

"Christmas Comes But Once A Year But When it Does It Brings Good Cheer"

by Lynne Belluscio

In 1895, Olsen's Store on Main Street headed their Christmas ad with the quotation above and Wooding's Store advertised kid gloves, handkerchiefs, umbrellas, perfume, neck ties, caps and stockings, mittens, calico dresses and night shirts. Wooding also advertised "fascinators" which were (and still are) feathered ornaments worn in the hair.

The *LeRoy Gazette* also published the Christmas wedding of Stanley Smith and Orpha Lull who were married at St. Mark's Church on Christmas morning at 10 am. The church was decorated with evergreens and holly. The bride wore a traveling gown of "mixed suiting" trimmed with green velvet and fur and a "harmonizing hat."

The Sunday before Christmas LeRoy was hit with a hard thunderstorm and everyone expected cold weather to follow, but by Wednesday, Christmas day, the weather was reported to be more like April than December. The Baptist Sunday School held a Christmas party with a visit from Santa Claus and "a chimney will be the leading feature of the evening's entertainment." (Wonder



what a chimney was?)

The *Gazette* noted that "F.E. Wooding's Christmas window is one of the most attractive on Main Street. The decorations consist of

a miniature Ferris Wheel of white and green, revolving by means of a spring motor. The wheel is mounted upon evergreen pillars and is relieved by a background

of ribbon squares and artificial flowers. The ingenious design was the work of C.F. Kellogg and Ollie Tillou.

The *Gazette* also ran a very sad story about Christmas in Libby Prison during the Civil War. A dying soldier called a friend to his side. He wanted to share his memories of Christmases past. And he told of his love for a beautiful girl who died while he was in the war. But as the soldier sank into delirium, he envisioned a Christmas wedding to his long departed love. As the Christmas music rose from the soldiers in the prison, he quietly passed away to join his love on Christmas.

So from joy and sorrow on Christmas, the *Gazette* also carried an article about "Christmasesms": "The best sauce for a Christmas dinner is a good conscience and the finest dessert is the memory of kind acts done in honor of the day."

Merry Christmas to all the folks who enjoy reading this column. Don't be upset if you don't receive a fascinator in your stocking and may you have a fine Christmas dessert.

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Jesus Christ is born!
Put Him first this holiday!

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