



The Christmas spirit makes this time of year a warm season, no matter how cold it may be according to the weather report

Christmas is always a pleasant day because of the warmth of family get-togethers, visiting friends, and the joys of children. It's singing, worshipping, remembering, giving, sharing, and loving.

We all have our fond memories of Christmases gone by, and I'd like to share some of mine — Christmas on my parents' York County farm. Those days are most memorable to me.

According to German tradition, the festivities and warm feelings always started the day before Christmas and lasted through the first few days of the New Year. Gifts were exchanged on Christmas Eve, after the barn work was done and a delicious meal had been eagerly consumed.

We children began buzzing with excitement about midway through December, and by the 24th we were just about bursting with anticipation. I suppose my parents awaited Christmas Eve just as eagerly because their joy came when they saw our faces light up while we opened presents and admired the beautiful tree.

But prior to all that warmth, joy and love, there was work to be done. The cows needed to be milked, the calves fed, and all the animals had to be provided with fresh straw to sleep on during this Holy Night. And in the house, especially in the kitchen, my mother and sisters prepared for the festivities.

The work was always done a little faster on the afternoon of the 24th — not so much because we took shortcuts — but because no one wasted even a minute. Everybody wanted to get his chores done and enjoy the rest of the evening as much as possible.

The milking were pulsing and clicking,

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a pleasant scent from the cows, hay, straw, and silage filled the barn from wall to wall. Outside, snow was falling gently, creating the White Christmas wonderland everyone had wished for. I like to think back to those pleasant Christmases.

Standing by the window in the barn, and looking across the pasture, it was no mystery how Joseph Mohr was inspired to write the words to "Silent Night." The night was silent, and calm, and in its own way, it was also bright. Soft moonlight bathed the countryside, which was robed in pure white snow, fit for a King's birthday. The light from inside the barn seemed to flow out of the windows, adding a touch of beauty to the scene that was all its own. Stars dotted the clear sky, the air was almost motionless but crisp.

The cows ate their hay and silage contentedly. Some had already laid down on the pale yellow straw, looking as comfortable as kittens in a basket of wool.

When the work was all done, we'd walk up to the house — the beauty of the evening kept us from running. Certainly, much of what we felt — and still feel — is due to tradition. The physical experiences and natural beauties of Christmas Eve combine with Bible teachings, family and country traditions, and an extra helping of warmth to give the event an air of holiness.

There's no place like home for the holidays, proclaims a popular Christmas carol. The most meaningful and memorable Christmases in my life were those on the farm with the entire family together, and animals to take care of. Somehow I can more readily associate a Holy Night and the first Noel with the way Christmas took place on the farm.

Have a warm and merry Christmas, everyone!

Focus on century farms

Beginning sometime in January of 1976, LANCASTER FARMING will publish Bicentennial feature stories on farms which have been in the same family for 100 years or more.

Anyone living on such a farm has reason to be proud and deserves some publicity.

We ask that those who presently own and operate a property which was originally deeded to your family prior to Dec. 31, 1876 notify us. Please call us (717-626-2191 or 717-394-3047) or write. The Editor, LANCASTER FARMING, Box 266, Lititz, Pa. 17543.

The only information we need is your name, address, how long the farm has been deeded to your family, and directions on how to get there. In as many cases as possible we'll send a reporter to your farm to write the story and take a few pictures.

We'll be looking forward to hearing from you.

THE BIBLE SPEAKS
BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE
THE RECEPTION COMMITTEE
Lesson for December 21, 1975



NOW IS THE TIME...

Max Smith
County Agr. Agent
Telephone: 391-6801

Background Scripture: Matthew 1:18 through 2:23
Devotional Reading: Psalms 72:1-11

We really don't know who the wise men were. We know only that they were from the East and that they were probably astrologers of some kind.

Despite popular tradition that there were three, we don't know how many there were — Matthew doesn't specify a number. We don't know whether they rode camels, as usually portrayed, or walked. We don't even know whether they arrived on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, only that it was sometime around the time "when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king" (Matthew 2:1).

Herod the un-wise

Obviously, Herod was not a "wise man," not in any sense of the term. He should have been a wise man, but he wasn't. Although he had great power, although he had fine resources and access to much wisdom and learning, Herod was not very wise. To be sure, there were times when he was cunning or crafty, but never wise.

He was the head of state, the government and, in a sense, he represents all those who possess temporal power. He who governs, whether as governor, legislator, judge, or mayor, may use the resources at his disposal with great wisdom or with equally great folly. To possess temporal power is no guarantee of wisdom.

