

Speaking of Christmas

SPEAKING OF CHRISTMAS . . . Throughout the world wherever Christmas is celebrated it is customary to place a lighted candle in the window . . . The legend is that candles originally were set out to light the Christ child's way as he made his visits through the children . . . One explanation of the custom of hanging stockings on Christmas Eve recalls the baronial halls of England where huge fireplaces were constantly in use . . . Each Christmas a special log, the Yule log, was thrown on the fire . . . This log burned steadily as long as the feasting and celebrating continued. Naturally, it burned with a pungent odor and stockings were hung over the fireplace to absorb some of this odor and to protect the owners from evil spirits . . . Christmas Eve, 1863,

saw a near tragedy in Virginia City, Nevada . . . Two friends celebrated with a terrific round of festivity . . . Just as dawn was breaking, they embarked on a perilous promenade over the town's rooftops . . . A policeman, mistaking them for burglars, drew his revolver and prepared to shoot—but a passerby stopped him . . . Had he fired and the bullets found the mark, the world would have been deprived of two great humorists—Artemus Ward (Charles Farrar Browne) and Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens) . . . Mince pies, so long a part of our Christmas tradition, originally had a deeply symbolic significance . . . The first mince pies were patterned in oblong shape, after the manger in which Christ was born . . . The crust represented the gold brought by the Three Wise Men; the many spices, the frankincense and myrrh . . . On May 11, 1659, the general court of Massachusetts Bay outlawed Christmas . . . Anyone celebrating, stopping work, serving holiday fare or deviating from normal daily life would be fined five shillings . . . The righteous Puritans were sure they were acting wisely—for how could good Christians condone the pagan origin of Christmas? Did not such a holiday encourage excess in eating and drinking? . . . It was 22 years before that law was repealed.



Leopard Joins Party
PHILADELPHIA (UP)—When Frank Palumbo, restaurateur and philanthropist, threw a recent party at the Philadelphia zoo for 1,000 under-privileged children, he had a spotted leopard as a surprise gift for them. The leopard is quite tame, having been raised by the natives in the Sierra Leone region of West Africa.

Bonds Are Safer
FORT WAYNE, Ind. (UP)—George Kayser walked away from the bank with \$850 he had received from cashing in some war bonds. A few minutes later after getting off a crowded elevator he felt in his pocket and the money was gone.

Conscience Eased
OKLAHOMA CITY (UP)—The state highway department awards the palm for civic righteousness to a Panhandle farmer whose tractor tore a hole

in a highway. The farmer drove 12 miles to highway department headquarters to inform officials and pay for the damage.

U. S. Presidents Wilson, Tyler and Cleveland married while in office.

There Will Always Be Christmas Trees

WASHINGTON, D. C. (Special)—Fifty years ago a President of the United States banned the use of Christmas trees in the White House because he thought the practice of cutting young evergreens was wasteful.

That order, issued by Theodore Roosevelt, went unchallenged until two of his young sons were caught in the act of smuggling a Christmas tree into the Executive Mansion. To escape their father's presidential wrath they appealed to America's first professional forester and Theodore Roosevelt's good friend, Gifford Pinchot, to intercede for them.

Pinchot did, pointing out that proper cutting of small evergreens for Christmas use is not harmful and frequently actually helps a forest.

That advice, good enough 50 years ago to lift a White House ban and convince a strong-minded president, is echoed this year by no less an authority than the American Forest Products Industries.

"Don't worry about the plight of the poor Christmas tree," says this wood-industry sponsored organization, "it's as replaceable as the Thanksgiving turkey and just as indispensable to the American scene."

Nearly half of the 21 million evergreens that make up America's 1949 Christmas tree harvest were farm produced. Nearly nine-tenths of the entire crop was cut on privately owned timberland. To augment this domestic Christmas tree harvest, about five million evergreens are imported annually, most of them from Canada.

Besides bringing a fragrant freshness of the forest into two out of every three American homes this December, the three-month Christmas tree harvest pours an estimated 50 million dollars into the Nation's economic bloodstream.

