

“T’WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE WEIHNACHTEN...”

by Lauri Hardingstachten

“Twas the night before Weihnachten, and all through Camp Springs,
Not a creature was stirring, --except for der Deutsch-Amerikaner,
who were doing wild and crazy things.

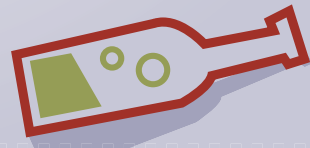
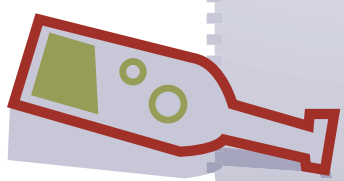
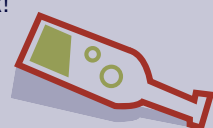
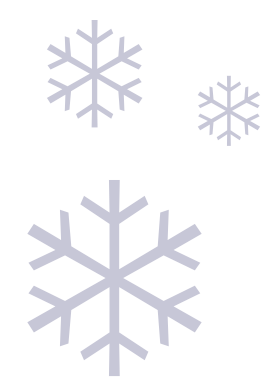
Everyone baking baumkuchen and lebkuchen and kekse and platzchen,
And singing O Tannenbaum, and Stille Nacht and old Kling Glockchen!
Drinking Gluhwein and Leibframlch and something called Eierlikor
Toasting Mama, and Papa, and brother and sister!
One for the holiday, and one for the road,
And one for everything else we forgot to mention!

All the sausages were hung by the schornstein with care
In hopes that Sankt Nikolaus soon would be there!
And Mama in her wollsocken and I in my nachtmutze
were just settling down for a long winter’s schnuze**
(*This isn’t a German word. It just sounds like one.)

When out on Four Mile, there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter!
Ran to the window, threw up the sash
And witnessed a crash.

Out on the crest of the new-fallen snow
I heard Weihnachtsmann hiccup below
And what else did my wondering eyes see and hear
But a miniature schleigh or schled and many drunk reindeer.
One for the holiday, and one for the road,
And one for everything else we forgot to load!

Poor Nikolaus couldn’t remember their names
And he was so not in the mood for any games!
“On Schnitzel, and Spitzel and Spritzer and Spratzen!
“On Schnauzer and Saner and Steffen and Spaetzen!
“On Gunkel and Spunkel and Stollen and Studer!
“On Spaetzel and Schnetzel and Pretzel and Hooter!
“On Bauman and Blitzen and Bezold and Blink!
“On Kremer and Kramer and the whole Kitchzen Zink!
“One for the kinder and one for the Frau!
“Now Dasch away, Dasch away, Dasch away Aul!”
And I heard him call out as he sped out of sight
“Frohe Christmas to All and to All a Gut Nacht!”



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DELIVERING ONLY THE NEWS THAT’S FIT TO PRINT

CHRISTMAS IN CAMP SPRINGS

By: Don Wiedeman

Camp Springs children...and adults too...have always enjoyed the Christmas spirit knowing that Santa Claus would visit with toys for good little girls and boys. And, while children snuggled in their beds, Santa would arrive on schedule...his gifts received but he was seldom seen. Occasionally a family would see him but, for most, his visit was quick like the twinkling of an eye.

However, he was frequently seen [in Camp Springs] 30-40 years ago when many families regularly enjoyed his visits and the children eagerly awaited his appearance on Christmas Eve.

He was a jolly old fellow who would go house to house greeting families, bringing toys and gifts. Children, some a little scared, would join Santa in singing songs...especially “Jingle Bells” which was bellowed out while Santa’s bells jingled...to end with a hearty “Merry Christmas” as Santa sped on his way to another Camp Springs home.

Sometimes, children would give Santa a gift...like the little boy who gave Santa a roll of 50 pennies which he saved for Santa’s visit. The following year Santa gave the little boy a dollar in return...a lesson in investing his money.

