

Santa Claus is the special friend of the young, which makes it only fitting that the town of Santa Claus, Indiana was named by children.

Today, thousands of children, from all parts of the world, write to Santa Claus c/o Santa Claus, Ind., and each of them receives a return letter from Santa Claus himself.

The stage was set for this happy situation more than one hundred years ago. The citizens of this small Indiana town were gathered to select a new name for their community. Originally, it was called Santa Fe, but postal authorities suggested selection of another name since there already was a Santa Fe in New Mexico.

**Timely Arrival**

Community leaders were considering a number of names for the town when someone dressed as Santa Claus came in. Immediately the children in the audience shouted "Santa Claus!" "Santa Claus!" The adults thought the name sounded fine, so the town of Santa Claus was born.

Business booms in the Santa Claus post office each year as Christmas approaches. Last year the post office handled well over 10,000 letters addressed to the old gentleman with the red suit and white whiskers — and each child who enclosed a return address re-

ceived a personal reply from Santa Claus himself.

Many of the letters received are in foreign languages, but Postmaster Elbert E. Reinke enlists the aid of monks at nearby St. Meinrad Monastery and they translate. Answers to foreign letters, the postmaster explains, are adapted to the different customs and ideas that children of other lands may have about the holiday season.

**Personal Reply**

The American Legion at Santa Claus handles the letter writing operation each Christmas, sending a personal reply to each child who has included a return address.

Adults don't write to Santa Claus, but many of them do have their Christmas cards mailed from Santa Claus, Ind., so they will bear the unusual postmark. In all, the busy Santa Claus post office handles well over 3,000,000 pieces of mail during the holiday season.

**Greeting Cards Express Feeling**

Friendly, merry, reverent, grateful — Christmas sentiments find expression in greeting cards at the holiday season.

Just when the sending of greeting cards first began is a question that may never be settled, especially since it is always possible that early examples of printed Christmas greetings are waiting to be found among private books and papers.

The Cole-Horsley card is considered by many to be the first published Christmas card. It was designed in Britain in 1843 by John Calcott Horsley, a well-known artist of the period, for Sir Henry Cole, director of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The card bears the now-universal greeting, "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You." It shows a joyous family seated at Christmas dinner.

A copy of the card, discovered in England in recent years by a representative of Hallmark, is now part of the Hallmark Historic Collection, housed at the greeting card company's headquarters in Kansas City, Mo.

Louis Prang of Boston, an art-loving lithographer, published the best known early Christmas greetings in the U.S. He conducted art and literary competitions for greeting card material, and published cards of outstandingly high quality.

**Yule Burns Bright**

The French traditionally exchange gifts on New Year's Day, but the burning of the Yule log at Christmas is an honored custom in many parts of the country. After carols are sung, wine is poured on the log by the youngest child.

**Ireland Lights Way For Christ Child**

The people of Ireland originated the tradition of burning a candle in the window at Christmas time. Legend said that the Christ Child might be wandering alone in the dark and cold, and they lit a candle to light him on his way.

**American Indians Redeem Legends**

Redeemer legends were common among American Indians. While some were aboriginal, others probably were greatly influenced by contacts with Europeans, especially missionaries.

One of these legends was gathered by the Reverend Ephraim S. Alphonse, a Wesleyan Methodist minister who lived among the Valiente Indians for 21 years. The legend concerns the Ulikron (orphan of the Virgin) and how he traveled long ago from the far, far north. He talked to stout little men, to tall red men, to men in huts, to men in tall houses made of stone, to men who make broad roads and wear fine soft clothes and pearls and silver and gold. The Ulikron passed among them long, long ago and told the men to be good, to love good, and to do good. The Ulikron passed and talked. His eyes were soft and seeing. His eyes saw through men. His eyes saw and saw and men looked on and wept and stopped their wars. They stopped their hate. Their bows and arrows shot the deer but never man again.

The Ulikron pointed to the stars. He talked of the Crab, the Plough, the Great Bear. He talked of the God above those stars and he told men to be good and he would come again for all good men; and men began to be good. All Indians wait for the Ulikron.

