

Dutch celebrate feast of Sinterklaas

Patron Saint of Amsterdam was born in Asia Minor. Famed as Child Benefactor for centuries, the Feast of Sinterklaas has been known as a Dutch and Finnish event, honoring St. Nicholas, Calendar A.D. 17 Dec. 6, but celebrated on the eve.

Who is St. Nicholas' influence so strong in Holland? Primarily because he was the patron saint of merchants and sailors. The actual Saint lived from 271 A.D. to Dec. 6, 342 or 343, so that his

Calendar Day honors the date of his death. He became famous as Archbishop of Myra, in Asia Minor, and performed many good and saintly deeds. Legend tells us he performed miracles as well, such as causing stormy seas, dropping down into the shoes of penitent rogues, and saving children from fire horns. He is now the patron saint of the city of Amsterdam.

All Dutch children believe that Sinterklaas, the saint is now known, lives in Spain, where he spends most of the year recording the behavior of all children in a big red book, while his servant Piet (Pete) stocks up on presents for the next Dec. 5. After mid-November, Sinterklaas mounts his milk-white steed, Piet swings the sack full of gifts over his shoulders, and they board a ship to sail for Amsterdam harbor and a formal welcome by the Mayor and prominent citizens. Then comes a fabulous parade through town, watched live and on tv by people all over the country.

At night Sinterklaas rides across Holland's rooftops and Piet distributes gifts and candy—in exchange for the hay or carrot which children leave for the horse in each little shoe that's left by the fireplace.

A Sinterklaas present is not a bit like an early Christmas present. Dutch tradition demands that all packages be camouflaged in some imaginative way, and that each gift be accompanied by a fitting poem. For the essence of Sinterklaas is sheer fun—with kidding expected between all ages and social groups. Presents are often hidden all over the house—and those who get them must be willing to work hard for their surprise. The poems that come with the gifts are expected to play good-natured jokes on the giftees and they must be read aloud. Afterward, each person says a loud "Thank you, Sinterklaas!" which is indeed the way the Hollander feels about this merry and very special Christmas festivity.

Know What "Wasail" Means?

This ancient word, familiar to us from song and story, comes from the Anglo-Saxon words, "Wes hal"—which means "be whole"—or in more modern terms, "Good Health." It was used as a toast, before lifting one's glass—and by extension came to mean a drinking song.

Christ is Born...

Let us rejoice and join together with Christmas spirit to celebrate His birth.

The Nicholas County Bar Assoc.




Greetings

Merry Christmas to each and every one of you. May the season's glad tidings brighten your days.

Harper's Garage



May the spirit of the Christmas season linger on and brighten all your days.

Hopkin's Drug Co.



Rejoice

The time of His birth is a time for rejoicing. May the many blessings of Christmas be yours.

Floyd Clark, County Judge

Greetings for Christmas

From all of us to all of you, our best and warmest wishes.

E-Dell Beauty Salon



Merry Christmas

At this joyous time of year, we wish the best of holiday blessings to all our customers and their loved ones. Thanks for your loyalty.



Standard Oil Company

Bob Estep, Agent

Carlisle, Ky. Phone 289-5350 Cynthiana, Ky.

Greetings



To all our friends and their families. We want to wish you the merriest Christmas ever and bounty of holiday cheer.

from all the folks at


Blue Grass Industries, Inc.

Blue Grass Knitting, Inc.

Peace on Earth

May the Holy Babe bless the family of man with lasting peace.

Abraham's Ladies Shop



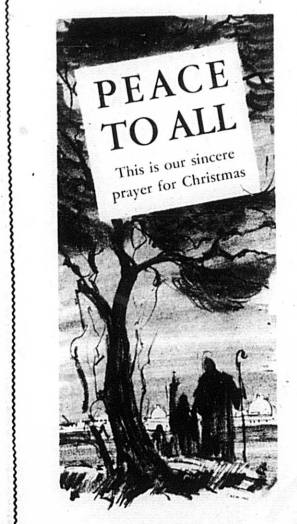
May the many blessings of Christmas dwell with us... always.