There was the curious...like the boy who wondered why Santa wore firemen’s boots...to be explained that his regular boots wore out from all the trekking and a stop at the local firehouse helped Santa out.

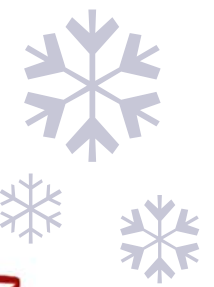
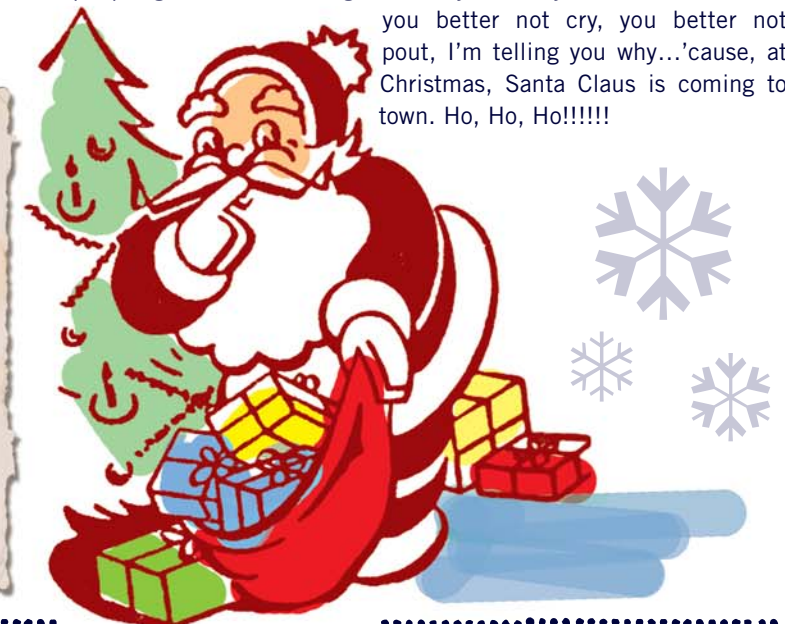
Then there was the time Santa [was invited to] a home on Fausz Road and was welcomed by a little girl who was alone. Although Santa was concerned the mother was not present, the girl, assuring Santa of her good behavior, joined him in singing “Jingle Bells.” During a stop at Camp Springs Tavern, Santa learned that the mother was in the shower barely able to keep her wits while Santa wished the girl a Merry Christmas. It was then Santa learned he stopped at the wrong house and should have visited another house on Fausz Road.

A regular stop was made at the Tavern where Santa spread his cheer to Frank the barkeep and his bachelor brother Henry. A little libation was offered to help him on his journey to other families and then the North Pole.

Then there was the boy who never forgot Santa’s voice. Upon hearing it from afar several years later at the firehouse, he exclaimed to his mother “That’s Santa Claus.” And, to this day, a grown lady with children of her own gets thrilled to hear Santa’s voice.

While Santa is seldom seen in Camp Springs these days, there are many who remember his visits when they sang, enjoyed their gifts and had their pictures taken with him. Ask around and you’ll find those who remember the fun they had with Santa. Though you may not see him, you can be sure he keeps his eye on Camp Springs’ families throughout the year. So you better watch out,

you better not cry, you better not pout, I’m telling you why...’cause, at Christmas, Santa Claus is coming to town. Ho, Ho, Ho!!!!



ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH

by Anna Enzweiler

Nestled in Lower Tug Fork valley, St. John Lutheran Church is a living testimony to the history of Camp Springs. Some changes have taken place since the church's official foundation in 1861. The Ladies' Aid, organized in 1888, has been replaced by Modern Lutheran Women. The church's appearance is different from the original stone building, which was first rebuilt in 1961 and then turned to brick in 1980. A wing was added in 1951 to one side of the church in order to house Sunday School classes. Women, who before 1985 were not permitted to hold office, now serve on the church council. And St. John's has seen thirty-one pastors, from founder Christian Dingledey to current pastor Phillip Garber.

