



RETURN

By Nancy Plyler

THE SMALL BOY pressed his face closer to the window. Outside the snow lay a white blanket over the community, and darkness had drawn its curtain upon the day's activities. Johnny had been standing there since dinner.

His mother and father sat nearby. "He hardly touched his dinner!" his mother explained.

"It's too bad! He was very fond of that dog," his father said seriously.

"I'm so sorry this happened. It's just two weeks until Christmas and there's so much to do. Scouring the neighborhood for the dog at this time will interfere with our other plans," the mother said.

While they were talking, the door-bell rang. The wife went to answer it and found two teenage boys on the porch.

"Yes?" the wife questioned.

"The boys seemed to be out of breath from running. 'Mrs. Rice, we saw two men take your dog into



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their car. They drove away with him," one of the boys explained.

"What? When?" the wife was beside herself.

"About two hours ago. We were taking the groceries to Mrs. Jane; we couldn't turn back to tell you. Besides the car was gone before we knew what had happened. I think we'd know them if we saw them again," the boys finished.

"Don, will you come here?" Mrs. Rice called to her husband. "Now, will you please tell my husband what you have just told me?" she turned to the boys.

Lucia Day Starts Christmas Season In Swedish Custom

Celebration of Lucia Day on December 13 inaugurates the Christmas season in Sweden. It takes its name from St. Lucia, or Lucy, martyred for her faith and virginity in Syracuse in 304 A. D. and venerated by the church each December 13.

The prettiest blonde in every home office, factory, village and town is elected a "Lucia" and visits the sick, leads carnivals and processions and attends banquets and balls accompanied by her "handmaidens."

The ancient custom coincides with the winter solstice, when the sun swings toward the earth once more and the days begin to lengthen.

In addition to beauty, other qualifications for "Lucias" or "light queens" are fair hair, a nice disposition and high character.

Dressed in long white robes, wearing crowns of lighted candles (the traditional costume for "Lucias") the girls present gifts and the traditional Lucy day coffee and rolls to hospital patients, etc.

The queen and her maidens, enthroned in a star spangled horse-drawn chariot, lead festive processions around the village squares and through city streets.

Parade participants depict alternate scenes from Sweden's picturesque Lapland and the Wild West of the United States, while musicians in multi-colored costume alternate playing northern folk tunes and American jazz.

They reiterated the same facts to Mr. Porter.

His first statement was "Don't say anything about this to Johnny."

He questioned the boys further, thought for a time, then asked the boys if they would agree to go around the neighborhood with him to see if he could trace the men.

Agreeing to this, the two boys left with Mr. Porter.

MRS. PORTER was sitting in the living room when Mr. Porter returned. Her eyes questioned what her lips could not say.

"No luck?" he asked.

"I didn't really think there would be any use to go out and look for them. There just wasn't anything else to do. Poor kid! With Christmas coming on and everything!" Mr. Porter was very solemn.

On Christmas morning Mrs. Porter was up very early. The Christmas tree was trimmed to perfection. The wreaths were hung. The living room was very picturesquely decorated. The stockings were hung over the mantle. It was brimming to the top with all kinds of toys that would delight the heart of a five-year-old boy were under the tree. His mother took one last look before she called to her husband to ask for Johnny.

A sleepy, tousled-haired boy crept down the steps to behold the wonders of another Christmas day. After viewing the scene, he gave one leap to the hobby horse that waited for him. By now he was no longer sleepy, but had mustered energy to open all his gifts without any help from his parents.

And for a time Johnny seemed to engrossed in the many toys that he never mentioned about his dog. But their hopes were short-lived! For while they were planning for the day, they noticed that Johnny was watching at the window. Mr. and Mrs. Porter looked at each other and knew that they had lost in their endeavor to make Christmas Day a happy time for their boy.

When Mrs. Porter was nearly on the verge of tears, Johnny gave one scream from the window. They ran to it and looking out, saw a small white dog scurrying up the path. Mr. Porter never opened a door more gleefully and the dog dashed into the room, into the arms of his master. Johnny was laughing and crying at the same time. "Did Santa Claus send him back to me, Mommy?" was all he asked.

"Yes, dear," she whispered.

"The dog either broke away, or the spirit of Christmas must have worked in those men's hearts," Mrs. Porter smiled to her husband.

England's Puritans Banned Christmas As Frivolous Time

Christmas was outlawed in England by the Puritan government of England in 1643 and, although the restoration of the Stuarts brought a revival of Christmas customs and traditions, Christmas never regained its former prestige in England.

It is observed religiously in the churches and as a day for family reunions and social gatherings, in contrast to the lavish feasting and boisterous merry-making of olden times.

Merry-making and gift-giving come in for their share, however, on December 26 which is Boxing Day.

The origin of Boxing Day antedates Christmas and can be traced to the custom of gift-giving during the Roman festival of Saturnalia.

