

4 Legends, Loved for Centuries

During the Middle Ages in Europe, legends surrounding the birth of Christ circulated from family to family and from generation to generation. Here are 4 of these legends:

the Stork * *

On Christ's Birthday even the birds and animals felt the wonder of it, and knelt down to pray. The ox, the badger, all manner of wild and domestic beast, including the long-legged stork, flocked 'round where the baby Jesus lay. The stork, seeing how mean His bed, plucked the soft down from her breast, pulled plumes for Him to cushion His head.

Ever since then, the noble stork has been patron of babies of every land.

the Rosemary * the Robin * * the Birthday * Symbolism

When Mary and Joseph fled with the infant Jesus into Egypt, the flowers showed their love by blossoming wherever the little caravan went.

Everywhere, the air was filled with heavenly fragrances . . . from the lilac, from many flowers and plants. Even the serene lily spread wide her cup of gratitude.

Only the green rosemary, petal-less, could not contribute to the poetry of color and sweet or spicy scent. The rosemary grieved.

As Mary paused to rest, she decided to wash His little garments and hang them to dry, for the journey tomorrow. But where to hang them? The fragile lily broke . . . the proud lilac was out of reach. So on the sturdy branches of the rosemary she hung the raiment to the sun.

"I thank you, gentle Rosemary," said the Mother of Jesus . . . "henceforth you shall bear blue flowers for remembrance of my blue cloak. And, where His clothing touched you, all shall be fragrantly aromatic." And so the blessed leaf, stem and flower of the modest rosemary.



VISIT OF THE THREE KINGS, or Three Wise Men is traditionally celebrated in the Christian church as Epiphany, or Twelfth Night. Literally translated, "Epiphany" means "appearance," and also commemorates the manifestation of Jesus as Christ the Saviour. Epiphany is celebrated in various ways throughout the world. The visit of the Three Kings to Bethlehem, the baptism of Jesus and His first miracle at Cana are all three believed to have happened on the same date, though in different years.



When Christ was born in the manger, He had few comforts in the rude stable, assailed by cruel winds. His Mother pleaded with the oxen and the donkeys, and even the cart-horse to breathe on the listless embers and bring some warmth from them.

But all dozed and dreamed, not hearing the frail Mary. Suddenly into the stable flew a brown bird. Making a bellows of his wings he puffed up his feathers and made forays into the slumbering fires, stirring them to a rousing flame, all the while risking his little body for his Lord's comfort.

Even though the flames seared him, the bird, now red-breasted, sang loud and cheerfully.

Soon all the stable was comforting and warm . . . and softly slept the Christ-Child.

"Master Robin," said Mary, "wear now a breast of red, a blessed stain on your heart, that all may see the symbol of your love."

On Christmas Eve, some say, certain fortunate little children are gathered up by angels to visit the Christ-child in Paradise.

It is said they have such a pandemonium of fun, Heaven is rent with their laughter.

They toss gold balls, climb the ever-beautiful trees, reach forth to touch the stars, join Him in a celestial chorus of sweet young voices.

Then, drowsing upon their angels' stalwart shoulders, they are borne earthward through the night, and by angels tucked tenderly into their little beds at home.

On Christmas Day and later, when they try to tell about the journey and the Birthday party, they cannot form the words, and fall silent in happy remembrance. Parents look at each other questioningly, and smiling, go about their ways thinking their child is lost in a fanciful dream.

Yet, how blessed are these little ones who with their own eyes have seen the dazzle of Heaven and carry through all their lives the very magic of Christmas.

Symbolism Of Colors in Stained Glass

The beauty of the stained-glass windows in churches can be attributed to the vivid contrasts of clear color. All of the colors have a spiritual aspect, according to the practitioners of this ancient craft.

The sapphire blues of the heavens reflect steadfastness, devotion and the effects of calm meditation.

Ruby reds are the hues of life, itself . . . enthusiasm, courage and sacrifice, and of love. Red is the color of valor, action — the wings of the seraphims and the gift of the Church's martyrs.

The gold of the sun is also the color of silence and strength. Poets and philosophers refer to the "golden thread" joining this life with the next. And yellow is associated with joy.

Green is the color symbolic of Spring, of youth and renewing promise. It typifies rebirth and newness of life.

All these, and other colors, are complemented by the simplicity of white . . . symbolizing innocence and perfect purity.

CHRISTMAS TREE FOR ENTIRE U.S.

One winter day in 1924 a visitor to King's Canyon National Park, California, looked down and saw a little girl who had appeared suddenly as if "from nowhere."

She looked up at the tall, 267 ft. Sequoia covered with a cloak of snow and exclaimed, "What a wonderful Christmas tree it would be!"

What, indeed, thought the man, looking again at the towering giant which he recognized as the famous General Grant tree. So, before Christmas 1925 the inspiration the child had given him stirred Charles Lee to recruit over a hundred of his acquaintances to attend a special Christmas service conducted at the foot of the sequoia.

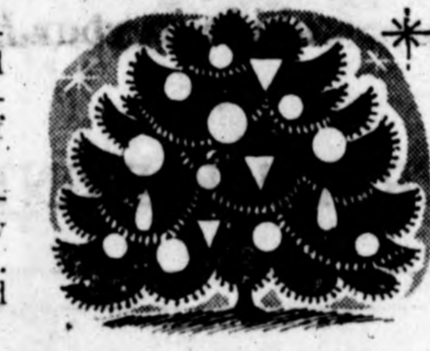
The awesome ceremony has been celebrated for almost 40 years by nearby residents. As a result, the United States Department of the Interior, on April 28, 1926, officially dedicated this Sequoia as the Nation's Christmas Tree.