However, much of St. John's speaks like an echo of the original church. The cemetery, founded in 1847, is still in use today, and many of the oldest gravestones remain visible. The church's bell tower has been a part of St. John's since 1981. And to honor its rich historical past, St. John's holds Heritage Sunday each year, during which old church documents are exhibited, the service of yesteryear is used, and old hymns are sung. But most of all, St. John's continues to be a haven of faith for Lutherans in and around Camp Springs, as well as a vibrant part of our community's history.



OAKLAND METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Photo and information from Chester Nelson

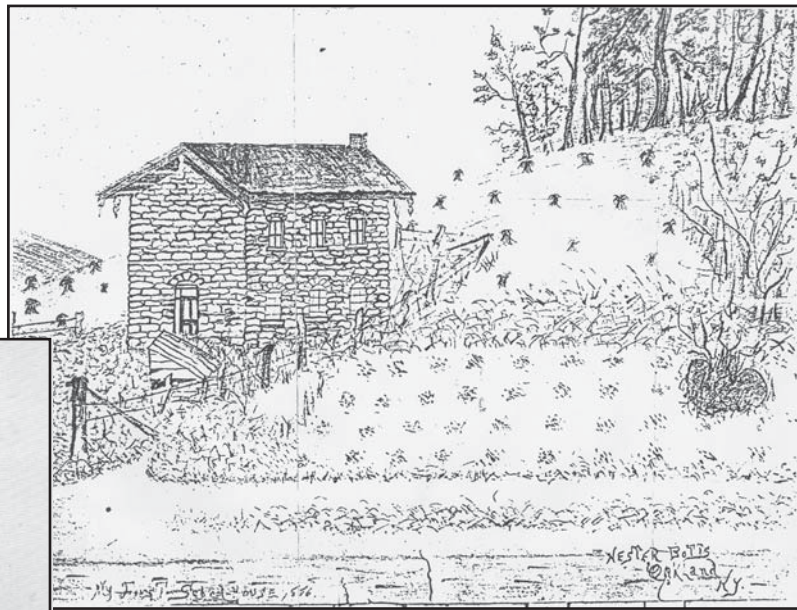
Our Church, originally known as the Oakland Methodist Episcopal Church South, was first organized in 1820. The first pastor was Reverend Gilby Kelly. The first church building was at the junction of Four and Twelve Turnpike and Fender Road. It was built of logs and also served as a school. After about ten years, the church burned to the ground.

The next church was built on McKebben Road, just off Nelson Road. In 1876, we entered the Kentucky Conference and became known as the Oakland Methodist Episcopal Church.

The land where the present church now stands (on Stonehouse Road) was purchased in March 1881, but the date of the actual construction is unknown. The basement of the church continued to be used as Oakland School until 1915. In 1929, the church was remodeled, changing the old rear entrance to the front entrance as it exists today. At that time, each step of the front steps had a word carved into it: CONVICTION, CONFESSION, CONVERSION, CONSECRATION, CLEANSING, and COMMUNION. The steps were replaced in the latter 1960s, without the words. Over the next several years, the church basement was renovated with new bathrooms and indoor plumbing! In 1986, ground was broken for new Sunday School rooms. The people of the church did all of the construction and renovation themselves, all completed in 1988.

{Taylor Barker Nelson, Chester's father, was baptized in this church as an infant in 1896; attended school and church here; and literally died in church in 1990, at the age of 94. He lived most of his life on Four and Twelve Mile Road, now Stonehouse Road.}

(Here is a very early sketch of the church/school, The barely-legible caption on the drawing reads: "My first Schoolhouse-1876 by Nester Botts, Oakland, Kentucky")



HILTOP PINES TREE FARM

What could be more fun than packing up the family in the car, putting a little hot toddy in a pocket flask, and heading up to Hilltop Pines to select and cut down this year's Christmas tree to dress that front window in your house? When you get there, Christmas music will merrily greet you and a jolly Santa will let you take his picture while brothers galore steer you toward the right path leading to your perfect tree. These paths meander through some 12 acres of mostly Scotch, Austrian, and White pine, and the annual trek through the trees has become quite the tradition for many families, some coming for 20 years or more.

