

MURPHY LIBRARY  
MURPHY N C SAMPLE

## Excursion Into Christmas

(Editor's note: The following article by Mrs. Barbara Sampson was written when she was a student at Carson Newman College. She submitted it for publication at the time it was written, but it was turned down. The article has been published in the current issue of "Friends" magazine. Mrs. Sampson is now the Journalism teacher at Hiwassee Dam High School.)

By Mrs. Barbara Sampson  
CHRISTMAS EVE is no time for tears, but I was crying. Great wet drops stole down my cheeks, soaking my collar. I bit back a gulp and squared my shoulders, trying to be brave. But how can you be brave when you have just had your whole world yanked from under you?

Again I re-lived the moment of no more than fifteen minutes before when Dr. Hoffmeier had dealt his blow: "Let this be the last lesson, Marcie," he had ordered gruffly. My stammered why brought the wreck of dreams that had been close and real since the first time I tucked a violin under my chin and pulled a bow quaveringly across the strings.

"I can teach you no more," he had said. "Your technique is perfect. You are a machine playing a violin flawlessly—but there is no heart—no soul." He waved a wrinkled old hand to silence my protest.

"I do not mean you are a heartless girl. You are kind and good. You have done all I have asked, but I cannot teach you soul. That will come, or it will not come. Perhaps it is only that you are young. One grows with living."

I'd stumbled under my violin clutched under my arm. For ten years—ever since I was a small girl—I had come three times a week to the stuffy little room where the once famous old man condescended to take pupils, but only pupils with promise. Now I was denied, shut out, the technically perfect little violin-playing machine that Dr. Hoffmeier would no longer permit to come for lessons.

AS I SHUFFLED along the street, I felt the cold, sharp sting of snowflakes on my cheeks. Snow on Christmas eve—the perfect touch—and yet I had no joy in thinking of white Christmas, the shining tree, laughing with my parents and younger brothers and sisters.

Gone was even the excitement of the family trek to the candlelighting service at the church in the dim darkness of early Christmas morning. Now all the world was dark, dire, ugly, with no future with my violin carrying me to heights that I had dreamed of for so long.

The streets narrowed, becoming crowded. I realized this as a man jostled me, almost knocking the case from my hand. He caught it firmly, saying "Sorry." I looked into a working-man's face, etched with worry lines. "That would have been the final straw," he said.

"Everything's gone wrong lately, but if I'd had to try

to replace your instrument..." "No harm done," I murmured, trying to smile reassuringly.

The shock of seeing someone else made me look around. Then I realized my feet had led me into a section of the city where the poor huddled together in need and hunger. The feet hurrying by wore broken, run-over shoes that made me shiver with shared discomfort. A pair of worn scarlet sandals suddenly rushed by—a dancer racing to her job at the cheap dance hall at the end of the street. Two small children clung together before a toy shop, noses tight against the frosty glass. A broken man slouched at a lamppost. Somehow I knew that in all the world he had no place to go, no one to wish him Merry Christmas.

A girl no older than I struggled up the street, a fat baby in one arm, a huge, pink, stuffed poodle in the other. She slipped, and, in protecting the baby, dropped the toy to the wet pavement. I scooped it up quickly and wiped it clean. "I don't think it's hurt," I said, helping her get it safely settled again in the crook of her arm. "No," she said gratefully. "You picked it up so quickly before it could be ruined. This is Earl's first Christmas, and this was all we could give him."

"And your love," I heard myself say, and I saw an almost angelic smile blossom on the other girl's face. "That was good!" a trembling old voice spoke close to my elbow. "Your heart, it is kind, yes?"

"I don't know," I whispered, remembering Dr. Hoffmeier's words.

"Of course you know," scoffed the old man with the funny walrus mustache. "You know in your heart what Christmas is. I watch you standing here, seeing us who do not have enough, and your heart shows in your face. You would do all, and yet you think you can do nothing. And so you suffer. You will always suffer, wanting to help everyone, never knowing that to wipe off a plush dog and remind a little mother that love is a great gift is also a great gift."

"You are wonderfully kind," I whispered, wondering if this was living, if this was experiencing, so that I might no longer be mechanical but a living, breathing violinist.

"You look at my package. You wonder what it is, yes?" A chuckle wrinkled his face. "I am very old, my dear, but also wise. I have learned that heart is the only gift one can give. These are bananas. Only bananas some would say. Yet my Rosa loves them so that with them—and me she will have a good Christmas."

