

Strange But True

By F. H. MacArthur. CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS

The name indicates that it is a solemn mass in honor of the birth of Christ. However, it was an important celebration of pagan peoples long before Jesus was born. It was a time of feasting in honor of the winter solstice; the longest and days were shortest, and when Old Man Winter reigned supreme.

When the church began the task of Christianizing these pagans, its leaders learned that it was wise to take pagan feast and celebration days, give them some Christian meaning, and allow the new converts to keep on observing them. This was more or less what was done in the case of Christmas.

As to the exactness or correctness of the day we are uncertain, for no one knows on what day of the year Jesus was born. There are those who have figured that about the last of December is the approximate time. On the other hand, there is some reason to doubt that it is. Bible accounts tell us about the shepherds being in the field with their flocks. This might indicate that it was in the spring of the year in the Holy Land, when the grass was green and the weather mild enough to permit the shepherds to remain out of doors all night without discomfort.

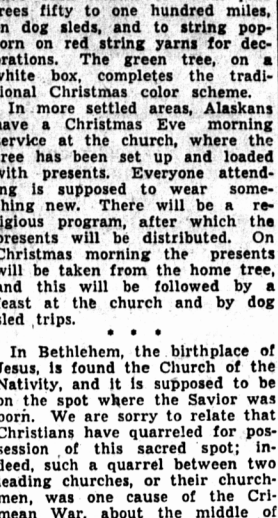
Other marchers follow behind, some with little figures to represent angels, some of them carrying candles, and all of them singing. They stop at houses with their songs and continue them until the owner bids them enter. Then follows a social hour, featured by the breaking of the pinata; an imitation bird or animal stuffed with candy, peanuts, or other goodies dear to the hearts of children. Blindfolded children strike at the pinata, swung from the ceiling, until they burst it and scatter its contents over the floor. Then they scramble for the goodies, while the old folks watch and enjoy the fun.

During eight nights this program is repeated, but on the ninth the manger scene is publicly enacted. Nor does this end Christmas. January 6 is the day of the three wise men, when the children put their shoes on balconies or at other places nearby, and the wise men fill them with toys. Needless to say, the Mexicans borrowed heavily from Mother Spain for their celebration practices.

Perhaps a glimpse at our own Alaska at Christmas time would be interesting. Some Alaskans solemnly claim that Santa Claus lives there, but many homes are so far from neighbors that Christmas preparations often involve hard work and trouble. Families have been known to haul pine trees fifty to one hundred miles, on dog sleds, and to string popcorn on red string yards for decorations. The green tree, on a white box, completes the traditional Christmas color scheme.

In more settled areas, Alaskans have a Christmas Eve morning service at the church, where the tree has been set up and loaded with presents. Everyone attending is supposed to wear something new. There will be a religious program, after which the presents will be distributed. On Christmas morning the presents will be taken from the home tree, and this will be followed by a feast at the church and by dog sled trips.

Second Of New Minesweepers Launched In N. B.



H. M. C. S. Fundy, second of 20 minesweepers now under construction in Canadian yards, slides smoothly down the ways at Saint John, N. B., after Mrs. Milton F. Gregg, wife of the minister of transport, declared: "I christen you Her Majesty's Canadian Ship Fundy. May God bless this ship and all who sail in her."

H. M. C. S. Fundy follows by a few weeks the launching of a sister ship, H. M. C. S. Gaspe, in Quebec. The second of her name in the Royal Canadian navy, the Fundy is a new class of minesweeper. One hundred and fifty-two feet in length and with a beam of 26 feet, she is largely of aluminum construction. Her hull is of wooden planking fabricated over a frame of aluminum alloy, while in her superstructure great use has been made of this light metal to reduce top weight, allowing for an increase in living spaces. Displacing 390 tons, she is twin-shafted, driven by diesel engines.

The yule log, oak felled at midnight, played a prominent part in Britany celebrations. Even its ashes were regarded as valuable, for they were thought to protect the home from lightning; and when sprinkled under cradles and beds, to bring good health.

Holland gave us Saint Nicholas. There he was regarded as a real saint, and often he appeared in full costume, with embroidered robes, mitre, crosier, and jeweled gloves. He appeared on December 5 to distribute toys and treasures dear to children. Sometimes, it was whispered, he left birch rods for bad children.

