

stories that shed light on Christmas

The good St. Nicholas would often make his appearance... riding jolly among the treetops, or over the roofs of houses, now and then drawing forth magnificent presents from his breeches pockets, and dropping them down the chimneys of his favorites.

Diedrich Knickerbocker's History of New York, by Washington Irving

From a telegram by General Sherman to President Lincoln, Christmas Day, 1864: "I beg to present to you as a Christmas gift the city of Savannah."

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.

— Luke II, 10 and 11

A miner's Christmas dinner in the Rockies, 1858: pork, elk, antelope, buffalo, grizzly bear, squirrel, prairie dog and mountain rat; then swan, crane and quail.

England's Henry V lifted the siege of Rouen just long enough to permit food to get through for a Christmas celebration.

There is no record of Jesus' birthdate. Some early church scholars urged that it be celebrated in January. Others pressed for March, April, or September. If, as Luke reports, shepherds were in the fields at night watching over their flocks, the Nativity must have occurred during a warm season. In winter, the sheep slept in folds.

The industrial revolution sharply cut back the traditional twelve days of Christmas. Massachusetts, in deference to the Puritan tradition, didn't declare Christmas Day a legal holiday until 1856. But in the agricultural south, where December was a slack season, the slaves were on holiday as long as the Christmas log could be kept burning — sometimes more than a week.

Hessian soldiers had introduced the Christmas tree to Americans during the Revolutionary War, but it was 1856 before the first tree was put in the White House, by President Franklin Pierce. Several thousand years earlier, the Egyptians brought date palms indoors during their winter solstice rites, to demonstrate life triumphant over death. The Romans trimmed trees with trinkets and masks of Bacchus during the Saturnalia.

So, life might well be likened to a race, rather than a stance. For Jesus did not say, "I am the position, but 'I am the way...' and the first name given to those who followed the resurrected Lord was "followers of the Way." Christianity was not intended to be a fall-out shelter, country club, or asylum for the fearful, but a people of God on the run in the midst of a great race. Whether that race is a "wild goosechase" or the winning of a crown of laurels depends upon the way we run it.

Russ Boyle, my track coach in high school, had a maxim which he never tired giving to his runners: "Don't look back!" That may seem an



SEE THEM ON TV - The Hoke High School Chorale will appear on a television show featuring choral groups from across the state to be aired Dec. 23 at 7-30 on Channel 4.



Several decades ago an enterprising songwriter used a beautiful melody by Frederick Chopin as the basis for a song we still occasionally hear today. "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows" was one of Perry Como's biggest hits. Hundreds of thousands of people have sung, hummed, or heard this as a pleasant song. Yet I wonder how many have ever stopped to think of the plaintive message behind that beautiful tune?

As Perry Como sang the song, it all sounded very beautiful, but when you begin to consider the words by themselves, there is nothing beautiful about the experience of which they speak. Life, says the song, is a "race," a "wild goosechase" of chasing one "rainbow" after another.

Paul also saw life as a race, but he saw it in much more positive terms. He described life in terms that could easily be understood by any first century A.D. sports fan: "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." He had been even more pointed in his allusion to running in 1 Corinthians 9: "So run that you may obtain it (the prize)." (24b.) Later the writer of Hebrews would also urge: "...let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us..." (12:1).

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Hoke High Downs Clinton

The Bucks downed Clinton 74 - 57 Friday night in their first conference match of the season.

The Hoke five jumped off to an early 14 point lead and then hit a cold spell in the second quarter. During a three-minute period without a field goal by the Bucks, the Clinton Dark Horses took command of the shooting, outscoring Hoke 18 to 9 in the second quarter.

The Bucks field a two-point lead at the half.

Sparked by the shooting of Russell Davis and James McLeod, the Bucks came back in the second half to take over the game. Davis dumped in 19 points in the last half of the game and McLeod added 14. The two Bucks were high

scorers for the game with 22 points each. David Wood had 13 points.

Clinton's Jackie Robinson scored 15 points. Bobby Kirby and Vincent Harper were both in the double figures with 14 and 12 respectively.

Raeftord's JV's dropped their game to Clinton 58 to 42.

The Bucks will play a home game Jan. 5 against Rockingham. They now hold a conference record of 1 - 0 and a 4 - 4 record for the season.

Raeftord (74) - McLeod 22, Davis 22, Howell 13, Wood 7, G. Hollingsworth 5, B. Hollingsworth 2, McGregor 2, Clinton (57) - Robinson 15, Kirby 14, Harper 12, McCallop 6, Grice 4, Platt 3, Parker 3.

Veterans Corner

EDITOR'S NOTE: Below are authoritative answers by the Veterans Administration to some of the many current questions from former servicemen and their families. Further information on veterans benefits may be obtained at any VA office.

Q - I am 20 years old, attending college and drawing \$175 per month War Orphans benefits. Will my benefits be discontinued when I marry in December?

A - No. If otherwise eligible, you may still draw the War Orphans benefits even though you marry.

Q - May I obtain a G.I. home loan as investment property only?

A - No. The law requires that you live in it as your home.

Q - My brother is drawing 100 per cent disability from the VA due to service-connected injuries. He is planning to move to Mexico City. Will his pension be discontinued if he lives anywhere outside of the United States?

A - No it will not. He may live outside the United States and continue to receive VA benefits. While there are some exceptions, Mexico City is not one of them.



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to all of you from us

Mr. & Mrs. Israel Mann

May the gladness and cheer of the HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON Bring much happiness to you!

C.P. Long Bait & Tackle

It is our sincere wish that happiness and prosperity find their way into the homes of our friends and remain with them throughout the coming year.

CLARK'S GULF SERVICE
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Hope your Christmas is up to par in every way!

ARABIA GOLF CLUB
THE BROWN HENDRIX FAMILY

We wish you the good cheer of this holiday season. And may the New Year bring to your family success and lasting happiness.

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