

# MUELLER Record

NOVEMBER  
DECEMBER

1956



ONCE AGAIN, IT'S --

**MERRY CHRISTMAS!**



# Recording Our Thoughts

**Y**EARS AGO, the late Charles Wagenseller who served as editor of the MUELLER RECORD from its founding in 1910 until his retirement in 1945, labeled this publication "The Little Magazine Of General Interest."

While we no longer carry this statement in our publication, we nonetheless hope the magazine has continued to be of general interest to all our readers. It,



## Our Cover

*In the heart-warming fellowship that characterizes the merry Christmas season, "everybody gets into the act," in office and in plant, as Artist Graham Hunter (famed for his "busy" scenes) symbolically shows in the decoration of the great tree.*



**Christmas ● 1956**

WALTER H. DYER, Editor

**MUELLER CO.**

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of course, has gradually become more semi-technical as the years passed due to the changing scene and make up of our reader audience.

This month, we have accepted a challenge from the calendar, and are attempting to bring you something entirely apart from the usual subject matter, and perhaps in a way, we may recapture some of Mr. Wagenseller's flavor by designing an issue intended to prove of general interest to everyone.

This issue is Christmas in content throughout. You'll find stories by several water and gas industry officials concerning their most unique Christmas experience. Three holiday messages have been written by a Protestant Minister, a Jewish Rabbi, and a Roman Catholic Priest. Then there is O'Henry's famed Christmas short story, "The Gift of The Magi." It has been illustrated by a professional artist. Many other Christmas items appear.

We mentioned a challenge from the calendar because as this is written, there are fewer shopping days left than we care to admit. The big mechanical job of printing plus our entry into Uncle Sam's annual Christmas mail stampede may mean this won't arrive by Christmas day. If it doesn't, we hope your Christmas spirit still prevails for there is much to be found of interest through these pages.

OUR FAVORITE SECTION is that of the "Unique Christmases." This was a difficult writing assignment, and we congratulate our authors who contributed stories on such short notice.

So intrigued was the writer with the idea, that he spent considerable time trying to recall his own unique Christmas. Just about the time I decided no such Christmas had occurred to me, our minister, while delivering a recent Sunday sermon, brought back the memory of my own tenth Christmas.

Since as editor, my only contribution has been one of extreme worry, it is only just that I should have to recount

my own unique Christmas experience. My memory was jarred considerably when Mrs. Dyer politely pushed her elbow into my ribs as she noticed my eyelids growing heavy during the sermon. I remained alert long enough to hear our minister tell us something we all should know about prayer.

"Most of us are guilty of praying only when we need some materialistic object," he said.

(Such as, I silently confessed, "Oh Lord, help me make the down payment on that 1957 car!")

The minister went on to say that most of us plead with Christ to help us attain some end that will add to our comforts and then we fail to thank Him if He gives us what we want.

That accusation hit home. Countless times, I've sought the Lord's help to attain a materialistic end. That pattern of prayer, as our minister sees it—and I agree with him—is not a healthy one. As I thought of what he said, I suddenly recalled an event that took place earlier in my life. A theater in my home town offered a shiny, red car to the boy or girl holding the lucky ticket. The big give-away was to take place on Christmas eve immediately following a wild and wooly Western. The car, not much larger than an ordinary kiddie-car, was operated by a gasoline engine. "What a grand Christmas present that would make for me!" I decided.

Several days before Christmas eve remained to get the Lord on my side, and I spent every spare moment conversing with Him in the hope that He would see things my way, namely, to drive that shiny, red car home.

When Christmas eve finally arrived, it came as quite a blow for me to learn that my ticket was worth no more than the price of admission to the theater.

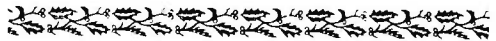
Believe me, the Lord received a verbal lashing that night. I was angry because He had failed—despite my "prayers"—to help me win that lottery.

Perhaps that personal experience as a small boy in prayer is an example of our minister's remarks. Prayer is not altogether a means to attain an end, our end that is. We should offer some little prayer each day, if only to give thanks for what we have, and not wait until a

crisis comes our way to invite Christ into our home.

Mrs. Dyer was pleased when I discussed the sermon with her after church. During our talk I pointed out that it was a Benjamin Franklin quotation and not a Bible verse that goes something like "God Helps Those Who Help Themselves."

Not a bad bit of thinking there. It might be a good idea to remember that the next time you make one of those big down payments.



## The Poinsettia

Attracted by the beauty of a wild plant, Dr. Joel Poinsett, first U. S. Minister to Mexico generations ago, sent cuttings back to his South Carolina plantation where they thrived vigorously and, eventually, gave all of us the familiar Christmas plant which perpetuates his name.



Your poinsettia may last until next Christmas and even afterward with care. When the leaves begin to dry, cut off one-half the growth, put it in the basement, water it every few weeks. Plant outside in June in partial shade; bring inside in early September, keep at 65 degrees.



☆ ☆ For who hath nought to  
give but love  
Gives all his heart away,  
And giving all, hath all to  
give  
Another Christmas Day.

—Charles W. Kennedy



By accepting good advice, you're increasing your own ability.



## The Meaning of Christmas

The Rev. Porter French, Pastor  
First Congregational Church  
Decatur, Illinois

**C**HRISTMAS MEANS literally "The Mass of Christ." When you and I witness the Communion service, we are aware that the high point in the service is the moment when the minister raises the cup before the altar. Here is the dramatization of the greatest of human experiences: the miracle of the manifestation of the spirit in our world of sense and feeling.

If this seems a bit abstract to you, ask yourself this question: where does an idea come from? What is it that enables me to take various experiences through which I have passed and from them derive an entirely new understanding? How does this understanding "get into me"? Or where does music come from? Handel wrote THE MESSIAH in nine days, hardly stopping to eat or drink. Where does such beauty, often under apparent pressure from the outside, come from?

Christmas is, for each of us, a dramatization of this reality. It tells us with all the language of word and music and art and feeling that there is about us and seeking to enter our lives, a great universe of power and beauty which is able and willing to enter even your life and mine.

Let us note that this coming of love and beauty is the result of God's initiative. We do not produce it, nor even

climb up to it. We receive it. And in this truth we perceive the first of the realities that we observe concerning the meaning of Christmas. For Christmas means the deliverance from our self-centeredness. Sigmund Freud discovered something in human nature that he called "The Id," by which he meant that part of our minds over which we have no control—the hard core of animal instinct that demands self - preservation. Our stern church ancestors discovered something that they called "The Old Adam." Both terms describe the same thing.

Any noble resolve on our part to live a good and exemplary life will eventually break in pieces on this hidden rock of our self-centeredness. When you examine the proposition, you find that even your very nobility of life must be conscious of itself in order to maintain its nobility. It is for this reason that the stoic philosophy, the noblest creation of the Roman world, had no answer for the problem of man's suffering and isolation. No wonder life was cheap!

Only the initiative of God could solve this problem. The love of God came to earth in spite of man's unreadiness—in spite of the crowded state of his mind and heart. God came in the Mass of Christ to say, "I will not leave your brittle human nature alone to solve its

problem. I will give you help. I will come."

This leads us then to the second observation concerning the meaning of Christmas which is that it gives us victory over the world. If this also seems abstract, ask yourself whether you are the victim of your environment, or have a way of meeting changes that come. If your situation changed radically today, how would you meet it? Would the change crush you? I have seen such changes crush people because they were too closely adapted to their environment. The Christmas message is that here is a victory that is beyond shifting circumstance. In this is the "peace on earth" that the angels sing.

It is important here to note the contrast between the Christmas message and that of the surrounding world. The other world of religions were religions of the cycle of nature. The worship of Isis, Mithra, the mystery Rites at Eleusis, and others saw their deity disappear into the underworld when the autumn brought the withering of vegetation. Their religion dramatized the death and resurrection of the deity, and the birth of the individual into new life as he underwent this rite.

But the drama of Christ was different. He was not a myth, but a real person who walked the earth. More than this, he was a personality, who gave depth

and expression within himself to the love that he taught. And although the Christian drama was somewhat influenced by this nature myth of death and resurrection, his victory was no longer a cyclic victory, with recurring death and recurring revival. The victory after the resurrection was a continual and eternal victory. Men had an answer to the problem of changing circumstance, as the faith of Christians has abundantly testified.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Christian year should begin with the season "Advent," "The Coming." On this initiative of God, our faith rests.

We do not know, from the Gospel record, on what actual date Christ was born. The date of December 25 did not become established until early in the fourth century. Here we see the influence of the nature religion already referred to.

But, when we stop to consider it, this is not an unhappy circumstance. We would not like to think of the love of God being manifest to man at any one time. God's love is constantly breaking into our lives, and although we celebrate it on the date of the winter solstice, we really are recognizing that which is happening all the time and which belongs to all the year.

Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!



HERE were shepherds . . . keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by them and the glory of God shone about them . . . and the angel said to them,

*"Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you news of great joy which shall be to all the people, for today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign to you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."*

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

*"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men."*—From the Gospel of St. Luke.



# In U. S. Economy We Hope To Earn Way With Dignity

The Rt. Rev. Msgr. George H. Powell  
St. Patrick's Catholic Church  
Decatur, Illinois



**A** FAVOR MOST PEOPLE expect of a sound economic system is the opportunity to earn their way through life with the dignity proper to a rational and free being. And they hope that their response to the opportunity of work will enable them to support their families in decent comfort, and to make their contribution to the welfare of their fellow man.

So one of the important requirements of a healthy economy is widespread and gainful employment, with a large segment of it being furnished by industry like Mueller Co., where some are employers and many are employees.

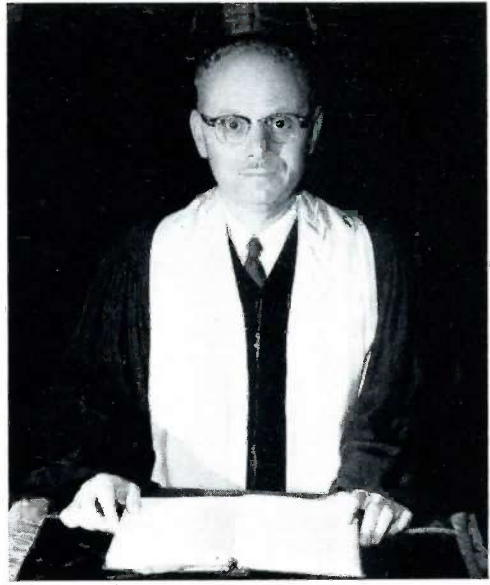
Employer and employee in industry are human beings, brothers, basically alike in instincts, needs and desires, and subject to the same weaknesses, defects and sins. In addition to this common human element, a large problem in itself in any field of endeavor, industry is forced to deal with many factors beyond its control or complete blame, such as varying local conditions national and international adjustments, competition sometimes vicious, new inventions, not to mention the atomic age itself. The fact remains, however, that industry made up of employer and employee, can show today achievements in employment of such magnitude as to merit our profound gratitude and admiration.

Only the saints, and they not without long struggle and help of God's grace, operate solely or mainly on the law of love, but the advances today in human relations between employer and employee in industry, though far from perfect in effort or intent, and sometimes made only in pain and sacrifice, are marvelous approaches to the same law of love as practiced in a more perfect degree by the choice few.

At this Christmas time, when we are thanking and complimenting industry for some of our prosperity we should ask ourselves this question: What are we doing in study, prayer, and sacrifice, to fit ourselves for a wider and deeper participation in the divine work of making this world a better place of opportunity for all people?

# Jews, Christians Can Bring Peace, Goodwill To World

Rabbi Leo E. Turitz  
Temple B'nai Abraham  
Decatur, Illinois

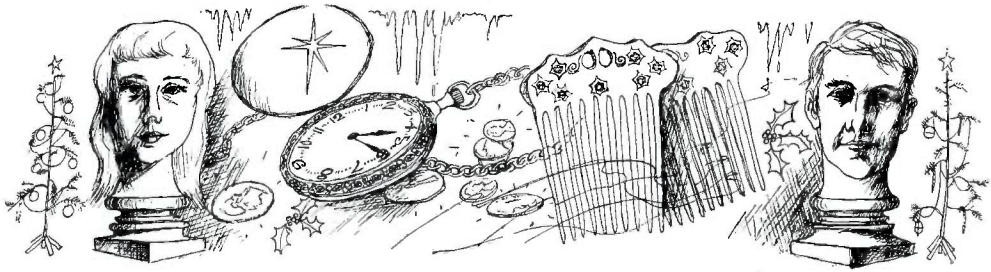


**I**N THIS SEASON of the year, Christians observe their lovely festival of "peace and good will." Jews, at this season, celebrate their festival of light and religious freedom, The common greeting during the latter is "Happy Chanukkah!" To our Christian friends we extend sincerest wishes for a "Merry Christmas!"

The wish for a Happy Chanukkah among Jews is coupled with a deep, historic sense. For, Chanukkah, going back to the story in the books of the Maccabees in the Apocrypha, is the historic occasion in which the Jews of old fought for the continuation of their faith, despite the fact that they were not, at that time, a military people. This was 165 years before the time of Jesus. Since then, the Jew has continued to value, despite historical circumstances, the teachings of his faith: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" and "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might." Aware of the contribution of this to human existence, the Jew treasures this festival which commemorates the perpetuation of the teachings of his faith.

When the Jew extends his greeting of "Merry Christmas" to his Christian neighbor, he sympathizes deeply with the sentiment that there is more to Christmas than the "merry" part of in terms of gifts. The merry heart is only really such in that it goes to the essence of the origin of the holiday itself, which brings the promise of hope to the human breast in the religious teachings of the man whose birth is celebrated.

And so, to our Christian friends, we extend our earnest greetings that "the peace of God which passes all understanding" may be yours this time of the year and all your days, that, together, each of us, Jew and Christian, through our own respective faiths, may be instrumental in bringing the good tidings of peace to the world. In this manner, may your Christmas be truly merry.



# The Gift of the Magi

By

O. Henry

ONE DOLLAR and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheeks burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it. Which instigates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating.

While the mistress of the home is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, take a look at the home. A furnished flat at \$8 per week. It did not exactly beggar description, but it certainly had that word on the lookout for the mendicancy squad.

In the vestibule below was a letter-box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring. Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name "Mr. James Dillingham Young."

The "Dillingham" had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid \$30 per week. Now, when the income was shrunk to \$20, the letters of "Dillingham" looked blurred, as though they were thinking seriously of con-

tracting to modest and unassuming D. But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above he was called "Jim" and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della. Which is all very good.

Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a gray cat walking a gray fence in a gray backyard. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only \$1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only \$1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling—something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honor of being owned by Jim.

There was a pier-glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pier-glass in an \$8 flat. A very thin and very agile person may, by observing his reflection in a rapid sequence of longitudinal strips, obtain a fairly accurate conception of his looks. Della, being slender, had mastered the art.

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face



had lost its color within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped the sign read: "Mme. Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds." One flight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting. Madame, large, too white, chilly, hardly looked the "Sofronie."

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair," said Madame. "Take yer hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it."

Down rippled the brown cascade.

"Twenty dollars," said Madame, lifting the mass with a practised hand.

"Give it to me quick," said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ramsacking the stores for Jim's present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum fob chain simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by meretricious ornamentation—as all good

things should do. It was even worthy of the Watch. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and value—the description applied to both. Twenty-one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the 87 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

