

Yes, There Is a Santa Claus!

Dear Editor
I am 8 years old
Some of my little friends
say there is no Santa Claus,
I hope you if you could tell them
the same thing.
Please tell me the truth
is there a Santa Claus?
Virginia O'Hanlon
117 West 11th Street



POSTMASTER JAMES F. MARTIN AT SANTA CLAUS, IND.

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

ONE day in September, 1897, there came to the office of the New York Sun the letter which is reproduced above. It was turned over to Francis P. Church, an editorial writer for the Sun, and on September 21 there appeared in the editorial columns of that paper the following:

We take pleasure in answering at once and thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of the Sun:

Dear Editor—I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus.

Papa says: "If you see it in the Sun it's so."

Please tell me the truth: "Is there a Santa Claus?"

Virginia O'Hanlon. Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or little children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, a prey to the powers above him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas how few are there who would believe if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dear as if there were no Virginias. There would be no child-like faith then, no poetry, no romance, to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus? You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus? Thank God! he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, may, ten times ten thousand years from now he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

It is doubtful if Church realized, when he wrote that editorial, that he had penned a classic. Yet, such was the case, for in the years that have followed it has been reprinted, both voluntarily and by request, in thousands of newspapers thousands of times. It has been translated into many foreign languages (even the Chinese) and every year around Christmas time you will see it in print somewhere.

Not only has "Yes, There Is a Santa Claus" become a part of the American Christmas tradition, but the little eight-year-old Virginia O'Hanlon, who once wanted her faith in Santa Claus reaffirmed, has become a legend, and as such, some have doubted that there ever was such a girl. For the reassurance of those it may be said that there not only was such a girl but that she still is living. The little Virginia O'Hanlon of 1897 is Mrs. Virginia O'Hanlon Douglas of today, a school teacher in New York, a widow and the mother of a daughter, Laura Virginia, who, it is needless to say, also believes that there is a Santa Claus.

Since Virginia O'Hanlon's letter was first printed letters have come to her every Christmas, from lonely people whose faith in all things is shaken. She has become a symbol of trust and of everlasting childhood, for many of

who bring joy to children, and to men and women, all over the world. Because these people live their unselfish lives in such close communion with Santa Claus they are selected by him as his assistants. The messages they bring to us come direct from him. Their lives are a constant reassurance to us that there is a Santa Claus, and our wavering faith is strengthened.

But these aides are mortal. They live their purposeful lives and pass on. Santa Claus we know to be immortal. He has lived through all the ages since the breath of civilization touched savagery; he will live through all the ages yet to come.

No, Opal Marie, the Santa Claus you love was not killed in the wreck. There is no disaster so great but that he can and will survive it. All through the horrors and sorrows of the great World War Santa Claus was in the trenches of all the armies on both sides. Wherever disaster, pestilence and suffering exist, there will Santa Claus always be found bringing comfort and happiness and none of these have the power to shorten his life for an instant, nor to stay his hand in his ministry to the needy. Into the homes of the poor as well as into the mansions of the rich he pays his secret visits and sheds his cheery blessings impartially. He may not always bring to you all the joys you wish, but in his great wisdom he will bring to you those which he knows are best for you. And though you, as a little girl, may not see him now when he steals into your home, you will be able to see him when you have grown older. And when you have visualized him you will have communion with Divinity.

Your Santa Claus lives, Opal Marie, and there is no harm that can ever befall him.

Is there a Santa Claus?

Ask J. F. Martin, postmaster of the town of Santa Claus, Ind. For there is such a town (not to mention a St. Nicholas, Pa.) and the story of how it came into being is interesting. The town Santa Claus was first christened Santa Fe, when it was founded in 1846. One Thomas Smith, a surveyor, was called upon to plot the place, originally composed of seventeen town lots. Seventy-six years before that time, Shadrack Hall had built a tannery there.

For several years the town went by the name of Santa Fe, the population increasing all the while. After families had settled in the village, it was decided to apply to the government for a post office. While the request was being considered, postal authorities observed that there was another town in Indiana named Santa Fe. Consequently the post office department ruled that there could not be post offices in two towns of the same name in any one state.

