The compensation to postmasters in 1904 was \$22,273,344. Conceding that to be normal there should be a profit of \$100,000,000 annually in favor of the Government.

GEORGE H. LOCKY.