Strangely enough, Herod knew that the child Messiah was sent by God, yet he obviously believed he could outsmart God. Man's greatest troubles and tragedies always occur when he assumes he can outwit his Creator.

Neither were the "chief priests and scribes" the wise men. Their foolishness is perhaps even greater than that of Herod. Herod had to come to them for their expertise in the scriptures. When, in response to his question about the birthplace of the Messiah, he said: "And you, O Bethlehem . . . from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel . . ." they demonstrated that intellectually, at least, they knew the right answers!

Right answers wrong reaction

Yet, for all their knowledge, they were not wise men either. They had the right answer, but they didn't know what to do with it. Or, better still, they knew what to do, but they didn't do it. So, instead of scribes and pharisees coming to the Christchild, instead of the religious elite discovering the newly-arrived Messiah, it was, rather, some strangers from the East who followed the star to the place where Jesus lay.

Luke tells us, instead of wise men from the East, of shepherds who came to worship the newborn King. Yet, in both Gospels, the

To Control External Parasites
Many farm animals become infested with body lice in the fall and carry them all winter. When the winter hair coats get heavier it becomes a harder problem to eliminate the lice. Producers are urged to be on the alert for lice and treat their animals before serious infestation occurs. Body lice cut down on feed efficiency and the general health of the animal. Two or more treatments are usually needed at least 12 to 14 days apart. Dusts, sprays, or self-treating equipment is available to treat animals for lice. During cold weather it is best to use cold water with the insecticide rather than warm or hot water; this is advisable in order to prevent chilling and respiratory infection. For best efficiency and greater profits don't feed parasites along with your livestock.

To Exercise Ewe Flock

Sheep producers should be looking forward to the new lamb crop, the main source of income from the flock. The proper care of the ewes during the winter months will have a great amount of influence on the kind of lambs that are dropped next spring. Daily outside exercise is very important and some shepherds will feed hay on top of snow or frozen ground at the far end of the exercise pen in order to force the ewes to move around. To keep the bred ewes confined to a barn or small lot will result in weak lambs and possible lambing problems. Top quality legume hay should always be available to the ewe flock during the winter months.

To Control Stray Animals

The risk of permitting stray dogs and cats in farm buildings is too great and may result in new disease infection. I'd like to include wild birds in this same category, but they are more difficult to control or eliminate. Some producers are quick to destroy stray animals because of the danger of spreading diseases. In this part of the country, where farms are so close together, it is quite possible for a stray dog or cat to be in several barns in a 24-hour period; this could

welcoming committee is hardly the one we might have expected: shepherds and strangers rushed in where rulers and clergy feared to tread!

There is a relevance in Matthew's story even today.

Today, as then, one would expect the pious and the powerful to be the ones to recognize and worship God's Messiah. Yet, for the most part, it is an image they honor, while the real Christ comes unnoticed into their presence. The powerful still think they can outwit their God and the pious still have the right answers but the wrong reactions.

easily be a source of infection and should not be tolerated. The use of more wire mesh or screens about buildings might be one way to reduce the problem.

To Practice Farm and Home Safety

I realize that Farm and Home Safety is "old hat" to many folks but there is still need for more attention to the removal of accident hazards before someone gets injured or killed. Many of us take chances with animals and equipment that might "catch up" with us the next time. Here at the Holiday Season when there are many extra activities we tend to get in a hurry and take chances. We have in mind decorations in and about the home with the use of evergreens and extra lights. All of these could be a hazard if not properly handled. We urge attention to keeping evergreens fresh and warn all members of the family not to overload the electric circuits. Special care with tractors and other farm equipment is also very much in order; the removal of protection shields and too much speed are often the causes of severe accidents.

Farm Calendar

Upcoming Events

- Tuesday, Jan. 6
Pa. Guernsey Breeders Association meeting at Schindler's Restaurant, Camp Hill 10:30 a.m.
- Tuesday, Jan. 13
Ephrata Area Adult Farmer's program on dairy herd management 7:45 p.m. Ephrata Senior High School.
- Wednesday, Jan. 14
Milking School at the Lancaster Farm and Home Center.
- Mon., Jan. 5-Fri., Jan. 9
Pa. State Farm Show at Harrisburg. For complete schedule and list of activities see our special Farm Show Edition - January 3rd.

MERRY CHRISTMAS



Our hearts are aglow as seasonal excitement mounts. We hope you enjoy it to the fullest. Thanks, all.