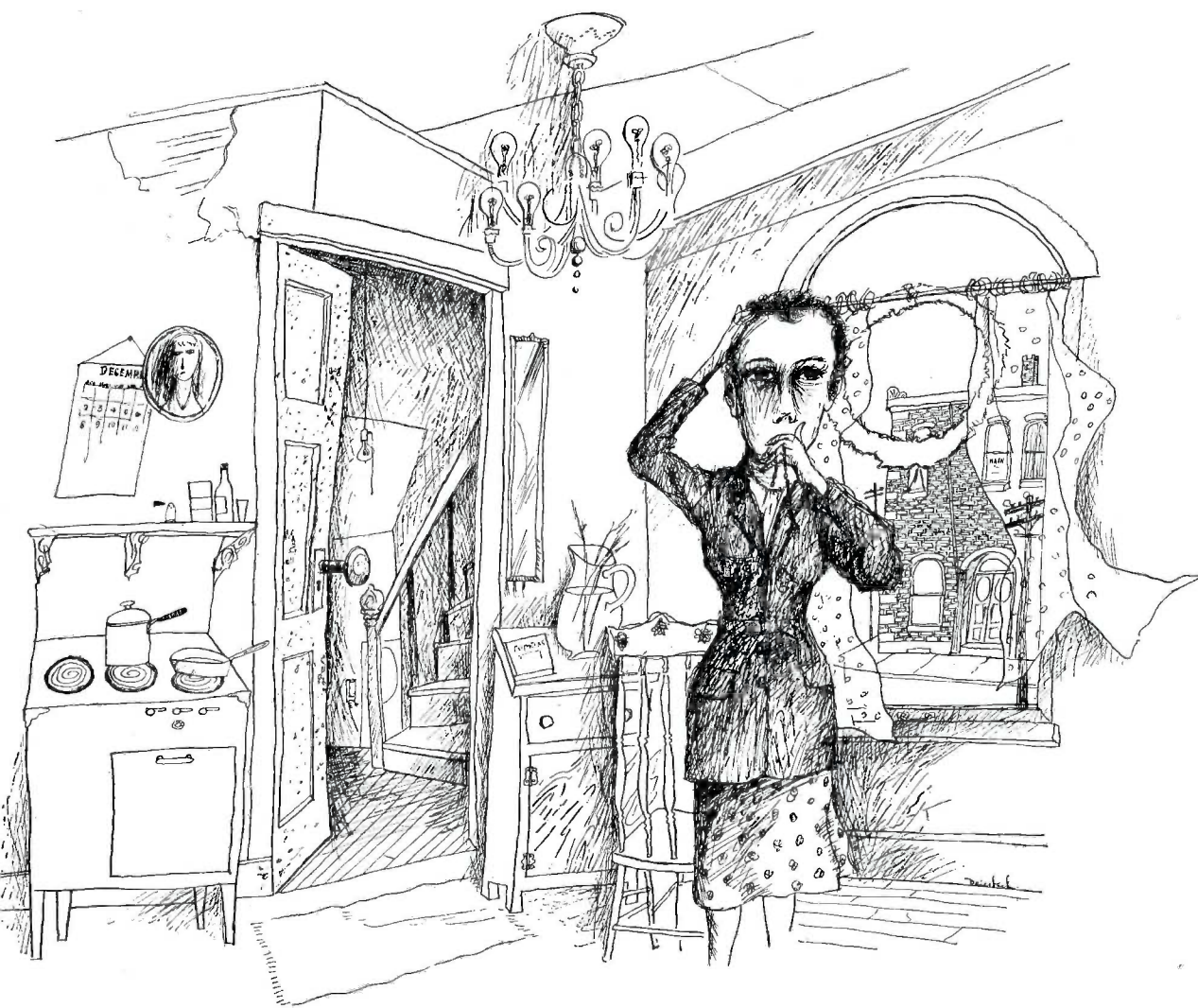
When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love. Which is always a tremendous task, dear friends—a mammoth task.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

"If Jim doesn't kill me," she said to herself, "before he takes a second look at me, he'll say I look like a Coney Island



William Sydney Porter, known to millions simply as O. Henry, is one of the greatest short story writers of all time. With the possible exception of Mark Twain, O. Henry did more to record the American scene than any other author.



**When Della reached home her intoxication gave way to prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and repaired the ravages made by generosity added to love.**

chorus girl. But what could I do—oh! what could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?"

At 7 o'clock the coffee was made and the frying-pan was on the back of the stove hot and ready to cook the chops.

Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his steps on the stair away down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit of saying little silent prayers about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered: "Please God, make him think I am still pretty."

The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-

two—and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim stopped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

Della wriggled off the table and went for him.

"Jim, darling," she cried, "don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold it because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again—you

won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say 'Merry Christmas!' Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know what a nice—what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you."

"You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet even after the hardest mental labor.

"Cut it off and sold it," said Della. "Don't you like me just as well, anyhow? I'm me without my hair, ain't I?"

Jim looked about the room curiously.

"You say your hair is gone," he said, with an air almost of idiocy.

"You needn't look for it," said Della. "It's sold, I tell you—sold and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered," she went on with a sudden serious sweetness, "but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?"

Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his Della. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction. Eight dollars a week or a million a year—what is the difference? A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. This dark assertion will be illuminated later on.

Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

"Don't make any mistake, Dell," he said, about me. I don't think there's anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you'll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going a while at first."

White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper, and then an ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas! a quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails, necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat.

For there lay The Combs—the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshipped for long in a Broadway window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise shell,

with jewelled rims—just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them without the least hope of possession. And now, they were hers, but the tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were gone.

But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say: "My hair grows so fast, Jim!"

And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, "Oh, oh!"

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

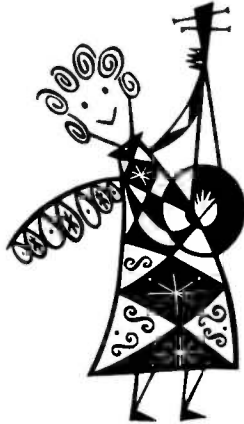
"Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch, I want to see how it looks on it."

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled.

"Dell," said he, "let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em a while. They're too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on."

The magi, as you know, were wise men — wonderfully wise men — who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi.





## **“A Christmas I Remember . . .”**

In an effort to give our readers something just a little different in the way of a Christmas issue, we asked several persons in the water, gas and allied fields to author their own most unique Christmas experience. The time granted for each contribution was only about two weeks, so we were indeed pleased with the response from these 22 gentlemen whose stories appear on the following pages. We know you will enjoy reading about their most unique Christmas, and perhaps, through their experience, will recall a similar event in your own life.

# 1896 Panic And Poverty Failed To Mar That Merry Christmas

THIS WAS Christmas 1896 in Louisiana, Missouri, where I lived with my father, mother and sister on a small fruit farm.

Times were hard, due mainly to the recent "panic," and while our fruit crop had been abundant, it could not be sold. I presume my father did not have \$10 in cash to his name.

Mother, however, was determined to make it a "Merry Christmas" in spite of the terrible economic condition that was gripping the hearts and souls of most of the country

From our own timber, we selected a nice fir tree which was trimmed with pop corn strings from our own crop and colored chains which we made from scrap paper stuck together with flour paste.

On the tree were presents for the whole family, namely, a corn cob pipe (5¢) and a sack of tobacco (5¢) for father, sis got a rag doll mother had made and I got "Pilgrims Progress."

We had hung up our stockings Christmas Eve and, as usual, they were full the next morning. Mine had an orange in it, the first I had seen since the previous Christmas. I think that orange was about the finest thing I have ever eaten. The other items were cookies and candy mother had made from the small stock of precious sugar we had.

For dinner we had baked chicken, as every one raised them, but this was quite a departure from the expected turkey which we could not afford. Everything else on the table was from our own cellar, including sliced tomatoes which mother had picked semi-green and wrapped in paper to slowly ripen.

That afternoon we read the Christmas Story of the Wise Men and the Babe who was born in a manger and whose parents were very poor. We were most grateful and happy that we had a nice warm house in which to live.

While only six years old at the time, it was the first and lasting lesson I learned of the little value of money has as such. My happiest experiences since have, invariably, been those which required little, if any money.

This simple Christmas story is one that probably thousands have experienced and possibly has been rather dull so far to the reader.

It does not appear that our contemporary idea of a good time and happiness depends too much on our ability to buy it. This, of course, is entirely wrong and I think we should emulate more, the life of the Man whose birthday we are about to celebrate, and who gave Himself that we might live abundantly and have eternal life. We will then have a Real Merry Christmas.



Lynn O. Minor

Dear Editor:

With reference to your letter of November 9th, I think your idea is excellent and enclose a "story" which I trust you can use. Feel free to correct the wording, etc., as I am not a writer as you know.

In the October issue of Mueller Record last year you used my photograph on page 5, so I presume you have this in your "grave yard."

Sincerely yours,

Lynn O. Minor,  
Vice President,  
Kankakee Water Co.,  
Kankakee, Ill.



# Home For Christmas

## After World War I

Dear Editor:

THE CHRISTMAS in my life which is best remembered was in 1918, after the Armistice ending World War I.

Sometime after the Armistice the Colonel of my regiment advised the younger officers that he thought they should get out of the service as quickly as possible, but they must have a job to go to before applying for a discharge. I proceeded to attempt to get a job, and was successful in my quest. In the meantime, my Colonel left our outfit, before I had all of my clearance papers, and it turned out that the Colonel who had taken over command was opposed to discharging young officers.

However, after a few days delay, he agreed to sign the necessary papers for my discharge, leaving me barely enough time to get home for Christmas. However, I was fortunate enough to arrive home for Christmas Eve.

I had been away from home for a year and a half and my new job which was to start in January was with an oil company in Mexico.

It was a Happy Christmas for me, even though, I was to leave my home in a short time to take up my work in Mexico.

I do not wish to discount the many Happy Christmas days in my life, but this particular series of circumstances with the happy ending for me, stands out vividly.

G. Guy Morrow, Manager  
Peoria Water Works Com-  
pany,  
Peoria, Ill.



## A Warm Christmas In New Jersey

Dear Editor:

IN REPLY To your letter of November 9th, with reference to a unique Christmas I will select one I experienced when in my teens and living in South Orange, N. J.

This Christmas stands out because of the unusual weather. At the middle of the day the thermometer registered sixty degrees F. We five children together with my mother and father were very much impressed by being able on Christmas Day to be out on the lawn of our suburban home without wearing the usual winter clothing.

Naturally, I remember more distinctly the details of recent Christmas gatherings, but the one I mention is the one that is especially fixed in my memory.

