

# THE XMAS CELEBRATIONS

## CHRISTMAS IN THE ARMY DURING THE CIVIL WAR.

Oh, yes, the veterans—some of them remember Christmas, 1861, which witnessed the battle of Wadesburg, Mo.; that of 1862 the battle of Green Chapel and Bear Wallow, Ky. The 7th Illinois Cavalry has cause to remember the Christmas of 1863, as they fought the battle of Bolivar, Tenn.; and the 117th Illinois Infantry the battle of Lafayette, Tenn., which was fought on that day of joy to the world and "peace and good-will to men." On that day the vessels of the U. S. navy fought the battle of Stone Inlet, S. C. The battles of Ft. Fisher, N. C., Pulaski, Tenn., and Verona, Miss., were fought on December 25, 1864.

Our first Christmas in the army is the one we remember, but, as we were just a little homesick, Company F, 8th Illinois Cavalry received a box of good things to eat and wear from kind friends at home—and had to pay \$14.40 express on it. Allen Wheeler had to loan Frank Rogers money to pay his share of the express charges. The boys reported that it was filled with dressed turkeys, pies, cakes and everything that was calculated to make a fine Christmas dinner. It is no faint recollection that they have of that dinner. They remember it as distinctly as if it was but yesterday. Wheeler even remembers that the money he loaned Frank is still due him.

The recollections of Christmas, 1861, sends cold chills over yet. Our regiment—the 33rd Ind. Inf.—after the battle of Wild Cat, Ky., followed General F. K. Zollicoffer as far as London, Ky. We made a forced march back to Crab Orchard, Ky., in one of the worst rain-storms, which was followed by a blizzard. There were 1,000 soldiers in our regiment—principally boys—who knew no more about taking care of their health than a lot of children. We laid on the frozen ground at night in our wet clothes, or stood around log-heap fires with one side burning and one freezing. The result of that exposure was that 700 of us were sick. We managed to get the sick under cover at the Springs, which had been quite a resort before the war.

The negro quarters was composed of log houses of two rooms, a large one with a small kitchen attached. In one of these there were three very sick soldiers in separate beds, with their comrades to nurse them. There was an old cook-stove in the kitchen, so the nurses planned to have a Christmas dinner of their own cooking. I was their invited guest, and we four sat down to as fine a meal as anyone would wish to. There was biscuit, butter, pie, cream, cake, a roast turkey (I don't know where they got the turkey); in fact, everything that we usually had at home on such occasions, but the environment. The table in the center of the room, with three big beds around it, and in each bed a very sick soldier. We had a merry time, notwithstanding, and enjoyed our dinner. When we were ordered to meet Zollicoffer at Mill Springs, Ky., a few days afterward, there was only a small squad able to go—the sick, with their nurses—numbered 900.—T. F. Leech, M. D.

The Presbyterian and Congregational pioneers had no use for Christmas as a day to be recognized by the church. Some of the prominent ministers of early date came out openly against it, claiming that it savored too much of Paganism and that there was no Biblical authority for the observance of the day. The hanging of the stockings around the fireplace was a custom the pioneers brought with them from their former homes. The first Christmas tree exercises held in this vicinity, by any congregational churches, now recalled by the writer, was in the winter of 1868, and was held in the hall over what is now the store of Mrs. Gress, and was then fitted and used by the Congregational church as its place of worship. This Christmas festival was more in the nature of a large family gathering. The family presents were all brought in and placed upon the tree. The intrinsic market value of this tree, when loaded with its presents was probably greater than that of any tree decorated by this church since that day. The chain that connects with that day shows many a link missing. The memories of the joys of that evening bring to us a twinge of sadness as we recall the absent ones. Christmas festivities since that time have been an annual occurrence and will no doubt continue to be observed in the years yet to come.

The Evangelical St. Paul's church now located in their fine home at 40th and Maple Ave., was started in 1844 at Lorton, now Belmont; in 1864 the church was moved to Stanley Hill, by the Rev. Dickover as Pastor. The following old-timers who were instrumental in having it moved here are: John Behm, John Lehmann and Mr. The first Christmas in the church in 1871 was celebrated in the presence of the following: Mrs. P.

