



### A Christmas Prayer

With most sincere hopes that peace and happiness be with us all. Many thanks.

ED TOWNSON AUTO CO.

## When Families Gather, It's Christmas!

Through the years, the ways of celebrating Christmas have taken on many different forms. Today's Christmas tree is apt to be plastic or aluminum, rather than native fir, spruce or pine. The glow of tiny beeswax candles on a tree is only a memory, replaced now by strings of twinkling electric lights. Jolly Santa, once transported only by reindeer-drawn sleigh, may now arrive by helicopter or jet plane.

But in spite of changes, the essence of the season, the basic spirit of Christmas, stays the same. Christmas is, above all, a time for togetherness and rejoicing. And a modern Christmas, just like an old-fashioned Christmas, calls for gatherings of family and friends, with much merriment, fun and feasting. Right now in this community, families are celebrating the holiday with just such gatherings, such merriment,

fun and feasting. Like families of yesteryear, they celebrate with gifts and greens, with the warmth of a glowing hearth and the gleam of a lighted tree, with stockings hung by the chimney with care and even with candles, though these beckon brightly from candleholders rather than from the tree. All these ways of celebrating are part of the legend and lore of Christmas.

**Burning the Log**  
Today's fireplaces, though smaller in scale than those of yesteryear, symbolize at Christmas the age-old custom of burning the log. The Yule log was adapted to Christmas celebrations from the Scandinavian practice of building huge bonfires at the winter solstice. Fire represented the spring sun, soon to return.

**Hanging Stockings**  
St. Nicholas, so legend says, secretly gave gifts of gold for the dowries of poor spinners. He tossed the gold down a chimney on Christmas Eve, and on one occasion the gift landed in a stocking hung by the fireplace to dry. A tangerine or an orange in the toe of a stocking has come to be symbolic of the gifts of gold.

**ABOUT GREENS**  
Many Christmas greens used today were once pagan symbols. Flowers and leafy boughs were used in Roman rites. The Saxons used holly, ivy and bay in their religious observances.

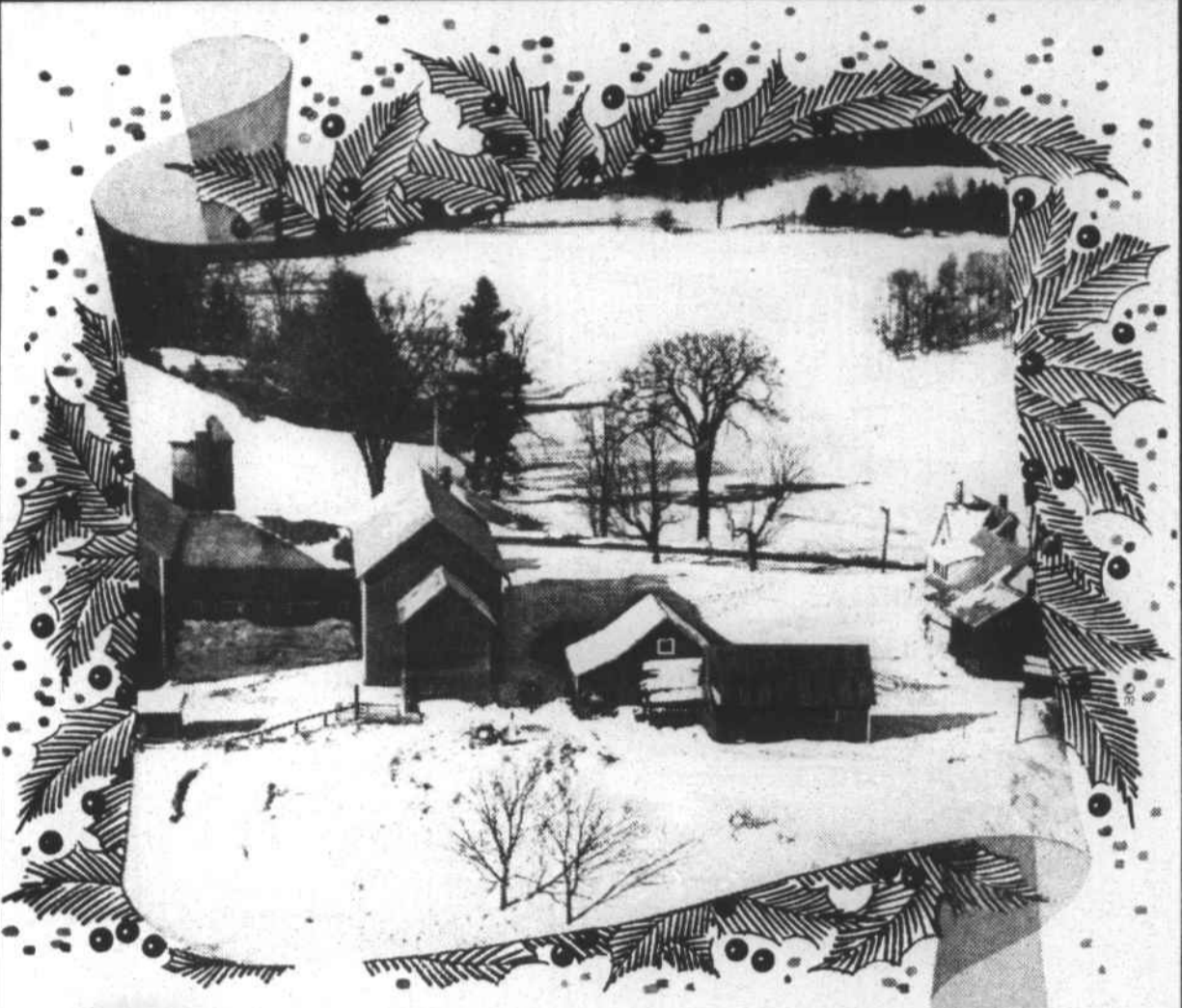
**Exchanging Gifts**  
Exchanging gifts at Christmas is one of the most time-honored of customs, and toys, dolls and games for the children have always ranked high on the gifts list. In the not-so-long-ago, however, just one important present — a doll for a little girl, perhaps, and a toy accordion for her brother — was all that youngsters might expect at Christmas. Though Santa is more bountiful nowadays, the gifts he brings are like those of yesteryear in at least one way. They reflect the interests and fashions of their times.

