

# A Final Gift List . . .

## The Glorious Anniversary

Christmas is a day of sacred rededication, when men feel and sense in its gentle spirit all the full and rich meaning of the most treasured gift ever given to mankind . . . the unerring promise of Peace and Goodwill.

Their homage to their Maker, on this sublime anniversary, is Christendom's most magnificent. Christmas, the festival and the joyous time, opens men's hearts in happy and divergent ways, the celebration accords everlasting tribute to a Man, once living and breathing, who mercifully shaped human destiny forever with his concepts of human behaviour.

Significantly, the time around our December 25th stretches back into antiquity as a time of mysterious import. The practice of pagan festivals on or about this date points to some unknown urge, felt even when the world was young "Bramalia," the Roman festival held at the winter solstice, when the sun, as it were, was born anew, took place about this date.

Some way, and in some manner, perhaps stirred by half forgotten tales of miracles, mankind has sought to express adoration on the birth of its Messiah, and in the seeking expressed its reverence in diverse and strange ways.

Although no certain knowledge of the day of Christ's birth existed, men began to conceive customs to recognize His power. With whatever at hand, a day was set aside to glorify this yearning, this queer stirring of the heart and of the soul. Homage took many forms, customs changed and became intermingled with age-old beliefs, loathe to abandon rites of long practice.

superstition mingled with a new measure of reverence, gradually both old and new blended into a great festival which, even today, is still coloured by pagan memory.

Over centuries of Christendom, this innate urge to sanctify some unexplainable power, even yet a mystery to all men, took its place in established festival when the Western Church fixed December 25th as the day of Christ's birth, and proclaimed that this day be set aside to rededicate His gift to the world. Many Eastern Churches, which had favoured January 6th, soon adopted the same date.

Now Christmas became the most important festival of the Christian Church. Roman Catholic, Greek, Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist, and others, created appropriate services for Christmas time in the homes in all Christian countries, Christmas became a day of household festivities, family reunions, and joy for the children.

But, lingering from antiquity, customs of long ago still persisted. Now the real meaning of Christmas was clear, the sincere but fantastic beliefs of the old and stored past became little more than tradition, kept alive only to preserve the primitive pleasures they accorded. Today, we have an ultimate altar at which to kneel in common reverence and in whole heart. The ancient customs spawned in bygone days are with us still, they are happily alive and in their colour and rich imagination help mark this Christmas Day on which we celebrate the direction and promise of our Maker.

"On Earth Peace, Goodwill Toward Men"  
(Reprinted from Atlas Steels)

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## A Final Gift List

The hustle and bustle of Christmas shopping is nearing an end and the stage is set for the arrival of the festive season. Preparations have been made for family celebrations, cards have been exchanged, gifts are being tied in the final frenzy of activity and a spirit of good fellowship and friendship has begun to set in, a spirit somehow unique but prevalent at the Christmas season.

Christmas is a season of gift giving and gift receiving. Perhaps you've completed your shopping and are rethinking to be sure none is missed.

For your consideration here is a last minute list of items, priceless in value, yet they will cost you nothing.

The gift of brotherhood to those discriminated against.

The gift of a friendly greeting to strangers.  
The gift of assistance to those in need.  
The gift of patience and forbearance to those who disagree with you.

The gift of moderation in speech and good example in conduct.

The gift of comfort to those in distress.  
The gift of good citizenship to your community.

The gift of understanding and happy home life to your children.

The gift of wholehearted response to your duties as a family member, a worshipper at a church or synagogue, as employer or employee and as a Canadian citizen.

The gift of daily thanks to the source from whom all gifts flow.

You won't find these gifts under the tree but you can find them within your heart.

# Sugar and Spice

BY BILL SAILEY

We nostalgics of the frantic twentieth century have a genius of sorts. We can take almost anything that is simple, clean and beautiful, and make it complex, sullied and a garish monstrosity.

Almost anything but not quite. We haven't quite ruined Christmas yet. But we have taken a day that was for our ancestors a simple observance of the birth of Christ and turned it into a gift-scrambling, card-exchanging, card-jangling, tub-thumping, several-weeks.

In the good old days the good old families rose early on Christmas Day and went to church where the parson gave them a two-hour appetite.

Then they went home and drank something hot to take off the chill. While the servants were sweating in the kitchen, preparing the vast dinner to come, the party took a bit of lunch. Then the ladies set off to distribute gifts to the poor while the gentlemen put their coats to the fire and tried to keep warm.

That's YOUR ancestors. I'm talking about mine. Mine were among the people the ladies were taking the food to. I can just see them kicking the pigs under the bed when her ladyship came in, tugging their forelocks, scraping their feet and saying, "Thank yer, Milady. Thank yer, Mum," as she pulled from her basket one of the pees that had died of his case, and one of last year's but that of blackberry brandy that had gone vinegary.

