

If Mom's In Prison, How About Santa?

By JERRY REECE
News Staff Writer

Thirty-seven Mecklenburg mothers will not see their children for Christmas.

They are inmates at Woman's Prison in Raleigh.

But prison officials and the Mecklenburg Department of Public Welfare will see that both mothers and children will have as good a holiday as possible.

Mrs. Elizabeth B. McCubbin, superintendent of the prison, told Raleigh today "the girls" in Raleigh have a full schedule of events planned for the five-day holiday.

On the local scene, most of the children of inmates will

spend Christmas in foster homes.

When a mother goes to prison her children usually become wards of the welfare department, according to Miss Mary Potts, head of the child welfare division.

"If the children have relatives who are able to take care of them, we place them there," Miss Potts says.

The children who stay with relatives receive money through the Child Welfare Department's Christmas Fund if it is needed, Miss Potts said.

"We have 28 to 30 children in foster care now, whose mothers either were or are in prison," she said.

Some of the mothers are in prison for neglect of their children, the rest for other crimes.

Fifty five out of the approximately 400 inmates of the prison are from Mecklenburg.

YULE PAGEANT

All of the inmates will begin their holiday celebration with a pageant on Christmas eve. This will be followed by a visit from Santa and the distribution of gifts purchased out of the prison recreation fund, Mrs. McCubbin said.

Christmas day the girls will see a movie in the morning and spend the afternoon listen-

ing to music and seeing a film of Southern Bell's Christmas puppet show.

Friday after Christmas inmates will play games in the morning and participate in dance and hula-hoop contests in the afternoon. That night they will be treated to another movie.

Saturday they will see a basketball game in the morning and watch another movie in the afternoon.

KEEP THEM BUSY

Mrs. McCubbin pointed out the schedule is planned to keep the girls busy. "If they don't have something to do, they may

start crying," she said.

"They're very brave though and I get teary sometimes watching them."

Mrs. McCubbin, who once was with the Family and Children's Service here, said the inmates have been helping the Raleigh Lions Club with their annual toy project by repairing dolls and stuffed animals.

"This has been good for the mother's," she said. "They know they can't do anything for their own children but they can help other unfortunate youngsters."

While their mothers are celebrating Christmas in prison the children will be spending as normal a Christmas as is possible

under the circumstances in foster homes here.

The welfare department pays foster parents \$45 monthly for the support of the children but the agency's budget does not include extra money for Christmas.

The foster parents dig in their own pockets to furnish holiday treats for the kids. They are also assisted by the Epler Stocking Fund money.

If the child's father is known (many were born out of wedlock) the welfare department tries to get him to send the child something for Christmas.

"It means a lot to the kids to get anything from their own parents," Miss Potts says.

The Christmas I Remember Best



(Seventh of a series by prominent Charlotteans)

Santas In Blue

By ALAN NEWCOMB

Thanksgiving that year was miserable. Our room of 20 men drew its daily ration of a rutabaga, a stale cabbage, and a few frost-bitten potatoes. Those were the days of one meal, sitting hunched in our worn greasy clothing and eyeing the division of the food.

Since our camp was on the shores of the Baltic Sea, snow-laden winds came zeroing in at every crevice in the ramshackle barracks walls. The only men more uncomfortable than we were the German guards, high in their boxes, with a spotlight and machine gun for company. And somewhere far to the west was the fighting.

It was a week before Christmas, 1944, when things began to change. The Battle of the Bulge had given Germany new confidence, and our guards had been even more arrogant than usual. When a yell came down the hall for all room leaders to fall out, they left with an air of resignation.

But once outside, they met detachments of blue-clad soldiers marching in to the prison compound with their arms piled high with fir branches. With rare, shy smiles and a gruff greeting the guards passed out the branches, one for a room.

"Fur Wienachts Baum!"

We set up the trees on tabletops and hung them with improvised decorations; bits of tin cut into stars, potatoes wrapped with tin foil, strings of felt cut from the hems of G. I. coats; and it began to feel like Christmas. Four days later, the big news came, called across the barbed wire fence from the central compound: "Christmas packages! Red Cross Christmas packages are here!"

It seemed too good to be true until the horse-drawn carts came rumbling into our compound, loaded with square boxes. Gold? Frankincense? Myrrh? Here were the treasures of America!