Most American Christmas trees are thinned from natural growth forests. An original stand of from five to ten thousand trees per acre will actually mature only a few hundred sawlog-size trees. Most of the small evergreens, selectively cut for Christmas sale, would sooner or later have been eliminated by Nature in the life and death struggle for forest space.

When it comes to selecting a Christmas tree, most Americans have as many individual likes and dislikes as they have in motor cars or hats. Color, limb strength, shape, compactness, fragrance, an



These spruce trees from Northern Minnesota's second growth forests will bring Christmas cheer into homes all over America. This scene typifies the holiday forest harvest just completed. (Halvorson Trees, Photo)

ability to retain needles and, of course, price are factors.

Best seller on the Christmas tree market today is the balsam fir, a product of New England and Northeastern United States. About six and one-half million of these are sold in an average year. Douglas firs, products of the Pacific Coast, are the second most popular. Black spruce, red cedar and white spruce follow in that order. Together these make up 83 percent of all Christmas trees sold in the United States. Scotch pine, Southern pine, red spruce, Virginia pine, white fir, Norway spruce, hemlock, cypress, juniper and Englemann spruce also are marketed in commercial quantities.

Historians disagree over how and when this Christmas tree business started in America. Home-sick Hessian soldiers, brought over from Germany by the British to fight George Washington's Continental Army, probably introduced the custom.

Another German, the sixteenth century religious leader Martin Luther, generally is credited with originating the custom of decorating Christmas trees with lights. Noting how snowflakes on the boughs of evergreen trees reflected moonlight, Martin Luther determined to capture the same effect in his home by placing lighted candles on the tree. The idea spread through the centuries. This Christmas eve, just as they have since 1923, people will gather around an evergreen tree on the White House lawn to participate in a tree lighting ceremony dedicated by the President and broadcast nationally.

Forestry-wise the United States has traveled a full circle since Theodore Roosevelt's day. Christmas trees, like sawlogs and pulpwood, have become a crop in America. This country's forests, if protected and wisely managed, can produce both wood and Christmas trees in quantities sufficient to meet present as well as future needs.



Christmas has rolled around once again and Santa Claus with round red cheeks, jolly smile and chunky figure looks the same as he did nearly 90 years ago.

His creator was Thomas Nast, one of America's greatest cartoonists. During the early 1860's he was asked to illustrate Clement Clark Moore's poem, 'A Visit to St. Nicholas, better known to us as 'Twas The Night Before Christmas.' The result was Santa Claus as we know him.

Santa's creator was born in Bavaria in 1840, son of a musician in a Bavarian army band. When he was a fat little boy of six, Thomas' father left Germany to enlist in the United States navy, and Thomas' mother brought the boy to New York to live.

Along about the time stocky Tommy was 15 he landed his first job as an illustrator for Leslie's Weekly at \$4 a week. By the time he was 20 he was sent to England by the New York Illustrated News to sketch the Heenan-Sayers fight, an outstanding sports event of the day.

In 1862 he joined the staff of Harper's Weekly and began the series of emblematic drawings which continued throughout the Civil War. From those he created certain trademarks that have been the inspiration of cartoonists down to the present—notably the Republican elephant and the Democratic donkey.

Famous as the political symbols are today, Nast's Santa Claus probably holds first place in the hearts of Americans. Before Nast's day, a few artists had drawn Santa on one occasion or another, but could not seem to agree on how the old gentleman should look.

Nast changed all that. He located Santa's home at the North Pole and gave him a sleigh drawn by reindeer. He drew the familiar, fat, merry old fellow with red cheeks and white beard, dressed in red, wearing a cap and boots, carrying a pack of toys and smoking a short pipe.

Use Journal Want Ads.

Three U. S. presidents died on July 4 — John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.

Prince Albert introduced the Christmas tree into England.

Warren G. Harding was the first U. S. president to speak over the radio.

It's ALAMITO For Me!

