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TO OUR FRIENDS

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Christmas of 1804 Was Chicago's Best

Surely there will never be another Christmas celebration like the one in Chicago in 1804.

Captain John Whistler (grandfather of the painter who painted the famous "Whistler's Mother") was in command of the garrison at Fort Dearborn and he decided that there should be a great feast—complete with music, dancing and a splendid Christmas tree.

Soldiers from the garrison went a-hunting in the woods just north of the river and came back with a fat buck deer, some rabbits, a raccoon or two, a few wild turkeys. Added to the roasted pig (contributed by some festive-minded citizen) and the magnificent Christmas pudding, these morsels provided abundance for all. Everybody—the civilians and the military—drank a toast to Thomas Jefferson, the President of the United States.

The punch was "dizzy" and there were fifes and drums and a couple of fiddles to play for the dancing.

It was getting late when a watcher in one of the blockhouses gave a warning shout that Indians were approaching; but they turned out to be friendly Indians who came bearing gifts to the feast. They watched the white folks dance, and when the whites were exhausted, the redskins took the floor and began a wild, whooping dance of their own which climaxed Chicago's unique Christmas celebration in 1804.

QUESTIONS ON CHRISTMAS

- The Swedes know kissing is fun. That's why they thought of the Christmas mistletoe. What should be done to the mistletoe for each broken kiss? (a) remove a berry (b) do nothing (c) take off a leaf.
- We ought to know the names of the Three Wise Men who were the first givers of Christmas gifts. They were Melchior, Balthasar and (a) Samuel (b) Casper (c) Shadrach?
- Everyone likes to get lots of Christmas cards. When did the custom of sending them start? (a) about 1845 (b) about 1781 (c) about 1903
- Who first had the idea of building a small replica of a manger for the Christmas ceremony? (a) Pope Gregory (b) Piers Plowman (c) St. Francis of Assisi.
- The Christmas tree is the heart of our Christmas decorations. Which country first used the tree as a part of holiday observance? (a) Germany (b) Norway (c) France.
- "Silent Night, Holy Night," one of the most beloved of Christmas hymns, was written by (a) Beethoven (b) Father Joseph Mohr (c) Martin Luther?



Among the myriad problems which beset parents at Christmas time are the many questions from the small-fry about Santa Claus. And the business of telling Junior or his little sister the truth about the jolly old gentleman in the red suit is really a major task.

However, the situation is bound to arise, and when it does, it does something to your heart strings—so you draw the little ones close and cast about for the best explanation.

Oddly enough, the true story is best—and the easiest to tell. So why not just tell the little ones this?:

St. Nicholas (or Nicolas) is Santa Claus' real name. He lived in Asia Minor and was the beloved bishop of the Greek church of Myra in Lycia. He is the patron saint of the young, and in some European countries a person dressed as a bishop still assembles the children and distributes gifts of nuts, sweetmeats and other nice things to the good boys and girls.

Children loved St. Nicholas and trudged along beside him as he trudged the dusty roads of the Lycia countryside, bringing fruit and candy to the sick and needy.

One of many stories told of his goodness concerns a poor and honest man and his three good and beautiful daughters. The father was unhappy for poverty prevented his giving the customary dowries to his daughters, and for this reason they could never have suitable husbands.

One night a bag of coins was tossed in at the man's window. The next night the act was repeated. But on the third night the father watched, and the anonymous giver was detected. The jolly bishop stood with the third bag of coins in his hands. The father was very proud and would not accept the money. The good bishop begged the poor man to accept the gifts and use them for his daughters' dowries, requesting that his name never be revealed.

At last, the father accepted the money for his daughters, but he could not keep the name of the generous bishop secret—so the legend of the goddess of St. Nicholas was further spread and strengthened.

The practice of placing burning candles in the windows on Christmas eve is tied up with an Irish custom which holds the thought of the Christ child alone in the dark, needing light for his way.

When buying toys for children remember that those of the constructive types are best—they develop the youngsters' ingenuity.

The wild bear has been revered from ancient times, and was especially honored at Christmastime, for having taught mankind the art of glowing by rooting into the ground with his tusks.

