PAUL MARCHMENT, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ken Marchment, wasn't afraid of Santa Claus at the Legion party Saturday. He sat on the old gent's knee and tweaked his nose as a reminder to be sure and bring him toys.

Sombre omens of Christmas

"Merry" Christmas? Not always, according to some ancient beliefs once associated with the day. Take, for instance, the old belief that cattle and other stable animals were given the power of speech on Christmas Eve.

Any person who heard the animals speak would die within a year, so superstition said.

Sombre omens of death were read into still other Yuletide legends. When the Yule log burned, bystanders were told to watch the shadows on the wall.

If the shadows of any persons appeared to be headless, this supposedly meant death for those persons, again within a year.

Salt was also said to have the power of forecasting life or death, when used in connection with Christmas. The test could be made by leaving a small mound of salt on the table on Christmas Eve. If the salt melted during the night, that, too, meant death within 12 months.

If the salt remained unmelted, the forecast was for a long and healthy life.

In Northern Europe, where Santa Claus arrives on a white horse, boys and girls put out food for the horse.

Little but Legend Known About Visit of Wise Men

Many legends have developed around the visit of the three wise men to adore the Infant Jesus. Even their number is legendary.

St. Matthew, the only book in the New Testament that refers to the visit, reports that wise men came from the east, without stating how many there were.

It was not until later, in a legend which can be traced back to the second century, that they were called "kings," according to The Encyclopedia Americana.

In even later times, they were distinguished as Melchior, Gaspar or Caspar, and Balthasar.

The magi originally stood for the priestly caste of the ancient Persian Zoroastrian religion. As the religion moved westward, it came in contact with Babylonian beliefs and practices and derived a strong interest in astrology, demonology and magic.

By the time it reached the Graeco-Roman world, it was practically identical, in the popular view, with astrology and magic. This explains the use of the term "wise men" by St. Matthew, since they were astrologers.

Lithographer "Fathered" American Greetings, Encouraged Artists

To Louis Prang, a native of Breslau, Germany, goes the credit for being "father of the American Christmas card."

Prang, a lithographer who began a greeting card business in Roxbury, Mass., exhibited his own cards at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1875. He then had the idea of holding an annual competition to obtain the best of American art for cards.

Hundreds of paintings were entered in Prang's contest, for prizes from two hundred to one thousand dollars. Winners, with two exceptions, were artists born in the United States.

Women artists were well-represented among winners. Rosina Emmet was the mother of the late author and playwright, Robert Emmet Sherwood. Others were Dora Wheeler, Anne Morse, Lizbeth Humphrey and Florence Taber.

The group of 20 Prang prize cards is owned by Norcross, Inc., greeting card publishers.

JOY AT CHRISTMAS

This Christmastide, may the peace and contentment that comes with love, understanding and good will towards our fellowmen prevail throughout the world. And for you and yours especially, may the meaning of Christmas be deeper, its hopes brighter than ever before.

MANAGEMENT and STAFF

GOY CARTAGE LIMITED

CHEERS

We're sending best wishes of the season to you and yours. Have a Merry Christmas!

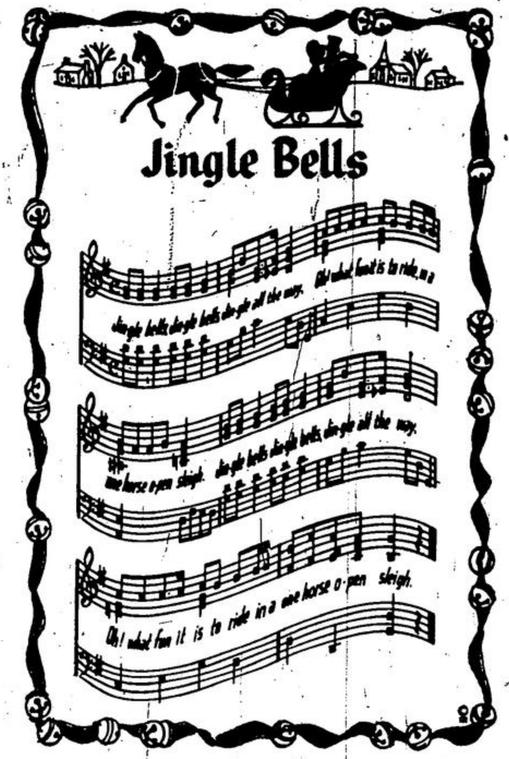
ACTON CREAMERY LIMITED

Silent Night

Rosy cheeked carolers carry our glad message of Yule greetings to everyone.

ROOT HARDWARE

ROCKWOOD, ONT.



"Jingle, Bells" Sings Of Snow and Sleigh

"Dashing thro' the snow, in a one-horse open sleigh;
O'er the field we go, laughing all the way;
Bells on bobtail ring, making spirits bright;
What fun it is to ride and sing a sleighing song tonight!

• • •

"A day or two ago I thought I'd take a ride;
And soon Miss Fannie Bright was seated by my side.
The horse was lean and lank, misfortune seem'd his lot;
He got into a drifted bank, and we, we got upsot.

"Now the ground is white; go it while you're young;
Take the girls tonight, and sing this sleighing song.
Just get a bobtailed bay, two+forty for his speed;
Then hitch him to an open sleigh, and crack! you'll take the lead."