Little cans of turkey, plum pudding, jam, honey sausage, ham, cheese, real butter, nuts, candy, chewing gum, pipes and tobacco, cigarettes, cherries, and dates, all in a 10 pound parcel! The eyes of our amateur cooks whose only experience had been in the potato-cabbage-rutabaga school, lighted up like the brightest star in the sky.

Our hearts lighted up. We drew names, and began making little presents for each other; a wooly lamb for Weiss, who talked about his farm; a toupee made of felt scraps for baldheaded Gose; a mustache cup for Omskny's proud upper lip; a pair of ear muffs for Grissom, who came from the sunny South. And while we worked, lying on our beds with backs turned to keep the secrets, the cooks cooked.

All of it was eaten in one day: date-nut cake, jam tarts, cookies, turkey, ham, cheese, and plum pudding! We ate and laughed, laughed and ate, and then exchanged our gifts around the rude little tree.

Our tough German guards were not done. Having tramped through the snow to cut our trees, having stopped a little part of the war to bring the Red Cross parcels from the hinter, they announced in the late afternoon that our doors wouldn't be locked at sunset, that our lights would stay on until midnight—for this one night.

We roamed between barracks, singing carols and visiting. Finally, the doors were locked, the lights went out, and the big dogs were loosed to police the camp through the night.

The next day it snowed. We ran out of coal three weeks later. The tower guard shot a prisoner in the leg when he accidentally stepped over the warning wire. The rutabaga war was on again.

(WFTV-TV personality Alan Newcomb, a B-17 pilot during World War II was shot down twice. He was a prisoner at Stalag Luft 11 north of Berlin on the Baltic Sea.)

82 Killed, 50 More Hurt In Store Fire And Panic

Admits English Love

Sergeant Denies Poisoning Wife

DENHAM, England (AP)—S. Air Force M/Sgt. Marcus Marymont—facing court-martial on a charge of murdering his wife—testified today he had never given his wife arsenic.

Marymont, mustached 37-year-old Korean War veteran with 12 ribbons on his chest, took the stand for the first time on the eighth day of his trial.

The prosecution charges Marymont poisoned his wife Mary Helen, 49, for his love for a 23-year-old English beauty, Mrs. Cynthia Taylor.

He pleaded innocent to the murder count, and to a further charge of adultery with Mrs. Taylor.

Previous witnesses testified Marymont had tried unsuccessfully to buy arsenic at a drug store, then wandered into an Air Force laboratory where arsenic was available almost to anyone.

Study Group Tackles Free Lunch Problem

By ANN SAWYER
News Staff Writer

A special committee to study the hungry school children problem here was scheduled to hold its first meeting today at 4 p. m.

William K. Van Allen, committee chairman and former head of the Mecklenburg County Welfare Board, said it would be a organizational meeting at the American Commercial Bank.

Mrs. Anne S. Hausmann, director of the city school Attendance Dept., was to present figures showing the need for additional free lunches in the city system.

She has estimated there are 250 children already certified as needy who could be receiving lunches immediately if funds were available.

These children are brothers and sisters of children already on the city's free lunch program. The Attendance Dept. has the policy of not giving more than two free lunches in any one family, but often the number of school children in a family will be five or six.

TO BOLSTER FIGURES

She planned to document these figures with records of the families, showing number of children, number of lunches given, number of free meals, and the approximate weekly income.

Members of the Social Planning Council study committee, appointed last week by Council Chairman S. Herbert Hitch, are: Stan Brookshire, Al Bechtold, Lucy Ranson, Art Jones, Stokes King, Col. Francis Beatty, Robert Scott, Paul Johnsons, Ruth Conger, Fred Alexander.

Mrs. Ernest B. Hunter of the county welfare board has been added to the committee.

The Social Planning Council committee was named after a Charlotte News series on children who must stay in school without lunch because their parents cannot provide it.

United Appeal offered \$1,000 to city and county schools for free lunches, and individuals have contributed \$664.25 to the City Lunchroom Dept.

Benefactor for the county Negro children (white county schools say they are feeding all

See HUNGER On Page 4-A

6 SHOPPING DAYS LEFT BUY CHRISTMAS SEALS HELP FIGHT TB



Cabin Gone, Land Charred, John Lampo Faces A Black Yule (AP Photo)

Sadness Follows In Wake Of Brush Fire On Rampage

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, Calif. (AP)—Tragedy and sorrow lie today in the wake of a four-day brush fire that has flared over more than 50,000 acres of Southern California hills and canyons and is still out of control on nearby hills its 75-mile perimeter.

