

# WHITE HOUSE CAROLS AND BRILLIANT TREE USHER IN CHRISTMAS

## Thousands Join President in Singing Message of Saviour's Birth.

## TRUMPET FANFARE AS EXERCISES OPEN

## President Touches Button Which Sets White Lot Aglow With Myriad Lights.

## JOYOUS CELEBRATION AT THE NORTH PORTICO

## Vested Choir and Thousands Sing "Adeste Fidelis" as Coolidge Family Attends.

From the steps of the White House there went forth last night a message of "peace on earth, good will to men."

It was the message echoing down through the ages from the days of the three shepherds, and as it passed from the throats of a choir on the south portico of the White House it was echoed by the President and his family and thousands of citizens, all in harmony with the reecho in the hearts of the people of the nation and the rest of the world.

It was the reverence of a Christian people giving at the seat of their government the expression of their praise for "the King of kings" on the eve of the anniversary of His birth.

All the world today does homage to Him who 1923 years ago was born and laid away in a manger, and last night the peoples of the world expressed their joyousness and gratitude for the birth of Jesus Christ.

Though the principal observance of the eve of Christmas was at the White House, all over the city people gathered in small groups and in their own homes in honor of the day. In the churches, joyous ceremonies commemorative of the day were held. Not a person in the city but found time during the night to welcome after 1,923 years the rebirth of the Saviour.

### Churches Ablaze With Light.

At midnight, every church in the city was ablaze with light—the light of Him who was born, and who died that they might live. The impressive and extensive ceremonies of the Catholic Church found their counterpart in the more simple but equally reverential services in the churches of other creeds.

And then, after the solemn joyousness of the day, there followed the "children's hour," the hour when Santa Claus, mythical hero of a world of kids, skimmed over the roof tops, dropped down chimneys, trimmed trees, and left myriads of gifts. It was a far cry from the time when St. Nicholas went among the poor, distributing little knickknacks to last night when doting parents lavished upon their young a new kind of toy.

But the true realization that Christmas was on hand, came for the city when the "national Christmas tree" was illuminated yesterday afternoon at 5 o'clock. The giant tree, symbolic of the spirit of Christmas, and emphasizing the good will and cheer characteristic of the world's greatest and most joyous festival, was turned into a blaze of glory when Calvin Coolidge, President of the United States, touched an electric button at its foot.

Standing in the center of the White lot, the tree, rearing its head 60 feet, just as it stood in the forests of Vermont, was converted into a national emblem, when with simple ceremonies, the President and thousands of citizens, old and young, gathered in the dusk to consecrate it as a symbol of their feelings on this, the anniversary of the birth of Christ.

### Representative of All Trees.

As at the side of the towering branches of this tree gathered a group representative of the country, so at the side of innumerable trees in as many homes throughout the nation, their gathered last night groups to find in the emblem their profession of faith.

Shortly after President Coolidge touched the button which illuminated the tree, there was a fanfare of trumpets, and the National Capital's observance of Christmas began. A choir of 50 voices led the thousands of spectators in singing a carol service. The choir was that of the Epiphany church, and was conducted by A. Torovsky, director, accompanied by a quartet of the Marine band, composed of Arthur S. Whitcomb, John J. Miller, Peter A. Hazes and Lee C. Sanford.

The second part of the community tree program consisted of a Christmas concert by the marine band, led by Taylor Bransom, second leader.

"O come, all ye faithful." That hymn which beckons all to reverence, was the first line of the carol service on the White House steps last night, and it drew from homes in every section of the city nearly 10,000 persons who

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# CAROLS AT WHITE HOUSE USHER IN CHRISTMAS DAY

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sought, with their official leader, to voice their feelings on Christmas eve.

## Forsake Preparations.

Forsaking for the moment the preparations for dispensing joy to their loved ones, these people, of all conditions of life, assembled to praise the Child for whose birth centuries ago there was no room. Many a tree was deserted, half trimmed, many a stocking half filled, that they might symbolically follow the footsteps of those who left their flocks unattended many years ago to follow a guiding star.

In front of the white walls of the executive mansion, which, in their purity gave some hint of the life of Him whom they honored, and under the vaulted roof of the portico, the crowd gathered.

At 9 o'clock, there filed out upon the porch, a hundred young men and women, clothed in the black and white vestments of the church. In each of the three windows before which they stood was a wreath of holly, and crossed above them were strings of electric lights.

As the voices of the choir, which was that of the First Congregational church, rose in the call of "O Come, All Ye Faithful," the last few hundreds passed through the gates of the White House, and took their places in the grounds.

By the time the choir had finished the first verse of "Adeste Fideles," the thousands gathered in the grounds had raised their voices in a glorious hymn of praise, and through the carol service they continued their hymn.

The vested choir stood like a host of angels while their leader, Harry Edward Mueller, led them through the carol service which a few hours later was echoed in almost every church in the city. At times the choir carried the hymns by itself, through the more intricate parts of the service, but in alternate hymns the public joined in a peal of praise. Now and then a woman would step out from the ranks of the choir and for a few moments would carry the hymn as a solo, and while she did the silence of the throng was absolute, being dissipated only when the time would come for general singing.

Just within the center door of the north portico, during the services, there stood a smiling man and a cheerful-looking woman. They were the President of the United States and the First Lady of the Land. Beside them stood their two sons, the first youngsters to spend Christmas day in the White House since President Wilson had his grandchildren there.

And as truly joyful in the hymns of praise as the most humble of those gathered on the lawn were those who lead the nation. They joined in the singing, and participated in the happiness of the night as simply as did those who stood in front.

At the midnight hour, that invisible dividing line between Christmas, eve and Christmas, there gathered around the community tree in the White lot, the colored citizens of the city, and just as earlier in the day, hymns and carols resounded through the air.

So the Capital, so the nation, and so the world, welcomed the advent of the 1923 Christmas.