

History and Legend of Trees and Cribbs



Christmas trees and cribbs, within respective spheres of influence, provide focal points for observances of the season.

Legendarily, the Christ Child blessed the huge pine which sheltered the Holy Family during the flight into Egypt.

A strange child was received hospitably into the hut of a poor woodcutter who lived on the edge of a great forest. At midnight the family was awakened: looking out of the window, they beheld the little stranger clad in gleaming radiance and surrounded by a choir of angels: the fir tree beneath the window was covered with silver nuts and lights, apples and threads of gold; and the Child revealed his identity:

"I am the Christing, bringing happiness to good children. This fir tree shall be my emblem."

The Druids were worshippers of Thor to whom the Thunder Oak was sacred. St. Wilfred, standing amid his Christian converts, felled the oak to symbolize the severance of all connections with heathen Druid rites. The old tree split into four pieces as it fell and, from its very center, a young fir tree pointed skyward.

"This young tree," said Wilfred, "shall be your Holy tree tonight. Let it be called the tree of the Christ Child; gather about it, not in the wildwood, but in your own homes. There it will shelter no deeds of blood but shall be surrounded with loving gifts and rites of kindness."

What the Christmas tree is to northern countries, the crib is to southern Europe and Catholic countries.

Owing to the widespread inability

of the masses to read and the prevailing lack of books during the middle ages, the Bible was frequently interpreted by literal representation. In 1223 St. Francis of Assisi, hoping to inspire greater religious fervor among the faithful, received special permission from the Pope to present a tableau of the Nativity scene.

On Christmas eve of that year in Greccio, Italy, representatives of the Wise Men and other biblical characters (a young mother laid her "bambino" in the manger), real, live animals, sheep and oxen, finally obedient after hours of tugging and shoving, took their place within the chancel of the village church.

This first crib was such an immediate sensation that the presentation of the Nativity scene at Greccio became an annual event attracting many visitors to the heretofore obscure village. Famous cribbs sprang up and were presented throughout southern and central Europe.

During the Renaissance, painted landscape backgrounds, and increasingly realistic figures, richly clad, elaborate shrines and processions endowed the cribbs with the characteristics of highly ornate pageants. In modern Italy, the Praesepe or manger is seen in every church at Christmastime. In Germany, it is the Krippe; in Czechoslovakia, Jeslicky. In Spain and other Catholic countries, the Nacimiento or Nativity scene is everywhere—in churches, public places and private homes.

Amplexing, being the melting-pot of Christmas customs and traditions, has taken the tree and the crib to its heart.

Christmas Customs Vary Around the World



Among the fancies that longest survived in Europe, and even became naturalized in America was that at one o'clock Christmas morning, the cattle would turn their heads eastward, get down on their knees and worship the King who was born in a stable.

Of more recent date—during the Christmas season the barnyard cocks crow with more than usual force and frequency.

The Christmas feeding of birds is prevalent in Norway and parts of Sweden. Bunches of oats are placed on houses, trees and fences. The children save their money to be used to purchase bundles of oats.

During the early 19th century, some of the parishioners of the British Isles who paid vicarial tithes, claimed a custom of being entertained at the vicarage Christmas afternoon, with four bushels of malt brewed into ale and beer, two bushels of wheat made into bread and 50 pounds of cheese. Any food left over was distributed to the poor.

At Cullinst, Ireland, about 1800 was started the forerunner of two American pastimes, "shinney" and the "lottery." Previous to Christmas it was customary for the laboring class to sell tickets on a raffle for mutton. The favorite game was described as karmamy, which consisted in impelling a wooden ball with a crooked stick to a given point.

The Christmas hymn, "Silent Night," was written by a German country priest and his friend, the schoolmaster of a neighboring village, for a Christmas Eve service in 1818. In a little Austrian town, it gradually made friends until it came to be known in all Germany and in translation in many other countries. The author of the verses was Joseph Mohr, born in Salzburg, Austria, in 1792. He was ordained a priest

point, while an adversary endeavored to drive it in a contrary direction. The British Isles are rich in Christmas customs. Starting at eight o'clock, Christmas eve, with bells ringing, the children parade the streets of Yorkshire with drums, trumpets, bells, or perhaps with the poker and shovel taken from their humble fire. A furnace or yule cake, one for each member of the family, is always served.