Hilltop Pines is run by Art Ritter and his five sons, Joe and Tom Ritter; and Kent, Craig, and Jim Elam. Art, a retired railroad man now in his upper eighties, has deep roots in this land. The Ritters go back to the 1850s, when an earlier generation from Germany settled in a cabin built on the very same land (the cabin has been wholly remodeled into the distinctive stone house that now sits near the road). Originally, the farm was used for dairy cattle, and during Art's earlier years, for beef cattle. Eventually, Art came to the conclusion that he needed something to sustain him through retirement. When he married Marian in 1962 (her dad was the popular "Doc" Elbert who ran Pelle's drugstore pharmacy), they decided to start growing Christmas trees for posterity.

In 1964, they planted their first trees, about 2,000 of them. His first cutting was in 1977, and the business has been going strong ever since (but probably peaked during the 1980s, due mostly to the growing popularity of artificial trees). Today, the five sons chip in together to keep it running smoothly. Approximately 1,000 new seedlings are planted each spring, --many, sometimes a majority, are lost to weather conditions during those first two years. And the brothers return from their regular full-time jobs to help manage the farm throughout the year. Every May, they work for two weeks pruning that year's crop. They must also water the trees during dry months, spray them for bugs, and keep weeds away.

But Christmas season makes it all worth its weight in gold! The merriment, laughter, and memory-sharing passes from brother to brother, father to son, and family to customers. Many a season, customers have come for a tree and spent four or five hours just "shootin' the breeze" with Art or the "boys" in the little heated hut overlooking the tree hills.

---And then there is Uncle Carly's homemade wine. It started as a picker-upper for the brothers out there in the cold helping customers cut down their trees. However, a good thing is better shared, at least with these generous boys! Soon, the customers were coming for the laughter and good wine as much as the trees! Grape, berry, --this year some strawberry! Ho! Ho! Ho! Don't miss the fun!



God Bless Us Everyone!



(In 1897, eight-year-old Virginia O'Hanlon wrote a letter to the editor of the New York Sun, asking if there really was a Santa Claus. Editorial writer Francis Church replied to her in his newspaper column. His response has become so famous over the last 110 years that it is now considered synonymous with the true spirit of the season.)

Des, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias.

There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

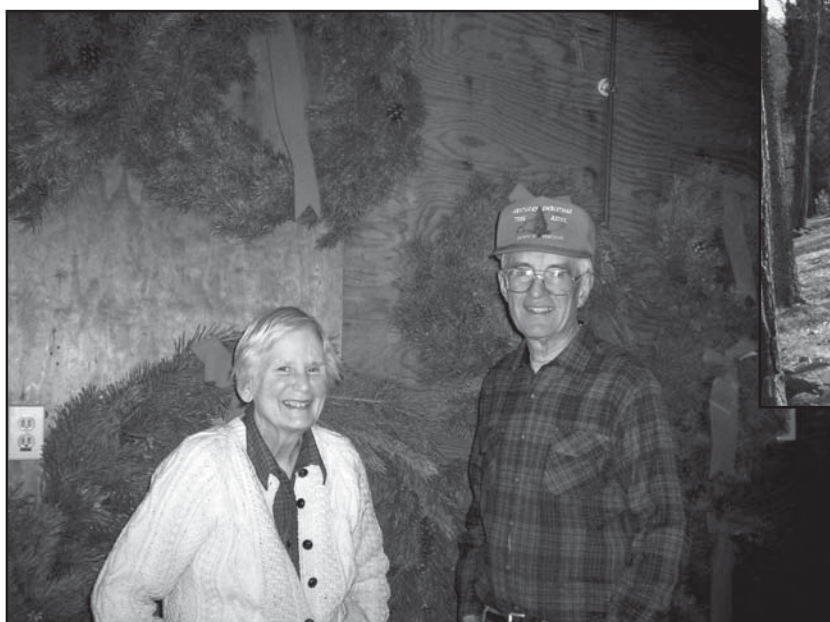
Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that no children or men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen or unseeable in the world...No Santa Claus! Thank God he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.