On November 11, 1956, Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, in accordance with an act of Congress, in a special ceremony declared the Tree a national shrine in memory of America's armed forces who died in service.

Last year almost 2500 persons attended the service, held on December 13; approximately a dozen states were represented, coming from as far away as Florida.

As Bishop Kennedy of the Methodist Church, puts it: "The Nation's Christmas Tree is the best symbol of Christmas . . . very old, very new, and forever alive."

Yes, for this huge sequoia reaches heavenward more than 267 feet and was already 1,500 years old when Christ was born.



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Merry*
Christmas

May Holiday
cheer be yours
throughout
this Yuletide
season

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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 trees 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 and up over flower beds when the ground is exposed will prevent heaving of soil 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.



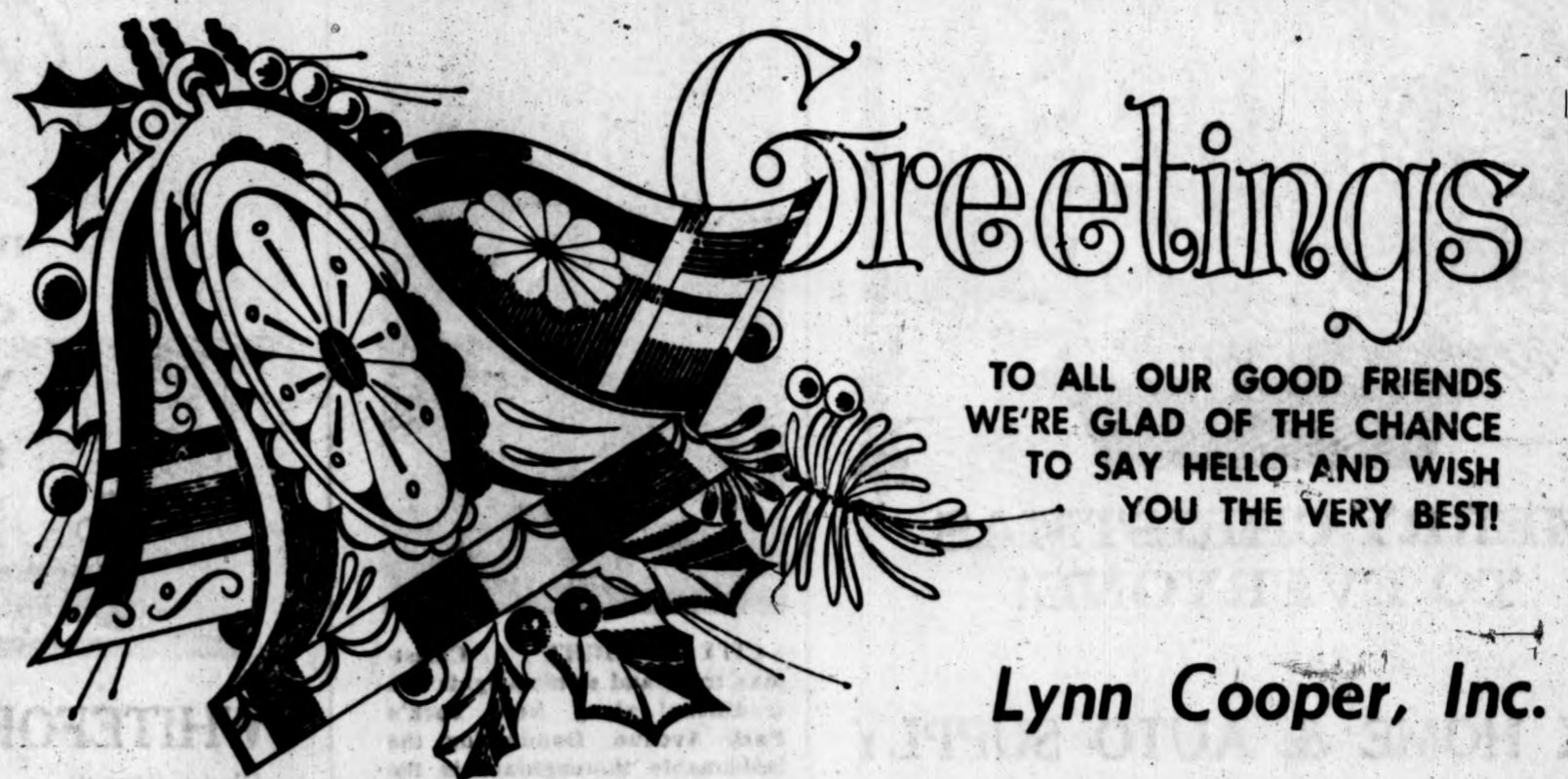
TEST PILOT . . . This seven-year-old is wide-eyed with delight as he operates a remote control plane, pyton and airport shown at New York's Ninth Annual preview of toys. Helicopter is actually airborne by the propeller and responds only to the junior "test pilot" at the control panel.



FUN FOR ALL . . . Strategy games offer fun for old and young alike and most on the market are designed to provide pleasure for players from age 6 to adult.

The Good Witch Visits Italy's Young

It is on January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany, and not on Christmas Eve that Italian children place their shoes by the fireplace. The shoes are placed in anticipation of the arrival of "Befana", the good witch, who comes down the chimney on a broom to fill the shoes left out for her — sweets for the good youngsters, coal in the shoes of the naughty.



TO ALL OUR GOOD FRIENDS
WE'RE GLAD OF THE CHANCE
TO SAY HELLO AND WISH
YOU THE VERY BEST!

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