The ancient custom of sword-dancing at Christmas is kept up at Shropshire. Grottesquely dressed dancers perform their annual routine of warlike evolutions, some accompanied by imitations of the ancient hobby-horse.

The pinata is the Mexican equivalent of a Christmas tree. It is a large clay water jug, decked in paper mache ruff and feathers to look like a turkey or peacock. After being filled with toys it is suspended from a doorway, betwixt and between.

The schoolmaster of Armstorf, near Laufen, who wrote the music of this and a number of lesser known hymns, was Franz Gruber, born in Hochburg in 1797. He died in 1863 at Hallein, near Salzburg, where he was organist.

GOD IS MY CO-PILOT

Col. Robert L. Scott W.N.U. RELEASE

The story thus far: After graduating from West Point, Robert Scott wins his wings at Kelly Field and takes up combat flying. He has been an instructor for four years when the war breaks out, and is told he is now too old for combat flying. He appeals to several Generals and is finally given an opportunity to get into the fight. He flies a bomber into India, but on arrival is made a ferry pilot and this does not suit him. After paying a visit to Gen. Chennault he gets a Kittyhawk and soon becomes a "one man air force" in the skies over Burma. Later he is made C.O. of the 23rd Fighter Group but still keeps knocking down Jap planes. His "Old Exterminator" is badly mauled and he gets a new P-40E.

CHAPTER XXIII

It had been only recently, when he had been taken from his thirteen four-engine bombers on the way to blast Tokyo, that he had been assigned to transports. The Japs must have known just how to get under his skin, but in the end I think the knowledge worked against them. Now he was getting back at them by having thousands of little leaflets printed in several languages, especially in Japanese. They read:

COMPLIMENTS OF THE OLD BROKEN-DOWN TRANS. PORT PILOT

He used to drop some of these on every bombing mission he led. He'd go out and tie some to each bomb; put them in the bomb bay so that they fell out when the doors were opened; even throw them out over the Japanese-occupied cities that he blasted. I knew now that he was getting a new supply ready for Hongkong.

Towards the end of October came the word we had so long been waiting for. Victoria harbor was filled with Japanese shipping. In deepest secret we got ready to go.

Our ships would leave from Kuning, but we would of course use the intermediate bases in the Kweilin-Hengyang section, 500 miles to the East. Hongkong, you will recall, is about 325 miles Southeast of Kweilin. It is protected by surrounding enemy fighter fields at Canton and Kowloon. Our objectives would be the shipping in the harbor, the shipping at the docks in Kowloon, and the ships at the drydocks in Hongkong.

Early on the morning of October 25 our twelve bombers took off from Yunnan for Kweilin, and shortly afterwards Hill, Allison, Holloway and I led the fighters off. We were all to infiltrate into Kweilin, a few ships at a time, so as not to alert the coast of eastern China.

For two weeks I had worried about this attack. I thought it would come any day, and because of the tension I couldn't sleep.

When I learned that word hadn't come, I'd spend another sleepless night. I got the doctor to give me something to make me sleep and I had a headache the next day. I knew "my wind was up," as the British say—but why in hell didn't we go on and get the attack over with!

But now I was on the way. I could see the shark-mouths of the P-40's all around, and the whole thing was easy—just what I had wanted all the time. We sat down at Kweilin at one-minute intervals at eight o'clock. The bombers were soon in, and the Chinese were busy servicing the field full of ships. They were the happiest people I had ever seen. They'd point towards Japan and point down with their thumbs and say, "Bu-hao."

All of us were proud to be going. But as I looked at those seven P-40's escorting ten bombers, I could not feel feeling apologetic for that greatest country in the world that we were representing. Oh, God, if the day could soon come when we could go against this enemy with a thousand bombers, even a hundred bombers!