This Christmas, of course, my ancestors' descendants will eat turkey until they resemble

purple pigs, while the descend-ant of Milady, who have managed to hang onto the manor house only by taking tourists through at a shilling a shot, will dine in the only room of the big house they can afford to heat on a small bit of brick and brass spoons.

However, that's not what I started out to say. Well, despite all the weeping and throwing of hands in the air at the paganism and commercialism of Christmas today, I feel that we have failed somehow. We haven't quite managed to ruin Christmas.

I'll warrant our children know just as much, and maybe more, of the story of Christmas and the coming of the Christ-child as their counterparts of 100 years ago did. And I'll bet we are not as snug and selfish despite our much-touted materialism as our Victorian great-grandfathers were.

Witness service clubs scuffling about town with Christmas baskets for those less fortunate. Witness groups of youngsters singing carols at homes for old when her ladyship came in, tugging their forelocks, scraping their feet and saying, "Thank yer, Milady. Thank yer, Mum," as she pulled from her basket one of the pees that had died of his case, and one of last year's but that of blackberry brandy that had gone vinegary.

No grid up your loins, plunge into your shopping and debt, give for the joy of giving, be happy in the family reunion, go to church on Christmas Day, and don't be a hog with the turkey, and you won't go far wrong.

## Jovial Joe

### Needs Taxi for Yule Visits

A holiday is a time for frivolity and carefree joy, a time to be convivial and friendly, a time to be intermittently host and guest. In the days when highways were longways and dabbins could find his own way home, Jovial Joe was comparatively safe on his junkies.

It's different today. Joe, still jovial and juketing, has command of a couple of hundred horsepower and a two-ton vehicle (and thousands of other similar, unimpaired celebrators). The same manœuvre that dropped an alcoholic must over his unfoxy, singe eyes build within him a boldness and recklessness that reduces his driving ability and produces an unguided missile that takes

human life in horrifying quantity. Keep that driver off the walls of your home or take a taxi. There will come another Christmas and New Year's and you might want to be around, but not as a shameful memory.

### AVOID LYNCHING

In Canada it is an offence to leave the scene of an accident. But in India and Malaya motorists must not stop if they injure a pedestrian. They are required to drive straight to a police station. This serves a double purpose. The accident is reported promptly, and the driver avoids being lynched.

# The Ghosts of Christmases Past

## 10 YEARS AGO

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, Dec. 23, 1954.

About 80 children of employees of the Wool Combing Co. enjoyed the Christmas party. T. M. Dowell acted as Santa.

The last day of school was marked by two special assemblies at the public school, under the direction of Mrs. Turner and Miss Braida. Gwen Bean read a Christmas story. Neil Franklin recited and Karen Heller played a piano solo. In a Christmas pageant, David Papillon acted as Joseph, with Gloria Barber as Mary.

John Guy read the story. Gail Roszell gave a reading and Betty Garner recited. Others taking part were Bobby Cripps, Sheldon Blow, Teddy Branclawicz, Helen Benton, Donald Maude and Wayne Roszell.

R. R. Parker was master of ceremonies for the Beadmore party at the Rovy Theatre, with about 300 children and 70 adults present.

There were over 270 at the Legion party Saturday when the Hurst was master of ceremonies. Citizens prominent in municipal affairs in Halton county and other centres were guests. Last Thursday evening of Warden J. J. Stewart at the annual warden's dinner in the Royal Hotel, Guelph. All were loud in their praise of his courtesy and efficiency in office.

The high school contained a small-scale Tower of Babel when the classes in Basic English held a Christmas party. Mr. Ringler and Mr. Heron are the teachers.

Chronicles of Ginger Farm . . . I recall our first Christmas at Ginger Farm . . .

The Matley Co. assumes ownership of Ajax Engineers next week.

## 20 YEARS AGO

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday Dec. 21, 1934.

A very fine Christmas concert was presented by the pupils and teachers of the United Sunday school last Wednesday evening and enjoyed by a large audience of parents and friends. Christmas hymns were of course a feature and superintendent A. T. Brown and the minister Rev. A. W. Fosbury were chairmen. Little Diane Baird gave the scholars welcome and other features on the program were, a play entitled "Light in the Window"; a playette "Choosing a Doll" singing of old English carols, a cornet solo by Ken Anderson, a little play "Fairies Christmas Party" and the tableau "The Manger Scene" with the organ chimes playing the Christmas hymn "Silent Night".

A band and Santa Claus drew big and little children at this season of the year like the Pied Piper. In spite of strong and blustery weather, the Acton Boys' Band paraded Santa Claus behind the team of Mr. Evan Jones from the Beadmore and Co. gates on Elgin street to the town hall. All along the route the children tagged along. It was the Christmas party of the Beadmore Employees' Association for the Children and the versatile Reeve, J. M. McDonald was the jolly Santa Claus and the centre of the party while Bobby Anderson was the clown. It was held on Saturday Born — Papillon — At the Nursing Home, Guelph street, Acton on Friday, December 15th.