He also visited Belgium. Little Dutch children stuffed their shoes with hay for his mule, and left them on the hearth. The next morning the shoes were full of toys and candy.

In Serbia and Bulgaria, Christmas morning witnessed a quaint celebration by the head of the house. Before breakfast he took some grain from a stocking, sprinkled it on the doorstep, and said, "Christ is born." The other members of the house replied, "He is born indeed."

He then entered, advanced to the fire place, and struck sparks from the yule log with a poker, making a wish with each blow; health to the cattle, to the horses, to the goats, and so on, his last wish for a good harvest. He then collected the ashes and preserved them. The yule log was not allowed to burn entirely, but pieces of it were placed in trees around the place to secure a good crop.

There are many other quaint practices that peoples of the world have observed, and in most cases still observe. Some of them are superstitious, but most of them are reverential. To the world in general, Christmas is a time of happiness. To some of the world's peoples it is a time of religious feeling. It ought to be both.

HUGE PORT The port of Montreal has nine miles of deep draft wharf, capable of accommodating 100 ocean vessels.

Veteran Indian Scorns House, Dies In Tent



ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE, Alta. (CP)—When 81-year-old Philip House became ill a few weeks ago for the first time in his life, mission workers urged the old Indian to go into a house built for him by the government, where he could receive better care.

For anyone who knew House, whose Indian name was Running Deer, his reply was typical of his way of living. He said he was born in a tent and would die in one, as his father had. He never saw a doctor and the only medicine he touched was a herb brew his wife made in the old Indian fashion.

When the Indian patriarch died Saturday, he was in his tent and married 62 years—was at his side. The weather was freezing and there was snow on the ground.

House was one of the last Indians with a vivid memory of the historic peace treaty signed in 1887 at Gleichen, Alta., which saw representatives of the Great White Mother, Queen Victoria, give the Indians reservation rights. As a young member of the Stoney tribe, House attended that meeting with his father, who signed the treaty for the Stonies.

Refused To Go The Stonies were given a reserve at Morley near Calgary. But a little band from the Kootenay plains valley near this west-central Alberta foothills town, refused to go there. Although they sent their children to Morley to be educated, the elders continued to live on the plains as their forefathers had "since the world began."

House was born on the plains and lived there all his life. The Alberta Government built him the frame house on his land, where he grew some grain for his horses, hunted and trapped. In the coldest weather he scorned winter clothing for ordinary summer garb.

House was proud of his government-built home, and loved to show it off to visitors. His sons like the frame house and think they will move into it. But his widow says she will end her days in the tent, which she says is more comfortable than any wood-and-stone structure.

House was buried in the valley's little Indian cemetery, where his people have been buried for more than 200 years.

CENTRAL ROYALTY W. I. The Central Royalty Women's Institute met in the school on Dec. 3 with president, Mimi Ward in the chair. Roll call was answered by 20 members and one visitor.

Christmas Just Another Day In The Soviet Union



MOSCOW, (CP)—Christmas in Russia is just a date on the calendar. New Year's is the day of gifts and greetings.

Fir trees are set up in homes and public squares to mark the winter holiday. Under them, on New Year's morning, the children find their gifts.

And yet, those trees are decorated, and the time at which the lights go on is the evening of Dec. 24. And the state lends Elohovsky Cathedral the Bolshoi Opera chorus for its ceremonies on Christmas Eve.

This information about Christmas arose from a search for greeting cards. I took the card problem to my tourist guide.

Christmas For Aged Christmas, she said, is observed mainly by the old: "There is nothing in the calendar to indicate anything special about the day, and many young people who have grown up since the revolution have never heard about it."

"There is a fir tree in most homes and it is decorated by the parents in time for the holiday season. The first time it is illuminated is the evening of Dec. 24. "The state places decorated fir trees in front of the main buildings and larger apartment houses, and usually there is one also in Red Square. They also are illuminated for the first time Dec. 24. "The presents are placed under the tree New Year's Eve and the children find them there the next morning."

Religion Free "The practice of religion is free here, and those who believe in a God may go to church. Many people go to church Dec. 24. If you go, you will find it very difficult to find a place."

