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# CHRISTMAS

In The Mountains  
And Caney's Community Tree

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Bringing Joy of the Sacred Season  
Into  
120 Remote Public Schools- Reaching 18,000  
Parents and Children

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Spreading the spirit of the Christ - Child  
through the hollows and mist shrouded  
valleys - Shedding grace over hundreds of  
Pilgrims - Going home through the Dim  
Purple Shadows - From Caney's Com-  
munity Tree

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Caney Creek Community Center  
Pippapass, Kentucky  
News Letter - December 1925

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Written by

Elizabeth of the Mountains  
And Mother Betty of the Little Girls Cabin

## CHRISTMAS IN THE KENTUCKY MOUNTAINS

Christmas! Magic word! Eager little voices shouted it, sparkling faces mirrored it, tiny hands, with bigger hands, worked for it.

In the administration offices of the Caney Creek Community Center were boxes and boxes, tantalizing in their contents for the wondering glances cast toward them, for they were filled to the tops and piled on, with jolly toys, necklaces, dolls, drums, knives, and everything that goes to make the heart glad. Over in one corner stood a big box. It was filled to the top with the warm clothing the Caney Creek Community Center gives to its people every year.

Christmas! The boys shouted as they watched "Buddy" the "hauling-man" urge his tired mules up the steep incline near the post office, loaded with boxes and huge parcels - tied on to the jolt-wagon with ropes - cardboard boxes, boxes of wood, and big paper parcels which had come by Express to the little railroad-mining-town twelve long weary miles away. These were full of "pretties" from service-loving friends on the outside for Christmas in the mountains.

Christmas! Shouted the mail-man as he too urged his tired mules up the incline near the post office, his jolt-wagon laden with heavy mail-sacks.

Christmas! Echoed the teachers and children in the 120 remote hollow-schools. as they joyfully climbed the hill side looking for the biggest and greenest fir-tree they could put into the school-house; getting ready for the Gifts and candy and the tree-trimming the Caney Creek Community Center had promised them.

In the two office buildings of the Caney Creek Community Center, Blanche, the artistic, directed little hands making paper chains of red, green, gold, and blue paper, donated by friends of the work, for extra tree-trimmings. Holly sat in a corner by a table joyfully making cards for the children whose names had been sent in by the teachers - out of the hollows. Herma frantically searched among all the letters from the teachers asking for "pretties" and tree-trimmings, for the one letter that had been tucked away on the bottom before it could be filed - finding it, hurried to make up the last package that went over the hill to Troublesome. "June," our beloved educational director, went her way among the boxes of toys, her hands filled with

the Christmas tags Holly had made, assisting the girls and boys who had been commissioned to wrap and tag the gifts that went out to the little schools - up the little hollows. Boys were busy tying and labeling the boxes. Those for the schools too far away for the jolt-wagon to reach them in time, were addressed to go by parcels post - there were many relays of the mail-sacks before they reached their destinations.

A few days before Christmas the jolt-wagons rolled down the steep incline near the post office, decorated with sparkling tinsel, beautiful paper chains, with big scarlet bells tied to the harness of the mules, which were wrapped with red, and green, and silver garlands laden with boxes and parcels, labeled and tied with pretty string, for the teachers and the children and the parents in the little schools - in the little hollows.

AND...dashing up to the main entrance of the campus around the Caney Creek Community Center, on a spirited horse or low-eared mule, the rider, a teacher from a far off hollow, ascended hurriedly up to the managers office to get his package - since he lived off the main trail where the jolt-wagons passed. Sometimes the boxes were too large to go into the sack he brought, and the gifts were taken out and placed in the sack carefully, so as not to break the precious dolls for the little girls -- many who had never had a real doll before.

After Christmas the letters poured in from the teachers. Telling of the joy that was created for 18,000 children and parents; Thanking the Caney Creek Community Center for the gifts and the candy and the joy; from happy teachers who were fortunate to be the first to hold a Christmas Tree in the Community. Telling of the quietness along the creeks, "and not a single person was drunk" wrote more than one teacher.

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Christmas! Magic word! Used to be different in the mountains. Weeks before there would be no fir-tree cut, but the men and boys would begin to store up ammunition and "Moonshine." Christmas now in the mountains means Peace and Joy, with the story of Christ where liquor did flow.

### CANEY'S OWN COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS TREE

THROUGH THE DIM SHADOWS THEY CAME.....on mule-back, walking, and in jolt-wagon, to the miracle of the GREAT GIFT.

THERE ITS SYMBOL STOOD TOWERING.....on the high porch of the new dining hall, covered with "pretties" and tinsels.

THE PALE BLUE SHADOWS CLUSTERED.....thicker, but the hearts of the six hundred people beat high with the hope of the MIRACLE.

"It's falling weather" an old man whispered, "But God holds the storm off till after the gifts are over."

THEN, SAINT NICHOLAS, A THIN, TALL, MOUNTAIN SAINT, came Pied-Piper-like leading the children, close, ever closer.....

### SO THE MIRACLE BEGAN

WHILE.....a window of carols opened to the Manger of Bethlehem.

SWIFTLY, AND AS WITH A SINGLE MOTION, a thousand eyes shot upward and there, from beneath the fir-giving-tree, - THE TREE of the Christ Child - came the Center's children, with huge family sacks for the pilgrims:

CANDY AND TIES  
PENCILS AND BOOKS  
SCARFS AND THICK STOCKINGS  
MITTENS AND TOYS  
DOLLS AND CAPS  
SHOES AND WARM CLOTHES

SO AS THE PILGRIMS WENT BACK THROUGH THE SHADOWS.... Light were their hearts for they kept singing, chanting, the OLD Christmas Hymn.

"ALL GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST"

AND SO.....Caney's Community Christmas was over!

(Printed at the Caney Creek Community Center)

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