Against Starvation,
Grass Soup Tastes Good

Even grass soup tasted mighty good when the alternative was starvation. Pvt. Harry Nixon Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Nixon Jr. of 304 Trueway, discovered after four and a half months as a prisoner of war in Germany.

Captured by the 4th Armored Division and now home on a 63-day furlough, Nixon recalls how he and his buddies spent many of their prison days working out elaborate menus of food that they were going to eat when they got back to the United States.

He lost 50 pounds during the imprisonment but has now regained most of it, thanks to very tasty and vitamin-potent meals which the army has provided since his liberation.

A former student of St. Mary's University and a former employee of The Light, Nixon went overseas with an infantry division in October, 1944, and landed at Marseille, France. He worked as a steward, unload food and munitions for several weeks before his unit went into action with the 71st Army in the Vosges mountains in Alsace-Lorraine.

Over-ambitious on the part of his company to overtake the retreating German army caused his capture. The men had been told that if they took a small village called St. Die, they would be able to sleep in the homes of that town that night. The weather was bitter cold, and Nixon's company, who had not had a warm bed on their minds advanced five miles during the day, crossed a river and entered St. Die at nightfall.

They fortified several houses and prepared to spend the night there. But the Germans blew up the bridge behind them with 38 caliber artillery, and then counter-attacked with Mark IV tanks. Nixon was in the attic of one of the houses with a light machine gun, but the bullets kept plugging off the side of the tanks. Meanwhile, Nazi shells were crashing into the house and there was no alternative but for the Americans to surrender.

The trip to the German prison camp where he was finally interned was sporadic and harrowing. The Americans got no food for three days, but were put to work digging gun emplacements on the Siegfried line

**PSN. HARRY NIXON JR.**
Grass soup main dish.

*On the French side of the Rhine*

Then they were transported alternately to trucks, box cars and regular German passenger cars to Gannezau in the center of Germany. American and British planes bombed them on route, and while friendly planes were a welcome sight, they also caused hit and run moments for the prisoners, who narrowly missed being hit by the bombs several times.

In Ganneau, they worked at a lumber mill which was manufacturing fabricated houses for the bombed out cities of the Reich. They also planted potatoes, which the prisoners liked because they could always hide a few in their jackets to make potato soup later. Nixon states:

“When we were freed, I had more than 10 pounds of potatoes hidden in the camp for an emergency. I had worked so hard sneaking them in that I was afraid to leave them.”

Onions, potato and pea soup constituted the main dish when meals were served at all. Many times the prisoners went without either food or water. Nixon declares:

“In our particular camp they weren’t mean to us and I don’t think they meant to starve us. But the conditions in Germany were so disrupted that they just couldn’t distribute supplies among everybody. The German civilians in the town where we were ate almost as badly as we. Trains and transportation was so bad it took up to seven days to travel 100 miles.”

S.A Notes-Aug. 1944

Service Men Visit College During Leave

Five St. Mary’s University students were visiting the college campus last week.

The five, all San Antonians, are Pvt. Wendell Lienhard, Frances Bales, Mildred Burkhalter and Harry Nixon, all attending Texas A. & M. at Kingsville and Pvt. Robert Clarkson attending Sam Houston S.T.C. at Huntsville. All are at home now on short leave from their respective outfits.

Others who visited the campus were Lt. Col. Joseph H. McGlone, just back from the battle of Saipan, Capt. John Salter, medical corps, returned on leave from the North Pacific area; Ensign Oliver C. Boughen, back from destroyers service in the Pacific Lt. Lyle Brusselston, returned from the asbestos and on his way to a new assignment; Lt. Sam Davis, marine air corps’ instructor; Lt. Vincent Kitowski, newly commissioned navigator; Pvt. Sam Overstreet from Louisiana State University, Pvt. Claude L. Conner from Ohio State University, and Pvt. Jack Brown from Camp Shelby, Miss.
Kelly 'lost company' survivor retires

By JIM MARTIN

A member of World War II's "lost company" surfaced to put in 27 years of federal service.

Harry Nixon's tour with the federal government, both in and out of uniform, closes out this week.

The 58-year-old leaves his post as chief of media relations at Kelly AFB Friday to join Trinity University's public relations staff.

Nixon's federal career began in 1942 when he enlisted in the Army.

Two years later, what was left of Nixon's company was captured in a small town in France.