The following was taken from the Downers Grove News of Saturday, January 1, 1876:

**Christmas Festivities.**  
Following the Young Folks' concert and the fair at the Baptist church, on the evening of the 23d, was the Christmas tree of the Universal Sunday school, Friday eve, the 24th, laden with presents for all; and Saturday evening the Evangelical church celebrated Christmas with a tree for the children and had exercises that kept the audience until a late hour. One bright star seemed to shine from beneath the boughs of the Universal evergreen. Among those immortelles was found for us a little mortal, so quietly reposing in its hammock, that we have no disposition to molest. Not only was our household remembered, but our sanctum also. For that we received a sack made of white, ornamented with bright red stripes, and handle to match with open mouth, and the bottom, gathered to a point with tassel attached and labeled "Scrap-bag for the editor of the Downers Grove News." Its capacity is about half a bushel of good eating apples, or a quantity of grapes, or a good-sized watermelon, or a turkey, or a pair of ducks, or some chickens, or other useful articles. And here we would like to admonish our friends when they visit our sanctum, that it is the height of impudence to examine the contents of an editor's scrap bag.

The first Christmas celebration of the German Evangelical church, which is now located on Grove street, was held in the old M. E. church in 1888. The first trustees of this society were Fred Schindler, Chas. Mochel, Henry Selig, Henry Sass and Christ Leggenhausen.

### XMAS IN THE VILLAGE.

(Continued from Page 5.)

his face hidden behind a great gray beard, jumped in.  
"It's Santa Claus," "It's Santa Claus," chorused the children.  
Then came the biggest time. Santa took possession of the place elbowing even the Sunday School superintendent from his way and with magnificent generosity distributed presents right and left so that not one child in the church was overlooked.  
The little boy in the back seat heard his name called and marched proudly down the aisle to receive a pair of skates, an orange and a box of candy.

"God rest you, merry gentlemen,  
Let nothing you dismay,  
For Christ, our Lord and Savior,  
Was born on Christmas Day."

Again the clear tenor notes rang out on another Christmas eve in the little brown church in the wildwood and the basses answered deep and strong—

"To save us all from satan's power  
When we had gone astray."

The church was again filled but it had changed. In 190— where were the old oil lamps—their places were filled by electric lights; the sheet iron stoves which glowed at each end of the church that other Christmas were gone, too, but the tree was there. A tree not lit with candles, but blazing with multicolored electric lights.

There was—or seemed to be—the same troop of happy children and their fresh voices and happy smiles gladdened all who saw them.

The little boy of the other Christmas was there, but his face was hidden behind the gray beard of Santa Claus and he was wearing the red coat and furs which he had so admired. His cheery voice brought joy to all the children and he searched the building with his eyes to be sure that not one little boy or girl was missed, but all the time he was thinking, "If grandma was only here, for grandma, who never missed taking him to the Christmas tree when he was a little lad had been borne slowly to her last resting place a few short months before."

So Christmas in the village comes and goes, bringing joy and gladness to the little ones and sometimes a heartache to the children of larger growth who think of other Christmas days, but ever through the years can be heard faint perhaps but clearly ringing the old carol:

"God rest you, merry gentlemen,  
Let nothing you dismay,  
For Christ, our Lord and Savior,  
Was born on Christmas Day."

**Much Like Sarcasm.**  
The conceited visitor had talked a long time, and small Janie was duly impressed with the breadth and variety of his knowledge. At last the talker made the sententious statement that one-half the world does not know how the other half lives. "Why don't you teach them?" was the innocent question that made the visitor blush and his other listeners struggle with scarcely suppressed chuckles.

**From "Old Stew."**  
"We are more frivolous in our college life than in our business," George Fitch said. "Still, college life has made business what it is. Fraternities are a clearinghouse for ability and ambition."—Kansas City Star.

**A La Mode.**  
"What was the chief food of the worshippers in whose camp you spent your vacation?" "Pork and potatoes, served in the form of chops and chips."—Christian Science Monitor.

### THE CROWNING DAY OF THE YEAR.

By John H. Williams.

The greatest of all mysteries is the coming of the Son of God to earth. Why did he come in such a commonplace way? We cannot answer. The people of Israel looked for the Messiah to come with all the pomp and splendor of royalty.

He came in God's way and not according to the preconceived plans of men; and the seeming commonplace becomes the greatest event of history.