"Let me give her something," I cried, and then I felt my cheeks flame at my crudeness in the face of a greatness I did not have. "Things money can buy, we do not need now, my child," he assured me, and I was relieved that he was not hurt at my presumptuousness.

"Out of your heart you may give us one thing: Play for us. I live in the flat above. My Rosa is at the window, watching and waiting for me. Play and she will hear, and it will be a great thing for our Christmas."

I almost cried out Dr. Hoffmeier's words bitterly. But then I knelt and unbuckled the case and lifted out my violin. These were good people, kind people. They listening with their hearts, would supply all that my playing lacked. The dear little man and his Rosa should have their gift from me. Pray-erfully, I lifted the familiar dark wood, tucked it under my chin and rested my cheek against its satin smoothness. Drawing the bow, I drifted into the strains of "Silent Night."

"My dear, I go! I lift the window! Together, my Rosa and I shall shout 'Bravo! Bravo!' louder than all the rest."

The bow was moving upward, downward, sweeping me along with the unspeakable beautiful, throbbing strains of song. Before the spell was broken, someone called for "O Holy Night," and I drifted into its piercing beauty. Never once did my violin grow silent. One after another called for an old favorite—"Little Town of Bethlehem," "It Came upon the Midnight Clear," "The First Noel," "Angels from the Realms of Glory."

I do not know how long I stood there, carried along by the magic of my violin and its inspired bow. I had seen the faces crowded about me, eager and happy, but now I suddenly realized that the sidewalk, the street itself, was jammed with people, all with the holy light of Christmas on their faces.

They were like the faces I saw in church on that Blessed Morn. And as my bow whispered to a stop, there was a great breath of applause, the throbbing of voices and hands. And above all the others, I heard the thin old voices from the window above: "Bravo! Bravissimo! An Artist—a great artist!"

They were talking about me—the perfect machine. I did not try to hide the tears in my eyes as I looked at all the glowing faces that shouted to me, "Thank you and God bless you."

I choked as I called back as loudly as I could so all might hear, "No—no—do not thank me. It is I who must thank you for the most wonderful Christmas gift I have ever received."

I left then, quickly and quietly. One night cannot constitute a lifetime, but it could be a start at least to understanding what the maestro meant. After the New Year, I would return to him. I would play for him my medley of carols, closing my eyes, recalling my Christmas audience. And then I would ask him what I must do. He would have an answer, and in my heart, I knew where the answer would lead me.



THIS TRACTOR-TRAILER RIG overturned on US 19-129 in the Rhodo section east of Andrews Tuesday morning. The driver, Thurman Penix, 50, of Asheville, was treated at District Memorial Hospital. Penix told the Highway Patrol he was travelling east and was forced off the road by an unidentified motorist. In another accident, Mrs. Helen Kivel of Andrews suffered undetermined injuries Wednesday morning when her car struck a telephone pole on Bristol Ave. in Andrews. District Memorial Hospital declined to release information on her condition. (Photo by Sue Morrow)

## McGlamery Seeks Another House Term

Rep. Wiley A. McGlamery of Hayesville announced Wednesday that he will seek reelection to the North Carolina House of Representatives from the 49th District next year.

The district includes Cherokee, Clay, Graham and Macon Counties. McGlamery represented Clay County in the 1965 term of the General Assembly and was elected to the four county district for the 1967 session. "My interest in seeking another term is that I have built up seniority and experience that will enable me to receive top committee assignments where I can work for the many services needed in our district," McGlamery said.

He cited roads, schools, welfare programs and the expansion of Western Carolina University and Tri County Technical Institute at Peachtree as the things he is most interested in working for. He added that the Community College system should be expanded to this area.



McGlamery pledged to work to bring teacher salaries in line with neighboring states and raise the pay of low income state employees. Citing his past record, Mc-

Glamery said he "worked with the sponsors of the bill that raised death benefits from \$12,000 to \$15,000 under workman's compensation and raised the weekly maximum benefit from \$37.50 to \$42 under the state unemployment act" in the 1967 General Assembly.

He pointed out that he served on a special appropriations committee that recommended pay increases for school personnel above Governor Dan Moore's budget figures.

"I will continue to work to repeal the lien law against our old people over 65 years of age," McGlamery said. "This law is a burden on our counties to foreclose to collect and over 80% of the money reverts to the Federal and State Governments," he added.

