

# Christmas Questions Unanswered

*(Editor's Note: This revealing feature article is written by A. F. Jenaps, manager of the Morehead Planetarium in Chapel Hill.)*

There are many unanswered questions about Christmas. Christmas marks the birth of Jesus Christ, but on exactly what day, in what month, or in what year He was born is not definitely known.

Other unanswered questions include: How many wise men were there? Why did Joseph and Mary remain in Bethlehem several months after the birth of Jesus? How long did the "Star of Bethlehem" hover above? What made Christianity settle upon December 25 as the birthday? Were shepherds in the pasture in mid-winter?

All this may seem superfluous at this heart lifting season, but church authorities, historians, and

scientists have pondered for centuries to obtain the answers.

The Gospels give the meaningful part of the story, but over the years human urge has caused people to reduce the weightier truths to tangible things, such as dates and places in accurate chronological order.

One thing scholars definitely agree upon is that Christ was not born in the year 1 A.D. It was at least four or five years, and may be even seven years earlier.

And the wise men were not at the manger scene. They did not appear with their gifts until weeks or months or probably a year later. Too, some of the authorities suggest they were 12 rather than three in number.

However, supplementing Gospel accounts and histories written in the beginning years of Christianity with other ancient recorded data, some historically based conclusions can be drawn.

First, it is evident Jesus was born prior to 4 B. C., since that is the year of the death of Herod the Great, who ordered infants under two years of age be killed to try to eliminate the Christ child. And he learned of the child

from the wise men of the East. So, it is reasonable to conclude that Jesus could have been many months, maybe a year old, at that time.

If these wise men came from the Persia or Chaldea, that was a trip of at least 1,000 miles. It must have taken many months. That would suggest Jesus was born as far back as 5 or 6 B. C.

That, too, brings up the "Star of Bethlehem." In that period, ancient astronomers recorded a spectacular light in the night skies. We now know that could have been the conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn in 7 B. C. or the configuration of Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars in 6 B. C.

The conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn in 7 B. C., however, is thought by many early writers to have been the potent sign, seen by both the Jews in Bethlehem and the Magi in the Far East. Nothing else is known to astronomers that might have occurred and might have been taken by the Magi as a sign. It would have served to send them on their way to discover the meaning of it.

The search for the answers has been traditional. Equally as traditional are the closing lines the narrators speak in the Morehead Planetarium's annual tribute to Christmas. They are:

"Of course, there will always be those of us who will prefer to believe that the 'Star of Bethlehem' was a miracle, given only to the eyes of the wise men to see.

"But is it after all important to know what the 'Star of Bethlehem' was? The important facts are that Jesus was born, that he dwelt on earth for a time with men, and that His teachings have altered the history of the world."

## A S C ITEMS

### Return Cards

Out of the 191 burley marketing cards issued to Macon producers, 44 cards have been returned to the county office. All cards have been mailed to producers. Marketing cards should be returned to the office as soon as sales are completed for the farm and in no case later than 30 days after the local markets close. Failure to return a card will result in the coming year's allotment for the farm being reduced. The cards should be returned in person or they can be mailed to the A.S.C. office.

### Soil Tests

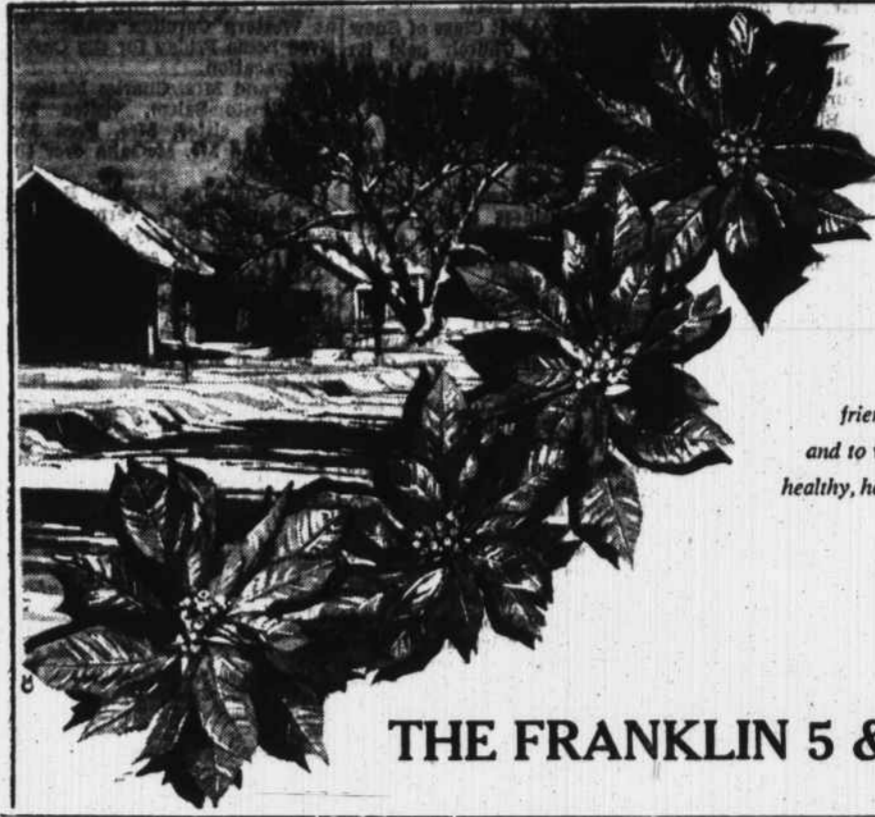
With spring planting just around the corner, farmers would be wise to take soil samples now

