# Busy Belfast

**Sheep Get Right of Way in Belfast.**

Prepared by National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.—WNU Service.

THE industrial and cultural center of Northern Ireland is indisputably Belfast, so appropriately nicknamed "Linenopolis." "A very young city," you are told by those English residents who reckon a settlement's age in centuries instead of years. They remind visitors that during the Middle ages Belfast was a minor castle on the outskirts of important Carrickfergus.

Situated near the head of a lough, or inlet, a dozen miles from the sea, where a little tributary joined the River Lagan at a ford, Belfast derived its name from its position. Bel or beal meant an entrance, a mouth, while fearsad was a sandbank.

In those early days Belfast sometimes was referred to by another name, and a whopper it was, too—Ballycoonegalgie!

So shallow and twisty was the mouth of the River Lagan that even the smallest craft could not reach the town except at high water. Nevertheless, it once was an important military position for maneuvering armies of the continually warring factions.

Seeing Belfast now, it is difficult to realize it was given as a present to Sir Arthur Chichester when he was made governor of Carrickfergus by Essex in 1604. Rightly enough, he is considered the founder of the city and today motor cars speed over the creosote-block surface of an important street bearing his name. Then the town could boast but five muddy lanes and about 500 inhabitants.

A quarter of a century later, Lord Deputy Wentworth gave the trade of the "port" its first major stimulus when he purchased from the corporation of Carrickfergus the "right of importing certain commodities at one-third of the duties payable at other places." During the linen industry boom of the 1780s, work was started on dredging a winding, shallow channel through three miles of mudbanks to the lough proper. The result was magical.

**Growth of Textile Industry.**

In less than a generation the linen export figures increased 300 per cent! Also the manufacture of cotton goods developed, and in 1800 it was estimated 27,000 people were employed in that industry within a ten-mile radius of Belfast.

Although shipbuilding had been carried on in a small way since early times, the completion of the waterway project by the middle of the century naturally stimulated this industry, too. Belfast reached its majority when it was created a city in 1888 and today it boasts a population comparable to that of Kansas City, Missouri.

Stormont, where the resplendent new Parliament building stands, is about four miles from Belfast. On your way there you cross one of the four bridges which span the Lagan and enter the section which is in County Down; the main part of the city is in County Antrim.

Rows and rows of workers' houses line the side streets. Made of brick and all of one type, they are only about twelve feet wide. The door opens onto a narrow staircase, to the left of which is the living room with a fireplace.

To see the different styles you look down each cross street. Some rows are perfectly plain, of yellow brick; many are of red; some have little porches, others simply a protruding entranceway. But all are in groups, like quintuplets or octuplets; never one with a design all its own.

These are for the greater part the abodes of shipbuilders and ropemakers, for this is a city of industrial workers. Their homes spread fanlike in all directions, encroaching upon and, in many instances, even completely engulfing the pretentious mansions of captains of industry. From Cave hill on the northwestern outskirts of the city, the panorama of roofs and chimneys, punctuated only by the narrowing arms of Belfast lough with its shipyards, unfold like the fan of some giantess.

**No Tenements or Slums.**

In Belfast you see no tenements or large buildings housing several families. Each family has its individual home. You see no "slum" sections, in the strict sense of the word. In this respec. the city is exceptional, considering its size and preponderance of wageworkers.

Farther from the river, as you near the outskirts, the houses are larger and more detached. Many have little gardens and hedges. Before reaching Stormont, you notice several conspicuously beautiful places with spacious lawns.

On a sloping hillside in the center of a large park stands the imposing white limestone Parliament building, a present to Northern Ireland from the British government. For those who object to the four-mile trip to and from the city, attractive new homes have been erected nearby.

Back in Belfast, one finds the city's magnetic appeal lies in its industries. Linen and shipbuilding are undeniably paramount, but rope-making, cigarette and flour manufacture, and distilling also are important.

The ropeworks has its lure, and you are conducted over the most interesting portions of the many acres of plant.

Your eyes travel over bale upon bale of a dirty brown fiber imported from India, Russia, Italy, and Belgium. They stand ready to be transformed into cordage, ranging from the heaviest anchor rope to binder twine and ordinary string.

You pass on into other acre-area departments where men sort, clean, spin, braid, and twist hemp, flax, and cotton. Long lines of noisy machines suggest vast armies drilling—drilling to double-quick time.

**Making Trawl Nets.**

You are glad to reach that quiet section devoted to the making of trawl nets used by "drifters" the world over, especially in the North Atlantic food fish regions. Each individual fisherman has his particular idea as to sizes and shapes, and these vary widely in different localities. This variety, and the gradual change, from top to bottom, in the size of the mesh, make it necessary to manufacture these nets entirely by hand.

It is surprising how quickly girls are able to turn out one of these unwieldy fish catchers which may measure 100 feet from its "wings" to its tip. The nets are finally thoroughly immersed in a tar bath for protection from the action of salt water.

The ropewalks where three strands are twisted into rope are most interesting, though nowadays they are being replaced by improved patented machinery which takes up less room and requires fewer operators.

When sailing ships ruled the waves, almost every seacoast town had its own ropewalk, some a quarter of a mile long. In Belfast there were about a dozen, but by 1880 most of this business was handled by a single company closely affiliated with the shipbuilding industry. Most of the smaller works disappeared and gradually the rope demand lessened as steamships supplanted the sailing vessels.

The advent of the reaping machine literally saved the day for rope-makers and now their largest volume of business is with Canada, the United States and South America, to whom they supply twine for binding grain sheaves.