### Murphy Library

### Holiday Schedule

The Murphy Carnegie Public Library holiday schedule has been announced by Miss Josephine Heighway.

She said the library will be closed from December 23 through December 28 for Christmas. It will reopen on Friday, December 29. The New Year holiday will be observed by the library on January 1 and 2.

"Those wishing to check out books or use the library facilities should keep these dates in mind," Miss Heighway said.

She pointed out that many books and publications are available in the library which would be helpful in planning Christmas and holiday programs.

### Use Complete

### Addresses

During the Christmas rush, the postal service carries more mail than most countries do in a year.

Postmaster Joe Ray requests that all people sending mail to those living on rural routes include the box number in the address. This aids in the sorting of mail.

"We expect a record breaking nine billion pieces of mail to be delivered across the country this Christmas and cooperation by the mailing public in shopping and mailing early and the use of ZIP codes will mean there is virtual assurance that all holiday mail will be delivered on time," he said.

## Airport Bids To Be Opened Friday

The Cherokee County Board of Commissioners will open bids on Friday morning at the Courthouse for improvements to the Andrews-Murphy Airport.

The project involves land acquisition for airport development and clear zones, and construction of a 4300-foot paved runway, stub taxiway and apron. A wind cone, segmented circle and runway markers are also included. Total project cost is estimated by the engineers, John Talbert and Associates of Charlotte, at \$280,000. Cherokee County holds options to acquire 82 acres of land in fee simple and 12 acres in easements for approach or clear zones.

This acreage, which is

slightly more than in the present airport, will allow for future expansion of runways and aircraft parking and service facilities.

Financing of the airport improvements will be accomplished with the assistance of a 50% grant from the Federal Aviation Administration and a grant of \$43,999 from the Appalachian Regional Commission. The voters of the county approved an airport bond referendum of \$150,000 in August of 1966.

The invitation to bid culminates two years of effort on the part of the Andrews Development Corporation, the Cherokee County Rural Renewal Authority, and others to provide the tri-state area with modern airport facilities.

## Two Hour Parking Limit Enforced

Police Commissioner Kenneth Godfrey announced this week that Murphy's two-hour limit on parking meter spaces will be enforced.

In a letter to downtown merchants and their employees, Godfrey pointed out that the town provides about 160 free parking spaces on the recently paved lot across from the County Jail and the lot behind the First Baptist Church.

"We are now going to enforce the two hour limit on employees to use these lots as about one third of the meters or parking spaces are now being taken by employees who work several hours in town," Godfrey said.

"Your cooperation ... will

give the shoppers more time to do their shopping, thereby creating more business for everyone," he added.

Godfrey pointed out that the two hour time limit "is not a new ordinance. It has been effective since the meters were put in."

Godfrey also said businessmen should not keep large sums of money on hand at night and over the weekends. He said this encourages burglaries and he has noted that several small towns in the area have had an increase in thefts recently.

The police commissioner said this can be avoided in Murphy if the merchants will use the night deposit window at the bank.

## Zoning Change Request Denied

The Murphy Planning Board voted last Thursday night to leave the Hilton, Harding and McClelland St. area in its present residential two zoning status.

A group of residents of the area had signed a petition earlier requesting that the area be changed to residential one.

The Board deferred action on the petition at a meeting on November 13 in order to study the petition and determine how many of the signers were property owners and what percentage of property owners desired a change.

The Board learned that about one half of the property in the area consists of

apartments or single homes for rent and, upon a motion by F. O. Christopher and a second by Ed Manchester, voted unanimously to recommend that the area be left in its residential two status.

A change in the zoning classification would have barred future construction of apartments in the area.

The Board voted to defer action on a request to change the zoning of the area of the King's cattle sale barn in Bealton from residential two to a business classification.

Dr. K.G. Keenum was elected chairman of the Planning Board. He replaces Joe Ray, who resigned for health reasons.

## Robbinsville Firemen Save Soldier's Life

The life of Steve Phillips was saved by alert volunteer firemen when they responded to a call at the general store of Claude Hyde in Robbinsville on Monday.

Firemen answered the call about 3 a.m. When they were able to enter the building some two hours later, they discovered the unconscious body of Pvt. Steve Phillips under some baled hay in storage room of the store. He had been reported missing earlier by his mother, Mrs. Claude Hyde.

Firemen had kept this part of the structure thoroughly doused in their efforts to prevent the fire from spreading to the Hyde home. No one knew that Mrs. Hyde's son was anywhere in the building.

