

Colonial Christmases Were Festive Occasions

Although the earliest American Christmases were rather grim due to the fact that the Pilgrims disapproved of celebrating the holiday, Christmas in the colonies in time was generally pretty festive.

There were no Christmas trees, as the German custom was not introduced into this country until the 1880s, but in other ways, Americans made merry.

In Williamsburg, Virginia, for instance, the celebrating began a week before Christmas and lasted until Twelfth Night, or January 5. Festivities included caroling, dancing and much feasting.

The holiday season was ushered in with a huge bonfire and candles were lit in every window, while fiddlers and singers filled the air with music.

Balls, fox-hunts, and visits between neighbors and family set the tone for the social season in colonial Virginia during the holidays.

The Dutch who settled in Manhattan Island brought over their Christmas customs from Holland, including the legend of Sante Klaas. So intent were the Dutch on celebrating Christmas that all Council meetings were called off from December 14 to three weeks after Christmas!

In Maryland, the many Catholic settlers brought holiday customs from their native England to keep a merry Christmas, too.

Food, of course, was an important element in all colonial celebrations, although it varied in ethnicity. The Dutch, for instance,

avored doughnuts, sweet cakes, short cakes and ginger cakes, fruit pies, preserves, fried shad, roasted chicken and bowls of milk and cream.

Virginians feasted on roast turkey with grapes, kumquats, roast beef, cranberry mold, spiced crab apples and glazed sweet potato slices.

Christmas Day itself always centered around church services, ranging from morning worship to midnight mass, with churches festively decorated and voices raised in praise of the season.

Because colonial settlers were often widely scattered, greetings at Christmastime were likely to be sent by way of musket fire. This custom of firing muskets, as a matter of fact, has evolved into setting off firecrackers in some parts of the south today.

Although the colonial Christmas did not have Santa as we know him, or a tree, or gift-giving to the extent of modern times, it was a time of joy. A poem published in the *Virginia Almanack* during Colonial times expressed it best:

"Christmas is come, hang on the pot,

Let spits turn round, and ovens be hot;

Beef, pork, and poultry, now provide

To feast thy neighbours at this tide;

Then wash all down with good wine and beer

And so with mirth conclude the year."



The First Noel Born Is The King

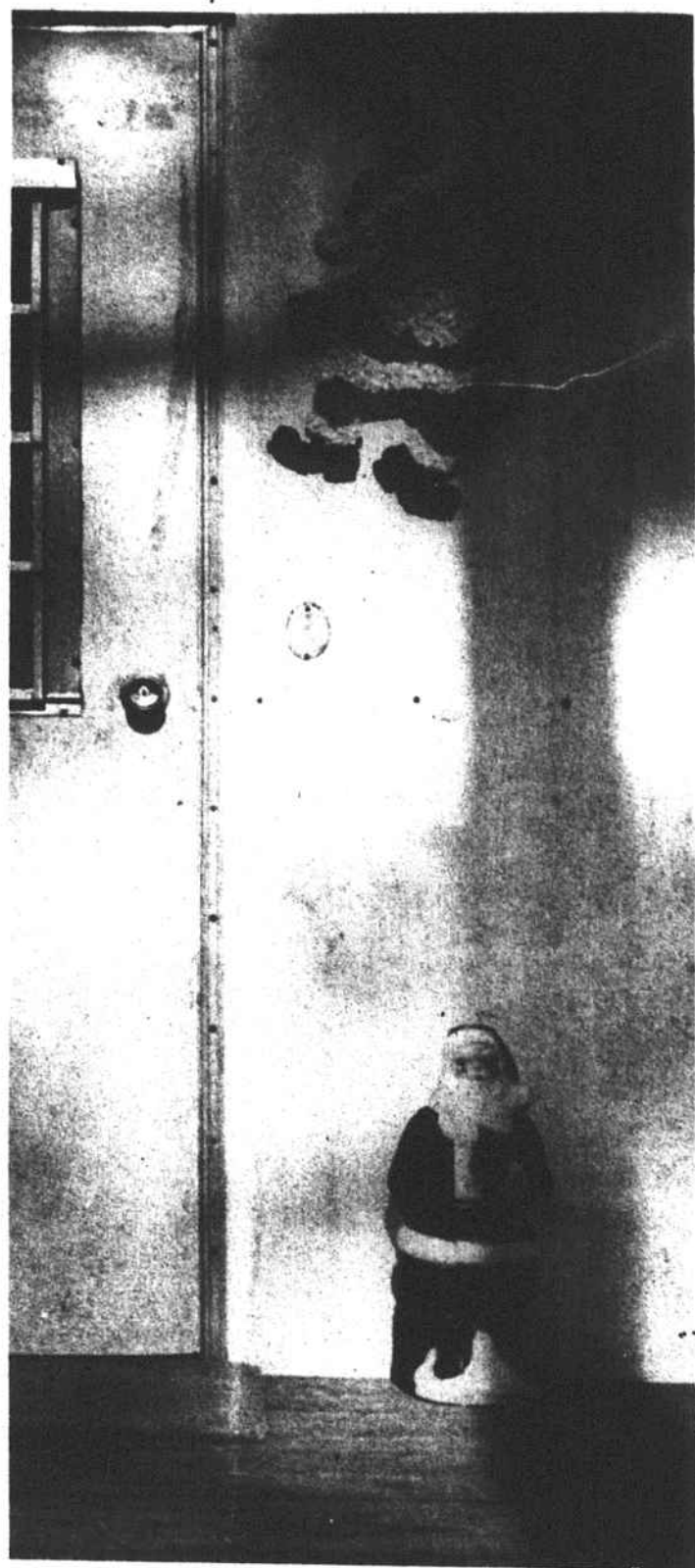
The first noel the angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep
On a cold winter's night that was so deep
Noel, noel, noel, noel, Born is the King of Israel.

