

# 85 years of helping

(Continued from Page B15)

To the children on the route, the carrier is sometimes "Santa Claus" when he gives them candy along with the mail. And to all of the patrons, the rural carrier renders that legendary "Service with a Smile."

Although members of Congress did not fully support Wanamaker's Rural Free Delivery idea, the nation's farmers did.

They felt discriminated against and realized that home delivery would save time, which meant money. The farmers also felt that they were being taxed so that city people could enjoy home mail delivery which had begun in 1863.

Postmaster General Bissell, who succeeded John Wanamaker, refused to institute a Rural Free Delivery experiment with the \$20,000 appropriated by Congress. He resigned in 1895 and Rural Free Delivery began under the succeeding Postmaster General William L. Wilson. While Wilson, too, was not enthusiastic about Rural Free Delivery, he said that since the people continued to demand it, he would not stand in the way; Congress only needed to appropriate the money once more and he would do his best to conduct a successful experiment.

With \$40,000 appropriated, Postmaster General Wilson in 1896 chose his hometown of Charles

Town and two other villages, Halltown and Uvilla near the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains and the banks of the Shenandoah River, as the first sites where Rural Free Delivery would officially begin.

The five original carriers traveled their 20-mile routes on horseback, bicycle or horse and buggy. Today's rural carriers travel daily 2,309,313 miles in 4-wheel drive jeeps or right-hand drive cars along one of the 36,102 rural routes throughout the country.

As a result of Rural Free Delivery, many roads were built and improved in rural areas, linking up communities. Subsequently, the home delivery of weekly and daily newspapers was possible.

The timely, home delivery of such mail may be in jeopardy by 1984, however. The entire public service appropriation (P.S.A.), to the USPS is scheduled for complete elimination by 1984 under the provisions of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act which was

WASHINGTON D.C. — The average American ate 1,402

passed this year. P.S.A. monies have been an historical guarantee for R.F.D. services; they have been provided by Congress to help defray the cost of financing unprofitable postal services like comprehensive rural delivery.

With the elimination of such funds and rising inflation costs, the Postal Service could decide to eliminate some services, such as Saturday mail delivery, if postal rates and productivity are not increased. A bill, H.R. 1300, sponsored by Congressman Tom Corcoran (R-Ill.), would mandate Congressional approval over any Postal Service decision to reduce services which would have a nationwide impact.

Historically, the preservation of rural free delivery services has depended upon people writing letters to Congress, as the farmers did in 1895 for the need to appropriate funds. The times today are no different.

# Average American consumes about 1400 lb. per year

pounds of food last year but paid proportionately less for it than in 1960, according to a recent U.S. Department of Agriculture study.

Consumer expenditures climbed 319 percent from 1960 to 1980 but, proportionately, food gained less than other items in the consumer's budget. In 1960, about 20 cents of each dollar of disposable income went for food. Last year, food took about 16 cents of the disposable dollar, the survey showed.

In the last 20 years, shifts in consumption patterns affected many products. Consumption of frozen orange juice, for example, increased 98 percent, from 4.6 pounds per capita in 1960 to 9.1 pounds last year. Beef consumption per capita was up 21 percent, from 64.3 to 78.1 pounds. Beef consumption has been dropping each year since 1976 when it hit a record 95.7 pounds per capita.

Chicken consumption also gained dramatically going from 27.8 pounds per person in 1960 to 51.2 pounds in 1980 — an 84 percent increase. The biggest gainer was

cheese, going from 8.3 pounds per capita to 17.9, an increase of 116 percent.

But some foods lost ground. Potatoes dropped from 80.4 pounds per person in 1960 to 44.4 in 1980, a loss of 45 percent. Egg consumption declined 17 percent, from 42.4 pounds per capita in 1960 to 35.4 twenty years later.

All fluid milk consumption decreased from 290 pounds per capita in 1960 to 243 per pound last year. Other losers were sugar, down 12 percent, and fresh peaches, down 38 percent.



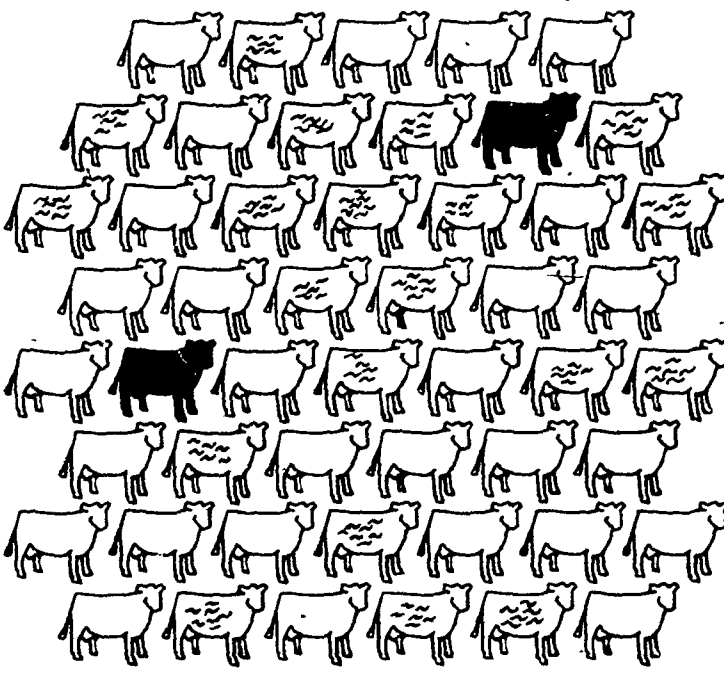
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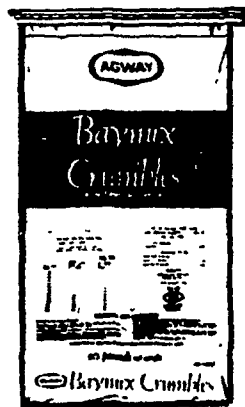
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