A. V. (Doc) Allison



PEACE TO ALL

This is our sincere prayer for Christmas



Ratliff Bros.

Old pagan traditions still honor 12th night

Twelfth Night is the popular English name for the Feast of the Epiphany, which falls on Jan. 6, just 12 days after Christmas. The word "Epiphany" comes from a Greek word meaning a "p.e.e.r. a.n.c.e.", usually used in reference to the appearance of a deity in visible form. The earliest reference to the festival, according to the editors of the Encyclopedia Americana, was in the later years of the 2nd Century, when Clement of Alexandria, in Egypt, spoke of certain Christians observing the 6th of January in memory of the baptism of Jesus. The actual date seems to have been chosen in order to rival some of the popular pagan festivals of that day.

By the beginning of the 4th century, orthodox Christians in the East were observing the festival as a triple celebration. It became an all-inclusive feast, honoring the birth and baptism of Christ, and His first miracle at Cana of Galilee.

Arrival of the Magi In the West, however, the particular commemoration assigned to Epiphany was visit of the Magi. During the Middle Ages, the Epiphany festival was widely observed by the performance of miracle plays in the churches about the Three Kings or Magi. Particularly in England, the day was marked by dramatic productions, though not necessarily religious ones, and this custom survived into the Elizabethan period. Shakespeare took the popular title of Twelfth Night for his play of that title, which was written to be performed on that date.

Since Epiphany concludes the Yuletide festivities, and its date coincides with many ancient pagan customs, it was often celebrated with strange ceremonies in which those customs mingled with Christian rites. Some of these old ceremonies still exist in parts of Europe, where fixed rituals may have origins, often with an overlay of magic, that are lost in the past.

Up-Holly-As Is Norse Still celebrated in the Shetland Islands is an old Viking ceremony known as "Up-Holly-As." The name means "end of the holiday," indicating that the event comes some time after Christmas, actually at the end of January.

The ceremony itself is very dramatic, since it takes place at night, by torchlight. Men in the old wild Viking costumes, complete with high horned helmets, use a huge skinned horse legboat through the town, in a torchlight procession. Then the boat is set ablaze on the beach.


Hasxy Hood Game Hasxy is a place in Lincolnshire, where they still play that famous old hood game, on Jan. 6. Its origins hark back to pagan times, and the "hood" itself is thought to represent the head of a bull.

In the game, 13 men take part, one called the "hood," another the "ball," and 11 others, "hoagies." A two-team scrimmage takes place, the object being for each man to succeed in placing a folded canvas hood into a particular goal, one after the other. The very last hood, the 13th, called "The Hasxy," has to be fought towards the final goal—in inn where there are drinks for all.

Wassaling the Trees This unusual torchlight ceremony still is observed in certain parts of England on Jan. 17, which is the date of "old 12th Night." It's another survival from very ancient times, when prayers were made to the god of trees and fruit.

Merry Christmas to our wonderful friends & patrons

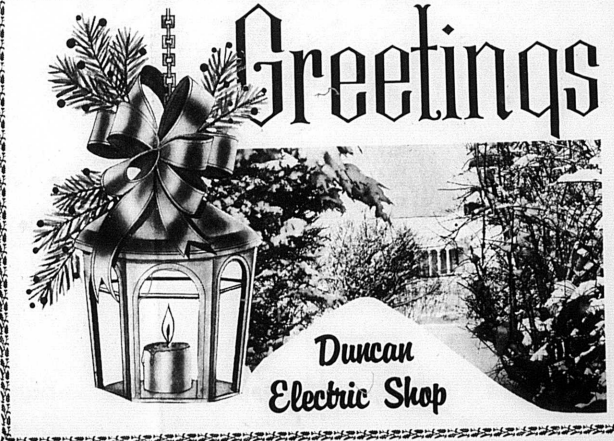
Sims' Jewelry




At Christmas, we wish for you and yours peace, joy, and love. With gratitude and thanks for your loyalty.

Eastern Ky. P.C.A.

Greetings



Duncan Electric Shop