"The Germans actually lured us into the town, then burned the bridge that was the only escape route," Nixon said.

It was under shelling by German troops that Nixon earned the Purple Heart for a broken wrist.

"I was going down the stairs of a farm house to get the lieutenant when a shell blast knocked me down," Nixon recalled.

The men in Nixon's outfit swapped roles with 13 German prisoners they were holding in the farm house basement.

"We became known as the lost company because we disappeared into captivity overnight," Nixon said.

Nixon was listed as missing in action for more than three months before he was allowed to send a letter to his parents from a prison camp in Glauchau, Germany.

His memories of his five months as a prisoner of war are tinged with a certain sadness for his captors.

"One of our guards was 70 years old," Nixon said, "On Easter, his wife brought us a jar of goose meat."

The gesture made an impression because the Germans were running out of food.

"You can tell the state of a town's food supply by looking in the trash cans," Nixon said. "The trash cans in Glauchau were always empty."

Forward elements of Gen. George Patton's 3rd Army rolled into Glauchau on April 15, 1945.

"We were lucky because Patton had orders to pull up at Glauchau," Nixon said. "The next town down the road was liberated by the Russians. They held the American POWs a month before sending them back to our lines."

Nixon's injured wrist, which healed without medical attention, earned him a discharge from the service.

When the San Antonio native returned home, he worked briefly as a sportswriter for the Express-News and the Light.

Nixon cut short his newspaper career to become the administrative assistant to San Antonio's first city manager, C.A. Harrell.

"It was exciting work for a year, but our side lost the war and we were out," Nixon said.

Nixon went to work at Kelly in 1951 after a brief stint as director of public relations at St. Mary's.
War over early for reluctant POWs

By HARRY NIXON

We were going all the way.
We were going to be the first Allied unit to cross the Rhine River into Germany.
We were going to invade the Nazi home domain and help put an end to the war in Europe.
It was Dec. 2, 1944. It was cold as we crossed the Maas River and entered the Rhine plain of Aachen.
The Vosges Mountains and the action there in the snow and ice were behind us. The roadblocks, the landmines and barbed wire traps on the mountain passes were now in the rear.
Enemy activity had been far more severe than anticipated. We took several towns, but the expected delay was still as we approached the small city of Selestat.

The weather was clear, but darkness was beginning to prevail as our Company B unit of the 69th Infantry Regiment entered the city. We were spearheading our 103rd Cavalry Division drive, less than a dozen miles from the Rhine.
Then the Germans gave us opposition as we pushed toward the opposite side of Selestat. We overcame this and fought our way over the Lil River. There were no barricades ahead of us except the Rhine — we thought.

It was dark. That's when they let us have it. They returned the bridge and shot at us with their mounted flak. We were running the bridges, using all available windows and other route openings to cover ourselves.

We could hear the heavy roar of engines and clashing of tank turrets. At the crack of dawn, we had our men at the trigger, repeating the "handy-boy" instructions.

As we glanced over at the Tigers, with their turrets rotating toward us, we needed no further reminder. We complied, with our hands behind our backs.

The war was over for us.
We were almost in sight of the Rhine, but we were not to cross it in glory. We indeed were some of the first American troops to cross the Rhine, but it was not the manner we imagined. It was as prisoners of war.

Ahead of us was a slow, tedious and dangerous five-day, 115-mile backpack hike through American aircraft bombing up the Rhine and through the Ruhr to the saltmines (POW camp) at Limburg on the Lahn, near Frankfurt.

In another camp, we later spent four months of forced labor, in a lumber mill at Clogau, near Leipzig, Dresden and the Czech border.

On April 13, 1945, elements of the 86th Division of Gen. George Patton's Army invaded our town and liberated us, just ahead of the Russians advancing from the other direction.

Our company commander, seriously wounded, directed us to "fight to the last man." I wondered if that "last man" could be me.
Fortunately, our first sergeant, uninjured, directed us to "fight to the last man." I wondered if that "last man" could be me.

Fortunately, our first sergeant, uninjured, directed us to "fight to the last man." I wondered if that "last man" could be me.

