

Christmas: A Time of Luke's Story, Carols, Decorated Trees

St. Luke Tells Greatest Story

BY JOHN A. GOLDSMITH
United Press International

This is a Christmas story about a reporter named Luke. Long before the days of typewriters and city rooms, he was the most arduous story teller of his time. Beside, he was blessed with the luck of a good reporter.

Over the centuries he has been close to "exclusive" with the beginning of what has been called "the greatest story ever told." A couple of short verses in St. Matthew's Gospel are the only other telling of the Christmas story.

Luke's full and poetic account begins with the "decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed." At Christmas time it is usually ended at the 19th verse of the second chapter:

"But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart."

Believed To Be Gentle

Luke is generally believed to have been a Gentile convert to Christianity who lived in the first century A.D. He was, according to most accounts, not a professional writer but a physician whose principal patient was St. Paul.

The report of Christ's ministry written by Luke is thought to have been started about 60 A.D. when Luke was in Palestine. It probably was completed in Rome a few years later and may have been written in connection with St. Paul's difficulties with the Roman authorities.

At any rate it was written to a Roman, called "Theophilus," to whom Luke later addressed a report on the works—the acts—of Christ's apostles. As reference works, Luke is believed to have used a collection of Christ's sayings and a version of the gospel written earlier by St. Mark.

Based on Original Research

Luke's version of the Christmas story is evidently based on original research—on stories and songs collected by Luke, himself, in Palestine. Only about 30 years had elapsed since the crucifixion, and his account of the Nativity could have been drawn from living witnesses.

It is even possible that Luke may have met Mary and talked to her about events in Bethlehem. Tradition has it that she lived out her old age in Ephesus where Luke could have met her when he was fashioning his gospel.

Some distortions have crept into the Christmas story after hundreds of years, thousands of illustrations and millions of Christmas pageants. Some say the Nativity scene took place in a cave, and it may well have.

Used As Shelter Houses

Caves were often the shelter houses for domestic animals in Palestine at that time. The manger, in that case, would have been a straw-filled hole in the earthen floor rather than a movable box or trough.

Luke's Gospel makes no mention of kings or wise men at the Nativity scene. The presence of the wise men shortly after Christ's birth is drawn from St. Matthew's fragmentary account.

Also from Matthew's account is the popular conception of the Star of Bethlehem functioning as a guide beacon for those seeking the Christ child.

To Luke we are indebted for the story of the trip to Bethlehem, where there was no room at the inn, for the swaddling clothes and—but why paraphrase it!

The whole story is there in Luke, II, 1-19, and no one has ever told it better.

Christmas Carols Have Become Indispensable Segment of Holiday Celebration

By LOUIS CASSELS
United Press International

It says on the church calendar that it's almost time to begin singing Christmas carols.

This will be news to disc jockeys, who've been harking to the herald angels since the day after Thanksgiving.

But churches which observe the ancient liturgical calendar insist that the four weeks preceding Christmas are properly the advent season. The 12 days of Christmas—during which carols are supposed to be sung—don't begin until midnight, Dec. 24.

Whether they're sung in season or out, carols have long been an indispensable part of the Christmas celebration.

The first Christmas carol was sung by an angel choir to an awestruck group of shepherds who were keeping watch over their flocks by night on a hillside near Bethlehem. The words, as recorded in St. Luke's gospel, were:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Under its Latin title, "Gloria in excelsis Deo," this original carol is still being sung in churches on Christmas eve. Scores of great composers have contributed musical settings for it.

A Great Composer

St. Francis of Assisi, who lived in Italy around the start of the 13th century, was a great composer of Christmas carols. His "Psalms in Nativity," although rarely heard outside of churches, is still one of the loveliest pieces of Christmas music.

Perhaps the greatest piece of Christmas music ever written—George Frederick Handel's "Messiah"—was inspired in part by a Franciscan carol which Handel heard on a visit to Italy.

Handel was indirectly (and unwittingly) responsible for the music of one of the most popular of all carols, "Joy to the World." Hymn book, credit this carol to Isaac Watts, a prolific English composer of the 18th century. But the melody was lifted from "The Messiah."

Martin Luther is often given credit for the tender children's carol, "Away in a Manger." But the lyrics actually appeared first as an unsigned poem in a children's book published in 1885.

Some carols which are popularly regarded as very ancient are in fact of relatively modern origin.

