CHRISTMAS RUSH

Holiday Mail Problem Easier to Handle Since Public Started Helping Postmen

By HUGH THOMASON
(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

WASHINGTON. — By this time your Christmas card to the folks who used to live next door has been delivered in a distant community, and Aunt Matilda's gift package for the youngsters has arrived as usual — right on schedule.

Forty thousand postmasters are beginning to see daylight over a mound of letters, parcels, greeting cards and whatnot that showers down on the post office department each Holiday season. Pretty soon it will be over for another year, and the weary mailmen will start preparing for 1940.

This is a job that requires 3,770,000,000 postage stamps, an eye on the weather, machine-like co-ordination of railroad and postal facilities, oodles of patience with the well-meaning but lax public, and around $10,000,000 for extra clerk hire.

Beware of Fads!

It means watching out for population trends, economic conditions and those unpredictable mailing fads that grip the public fancy each Holiday season. One year they'll pour oceans of Christmas cards on a little village of 150 called Bethlehem, Md., the next year on Santa Claus, Ind., next on Christmas, Fla., and probably the following year at Noel, Va.

Why? Just to have their cards cancelled with a Christmas-y postmark which most of the recipients won't even notice. But it's fine old American tradition and the post office department must co-operate.

Holiday postal rushes aren't what they used to be, but that doesn't mean the volume of mail is decreasing. On the contrary, it's on the upgrade. But the public has memorized those oft-repeated "shop early, mail early" slogans and they're taking more pity on the hapless mailman.

There's still a disheartening deluge of mail each season to that graveyard of good intentions, the dead letter office, where go all letters and parcels suffering from illegible, incorrect addresses and hopelessly poor wrappings from which the address has become lost altogether.

An old hand in the postal service can decipher handwriting as illegible as an Egyptian cryptograph, but Christmas is just when the mail clerks don't have time to do it. Such detective jobs must then fall partly on the shoulders of inexperienced substitute postmen, which only emphasizes the need for legible addresses.

To outfox the dead letter office, many post offices have a "hospital" to doctor decrepit packages. In larger cities a half dozen men are assigned to this job during the Holidays, armed with patches, glue and cord. But sometimes the job is beyond them, spelling grief for both giver and intended recipient.

Mail Volume Anticipated.

Christmas preparations in the post office department begin in mid-summer, when individual postmasters send in their requisitions for stamps. They don't guess at it; instead they turn to reliable local sources like the chamber of commerce, board of trade and other commercial groups which can make a pretty good guess about local business conditions five or six months hence.

About the same time the bureau of engraving and printing begins turning out extra stocks of stamps for Christmas. This office doesn't wait for the postmasters to make their check; stamps must be printed immediately to avoid a log-jam later in the season.

Transportation equipment is the next problem. When the post office department knows how much business is expected, railroads are notified to have the proper number of mail service cars in readiness when the rush starts. At local post offices special vehicles must be requisitioned for parcel delivery.

DELUGE!—A flood of Christmas mail descends on one of America's metropolitan post offices, bound for cities and hamlets hundreds of miles away.

Two Left Feet? Not for Uncle Sam's Newest Recruits!

Streamlined Drill Regulations Eliminate 'Pain' of Becoming Soldier.

FORT HAYES, COLUMBUS, OHIO. —Regular army drill sergeants may claim that recruits still have two left feet but adoption of the new infantry drill regulations has eliminated much of the "pain" of learning to be a soldier and reduced the time required by from 33 to 50 per cent, according to reports just made to Maj. Gen. Daniel Van Voorhis, commanding general Fifth corps area, by Col. L. A. Kunzig, Eleventh Infantry, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, and Col. Arthur R. Underwood, commanding the Tenth Infantry at Fort Thomas, Kentucky. Easy naturalness and logical sequence of movement have resulted in definite saving of time and energy in close order drill, the veteran regular army colonels reported.

Under the new drill regulations, intricate movements, such as "squads right" and "squads right about" have been eliminated. Those movements will be remembered by World war veterans as "bugaboos" of army training and almost impossible to execute correctly. "Port" and "right shoulder arms" are two other unnatural movements which are changed in the new doughboy "bible."

Called Forward Step.

General Van Voorhis said, "adoption of these regulations is a definite step forward in national defense, because of the great saving in time which has ever been a vital training factor. Under the old regulations in reviews and parades, emphasis was placed on massed formations with the result that the soldier's individuality was lost. Now, in ceremonies and parades, the soldier can see and be seen. This will enhance morale. Early completion of basic drill permits starting training in technical and tactical subjects much sooner. Such training is the essence of transforming a civilian into a soldier and for both officers and enlisted men is never completed."