One by one, we filed down the mustached stairs as angry German infantrymen emerged, with their fingers...
REMEMBERING WORLD WAR II -- 50 YEARS LATER

...Oct.-Dec. 1944

-(Pfc.) Harry W. Nixon
Co. B, 409th Inf.
103rd Division
--Weapons Platoon,
Mortarman

I remember leaving Camp Shanks, N.Y., and New York City, and
landing on the Troopship S.S. Monticello at Marseilles, France...
A long night march from the dock to the hillside outside the city,
where we camped in tents...A heavy rainstorm then washing our
tents down hill...Going back to the Marseilles wharves several times,
where we unloaded ammunition from cargo ships that were in our convoy.

I remember riding in trucks through Lyon and Dijon into the
Vosges Mountains, where we went into combat action against the
Germans.

I remember the hardships in the Vosges, our bedding down in
foxholes in the frozen earth on the mountains--My foxhole mate was
Pvt. Leshie Weeks of Kentucky--and waking up in the morning after a
night of uncertain sleep to find several inches of snow on top of
the shelter-half over our foxhole...The slush from the snow infiltrating
our shoe-packs so that our feet stayed wet and we could feel
approaching frost-bite.

I remember passing the captured city of St. Die, and the heavy
enemy action at Stiege, with the Germans attacking down the mountain--
and Leshie Weeks among those being wounded and sent back to a front-line
hospital...Sgt. Ed Crossley of Michigan helping some of the guys carry
their weapons so they could keep up with the company.

I remember our fighting our way out of the Vosges into the
beginning of the Rhine Valley...A night crossing of the Meurthe
River, single file over a narrow foot bridge...Going through the
shattered Alsation villages...Col. Teal Therrell, our battalion
commander--from South Carolina--leading the way in his jeep...and
on foot...barking out his orders.

I remember vividly the fateful night of Dec. 1 (and the early
morning of Dec. 2) before our capture...Moving along the Ill River
on the outskirts of Selestat...Hearing the eerie sound of a German
motorcycle on the other side of the river, as we were inching our
way along...Moving across the river, and fighting our way into the
town...Capturing 10 or 12 German soldiers and placing them under guard
in the basement of the house we had occupied...While on sentry duty
outside the house, having a German soldier approach toward me--and
surprising...and capturing...him...and placing him with the other
prisoners.

I remember artillery shells going over our house (and apparently
knocking out the bridge we had crossed to get into Selestat)...Then
the ominous grinding sound of several tanks coming down the street in front of our house... Trying to "dig-in" the onions and potatoes in the attic of the house... as the Gallow tanks rotated their turrets in the direction of the houses we were occupying... A G-A-R man in our attic (trying to be a hero) "opening up" on the tanks... The tank shells piercing through the roof above us (reminding us of the 4th of July... on the 2nd of December)... A sergeant next to me sending me downstairs (between shell bursts) with a message for another sergeant... but the firing resuming—and my getting knocked sprawling down the stairway and landing heavily on my left hand (my wrist later turned out to be fractured—after an examination following my liberation from a German prisoner-of-war camp). A German tank commander yelling at us to "handy-ho!"... and realizing our hopeless situation, filing out of the house with our hands in the air... The German tank guns—and the infantryman's rifles—pointing at us as a warning not to do anything foolish... Our entire company (those who had survived) had been captured... Since communications had been knocked out, we disappeared from the "face of the earth"... We have been called the "Lost Company of the 103rd Division." I was "missing in action" three months.

I remember being lined up in the snow on the street outside the house, and the dozen or so liberated German POW's coming out of the basement and telling their comrades that some of our guys had taken their watches from them after capture... Demanding that one of our Jewish-American buddies, Pvt. Samuel Berkowitz, who could speak German, tell us that the liberated Germans wanted their watches back... Although it was a bitter cold Alsation night in December, Berkowitz apparently almost was sweating as he told us, "For heaven's sake guys, if any of you have their watches—give them back!" After several watches were returned, the Gerries, apparently being satisfied, started marching us behind their lines to the rear.

I remember the Germans bedding us down in a barn just outside Solostat... Waking us the next morning (with no food) and bussing us downstream to the ferry to cross the Rhine to Breisach, Germany, where they forced us to dig machine gun emplacements on the other side of the river to be ready for the anticipated early invasion of the Reich homeland by the Americans... (Seeing no wounds, or blood, the Gerries would not believe I had an injured wrist, and forced me to dig—with the others—the emplacements along the east bank of the Rhine)... Being bombed by our own planes in the town—on our way back from our unwanted (and illegal, according to the Geneva Convention) digging duties... With no food on the second day—finding an old, stale piece of brown bread in the hay of the barn in which we were sleeping, and, in hunger, eating the bread even though it had teethe marks in it—probably from the horse or cow that munched on it before me... We had hoped to be the first U.S. military outfit to cross the Rhine... We did cross the river, but not in the way we had envisioned... It was not on our own, but in the hands of the enemy.