"Silent Night," for example, first was sung 144 years ago, in St. Nicholas church in the village of Oberndorf, Austria. The church's organ broke down on Christmas eve, and the pastor, Fr. Joseph Mohr, was desperate for Christmas music. He called in a schoolmaster named Franz Gruber, who played the guitar, and together they composed the words and music of "Silent Night" just in time for the midnight service.

"We Three Kings of Orient Are," "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear," and "O Little Town of Bethlehem" all were written in America during the latter part of the 19th century.

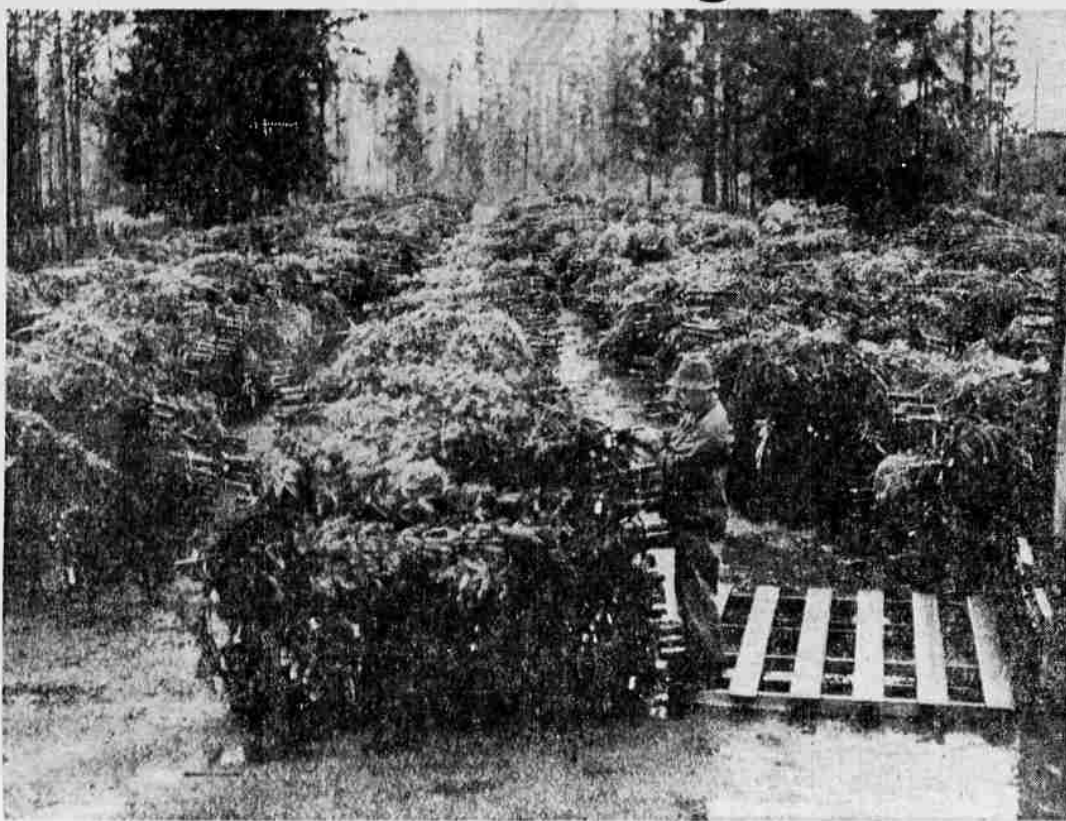
Church members sometimes get upset when they hear Christmas carols being played in department stores and other commercial settings. But it has always been difficult to draw a fine line between sacred and secular in Christmas music.

The great Methodist hymn writer, Charles Wesley, used the second chorus of Mendelssohn's "Festgesang" as the melody for his "Hark the Herald Angels Sing." (The first line, incidentally, was originally, "Hark how all the welkin rings.")

The hauntingly lovely English carol, "What Child Is This?" is set to the music of an old folk song called "Greensleeves," which had nothing to do with Christmas.