Based on observations of some 500 recruits at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Colonel Kunzig stated, "I believe men who have completed one week's training under the new training regulations, are as proficient as men with two weeks training under the old regulations. It is estimated that in teaching drill movements and the basic training school of the soldier, the time element is reduced 50 per cent in almost every case."

Observations at Fort Thomas, where another large group of recruits were trained, caused Colonel Underwood to report, "that with an average of 2½ hours daily drill under the new regulations, the recruit can be taught the drill of soldier squad, platoon and arms in about two weeks. Teaching movements in the old regulations necessitated four to five weeks training for the average recruit to master and remember the complicated squad formations and detailed counts. The new foot movements come natural because he has already learned his facing and natural column movements as a child in grade school. Even the manual of arms is now a more natural movement."

All the recruits of the Tenth Infantry were so well grounded in basic military subjects that they were qualified to accompany the regiment south to Fort McClellan, Alabama, where they will participate in the interesting tactical maneuvers scheduled for this winter. Recruits of the Eleventh Infantry at Fort Benjamin Harrison are similarly qualified and will accompany their regiment which is expected to entrain shortly.

The A. E. F. didn't do it this way back in '17, but that's all right with army officers stationed at Fort Hayes, Columbus, Ohio. They like the newly adopted, streamlined infantry drill regulations, which eliminate much of the "pain" of learning to be a soldier, and reduce time required by 33 to 50 per cent. Simplicity is the keynote. Left: It's "right shoulder arms," new version. The right hand drops to the butt and the rifle is placed on the shoulder. Center: Soldiers march a full arm's length apart instead of half that distance. Right: The modern doughboy practices anti-aircraft defense formations in gas masks.

What to Do

BY PHYLLIS BELMONT

I AM celebrating my second wedding anniversary this month and wish you would tell me how to attractively decorate my table.
MRS. C. R. M.

Answer—A very attractive table may be made to represent " 'way down South" and a red-blocked tablecloth of paper or cotton with napkins to match forms an excellent background. A mammy doll may be the centerpiece, and this is easily made from red and yellow crepe paper, or may be purchased quite inexpensively. She might hold in her arms a bouquet of cotton bolls with wire stems and some may be scattered at her feet.

Phyllis Belmont.—WNU Service.

Women Own 70% Of Private Wealth, Says C. of C. Man

MILWAUKEE.—A man's world?

Well, hardly—in the opinion of Henry W. Stanley, executive secretary of the Hot Springs, Ark., chamber of commerce.

According to Stanley, the women of America, or "powder-puff financiers," as he calls them, own 70 per cent of the nation's private wealth, buy 85 per cent of all the merchandise sold through retail outlets, have $10,000,000,000, or 66 per cent of all savings bank deposits, possess titles to 48 per cent of all the homes in the country and comprise 49 per cent of the 15,000,000 stockholders.

"The American woman," he claimed at a recent merchandising meeting here, "has it in her hands to make or break this nation.

"I wouldn't say the gentlemen are hiding behind the women's skirts, but there may be something to it."

American women, he said, even buy 65 per cent of the men's underwear.

"And," he added with a touch of bitterness, "the men wear it."

Texas Sour Grapes?

A single grapevine in Rosebud, Texas, covers the entire side of a building and is half a block long.

Peter Rabbit's Friends Save Him From Clutches of Granny Fox

By THORNTON BURGESS

The friendship which is truest, best,
Is that which meets the trouble test.

NO ONE really knows who his best friends are until he gets in trouble. When everything is lovely and there is no sign of trouble anywhere one may have ever and ever so many friends. At least it may seem so. But let trouble come and all too often these seeming friends disappear as if by magic until only a few, sometimes a very few, are left. These are the real friends, the true friends, and they are worth more than all the others put together. Remember that if you are a true friend to any one you will stand by him and help him, no matter what happens. Sometimes it is almost worth while getting into trouble just to find out who your real friends are.

Peter Rabbit found out who some of his truest friends are when, because of his own carelessness, old Granny Fox caught him. Peter has been in many tight places and had many terrible frights in his life, but never did he feel quite so helpless and hopeless as when he felt the black paws of old Granny Fox pinning him down and Granny's sharp teeth in the loose skin on the back of his neck. All he could do was to kick with all his might, and kicking was quite useless, for Granny took great care to keep out of the way of those stout hind legs of his.