The scenes enacted are even less than ordinary. A carpenter and his young wife have arrived in Bethlehem from Nazareth. Consternation seizes Joseph, for night is coming and he can find no shelter. Deaf ears have been turned to his pitiful appeals. The innkeeper would be kind to the stranger, but his inn is full to overflowing. He offers Joseph room in the stable—it would at least protect them from the cold of winter. Gladly is the offer accepted. That night in a stable the Greatest One that ever came to earth was born, and placed in a manger.

A few shepherds, with their sheepskin garments, with crude speech and manners, leave their flocks upon the hills of Bethlehem to welcome the Messiah to earth.

This the Messiah? Not to the world. It is all too commonplace. Yet the Promised One has come, and He is not known, save by a few humble men who are guarding their flocks. But it has ever been thus, and so will it ever be.

Eyes to see and ears to hear have these shepherds, not of the learned nor of the rich are they, but ordinary toilers, who become an audience for God's great message and select enough to hear an anthem out of God's eternities sung by a choir from his throne.

The messengers, the light, the radiance, the glory, are too much for mortal senses. A messenger speaks, "Fear not!" At the sound of this sweet voice terror flees from the shepherds. "Fear not! I bring you tidings of wondrous joy—a Savior, the Christ, the Lord, is born."  
"Where is He?" asked one of the shepherds.

"Ye shall find the new-born King wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger," was the answer.

The story of the shepherds was doubted. They were dreamers. A child had been born in the tavern stable, but their strange narrative is not in accord with the simplicity of the child's surroundings.

The song of the angels was beautiful and wonderful. "Glory to God in the highest," are the first notes ringing sharp and clear upon the night air over Bethlehem's hills. "Glory!" for a lost world is redeemed from sin and woe. The Highest has stooped from highest heights to lowest depths. "Peace on earth," the song continues. No longer is might to make right, for the Prince of Peace has come to reign. "God will to men!" A new brotherhood has been established. There is to be no caste, all men are to be brothers. "Peace on earth" is to come through this "good will to men."

The manger bespeaks poverty and is "a fit prelude" to the life which the Redeemer of the world is to live. Who is there that is not glad that his cradle was a manger? Poverty henceforth is to be no barrier to the progress of the world and its redemption. Luther, the emancipator of religion from superstition and priestcraft; Wesley, the emancipator of ritualistic and spiritually dead England; Lincoln, the emancipator of the slave, were all born and reared like the Great Emancipator, in poverty.

The Star of Bethlehem has made Christmas the brightest day of the year. We turn aside this day and read God's calendar, for the Incarnation has a date, even though it has root in the eternities. The music of the angels has made it a songful day. Men agree to make merry together and make it a day of rejoicing.

We are too apt to forget that keeping Christmas is worship. The shepherds left their flocks, and the Wise Men traversed deserts to find the Christ Child to worship Him. Christmas is a stooping down to consider the deepest needs of humanity, caring for the lonely and the distressed. The great gift of Christmas was Jesus Himself, who lived with and for humanity.

Christmas is God's day for the children. Wherever the story of Christmas is known the world becomes a safer place for children. Childhood and motherhood are everywhere exalted by the mother and Child of long ago. Something of the light of the manger shines around every child's cradle, and gives a halo of glory to every mother. Hearts are gentler and truer, and the air is sweeter where this story possesses the right of way.

**Non-Rusting Tinware.**  
If new tinware be rubbed over with fresh lard and thoroughly heated in the oven before it is used, it will never rust afterwards, no matter how much it is put into water. For stained tinware borax produces the best results. If a tea-pot or coffee-pot be discolored on the inside, boil it in a strong solution of borax for a short time, and all its brightness will return.

**Garland of Gardens.**  
You must have lovely chrysanthemums, said Ruskin, crystallized, not congealed. Into form; limited in size, and not casting out the scum and scurf of them into an encircling eruption of shame, but girded each with its sacred pomponium, and with garlands of gardens, full of blossoming trees and softly-guided streams.

# NEW LOCATION

## South Main Street

Next Door to the Gas Office



### C. L. JOHNSON

#### The North Side Shoe Man

will open on Friday with a complete line of Men's, Ladies' and Children's Shoes.

Come in and look over our stock, we will please you both in material and courteous service.

### PRICES RIGHT

## C. L. JOHNSON

Office Telephone 15  
Residence 186

# BROOKS-MUELLER CO.

## 9 RAILROAD STREET

DEALERS IN

# COAL and WOOD

### FIREPROOF

# STORAGE

### CHICAGO MOVING A SPECIALTY