Cordially,  
William W. Brush, Editor,  
Water Works Engineering,  
New York, N. Y.



W. W. Brush



Henry Wilkens Jr.

## Best Christmas Has Flavor Of 19th Century

MY GRANDPARENTS reared their own large family in an atmosphere of love and devotion that reached its highest expression at Christmas. Grandfather retained the custom of his native Germany, of holding the Christmas Tree celebration on the night of Christmas Eve, and in their later years, during my early childhood, these became occasions for gathering their family together.

We lived near them, and I can still feel the thrill of our walk to their home, seeing its glowing, wreath-hung windows—with those of the parlor mysterious behind drawn curtains, for that was where the Tree was—the grandparents greeting their family at the door, the swarms of uncles, aunts and cousins within.

Then, the dinner, with its loaded table. A huge turkey at one end, a massive ham at the other. Grandfather and Grandmother, sitting side by side, presiding over the happy, devoted group, secretly passing parentally forbidden extra tidbits to us at the little children's table nearby.

However, this was but a prelude to the climax of the Christmas Tree!

From behind the closed parlor doors wonderful sounds would come: a faint horn gradually getting louder, a clattering as of reindeer hooves, scuffling sounds from the direction of the fireplace, a knock at the doors, which would then slide back—and there, in simple beauty, stood the Tree!

Unforgettable moments!

The inimitable fragrance of a fir tree holding its dozens of lighted wax candles. The heaped presents. The jolly, red-suited Santa who always knew the name of each of us, whose questions as to our worthiness to receive his presents, usually answered by some uncomplimentary cousin, made Grandfather's intercession in our behalf a thankful relief.

Afterward, a sleepy, small boy, hearing midnight church bells ringing in the distance, knew they were celebrating the most important event in the world.

Those were Christmases of peace, of family solidarity, of happiness. They were the manifestations of a love based on a nineteenth century old recipe. They gave that little boy a pattern to follow as he grew up and, later, to carry on into his own family.

Dear Editor:

I thank you for including me among the invited to participate in the Christmas issue of the **MUELLER RECORD**. Although I think your choice is a questionable one in my case it is a privilege for me to accept. My contribution is enclosed.

You will not disturb me at all if my Christmas story is not usable, or if you want to make any changes in it to bring it down to the three hundred word limit (without counting, it looks like there may be a few more words than that in it), please feel free to do so.

Sincerely yours,

Henry Wilkens, Jr.,  
District Manager,  
Texas Water Co.,  
Houston, Texas



# Memories From Childhood To Man



IT IS NOT EASY to pick any specific Christmas that is outstanding for it seems that when one is selected, another comes through with a thought that needs to be mentioned.

Let us then start with a first remembrance. It was in a small Presbyterian Church in southeastern Kansas where there was a very large and beautiful Christmas tree in all its glory, brightly lighted with candles. Our parents brought us children in to sing Christmas carols and to have Santa give each of us our bag of fruit, nuts and sweets.

Our memory then flashes to the home on Christmas Eve some few years later when the whole clan was present—parents, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles and cousins (all except a very special uncle that had been around earlier in the day). Suddenly Santa arrived with his bag of toys and treats and one of the older cousins said, "Oh, there's Uncle Ed."

The picture advances a few years to a small Episcopal church during the Christ Mass at midnight on Christmas Eve. The Christmas Nativity scene was being enacted and three of us boys from high school were portraying the Three Wise Men—singing our parts as we came down through the Church in the Processional—one a Presbyterian, one a Methodist and one an Episcopalian. We were wearing DeMolay robes, Angelican vestments and carrying a Censer borrowed from the Priest of the Roman Catholic Parish in our city.

The years further advance and suddenly we remember the Christmas tree all brightly decorated for the Christmas of our firstborn. She came into the room, pointed up to the top of the tree and repeated all through the evening, "Pretty, pretty."

Another outstanding memory is the time we went to Champaign, Illinois. We left Decatur in our car with a live goose in a basket on the rear seat. A blizzard caught us before we arrived in Bement. The car froze up, so we parked it in a garage and caught an interurban loaded with snowbound passengers similar to ourselves. My seat was up front alongside the motorman. We proceeded to Urbana in this conveyance and everytime the interurban's air horn would blast, the goose would give an answering honk. Everyone in the car was "in stitches" before we arrived at our destination.

Several memorable Christmases of current date are when the grandchildren are all at home with their parents and in-laws around the fireside, presents around the tree and everything else in its proper place early on Christmas Eve. With the arrival of Santa Claus, the opening of the packages and the pleasant excitement of the children, the whole household is suddenly transformed from a neat and orderly home into one of empty boxes, paper, ribbon, trinkets, toys, food and furniture all mingled together.

Again I say, these memories are hard to separate as one individual experience. They are all outstanding and memorable and I am sure are typical of most American homes.



Dear Editor:

The attached is in reply to your letter of November 9.

As stated, it is difficult to pick out any one particular Christmas as outstanding and hope this report will be satisfactory.

Yours truly,

Homer L. Chastain,  
Water Commissioner,  
Decatur, Illinois





Dear Editor:

I AM FLATTERED and chagrined. Flattered that you singled me out to receive an invitation to contribute to your Christmas number, but chagrined that all my combing back of memory brings forth nothing which would rate consideration by you.

I think the biggest thrill in my Christmas childhood was an orange. You note that I used the singular. It was one orange, in the toe of my stocking, and the big kick came from the fact that that was also my ANNUAL orange. For back in the gay 90's in central Kentucky there was no organized citrus industry as now. The town grocer got in a box of oranges for Christmas, and Christmas only. It only took me a couple of years to find out by trial and error that it was better to take the peeling off first. Also that using it for a ball first produced a certain deterioration in it as a delicacy.

Of course it had a high value also as a medium of exchange. You could swap it off to another kid for a badly shop-worn frog (left over from August) or a colored picture of a well-fed actress from a pack of Sweet Caporal cigarettes. But usually, after due deliberation, you frowned on such crass commercialism and ate the orange. Then you could look forward to the next one—next Christmas!

Sincerely yours,  
Art. Akers,  
Director, Advertising  
and Research  
Public Works Publications  
Ridgewood, N. J.

## The Orange



A. F. Porzelius

Dear Editor:

I am in receipt of your letter of November 9 with reference to a Christmas story, so I am enclosing my fond remembrance. I was retired on June 30, 1956, as manager of the City Water Co. of Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Give my regards to my good friends O. E. Walker and Hugh Baker.

Yours very truly,  
A. F. Porzelius  
Retired Manager,  
City Water Co.,  
Chattanooga, Tenn.

## A Gift For Mother

THE CHRISTMAS I will never forget occurred before the turn of the century—in the year 1898. During that summer I had obtained a job working in my grandfather's grocery store for the princely sum of \$1.50 a week from seven A.M. to seven P.M. I hoarded my earnings like a miser because on my way to school I had seen displayed in a furniture store window a Christmas present I wanted to give my Mother that year.

Mother, being of German descent, spent most of her time in the kitchen and I knew that she had to depend on odd cans and boxes to store the flour other food supplies which made her work much harder.

When I started back to school that fall I stopped by the furniture store window every week until I finally summoned up the courage to go into the store arrange for the purchase of a Hoosier kitchen cabinet—the height of kitchen luxury in that day. It had a place for everything from flour and potatoes to condiments of all sorts. The price strained my financial resources to the limit but I was finally able to make the purchase. I arranged for the store to deliver the cabinet on Christmas morning. I watched carefully for its arrival and got Mother out of the way so that the cabinet could be placed in the kitchen. Her surprise and great joy when she opened the kitchen door gave me a thrill I have never forgotten.



# The First, The Most Lonely, And Busiest Christmases

Dear Editor:

Re: Your request of November 9, 1956.

Thanks for your request. It interested me in back tracking my memory to Christmas days that I can best recall. I mention several that contain some incident that stands out in my memory.

Christmas Day, in my book, is one day of the year that families should celebrate together and give thanks for all that the day portrays.

The Christmas days I remember best:

1. 1893 — My first Christmas as I remember as a lad of four.

2. 1915 — One of two Christmas days I was not with my family.

3. 1924 — One to remember as a busy one.

I hope you will find some of it interesting and can use any or all as you see fit.

With Seasons Greetings.

Very truly yours,  
C. C. Casad, Supt.,  
Bremerton Water Department,  
Bremerton, Wash.

In 1893—

As a four year old lad living in Wellington, a small coal mining town located about six miles north of Nanaimo on Vancouver Island in British Columbia.

My family had moved to Wellington in the Spring. Dad was employed as machinist for the coal company.

A few days prior to Christmas, I started, with another boy about my age, to find Santa Claus, who, we were told, lived in the hills some distance away. When our stomachs told us it was time for dinner we gave up the trip and returned home.