TUG FORK TREE FARM

As early as December 3rd, a sign out front advised unlucky tree-shoppers that fresh Christmas trees were already "SOLD OUT." But Don and Mary Martha Girton, owners of Tug Fork Tree Farm, were still busy in their garage assembling large wreaths, boughs, garland, and beautiful red velvet bows. The fresh smell of pine was intoxicating, as was the holiday good will! Two golden retrievers meandered in and out, offering opinions and greeting visitors. The air was biting crisp and clean; the outdoor views spectacular from the farm's high vantage point; the sun filtering through majestic woods and casting long shadows on the surrounding hills and valleys. This environmentally-friendly mecca, owned and operated by the Girtons for the last 40 years, sits high in the hills, quietly and unassumingly shining down on Camp Springs and the world at large.

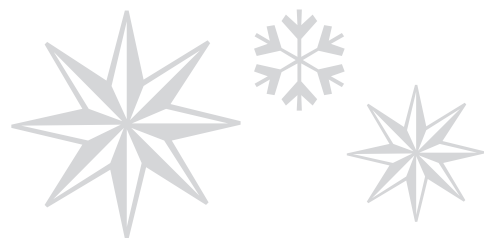
The farm has prospered under the Girtons' stewardship. Don, a Yale grad with a degree in forestry, and Mary Martha, a civil engineer, met while both were professionally associated with the U.S. Forestry Department. They originally bought the nearly 50-acre farm as investment property, managed by Don's father for the first 20 years. At the time they began planting trees, Christmas trees were selling for \$1 each wholesale, so the Girtons figured they could grow enough to cover their taxes on the property. By the time their first crop matured more than eight years later, the wholesale price was \$3 per tree. Following the first 20 years, the Girtons moved back permanently to the area and built their home on one of the property's scenic hills. Mary Martha designed the sprawling structure, now nestled among mature trees, and also served as general contractor for the home's construction.



Today, the tree farm continues to run seamlessly and cyclically without skipping a beat, like a favorite heirloom watch in a vest pocket. Fields are alternately cleared and planted with different species of trees, and each field's planting represents a different stage of growth and age. A mature tree takes roughly ten years. Don is on his fourth planting now.

Trees that are two-to-three years old stand only a foot or so tall (having started as 6-8" seedlings), but many represent experimental and exotic plantings. Scotch pine appears to be the most ubiquitous, as it adapts well because it shares a similar soil and latitude as that of its native Europe. But Don cultivates new trees of Russian, Chinese, or Korean origin as well. These countries also share with us the same geographic topography (about 3000 feet), so the growing temperatures and environments are ostensibly similar. There is also a smattering of White Pine, Austrian Pine, and Virginia Pine. So far, the trees appear to be thriving, and Don hopes to continue nurturing them to maturity and further diversifying his seedlings.

As peaceful as it all appears, there is plenty of time-consuming maintenance to go around. The grass surrounding each tree must be regularly mowed; the seedlings and early trees must be pruned and shaped; and the Girtons must keep the bugs and disease away. In addition to the six acres dedicated to Christmas trees, Don performs general woods management on another 30 acres, clearing scrub and waste-wood to allow more indigenous and worthy trees to thrive. He sells some timber for firewood and/or mulch. Clearly, his efforts have contributed to the beauty of the area, the enhancement of overall air quality, and the enrichment of holiday tradition and fun! Thank you, Don and Mary! [HYPERLINK "http://www.tugforktrees.com" www.tugforktrees.com](http://www.tugforktrees.com)



