



T'IS THE SEASON

DECEMBER 13, 2008

The night was brisk and lit with torches as William & Mary community members took time out of studying for finals exams to attend the Yule Log Ceremony. Held in the Wren Courtyard, Yule Log had been a tradition at the College since 1934. However, this ceremony introduced some new participants as the new President of the College and the Vice-President of Student Affairs made their Yule Log debut.

Despite the cold evening, crowds began to form before the campus-wide event was planned to start. "It was freezing; I couldn't wait for the hot cider they give you at the end," sophomore Katie Boretzky said. Many upperclassmen came early, knowing what was to come and eager to secure a good view.

While waiting for the ceremony to start, William and Mary Choir sang popular holiday tunes to entertain the crowd. Members of Mortar

Board and Omicron Delta Kappa, two honor societies on campus, introduced the ceremony and its history. Filling the shoes of Vice-President Sam Sadler, Virginia "Ginger" Ambler gave her inaugural version of "The Night before Finals." Her version contained the usual jovial rhymes and some new lines about recent events at the College. Several representatives from campus organizations spoke about the cultural traditions of various holidays typically celebrated in the winter months such as Kwanzaa, Ramadan and Diwali, an Indian Festival of Lights. After the holiday speeches, The Gentlemen of the College sang their classic carol mash-up.

Huddled together, attendees watched as Santa "President Reveley" Claus came forward for a dramatic reading of Dr. Seuss' *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, taking up this presidential tradition for the first time. For the most part, on-lookers were very receptive of the new Santa. "I

genuinely enjoyed Santa Claus' cameo," freshman Madeline Chessman said. "He sets a great example for William & Mary students. One should always take time to stop and be joyful, no matter how epic one's all-nighters are."

Finally, the celebrated yule logs were carried through the crowd to the doors of the Great Hall of the Wren Building. The crowd strained to brush their holly sprigs against one of the logs, hoping to snag some luck in the new year. As the doors to the Great Hall opened, the crowd funneled through. "It's an intimate setting," sophomore Claire Meers said. "You don't walk so much as you get carried by the group."

The Yule Log Ceremony provided students with not only a festive break from studying, but also with the opportunity to celebrate the joyful season with the entire campus before the break.

>Irene Morrison-Moncure

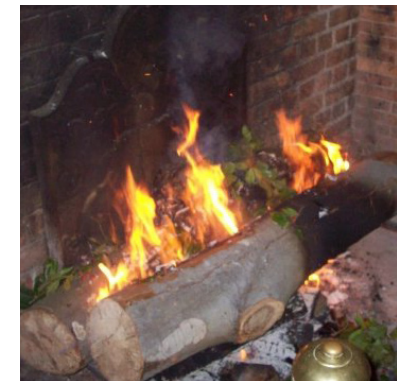
Standing on the porch steps of the Wren Building, the William and Mary Choir sings such tunes as "Deck the Halls" to the gathering crowd. Torches in the courtyard and bundled-up guests lent a holiday feel to the traditional ceremony.



Photo courtesy of Caitlin Clements.

Students strain against the crowd to brush their holly sprig against the passing Yule Log. Helpers with baskets of holly handed a sprig to each person as they entered the Wren Courtyard before the ceremony began.

Holly branches and the Yule Log burn in the fireplace of the Great Hall. Participants were allowed into the room in small groups of about 20 people to throw their year's troubles (signified by the holly) onto the log.



Reuniting with freshman hallmates, sophomores Claire Meers, Katie Boretzky, Jen Schindler and Cameron Glenn bundle up to brave the frigid weather. Most people came in groups of friends that met up for dinner before the ceremony held at 7:00 p.m.



Photo courtesy of Caitlin Clements.