But early Christmas morning Santa Claus found me. I discovered him in the sitting room. Red suit, whiskers and a bag of toys. And a beautiful Christmas tree well decorated and lighted with candles. But I'm afraid they were lost to my interest when I discovered a steam engine, sawmill and other toys my dad enjoyed playing with.

And Santa, I recognized him through his disguise as a friend of the family.

My first Christmas to remember.



In 1915—

As one of the survey crews on the Shoshone Reclamation Project in Wyoming.

I was stationed at a survey camp known as Deaver. Now the town of Deaver near the north boundary of the state on Highway 310.

As I recall the camp personnel was about twenty-five. The Chief Engineer and his assistants, with their families, occupied cottages. The rest of us occupied boxcar type sheds housing eight men each. Weather ranged to a 35 degrees below zero.

On Christmas Eve, thinking I would find it more interesting and with prospects of finding a dance, I went to Powell—the headquarters of the Project. There I was assigned one of the cabins used for employees.

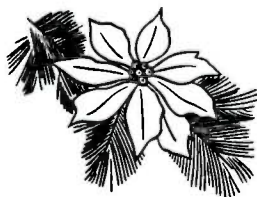
A disappointment—no dance, no street lights and even the windows of the few stores were dark. I wound up in the movie and found a warm spot which I vacated, when lock up time arrived, and went to my cabin to spend a cold night.

In the morning, as soon as I could, I found a man who drove me back to Deaver where I was happy to sit down to the swell dinner the cook prepared for us.

The most lonely Christmas I ever spent.



When I left the Reclamation Service April, 1916, I had been inspecting construction of Deaver Canal. My assignment was



taken over by a man named Gettleson ("Getty" for short). Leaving Deaver I went to St. Paul, Minn. where I joined a party of engineers on railroad valuation work for the Interstate Commerce Commission.

Our party consisted of twelve men living in a pullman car fitted for our needs. We were assigned the task of measuring the physical road bed, earthwork and materials.

After working in Minnesota and Wisconsin during the summer and early fall, we were transferred to work along the Columbia River in Washington and Oregon.

For some reason we stopped over a day in Minot, North Dakota.

That evening I went to a show and, at its conclusion, stood on the curb watching the people come out. I heard a voice back in the crowd and yelled, "Hello, "Getty." A voice in the crowd came back. "Cassidy," stay were you are." In a minute I was shaking hands with the chap who had taken over my job in Wyoming six months past and hundreds of miles away.

The remarkable thing was to recognize each other's voice under the circumstances.



In 1924—

As Superintendent of Water for the City of Bremerton, Washington, I made frequent inspection trips over the several sources of water supply.

On Christmas morning I left home about ten o'clock with the intention of sharpening my appetite, for the dinner my mother was preparing, by making an inspection trip over the supply system—two small streams with dams for storage and the Gorst Creek Pump Station.

In my town, I visited the home of Charlie Woods, one of the two operators of the Gorst Creek Station.

Mrs. Woods had a reputation for cooking southern fried chicken which she was preparing when I arrived. Nothing would do but I must stay for dinner with a number of her family, close friends of mine.

My weakness—southern fried chicken, so I risked spoiling my dinner at home.

After dinner we went outside for a stretch. I received a shock when my attention was called to a sight about a half mile away.

A fan shaped wall of water was spreading over radius of about fifty feet. When I arrived, I found Otto Jarstad, pump foreman, closing a valve near the break in a sixteen-inch wood supply main.

For about a quarter of a mile along the shore line of Sinclair Inlet the main was supported on posts. A rather stiff wind was kicking up the water of an unusually high tide. The waves had slapped the pipe, loosening its fastenings to the post and caused the break at one of the joints.

I had hastened to town to round up a crew of water employees to make repairs.

About 9:30 that evening the main was repaired and ready to resume service.

You can be sure the Christmas dinner waiting for me was not spoiled by southern fried chicken.

The busiest Christmas I can remember.



# Helping The Needy During Great Depression



B. R. Newberry

NO CHRISTMAS will remain more vivid to me than that of December 25, 1931. We were in the great depression, and every village and city throughout the land was affected. Millions of regularly employed men and women were out of work, and the pinch of hunger was felt by many.

In the Fall, the good people of Dallas had contributed a large sum of money for feeding the needy. The disposal of this money was placed in the hands of a committee from the Dallas Chamber of Commerce. It became my assigned responsibility to see that these dollars were stretched to cover as many meals as possible, and to supervise the dispensing of that food. Considerable planning was necessary, in order to provide balanced rations in both the raw and cooked food we were to issue. It was also necessary to secure quarters from which raw food could be distributed, as well as kitchens for the dispensing of cooked foods. Our menus were prepared by dieticians from our public school system.

In particularly hard hit areas, we built and equipped kitchens, and cooked meals were served in containers brought by those in need.

In other locations, we installed commissaries where raw food was distributed to families scattered throughout the city. Each family would receive a supply in sufficient quantity for one week's use. These supplies were reissued so long as the need was apparent.

Ours was the job to have everything in operation before Christmas. It was a hard winter—the weather was cold, and we had much rain. With the help of many volunteers, our last kitchen was made ready for opening on Christmas Eve. We began serving groceries and cooked food on time, and to a full house at every point of operation. This free service continued daily throughout the holiday season, and for many months in 1932

The happiness that was expressed on the faces of thousands of our good citizens, who were victims of the depression, the bloom of health in cheeks of children, the food that kept those bodies warm and healthy throughout the winter months, and the generosity of the people of Dallas, demonstrated so forcefully by their contributions to this need, all make for me the Christmas of 1931 an unforgettable one.



Very truly your,  
Ben R. Newberry,  
Director of Purchases and Ma-  
terials,  
Lone Star Gas Company  
Dallas, Texas





E. W. Aniol

## Playing Santa Proved To Be Best Christmas



Dear Editor:

THE CHRISTMAS SEASON of 1955 is one that I shall never forget because of the unique experience I was involved in as an Officer of the Allen Park Chamber of Commerce.

As Chairman of the organization's Christmas Season program, I found myself busy for months handling a multitude of arrangements for this community of 35,000 people. The high point of my activity came a month before Christmas when, while playing the role of Santa Claus, I climbed into a helicopter at the Detroit Wayne Major Airport for a flight to the Village's huge Municipal Parking lot, where I was to hover before landing to greet a crowd of some 5,000 anxious children.

Rain and poor visibility kept me from going through with the landing. With high-power utility lines in the parking area and visibility about 100 feet, the Pilot decided to turn back to the Airport, rather than jeopardize the safety of the huge crowd.

But the Chamber of Commerce was determined not to disappoint the waiting children. I arrived by Police Escort, amid cheers from the smiling youngsters who welcomed me. Needless to say, I was a bit shaken from the danger of the inclement-weather flight and disappointed that Santa wasn't coming by helicopter as was promised. But the minute I started my speech to the kiddies, the helicopter incident had been forgotten—for there before me were the warm, smiling faces of happy youngsters anxious to see and talk to me.

Later, that day, as I chatted with the kiddies at Santa's Headquarters and presented gifts to several hundred youngsters who filed through the building to tell me their wants and needs for Christmas. I knew that here was the "True Spirit of the Holiday"—of giving to the needy, of being thoughtful and of having Faith.

My earlier concern over the danger of the flight due to the bad weather-conditions was soon forgotten as I found myself deeply interested in the problems the children had whispered into my ear . . . "Please, Santa, don't disappoint me."

With those words, Walter I will bring this Treasured Memory to a close, and thanking you for this opportunity to share it with your thousands of readers.

Wishing you and your Company the best for the Holiday Season, I remain

Sincerely yours  
Edward W. Aniol, Supt.  
Allen Park Water Dept.  
Allen Park, Mich.



# The Christmas I Remember Most Is Yet To Come; It May Be This One



Dear Editor:

I HAVE BEEN around here 49 times for Christmas and it seems that each one has been better. I have practiced living toward the future so the past doesn't become too indelible on my mind. This Christmas could easily be the one that I remember most for several reasons.

**PHYSICALLY**, I am enjoying excellent health, as is my good wife, a daughter, a sophomore in college, and my son who is a junior in high school. We have a happy and ambitious family. My income is enough to afford the necessities of life plus a few extras.

**SOCIALLY**, I am known by, and know of, nearly all the good people who make up our little city community. If I have an enemy I do not know who it could be. I count every person a "Friend."

**SPIRITUALLY**, I have anchored my soul in the "Christ Child" whose birthday we all celebrate at this season of the year. My faith in "HIM" truly makes each day better than the day before.

