

JEREMY CHRISTMAS

A Yuletide Story

BY WALT SCOTT



Big Health Achievement Noted By Yule Seals

By DELOS SMITH

NEW YORK (UPI)—Let's play a guessing game. What are Christmas seals for?

If you are vague in your answer, it dramatizes the greatest public health achievement in the history of the Western world.

The first buyers of Christmas seals 51 years ago weren't merely buying traditional decorations for their Christmas mail. They were fighting the dreaded "white plague"—tuberculosis—which was all around them and might well kill them, as it was killing their relatives and friends.

How astonished our forefathers would be if they could know that in 1958 it is necessary to explain the white plague to many people, and to identify "the captain of all these men of death," as the English preacher and author, John Bunyan, characterized it some 300 years ago. Readers with the longest memories may not realize that the younger generations have had little or no personal knowledge of tuberculosis.

"The Captain" today is a faint shadow of its old self. It killed only 7.8 out of every hundred thousand Americans last year. It killed almost 200 out of every hundred thousand in 1900.

In 1958 there is no unchangeable reason why any person must die of TB.

Some believe tuberculosis is done for in our country. One of these is Dr. Louis I. Dublin, one of the world's most respected statisticians. He believes, on a statistical basis, that tuberculosis will be "eradicated" from the

United States within 20 years even if no more is done to combat it than is being done now.

But medical and other scientists who know "The Captain" on much more intimate terms than Dublin is right, as much as they'd like to have the same faith. They have an abiding sense of unease. They know the enemy well and what alarms many of them most is that a large and growing segment of the public hardly knows the enemy at all any more.

Nothing big-scale can be done

in this country without full public support, and this is written at the urging of bacteriologists, microbiologists, public health authorities and physicians who treat tuberculosis, and whom this writer meets on his reportorial rounds. They want everyone to know this enemy—weakened though it may be—and to be on guard against it.

The rub is that the disease, tuberculosis, and the bacterium (the tubercle bacillus) which causes it, hang onto many of their mysteries, as do the processes of defense human body chemistry which

have much to do with whether the bacterium kills or has little or no effect. These unknowns enormously complicate guesses as to TB's future. The more experienced the tuberculosis scientist, the more likely he is to shun predictions and say simply, "I don't know."

There is plausible evidence that tuberculosis would have become a comparatively minor disease even if there had not been a vast anti-tuberculosis crusade sparked by an army of professionals and volunteers and financed in part by the \$438,440,000 which the public has put into Christmas seals since 1907. But for several reasons this is not of complete comfort to all TB-fighters.

One disturbing thing is that the drugs of rather recent discovery, which can "arrest" 70 to 90 per cent of all tuberculosis cases—but not cure in the complete sense—may well lose their power, and anyway there are many technical difficulties in using them effectively.

Also, with fewer tubercle bacilli circulating among us than ever before, some authorities fear we may be building a population of people which would be highly susceptible to them if they were challenged at some future time.

There is no chance of wiping the TB bacterium off the face of the earth. When anyone speaks of quick "eradication" he means from the United States, the countries of Western Europe, and Japan. In other parts of the world the bacillus thrives and tuberculosis is high up among the top killers of human beings just as it was everywhere 50 years ago.

Home Extension

CHRISTMAS PARTY

KENO — Keno Home Extension Unit members met at the home of Mrs. Douglas Shaw for the group's annual Christmas party December 10. Gifts were wrapped and boxes filled for the pioneers and shut-ins in the community. This is an annual project. Mrs. Lilly Lynn and Mrs. Bill Weatherby became new members.

VOICE OF EXPERIENCE

NEWTON, Iowa (UPI)—When police recovered a car stolen by three teen-agers Monday, the senior member of the trio, aged 15, was teaching his two younger companions to drive.

OBJECTS STOLEN

The Klamath County Sheriff's Office reports that Ray Chase of Fort Klamath had a number of objects stolen from his ranch on Saturday night. Among these were a black silver mounted ladies' saddle and a man's Rowell rough out double rig quilted seat saddle.

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Delay In Sounding Alarm Blamed For Chicago Fire

CHICAGO (AP)—A delay in sounding a fire alarm and a mix-up in street addresses are cited by Chicago's fire commissioner as two of the direct causes of the deaths of 89 pupils and three nuns in the Our Lady of the Angels School fire.

Had fire fighters reached the school as little as three minutes earlier, Robert J. Quinn told a coroner's jury investigating the Dec. 1 fire, there might have been no lives lost.

Firemen were able to save 160 children, he added. Many of the victims were trapped in their second-floor rooms by heavy, black smoke.

Quinn said that there were "definite discrepancies" as to when the alarm was sounded.

"There were three persons inside the school building who knew of the fire and did not give an alarm immediately," he declared.

He apparently referred to the testimony of Miss Pearl Tristano, 24, a fifth grade teacher, who said she and one of her pupils smelled smoke between 2:35 and 2:40 p.m. She notified a teacher in an adjoining room. The teacher hunted unsuccessfully for the mother superior.

Miss Tristano said she sounded the school alarm, but only after she had led her class out in fire

drill formation. The school alarm does not ring in the Fire Department office.

When a telephoned alarm did come at 2:42 p.m., said Quinn, the address given was that of the rectory, half a block from the burning school. Firemen had to waste precious moments, he said, asking where the blaze actually was.

Asked why the Fire Department did not sound an extra alarm as soon as it knew a school was afire, Quinn answered, "It's a good suggestion, but in a case like this, if he had sent 500 companies on the first alarm, it wouldn't have done much good."

"In fire fighting you win or lose in the first few minutes."

Earlier, Robert J. O'Brien, chief of the city's Fire Prevention Bureau, said he believes the fire burned in the school 20 minutes before it was noticed.

James R. Raymond, 44, janitor at the school, told the inquest previously he noticed the fire about 2:20 to 2:25 p.m. and told two pupils in a boiler room about it. Two boys did carry newspaper to the boiler room at about that time, but did not mention smoke.

Both Quinn and O'Brien had recommendations to make concerning safety standards.

Quinn said all vertical openings such as elevators and stairs should be enclosed. He also said public telephones should be installed on all floors of schools and public buildings.

O'Brien said he would recommend, among other things, these improvements in old buildings such as the 40-year-old parochial school: more exits, an improved fire alarm system, a fire alarm box in front of the school, fire doors between rooms, more outside fire escapes, enclosed stairwells and abolishment of transoms over doors.

"Gin" in "cotton gin" is an abbreviation for "engine."



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PTA NEWS

PAISLEY — Solos and numbers by the Paisley High School Girls Chorus, were featured at the December meeting of the Paisley PTA held at the school auditorium Wednesday evening, December 10, at 8 p.m.

The girls sang "Winter Wonderland" and gave a short skit, "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer." A baton number was given by Gail DuBose; Barbara Nelson played a violin solo, "None but the Lonely Heart;" and Paul Atkins was clarinet soloist who played "Song of Spring."

The program was concluded with the audience participating in singing Christmas carols led by Barbara Nelson. Mrs. James Foster was accompanist for the chorus, soloists and caroling.

The PTA will have a Christmas dance, December 25, at the high school gymnasium.

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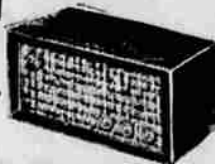
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