They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east, beyond them far
And to the earth it gave great light
And so it continued both day and night.
Noel, noel, noel, noel, Born is the King of Israel.

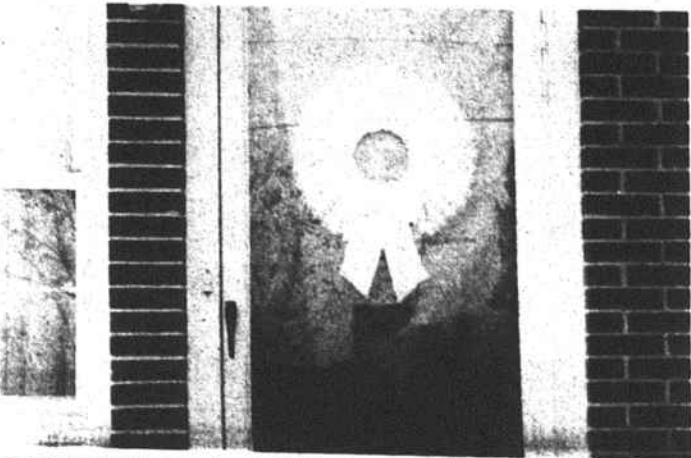
And by the light of that same star
Three Wise men came from country far
To seek for a King was their intent
And to follow the star wherever it went.
Noel, noel, noel, noel, Born is the King of Israel.

This star drew nigh to the northwest
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest
And there it did both stop and stay
Right over the place where Jesus lay.
Noel, noel, noel, noel, Born is the King of Israel.

Then enter'd in those Wise men three
Fell rev'rently upon their knee,
And offer'd there, in His presence
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense.
Noel, noel, noel, noel, Born is the King of Israel.



Bruce and Myrtle Swann's mobile home near Rockfish.



HANDMADE -- Handmade Christmas wreath decorates the front door of State Trooper and Mrs. R.V. Lee's home on Cole Avenue Extension, Raeford. Mrs. Lee made the wreath.

Greetings

We thank all of our loyal patrons and wish everyone a very Merry Christmas. We hope we can share many more Christmases together!

Candlestick Crafts
ELWOOD AVE.
BETTY GILL

Greetings

A hearty "thank you" to all our Patrons...may this Christmas be your merriest ever!

Edenborough Restaurant
Earl McDuffie

HAPPY HOLIDAY

As the Yuletide bells ring out their message of good cheer, we extend our best wishes to our good friends and patrons.

McGinnis
Plumbing & Supply
112 S. Main

HOLIDAY GREETINGS

May Christmas bring contentment to your heart, the best of health, good luck and good will to everyone.

Arabia Cash Mart & Auto Sales
Arabia, N.C.

NOEL

Hope you have a joyous Christmas and a New Year of hope and peace. We've enjoyed having you as our customers.

Tuttle Repair Service

Merry Christmas

Our best wishes for a joyous Noel to all our wonderful patrons. May the best of the Holiday Season be yours!

Jones Intercable
Red Springs, N.C.