**PROFESSIONALLY**, I am challenged anew each day. The thrill of providing such essential service as our public water and sewer facility, makes me feel "Humble" and also important. Good crews, good equipment, and future planning are the ingredients that make a busy and happy life.

Yes, "The Christmas I remember most" could easily be this one, at least until another one comes around.

Sincerely yours,

Nall Brantley, Manager  
City Water & Sewer Dept.  
Forrest City, Ark.



## Decision To Become A Publisher

ONE OF MY earliest Christmas recollections is of one December 25 when I was seven years old and I came to the momentous decision that perhaps I ought to study to be a clergyman so that I could conduct Christmas services myself.

I started on that Christmas day to compose sermons and prayers, but the reception these sermons received when I tried them on my brothers and sisters was so unfavorable that I decided to take up something easier like the publishing business. Finally I became a publisher of The American City Magazine, and one of my earlier out of town trips was to Decatur, Illinois, to visit the Mueller Co.

As the years went by Mr. Adolph Mueller and Mr. Robert Mueller became my very good friends in the old days when they were active in the Mueller Company. Later on a handsome looking, nervy young fellow named Frank Mueller came into the organization, and he continues to be one of my very good friends.

On this 25th of December of 1956, I wish every member of the Mueller staff a merry Christmas, and to the Mueller Co., continued growth and prosperity.

Dear Editor:

On my return from an out of town trip I find your letter of November 9 about your plans for a special Christmas issue, and while the enclosed might not be just what you had in mind, I am submitting it to you for what it may be worth.

If it is not in line with what you want for the Christmas issue of Mueller Record, do not hesitate to deposit it in the waste basket, and I shall think just as much of you as ever.

Sincerely yours,  
Edgar J. Buttenheim,  
Publisher,  
American City Magazine

# Spirit of Season Predominates

IT IS WITH sincere regret that this will not be a story of a unique Christmas. It seems, as I look back over the years, each year has been unique in its own right. The pleasure of Christmas has changed only as has my status in life. First as a child, then as a father now as a grandfather. Which has been enjoyed the most, I cannot tell. It seems as though my present status is the most pleasurable and unique of them all, but that maybe only because the years have so classified me and the spirit of the Season predominates, regardless.

I want to take this opportunity to wish you and all of the Mueller Staff a most Merry Christmas and a Happy and prosperous New Year. Keep the Mueller Record coming. I have been one of its readers for more than 30 years and had the pleasure of knowing your predecessor, Mr. Wagenseller.



F. C. Amsbary

Very truly yours,  
Frank C. Amsbary, Jr.  
Vice President and Gen. Mgr.,  
Long Island Water Corp.,  
Lynbrook, N. Y.



L. R. Shannon

Dear Editor:  
Thank you very much for the letter and the opportunity to tell of a Christmas experience. Of course, every year we have a wonderful time during the Christmas season. Even though four years that I was away from the good old U.S.A. at Christmastime there was always a warm feeling in my heart.

Also, we always look forward to the pleasant cards and warm hand-clasp from our acquaintances of such Mueller people as Ray Carr and Doc Martin.

Enclosed you will find a short article on one of my most enjoyable Christmas experiences and hope that it will be of some value to you.

Sincerely yours,  
L. R. Shannon,  
1635 N. E. 50th St.  
Portland, Oregon

## Bringing Joy Through Caroling

I DO BELIEVE my greatest joy at the Yule Tide season was a few years ago when the young people of our church asked me to help them learn Christmas carols and to direct them on a caroling tour. They had so much energy and happiness in the thought that they could bring a little warmth to others through this endeavor.

We learned our songs well and planned our places to go with great excitement. Among the places we were to carol was a hospital and an Old Folks' Home. At the Old Folks' Home they told us of an old couple that would enjoy hearing us so we planned to make this our last stop.

Quietly we worked our way up to the window of their front room and as we began to sing the first verse of "Come All Ye Faithful," the old folks came to the door with tears in their eyes and joined us in our singing. They knew the songs well.

When we finished singing they invited us in and we found the table all arranged as though they had been expecting us. They were so happy, flitting about and waiting on us just as though they were once again young. After we had all been served, they settled down and told us of their younger days when they went caroling.

It was some time later, that we found out that no one had ever come to sing for them before. But, regardless of this, every year they had arranged their house to party those carolers who might come to their house. We were privileged to be the first to receive their love and joy through the custom of Christmas caroling. Now, every year their house is the last stop for the young people on their caroling tour.





Frank Prideaux

## Playing Santa For Hospital Is Great Thrill

I TOOK UP the hobby of playing Santa Claus to the different organizations in the town of Bennington, Vermont such as, the Lions Club, of which I am a past president, the Bennington Club (a men's business club in this locality) also of which I am a past president, churches and the local hospital, also visiting the shut-ins at Christmas time. This hobby started by playing Santa Claus to the children in my neighborhood.

I think the biggest thrill that I have received in doing this kind of work, was visiting the Putnam Memorial Hospital on Christmas morning. I visited every patient with the superintendent of nurses, wishing them a merry Christmas and giving them a gift furnished by the hospital. I would like to say that any human being that has a heart, would certainly get a thrill out of doing this kind of deed. When you go through a hospital and see these people lying there and do not care if it is Christmas or not, it certainly is heartbreaking.

I am telling you, that in taking care of this duty in the past years, if I did not receive a gift or any Christmas cheer, I would not feel bad because this duty I performed gives me all the glad tidings I would want on Christmas day knowing I have brought a little Christmas spirit to the people that are confined to the hospital on this day.



## Saved by Allies on Christmas

Dear Editor:

I WANT TO THANK you for your letter of November 9, 1956, in which you asked me to relate an experience about Christmas.

Here in America, we have the opportunity to enjoy every Christmas Season, and, as we grow older, memories of our childhood Christmases grow more enjoyable than ever.

The Christmas that really stands out in my mind concerns the one during World War II when I was stationed in Europe. I was assigned to an Ordnance Unit, which most people believe to be a safe assignment as far as casualties go. However, in the middle of December, after receiving my Christmas gifts of canned fruit cake, etc., that had been mailed early according to Postal Regulations, we were surprised and practically surrounded by the Germans in the Battle of the Bulge, and had to retreat along with the rest of the allied army from a point about forty-five miles east of Bastogne, Belgium, back into France.

From the time of the initial attack until Christmas Day the

Dear Editor:

In reply to your letter of November 9, 1956, I am very pleased to give you the following information and hope it will be of interest to you.

My name is Frank Prideaux and I am Vice President of the Vermont Gas Corporation of the Bennington and Brattleboro, Vt. division. I am also Vice President of the Claremont Gas Light Company and Vice President of Utilgas Corporation. I have been connected with the Vermont Gas Corporation for the past 9 years. I am 54 years of age and live in the town of Bennington, Vt.

Very truly yours,  
Frank Prideaux,  
Vice President,  
Vermont Gas Corporation,  
Bennington, Vt.



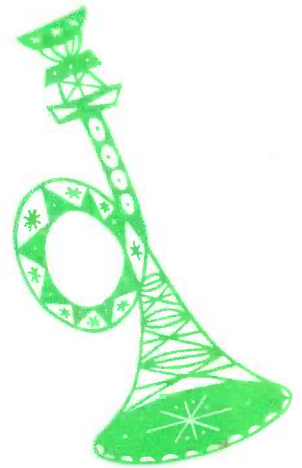
Mr. Prideaux and Friend





weather was so foggy and cloudy that allied planes could not fly. On Christmas Eve, we received orders to move up the west bank of the Meuse River to a point south of Liege, Belgium. We started this move early on the morning of Christmas Day, and, when dawn broke, there were the clearest skies we had seen in a number of months. Needless to say, the allied planes came over in force, and THAT was the best Christmas present many of us ever received, and a day none of us in the Unit will ever forget.

Sincerely yours,  
John R. Bettis  
Manager and Engineer  
Water Department  
Charleston, S. C.



## A Day of Unsurpassed Peace

Dear Editor:

I just noted the deadline in your letter for Christmas experiences and realize that this may reach you too late for your use, but am sending it along just the same in case you may find that you can use it.

Very truly yours,  
W. Franklin Richards  
Superintendent,  
Department of Water-works,  
Ogden, Utah

CHRISTMAS OF 1941 is a day scheduled "Never to be forgotten" by me. I was more depressed than most people at that time, at least I had almost more pressing and urgent worries than I could handle. We were living on a government project, ten miles from the nearest town, and two miles from the nearest grocery store. My wife didn't drive and had just returned from the hospital with our third child, when I fell, while working one night, and broke my leg.

