

Gull-Marie Recalls Swedish 'Jul' Season With Her Family

By Gull-Mari Lundberg

The Yuletide spirit invades Sweden long before Dec. 24 arrives. The snow which starts falling in November, lays in December like a beautiful soft white cover several feet thick providing a natural setting for Christmas preparations.

Dec. 24 was celebrated in Sweden long before Christ was born, and the Swedish word for Christmas; "jul" (the same as the English yule) is an old heathen word. Dec. 24 is the darkest day of the year, and the old Vikings used to celebrate the fact that the days would be getting longer and they would see the sun again at their "midwinterblot", (blot is the same word as blood) the annual feast of sacrifice to the gods Odin, Tor, and Blader.

This midwinter feast would mean wild carousing, and still to-day you will find a great emphasis laid on the materialistic aspect of the Christmas celebrations in Sweden: there are innumerable traditional Christmas-dishes and you are forced to stuff yourself with an incredible amount of food.

On Dec. 23 you decorate the Christmas tree which the men in the family have cut down themselves if you don't live in a big city where there are far too many people and too few conifers growing wild to enable you to keep this custom. On this day you are also very busy writing witty poems on the presents you are giving.

Early on the morning of the 24th, mother gets up and prepares a big tray on which she puts little wax candles and tulips growing in clay pots. She comes into the room singing an old medieval Christmas song.

And if you listen closely to the words you will hear that the song begins: "Good evening and Merry Christmas both husband and wife".

But you are so dazzled by the light and so surprised, supposedly, that the only impression you get is that at last the glorious miracle which happens every year is come.

You are so happy and bewildered that you all but forget to wish mother Merry Christmas. She gives you a candle, a tulip, something warm to drink and a plate with ten different Christmas cookies made according to the same recipes for generations and generations.

Then she goes around to everybody in the house waking them up in the same manner.

For Christmas dinner, all relatives are invited. You form a long line, take hands and dance through every room in the house and twice around the big table singing a song which begins "Now Christmas is here again and our Christmas will last until Easter".

After dinner everyone goes to his own home. Now you light the white wax candles of the Christmas tree, hymns are sung, the gospel according to St. Luke is read, and the children try to forget their excitement about Santa Claus.

Then father says that he has to buy some cigarettes. Everyone says, "Please don't go; 'tomten' may come while you are out." ("Tomten" is the Swedish equivalent to Santa Claus; he is from the old Swedish folklore, although in his present form he has much in common with the Dutch St. Nicholas.)

Father leaves (though mother pretends to be very angry with him for doing so) and he promises to be back in five minutes. In five minutes the bell rings, and the children rush to open the door for father.

But no, it isn't father! It is a very old man with a long white beard and a heavy sack full of intriguing parcels. "Oh Mamma, it's

"tomten!" Or isn't it? For a long time the children have been saying that this time they would really have a close look at him and see for themselves whether the girl next door was right in saying that it was just father in disguise.

But somehow you don't dare to. "Tomten" is very, very nice, to be sure; but he is at the same time just a wee little bit frightening. He has a way of putting embarrassing questions to you, such as: "Have you been a good little girl all the year, and done everything mother has told you?" This just makes you want to look down at your toes when you hesitatingly and timidly answer yes.

You curtsy very reverently (all girls curtsy and boys bow to their elders in Sweden) and are secretly pleased that he is so busy that he can't stay until father comes back. When "tomten" leaves, the tension is over, and when Father comes back the children are so sorry that Father has missed him again.

Father, however, explains that he didn't miss him altogether, for they met in the street.

What's more, he has got a Christmas present that "tomten" had forgotten and asked him to deliver. This of course proves that he really did get to see him, which comforts the distressed child.

On Christmas Eve you go to bed very late and have to get up at 3 o'clock to go to early morning service. This does not begin until 6 o'clock but you have to be there in good time to be able to get into the church which is crowded on this occasion. Although there are five services on the 25th everyone feels that if they have not attended the earliest one they can't get the real Christmas feeling.

You go to church in big sleighs and carry torches which you stick into the snow outside the church. The bells jingle and everyone is very cheerful in spite of the early morn and the bitter cold.

On Christmas day the first party is held which especially the children enjoy. You sing a lot, play many games, and dance Christmas around the Christmas tree. I believe that Sweden is the only country where this is done.

In many countries, people stand or walk in processions around it singing Christmas carols but we have different traditions. The celebrating ends with a big party for the children during which you throw out the Christmas tree. When this takes place, the celebrating has been going on for a long time although our Christmas doesn't quite, as it says in the song, "last until Easter".

News Briefs

The Canterbury Club will meet Monday, Dec. 13, at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Frazier will lead the second of two discussions on the doctrines of the Episcopal Church. The meeting will be held in the date room of Clewell. Everyone interested is urged to attend.

Miss Elizabeth Ann Collett, Mrs. Robert Prongay, and Mrs. Edwin Hubbard represented Salem College on Dec. 3 and 4 at the N. C. Conference of the American Association of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation. During the meeting, held in Chapel Hill, Miss Collett was elected secretary-treasurer of the Research Division of the organization.

Paul Peterson, head of the voice department, will serve as moderator for a discussion group at the National Voice Teachers' Convention being held in Chattanooga, Tenn., during the Christmas holidays.

