

## SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION

By W. M. BLAND  
Work Unit Conservationist

Bobby G. Brock of the local Soil Conservation Service office has just returned to duty after four weeks of training at the SCS Training Center in Athens, Georgia.

Located on the campus of the University of Georgia, the center is one of five in the United States. It serves nine Southeastern states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Jackson Bennett, Supervisor, and Warren Turcott, Assistant Supervisor, are the directors of the center.

The Athens Training Center was established in 1954 to provide training to 608 employees to better equip them for giving service to Soil and Water Conservation Districts. This is accomplished by instructing SCS employees in the latest and best methods in soil and water conservation fields of study.

Eighteen employees, including Mr. Brock, were in the group which attended the training center from October 14 to November 8. They came from North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, and Georgia.

Instruction was given in public speaking, cartography, agronomy, biology, weather and climate, engineering, farm conservation planning, plant materials, public relations, woodland conservation, waterways, safety, and research. Not all instruction was in the classroom. Field instruction was given in such subjects as engineering surveys, soils, woodland conservation, research, agronomy, erosion control, and conservation planning.

Since the training center has been in operation, more than 1,500

employees have received "post graduate" instruction at the center. Instruction is provided on-ly by Mr. Bennett and Mr. Turcott, but also by University of Georgia Professors, by SCS Specialists and administrators, and by qualified people outside the Soil Conservation Service.

The American farmer is the most successful farmer in the world. One reason is that he is always ready to capture new markets for his products. The door to another new market has now been opened to him — perhaps the most lucrative of all.

City people who don't have room to play, hike, swim, or camp are looking for outdoor fun and are willing to pay for it.

If you are a landowner or operator and want to know more about this coming business boom, you should ask the local representative of the Soil Conservation Service, or the local office of other agencies of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, for a copy of AIB 277, "Rural Recreation Enterprises for Profit."

Just off the press, this publication lists and describes the many ways you can get started in the recreation business and takes advantage of the increasing demand for fun in the sun.

The publication points out the opportunities for income from vacation farms and ranches, picnic areas, fishing waters, camping, shooting preserves, and cottages and recreation sites and the like. It discusses legal angles and financing, what to charge, how to advertise, and how to deal with customers. And it tells of the assistance available from the U. S. Department of Agriculture and other public agencies.

This is one of the ways we can strengthen Rural America. Local landowners and operators can put idle land to work and turn it into an entirely new business in their community.

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and the  
Wise Men  
came.....  
and found Him  
lying in a manger.  
May your holiday  
be filled with  
the peace and  
contentment of  
that first  
Christmas...

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Season's  
'First's' Are  
Traced

Shepherds watched, angels sang and wise men traveled far to hold the miracle of the first Christmas.

Since that holy night a multitude of legends and customs, both religious and secular, have developed as part of the holiday. Each legend was once told, each custom once observed for the first time, and though origins of many are now lost in time, other Christmas "firsts" have been recorded for posterity.

There are historical Christmas "firsts," attested by church records and by scientific research as well as "firsts" of later history and "firsts" that blend fact with myth.

## Setting The Date

December 25 was first assigned as the date for the celebration of the Nativity in about the year 320 A.D. Since the New Testament was written as religious instruction rather than history, the exact date of Christ's birth is not known.

The present day was selected as a means of unifying the observance of Christmas, "the mass of Christ."

## Hanging Stockings

Story of the first Christmas stocking is associated with the real St. Nicholas, a fourth century bishop known for his many kind deeds. Wishing to present an anonymous gift to help the daughter of an impoverished merchant, he threw a bag of gold down the chimney, where it fell into a stocking hung up to dry.

The legend is reflected in today's custom of tucking "gold" — an orange or tangerine — into the toe of a Christmas stocking.

## Trimming Trees

Trimmed Christmas trees first appeared in the United States probably during the American Revolution. Hessian soldiers with the British forces started the practice to relieve their nostalgia for their homeland.

An early diary, written at Fort Dearborn, Ill., in 1804 relates the practice of trimming the Christmas tree with ornaments of the time.

## At The White House

First National Community Christmas Tree in the U. S. was placed on the White House lawn in 1923, while Calvin Coolidge was President. The tree was a spruce from Coolidge's native state, Vermont.