While more than 2,000 men fight the stubborn flames, residents pick their way over the blackened earth to the ruins of their homes and summer cabins. Eighteen structures have been destroyed. More than 300 are still in peril.

In picturesque San Juan Canyon, scenic beauty is turned to rubble and ash.

COMMON LOSS

The canyon people who have returned share the common sadness of loss.

There is Joe Paseri. He came to the canyon to make his home in 1942. Beside the house was a great oak tree. Joe, 77, spent many a day relaxing beneath its branches.

Driven out by the fire, Joe came back to the ruins of his cabin the black skeleton of the oak and the charred table beneath it.

"I don't know what to do," he said. "I feel like crying."

He reached into the ashes and picked up half of a figurine. "St. Anthony," he said. "My wife's patron saint."

"We had a nice cabin," said Romelia. "All of the cabins here in the San Juan cost \$5,000 or more to build and furnish. Most of the old people lived in them."

"Rebuild! No," said John. "It takes money for that and our is gone."

"I wonder what the little animals will do for a drink?" Romelia asked.

"We had three little foxes—Limpy, Eater and Bolt—and—yes to feed them every day."

"Yes," added John. "Every day at half past four exactly."

Explosion Of Lights Is Blamed

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP)—Fire bred panic in a Bogota Department store crowded with Christmas shoppers last night and sent scores of frightened men, women and children screaming to death.

Officials said 82 persons were killed and 50 injured. Most of them made a fatal wild scramble for a rear staircase that led only to a meat market.

Some died with toys in their arms. Others knelt as if in prayer.

The panic spread very quickly," said Alberto Manera, the manager.

Explosion of holiday lights had fired the clothing of salesgirls and sent a curtain of flame across the center of the long, narrow store, named Vida, on Septima Carrera avenue near the Capitol.

CLOTHING AFIRE

Manera said customers started bolting when they saw the salesgirls' clothing afire.

Those in front of the store had easy access to the street.

About half of the dead were employees of the store. The remainder were mostly women shoppers. It was estimated 10 children died in the fire, which raged for two hours before being brought under control.

A 16-year-old girl was found alive beneath a mass of bodies on the stairway. Her condition was critical.

Jose Salinas, a fireman, told of finding an 8-year-old boy lying in a pool of water, his face burned away, but still holding a wooden truck in his arms. "A woman knelt as though in prayer beside the boy's body," Salinas said.

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The Lighter Side And It Was His Birthday, Too

(From AP Reports) It was Beethoven's birthday, but it was also the Christmas season. That's how the trouble started in Chapel Hill. The University of North Carolina's Choral Club scheduled Bach's "Christmas Oratorio" last night. Some students took offense and began jeering the performance. Signs said, "UN Music Dept Unfair to Beethoven," "Bach Go Home," "Three Cheers for Beethoven."

Nothing New Delano Curington, 20 a Navy man in San Francisco, said, "I like to faint when they told me it was our."

TWO ROBBERIES IN ONE NIGHT— Peters Is Shut Out In Double-Header

By JOHN KILGO
News Staff Writer

Peter G. Lozarides called it a double-header.

Others would probably call it just a case of plain bad luck—the kind that strikes in pairs.

Lozarides operates Pierre's Restaurant, 3533 Monroe Rd. Around midnight last night he was closing the door.

He had his money box sitting on the counter—with \$30 in it.

"I looked around," he said, "and a tall colored man was pointing a gun at me. He had a wool scarf over

his face and he picked up the money.

REALLY SHOOK UP

"I was scared stiff. I mean really shook up," he said. "Man, there are you going?"

"He went out the door and I went to the phone. He stuck the gun back in the door and I hit the floor."

"I was going to buy Christmas presents today. I was going to get my mother a TV. Now I'm broke."

"I work 18 hours a day and this guy takes my profits in about five seconds."

"I went home and couldn't

sleep. I went bowling. My dad and I opened this morning around 6 o'clock."

MACHINE BROKEN

"I saw the cigarette machine on the floor, broken open. I told my dad. The machine fell apart. They're not much good, are they?"

"Then I saw the juke box on the floor—ripped open. The juke box was torn down. I was really shook up."

"Somebody had broken into the place and stolen the money out of the two machines. I don't know yet how much they got."

"I still can't believe it."



PETER LOZARIDES