Notice to that effect was sent to the people of Santa Fe a few days before Christmas, in 1855. Immediately calling a mass meeting to see what could be done about renaming the town, the citizens of Santa Fe decided to give their village the name of Santa Claus.

Santa Claus, Ind., is in Spencer county, twelve miles from the Ohio river and about four miles from Lincoln City, near the boyhood home of Abraham Lincoln and the site of the famous Nancy Hanks Lincoln memorial. It has about one hundred inhabitants, boasts a milk and cream station, a blacksmith shop and a combination general store and post office over which Mr. Martin presides. But the most interesting thing about Santa Claus, Ind., is the fact that every year that post office is flooded with letters to Santa Claus from children, not only from all parts of the United States but from Canada, Mexico and other foreign countries as well.

Mr. Martin has been postmaster for twenty-seven years and in that time has played Santa Claus to millions of children. For he reads all letters he receives from children and, if he has time, answers some of them. "Mostly, they're just gentle reminders to Santa," he says. "Sometimes I run across queer requests for gifts. One boy asked for a baby elephant." On rare occasions he receives letters after Christmas, thanking Santa for past favors. During the Christmas season parents wishing to make the Yuletide more realistic often mail boxes of addressed and stamped letters to the Santa Claus post office to have them posted with the official "Santa Claus" postmark. Many persons interested in unusual stamp cancellations write to the postmaster, asking him to cancel stamps on enclosed envelopes and return them by mail.

With in recent years there has been written another "Santa Claus editorial," brought about by circumstances similar to those which inspired Church's immortal bit of prose, which reassures childish faith in the good St. Nick and which, if one may safely predict what will or will not become a "Newspaper Classic," may eventually enjoy a wide fame. It appeared in the Greenwood (Ark.) Democrat and reads as follows:

SANTA CLAUS, IMMORTAL

Six-year-old Opal Marie Adams heard some of her elders discussing a news item which told of the death, in a wreck, of a man who was playing Santa Claus. This news of the death of Santa Claus was heart-breaking to the little girl. Explanation by her parents were not wholly satisfying. She asked her mother to see the editor of the Democrat and learn if the news were true.

Opal Marie may banish all of her fears, for Santa Claus still lives. The man who was killed in the wreck was but one of those hundreds of thousands of mortal aides to Santa Claus

the letters are written as though she is still only eight years old. Many of them are addressed in her maiden name but they are delivered to her at the home of her father, Dr. Phillip O'Hanlon, where Christmas is observed just as it was in 1897.

At that home an enterprising reporter sought her out in 1927, just thirty years after her famous letter was written, and in a copyright article issued by the North American Newspaper Alliance, Virginia O'Hanlon Douglas reaffirmed her belief that Frank Church was right in saying there is a Santa Claus because he is the symbol for the faith the world lives by. She said:

I wish that it could be made easier for all children to believe in Santa Claus, in the way that Mr. Church meant.

My only doubt, when I was small, was about the identity of Santa Claus. Some of my playmates were skeptical. Their own parents were under suspicion. So I began to wonder whether my Christmas presents really came down the chimney, and whether the stocking at the fireplace would be filled by a picturesque old fellow from the North pole.

But I'm afraid there are many thousands of children without any confidence that their stockings will be filled by anybody. It has always been so, but it seems worse now, because the children from poor homes are taken to the big stores, by their teachers in the kindergartens and schools, and see all of the dolls and toys that more fortunate children will receive.

Half dazed, the poor little things are led through aisles overflowing with the most wonderful and expensive toys, and then they are presented to the store Santa Claus, and he asks them what they want. Timidly they speak of a doll or a drum, or some trinket of no consequence in the luxuriant stock of a big store. And they mention it only to be polite. There may be a Santa Claus, but not for them. Last Christmas there wasn't any.

Isn't there some way to keep every child from being entirely disappointed on Christmas day? Couldn't the teachers in the schools find out the simple, modest desires of these wistful children, and then couldn't the community provide the money to give to every small child the particular small toy that he craves?