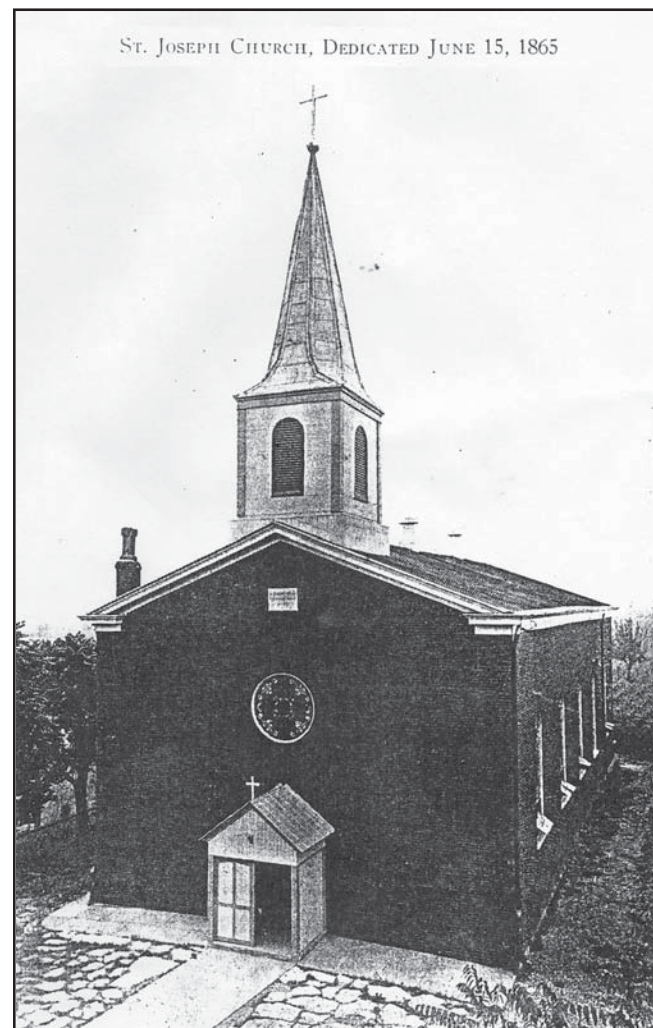
ST. JOSEPH

By Linus Enzweiler

The year was 1843 when services were offered in homes by a priest riding a horse from Newport, purchased by the members for \$10. Services in the homes lasted two years when in 1845 a log church was built at the bottom of the hill where the cemetery is now, and dedicated to St Joseph. In 1851, Reverend John Voll was appointed pastor and we became a parish; until then we were a mission to Corpus Christi, this is the year our school also started.

Around 1863 we were outgrowing the log church so 10 acres were purchased and members hauled in large rocks for the foundation, bricks were made from clay found in the creek, and logs hewn for the roof. The church was completed in 1865 at a cost of \$7,000.

In 1983, St. Joseph was put on the National Register of Historic Places, and with the closing of Corpus Christi, we are now the oldest Catholic Church in Campbell County. Since 1997 we have not had a resident pastor, and as with most everything, there are good times and bad times, as history tends to repeat itself. We are also optimistic about the future as our members are faithful and hardworking, some of whom are descendants of the founding families.



CAMP SPRINGS KITCHEN

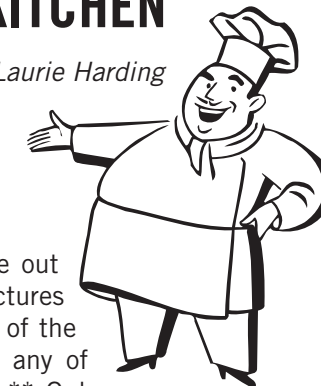
Culinary Artist Extraordinaire: Laurie Harding

CHOCOLATE MILK

- 1 half gallon chocolate milk
- 1 glass*
- 1 refrigerator

Open refrigerator door and take out milk carton. Check out the pictures of missing persons on the side of the carton to see if you recognize any of them. Pour contents into glass.** Gulp down and enjoy. Mmmmm-mmm.

** (If you live alone and are certain that no one else will ever go into your refrigerator, you can skip the glass and get away with a little swig right from the carton now and then.)



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