Mr. Peterson is also Lieutenant-Governor of the Southeastern States of the National Association of Teachers of Singing and will attend the officers' meeting being held at the convention. Mr. Peterson is past president of the N. C. Chapter and was instrumental in organizing the first Regional Voice Workshop conducted in the south.

Linda Tells Of Yule Season In The Philippines

By Erlinda Abueg

Christmas is a universal feast and its very spirit tends to bring about a certain sense of unity among people of different races.

To Filipinos, Christmas is a great, big, and Holy day involving a lot of preparation on the spiritual as well as the material side.

Two or three weeks before the day, one will scent Christmas everywhere he goes. Christmas songs and jingles, the strains of the Silent Night and Adestle Fideles fill the air with Christmas spirit. There is a sense of holiness and good cheer pervading everywhere.

In most homes, they have a Christmas tree, a miniature Bethlehem or a crib, or a star-shaped paper lantern hanging in the window. The department stores downtown are lighted with multicolored lights and decorated with Santa Claus, reindeers or lanterns.

Spattered on the doors of many stores are huge signs saying "Big Xmas Sale". Then you know that people are starting their Christmas shopping.

About seven days before Christmas day, many Filipinos start their real spiritual preparations by attending early 4:00 a.m. masses everyday. Finally on the 24th, a solemn midnight mass is held in every church so that at the stroke of 12, weary people, rich and poor alike, start Christmas day on their knees in prayer.

In most houses, it is customary to have a midnight snack or "noche buena" of which the whole family partakes.

On Christmas day, those who hadn't gone to midnight mass do so in the morning wearing their best dress, their best suit, and the cheeriest greeting of a "Merry Christmas".

Maligayang Pasko, At Masaganang Bagong Taou!

Library Given Special Book

By Beth Paul

In the lobby of the Salem College Library, on a small table near the desk is a book called "The Book of Remembrance." This book was a gift to the library in 1952 by a group of friends of the library.

The primary purpose of this book is to allow those people who wish to express their sympathy to a family in bereavement, to express this sympathy in a permanent remembrance of the deceased person. Instead of sending flowers to the family of the deceased, one may send money to the library. The name of the donor and the name of the person in whose memory the money was sent are both written in "The Book of Remembrance."

A special name plate is put in the book or books that are purchased with the money received.

The students in Clewell Dormitory are the first students to use this book, having used it to express their sympathy to two fellow class-mates.

Last year, the library received about eight hundred dollars through "The Book of Remembrance" gifts.

Salem Ensemble

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were given by Peggy. Instrumental soloists, Suzanne Gordon on the violin and Suzanne Delaney at the harp, accompanied the Ensemble in an arrangement of "Silent Night."

Miss Margaret Vardell played two organ solos, and Beverly Brown accompanied the chorus. Paul Peterson, choral director, also sang a solo.

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Marie's Summer Christmas Similar To Our Winter One

By Maria-Ines Astorga

Christmas in Chile is different from that in the United States in the sense that it falls during the summer vacation. But in spite of this, we carry out the traditions of Christmas, such as Santa Claus, Christmas trees, Christmas cards, and religious services much in the same way as is done in this country.

In Chile, Christmas Eve is called Noche Buena. Before twelve, families stay together in their homes and throughout the cities and country everything is silent. A little before twelve, most people go to midnight mass which is called Mise del Gallo or Mass of the Cock. This signifies Peter's betrayal of Christ.

At twelve o'clock church bells ring out, announcing the arrival of Christmas day. There is then much noise and celebration including fireworks, parties and formal dances. The people return from mass to their homes or to the homes of friends for large suppers called cena de Pascua. In the homes where there are no small children, the grown-ups usually open their Christmas gifts at this time.

But in the homes where there are small children, presents from Santa Claus are placed under the Christmas tree for the sleeping children to open when they awake on Christmas morning.

Christmas day is a day for the children. In the cities, they take their toys from Santa out into the streets and squares to play with and to show their friends.

In the country, Christmas Eve and Christmas day are spent in a much quieter way than in the city. The workers and the farm people go to church and seem to be more devoted to the real concept of Christmas.

It is customary that the owners

of the large Chilean farms give presents to the families of their farm workers. Their presents are usually useful ones such as clothes.

The wife of the President of the Republic is chairman of a Christmas committee which collects money and presents the entire year to be given to the poor people.

The Christmas decorations found in the homes of Chile are similar to those here except that they are not quite as elaborate. In almost every home there can be found a Christmas tree called an abeto which is either a large branch of pine or a large real Christmas tree.

They are decorated with cotton, small lighted candles, and ornaments. Every home also has a Nativity scene—some with figures made of cardboard and some with figures similar to those in the Putz except smaller.

The streets and store windows are decorated for the holidays, but not as elaborately as they are here. These decorations are not put up as early as Thanksgiving as is the custom in the United States.

The people of Chile do not go Christmas caroling, but singing carols is a part of their Christmas celebration. "O Holy Night" is one of the important carols sung.

The Christmas cards that are sent are very similar to those found in this country. Most of them send best wishes for the New Year as well as Christmas greetings, thus the cards arrive between Christmas and New Year's Day as well as before Christmas.

For the greater part, the customs and festivity of Christmas in Chile are similar to those of the United States. It will seem different though to spend the holidays where the weather is cold or where there may be a white Christmas.

Feliz Pascua Y Ano Nuevo!



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