It may be impracticable but it is more than a sentimental wish. I think that ever child should have the confidence and faith that are typified by a belief in Santa Claus. I don't mean that perfect trust in the integrity of parents, which begins before a baby discovers the moon and the grass, and ice cream and Christmas, and ends when he finds certain packages tucked away in the closet, about the middle of December.

That perfect trust is lovely and touching, and something to make thoughtful parents feel meek and inadequate, but it can pass without serious consequences. I mean belief in people and in the goodness of life, and in the spirit of Christmas.

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Poverty at Christmas Time

A few nights before Christmas our five-year-old boy said: "Mother, we aren't very poor, are we? But I think we must be kinda poor."

"Why do you say that, dear?" I asked.

"Well, we—I, I think we must be kinda poor, the way I need toys."

The Christmas Stocking

It is not the longest stocking that contains the best Christmas gift.

Berries Without Thorns Promised

Blackberries and Dewberries Being Tested by Many Scientists.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture)

Blackberries and dewberries without thorns has been a subject of interest to plant breeders for a number of years. Doubtless those who have picked either of these fruits are in sympathy with the efforts of the scientists to eliminate the thorns, and it now looks as if it were to be done, according to George M. Darrow of the United States Department of Agriculture.

Two thornless varieties—the Cory blackberry and the Austin thornless dewberry—placed on the market in recent years have met with fairly good success. These thornless types are adapted to certain southern localities only.

Recent Developments.

One of the most recent developments in the production of thornless fruits is the work of E. L. Pollard, a fruit grower of California. In the summer of 1928 he observed thornless sports of the Young dewberry on his place. He tested six of these this year and all but one proved to be worthless. The one exception proved to be apparently as good in every way as the original Young, and all propagations of this sort were thornless.

"The success of this grower in finding a productive thornless sport of the Young dewberry," says Mr. Darrow, "calls attention to the desirability of finding similar sports of the standard blackberries of each section. All thornless sports should be propagated and tested for their productiveness.

Many Advantages. "Thornlessness in the dewberry is advantageous not only in lowering the cost of training, but what is more important, also in reducing thorn injury to the canes themselves. Even greater advantages might be obtained with thornless Oregon Evergreen and Himalaya blackberries."

Investigations looking to the development of thornless blackberries and dewberries are now being conducted by the department and by a number of workers at state experiment stations.

Tonnage of Hay Stack Is Easily Estimated

To estimate the volume or number of cubic feet of hay in a stack, find the length and width of the stack and measure the distance over the stack from the ground on one side to the ground on the other side. This last measurement is found by throwing a rope over the stack. These three measurements are multiplied together, and from one-quarter to one-third of this product will give the number of cubic feet in the stack. If the stack slants toward the top from close to the bottom of the stack, one-fourth of the product is taken; if the stack goes up straight for about half its height and then slopes toward the top, one-third of the product is taken. The most difficult problem is to estimate the number of cubic feet of hay required to equal one ton. One rule states that when hay has stood less than one month it requires 580 cubic feet of hay to make a ton, when it has stood one month 512 cubic feet, five or six months, 422 cubic feet, and when it has stood one year, 343 cubic feet.

Gatherers of Nitrogen Are in Legume Family

Nitrogen gatherers belong to the legume or clover family, most of which take their nitrogen from the air and do not reduce the content of soil nitrogen. These crops, when plowed down as green manures, add directly to the crop producing power of the soil. In order that the plant may obtain its nitrogen from the air the soil must originally contain or must be inoculated with a special type of bacteria, the presence of which is noted by the growth of nodules upon the roots through which the nitrogen is obtained.

Agricultural Notes

Most fungous or bacterial parasites thrive best where moisture is plentiful.

Calves fed at shorter intervals are also less subject to digestive disorders.

Not all plants need a "sweet" soil; some do better at a fairly high degree of acidity. It pays to know your plants.