And For Sis'

Our whole family goes for Alamito Milk! Sis and I like it at meals and with a sandwich after school. Mom likes the sturdy Alamito no drip carton because it's so easy to pour and takes less space in our Refrigerator.

PERFECTLY PASTEURIZED

ALWAYS DELICIOUS

Alamito

HOMOGENIZED

Grade A Milk

Enriched With Vitamin D

SHELBY, Miss. (UP)—The Rev. L. S. Gregory, 81-year-old retired minister, came out of retirement one afternoon to perform two wedding ceremonies. In both cases he had married the bride's parents.

Christmas Carols

Christmas carols express better than anything else, probably, the true spirit of Christmas.

The word "carol" itself signifies joy and was originally used to accompany a dance. William Wallace Fyfe concludes that the term carol "signifies a song of joy or exultation." Another definition states: "A carol is a hymn of praise especially such as is sung at Christmas in the open air."

In England, which gave America most of its carols, they were sometimes gay and sometimes convivial until the time of the Puritans, who tried to suppress the Christmas spirit.

After the Restoration, the religious nature of the day was for a time almost forgotten in the reaction from Puritanism, and the carol was temporarily lost in the songs.

There are many quaint customs associated with the early carolers that might be used today to break the monotony of going from house to house singing Christmas hymns.

It was about the 16th century that caroling became a Christmas custom, and is supposed to have been brought to England from Italy by the traveling clergy. The first real Christmas carol is attributed to St. Francis of Assisi who made a model of the Bethlehem manger to help him tell his people the Christmas story.

The idea of caroling fitted admirably into the English conception of Christmas as a combination of religious celebration

and a great home day with neighborly feeling, so it grew and flourished in that country.

Little bands and groups of singers which sprang up in the towns and villages came to be known as "waits." A natural explanation of the name seems to be that it refers to watching and waiting, for Christmas Eve is called the Vigil of Christmas.

As early as December 21, which is the day dedicated to St. Thomas, mummers and carolers would begin going from door to door, announcing the great feast at hand. It was natural for the householders to offer hospitality to these Christmas troubadours, and gradually in many places the custom of giving alms and presents of various kinds was established.

This benign custom threatened at one time in England to become a profession and to lose its original simple charm.

For a period beginning just when no one knows and ending in 1820, there were in London and Westminster companies of "waits" whose leaders held office by public appointment and who obtained an exclusive right to solicit contributions from the public.

The carolers were often accompanied by entertainers who gave a spirit of revelry to the occasions. The mummers often interrupted the singing to give their interpretation of "St. George and the Dragon." Tumblers, dressed in bright red, would perform their arts of skill to entertain the onlookers.

trying to destroy the evidence and thought the bag contained nothing but receipts.

Store at Your Door
SPRINGFIELD, Mass. (UP)—Gerald D. Michelman has found one way to beat high rentals. He fixed up a truck as a clothing store and travels around to his customers. The slogan for his enterprise is: "Store at Your Door. Why Pay More?"

Thief Fools Himself
KENDALLVILLE, Ind. (UP)—Tony Clyde Jones pleaded guilty to stealing a money bag from his apartment mate but he said he had burned almost \$1,000 in it by mistake. Jones said he was

Holes in Swiss cheese are formed by gases that result from fermentation.

Season's Greetings To All

We wish for a moment that we were back in the days when towncriers proclaimed the news. Then we'd stop off at the houses of all the folks we know, and personally wish each one of you a joyous and bountiful Christmas followed by a year filled with contentment.

Plattsmouth Creamery

The Home of Butter

SEASON'S Greetings

The arrival of another Christmas season brings with it the joyous recollections of many pleasant and friendly associations with those whom it has been our pleasure to serve in this community.

Each year we find ourselves eagerly awaiting the Christmas season because in it we find the opportunity to express again our appreciation for your thoughtfulness and consideration.

And as we extend our thanks, we hasten to add our best wishes to you for the Holiday Season. May it be one of manifold blessings . . . a time of merriment and thanksgiving. May this Christmas be your happiest

S. CLA

The Plattsmouth State Bank

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