



Small Worlds Around Us

By Lynn M. Watkins

Termites Live in Colonies—And Run a Stern State

The termites are native to warm countries and grow and thrive prodigiously in nearly all the tropical regions of the earth. But within the past few years they have extended their range until today they are present in nearly every section of America.

They are not white ants, although this belief continues to exist in the minds of a good many people. There is a slight resemblance, but it is only superficial. Termites are classed as social insects and like the ants and the bees live in colonies. They also have a working social organization that compares with the others, and one which is not too well understood.

The termites have gone underground. At all times they avoid the light. He carves out a name for himself by eating wood and in this respect he is unique. Other insects may

bore holes in wood, build their nests in it, but they never eat it, they carefully throw it away in the form of tiny piles of sawdust. But not the termite, he really eats the wood.

With The Grain

And there is a certain method to his eating; he eats with the grain. At intervals he cuts across into another alley, so that all the channels connect with one another. In this way the termite in the adjoining tunnel can come over, or have his friends drop in on him.

As hateful as this dirty white insect is, it is surprising how many friends he always has working for him. They assist him in all his dirty work, and they don't get any credit whatsoever. They too work in the dark, and strange as it seems they work inside the termite. These little organisms live in the stomach and intestines and predigest the cellulose. Cellulose is wood, and it must be worked on by the little animal helpers to make the wood digestible for the termite.

The termite family or colony consists of a winged king and queen. Around this nuclei of leadership live thousands of wingless policemen and workers. The policemen or soldiers, are readily recognizable by their large heads and biting mouth parts. These do the ground duty for the colony, and probably keep the workers on the job. There is no shirking here: the soldier promptly bites the head off any worker who pauses for very long.

Undoubtedly they also dispose of all members who have aged beyond the point of productivity. No termite ever dies of old age.

Egg-Laying Machine

The termite queen occupies a chamber by herself. She is so swollen with eggs that she is incapable of moving. She is fed and administered to by the workers who favor her every whim. The eggs are removed as fast as they are laid, and carefully tended by other workers in a regular nursery. The queen is little more than an egg-laying machine and all her off-spring are owned by the termite state; and it is a government that tolerates no interference.

The baby termites are fed special food and brought to an early development, to aid in the furtherance of the colony. Here also, the first and most rigid selection takes place. The weak or immature insects are disposed of by the watchful soldiers. These members of the insect "gestapo" are careful that only healthy and strong workers survive the early stage of infancy.

In the complex organization of termite society there are many imponderables that loom many times larger than these tiny, dirty-white, ant-like creatures that are gnawing away constantly in a world that knows no sunlight. (Released by The Register and Tribune Syndicate, 1959)

Treated Chicken Sales Suspended

Washington—(UPI)—Secretary Arthur S. Flemming has announced a voluntary plan to halt sales of chickens treated with a synthetic sex hormone which has been known to cause cancer in experimental animals.

Flemming said the plan, involving less than 1 per cent of all chickens, was developed because residues of the hormone had been found in treated chickens.

The hormone is stilbestrol. Flemming, secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, said housewives would be able to buy chicken with confidence following his action because:

—He has asked representatives of the poultry industry and food retailers to discontinue sales of treated birds immediately. He said, "I am confident this will be done."

—He has asked manufacturers of stilbestrol for use in poultry to immediately suspend the sale of the product for this use. They have agreed.

Nixon-Rockefeller Ticket Proposed

Springfield, Ill.—(UPI)—The national chairman of the Republican party has offered the possibility of a 1960 ticket of Richard M. Nixon for president and Nelson Rockefeller for vice president.

Sen. Thruston B. Morton told a news conference that Vice President Nixon "is far ahead" among party workers in building up support for the nomination and "if Mr. Nixon gets it, we might prevail upon Mr. Rockefeller" to bid for the vice president slot.

TREE CRUSHES YOUTH

Portland—(UPI)—John Shutz, 18, Dayton, died in a hospital Wednesday from injuries received when he was crushed by a falling tree at his home Tuesday. Shutz was rushed to Providence hospital for emergency treatment, but died Wednesday afternoon.

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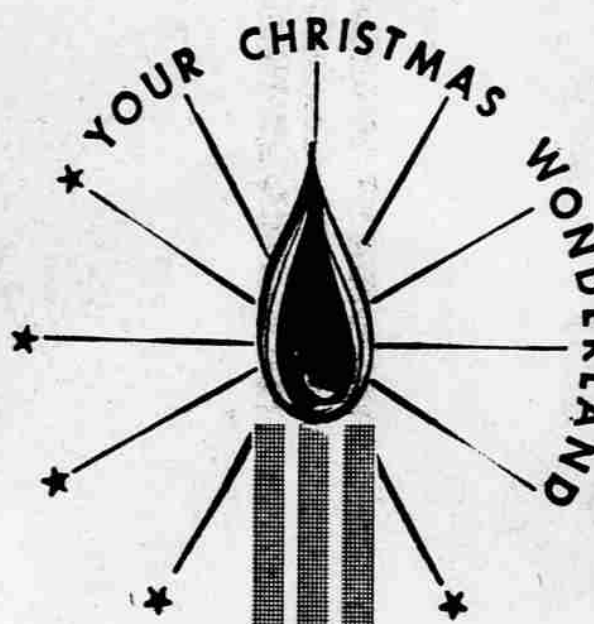


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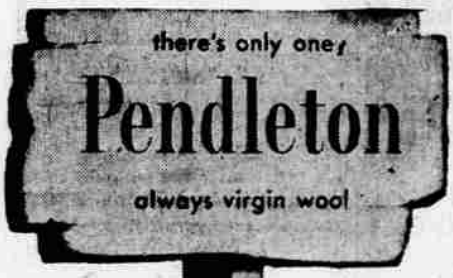
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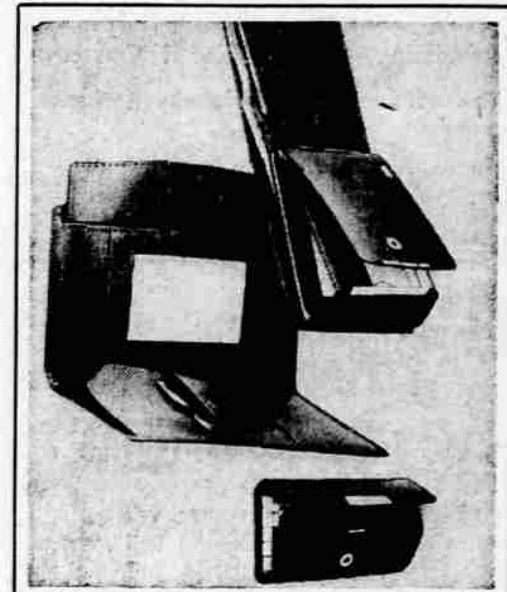


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