## 50 YEARS AGO

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, Dec. 24, 1914.

Merry Christmas! The merry sleigh bells will add a zest to Christmas time.

Acton's consumption of Hydro-Electric current is increasing every week. The services in the various churches on Sunday had a decidedly Christmas flavor.

Militia officials were here last week and purchased five or six army remnants from farmers.

Mrs. J. Kerr Brown, Winnipeg, was elected a member of the City Board of Education last week by a decided majority. Mr. Norman Wigglesworth of Ashgrove, has purchased the 100-acre farm of Mr. James H. Nixon.

The usual Christmas gifts to the children of the employees of the farm here have been bestowed during the week. Mr. Graham McDonald, Yonge street, had his right leg seriously injured when he was thrown to the ground when a load of hay upset.

There was a large attendance of former scholars and many happy reunions at the high school "At Home" on Tuesday evening, which was a very interesting function and a decided success.

Died — Thurtell — At the home of her grandson, A. T. Brown, Acton, on Friday, December 18, 1914. Mrs. Elizabeth S. Thurtell, in her 84th year.

## 75 YEARS AGO

Taken from the issue of the Free Press, Thursday, Dec. 26, 1839.

School election today at noon in the council chamber.

The Christmas tree and entertainment given by St. Alban's Sunday School in the town hall Monday evening was well attended.

Rev. W. E. Gifford, Chicago, is engaged to give an eloquent and entertaining in the Methodist church on the 30th inst.

The Free Press carrier boys are looking forward to New Year's morning when they will present their annual calendar. As usual, they modestly look for some acknowledgment of their regular and punctual visits.

The semi-annual examinations took place in the several departments of Acton public school on Friday. Owing to the inclement character of the weather, the attendance of visitors was smaller than usual. At the close of the day, short addresses were made by Messrs. I. Francis, W. T. Smythe and Dr. Auld, expressive of their satisfaction with the standing of the school.

Mr. Thomas T. Moore, principal of Acton school, attended examinations at Dublin where his son, Mr. T. James Moore, is teacher. The children were each presented with a Christmas present in the shape of an interesting book and an orange.

The concert given in the town hall by the Acton Lodge Ancient Order of United Workmen was first class in every respect. The musical program was enjoyable throughout except, perhaps, the half hour occupied by D.D.G.M. Billon, whose figures were rather dry for digestion at the time.

The Christmas entertainment of the Disciples Sunday School was a great success, the church being crowded. The Christmas arch bore presents for all the children.

The merchants will be glad to see brisk winter weather and a revival of trade. Sleighting has been poor.



CHRISTMAS PAGEANT pleased parents and friends Friday night when the St. Alban's Anglican church Sunday school pupils presented the annual Christmas concert. Left to right are Brenda Denny as Mary, Sharon Bradley as one of the angels and Randy Coker as Joseph.

## Floodlights New Trend In Outdoor Home Lights

The trend now in outdoor Christmas lighting and decorating is to floodlighting, used alone or to highlight a single, effective theme.

According to Ontario Hydro's Lighting Service, simplicity is the key to effective outdoor Christmas lighting.

For outdoor floodlighting, Hydro's Lighting Service recommends Par 38 floodlights, which are available in white with removable colored caps, as well as in a range of permanent colors. Also available this season are floodlight kits, which contain a 100-watt colored outdoor floodlamp and six feet of weather-proof cord. The lamps can be hung, or placed in the ground on a spike which is also supplied.

For the best effect, 150-watt floodlights should be placed as far back from the house as possible, up to about eight feet. Low

king shrubbery is ideal for concealing the floodlights.

Colors must be selected with care. Blue lights are ineffective on anything but white or buff exteriors, and turn red brick an unattractive purplish brown. Red light on red brick provides a warm and cozy look and contrasts well with surrounding snow.

An interesting architectural feature, such as a corner or gable, or a decoration, can be highlighted, but the rest of the house should be bathed in light as well. Use similar wattage lamps for all floodlighting, with a white lamp for accent and a pastel color for the remaining lamps.

Lighting equipment should be approved for use outdoors by the Canadian Standards Association, and identified by the CSA certification mark, a large "C" enclosed

## NEW LIST

Joe Jones, writing his old economics professor, saw a list of current exam questions.

"Why, those are the same questions you asked when I was in school," he said.

"Yes," said the professor, "we ask the same questions every year."

"But don't you know the students hand the questions along from one year to the next?"

"Sure," said the prof, "but in economics we change the answers."

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**MERRY CHRISTMAS**

We take great pleasure in sending you our every good wish for Yuletide happiness, and the best of health and success in days to come.

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