I was resigning myself to a 5 or 6 month stay in the hospital when Pearl Harbor Sunday came with several attempts of shelling the coast, 150 miles away. It was impossible for me to move my family to a safer place or for that matter, for them to go, and the possibilities of situations that could arise from an invasion nearly drove me wild. I could neither rest nor sleep. I tried to pretend cheerfulness but I guess I really didn't fool anyone but myself. The men from the office came Christmas Eve to cheer me—but I was bed-bound and my wife could not even visit me on Christmas as she could find no baby-sitter. Even the mistletoe over my bed with all the pretty nurses around, brought no cheer.

At 4 o'clock Christmas morning it started to pour down rain. It was to be a dreary day. At 6 o'clock a number of men, with rain soaked rain coats and carrying a stretcher entered the hospital ward and coming directly to my bed informed me that for today I was going home.

These fellow workers had decided that a hospital was no place to spend Christmas Day. The rain stopped during the time they were taking me home and again in the evening when I returned but in between it appeared as if the ocean had up-ended isolating our home from the world.

My two little daughters put their tiny brother into their doll buggy and came to my couch. We spent the day enjoying the toys and singing Christmas Carols. The oldest girl said, "Let's say a 'Thank-you' prayer Too."

It was a day of unsurpassed peace that sustained me those months and through many years. I shall always be grateful to those men who sacrificed a part of their holiday to give me the CHRISTMAS I SHALL NEVER FORGET.



# A Christmas at Home During War



George C. Sopp

Dear Editor:

As Mr. Sopp is out of town for a couple of weeks, he asked me to get this Christmas letter to you, hope it will do, it is all true. George Jr. is now married and a father of a little girl, also he has finished college and is an engineer on rocket ships. Sharon is finishing her second year of college as an engineer, so this story seems far away but very dear to us. Thank you for letting us share it with you folks.

Sincerely,

Mrs. George C. Sopp,  
1314 Angelus Ave.  
Los Angeles, Calif.

THE CHRISTMAS, the Sopp family will always remember, was during the war. Everything was hard to get and we did want that Christmas to be a very special one as our son would no doubt be in service the next year and our daughter was still convalescing from a mastoid operation. Things were pretty dark at our house.

We found that dolls could not be bought, so we took an old one and had the doll-hospital work it over, new hair, eyes, paint job and lovely clothes, this was more exciting to our daughter than a new one. Then, her brother's old red wagon got a green paint job and mother went to the Goodwill for new wheels, at least new on the wagon, brother helped hammer out dents, it was a pretty nice wagon for a little girl of nine. The rest of the family was happy with new clothes for Christmas.

But what is Christmas without a tree?

No trees, at least the few in town were out of everyone's price range. A few days before Christmas, we were riding down Glendale Blvd. when we saw a sign on a pile of Cypress tree cuttings, which read, "Help yourself for Christmas" and we did. We took wire and wood and with the help of George Jr. the Cypress limbs became a pine tree, even smelled like one. The children had never seen a tree such as this, an old fashioned one like we used to have, popcorn and cranberry strings, fruit and paper cutouts made by Sharon. George Jr. was a temporary postman that year and as he was in the district he would drop by several times a day to see how the Christmas preparations were going.

It was the most exciting, happy and loving Christmas, a real old fashioned one that most children never experience in this age of abundance. War or not, ours was a happy home and we will always remember it, for the next year, George Jr. was far away in the Aleutians and for a couple of years he was in service and Sharon was a big girl when our family had another Christmas with all the members together again.



## Christmas Tree For the Blind

Dear Editor:

IT TOOK ME a long time to decide what to do in connection with your recent request to relate an instance that stands out in my memory concerning Christmas. Here it is, and it was written on the last day of grace. Other than Christmas itself, I vividly remember the subject as follows:

On April 1, 1927, I was instrumental in organizing and establishing what today is the Shreveport Association for the Blind, which organization is in full force now and caring for the blind people of this area and capitalized at over \$100,000.00. Aside from the commercial viewpoint, we are interested in the welfare, social activities and civic endeavors of the blind—that means all blind. Of these activities, picnics in the summer, Thanksgiving Day dinners and Christmas Dinner and Christmas Tree with presents for each blind—fruit and candy.

An appropriate program is put on, a feature of which is a





full description of the tree with its lights, trinkets and tinsel. You understand these people are blind. But they are happy and enjoy this occasion as much as a five year old child.

The first Christmas tree given for the blind associated with us was December 18, 1935, numbering some twenty five to thirty persons and this is continued to this day. December 15, 1956, is the date set for some 150 blind persons to enjoy. The occasion of this first Blind Christmas Tree was the source of one of my best Christmases, and I am still enjoying them.

Yours sincerely,  
Thos. L. Amiss  
Superintendent-Engineer  
Dept. of Water and Sewage  
Shreveport, La.



## Christmas In Southern Florida

IN AS MUCH as I am one of the few fortunate ones who has always spent Christmas at home—both as a boy and with my family as the head of a house, I cannot recall any unusual experiences.

I can remember that all were happy and satisfying experiences. We now have two young sons and of course they mean Christmas to us—to share their happiness and to see the sparkle in their eyes and to watch the restless waiting for that most important day to arrive makes for us a very happy experience each Christmas.

Our family group did have a most pleasant Christmas experience in 1955. We drove to Miami, Florida and spent the holiday season going to the beach, sight seeing, and enjoying the balmy, tropical weather.

Being natives of Kentucky, it was quite different to see Christmas decorations on the streets, in the stores, and in the homes and yards and people wearing summer clothes. The tropical climate and summer clothes did not seem to fit Christmas since it is usually cold and snowy in Kentucky.

It was a great thrill to sit on Biscayne Boulevard and watch the beautiful floats pass in the tremendous Orange Bowl Parade. And the climax was watching the Orange Bowl football game between two of the greatest teams of all times—Oklahoma and Maryland—and we sat in that huge stadium in shirt sleeves with the sun beaming down and giving us a tan.

I think we, all of us, shall always remember Christmas 1955 which we spent in sunny Florida. The trip down and back was perfect in every way. Even though it was warm and tropical and flowers of all kinds were in bloom, we found that Floridians had the same Christmas spirit as we farther north. Their poinsettias bloom in their yards, ours in pot—their trees were laden with oranges and grapefruit, our trees were bare—but the holiday spirit was the same.

We recommend for all, at least one Christmas in Southern Florida.



Dear Editor:

I remember meeting you and your wife in St. Louis in May. I think your Christmas Issue will be most interesting except for the enclosed contribution.

I have only snapshots—so am not enclosing a photograph of the author.

Very Best Regards,  
Jack Boxley,  
Hopkinsville, Ky.,  
Sewage & Water  
Works, Commission



# A Christmas Not So Christmasy

HERE IS A STORY that sounds anything but Christmasy—to me, as a cub water plant operator at the time, it was something that only bad dreams are made of. It happened on the Panama Canal, where I had charge of one of the three filtration plants. It was only my second operating job.

The shock came on Christmas Eve, when the routine agar plates on the raw water took on the appearance of the “milky way,” with myriads of pin-point bacterial colonies. The lake intake was promptly visited, with the idea that a rotting log, or possibly a dead animal might be found on the screens.

It was a dead animal—but, to our horror, it was a two legged one. An alligator had a part of the native, and on the screen we had what was left, only the alligator’s part was fresh and ours was anything, but. The alligator had apparently upset the native’s cayuka (an unstable craft made by gouging out tree trunks) and that was his end.

Lucky for us the finished water plates that day and the next (Christmas Day) were as clear of colonies as usual—thanks to chlorination, which was being regulated on the then new residual chlorine control basis.

The reader can well imagine what an uneasy Christmas Day this young operator spent while waiting for possible consequences, and knowing that his little family had been drinking that water. The secret was well kept, however, and there was no sickness amongst consumers, psychologically or otherwise — **thanks to chlorine**, the most appreciated of any “gift” on **that** Christmas Day.



Linn H. Enslow

Dear Editor:

Here is my contribution for your Christmas issue. It is probably a little on the gruesome side and not the sort of story you would prefer.

Therefore, my feelings will in no ways be hurt if you reject it. However, it is the story of the Christmas Day that first came to my mind when reading your request.

Yours very truly,  
Linn H. Enslow,  
Editor,  
Water and Sewage  
Works,  
Chicago, Ill.



## The Stork And Christmas



NEARLY EVERYONE remembers various special events at Christmas, but one I particularly cherish concerns some of my grandchildren. One of my daughters had two boys, one six, the other four. The stork was indicating that another arrival was due around Christmas, and everyone was hoping it would be a girl.

Dear Editor:

This is to thank you for your letter of November 9 and for the ideas and invitation expressed therein.

I hope everyone you wrote to derives as much pleasure from offering a story, regardless of whether or not it is printed, as I did.

May you have many replies and a Merry Christmas.

Very truly yours,  
Charles H. Capen,  
C. E., D. Eng.,  
Newfoundland, N. J.