Many, many times Granny Fox had tried to catch Peter, and always before Peter had been too smart for her and had just made fun of her and laughed at her. Now it was her turn to laugh, and all because he had been careless and foolish. You see, Peter had been so sure that Granny had had such a fright when she ran away from the strange creature that rolled down Prickly Porky's hill at her that she wouldn't think of coming back, and so he had just given himself up to enjoying Granny's fright. With Unc' Billy Possum and Jimmy Skunk he had rolled over and over shouting with laughter and at last had thrown himself down right close to a low growing hemlock tree without once thinking of danger, a very foolish thing to do as he now knew when it was too late. You see, Granny had quickly gotten over her fright and had suspected a trick. So she had crept back and had been hiding under the very tree Peter had so carelessly thrown himself down beside.

At Peter's yell of fright Unc' Billy Possum scampered for the nearest tree and Jimmy Skunk dodged behind a big stump. You see, it was so sudden that they really didn't know what had happened. But Prickly Porky, whom some people call stupid, made no move to run away. He happened to be looking at Peter when Granny caught him, and so he knew just what it meant. A spark of anger flashed in his usually dull eyes, and for once in his life Prickly Porky moved quickly. The thousand little spears hidden in his coat suddenly stood on end, and Prickly Porky made a fierce little rush forward.

"Drop him!" he grunted.

By this time Jimmy Skunk had recovered himself. You know he is not afraid of anybody or anything.

Granny took good care to keep out of the way of those stout hind legs of his.

He sprang out from behind the stump, looking a wee bit sham faced, and started for old Gran Fox. "You let Peter Rabbit go!" he commanded in a very threatening way. Now the reason Jimmy Skunk is afraid of nobody is because he carries with him a little bag of very strong perfume, which makes everybody sick but himself. Granny Fox knows all about this. For just a minute she hesitated. Then she thought that if Jimmy used it it would be as bad for Peter as for her, and she didn't believe Jimmy would use it. So she kept on backing away, dragging Peter with her. Then Unc' Billy Possum took a hand, and his was the bravest deed of all, for he knew that Granny was more than a match for him in a fight. He slipped down from the tree where he had sought safety, crept around behind Granny, and bit her sharply on one heel. Granny let go of Peter to turn and snap at Unc' Billy. This was Peter's chance. He slipped out from under Granny's paws, and in a flash was behind Prickly Porky.

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Christ's Village Fears Uprising As World Celebrates Nativity

NO PEACE HERE—British motorized troops patrol the streets of Bethlehem to prevent disorders.

"O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie . . ."

WHILE America sings of Christ's birthplace this Yuletide, the little Palestine city of Bethlehem is smouldering under such a deep factional discontent that the event for which it is famous is being observed with cautious restraint this year.

Bethlehem's 1939 Christmas will be happier than last year's, however. At that time a shooting melee occurred in a cafe just across the square from the Church of the Nativity. British troops invaded the place, which was said to be a hideout for Arab rebels.

Rachel Died There.

Long associated with the religion of brotherly love and the gentle art of the shepherd, Bethlehem has frequently, in its 30 centuries, been the scene of strife and bloodshed. Its first mention in the Bible is associated with death—that of Rachel, nearly 2,000 years before Christ. Tending his sheep around Bethlehem was the boy named David, who later slew his ten thousands to the mere thousands of Saul.

During the World war new battle lines were drawn around Bethlehem, when, in November, 1917, British and Turkish-German forces fought for Jerusalem, nearby.

Nearly 1,000 years ago one of the turning points of the Crusades occurred at an old church just outside Bethlehem, where Richard the Lion Hearted gave way before Saladin.

In time of peace, modern Bethlehem with its 10,000 people is a prosperous town with a flourishing tourist trade. Around the Church of the Nativity are cafes, noisy with radio music, soft drink establishments and curio shops selling postcards of sacred scenes, crosses and rosaries.

The present strife centers around Arab opposition to making Palestine a haven for Jews, in accordance with Great Britain's plan.

Modern Colonists Plan New Home on Island in Bahamas

PASADENA.—Final farewells to sunny California will be offered next month by 25 "pioneers" leaving to start a colony on uninhabited East Caicos island at the eastern end of the Bahamas group, 750 miles from Miami.

Led by R. C. Irvine, Pasadena salesman, the party will live on the island belonging to Mrs. Grace Lake, who inherited it from her "salt king" grandfather, John Ney Reynolds. Part of the island is owned under a deed from the British crown, and the rest is leased for 99 years.

East Caicos' colonists will retain their American citizenship, returning to the mainland each two years to have their passports renewed.

Resources of the island, says Irvine, are sufficient to keep the group busy. It is surrounded by shark-infested waters, the fish being valuable for the skin and liver oil. Thousands of wild jackasses, propagated by those left behind by a sisal development company many years ago, must be killed.

