

Christmas Visit to The Seven Fountains

In 1540 when a plague was raging in Switzerland, 12 pious men of Rheinfelden formed a brotherhood to pray for St. Sebastian's aid, and to nurse the sick and bury the dead. Pestilence in medieval times was ascribed to evil spirits in water, so the Brotherhood of St. Sebastian visited each of the town's seven fountains, praying and singing hymns at each stop. They still continue this custom, but only on Christmas Eve. For that ritual the 12 Brothers are dressed in black, with black silk top hats. At every fountain they

Abbreviation, Xmas Of Greek Origin

There has been much unfavorable comment on the abbreviated form for Christmas that is commonly used. Many think it inappropriate and ungracified to use the shortened form, Xmas.

The explanation of its origin is that the initial letter of the Greek name for Christ is X and the coincidence of its cruciform shape led to an early adoption of this letter as the name and symbol of Christ. X is frequently found on walls of the catacombs. When the early Christians wished to make a representation of the Trinity, they would place either a cross or an X beside the names of the Father and the Holy Ghost. From this came the shortened form, Xmas, instead of Christmas.

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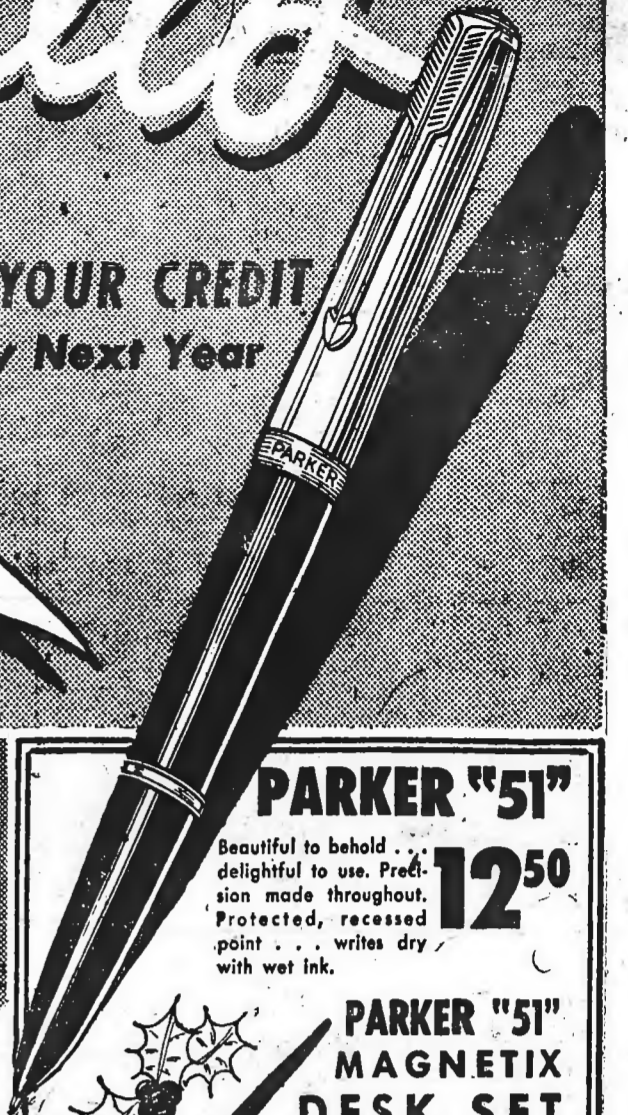
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