Dolls, yesterday and today, dress in the favorite styles of the moment. Toys, too, show the influence of current events. Toy racing cars, for instance, came in with the automobile, while today more complex types of wheel toys take advantage of modern technological developments.

**Using Greens**  
Use of greens and garlands to decorate for a festive season goes back a thousand years before the birth of Christ. The custom began with the ancient Egyptians. Many of the traditions of pagan festivals were later merged with the celebration of Christmas, and evergreens, because they stay green throughout the year, came to be regarded as the Christmas symbol of eternal life.

**Decorating the Tree**  
Many ancient legends associate trees with Christmas. One is that on the first Holy Night, all the trees of the forest blossomed and bore fruit. The idea of adorning the Christmas tree with ornaments may have started with an attempt to create the effect of snow on the branches. Strings of popcorn and tufts of cotton were used.

**Lighting the Tree**  
Martin Luther started the custom of lighting the tree, legend says. To symbolize stars glowing forth on a snow-filled winter's night, he placed lighted candles on his family's traditional Christmas tree.



# GREETINGS

The calm and quiet reaches every corner of this snow-covered landscape to remind us of the beautiful peace that is ours to share at Christmas time. And so we greet you and yours with best wishes for a wonderful holiday season . . . and heartfelt thanks to our dear friends and neighbors for your continued patronage, loyal trust, support.

Smoky Mtn. Gas, Inc.



## Glad Christmas Tidings

May the peace and joy which radiates from the heart of the Holy Child, fill you and yours with the wonder and splendor of this Blessed Season. And may the miracle of His coming be an inspiration and comfort to you always. Best wishes for a joyous Christmas.

MURPHY POWER BOARD

Murphy, N. C.

### Santa Claus Has Origins In America

Hear them? They're sleigh-bells — and we all know what that means! Santa's here, and with him arrives one of the oldest, happiest, and best loved traditions of the Christmas season. Today, of course, it just wouldn't be Christmas without Santa Claus, but it is interesting to ponder just where the jolly old gent got his start, and it might be surprising to learn that it wasn't really the North Pole. The name Santa Claus, itself, is an American derivation of the name St. Nicholas, an early fourth century bishop in Asia Minor, according to the editors of the Encyclopedia International.

