
Tiny Town continues 35 years of Christmas lights in Easley

by Billy Cannada

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EASLEY—Nestled in a rural community about two miles behind the Walmart in Easley is a Christmas tradition with a family atmosphere that attracted thousands of residents for the past 35 years.

Originally a hobby for the late Perry and Ollie Jennings, Tiny Town's tradition has continued on in recent years under the leadership of two of their children. Bill Jennings and Pat Kelly.

"Mama and daddy was up in the mountains and mama saw those log churches up there and said she would like to have one," said Jennings, who is the fifth of eight children. They went to Georgia and brought the logs home and daddy built it (a smaller versions of the churches they had seen). That's how it started."

That was 1974. Three years later more buildings had been built and that Christmas the family decorated the buildings for the first time.

For the past 35 years the lights have been on for people to drop by and walk through the village of more than 30 buildings including the church, a playhouse, a McDonalds, a car lot, two nativity scenes, a fire station, two crosses. The church and the other log buildings are the original buildings.

The buildings are filled with dolls, most of which all belonged to Ollie Jennings before she died in 2009. "She was quoted at one point before her death saying that she was like the nursery rhyme about the "Old Lady in the Shoe." "I had so many dolls, I didn't know what to do," Ollie said.

Today, people still come for an attraction that is open every night ("If it doesn't rain," Jennings says.) from Thanksgiving to New Year's Eve. They start putting up the lights and making necessary repairs in September.

"A lot of people come and they enjoy it, Jennings said. "We don't charge anything. We've got a donation well where they can drop a donation if they want.

"The closer you get to Christmas, the bigger the crowds get," Jennings added. "Lots of people love to come over, walk around and check everything and then just sit around the fire for 45 minutes to an hour. They just love sitting around the fire."

Visitors come from different parts of North and South Carolina as well as Georgia, driving as far away as Raleigh, N.C. or Atlanta, Ga. Many people make it an annual

trip even getting pictures of their children beside buildings where the parents stood for photos a generation before.

Dennis Brown, a cousin to the family, says he comes most every night

“It’s the family, the fire and the friendly atmosphere,” said Dennis Brown. “They treat you like family if you behave yourself. They don’t put with any foolishness.”

Bill Rector, another regular, says he sees spiritual significance to Tiny Town.

“Just to be truthful it has a lot of spiritual meaning to me,” he said. “I believe God put it on this earth for us to enjoy.

Kelly said the original church and the car lot are her favorites.

“I believe this is Mama trying to exalt the Lord. “

The electricity costs run about \$800 for the season. That expense, along with yearly repairs to lights and buildings are nearly covered in the donations that are made by visitors.