



The Christmas season means many different things to people in many different lands. The Americans have their Santa Claus...

break a Pinata and in Holland the youngsters leave food for Nick's reindeer. But wherever the country and its traditions...

the local group of American Field Service students is the same: 'Merry Christmas.' Spending the holiday season with their American families are (from left) Rob K Kelly, Scotland; Eva...

Kramming, Sweden; Ricky Mehru, India; Federico Olivieri, Italy; Sanneke Balhuis, Holland; Joachim Turorf, Germany; Jürgen Schwartz, Germany; Regula Allenspach, Switzerland; and Anke Thies, Germany.

Recollections of Christmas

Family, Dolls, Santa and the Tree

By ETHEL SIMMONS

Not being able to remember what you got for Christmas when you were a child probably is a good sign...

I don't remember an empty Christmas stocking so I probably never had one...

What I do "remember" about childhood Christmas gifts, however, is mostly what I have been reminded of—for your mother and father can recall more vividly what they got for you than you recall the getting.

Also, you're most likely to remember the toy. In this case, a doll that survived—there it has been sitting in a doll carriage over the years...



SIMMONS

MY SISTER and I got doll-every Christmas, my mother reports in 1964, but the only one I remember are two dolls still at home. One, my "big" sister, was a large-size doll with a pink or ganjy dress...

BECAUSE MY brother was younger, I can recall more about what he got for Christmas. One year we went to the store and...

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picked out a memorable red-and-white fire engine for him from Santa. Then there was the year my sister and I got permission to tell him there wasn't any Santa Claus...

WE ALWAYS bought and put up the tree on Christmas Eve, but it was a project that involved trading from one lot to another until the price and tree were right...

HER FAMILY MEMORIES

Yule Season Shines At Evening Services

By MARY BAHN

Christmas, for me, is culminated in attending church on the eve of the holiday. Every though the setting may have been different...

On the way, we would see neighbors and friends whom we would tell "what we got for Christmas." Everyone looked so happy that evening that they glowed...

AFTER church, we would trundle on home again, to be greeted by Grandma who had stayed at home to prepare a Christmas "snack."



BAHN

seemed like treasures in those days, but they probably weren't much different than ornaments now. There were little Santa Clauses, all shapes and many-colored...

MY MOTHER also remembers her Christmases as a child. She said they had an uncle, a young bachelor who boarded with the family...

usual amounts of parties at this time, but we usually found time to take a "partying break" at midnight to attend a nearby church service.

Dear Santa Claus: Please come early this year. Unsuspecting as I usually am, I can't help but feel that there is a conspiracy against me this year...

Any morning we expect to get up and find all the wrappings gone from the packages under the tree. She just can't seem to wait. And morning, noon and night (plus some in-between times) And we have to keep remind-

Suburban Scene: Yuletide Potpourri

By MARY ELLEN MEAD

SHINING HOUR She was radiant when she stepped off the midnight plane. The sophistication of miniature gold earrings in pierced ears was heart-warmingly tempered by a glimpse of stuffed animals wedged in amongst the overweight.

YULE DIVIDEND His initials are J. L. and he received a thank-you note. He owns and operates local department stores, of some note, where the milk-kad trade mingles with the blue jean set...

LIKE LARKS The moon zeroed in from a star-spangled sky — the night was bitter cold—as car after car steamed up to Shain Park...

she insists on asking "how many days until Christmas" and we have to hold up appropriate number of fingers. AND SCOTTY, He is continually eating the popcorn (tumbled) of the tree that his mother and Robin jerked so hard stringing...

Pop Asks Santa for Early Arrival

By DAVE PHILPO

Dear Santa Claus: Please come early this year. Unsuspecting as I usually am, I can't help but feel that there is a conspiracy against me this year...

PHILPO He is continually eating the popcorn (tumbled) of the tree that his mother and Robin jerked so hard stringing...

Goes After a Tree; Finds an Adventure

By LARRY EVOE

Christmas is for Christmas tree salesmen and to give husbands ulcers. Post Joyce Kilmer had obviously never gone hunting for or erected from a Christmas tree when he wrote his classic tribute.

BEING IN a new and larger home this year, my wife had already decided the tree would have to be bushier and taller than in previous years when size was dictated by small living rooms.

Depositing the little one with a handy set of grandparents, we started out on the hunt. The first lot we stopped at was across the street from a funeral home; this alone should have shown me I was in for trouble.

That REMINDS me, Santa, don't bother to bring anything for us grownups this year. The stork took care of that just fine on Aug. 25. But back to Robin and Scotty. When it comes time for you to fill the orders, don't hold what I have said against them.

After all, Santa, 11 months is a long time to be good at one stretch. And the final 30 days before the big event can be an eternity when you are younger than five. We'll be listening for you tonight, Santa. Please hurry...

A BIRMINGHAM FATHER

THE WEATHER was mild so the vacant lot selected for the showroom had turned into a quagmire. The trees ringing the display were all perfect, at least from the street.

THE NEXT lot was near a bar (things were beginning to look up), but I resisted temptation and my argument about being cold wouldn't stand up.

THIS TIME we were barely out of the car when the salesman shouted, "Merry Christmas, folks; is there anything I can do for you?" We have a real fine selection.

Christmases in general is a most delightful time in our family. My wife has decorations in almost every room and this being our daughter's third holiday season the event was looked upon with great enthusiasm.

It's not hard to tell what time of year it is. The rain and warm weather, so uncommon to our Christmas season, and yet so prevalent as I sit here at the typewriter, has failed to dampen persons' spirits.

As my patience and the salesman's grew thin, we joined forces against my wife. "For Pete's sake, lady, no tree is perfect," and "I think that would look great, honey," we said. (SEE TREE, 1-A)

Christmas Shoppers—Gullible and Gay

By DICK ZEMMIN

Her arms loaded with packages, and with fire in her eyes, the woman Christmas shopper looks, for all purposes, like a charging fullback plunging through the center of the line for a touchdown. HOWEVER, HER powerful appearance is most deceiving to the unaware male sorting through goods on the counter; for when she reaches her goal, her hands move with the swiftness and sureness of a magician. In a matter of moments she is off again with her prize, leaving the hapless man wondering just what he could have missed after so carefully looking over the merchandise. One word of warning, men: Do not enter a revolving door with the woman Christmas shopper. You will either leave minus a few packages or else find yourself spinning indefinitely until the holidays are over. (SEE SHOPPERS, 1-A)

Early Deadlines Next 2 Issues

Officials of The Birmingham Eccentric will be closed on Christmas Day, Dec. 25; Saturday, Dec. 26; and on New Year's Day, Jan. 1. They will be open, however, on Saturday, Jan. 2. Because of the holidays early deadlines will be observed. Therefore, all advertisers and news contributors are asked to submit their copy as early as possible for the Dec. 31 and Jan. 7 issues. The Birmingham Eccentric extends the greetings of the season to everyone.

Eccentric Photo by Sam Fowler