Shipbuilding now is a very vital factor in the city's life. Such liners as the Titanic, the Olympic, and the Britannic were constructed in Belfast, and during the World war the plants proved of inestimable value to the Allies. The two giant shipbuilding concerns have prospered under the very unusual circumstance of having to import not only their raw materials but their coal.

The people of North Ireland seem to consume more tea than the Chinese! Tea upon first awakening, tea for breakfast, tea at eleven (although, of late, coffee drinking has become popular at that hour), tea at luncheon, tea at five, tea at ten, and it is often served at midnight! There is "high tea' ' and "lowtea" and simply "tea"—depending upon the amount of food served with it. If you are invited to stop in "fer a drap o' tea," you are safe in calling any hour of the day or night.

Often, in midsummer, one returns from a dinner party or even from the theater by daylight, as the sun does not set until very late because of the city's northern location. Belfast is about on a line with the northern Aleutian islands and is nearer the North Pole than the northernmost tip of Newfoundland.

The "lighting-up time" for automobile lamps in July is about 11 p. m. After 6 o'clock, which is the closing hour for the majority of the factories, many streets during the summer months seethe with humanity till past midnight, making the operation of a motor vehicle literally impossible.

## Queen Bee Is Very Busy During Swarming Season

During the swarming season bees reveal most amazingly the intricate functioning of instinct, states a writer in Literary Digest. New queens have been developed in their circular cells. Quality of food determines whether an egg shall become a queen or a worker bee. Queens are fed bee-jelly (propolis) by their nursemaids, workers receive bee-bread, which is largely pollen scraped from the hairy legs of worker bees. The old queen departs with her retinue, leaves the hive to the newly hatched queen.

The virgin queen prowls around looking for the cells of unhatched queens. If the colony is large enough to permit swarming, guards prevent the virgin queen from attacking her sisters who are on the point of hatching. If the hive population is small, swarming inadvisable, the newly hatched queens battle to the death, the fittest remaining to take charge of the hive as ruthless dictator.

When the hive is large enough to swarm, bees leave the colony in clouds to follow their new queen. They gather in great clusters, clinging to one another's bodies, on tree limbs, fence posts, almost any nearby object, and the alert beekeeper must have a new hive ready to entice them into.

## STAR DUST
### MOVIE AND RADIO
*By Virginia Vale*

THERE was a rather funny reaction to an interview that Edward G. Robinson gave a reporter for an Italian newspaper some time ago. He praised the work of Frank Capra, the director, who is Italian by birth, saying that Capra refused to direct gangster films.

He remarked that he thought it was because Capra did not want to make pictures which showed his own people in a bad light. When the storm burst it hit, not Capra, but Robinson. Seems the Italians thought gangsters were something like senators—an American institution of which Americans were proud!

—★—

The long discussion over which actress would play the mother role in "Stella Dallas" has been settled at last. It goes to Barbara Stanwyck, who seems a bit young for it, but of course there's always make-up. And anyway, the part is to be rewritten to fit her.

**Barbara Stanwyck**

At the moment the "Gone With the Wind" pursuit of a heroine is still raging, but no doubt that will be settled in the same way—some attractive, dependable actress whose screen work is known to the public everywhere will get it.

—★—

**Phil Baker, who has long been one of radio's favorite comedians, has learned a lot from what has happened to other men like him when they consented to make a picture. And he is profiting by what he has learned. He knows that, when the picture is released, the comedian's part may have been cut and cut until there is practically nothing left of it.**

—★—

Apparently a lot of old stories are to be re-made during 1379. "BenHur" is up for discussion—maybe with both Clark Gable and Robert Taylor in it. There was a time when, if three featured players were in a picture, it was advertised as having an all-star cast. Now the producing companies put several of their biggest stars into one picture and just take it as a matter of course, as do the audiences. And this may be one of the reasons for the increasing attendance in picture houses everywhere.

**Clark Gable**

—★—

**Speaking of romantic stories, even the movies can't beat the one of Wallace Ford's long search for his mother and his finding her just before Christmas. It's about 38 years since she had to put him in an English orphanage, and Ford found her living in an automobile trailer, and the wife of a blind match seller. Now he is going to do all the things for her that he has planned during the long years when he was trying to find her.**

—★—

*Odds and Ends . . . Hollywood is still regretting the death of Irene Fenwick, Lionel Barrymore's wife; theirs was an exceptionally happy marriage, and Miss Fenwick was very popular . . . Now that Bette Davis is back at work they are working her so hard that she barely has a chance to breathe, to make up for the time lost when she was battling with the company . . . "After the Thin Man" is just as funny as "The Thin Man" was, so don't miss it . . . And you'll surely want to see "Beloved Enemy," with Merle Oberon and Brian Aherne*

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## Foreign Words and Phrases

A propos de rien. (F.) Apropos of nothing; without relevancy.

Crux criticorum. (L.) The puzzle of critics.

En rapport. (F.) In touch; well versed in a subject.

Fuit Ilium. (L.) Troy once stood; i. e., Troy is no more.

Inter nos. (L.) Between ourselves.

Lustspiel. (Ger.) Comedy.

Paris vaut bien une messe. (F.) Paris is well worth a mass; attributed to Henry IV.

Quod erat faciendum. (L.) Which was to be done.

Nosce teipsum. (L.) Know thyself.

Sang-froid. (F.) Cold blood; self-possession; indifference.

Toujours perdix. (F.) Always partridge; i. e., everlastingly the same thing.


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