In the following year Coolidge presided at a ceremony under the sponsorship of the American Forestry Association, to urge the use of living Christmas trees.

## At The Round Table

Traditionally, the first Christmas feast in England was held at the Round Table of King Arthur. While the specific date is undetermined, references to the famous king in medieval legends have been traced back to as early as 600 A. D.

Christmas Rose  
Famed In Legend

Blooming in the heart of winter and sometimes even in the snow, the Christmas rose is a plant famed in legend.

According to an old story, a poor little shepherdess had no gift to offer the Christ Child, and so she wept. When her tears touched the ground, flowers sprouted. Delighted, she plucked an armful and hastened to the infant. The caress of his fingers turned the petals pink.

Botanists class the Christmas rose as a member of the buttercup family. Native to Southern Europe and western Asia, it has leathery, dark green leaves and large, saucer-shaped flowers with white or rose-tinted sepals, according to The Encyclopedia Americana.

Robber Snoozes,  
Lands In Prison

For falling asleep on the job — and for sleeping in church — John Smith, Jr., landed in a jail cell in Washington.

Police said Smith got tucked out while trying to open a safe in Bethany Baptist Church during the night. He dozed off, woke in daylight, resumed his work — and was caught by a church trustee.

He was held on a charge of attempted burglary.

Iredell County FHA Farm  
Family Of Year Selected

Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Massey have been selected as the Iredell County FHA Farm Family Of The Year. Mr. and Mrs. Massey own and operate a 128 acre dairy and beef cattle farm in the Central School section of Iredell county.

This is an award made annually by the Farmers Home Administration to borrowers having made substantial progress in their farming operations.

During 1963 the Masseys have seeded several acres of permanent pasture and have worked closely with Soil Conservation Service in an effort to combat soil erosion. Strip cropping and the use of grass water ways have been effectively used on this farm.

Through a Farmers Home Administration loan Mr. and Mrs. Massey have moved from part owners to co-owners of the old home place. Since purchasing the other heirs' interest in the home place, the farm has constructed a modern dwelling on the property and made various other improvements.

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Two men are attending classes with 950 girls at Mercy College in Detroit.

Mercy College, a Roman Catholic girls' school founded in 1941, went coeducational this autumn. Robert Woods and Jerry Sup, both 19, are the first men to enroll.

Both men are graduates of the Detroit suburban high school system. Woods spent 2 years in a military school.

Sister Mary Lucille, the president, said she hoped the men would feel at home because 40 per cent of the faculty is male. More men students are expected to enroll in the future.

In recent years more and more pool halls fail to face-lift.

The possible result: Dime could, instead of alping off to shoot pool, say with pride and honesty to his parents: "My date and I are going to the pocket billiard salon tonight. We're going to put into practice some of the geometry and physics we've been learning about in school."

Like the shepherds who left their flocks to seek the Babe of Bethlehem, men, women and children of this community will put aside not only their everyday concerns but the more immediate interest in tree-trimming and package-wrapping and go to find once again the holy meaning of Christmas, in special services held by local churches.

Catholic churches will proclaim the birth of the King of Christmas by solemn midnight masses. To commemorate the Nativity, Protestant churches will hold candle-light and communion services and children's programs.

The custom of saying mass at midnight derives from an old belief that Christ was born at that hour. Actually, mass may be said at any hour during the night before Christmas, and in some countries the first Christmas mass is said at four or five in the morning.

According to early Roman regulations, Christmas mass was celebrated "when the cock crows" — about three o'clock in the morning. Spanish-speaking people still call midnight mass "Misa de Gallo," while the Portuguese term is "Misa do Galo" — in both cases, "mass of the cock."

Candlelight services held in Protestant churches symbolize Christ as the light of the world, and the shining beams of the candles call to mind the Star that shone to guide the Wise Men.

Exemplifying the spiritual side of Christmas are programs which include special sermons, reading the Christmas story, prayers, carols and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

## SOCIALLY SPEAKING

## The Status Of Pool Is Rising

Socially speaking, the status of pool is rising. This is good.

Pool is an excellent game of skill, but for years it was publicly ostracized because of the environment in which billiards was often played. The image of the billiard hall was that of a hangout for drinkers, smokers, loafers, and gamblers.

