

CHRISTMAS IN JULY

In the summer of 1946, a group of staffers at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly became good friends. Because they would not be together in December for Christmas, they decided to have their own "Christmas" on the 25th of July. Back together in 1947, the same group was larger, so plans were made to be more elaborate. Other staffers were curious about the decorations, the cards, "Merry Christmas" greetings around the grounds, and all the talking about the plans. Soon others were making their own Christmas plans, and everyone was either asking about or joining in with the plans to celebrate "Christmas." The group initiating the idea would meet together to sing carols, hear Christmas poems, and listen to the Christmas story by candle light. On "Christmas" night they had a festive gift exchange with games and refreshments. It was on a Friday night nearest July 25 that they first recognized a "Christmas in July". Out of this grew the annual custom of celebrating "Christmas in July" at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly.

Each summer a Christmas play is presented by the staff's drama group on staff meeting night before "Christmas". Carols are sung at the beginning of each meal the week previous, and Christmas carols are played on the chimes throughout the week. A dinner is given for the staff on Wednesday before "Christmas," followed by a special program. Each year staffers give a Christmas offering to further Southern Baptist work on Home and Foreign missions. These offerings in the past have been used to build Glorieta a prayer garden, a boat for village work in Thailand, a project in Cuba, and equipment for a new hospital in Southern Rhodesia.



Mr. Smith promises NO turkey for Christmas dinner.



It's Christmas and everyone is working on decorations. Marion, EVERYONE is . . .



Here we come a caroling.



Jim Maxwell sings "Sweet Little Jesus Boy."



Santa's little helpers at play.