In Christian liturgy December 26 is observed as the feast of St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, and during the centuries when journeymen and apprentices were in the habit of leaving upon their masters' customers, Christmas Boxes were collected on St. Stephen's day.

Thus, the children receive their presents, in boxes, as do old servants, the postman, and everyone else. And reminiscent of the Roman Saturnalia, householders dance with the servants and, toward evening, there is revelling in the streets as groups of merry-makers gather on street corners or ride about London-town dancing on the "flats" of trucks.

Six Communities Represented At Home Makers Fair

Six communities were represented last week at the Cambria County Home Makers Fair held in the Patton Moose Home.

The affair, under the auspices of the Cambria County Agricultural Extension Association, was presided over by Mrs. Ernest Sheehan.

The program included an original welcome poem by Mrs. Sheehan; three Christmas carols by women of Chest Springs; a monologue by Mrs. Cash Gray of Beaver Valley; a cooking demonstration by Marguerite Johnson, the nutritionist of the Penn State extension department, and a piano solo by Mrs. Florence Kittell of Chest Springs.

Mrs. June K. Griffith, Home Economist of this county, invited the members to partake of coffee and cookies and also view the exhibits of each community.

St. Augustine, Nicktown, St. Benedict, Ashville, Cross Roads, and Beaver Valley clubs were represented at the session, each club bringing exhibits of decorations for gifts and cookies.

—About the time one concludes that a warm winter is ahead the wealth takes a turn.

Currier and Ives Cards

Commercial production of Christmas cards in the United States began about 1835 with the founding and developing of the partnership of Currier and Ives in New York.

For more than a century American painters have aided the industry by painting Christmas themes on order or by selling reproduction rights to the art which is now conservatively estimated as worth \$10,000,000 annually.

The favorite Nativity theme is represented by hundreds of interpretations. Winter scenes are next in popularity, some of them dating back to the Puritans of New England, the German forests whence St. Nicholas emerged, and even to the Druids of pre-Christian England.

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1783 Account Book Shows Post-Revolution Troubles

Archives Doing Much To Reconstruct Past

Discovery of another historic Revolutionary War account book is an accounting of war surplus property which was in the hands of the commissary during the troubles and uncertain period between the end of the war and 1790, during which time Great Britain finally acknowledged the independence of the United States in 1783 and George Washington became its first president in 1789.

Casual notations in this well preserved document throw a great deal more light on the history of Pennsylvania than do the record accounts themselves, Auditor General Heyburn said, and this has been the case with most of the documents recovered from the lost records of the Auditor General's office, now being brought to light in our program of fiscal archive restoration.

For instance, the record itself shows that the commissary disposed of 14 six-pound cartridges together with 21 pounds of powder, three pounds of priming, two stacks of short fire and two hands of slow match to the militia artillery on December 8, 1783. But an informal notation in the same handwriting shows that it was "To Sainte General Washington."

Modern day historians are indebted to the history-minded commander of the commissary for his enlightening and informative comments in what otherwise might be a dull account book.

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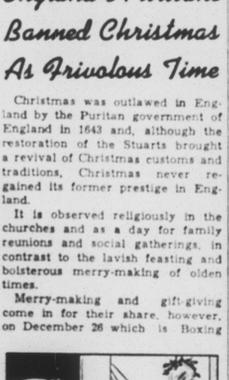
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Gallitzin Fire Co. Selects Nominees

The Gallitzin Volunteer Fire Company nominated officers and gave the annual fire report at a meeting last Tuesday night in the fire hall.

The firemen answered 22 fire calls, including seven in the borough, and a total of \$4,200 in damage was reported.

This total was the largest since 1927 when \$20,000 damage was reported. That year eight calls were made, including seven in the borough.

Nominees are as follows: President—A. J. Smeltzer; vice president—Joseph Flisinski; secretary—Patrick Short and Frank Lenz; treasurer—Fritz Olson; fire chief—Robert F. McCaa; assistant fire chiefs (five to be elected)—Richard Lenz, Richard Nagle, Paul Johnston, Mr. Short and William McMahon.

The election will be held Jan. 2. Firemen also discussed plans for the 30th annual convention in Gallitzin Aug. 1 and 2.

MARRIAGE APPLICATIONS

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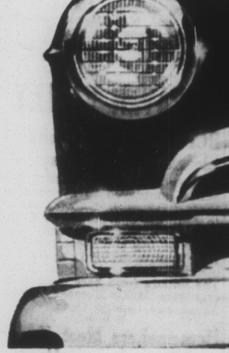
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 10. Luxurious New Interior Color Harmonies
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 12. Long-Flex Springs for an Extra Smooth Ride
 13. New Sweepstream Fender with Medallion Highlight
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 15. Wide, Easy Access Doors
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