

## The Yancey Record

Established July, 1936

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PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY BY  
YANCEY PUBLISHING Company

Second Class Postage Paid at Burnsville, N. C.

THURSDAY, DEC. 23, 1965 NUMBER SEVENTEEN

SUBSCRIPTION RATES \$2.50 PER YEAR

# The Night Before Christmas

By CLEMENT C. MOORE

'Twas the night before Christmas,  
when all through the house  
Not a creature was stirring,  
not even a mouse;

The stockings were hung  
by the chimney with care,  
In hopes that St. Nicholas  
soon would be there;

The children were nestled  
all snug in their beds,  
While visions of sugar-plums  
danced in their heads;  
And Mamma in her 'kerchief,  
and I in my cap,  
Had just settled our brains  
for a long winter's nap,

When out on the lawn  
there arose such a clatter,  
I sprang from the bed  
to see what was the matter.

Away to the window  
I flew like a flash,  
Tore open the shutters  
and threw up the sash.

The moon on the breast  
of the new-fallen snow  
Gave the luster of midday  
to objects below,

When, what to my  
wondering eyes should appear,  
But a miniature sleigh,  
and eight tiny reindeer,

With a little old driver,  
so lively and quick,  
I knew in a moment  
it must be St. Nick.

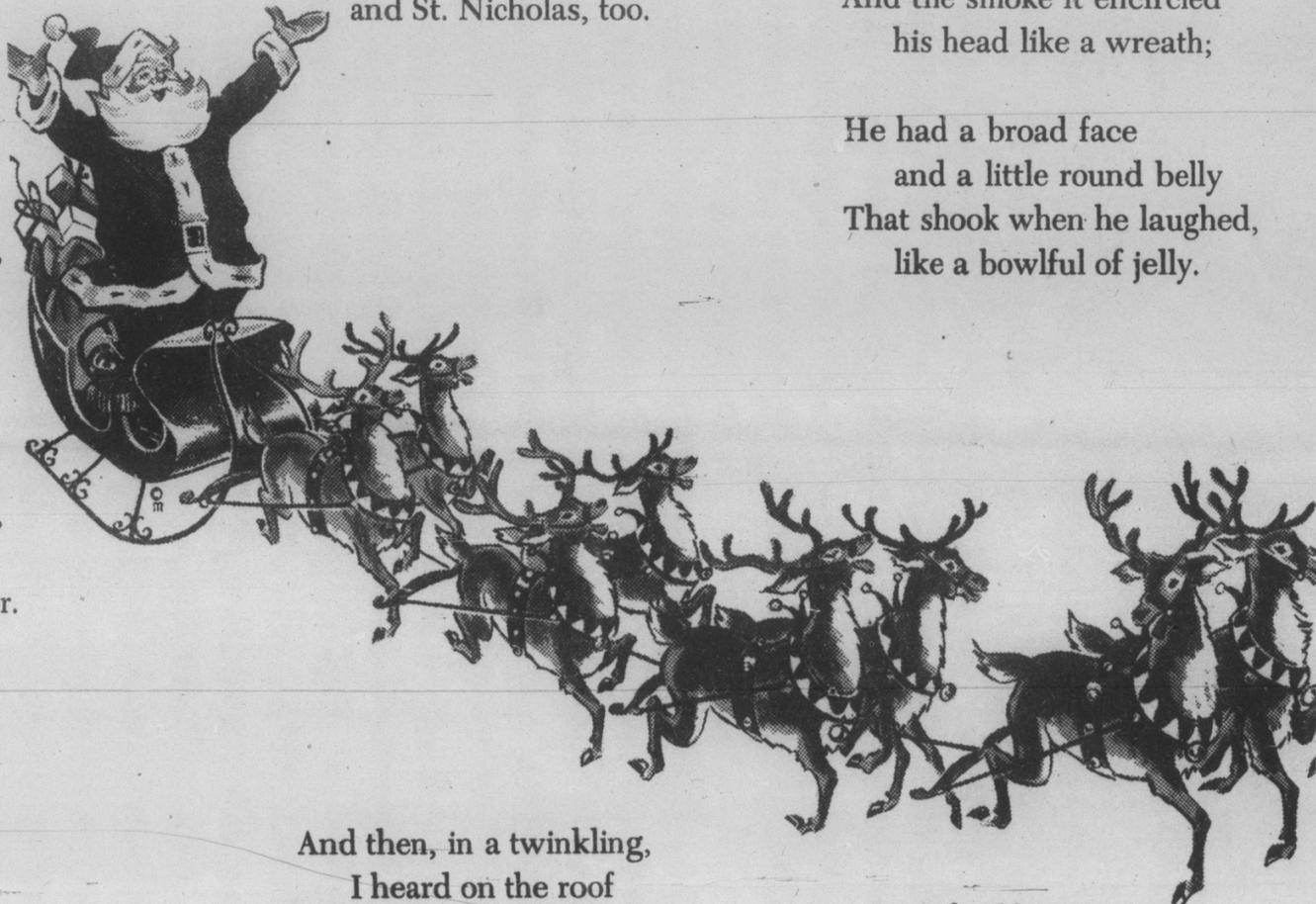
More rapid than eagles  
his coursers they came,  
And he whistled, and shouted,  
and called them by name:

"Now, *Dasher!* now, *Dancer!*  
now, *Prancer* and *Vixen!*  
On, *Comet!* on, *Cupid!*  
on, *Donder* and *Blitzen!*

To the top of the porch!  
to the top of the wall!  
Now dash away! dash away!  
dash away all!"

As dry leaves that before  
the wild hurricane fly,  
When they meet with an obstacle,  
mount to the sky,

So up to the housetop  
the coursers they flew,  
With the sleigh full of toys,  
and St. Nicholas, too.



And then, in a twinkling,  
I heard on the roof  
The prancing and pawing  
of each little hoof.

As I drew in my head,  
and was turning around,  
Down the chimney St. Nicholas  
came with a bound.

He was dressed all in fur,  
from his head to his foot,  
And his clothes were all tarnished  
with ashes and soot;

A bundle of toys  
he had flung on his back,  
And he looked like a peddler  
just opening his pack.

His eyes — how they twinkled!  
his dimples how merry!  
His cheeks were like roses,  
his nose like a cherry!

He was chubby and plump,  
a right jolly old elf,  
And I laughed when I saw him,  
in spite of myself;

His droll little mouth  
was drawn up like a bow,  
And the beard on his chin  
was as white as the snow;

The stump of a pipe  
he held tight in his teeth,  
And the smoke it encircled  
his head like a wreath;

He had a broad face  
and a little round belly  
That shook when he laughed,  
like a bowlful of jelly.

A wink of his eye  
and a twist of his head  
Soon gave me to know  
I had nothing to dread.

He spoke not a word,  
but went straight to his work,  
And filled all the stockings;  
then turned with a jerk,

He sprang to his sleigh,  
to his team gave a whistle,  
And away they all flew  
like the down of a thistle.

And laying his finger  
aside of his nose,  
And giving a nod,  
up the chimney he rose;

But I heard him exclaim,  
ere he drove out of sight,  
"Happy Christmas to all  
and to all a good night."