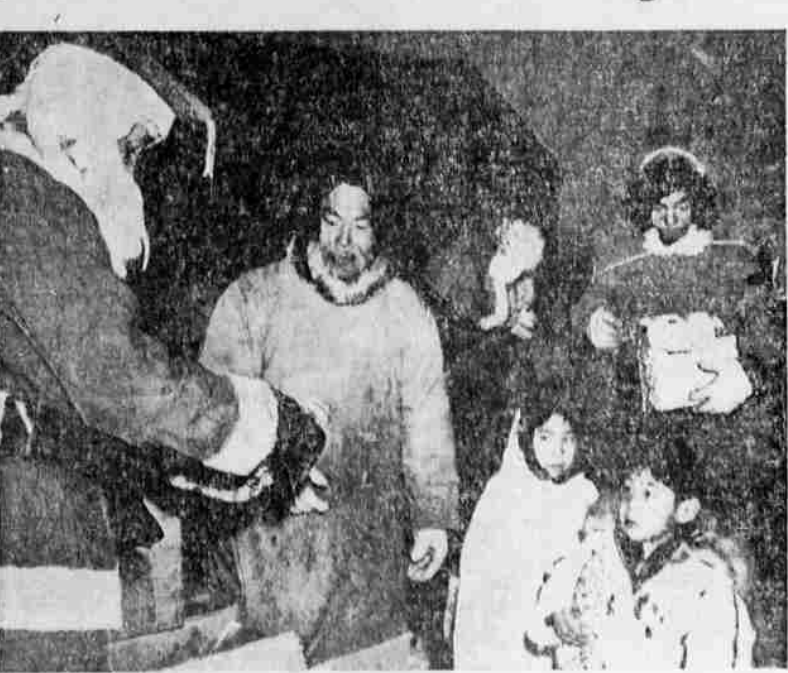
And "Deck the Halls With Boughs of Holly" is an old Welsh song which recalls the pagan rituals of the druids, who brought evergreen branches indoors at the time of the winter solstice to shelter wood-nymphs from the ice and snow.

Tree Harvest Is Big Business



ADJUSTS STACK—A worker is shown here adjusting a stack of Christmas trees at Shelton, Wash. By the time Christmas Day comes, \$10 million will have changed hands in one of Washington State's largest enterprises. (UPI)

Santa Visits Eskimo Villages



DISTRIBUTE 'GOODIES'—Children at St. Claus distributes "goodies" in the Eskimo Lawrence Island, Alaska, watch as Santa Claus, (UPI)

By GORDON W. SCHULTZ
United Press International

St. Lawrence Island, Alaska

—TP—Santa Claus is a stranger to many Eskimo children who live practically beneath the shadow of the North Pole in the land of the midnight sun.

But each year the dark-eyed children in many Eskimo villages in Alaska get a little bit more acquainted with the man in the red suit with the long, white beard.

"Kuwanotwek Kusamasic" (the Eskimo version of Merry Christmas), they squeal to the jolly fat man, who is the friend of all children.

For several years the men of the Alaskan Air command at Elmendorf Air Force base near Anchorage have been sending Santa Claus to the remote villages across the state.

New Volunteer

Each year the men volunteer to gather, repair, wrap and pack toys and gifts for air shipment to the remote Eskimo villages for distribution to the children.

Santa's visit to St. Lawrence Island this Christmas season was more special than

usual. Maj. William L. Dow, commander of the Northeast Cape Air Force station here, said a number of Eskimos are still living in a temporary summer camp because of a hepatitis epidemic in their home village of Savoonga, 100 miles north.

With a poor hunting season, the temporary villages have been living on wild ducks, sea-gulls and some small game. So an added treat of supplies brought by Wien Alaska Airlines was the visit of Santa Claus loaded down with toys and gifts for the children from the men of the Alaskan Air command.

In this case, Santa was Lt. Col. Jay Thomas, a veterinarian stationed at Elmendorf AFB.

Use Air Force Plans

Transportation wasn't quite the same as a reindeer driven sleigh, but an Air Force C-123 transport plane from the 5040th Air Transport Squadron at Elmendorf flew Santa Claus to the island with a regular supply mission.

From the northeast cape station, Santa Claus chose a more conventional method to make his way to the village—a dog sled.

An Air Force spokesman said by the time "operation Santa Claus 1962" is completed, gifts will have been distributed to about 1,200 children living in the vicinity of the 14 radar stations scattered across the state.

Dr. Norby Starts New California Job

Ashland — Dr. T. J. Norby, superintendent of the Ashland schools from 1939 to 1945, began his duties this month as superintendent of the Moreland Consolidated School district, Santa Clara county, California.

The area includes 13 schools and five more now under construction.

Dr. Norby recently served a three-year term as the first commissioner of education for Alaska with headquarters in Juneau.

Mrs. Norby is the daughter of the late J. Walter McCoy. She grew up in Ashland and attended Ashland schools.

By ELDON BARRETT
United Press International

Shelton, Wash. —(UPI)—When Paul Bunyan hitched up Babe, his big blue ox, and scooped out Puget Sound to build the Olympic mountains, he didn't leave much room for growing potatoes.