Part of 3,000 acres of sisal now growing wild will be cleared for papayas, valuable for medicinal purposes.

10-Year-Old Seattle Girl Hailed as Violin Prodigy

SEATTLE—The 10-year-old daughter of a cobbler may be America's next violin "prodigy." She is Anita Lipp, who first gained recognition this year when Mischa Elman, internationally famous violinist, heard her play and urged that she be given an opportunity to extend her education. Small for her age, Anita uses a three-quarters-size violin and has remarkable stage presence. Conductors marveled when she played through difficult concertos for four hours without faltering.

Veteran Prospector Strikes Pay Dirt

Maj. Graham C. Dugas, veteran prospector, examines samples of "pay rock" from his bonanza gold strike at Dahlonega, Ga. Wiseacres didn't believe there was gold in the Georgia uplands, but the major uncovered a vein of quartz two inches thick and assaying $60,000 to the ton—comparable to the world-famed Comstock lode of Nevada. Right: Dugas points out the rich vein to a friend.

Mechanical Toys Make Inventors of Younger Generation

NEW YORK.—If little Johnny grows up to be an inventor, you can probably thank that electric train, building kit or chemistry set he's getting for Christmas.

Since the toy industry began outgrowing prosaic toys like footballs, bicycles and boxing gloves, America's youth has turned to markedly scientific playthings that the psychologists say our coming generation will be chock-full of engineers and laboratory experts.

This is one reason, they maintain, why the nation produces so many inventions that the United States patent office is being cluttered up with bigger and better "Yankee notions."

Contrary to the popular misconception that inventors are born that way, child training specialists say the American boy is now brought up in an environment that exposes him to the latest gadgets and explains the workings of these things in plain and dramatic fashion. Hence they develop a knack for scientific work

BOY WITH TRAIN—A future mechanical genius?

SECRET FOODSTUFF PURCHASES STRENGTHEN ENGLAND

LONDON.—Great Britain does not fear starvation in the present war, according to government economic statisticians.

Secret purchases and storage of foodstuffs during the last 12 months have been so successful, it was said, that even if, in the future, ships were unable to reach British ports with supplies from abroad the nation could be fed for more than 12 months—certainly until after another harvest was gathered in.

The full extent of the government stocks has not been revealed, but in ports where wheat is stored in silos and granaries stocks are known to exceed 11,600,000 hundredweight. This is 73 per cent higher than a year ago. Holdings of wheat flour are nearly 40 per cent heavier.

If the whole of Ireland is included the stocks of wheat are 170 per cent greater than a year ago.

Purchases of wheat from abroad are reaching record figures. During the seven months ended July 31, 70,841,000 hundredweight of wheat had been delivered from countries overseas.

In addition, there is Britain's own harvest yet to be gathered. It is estimated at more than 30,000,000 hundredweight which is much greater than the harvest of 1914, taken at the outbreak of the World war.

Large quantities of frozen meat from Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, Uruguay and the Argentine are stored in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Cardiff and Nottingham, apart from canned foods placed in reserve by leading manufacturers.

On British farms the total live stock is greater than at any other time in many years. This is of inestimable value to Britain's future.

Dame Nature Shapes Up Stiff Problems for Surveyors

ALEXANDRIA, LA.—General land office surveyors have undertaken a task forced upon them by "a natural phenomenon" more than a century and a half ago.

Long before the Red river valley became populated with planters, the sluggish river was blocked by trees falling into the water and gradually stacked up in rafts.

The waters of the river backed into bayous and into natural land formations, forming lakes. The problem of the authorities today is—who owns the lakes?

Detailed accounts of the beginning of the log jam are lacking in general land office records, but one report estimates that the raft in the Red river grew at the rate of one mile a year during the 35-year period between 1793 and 1828.

Other reports of an exploration in 1806 tell of one obstruction in the river "forming an almost impenetrable mass, which extends from the bottom to two or three feet above the surface of the water, a thickness of 30 to 40 feet," and stretching up the river for nearly 300 yards.

Removal of the obstruction was begun in 1873.

New Telephones for India

New one-piece telephones are being manufactured in mass production in India to replace the old two-piece office models.

Arson Decade Ago Told After Hearing Sermon

RAYMOND, WASH.—A sermon in the Four Square Gospel church here led 28-year-old John Pernu to confess that 10 years ago he burned a residence in nearby Naselle.

He said he committed the act without reason except that "I was drunk." The blaze, officers recalled, also destroyed a store, the post office and a garage. County officials released Pernu.