He was taken to Andrews District Memorial Hospital where he was treated for smoke inhalation, shock and exposure. At last report his condition was reported good. Claude Hyde, owner of the

store, was away on a hunting trip when the fire occurred.

Mrs. Hyde told firemen that she had heard a noise between 2:00 and 3:00 a.m. and when she looked out the window saw flames coming from the store. A neighbor, Mrs. Henry Stiles, heard Mrs. Hyde's screams and called the fire department.

The store was completely destroyed. At press time the cause of the fire was still unknown.

## Scout Office To Be Closed

The Scout office will be closed Thursday, Friday and Monday in observance of the Christmas holidays.

The office will also be closed Monday, January 1,

## Letters To Santa Claus

Dear Santa,  
I think I have been a good boy this year. Will you please bring me a swingster. If you don't know what a swingster is, it is a record player. Well this is about all this year. Thanks a lot Santa. I'll write you again next year. Good-bye for now.  
Your friend,  
Dwayne Kilpatrick  
P.S. We have a fire in the fireplace. Come through the door.

Thank you Santa Claus,  
Joseph Davidson Bell.

Dear Santa Claus,  
I like you and bring me some toys. I have been good at school. Please bring me a gun and some skates. I want a etch-a-sketch and a paint set.  
Thank You Santa.  
Kenneth Dean Payne

Dear Santa Claus,  
I have been good, please bring me a stove, and doll.  
Thank you,  
Brenda Coffey

Dear Santa:  
I have been good, Please bring me doll and hula-hoop.  
Tara Garrett

Dear Santa Claus:  
I have been good, Please bring me go-cart. Thank you,  
Ivan Hogsed

Dear Santa Claus:  
I have been good, Please bring me hula-hoop.  
Thank you,  
Anne

Dear Santa Claus:  
I have been good, Please bring me an etch-a-sketch, Ava Sue Crowe

Dear Santa Claus:  
I have been good, Please bring me doll skates, a radio and an etch-a-sketch.  
Stacie

Dear Santa Claus:  
I have been good, Please bring me a doll and a hula-hoop. Thank you,  
Dimple Ingram

Dear Santa Claus:  
I have been good, Please bring me a hula-hoop and doll clothes. Thank you,  
Elaine Ledford

Dear Santa Claus:  
I have been good, Please bring me guitar. Thank you,  
Tommy Green

Dear Santa Claus,  
I have been good, Please bring me a paint set. Thank you Santa Claus.  
Barry Payne

Dear Santa Claus:  
I have been good, Please bring me a hula-hoop, Piano

## Social Security Offers Help In Filing Claims

All older people in the Asheville district office area covered by the medical or "doctor bill" insurance part of Medicare, who have had medical expenses of over \$50 in 1966 or 1967 -- but have not filed claims for payment on these expenses -- should contact the Social Security Office for any help needed in filing these claims right away.

James E. Robertson, Social Security district manager, declared Tuesday.

Robertson strongly advised all such Medicare beneficiaries to "get in touch with us without delay, since there is a time limit for filing these claims for benefits under Part B of Medicare. Particularly for medical expenses incurred in 1966 this time limit is fast approaching."

He explained that as a general rule such claims for payment must be filed "no later than the end of the calendar year following the year in which the medical services are furnished."

He reminded Medicare beneficiaries that in general they are responsible for the first \$50 (the "deductible") of covered expenses in the

year. Medicare will then pay 80% (\$4 out of \$5) of the remaining reasonable charges.

"Because of a special rule, called the 'carry-over rule,' some people do not even have to have medical expenses totaling \$50 to file a claim for payment. This rule is explained on Page 21 of your green Medicare Handbook.

"If you have any question as to whether certain medical expenses are, or are not, covered by Medicare -- or if you simply don't know how to file a claim for payment, or have delayed filing for any other reason -- get in touch with our office now.

"If you yourself cannot telephone or call in person, have someone call or come in to the Social Security Office for you (with your Medicare card and the itemized bills). Your Asheville office is located at 50 South French Broad Avenue, Asheville, N. C. Telephone 252-8773."

### Wet Christmas?

Dream on if you're thinking of a white Christmas.

There were indications Monday of a wet Christmas season in the Murphy area.

That heavy rain that fell several times during the day added up to 2.5 inches in the 12 hour period from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the rain gauge at Hiwassee Dam.

# SEASONS GREETINGS