Maybe the small fighter force that we had made us lucky ones who were privileged to go to resolve all the more that we would make up in quality what we lacked in quantity. Personally I felt like a veteran football player, who has been on the beach and has now been called into the big game. Nearly a year before, when Hongkong had fallen to the Japanese attacks from the Asiatic mainland of Kowloon, I had sworn that I would "see the first bombs hit the Crown Colony. I had no idea then that I would lead the fighters that I would shoot down Japanese fighters in the field, that we would be intercepted by a superior force of the enemy, but that in less than three minutes after the interception there would be only the ships of the U. S. Army Air Force over Victoria harbor.

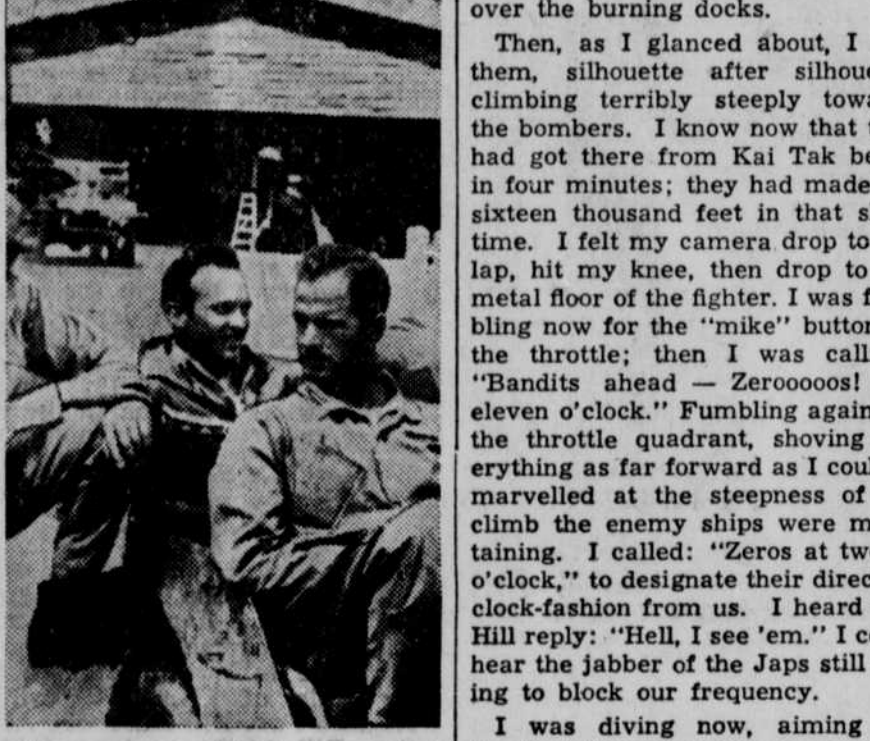
Now I had the familiar "wind up" feeling that precedes combat. The palms of my hands perspired freely. As I stepped there on the tarmac of my trousers I saw that the sweat was like mud; it had mixed with the red dust of Kweilin field through which we had taken off. Our altitude kept increasing to 20,000 feet, while down below at seventeen thousand were the medium bombers in javelin formation; two Vees of three; and the last element a diamond of four. We passed one of the river junction check-points that enabled me to compute our ground speed. In fifty minutes I could see the glint of the sun on the Pacific Ocean. As I saw the

bomber formation again, I felt proud of the crews of those perfectly spaced ships. This really was like a football game: the bombers were carrying the ball while we in the pea-shooters ran the interference.

I imagined General Haynes, down there in the lead bomber, grinning as he thought of dropping a few hundred more of his leaflet souvenirs to the Japs. "Compliments of the old broken-down transport pilot"—along with at least sixty 500-pound bombs. Big "Butch" Morgan, the best bombardier in the Air Force, had probably wormed his huge bulk through the tunnel into the nose of Haynes' bomber and was even now intensely interested in his pet bomb-sight.

Now I could even smell the freshness of the Pacific. The sky had never been so blue. The beauty of the day and the beauty of those weapons flying so smoothly under us made me forget the scratching of the oxygen mask on my sunburned neck. It was a joy to look back and see the six shark-mouths on the other P-40's grinning at me. Some day, I thought, Jap mothers were going to frighten their children by referring to them and reminding the brats of Nippon that their fathers had more than likely had that view of an American P-40 for a last memory.