and submit them to the laboratory in Raleigh for testing. This is the only way to determine the needs of the soil. By not taking a soil sample you stand a chance of over-feeding or under feeding your soil. Information sheets and soil cartons are available free at the A. S. C. office and the personnel will assist you in mailing the soil containers to the Soil Testing Laboratory, State College Station, Raleigh, N. C.

### Reports Needed

In checking out the 1959 ACP records, A.S.C. finds that several farmers in Macon need to make a report on the use of the material they received through the A.S.C. office. This is called a performance report. All material should be used and reported to the office by December 31, 1959. This report can be made by visiting the office and signing the necessary form or farmers may sign and mail the pink form that was given them with purchase orders.

The Soil Conservation Service reports that about 93,000 Tar Heel farmers are cooperating with soil conservation districts in protecting and improving their lands and in managing water on their farms.



# GREETINGS

Here's a holiday tradition we really cherish . . . time out to tell you how much your loyal friendship and patronage mean to us and to wish you and your family a very healthy, happy and cheerful festive season!

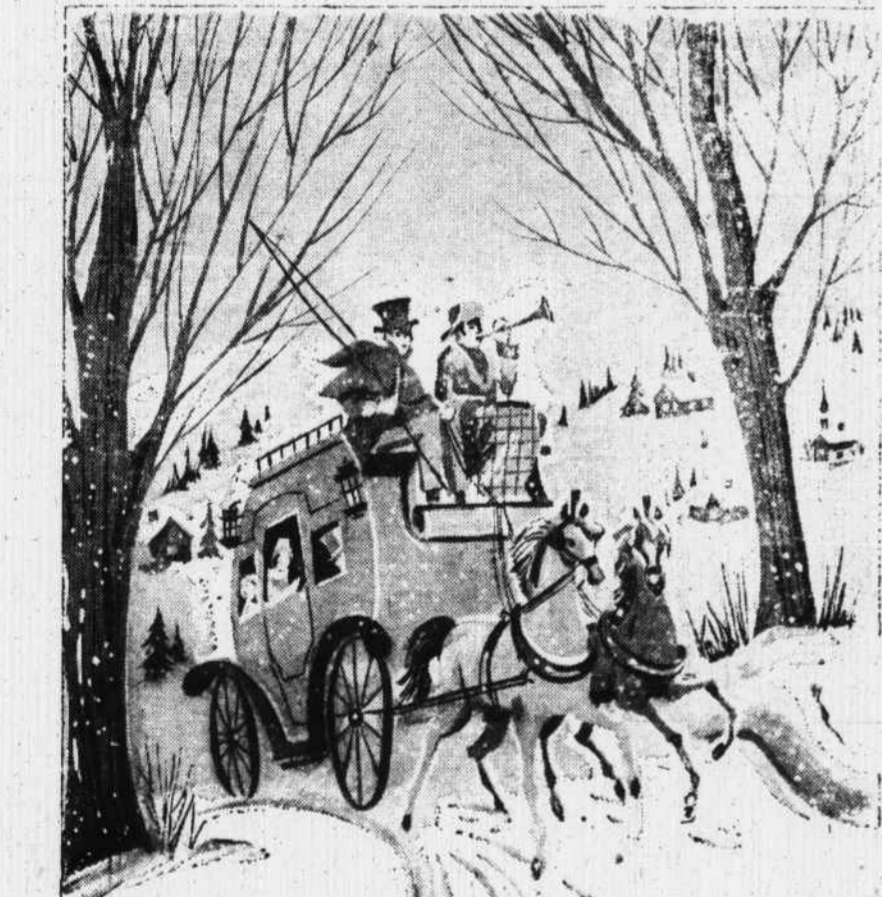
THE FRANKLIN 5 & 10¢ STORE



At this special time we're sending your way, warmest wishes for Holiday pleasure and joy. May this be the merriest of Yuletides for you and yours.