My search for Christmas cards

OTTAWA, (CP)—Color television is years away for Canada where black and white broadcasting is barely started. However, sources in the industry said Friday the government and broadcasters are watching closely developments in the United States where a new color broadcasting system has been adopted by the Federal Communications Commission.

Color TV Years Away In Canada



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Under the new system, broadcasts in color also may be seen in black and white on present television receivers. This system replaces one developed by Columbia Broadcasting System in the U. S.

The CBS color system is the one adopted by the Transport Department as the standard for Canadian broadcasters planning to enter the color broadcasting field.

Broadcasts with this system cannot be picked up by present receivers in black and white. However, the receivers could be converted with an adapting apparatus to pick up a broadcast in color.

Department officials said it is too early to say whether Canada will adopt the new system immediately as the Canadian standard.

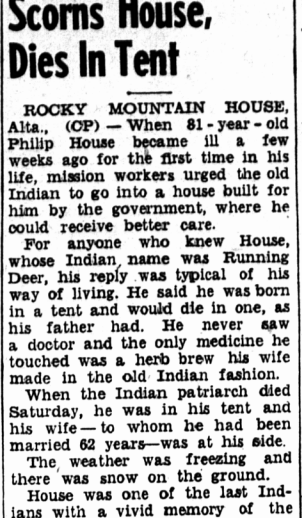
Lord Montagu Cleared By Jury

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The jury disagreed on a second charge—that Montagu indecently assaulted the boy—and Judge Lynskey scheduled a retrial for next March.

The nobleman, third Baron of Beaulieu and former officer in the elite Brigade of Guards, stood stiffly at attention to hear the verdict. Tall and slim, with receding blond hair, he looked pale and strained.

Report Missing Girl Had Initials On Her Forearm



TORONTO, (CP)—Toronto police Thursday investigated a report from a co-worker of missing Marion McDowell that the 17-year-old girl had initials of a boy friend carved on her forearm a few days before her Dec. 6 disappearance.

They quoted the unidentified co-worker as saying the initials were "K.M." when she displayed them at the photo-engraving office where she worked. Marion is reported to have said she had also carved her name or initials into the arm of the boy friend.

However, Chief Constable Wilfred McLellan of Scarborough township police said Ross McDowell, Marion's father, denied that his daughter had been sliced into his daughter's arm.

The girl was last seen Dec. 6 when James Wilson, 19, said a hooded gunman slugged him and kidnapped Marion, putting the girl in the trunk of his car.

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NAMED AFTER BEVIN LONDON, (CP)—A block of apartments in the Finsbury district has been named Bevin Court after the late Ernest Bevin, foreign secretary in the former Labor government.

Gives Accident Report On CF-100s

OTTAWA, (CP)—Associate Defence Minister Campney said Wednesday RCAF CF-100s have been involved in 37 accidents since the all-weather jet fighter went into service about two years ago.

Six RCAF personnel and seven civilians were killed in 11 major accidents and 26 minor ones. The civilians were killed in a single accident at Ville St. Laurent, Que., when a CF-100 plunged into a row of houses.

Of the 37 accidents, 10 were due to defects in the aircraft, seven to human error, two to faulty maintenance, four to other causes and there was as yet no final finding for the other 14.

Mr. Campney informed Clarie Gillis (CCF—Cap Breton South) in the Commons that the CF-100 had undergone minor modifications as a result of the accidents but there had been no major structural changes.

The RCAF had "complete confidence" in the CF-100. It had been designed for a special role—North American defence—and was living up to it. There had been no changes in RCAF plans concerning its use.

Mr. Campney said the CF-100 compares favorably with other aircraft in Canada and other countries.

The accident rate had been "gratifyingly low" and every precaution was being taken in operation of the CF-100.

NATO Council Votes Support Of Big Three In Talks

By PRESTON GROVER PARIS, (AP)—The 14 nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Council Wednesday voted support of the Big Three in their coming effort in Berlin to talk Russia into a better frame of mind.

But—as if they didn't believe it could be done—they voted continued long-range rearmament, with special emphasis on nuclear and other new weapons the Americans have promised to try to share with them.