Two days before the Holiday, I was at an annual office evening dinner. About 9:00 p.m., my son-in-law phoned to say that the stork had quite serious intentions. As per schedule I left, drove to their house, took the boys to stay overnight with a neighbor and returned to the party. Before long another phone call carried the glad news that a new granddaughter had arrived and everything was fine.

The boys spent the next day and part of Christmas with Gammy and Gramp. But Christmas day without Mother was somewhat of a failure. The boys went out of control and their Dad decided to take them home.

A couple of days later we all drove down to the big red-brick

hospital. No children were allowed in so I stayed out in the snow with the boys while their Dad went inside.

Suddenly Mom appeared, as prearranged, at a large French door, beaming and waving. The disappointments of the last two days were suddenly forgotten. Two pairs of young eyes instantly lighted up with the joy only youth can express so vividly. Perhaps the Wise Men, gazing at the Madonna and Child, exhibited a similar adoration. At any rate, no one living could have looked more beautiful to the puzzled boys. Yes, Christmas had really arrived. Mother had not deserted them.

And the little girl? Yes, she now plays happily with her brothers and answers to the name of Holly.



## A SHY PROFESSOR WROTE

# Our Happiest Yuletide Poem

*"'Twas the night before Christmas  
when all through the house  
'Not a creature was stirring,  
not even a mouse . . ."*



For well over 100 years the happy poem that begins thus has been part of just about every American's Christmas — but its modest author never dreamed or intended it so. He was a shy, scholarly professor, Clement C. Moore, in New York City, and he wrote the beloved lines in 1822 just to amuse his own children one Christmas Eve.

They were delighted, and so was a family friend, who sent it to the editor of her home-town paper with no name signed to it.

In the years that followed, many newspapers reprinted the poem anonymously; it was not until 1837 that the author's name became known. In the 1850's the poem began appearing in school books. Prof. Moore never sought or received royalties.

The poem has been printed in multi-millions of copies, translated into almost every language and into braille. An artist of a century ago drew a Saint Nick from Moore's description— ("His eyes, how they twinkled! His dimples, how merry . . . . And the beard on his chin was white as the snow . . .") and gave us a Santa Claus image which has endured these generations.



## Be Sure -- Be Safe

Your Christmas tree and evergreen decorations may be home fire-proofed by dissolving one cup of boric acid and a cup and a half of borax in a gallon of warm water and spraying them with the solution; use a spray gun or the vacuum cleaner's spray attachment.

Dad's Santa Claus suit or the children's costumes also may be fire-proofed with the same simple mixture; soak the gar-



ments for three or four minutes, wring, iron while damp.

Check tree-light wiring and connections . . . Make it an accident-free Christmas. (More accidents occur in December than in any other month!)

### INVITATION

*If you've lost it and no longer  
Can recall the Christmas glow;  
Catch its glint in eyes that twinkle  
Of the children that you know!  
Feel the wish and hope and fervor,  
Sense the faith and joy and prayer;  
Make a place for Christmas Spirit,  
Bid it welcome—and it's there!*

Rosaleen Schmutz

# The Tree Was Always Cedar

BY  
MARY LOUISE CHEATHAM

(ED. NOTE: Mrs. Cheatham, a Decatur, Ill., housewife, is the winner of a short story contest conducted by the MUELLER RECORD for members of a writing group sponsored by the Decatur Public Library.)



I CAN'T IMAGINE my father ever paying money for a Christmas tree. How he would scorn commercial firs! The idea of trees, bound and shipped, would not appeal to him. Our tree was always cedar, and its selection, about a week ahead, was one of the highlights of the holiday.

"We'd better go get the tree," Dad would say, picking up an axe and hustling the boys and me into the family Ford. He didn't have to hunt us; we were always at hand, eager to take part in this exciting excursion. Bundled like Eskimos, faces aglow, we enjoyed the chilly ride into the country. The side-curtains of the old Ford failed to keep out ALL the wind, but there was a decided snugness in viewing the landscape through yellowed isinglass. It made the snow look warmer!

I felt very rich on these trips; my father had so many friends among the farmers. Most of them traded at his combination woodwork, general repair and blacksmith shop, and some still had wagons left from grandfather's early wagon-building days. My father did them favors—he was known for his honesty and low prices—and this was one of their favors to him. We could stop at almost any Ozark farm we chose,

and range the foothill woods, by invitation.

When we had driven far enough, we'd leave the Ford parked by the snowy road and hike into the thickets. The cedar had to be exactly right. Mother seldom came along. She was always too busy at this time finishing gifts, stuffing dates and making fudge for friends. But we knew the kind of tree she liked. We always had a large one, no table tree for us! The trunk must rest substantially on the floor and the star must touch the ceiling. We never skimped, at Christmas, on our cedar! It had to be good and green—no brown and rusty branches—with small blue berries on its hearty boughs. The shape must be right, round and bushy at the base, tapering to a point at the top. No shopper hunting for a bargain ever covered more territory than we did looking for a tree! But at last we would find it—exactly THE one, with rabbit tracks around it in the snow, its spicy branches quivering recognition. The sound of the axe rang loud in the quiet wood.

We always felt a little sad to see the majestic tree come to earth, but not for long. The love it received in the next two weeks would more than compensate! Besides, we were too busy roping it to

the side of the Ford for our triumphant journey home.

All week, our cherished cedar sat on the back porch, keeping cold and green. We would never have dreamed of setting it up in the dining room a week ahead, ruining half the magic. Bringing in the tree was a ceremony for Christmas Eve, alone. Up to this point, we were anticipating Christmas, we were preparing for Christmas. But when the time came, and Mother said, "Might as well bring in the tree, now;" and Dad, with much help, maneuvered it through the kitchen door, dripping cedary prickles all across the linoleum; when the breath-taking icy fragrance rushed to the warmth of the dining room stove; then, Christmas was HERE!

There was always the job of fitting the trunk of the tree into the cross-shaped wooden stand, with plenty of cedar sprays left over for wreaths. Then Mother would bring out an old white sheet to wrap around the base, for the packages to nestle on, beneath the lowest boughs.

We never helped to trim the tree, while we were small. Overworked as he was, the job remained for Santa. Our last glimpse of it at night was as it stood, green and proud and bare. Its decoration was a gift to us, on Christmas Day.

It was always glittering and beautiful, and always a surprise. How this could be is hard to understand, for the tinsel had been used from year to year, and, though carefully wrapped in tissue, much of its sparkle was gone. The ornaments, too, were all old friends, their brilliance faded to a gleam. In the earliest days, we had no tree lights (except candles, which were a danger) for ours was a lamplit house. We had no angel hair, no silver icicles, no artificial snow (save cotton tufts) but still, our cedar shone! It had a sparkle seldom found in Christmas trees today. Somehow, the fingers of light knew just where to caress each bright glass ball; just to illumine the well-known beaded star. Our cedar sparkled bright with love.

How early we awoke on Christmas Day—just after dawn, while it was dark outside! Mother and Dad were always tired. How could they be, when we were so excited? First, we explored the stockings looped to the foot of each bed, the

knobby long white cottons which hung so lank before. We gouged out the contents, hard candies stuck with bits of lint, bright cookies, rattly nuts, and, at each toe, an orange. Released, the orange odor hurried off to join the cedar, in that special blend of cedar-orange perfume.

Then, after the stockings, the tree—and after the tree, the gifts. Of all the gifts I recall, the homemade ones were best. There was the year Dad made the furniture—a doll bed and a little kitchen cupboard. They were enameled white (still a trifle sticky) and the doll had on a dress my Mother made. The kitchen cupboard had a mirror and two small doors that hid the shelves within. Entranced, I thrust my hand inside and drew it back in quick surprise, my fingers moist with pumpkin! There, on the shelf, I found a row of tiny pumpkin pies!

Such were the gifts we found beneath our tree; gifts costing little money, but much labor and much love. Our Christmas were always shared and so secure—as certain as our cedar, every year!



## Why The Chimney?



Why is Santa pictured as coming down the chimney?

One story goes back to pre-Christian Germany and Hertha goddess of the home at the winter solstice, which is about the time of

Christmas, families kindled a fire of fir boughs inside their homes, and the goddess supposedly descended through the smoke to bring them good luck.

The legend carried over into old England, where Santa was credited with coming down the chimney to clean it of soot so good luck could come in.



## The Names The Same!

In Denmark it's "Glaedelig Jul!"; in Holland it's "Hartelijke Kerstgroten!"; in Finland it's "Hauskaa Joulua!"; in France it's "Joyeux Noel!"; in Germany it's "Froehliche Weihnachten!"; in Italy it's "Bono Natale!"; in Spain it's "Felices Pascuas!" and in Portugal it's "Boas Festas!"—and it's Merry Christmas! however you say it!