I remember several days later (after finally getting some food from the Germans) being loaded on box-cars in the Breisach rail yard, and beginning our slow, painful ride (cramped in the cold, airy box-cars with only straw on the floor) through Karlruhe, Heidelberg
and Mannheim toward the POW camp at Limburg—near Frankfurt... A friend to all of us, Pvt. Carlton Neumeister of Minnesota, who was "recruited" as an interpreter since he could speak German, being killed when the burp-gun of our German guard inadvertently discharged when the train lurched suddenly—shooting the little guy through the head... Our German guard frequently "taking off" and heading to the nearest air raid shelter in some of the bigger cities on the way... leaving us out in the rail yards, bouncing around like an egg-shell as Allied planes bombed the area around us... Five days (and several hundred miles) later, arriving at Limburg, and beginning our 4½-month stay in two German POW camps... and a final work detail in a lumber mill at Glauchau, Germany, from which I was liberated by General Patton's Third U.S. Army on April 15, 1945...

NOTE: Colonel Therrell, who we looked upon as a "tough cookie" in final training at Camp Howze, Tex., and in combat in France, ultimately gained our respect, along with those who followed him to the end of the war with the 103rd in Austria, as a real leader of men... Many of those who made it all the way through, say he was greatly responsible for their survival. At a 103rd Division Reunion at Hot Springs, Ark., in 1984, a GI who had served under him in Europe, was heard to say, "Colonel, I used to think you were eight-feet tall, but now I see you are no taller than the rest of us!"... The good colonel, who joined us at many of our reunions, died in 1994...

-- Harry Nixon
231 Veda Mae Drive
San Antonio, TX 78216

(Phone: 210/342-7626)
Addition to:

REMEMBERING WORLD WAR II -- 50 YEARS LATER

...I remember not being able to use our mortar in the Vosges Mountains, even though this was our primary role. Since we could not secure a "field of fire" to fire our weapon, we became "carbine infantrymen." The heavy foliage in the mountains did not give us an open area from which to fire our mortar.

--Larry

Recognized for military service by receipt of:

--Bronze Star
--Purple Heart
--Combat Infantryman's Badge

...Prisoner-of-war mementos, such as French Army uniform issued by Germans to replace U.S. GI combat gear, are displayed in the World War II Memorial Museum, adjacent to the Steven Stoll Playhouse at 1160 Wurzbach Road (and Loch mile-Selma)...Later at National World War II Museum in New Orleans, LA...
Jacket Worn by Harry Nixon as a POW

Pvt. Harry Nixon of the 409th Infantry Regiment, 103rd Infantry Division, was captured on December 2, 1944. After Nixon was stripped of his US uniform and combat gear, he was given this World War I-style French Army uniform, which he wore while imprisoned near Glaucha, Germany, until the camp was liberated by the US 3rd Army on April 15th, 1945.


Harry Nixon (center) and fellow prisoners on the April 15, 1945, the day of their liberation.

Postcard from Harry Nixon to his parents in San Antonio, Texas.
PVT Harry W. Nixon with fellow former prisoners-of-war and captured German POWs in field following liberation on April 15, 1945 by General Patton’s Third U.S. Army.
by Harry Nixon
Pvt., Co. B
409th Inf. Regt.
103rd (Cactus) Div.
...World War II...

All the Way

Toward the Rhine Marched Company B of the One-hundred-and-three,
A ray of joy filled the hearts of the haughty infantry,
As the Captain cried—
"Come on men, Germany's just on the other side."

Months of hope and fear were about to be rewarded;
"Come try Basten," a war-recruit retorted.
For the recruit had just joined the Company;
From a rear-eschelon area where all was not jump.

Oh, he had heard the stories
Of brave infantry men and all their glories,
But he had never seen the flash of rockets in the sky,
Nor felt the rumble of hot steel landing nearby.

Even grizzled veterans began to share the hope,
Though, long since they had found that war was no joke;
Comrades who had fallen where the pall of smoke,
And sights when they themselves thought they'd never see the
light of day's clock.