In the three days the ministers of foreign affairs, finance and defence got through a lot of work: 1. They quickly agreed to step up their active and reserve divisions from 98 to 103 divisions, and boost their air force 25 per cent to about 5,700 planes, heavily on the jet side.

2. They recognized that meeting the Russian menace was going to be a long pull and not a two-year or three-year job—and sloped off the speed of their buildup accordingly.

3. They welcomed promises of the American delegation to try to remove legislative barriers against making nuclear weapons and information on their use available to all NATO forces.

Defence Minister Claxton and External Affairs Minister Pearson headed the Canadian delegation to the conference.

Alma And Vicinity Mr. and Mrs. Charles Rix of Locke Road, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. R. L. England of Springfield West, were guests of Mrs. Mary Ellis and Mr. and Mrs. James Dunbar, Alma, on Dec. 15.

Alma And Vicinity

Miss Norma Locke, school teacher at Montrose, spent the weekend in Alma, guest of Miss Marion Barbour.

Mr. and Mrs. E. McNevin, Brae, were guests recently of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Dunbar.

Master Donnie O'Brien, Alberton, was the guest of his grandparents in Alma on Dec. 12.

Mrs. W. B. MacLellan was a visitor to Waterford at the home of her daughter Mrs. Chester Shea for a few days recently.

Mrs. Donnie Barbour was hostess to members of the Alma Women's Institute on Dec. 10. Mrs. Isaac Dunbar conducted the meeting. The members decided to start a sewing class for the girls. A contest was put on and very much enjoyed. Mrs. Allan Clark invited the members to her home for the January meeting.

Mr. and Mrs. Howard O'Halloran of Burton, were guests of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Dunn of Elmedale on Dec. 13.

Mrs. Foster Smallman and son, Avard, also Mrs. Lawrence Harris, Knutsford, visited relatives in Alma on Sunday.

AUSTERITY HOSPITAL

SOUTHAMPTON, England, (CP) Officials of Southampton Hospital, trying to make up a £10,000 budgetary deficit, have decreed austerity meals for patients. They would cut breakfast from three to two courses, with no "overloading" of plates.



DARLINGTON W. I. The December meeting of Darlington W. I. was held at the home of Mrs. Sterling MacLean on Dec. 7. Roll call was responded to by eight members exchanging Christmas gifts.

Three visitors were present. Mrs. Angus MacLean and Kaye Nicholson reported scrubbing school. Mrs. Neil Campbell was appointed to purchase a blind for the school. A letter of thanks was received for baby gift, also two expressions of thanks for fruit.

It was decided to buy treats for the school children, and the shut-in, next meeting is to be held at the home of Mrs. Angus MacLean, when roll call will be answered with a sale of hats. Program committee for next meeting are Mrs. Angus MacLean and Mrs. Donald MacPherson. Contests put on by Kaye Nicholson and Mrs. Sterling MacLean were won by Mrs. Donald MacPherson.

ROAD SAFETY KING'S LYNN, England, (CP)—A new road-safety instruction centre will provide three road-drill lessons a year for this Norfolk town's 1,600 seven- to 11-year-olds.

Advertisement for Marvel Skin Creme. Features a large illustration of a woman's face and a jar of the product. Text includes: 'Look LIKE A MILLION FOR ONLY \$1', 'AVOID FURTHER EMBARRASSMENT!', 'MONEY BACK GUARANTEE!', 'MARVEL SKIN CREME will help rid your complexion of PIMPLES, FRECKLES, and other blemishes that spoil you from having normal delightful skin.', 'Enclosed please find \$1.00 (cash, money order, or postal note). Send me at once your famous "/>

Advertisement for S. N. KAYS. Features a large illustration of a dog and a man's face. Text includes: 'S. N. KAYS Takes this opportunity of thanking his many loyal customers for their patronage during the year just closing and extending to one and all Best Wishes for a MERRY CHRISTMAS and A HAPPY NEW YEAR', 'S. N. KAYS OFFERS ALL THIS WEEK 10% OFF ALL GOODS', 'Exclusive of Bread, Milk, Tobacco & Cigarettes', 'SHOP AT KAYS 87 Pownal Street Phone 3465 FOR BARGAINS', 'ASK FOR A CALENDAR'.