The Quality Shop

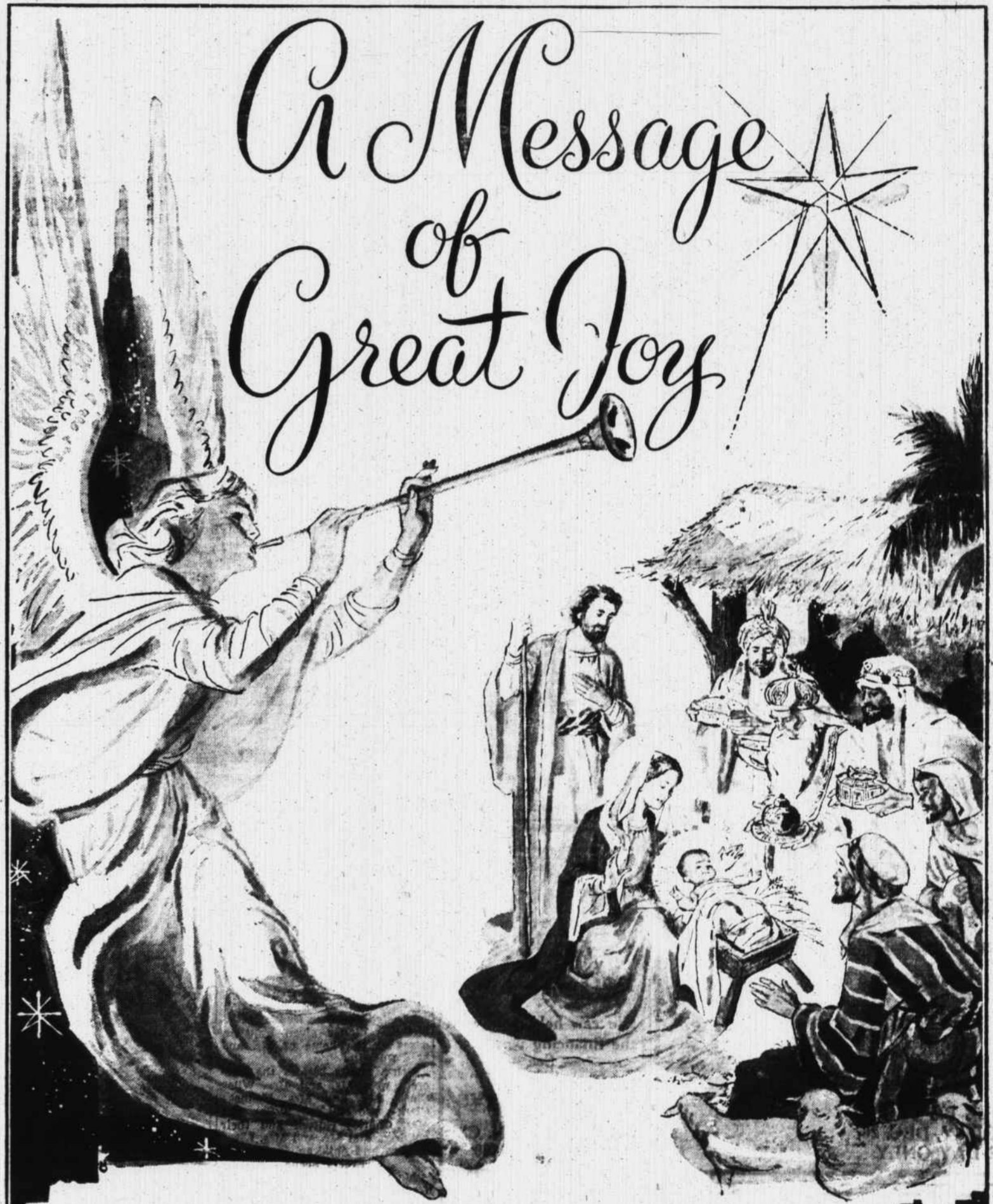
Georgia Highway South



# Season's Greetings

Away we go, full speed ahead! We just couldn't wait another minute to tell you how deeply we appreciate your loyal friendship and patronage and to extend to you and your family our very warmest wishes for a holiday season bright with all the great blessings life has to offer!

Nantahala Creamery  
Franklin, N. C.



"...and suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest... on earth Peace, Good Will toward Men..."

Let us rejoice, for once again Christmas brings us the guiding faith of Peace and Good Will to All, and the high inspiration of His holy message. To our many good friends, we send heartfelt greetings, with the wish that all may enjoy a most blessed Christmas, in the company of family and friends . . . singing the old familiar carols . . . hearing again the well-loved, spirit-lifting words of the Christmas story.

Zickgraf Hardwood Company  
Nantahala Lumber Company  
Franklin Machine Shop