In fact, about the only money crop that flourishes on the Olympic peninsula is trees. Of course that was all right with big Paul because logging was his game.

But the mythical lumberjack probably would dull the teeth of his misery whip and hang up his corks if he saw the size of the trees they're hauling out of this neck of the woods by the carload this season of the year.

Hardly a one is more than eight feet tall and those with the most branches are the most valuable. And by the 25th of December they will be wearing more goggles and trappings than a logger's queen in a skidroad honky-tonk.

Is Big Business

Although it doesn't compare moneywise with the saw timber operations in the northwest, the Christmas tree business in the Shelton area is big business.

By the time Santa Claus starts loading up his sleigh, nearly 2 million yule trees will have been shipped out of Mason, Thurston and Kitsap counties in the foothills of the southern Olympics. And for these trees, \$10 million will have changed hands.

Just like raising hybrid corn, Christmas tree growing is a highly specialized form of cultivation. In fact, the acres where most yule trees are grown are classified as farms on which county agricultural agents keep tabs and report developments just as they do for carrots and peas.

Mason county agent Charles K. Peck says the Christmas tree crop this year is in fine shape because of last summer's coolish, rainy weather.

Excellent Conformity

"They have excellent color, density and conformity," he added.

About 100,000 acres are under cultivation for yule tree growing in the tri-county area, which likes to call itself "Christmas Tree Land, U.S.A." Eight of the 15 major suppliers in western Washington operate in the three counties and numerous conventional farmers and "stump ranchers" pick up side money raising trees for these suppliers.

Outside of local retail markets, most of the trees shipped

out of this area go to California, Arizona, Nevada and Hawaii.

Douglas fir makes up the bulk of the seasonal cut, but some companies have introduced the more exotic Scotch pine and noble and white fir which bring higher prices.

Still Most Popular

"But the old fashioned Douglas fir is still the most popular when it comes to price," according to Leland Wells, area manager for the J. Hofert company.

At its peak, the industry in this region employs about 700 cutters, graders, balers and other workers on the site. The assembly line technique is used, complete with conveyor belts and electric saws, and once cutting starts it continues on a 24-hour basis until the harvest is complete. Workers generally get paid by piece work, plus a bonus if they stay all season.

Lack of frost delayed cut-

Singing Groups To Be Featured Today

Two singing groups, the Madrigal and the Modernaires, of Medford High School, will be special guests on the "Adventures in Medicine" program at 3:30 o'clock this afternoon over station KBES-TV.

This departure from the usual medical discussion format to feature choral groups from Medford schools before Christmas has become a tradition, according to the Jackson County Tuberculosis and Health association, which sponsors the program.

The Madrigal is a traditional group at Medford High school, and the Modernaires is a new ensemble this year. About 30 students in all will appear on the special program of Christmas music under the direction of Lynn Sjolund and Gary Frame.

Numbers will vary from old English carols and Christmas anthems to popular Christmas songs.

Fire Destroys Home Of Former Residents

An explosion apparently started a fire which destroyed the home of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Smith in Redway, Calif., recently. The Smiths are former Medford residents.

Mrs. Smith and her 6-year-old grandson escaped from the blazing home. Smith was at work at the time.

Some companies use helicopters to scatter seed and almost all have nurseries growing seedlings to supplement natural regeneration. It takes from six to 14 years to produce a Christmas tree, and the tree farmers can't take a chance on old mother nature.

Bears and mountain beaver, which feed on the bark of young trees, are a hazard, but neither is as great as the tree rustler. The Mason county sheriff's office has a Christmas tree posse patrolling tree farms to keep off the poachers at this time of year.

Most of the farms are situated on land where once stood giant saw trees—the kind Paul Bunyan used for toothpicks. It was through these stands that the timber barons sliced their monstrous swaths, leaving only stumps, snags and slash. Fire usually took over to complete the carnage.

Deep Wounds Heal

But even deep wounds heal. And today, these once-scared acres again are dotted forest green.

This year about 30 million trees will be trimmed in the United States alone. And that makes for good business.

As Peck put it in explaining why he grows Christmas trees:

"I wanted to get into business and I figured as long as people produce children, we'd be able to produce Christmas trees."

American Frontier Christmas Subject of Society's Meeting

By DORIS ROBINSON
Mail Tribune Correspondent

Yreka — "Christmas on the American Frontier" was the topic of a recent talk given by Mrs. Hazel Pollock, curator of the Siskiyou County museum, at the Christmas meeting of the Siskiyou County Historical society.