But now on this cold day of December First, 1944,
Their march up the shone from Marseilles was about to be no more;
The hedgerows had been crossed, and the enemy Vinges engrossed,
And the land of Sigfried was very close.

The sign on the post said "Strasbourg—10 km;"
To the Yank, this meant the long trail was about to end;
The happiest furlough in years
Was about to replace their fears.

Then the Captain said: "Gotta make Selestat before we go to bed;"
That didn't sound so bad, for Selestat was just ahead,
And after being on the go for days,
No show and a sack would find a welcome place.

The column-of-iles march into Selestat,
Seemed strangely silent with no rat-tat-tat
From Heimic burg-guns on the way,
Nor bar-ba from deadly Jerry 88 to play.

But thoughts of the Hun were secondary,
To men who were going to the land of the Gerry;*
At about midnight Selestat was reached,
Not a sound or movement greeted the marching feet.
After weary men had bidden down for the night,  
With only a token outlet to left and right;  
The stillness of the cold Alien night  
Gave no semblance of a night fight.

Little did the slumbering soldiers know,  
'Twas really the calm before the blow;  
For war is not a quiet, peaceful affair,  
As the green recruit was soon to be aware.

With rumbling cannon and crashing shell,  
Hilton had drawn the setting well in his picture of Hell;  
Without warning the dreams of sleeping doughboys were complete;  
Weary men postponed their sleep, a fate with destiny for to keep.

The startled men of Company B grabbed their guns,  
To meet the threat of the vengeful Huns;  
The shelling came not only from the front,  
But from the side and rear also came the drum.

Minutes seemed like hours to rock and roll alike,  
As the dreaded rumble of tanks sounded through the night.  
The roar of 58's stopped, but the figure of the Jerry jungle,  
Kept right on coming with their steady rumble.

Fear clung to the hearts of man,  
The only hours earlier thought only of the glories of the win.  
The Captain said: "Get ready, guys.  
Don't let 'em take us by surprise."

But it was too late for surprise,  
You could tell that by one look in his weary, gray eyes.  
Men of all faiths began to pray,  
To their God, each in his own way.

The Jerry Tigers crept stealthily toward  
Their American pray up forward!  
Then from north, east, south, and west,  
They came upon some of Uncle Sam's best.

Like brave, true soldiers they opened fire,  
But M-1 and D-4-B could not compete,  
To beat off cannon and heavy gun.  
Mounted on Ruhr steel of many ton.

Cries of anguish and of pain  
Came from officer and private the same,  
As American blood began to flow,  
So that Democracy soon might grow.
The Captain himself was not insane
To the hot lead of the machine-gun fire
In torture, he cried amen,
"Never give up, men, fight on."

But as casualties mounted and the tanks came on,
The top Sarge implored, "It's our one
Our one and only chance,
To keep from resting forever in France."

So, to save the lives of his fellow-men,
He ordered a halt to futile rifle and pistol din.
Soon the German tanks stopped their fire too,
And an enemy officer ordered all to surrender.""

All who could walk dropped their arms of steel,
And went forward to meet the German's seal;
With hands raised high in the air,
Their fear-filled eyes met the German glance.

In broken English, the surviving few
Were told to march to the rear, and knew
That the war was over for them,
As it was for their brave Captain.

The boy who was a rookie only a few hours before
Was now a hardened veteran but wanted no more!
All bid a silent and solemn adieu to their friends
Who would never see the bright daylight again.

They marched back through enemy line,
Past snarling Houndsies most of the time,
Till soon they seem on a sign,
Just one more kilometer to get to the Rhine.

Their objective was now almost within sight,
But their dream was as dark as the blackest night;
They had hoped and prayed for this day,
But not to realize it in this way.

Then they came to the broad, speeding river,
And many of the men had a noticeable quiver;
Not only a cold, empty feeling,
Like that of far-off voice pleading,

The voice of a loved-one at home,
Or one you've only met in a poem.
"Could this be just a poem now,
Why, I just don't see how--"
It couldn't happen to me,
Why just an hour ago, or two, or three
I was thinking about crossing this river
In honor and glory, but now consider.

They crossed the Rhine, the boys of Company B, One-O-Three,
Though not with joy and thoughts of victory,
But with cold steel bayonets at their backs,
And only nightmares颤抖 to pack.

