

Christmas Customs Part of Folk Lore

Many Christmas legends and customs are part of the folklore of our ancestors in all parts of the world. Many of them, too, are a mixture of early Christian and pagan observances which time and Christianity have given new meaning.

Santa Claus, our western giver of gifts, is little known elsewhere in the world. In Eastern and Southern Europe, it is the Wise Men who arrive bringing gifts. In Hungary the gifts come from the Angels, in Poland from the stars, in Greece, St. Basil is the gift-bearing patron saint.

Popular tradition has it that the candle we place in our windows at Christmas is a custom originated by early Christmas to whom the candle represented the star that guided the Wise Men to the stable at Bethlehem. One interesting legend tells of a shoemaker who, though poor, always placed a candle in his window at night to guide weary travelers, and so

Xmas Down Under

B. C. Hilliam ("Flotsam")

I'm sorry, but this Christmastime I'll have to illustrate my rhyme And make it, much against the rule,

A sort of topsyturvy Yule; The reason being — my thoughts will range

To an Aussie Christmas, for a change.

Now, in Australia, as you know, Instead of seasonable snow,

They get — or should get — swelt'ring sun,—

A different kind of Christmas fun Is therefore their's — but we can claim

That Christmas smiles are just the same,

As you will gather, if you glance, At this old Briton's countenance;

Turned upside down, — why, bless your heart—

You get his Aussie counterpart!

Now here's another drawing — quite!

"Australian Schoolgirl" — you are right,

But is her young face freckled so

Through sitting in the sun? Oh no!

I'm bound to tell you, with a frown,

That, if you turn her upside-down,

You'll find she's broken out in spots

Through eating lots

More than she should

Of Christmas "pud"! —

a large evergreen, an Aracuria.

Since, reader, you can turn it

upside-down

And it's still "chump" — discovery

sublime

With which to end this topsyturvy

rhyme!

(As tricky as "eleven-plus")

Why we should huddle round a

fire

While in Australia they perspire

At Christmastime! Don't be a

clown!

inspired the villagers that soon

each window contained a lighted

candle.

The holly bush, long associated

with Christmas, and with many

legends was once called the holy-

bush, because in its natural state

the berries ripen at Christmas

time.

The Wassail bowl, which today

is Christmas punch, is said to

have come to us from the ancient

Saxons. Wassail was a word of

greeting which meant literally,

"What Hails?" or "How are

you?"

At Christmas time, traditions of

the Old World live again. Pin-

atitas, doves and festive straw

chains from South Europe; wheat

sheaves, paper and carved wood

from Scandinavian countries; an-

gels, stars, Czechoslovakian bells

and gold German stars are all

bits of Old World charm that we

re-create in our homes.

Of course they're not all upside-

down!

The law of gravity please probe

And learn why they stay on the

globe

As we do here; a nice disgrace

If they should fall off into space,

As people uninformed — no wonder—

Thing they might do — being

"down under"!

And so — to all Australian friends

This rhyme a Christmas greeting

send,

For both our countries love full

well

The happy season of Noel.

While we're prepared for snow and

sleet

They're ready for excessive heat;

What odd? — for Christmas joy

is such

The weather doesn't matter much.

It's just a thing to like or lump

If you don't think so, you're a

P.S. "Chump" is a most unusual

noun,

Small Towns Were First To Decorate

Today nearly every community in the land has some kind of outdoor Christmas decorations and in nearly every big city you can find two or three spectacular displays.

It was a small town that first came up with the idea of lighting up the outdoors at Christmas time, but no one is quite sure which town gets credit for the idea.

Four communities are believed to have thought of it about the same time, as early as 1913. Two of them, McDonald and Germantown, are in Pennsylvania. Salem, Ore., decorated a Sitka spruce and Riverside, Calif., illuminated

A very merry Christmas!



Christmas... and the world is aglow with the spirit of good will! May you share in all the joys of this wonderful season and have a truly memorable happy holiday.

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Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

Best Wishes for Christmas

At this joyful season, may there come to every heart a glad renewal of the warming spirit of peace and good will. May we all be richly blessed with enduring hope and love, as we rededicate ourselves to the glorious message of the first Christmas.