The "presence of a pool table in your community" no longer has "the caliber of disaster," as Meredith Wilson's Music Man says.

In fact, the pool table appears to be taking a place beside the ping-pong table or chess board so far as wholesome recreation is concerned.

Wise parents and youth leaders recognize that pool appeals to young people, that it will draw many of them regardless of the surroundings. As an outlet for youthful energy and the competitive urge, it certainly ranks with bowling and claims as honorable an ancestry. George Washington used to shoot with Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson.

This way that pool shooting, in the proper environment, as the fun-type game it is. Civic and school officials and parents should press for this change wherever local pool halls fail to face-lift.

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The boy also was placed on probation for 2 years.

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Christmas Holy Meaning  
Expressed In Church

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

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A JOINT PROJECT—Members of the Mooresville Garden Club and the Petal Pushers Garden Club conducted a joint wreath-making workshop late last week at the War Memorial. The two clubs made the decorations for Veterans Hospital in Salisbury and Lowrance Hospital here. These ladies were only a few of the clubwomen who turned out for the project. Busily placing the greenery into attractive patterns are, from left, Mrs. Herb Hattaway, Mrs. W. B. Harris, Mrs. Jack Curtis, Mrs. Bill Morrow, Mrs. Tom Delk and Mrs. Riggs Goodman.

FOR CHRISTMAS ENJOYMENT  
President Sought 'Good Old Days'

At Christmas time, nostalgia for "the good old days" is as prevalent as turkey and trimmings, decorations and gifts.

Everybody had more fun — or so the feeling goes — during those good old-fashioned Christmases when life was simpler and, according to tradition, the snow drifts were always piled high, the food for feasting was always home-grown and home-cooked, the gifts and decoration always lovingly hand-made and the tree always chopped down by the head of the house on a personal foray.

Christmas nostalgia has even been known to affect heads of state — to be specific, a President of the United States. It was every-one's duty, the President felt, to make Christmas merry. He and his family, he declared, were going to have an "old-fashioned" Christmas tree.

A search through recent newspapers, or even through recent history, would provide no details, however, about this resolve. For the President was Benjamin Harrison, who, on December 22 in 1891, announced to reporters his plan for a "good old-fashioned Christmas."

Most people today whose thoughts turn to Christmases of yore would certainly settle for a date much later than 1891 as the time when the "good old-fashion-

ed Christmas" had ceased to exist. But if the spirit of an old-fashioned Christmas didn't vanish as early as President Harrison feared it had, when did it go? Or has it really disappeared forever?

Most of all, an "old-fashioned" Christmas is made up of traditions. Even in northern climates, only hope, luck and the weatherman can say, each year, whether the traditional snow drifts will be forth-coming. Other traditions, however, may not necessarily belong only to the past.

Preparing foods for feasting was doubtless fun — and hard work — in the good old days. But not all Christmas cookies, candies and fruit cakes today are "store bought." Many a family cherishes the tradition of having the children "help" Mother as the holiday goodies are concocted.

Even the ready-prepared foods have their traditions. For instance, some families deliver gift packages of cakes or candies to friends when they make Christmas calls; others set forth a table of treats in the home, ready to share with callers.

The same is true of that "good old days" habit of making gifts. In this "new day" of increasing interest in sewing, many lovingly home-crafted gifts are found under Christmas trees — and yesterday's Mom would no doubt have

been glad to trade her treadle sewing machine for one of today's electric models.

While Dad may not be able to chop down a tree for the family conservationists of our "good old forests" wouldn't approve, a look at any place where trees are sold in the days before Christmas reveals that choosing the tree is still a personal, all-family matter, involving plenty of old-fashioned fun.

Almost every nostalgic dream of Christmas long ago seems to have its counterpart in the present. And all the while new traditions are budding up, as each family, each community creates and treasures its customs.

In another 70 years, perhaps, some public figure may say, "It's time to get back to the good old ways of celebrating Christmas." So have an old-fashioned Christmas, now!

As the Wise Men responded to the joyful tidings with gifts for Him, so Christmas today is a time of giving and sharing. May you be gifted with happy hours, glad memories, a contented spirit.

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