As we got closer to the target, we split our formation of fighters automatically. Tex Hill, Hampshire, and Sher stayed with me; Marks took the other three on the opposite flank of the bombers. The country below had become lower in elevation but was green and still hilly. Over the radio, as we reached a



The men were all showing combat fatigue and needed a rest. They were tired out by almost constant alert without relief for twenty-one days. Many of their flying mates had been killed in action, and this helped to lower their morale.

point North of Macao, came the jabbering of Japanese voices on our frequency, and we knew from our ominous sound that they were warning of our attack.

I tensed a little and looked about for enemy planes. Far to my left I could see the three rivers meeting at Canton, could see two fields from which I knew Zeros were taking off to intercept us. We had bypassed Canton purposely by thirty miles. I saw the bombers changing course: we were around Canton now, and were going to steer straight for the North of Kowloon peninsula. The blue Pacific looked friendly, reminding me of the southern California coast. The old, familiar fog banks that should have been covering San Clemente and Catalina were shrouding instead the Ladrones Islands, with only their hilltops visible, sticking out from the fog on the China Sea.

We were turning over Macao, where the Clippers used to land. To the South I could see another Jap field, Sanchau Island. Now to the right was Hongkong Island, shaped like a kidney and mountainous, just about nine miles long and three or four miles across. I could make out the indentations of the romantic-sounding bays whose names I knew—Sandy, Telegraph, Kellet, and Repulse. There were points of land jutting towards the mainland—Quarry Point, with its Naval Drydock, and Shek Tong Tsoi, the point over which we would fight our aerial battle. Reaching towards the island like a finger was Kowloon peninsula, separated from it by the blue waters of Victoria harbor. Near the end of the spit of land closest to Hongkong, I saw the large modern Peninsula Hotel. All of us knew that Japanese Generals, and staff officers slept there with their women.

I crossed around and over General Haynes and his formation, watching vigilantly. Far below I saw dust on Kai Tak airfield, and knew that enemy ships were taking off to attack us. My throat felt dry and I had trouble swallowing. I turned my gun switch off and on nervously. Now I saw the bomb-bay doors opening, and I couldn't keep the tears of excitement from burning my eyes. Anti-aircraft was beginning to dot the sky with black and white puffs. As I dove almost to the level of the bombers, I could feel the ack-ack rock my fighter ship. I kept S-ing to watch for the enemy

SEWING CIRCLE PATTERNS

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Due to an unusually large demand and current war conditions, slightly more time is required in filling orders for a few of the most popular pattern numbers. Send your order to:

SEWING CIRCLE PATTERN DEPT. 530 South Wells St. Chicago Enclose 25 cents in coins for each pattern desired. Pattern No. .... Size .... Name .... Address .....

For Joyful Cough Relief, Try This Home Mixture

Saves Big Dollars. No Cooking. This splendid recipe is used by millions every year, because it makes such a dependable, effective medicine for coughs due to colds. It is so easy to mix—a child could do it. From any drugstore, get 2 1/2 ounces of Pinex, a special compound of proven ingredients, in concentrated form, well-known for its soothing effect on throat and bronchial membranes. Then make a syrup by stirring two cups of granulated sugar and one cup of water a few moments, until dissolved. No cooking needed. Or you can use corn syrup or liquid honey, instead of sugar syrup. Put the Pinex into a pint bottle and add your syrup. This gives you a full pint of cough medicine, very effective and quick-acting, and you get about four times as much for your money. It never spoils, and is very pleasant—children love it. You'll be amazed by the way it takes hold of coughs, giving quick relief. It loosens the phlegm, soothes the irritated membranes, and helps clear the air passages. Money refunded if it doesn't please in every way.

Taxes Cancelled for Valor

The town of Bahadarpur in Patiala, India, recently had its taxes canceled for a year because a local soldier won the Victoria Cross.

Advertisement for Kellogg's Corn Flakes, featuring the slogan 'Mighty Good Eating!' and 'Kellogg's CORN FLAKES'. It includes the Kellogg's logo and a small image of a cereal box.

Advertisement for Fleischmann's Fresh Yeast, titled 'DON'T DESPAIR BECAUSE YOU CAN'T BUY DRY YEAST!'. It features a large image of a yeast package and text describing the benefits of their yeast.