

Pantego Academy Historical Museum Association, Inc

ACADEMY COLUMNS



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By:

John L. Ratcliff, III

Christmas Open House on was great! Had short program; great music provided by Rob's musical "group"; great refreshments also. Attendance was small; but nice time had by attendants---where were you?

SOON TO BE GONE OR GONE TODAY

- * HOW TO USE "SIGNS" TO PLANT, CUT WOOD, & THE LIKE.
- * HOW TO TIE FISHING NETS WITH NET NEEDLE
- * HOW TO TRIM A KEROSENE LAMP WICK
- * HOW TO COOK ON WOOD COOK STOVE
- * OYSTERS NOT EATEN UNLESS THE MONTH HAS "R"
- * HOW TO USE PEDDLE SEWING MACHINE
- * HOW TO KILL CHICKENS; PLUCK FEATHERS; SINGE IT; AND CUT UP
- * HOW TO WASH CLOTHES IN A WASH POT
- * SKILLS USED AT "HOG KILLINGS"
- * ART OF PREPARING MEAT FOR SMOKE HOUSE
- * HOW TO MILK A COW OR HAVING COW TO MILK
- * CHILDREN KNOWING MILK COMES FROM COW AND NOT STORE
- * USING A GOOSE WING TO DUST FURNITURE
- * EATING CORNED FISH FOR BREAKFAST
- * HOME MADE BISCUITS ON TABLE, LEAST TWO TIMES A DAY
- * CELEBRATION OF "OLD CHRISTMAS"
- * HOW TO MAKE PONE BREAD
- * OYSTERS IN SHELL WERE ROASTED & NOT STEAMED

Christmas Story 1

Group of men standing around local store talking on Christmas Eve in early 1950s. (Remember, was days local stores stayed open very late) and men did drink a bit of Christmas cheer. One man reported there were 2 Pantego families and children would not have Christmas unless they did something about this. So they went to work buying; and thinking of things which could do. Some went home to get firewood and kerosene and other items. All met back at store after an hour or so. Pick-ups were full of varied things. (Nosey kid I was, whined to go; and did so. First house which men went was semi-dark. Man knocked on door; wife answered. Her first words were; "About time brought us something and hope better than stuff brought last year." Then said, "Bring that stuff in." Course, had to go in house with men. Father was dead drunk on the floor, passed out. No heat. Wife or none of children said thank-you or anything. Men walked out just shaking heads. Men continued to next home with Christmas items. Men stopped in yard. 6 or so children came out of house; followed by wife and husband (broken his leg working in log woods). Kids kept saying, "Santa come." Kids were jumping up and down screaming this. Men took most items in house with help of wife and children.

ADDITION TO STORY: Both families currently have some of these children still in area. One of the former children was overheard to say, several years ago; person's exact words were, "Daddy always provided best Christmas ever; and even had to give to neighbors and had huge Christmas tree. Former child from other family talked with me recently and she is about my age; said "I remember you came by our house on Christmas with the men. Daddy had cried most of day saying; 'Don't have enough food to feed the children'. I still have one of those toys; and want to give to museum."

WILL LET YOU DECIDE FROM WHICH FAMILY TOY CAME!

Christmas Story 2 "MISS RUTH CREDLE'S BIG CHRISTMAS EVE DRINK"

Miss Ruth Credle taught at PHS for many years until moved to Virginia. Always came back home for Christmas. "Miss Ruth" always wore hat and was most stately Southern lady. She had eaten at Mrs. Lee's Café and was walking home; when she came in store; just as closing about 10. Father asked Miss Ruth if she wanted Christmas "drink". "Yes," she replied in most stately voice and all proceeded to backroom where liquor was located. Now was small "Dixie" cups there and 7-UP. She said, "I need a glass." So got her a big ice tea glass; she poured about 5 inches of whiskey in glass; drank about half; paused and drank rest. Miss Ruth's words were then; "That was very good, thank you. I will walk home now." And left store. Father had only one word which said, "Damn".

Christmas Story 3

Your story or memories could have been here!

Christmas Story 4

Former PHS teacher used to tell about first Christmas after integration of schools. Said had extremely poor Black child in class; both parents were dead and raised by grandfather. Course kids often want to give present to teachers. Girl brought teacher a small box containing a little necklace. Girl told her, that only thing that she had was her mothers; but she wanted teacher to have; because she had been so nice to her. Teacher did not want to take; but did because it might hurt child's feelings. Teacher later returned the gift.

Christmas Story 5 Information

Why was "Old Christmas" celebrated? Way back in the days of 18th Century; calendar needed to be corrected because year has 365 day and ¼ day. (Still want to know what day is the ¼ day). But was done. So December 25th with old calendar became January 5th or 6th. Even today some Orthodox Churches celebrate Christmas in Jan.