• • •

REFRAIN:
"Jingle, bells! Jingle, bells! Jingle all the way!
O! What fun it is to ride in a one-horse open sleigh."

Although it says not a word about Christmas, the song, "Jingle, Bells," is now a familiar part of the holiday season. The spirited description of "Dashing thro' the snow, in a one-horse open sleigh" conjures up visions of the old-fashioned Yuletide nearly everyone remembers — or likes to think he remembers.

Usually it is thought of as "Jingle Bells," but early copies of the song show that the title was really meant to be "Jingle, Bells" — with a comma added to make it a command to the bells to go into action.

Both the melody and lyrics were written by James Pierpont, who was the son of a minister and who ran away to sea at the age of 14.

Pierpont wrote the song in the late 1850's, according to Encyclopedia Americana. He was then living in the Boston suburb of Medford where, at the time, the only piano in the entire village was located in the parlor of Simpson's Tavern. It was there Pierpont picked out the "Jingle, Bells" melody.

THE POINSETTIA

Latin America's traditional Christmas decoration, the poinsettia, is also popular in Canada. The shrub, which has flaming red bracts, is named for Joel R. Poinsett, an American statesman and former ambassador to Mexico.

As Yuletide bells peal out glad tidings, our hearts are filled with joy! May all the blessings of Christmas be yours!

NEWTON'S 5c to $1.00 STORE

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Winter scenes, the scent of pine, the sound of children laughing . . . may these and all the other beautiful things that mean Christmas fill your holiday brimful of happiness.

BLUE SPRINGS NURSERY and GREENHOUSE

R.R. 1, Acton Rockwood 856-9713

Seeking Log Was Family Affair

The traditional Yule log survives today more in art, song and story than as an actual "blazing Yule." After all, not every home has a fireplace nowadays, and even when a fireplace exists, its proportions are usually far from sufficient to accommodate the Yule logs of yesteryear.

During ancient times in England, however, it was a solemn family ritual to select the log, dry it and burn it according to custom. Logs from fruit-bearing trees were preferred.

The whole family went along to select the log, as this was thought to bring good luck for the coming year, and to frighten away any witches.

If the log burned out quickly, or did not burn brightly, it meant bad luck ahead.

On Christmas morning, the children of the household beat upon the log and called for gifts to come forth. They were scolded by their parents, sent outside and, after a time, called in to open the gifts, which had been set near the log.

WASSAIL

The Wassail [illegible] lore of ancient [illegible] pleases holiday [illegible] drink may be hot mulled, [illegible] spicy egnog or punch, but [illegible] pledge "Wassail" is the [illegible] Saxon equivalent of "Your Health" and is a fitting toast for the holiday season.

FOR THE BIRDS

You don't need an elaborate feeder to share Christmas with the birds. You can trim an outdoor tree and decorate it with such things as pine cones dipped in suet, popcorn, bits of apple and grated carrot, even pie crust. Blue jays, woodpeckers, nut hatches, chicadees, warblers and brown creepers are "meat" eaters. Cardinals, juncos, sparrows and finches like vegetable seeds.

Time to put on our Santa suit, and extend to you, from our heart, every joy at this Yuletide season.

ROSS'S BARBER SHOP

Joyous Greetings

May His Star, that guided the Wise Men on their way to the Manger, lead us toward greater love, peace and fulfillment.

EARL VAN NORMAN

ELECTRICIAN

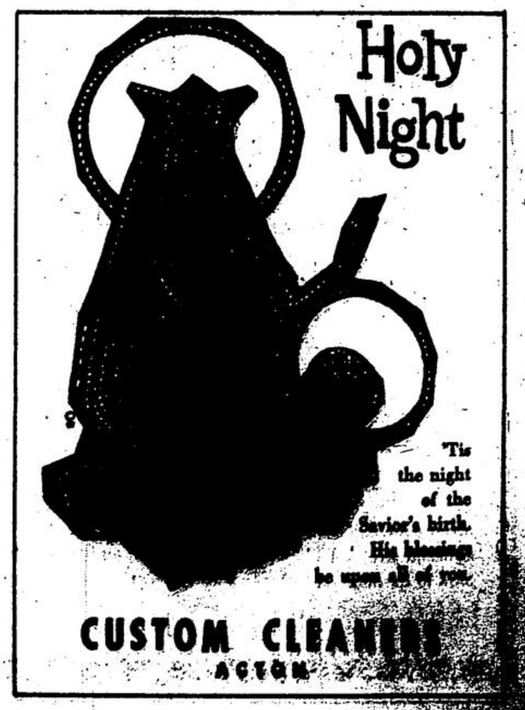
125 MAIN ST. N. ACTON, ONT.

Feasts

Many foods for Christmas feasting have been traditional since early days of Yule merry-making, although roast peacock, the feature of the feast in mediaeval England, is rarely, if ever, seen today!

Mince pie, with its spices and fruits, is said to symbolize the riches of the East, from which the wise men came.

Legend says plum pudding began when an English king and his men were lost in a forest on Christmas Eve. The cook used foods he had on hand, including part of a stag, plums, eggs, flour, to make a single dish all could share.



'Tis the night of the Savior's birth. His blessings be upon all of you.

CUSTOM CLEANERS

ACTON