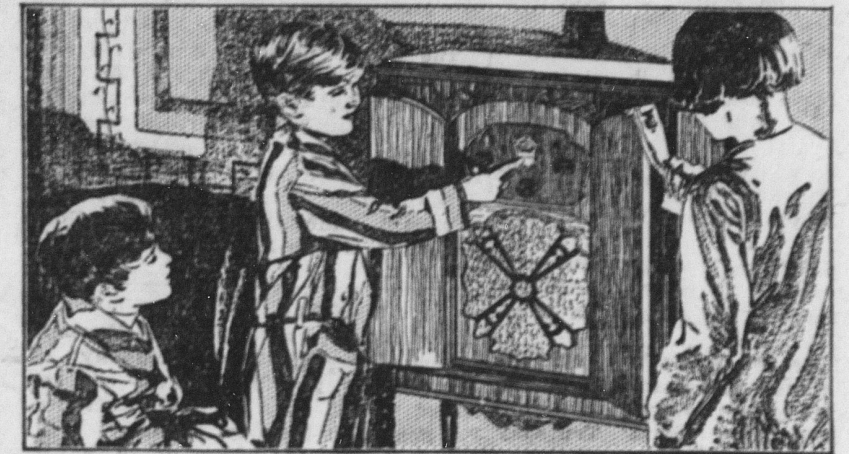
When they get to using rustless iron and steel in agricultural implements, the sky-roofed machine shed will not take its toll so rapidly.

Weed patches in grain fields should not be treated with sodium chlorate until after harvest when they need not be disturbed further with farm machinery.

The first and most important step in gathering the materials for use in manure-heated hotbeds is the manure. The best is fresh horse manure. Pile in rows four feet wide, not over six feet high and as long as is needed for the beds to be filled.

ATWATER KENT RADIO

SCREEN-GRID (BATTERY OR HOUSE CURRENT) ELECTRO-DYNAMIC



A radio—fine! but an Atwater Kent—that's great!

EVEN YOUNG FOLKS know the difference. Just watch their eyes glow when they discover their new radio is an Atwater Kent! Why is it that this one name in a radio means so much, particularly to those who live on farms? Perhaps it's because Atwater Kent Radio asks for no time out for trouble. Perhaps it's because Atwater Kent never offers any improvement in radio until it has first been thoroughly tried and tested.

You'll enjoy a real sense of satisfaction in owning the greatest radio Atwater Kent has ever built—the new Screen-Grid, Electro-Dynamic, operated either by batteries or from the high line. The two types contain the same proved improvements, giant power, needle-point selectivity, purer tone, and a choice of cabinets or table model.

Why not, this Christmas, join your home to the largest radio family in the world, who get the great programs of the air with Atwater Kent Radio?

On the Air—Atwater Kent Radio Hour, Sunday Evenings, 9:15 (Eastern Time), WEAF network of N. R. C. Atwater Kent Mid-Week Program, Thursday Evenings, 10:00 (Eastern Time), WJZ network of N. R. C.

ATWATER KENT MANUFACTURING CO. A. Atwater Kent, President 4215 Wissinickon Ave. Philadelphia, Pa.

The Grocery Lyceum "How about the brotherhood of man?" "That kin be accomplished. How about the sisterhood of wimmen?"

A Household Remedy For External Use Only Hanford's Balsam of Myrrh

Clears out cold in head or chest. A home remedy of tested and tried ingredients, safe, dependable. 30¢ at all druggists.

Book's Slow Progress German professors are writing a book that will take 750 years to complete at the present rate of progress. It is the great standard encyclopedia of the animal kingdom.

Complete your toilet with Cuticura Talcum

AFTER a bath with Cuticura Soap, there is nothing more refreshing than Cuticura Talcum dusted over all the body. Antiseptic and fragrant, it is an ideal powder for every member of the family.

Who Wants to be Bald? Not many, and when you are getting that way and losing hair, which ends in baldness, you want a good remedy that will stop falling hair, dandruff and grow hair on the bald head BARE-TO-HAIR is what you want.

Discover New Plant

A new plant called "brotex," discovered by a British gardener, is expected to revolutionize British agriculture. Its originator says it will yield raw material for three industries, fiber for textiles, wood cellulose for paper making, and seed for cattle food. A company is to control the production of brotex, which already has been tested with success at paper mills. The plant is a biennial, producing

Long Time Till Next Christmas

They say it is so many days until Christmas, but the children know better. It's so many years.