Christmas Story 6 "Cafeteria" school meal."

Back in 1970s, Pantego High cafeteria did special Christmas meal on day before school out for Christmas vacation. Not just going through lunch line; but was a true buffet. Baked ham, turkey, and all stuff that goes with this meal. Meal was served by good lunch room ladies as a buffet from tables in main part of cafeteria. Tables had table cloths; candles on tables; students were encouraged to dress up (most did); and encouraged to use best manners. Usual student noise while eating was not that day. Really was impressive! Mrs. Alfraetta Harris and other lunch room workers did this for their love of the kids. Just wonder if this would happen with kids today; or had they rather have a hamburger?

Christmas Story 7 "Bow down" (Story sent in)

Parents always told me the farm animals bowed down to Jesus at 12 on Christmas Eve. Always wanted to see this. But never could stay awake.

Christmas Story 8 "Christmas Turkey of 1938"

My daddy went off somewhere in 1938 and got live turkey. Times were "tight". Came home and killed and dressed turkey. Was too large to fit in kerosene cook stove oven. Grandmother said boil in wash pot in yard. Mother said was best turkey ever had (actually first turkey which she ever had).

Christmas Story 9 John's Personal Christmas Story at PHS 1967-68 School year.

First year of teaching was 7th Grade at PHS. You know students used to "draw names" to exchange Christmas gifts. Believe gift costs should be between \$.75 & \$1.

Had extremely poor girl in class; another girl was well to do; course, as would happen, each got each others' name. Children usually figure out who has each other's names. Day came for class Christmas party; gifts were put under classroom tree. I played Santa; rule was all open gifts at same time after passed out. Noticed number of children were watching poorer child; instead of opening gifts. Gift was very fancy wrapped (not way a child would do). Child opened gift and only item was single \$.25 handkerchief and a small group of children started laughing. Just went over and said, "that was gift to make Christmas tree look pretty; and here is your present (Ruth Jones told me earlier to have some spare presents). Girl had big smile on face. Learned later, this gift was one of 3 presents, which she received that year. I felt pity for this child; however, perhaps influenced my attitudes to children and adults. Hate to admit, never forgave the Mother or the child for doing such a cruel thing. The two children and the parent are deceased now. Names were never "drawn" again in any class I taught again.

Christmas Story 10 Cup Cake Fight

Was teaching Middle School Self-contained kids with behavior & emotional problems. Principal told me day before Christmas vacation; was being transferred to elementary school to work with kids with many problems in grades K-5 in a rural school in Wilson County. Never had worked with young kids before; and bit scared of this. Children touch you like small kids do. Kids at this rural school were like kids used to be at PHS. But learned that some of those "rug rats" can bite. Next school year, all went great until Christmas party day! Many parents brought stuff for party. Boy had "unusual" situation; mother lived in one house; dad's girl friend lived in next house (dad lived with her). Girl friend brought homemade cupcakes; Mom brought a package of "bought" cupcakes. Both arrived about same time. Cupcakes got in classroom; then they started screaming at each other while leaving and walking down hall. Words which should not be used around young kids. Ladies left building. Few minutes later, principal called me to office, and said look out my window." Both ladies were on ground fighting. Law was called and both locked up! Poor child seemed just to sense it all. Boy just seemed to "shrink". But our party went on! Class had been adopted by ladies church group; brought nice simple gifts and these good ladies stayed until 3. Think these elderly ladies had more fun than children. After lunch, had homemade ice cream, and etc. & etc. My special folks had some silly Christmas song which danced in circle.....bet played 50 times. Church group got more into this than kids. Rule was when anyone said song.....all had to get up and do the reindeer circle dance to music. Little Anthony would get so excited that would pee in pants; but who cared that day! So Cup Cake fight day ended up great for all.

Pantego Academy wishes you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Academy will be open on December 26(Sunday) for you and those from out of town.

Many thanks for help of many kinds given during 2010 to Pantego Museum. YOU are the ones whom keep the Academy doors open to all. Remember an Academy membership is a great Christmas present!
Please remember those less fortunate and in ill health during this special time of year as well as through the year in your thoughts and prayers.

Special Note: Decision was made to not repair central heating. Worn out and inefficient. Experiencing bitter cold now in east NC; Best done to winterize as best we could. Even leaving blinds open to pick up some solar heat. Main thing is to keep water pipes from freezing.

**AGAIN, MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM ALL AT PANTEGO ACADEMY HISTORICAL MUSEUM!!
VISIT SOON!**