

## Christmas in Monroe in 1919

Someone recently asked me how I determine the timing of the columns. If I can fit something in on an anniversary of an event, I like to do that. However, sometimes it takes too much time to research. I recently finished reading, indexing, and scanning the 1919 Monroe newspapers, so today we're going to get an idea of what Christmas was like here 105 years ago including the cost of a Christmas dinner.

I wrote a column in December 2020 about Christmas seals that have been sold for more than 100 years. Superintendent Neverman announced on December 9, 1919 that the children of Monroe had already sold \$200 worth of seals. The goal was to sell six cents per student to make a total of \$300 in the city. It was shared on the 17th that they had sold 23,566 stamps, which was 30 more than the total for 1917. Herman Tschudy, East School, sold 1,885, the most in the city. Kathryn Young, North School, sold 556 while Charles Noble, St. Victor, sold 500. At Lincoln School Irving Moritz sold 1,104; Francis Burkhard sold 310. Each of these students received \$1.00 for selling the most in their building while Tschudy received an additional dollar for selling the most in the city.

The Times announced on Christmas Eve that the post office would close at noon on Christmas Day. The city carriers would make one complete delivery throughout the city and all parcel post would be delivered by 1:00. The rural carriers were also to make their usual trips. But there was to be no issue of the Monroe Evening Times on that day.

The Union Church presented a cantata, "A Joke on Santa Claus," at 7:15 on Christmas Eve. In the play three small children sneak down to try to catch Santa Claus, but the Sandman puts them to sleep. Holly and Mistletoe Fairies visit the place and the spirit of Christmas comes to remind them of the real theme of Christmas.

Articles in the December 24 issue shared what some employees received as bonuses. The Luchsinger Monument Works gave each employee \$50. "A substantial bonus will also be given the employes [sic] of the Blumer Brewing company for Christmas it is announced. The bonus plan is becoming popular with many Monroe business houses." The Borden Company had given a bonus of \$10 at Thanksgiving. "Nine big geese totaling 110 pounds were distributed by the Hauser [sic] & Son produce company to employes [sic] at the packing house today as Christmas gifts." It was then shared on the 26th that employees of Citizens Bank were given \$20 gold pieces. First National Bank gave "substantial gifts" and Monroe Lumber & Fuel gave \$10 to each employee.

The newspaper then shared on the 26th that the churches received large offerings. The Immanuel Evangelical Church received \$267 for charitable purposes including Armenian sufferers, the Orphans Home at Flat Rock, Ohio, and the nurses home in Monroe. The junior classes also packed and shipped a box of clothing and toys. The Methodist Church took in almost \$400 from their packed auditorium. On Christmas night the East Clarno Evangelical Church received \$79 from their large audience.

Trukenbrod Pharmacy had conducted a doll contest where customers would cast one vote for each cent they spent at the Rexall store. Voting closed the Wednesday before Christmas; Marian Hauser received the most votes and "a large doll beautifully dressed." Nine other girls, Florence Tschudy, Geraldine Marty, Edna Germann, Phyllis Turner, Lucile Kubly, Marian Monteith, Helen Schwartz, Pauline Durbin, and Andra Neverman, also received dolls.

The Times reported, "The feature of the day was the big double-header basketball game at the armory. Nearly all business places were closed for a part of the day." They also added, "For the first time in a number of years there was not a prisoner in the county jail on Christmas."



This Christmas greeting comes from a postcard that was mailed 105 years ago. The verse says, "Decorate the place with holly For a Christmas bright and jolly Hope that Santa Claus will be Very liberal to thee."

In addition the paper reported that Sam Holmes and his wife had a family dinner on Christmas Day with their children, Mr. and Mrs. Grover Holmes, Orangeville, and Miles Myers, Spring Grove. Mr. and Mrs. Sim Wuethrich entertained Mrs. Emil Morton, Mr. and Mrs. James Dolan, and Mrs. Minnie Buehler and two sons. Many more shorts included what other people did on Christmas.

Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Hood entertained 11 couples at their home on December 26 in honor of their daughter, Miss Marguerite, who was here from Milwaukee. Two rooms had been cleared for dancing and were prettily trimmed in red and green. Punch was served during the evening by Miss Hood and Marie Wells. Music was furnished by Mrs. Ivan Swancutt and a luncheon was served at midnight.

An article on Christmas Eve gave prices for items that might have been included in Christmas dinner. "The family dinner this year is enough to cause mother's brow to wrinkle as she surveys the price list of the gastronomical items that usually make up the menu. The famous Yuletide bird, the turkey, is almost an extinct fowl. Few are on the market and they retail at 45 cents a pound. Other meats are more popular this season because of the greater supply and lower price. Ducks at 35 cents, geese at 30 cents, and chickens at 32 cents are being purchased instead of turkeys.

"The 'trimmins' for the meal add up quite a neat little total this year. Butter, which has been retailing at 75 cents per pound, dropped two cents and is now selling at 73 cents. The price of bread jumped one cent yesterday, the large loaf now retailing at sixteen cents, with the small loaf bringing eleven cents.

"Cranberries are fifteen cents a pound, milk ten cents a quart, and eggs 65 cents a dozen. The cost of other items of the menu is in proportion."

I hope you enjoyed this snippets. Wishing you and yours a very Merry Christmas and the best in the new year.