Santa was first brought to this country by the early Dutch settlers, who called him Sinterklaas. These Dutch burghers portrayed him as a merry old man, sometimes even with a wife they called Molly Grietje. Santa also looked a little different then, and he wore a wide-brimmed black hat, short Dutch breeches, and smoked a long clay pipe.

Later, the British brought their own Father Christmas to America — a happy, rolly-polly Falstaffian figure. Inevitably, Sinterklaas and Father Christmas became one. Add to this the Norwegian's Kris Kringle, with his sleigh and reindeer, and the picture is nearly complete.

It was finally the task of American artists and writers to create an image of Santa Claus such as we know today. Washington Irving, among others, contributed to the concept of Santa as a jolly holiday figure, while Clement Moore, in his famous "Visit from St. Nicholas" ("Twas the Night Before Christmas"), added to the concept.

However, the notion of Santa Claus which really captured the imagination of young and old alike was drawn by the American cartoonist Thomas Nast in 1863. Yes, that's Santa all right, with his fur-trimmed suit, shiny black boots and long white beard. Just the way we've always known him — or so it seems.

### Merrily, Bells Are Ringing For Holiday

Ringed across the ages and around the world, bells are part of the traditions of Christmas. Zurich, Switzerland, has long been noted for its beautiful bells, say the editors of the New Book of Knowledge. Every Christmas Eve, the Zurich bells ring out loud and clear, calling families to church. This same tradition is repeated in thousands of other cities, where chimes and bells ring out at midnight from the steeples and spires of churches. Bells contribute to the sights as well as the sounds of the holiday season. They are a popular decoration and are used as ornaments on trees.

Tradition has it that bells inspired Clement C. Moore to write his famous poem, "A Visit from St. Nicholas." The inspiration came from listening to the merry jingle of bells on his horse's harness, as he drove along on a frosty winter night.

### Yesteryear's Customs Live At Yuletide

Candles and carols, trees and treats, gifts and greens — and Santa Claus, of course. Wherever Christmas is celebrated, these symbols seem to appear. In the modern era of rapid communication, there is a growing uniformity in the ways that people everywhere choose to mark the holiday. Yesteryear's customs, however, still have their place in modern celebrations. It's a case of "the more things change, the more they stay the same," as countries, communities and individuals seek to cherish and preserve

their own special holiday traditions. Some of these traditions as treasured in memory or kept alive in holiday ritual are compiled in the following paragraphs, according to information from the editor of Encyclopedia International. ESTABLISHING CRIB Though legend says that St. Francis of Assisi first introduced the Christmas crib in the 13th century, history records that the first manger scene was created by Pope Liberius in 354 A.D.

**BLESSINGS**  
True blessings of Christmas arise from that first wondrous Holy Night, and may they be yours. Thanks

YOUR THRIFTEE DISCOUNT STORE

Santa is coming your way with plenty of jolly good wishes for your holiday, and thanks.

Merry Christmas

HAYESVILLE AUTO PARTS

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel

We join those who sing out the praises of this joyful season, and thank you for your trust and good will.

**E. C. MOORE CO.**  
The Dodge Boys  
Murphy, N. C.

We take this opportunity to wish every one of you a truly beautiful holiday. We enjoy serving you.

Merry Christmas

**GARRETT'S BEAUTY SHOP**  
Murphy, N. C.

Christmas

In the spirit of this beautiful season, we greet our friends and extend sincere gratitude for their kindness and loyalty.

**DOXOL GAS OF MURPHY**

**MIDNIGHT MASS**

You are cordially invited to attend "Christ's Mass", at 12 p.m., Dec. 24th. Come early and join in the singing of your favorite carols, from 11:30 p.m. to Midnight. A social hour will follow the Midnight Services!

Your Catholic Friends and Neighbors wish you and yours a Holy and a Happy Christmas, and God's favor throughout the coming New Year!

**ST. WILLIAM'S CATHOLIC CHURCH!**

'Twas the Night Before Christmas...

Time for us to say thank you to our many friends, wishing them all "Merry Christmas"!

**ROGERS ELECTRIC COMPANY**  
Willow Street  
Murphy, N. C.