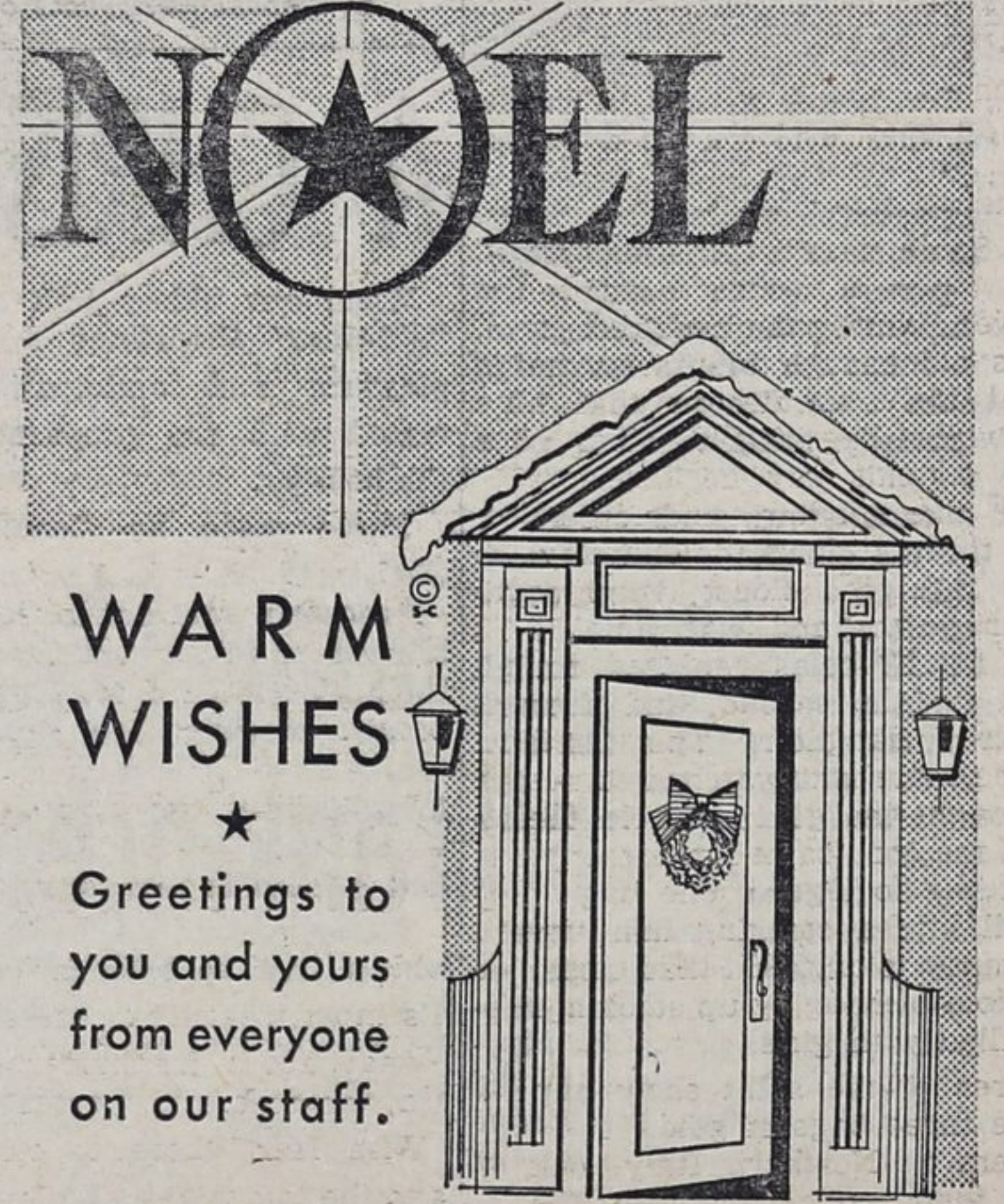
Such is the story of the Ulikron, which as you can see, closely parallels (and most likely is) the story of Christ.



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**Fire Can Spoil Happy Holiday**

Babbs Switch, Caribou and Billings can tell you that a happy Christmas is a safe Christmas.

Babbs Switch is a small Oklahoma community. On Christmas Eve, 1924, about 150 men, women and children were gathered in the frame schoolhouse for the community's biggest-ever Christmas party. A series of incidents — a Christmas tree branch brushed against a candle, a kerosene lamp knocked off a table, and a stage curtain thrown on the flames — led to a fire which destroyed the schoolhouse, killing 36 persons and injuring 40.

In more recent years, church fires occurred in Billings, Mont., and Caribou, Me.

In Billings, an attendant lighting candles accidentally set fire to a large velvet curtain behind the altar. Fire spread to a combustible fibre-board ceiling.

In Caribou, Christmas trees placed around an altar in the auditorium of a church fed a blaze. They were ignited when a small girl knocked over a tree which fell on lightened candles nearby.

And in Missouri, Christmas trees placed along the altar rail fed a blaze of undetermined origin.



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