

The colors most often associated with Christmas decorating are green, red, white, blue, silver and gold. These colors have been used for centuries and, as with most traditions, the reason may be traced to religious beliefs. In this instance, green represents everlasting life, red represents the bloodline of Jesus Christ, blue represents the sky from which the angels appeared, white represents the purity of the Virgin Birth, and silver and gold represent the richness of God's Blessings.

## The Spirit of Christmas

Well boys, with Christmas just a few gunshots ahead, I figger as hov this is a good time to forget all about our troubles over the cull and price of fish and all the other tormenting things in a fisherman's life and talk about something pleasant that we all believe in - Christmas.

But it's not enough to say that we folks in Pigeon Inlet believe in the spirit of Christmas, Santa Claus, St. Nick, or whatever you mind to call it. Like Skipper Joe Irwin said to me the other day: "Mose," he said. "the spirit of Christmas is like the Sou'west wind. We don't haw to believe in it, because we know it's there. It's true we don't actually see the Christmas spirit or Santa Claus (as the youngsters call him) but neither do we see the Sou'west wind. But we know when the Sou'wester is there because we can feel it and we can see the good things it brings us - smooth water for catching fish and good dry weather for rnakin' it. Same with Christmas spirit. You don't see it, but you feel it blowing around like a Sou'west breeze and above all you see the good effects of it."

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Christmas means "Christ's Mass" and is the celebration of Jesus Christ's birth and baptism. Although December 25th is generally accepted as being the time when the Christ Child was born, the exact date has never been chronicled with any degree of accuracy.

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Skipper Joe is right. How else can you account for the things goiri' on right here in Pigeon Inlet while getting ready for Christmas Day and the days coming right after it.

Look at the schoolboys after school last week. Straight in over the hills every evening with their fathers' catamarans and haulin' out loads of boughs - even Jethro Noddy's boys. I saw young Shem Noddy last Thursday evening comin' out with a load that even I'd have found it hard to handle - and I can pull on a haulin' rope with the next man.

"Boughs to decorate the church, Uncle Mose," he bawled out to me as I jumped out of the path. I don't s'pose the Noddys went to church ten times last year. But there you are! 'Tis Christmas.

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Then up in the Women's Association Room every night what do you find? All the young fellows and maidens, instead of out courtin' like they generally do, they're sitting around those same boughs, breaking off small limbs and tying them in wreaths, to twine around the church pillars and the windows and the chancel and the font and everywhere - then some more wreaths to decorate the school for the big Christmas Tree and school concert on St. Stephen's Night. Oh, I can tell you our church and our school, too, are going to look something wonderful by Christmas Eve and we're all goin' to be proud of it because we all helped to do it.

Then again, look at Martin Prior. Martin has got a big family and had a poor fishery last year. He's hardly got a cent to bless himself with. But look what he's doin'. Martin used to be a saw-filer with the paper company for years before he got turned down for blood pressure. Now he's the best skate sharpener in Pigeon Inlet and every week before Christmas, he sharpens up all the youngsters' skates - won't charge a cent, neither. Says he can't give much money for Christmas presents but there's something he can give. Luke Walcott is repairin' all the youngsters' broken slides - another Christmas present. Then there's Pete Briggs ... but I could go on for an hour.

Speakin' of Christmas, Grampa Walcott says we're all alike. When we're very young we believe in Santa Claus. Then we listen to a lot of nonsense from bigger youngsters who ought to know better and for a few years we don't believe in Santa Claus. Then we get some sense of our own and we find out for sure that he's there - just like the Sou' west wind.

"But Grampa," said I, night before last. "When you listen to all the stuff over the radio about only so many more shoppin' days left and how you'd better drop everything and hurry down to this or that shop right away, doesn't it make you wonder sometimes if Christmas isn't just a way to get people to spend their bit of money?"

"Ah, no, Mose," said Grampa. "I don't believe anyone thinks that, not even the people who talk it over the radio. Anyway," he said, "there's no use telling us in Pigeon Inlet to hurry down to a store right away. All express parcels from Eaton's and Simpson's and St. John's come two weeks ago and there'll be no more boats before Christmas. Besides, there's nowhere to hurry except down to Levi Bartle's ... and Levi's place won't run away. There's lots of stuff down to Levi's to do till next May, let alone next week."

"But people do spend a lot of money around Christmas," I said. "Perhaps they do," agreed Grampa, "but here in Pigeon Inlet it's mostly other things they spend. Things like friendliness and helpfulness, things that the more of 'em you spend the more you've got left. Take Sophy, for instance."

"Yes," said I. "What about Aunt Sophy?"

"Sophy's just like her mother used to be when she was in her prime," said Grampa. "Now there's a girl that believes in Christmas, and gets more out of it than anybody I know. Look at her almost every night since Advent come in, training the choir to sing Christmas carols. Then up there supervisin' the decorations for the church and school - then helpin' the teachers get the Christmas tree and the concert ready for St. Stephen's

Night - then seein' that the Santa Claus suit is in order for whoever gives the presents off the tree - And, Mose."

"Yes, Grampa Walcott," said I.

"Sophy don't spend much money at all this. She's never got much to spend. But she spends a lot of herself. And it don't leave her any the poorer."

"Grampa," said I. "About Aunt Sophy..." "Yes, Mose," said he. "What about it?" "Our quarrel," said I.

"Isn't that patched up yet?" said he. "No," said I.

"Well, Mose," said he. "With Soph feeling the way about Christmas that she feels, I should say if you can't patch it up during Christmas, there's no hope for you to patch it up at all."

"But how?" said I.

"How?" said he. "I dunno. But drop in again tomorrow and we'll try and figger out a way. I can't bear to think of everybody bein' on the outs with anyone else Christmas time, especially two fine people like you and Soph."