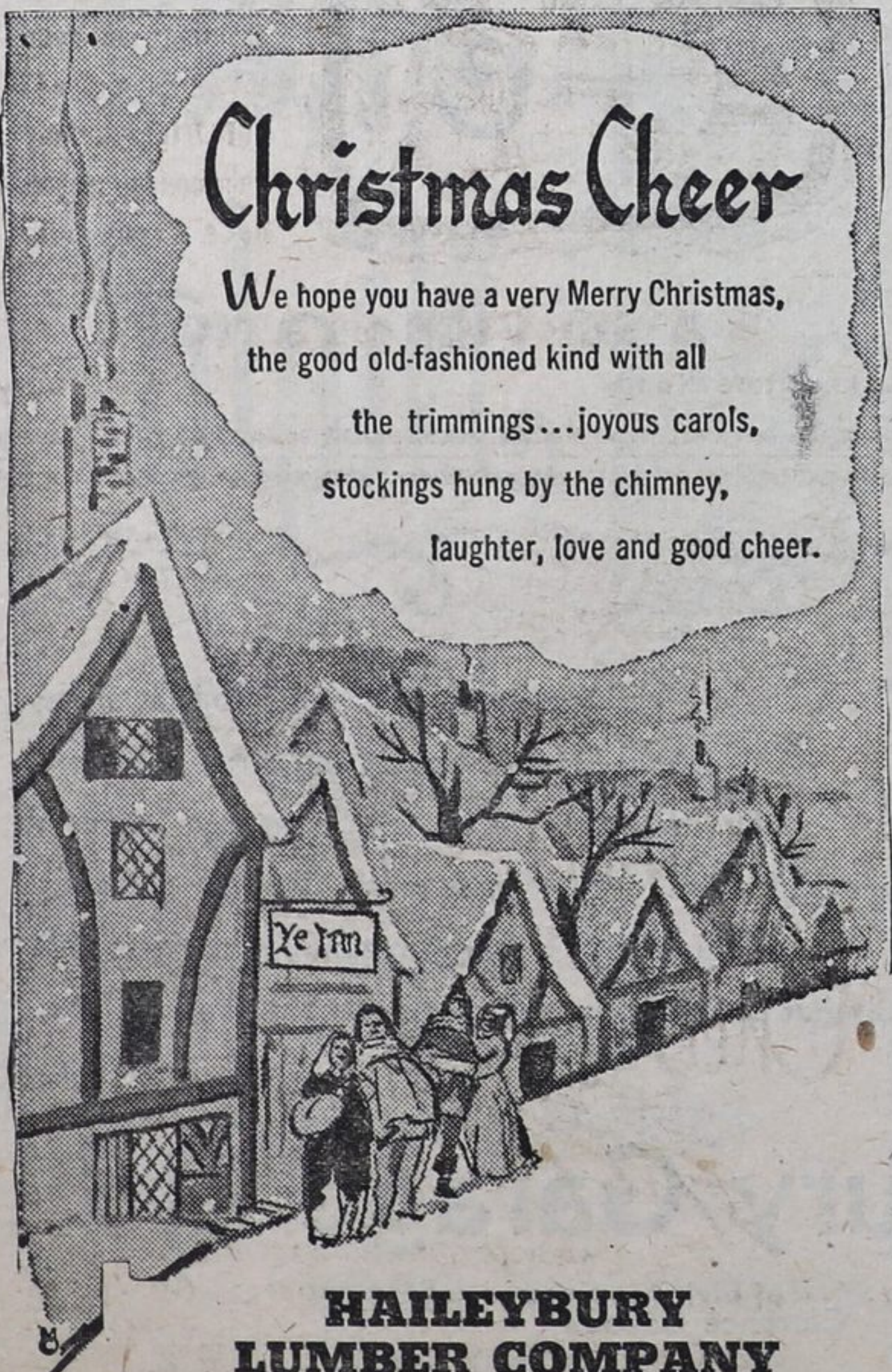
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Christmas Cheer

We hope you have a very Merry Christmas, the good old-fashioned kind with all the trimmings...joyous carols, stockings hung by the chimney, laughter, love and good cheer.



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