Andrew Jackson lived with his wife for two years when they found that her divorce from her first husband was not valid.



SHIRT-SLEEVED SANTA... It's not a common subject for discussion, but Santa Claus sometimes does take off his coat and just lounge around in his beard and shirtsleeves. However, this is not standard procedure, and it's mighty few Santas you see sitting on a park bench in New York.

Swiss Brotherhood Sang at Christmas To Banish Plague

One of the most impressive customs in the world is observed in Switzerland where the "singing at the fountains" is done by the Sebastiani brotherhood in the picturesque spa town of Rheinfelden.

According to the Swiss writer Gottlieb Wyss, the custom is more than 400 years old, dating from 1540 when a plague, sweeping through many lands, visited Rheinfelden. Twelve men formed a brotherhood in honor of St. Sebastian, promising to pray to him to safeguard their town from further distress. They also undertook to nurse those afflicted by the plague and to bury its victims.

If one of their own members died, the brethren acted as pallbearers, and up to the present day, by their own selection, the membership of the brotherhood has remained at 12. Pestilence in the medieval period was ascribed to the evil spirits in the water, and when the Sebastiani brethren make their rounds of seven fountains on Christmas eve, they start at the fountain in the "Froschweide" where the plague started in the 16th century. After singing for the seventh time near the town church, they join its congregation for midnight mass, first placing their quaint mounted lantern, with its lighted candle, before the altar of St. Sebastian.

For their Christmas eve singing at twelve, brethren are dressed in dark clothes and black silk top-hats. Around their lantern-bearer they stand in a circle and three times, as the name of Christ is mentioned in their song, they uncover their heads.

On New Year's eve, between 9 and 10 o'clock, the Brethren make another round of the fountains, this time singing an old song which concludes with the wish that St. Sebastian may intercede for all in the New Year so that they may be safeguarded from war, pestilence and other perils.

Football fields are called grid-irons because the white lines crossing the field resemble a gridiron.

Toys FOR THE CHILDREN

How did you choose the toys for your youngsters this Christmas?

A New York toy manufacturer declares that only a few parents will select the proper playthings for their children each Christmas.

Most, he said, buy toys that please themselves, rather than the children.

The man, who owns a company that makes creative playthings, warns that "gadgety" toys may be harmful and frustrating. And, he adds, children quickly tire of them.

"The best toy a parent can buy," he said, "is a set of plain un-painted, wooden unit blocks. Children will use and enjoy them from age 18 months to nine years."

He said that girls between age 3 and 7 should have a "doll corner." He said the corner should be supplied first with a large wooden stove, bed and cupboard.

"The doll corner will become the most treasured play place in the little girl's life," he said.

He contends boys from ages 2 to 7 mostly enjoy "transportation" play—trucks, cars and boats.

There was no statement about what parents should choose at Christmas for the young teen-age boy or girl—in the 13-16 year-old group, whose interests already are deeply grained in social activities, and who prefer parties and dances to play-at-home activities.

Perhaps by next year, this manufacturer, or some child psychologist will have solved this problem.



BACKED UP... What would Christmas be without bright new dollies for little girls to cherish? Giving promise of a goodly crop of dolls for this Christmas are these finished heads on racks in a factory, ready to be given eyes and limbs.

Wishing You
A HAPPY
CHRISTMAS
Chriswiser's Studio
121 Main St. Phone 225

Merry Christmas

May your happiness at Christmas be perfect and may it add much brightness to each moment of the coming year.

Mr. and Mrs. L. H. Hurst and Son
Electric Wiring of All Kinds
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Today, As In The Day When Three Wise Men Found Him...

... Let us express our hopes for the future through prayer. As we kneel in Homage on this Holy Day, let us pray for Peace on Earth. And let us determine to enact those ideals, in the months and years to come, which will help in making our prayers a reality. A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all.

Welshimer's
Firestone Store

A Christmas Scene

Nothing reminds us more of the holidays than a Christmas scene, whether it be one of a winter landscape, a roaring fireplace, or children playing with bright new toys. Christmas reminds us of well wishing, particularly to the people whom we enjoy serving... our customers. So we say to you with real appreciation,

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS SEASON.

Jack and Elmer's Bar