



FAMOUS CHOIR . . . Choirs and carols are an important part of each Christmas observance and the famous Boy's Town Choir of 600 voices each year presents a stirring program of Christmas music.



CITY AT NIGHT . . . Christmas trees and shining lights are traditional along New York's Park Avenue. Dominating the fashionable thoroughfare is the giant cross on the New York Central Building at 46th Street.

Candles Surrounded By Various Legends

Candles have long had their place in legends and in the observance of the holiday of Christmas. In Ireland on Christmas Eve a large candle was burned which could be snuffed out only by one named Mary. As the Irish put it: "Who knows, on some Christmas Eve, Jesus and Mary and Joseph may come again, not to Palestine, but to the Holy Isle on the farthest edge of Europe?"

The first use of candles for Christmas is not recorded in the annals of any nation but according to an old legend the "Christ Child Candle" is burned in the window to light His way if He makes an earthly visitation and in atonement for the night of His birth when there was no room for Him.

Children's Task

During the early days of our country, animal fats were relatively scarce. The branches of the bayberry shrub were covered with wax-giving berries and children were given the task of gathering the berries when candles had to be made so that the animal fats could be conserved.

According to tradition, one who burned a bayberry candle on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day would have long life and a happy one.

An old verse reads:

"To learn your luck for the year they say,
Burn a bayberry dip on Christmas Day.
If the flame burns bright and the light shines clear,
Good luck will be yours throughout the year."

HOLIDAY GREENERY

Home owners can often get all the Yule greens they need by wisely pruning their conifer trees and evergreen shrubs. There are five simple rules to follow when trimming branches and twigs for holiday decorations.

- (1) Thin the trees and shrubs for shape, always maintaining the natural contour of the plant.
- (2) Do not cut more than 6 to 7 inches from a branch.
- (3) If the tree has not been pruned for some time, take off every other branch.
- (4) Do not cut beyond the green needles; otherwise this will not fill in with new growth.
- (5) Keep the cut branches in a cool moist place until ready for use.

Ideal Greens

Spruce, pine, hemlock, yew and aborvitae make ideal Christmas greens. Yew seems to hold up best. Broadleaf evergreens such as laurel, andromeda, boxwood and Japanese holly should be kept in water when used indoors, otherwise their leaves shrivel.

Roping used to frame a doorway can be made of pine, balsam, laurel, and hemlock. Any of the broadleaf evergreens, combined with holly, balsam or yew, are ideal for wreaths. Good for indoor arrangements are barberry, firethorn, viburnum with its bright red fruit, bayberry and drooping leucothoe.

Many After-Holiday Uses for Family Tree

There are a number of uses to which you can put your Christmas tree after it has served its purpose in the home.

You can cut off the longer branches and "plant" them as windbreaks to protect outdoor plantings such as low-growing boxwood, azalea, yew, rhododendron and juniper. Little teepees can be built around exposed shrubs and tender plants. This will protect them from biting, drying winds and prevent snow and ice from accumulating and bending the plants out of shape.

Other branches curved end up over flower beds when the ground is exposed will prevent heaving of soils during alternate freezing and thawing. Heaving may force bulbs and roots of perennials from the ground.

The entire tree may be used as a bird feeder in the back yard. It may be either anchored securely or fastened to a fence. Pieces of suet tied to its branches and a container of water nearby will provide a constant supply of food for your feathered friends.

Sending Cards Is Old Holiday Tradition

The custom of sending Christmas cards has grown so popular through the years that each year an average of one and one-half billion cards are mailed.

Some historians suggest that the idea of sending Christmas cards originated with school boys away from home, who wrote their letters on fancy paper and in fancy writing.

William Egley sent out a Christmas greeting on a fancy card in 1842 which showed his artistic and engraving talent. The card carried the message, "A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year."

In 1844, Henry Cole, a middle class Englishman, sent Christmas cards which depicted a Victorian family gathered at the festive board and which carried the message "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You."

The cards brought fame and popularity to Henry Cole, but it was two decades before Christmas cards were sold generally.

THE Yule Log

The Yule Log tradition is making a comeback as more and more of today's modern homes are designed with open fireplaces as well as central heating and gas stoves.

For those who have a place to burn a Yule log and want one, tradition says that it should be oak, ash, olive, apple or pine. Whatever type you choose or may be able to acquire, get plenty of wood.

Ash is highly desirable since it can be used without being seasoned. It burns quickly, and throws off plenty of heat. Poplar, on the other hand, will spark badly if unseasoned.

Elm is less desirable since it is slow to get started. However, it lasts a long time and brightens up when it gets going. A few logs of birch, pine or fir will help it along.

Beech and oak are among the best logs. Beech has a pleasant aroma and gives off a steady glow. Oak has the outstanding merit of burning slowly.

If none of these are available, select wood from some kind of fruit tree. Such wood gives off a pleasant smell when burning.

Many People Still Celebrate Feasts By Ancient Calendar

Many people who use the Gregorian calendar still solemnize traditional feasts, including New Year, in accordance with ancient calendars.

The Jews observe a 10-day New Year season at the time of the autumn equinox. The observances begin on Rosh Hashana and end on Yom Kippur; Rosh Hashana commemorates the Day of Creation and is also the annual day of judgment, with judgment being irrevocably sealed on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement); therefore the spirit of penance dominates the solemnities.

Penance is also a feature of Hindu observances, solemnized in accordance with the ancient lunar calendar during the spring equinox.

The Moslem calendar, which dates from 626 A. D., is unique, since the twelve months of the year begin with the approximate new moon without any calculations to keep them geared to the seasonal equinoxes. Thus, the months—and New Years, too—retrograde through the entire year in about 33 years.

LONGEST YEAR

Once there was a year which contained 445 days—or an extra two months.

Numa Pompilius supposedly created the Roman calendar in the seventh century B. C. Although revised several times, the calendar by Julius Caesar's time was two months behind the sun.

When Caesar set his experts to the task of revising the calendar in the 16th century, they found they had to meet the problem of catching up with the sun. So two months were inserted between the months of November and December for the year 46 B. C.



TEST PILOT . . . This seven-year-old is wide-eyed with delight as he operates a remote control plane, pylon and airport shown at New York's Ninth Annual preview of toys. Helicopter is actually airborne by the propeller and responds only to the Junior "test pilot" at the control panel.



May this Christmas find you surrounded by those you love, enjoying to the fullest all the pleasures of a joyous Holiday Season.

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Season's Greetings

Triumphantly, the songs ring out, heralding the happiness, the glory of Christmas. We're wishing that the season will be a warm and merry one for you and yours.



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