But soon the despair was to pass away,
As Spring came and God produced a bright new day.
The thoughts of war and battle were almost forgotten,
Though in strange and enemy land.

Only the thoughts of better days that were ahead
Came to the men in their beds,
And soon their way was won
By the all good and merciful one.

The war was over and men went back to their home,
Never more for to roam;
Even the lad who had been a raw recruit
Got back for many tortures to restitute.

As hope was restored to the world,
And the flag of peace unfurled,
Let us all pray to Him it shall stay
Flying high to guide us on our way.

Shattered Dreams

"It's chocolate cake for me when I get home."
"Just give me some lemon pie and I'll never more roam."
These and other visions filled the cold, damp air
As men, American men, sat pair in pair
Dreaming of the day when they'd be home again,
Home again where men are men,
And not vassals of a "master" race and state,
As was now their unhappy luck and fate.

These men were once happy and free,
Talked and laughed just like you and me.
But that was before they went to war,
To find what a democracy really was for.
They had not known in days now past,
But now they were finding out at last;
In America there was plenty throughout the country,
But here these men were prisoners of the enemy.

They had fought hard in France and Italy,
Fought until captured by the dreaded enemy,
And hustled off to dingy prison camp,
Where vermin was thick and ground was damp,
And a high barbed-wire fence,
Foiled every thought or freedom pretense,
There German conqueror stood outside,
And marked at the place where the Yank abide.

But with unsurmountable American spirit and pride,
The Yanks thought not of their untimely suicide,
Only of brighter days ahead,
When there will be no more dread,
And people will again be happy and free,
But forced to how to Hitler an bended knee.
But able to sit down at a non-mixed meal,
And think when they've eaten enough how full they feel.

But now thoughts of food were all in dreams,
Of pies and cakes and candies, it seems!
For a "Kriegsmagen" in Deutschland had little,
A hunk of black bread and soup from a kettle;
But as long as a Yank had thoughts of his land,
Where there was plenty for all, no empty pan.
He was satisfied for he knew he'd someday be back,
Away from disease and starvation, but when was not exact.

What meals those Yanks did concoct,
Steaks, stew, and roasts with gravy on top;
They had their menus fixed up for a year,
When back to the U. S., once more they would steer;
Meat was saved over at the mention of fried chicken,
At the thought of hot dogs they'd drool like the Dickens;
Then the German guard pushed in the tin,
"What is it—no, not gross soup again."

Christmas Mass in a German Prison Camp

The day dawned cold and clear,
Just like any other time of the year,
When snow is on the ground,
And sleet and ice is to be found.
But there was something special about this day,
At no other time did one feel quite this way;
With thankfulness in his heart
To Him above for the joys he does impart.

Then someone in the crowded room said, "Merry Christmas,"
And the feeling of happiness inside was increased;
Yes, it was Christmas Day here,
But, strangely, came shed a tear.

On this happiest day, why would one feel sad?
Well, maybe it was not one of the most merry he had had;
Not only was he away from home and family,
But far from country and in the clutch of the enemy.

These were American prisoners-of-war,
Captured in Africa, France, and the Sea;
While fighting for the country the bold dear,
And the right to celebrate this holiest day of the year.

The cold, wooden building took on an air as happy as can be,
When there is no peace in the world and you are not free;
And the shout was heard, "Cut-meat for breakfast."
This one day of the year even the Germans were compassed.

After the small tin of oat-meal was eaten
Most of the sadness was beaten;
But there was still an emptiness of soul,
That mere food could not control.

As all sat around on cold, damp floor,
Thinking of Christmas celebrations before,
A York Or came into the room;
And said, "Catholic Mass next door soon."

The Kellys, Wothamis, and Lamberts all were called to their faith,
And even Luther Jones and Calvin Smith did embrace
The spirit of the day and went right along,
To join the others in prayers devout and strong.

Though the priest was from London
And the words were in Latin,
All were united in one common cause,
To give thanks to God and his laws.

That faith in peace and freedom
Had no bounds in sect or religion,
But encompassed the whole group,
As they prayed and knelt in a stoop.
When the last "Amen" was complete,
all had a good feeling that was repose
With happy fullness of body and soul,
That only one Being could rightly control.

So a day that started off with some sadness,
ended with a sincere "Merry Christmas" and much gladness;
Although the circumstances were dark,
With God's help each had a new joyful spark.