As the story of the frontier making its westward movement was told, figures representing the Puritans, plainsmen, pioneers, miners, missionaries and the Spanish and French people, were pinned in their proper places on a United States map.

Mrs. Pollock emphasized that the spiritual factor was the most important in all of the Christmas traditions brought by different nationalities to this country.

Celebrate Holidays

The 13 colonies had many ways of celebrating the holidays, she said. The Puritans were opposed to entertainment and celebrations during the Christmas season. They thought England made too much of parties, and so they were strictly religious in their observance.

The German people brought the first Christmas tree and St. Nicholas, which later was changed to Santa Claus. They made Christmas a family affair, with much cooking and baking for a big dinner.

The Virginia, the plantations were full of excitement during great parties. Slaves brought in Yule logs, holly and laurel which were used to decorate the halls. Satin coats, wigs and beautiful gowns were worn to dances, and tables groaned under the weight of foods such as wild geese, fish, wild turkey, mince pies, and toasts made to the coming year.

An old music box loaned to the historical society by Mr. and Mrs. Buff Ackerman, offered the melody of "Silent Night." Mrs. Pollock said music bridged the way between all these traditions.

Many important events happened on Christmas day, Mrs. Pollock said. In 1776 George Washington crossed the Delaware. And the war of 1812 ended Christmas Day, 1814.

The frontier around the Great Lakes region was of settlers mostly Roman Catholics. Their feasts included such items as roast pig, goose, bear paws, roast beef, sausage, head cheese and berries, all cooked in huge ovens outdoors. Christmas day observance was simple and no gifts were exchanged, but they did exchange gifts on New Year's.

French people settled in New Orleans and their slaves were free on Christmas day. It was everyone's birthday. The Spanish people settled in the southwestern part of the country, and brought customs and traditions of Spain. The Pueblo Indians took to the customs and religion.

'Rooster Mass'

They held what was known as "Rooster Mass." The mass lasted until the first rooster crowed on Christmas day. They danced ancient dances around the altar of the church wearing masks and chanting while others knelt and prayed. Strange, beautiful music, like the warbling of birds, was created by blowing through straws into pans of water. Gifts of tobacco and handkerchiefs were exchanged.

The Pathfinders' tune on the music box was "Home Sweet Home," a tune which might have been uppermost in the minds of Fremont and his men as they surrounded the camp fire in 1843. Camp was made on a lake in Oregon on Christmas day. It was named Christmas lake, and is now known as Hart lake.

Cut Christmas Trees

The plainsmen who came through the gateway, of Missouri in their trek west observed Christmas by cutting cedar and pine for Christmas trees. It was a hard life and provisions were prepared by preserving berries, rendering lard, collecting nuts, making syrup and cooking venison for the larder.

Father Junipero Serra moved into southern California from Mexico and held mass in the first church he established there on Christmas eve. John Sutter celebrated

Christmas in California at a big party. Thirty days later gold was discovered and a great migration followed. Mrs. Pollock noted.

Hold Elaborate Ball

Weaverville in Shasta county, Calif., held an elaborate ball one Christmas eve. Days of preparation preceded the event, and miners saw to it the children were not forgotten.

The 1900 era saw Alaska the last frontier where the Christian religion was recognized and Christmas became a legal holiday.

On Dec. 7, 1893, in a little town in northern California a son was born to one of the descendants of these pioneers. The father was so pleased he decided there should be a special Christmas tree in honor of the little son. He was an electrician by trade and made strings of electric lights to light the tree. This was the first electrically lighted Christmas tree in California.

The man was Mrs. Pollock's father and the son was her oldest brother. The technique of wiring the Christmas tree has been handed down in the family from father to son, then son to the oldest grandson, and the lighting of the Christmas tree is traditional.

Original Lighting System

The Christmas tree at the museum this year holds the original lighting system with tiny individual sockets for each light. There were only clear globes at that early date, so the museum tree has only clear globes.

Three of the original Christmas tree ornaments, a tiny drum, a bell and one other ornament hang on the tree. There are many other old ornaments and strings of popcorn, some of them 60 years old.

Under the tree is a life sized doll dressed in a red flannel nightgown representing a child discovering under the tree an old fashioned doll buggy and a doll more than 30 years old.

The Christmas tree will be displayed on the main floor of the museum all this month.



ORIGINAL LIGHTS—Mrs. Hazel Pollock, curator of the Siskiyou County museum at Yreka, is a daughter of the man who put up the first electrically lighted Christmas tree in California. The tree shown above, now on display at the museum for the rest of December, bears the original lighting system that Mrs. Pollock's father devised.