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CREATING
MARKETING SOLUTIONS

SINCE
1977

Glory in the Highest

⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find

a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

Luke 2:9-14

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!
-From all of your friends at Peacock Print & Marketing



THE

Peacock Periodical

winter 2021

A THRILL OF HOPE,
THE WEARY WORLD
REJOICES...



WHAT'S INSIDE

- Timeless Christmas Stories
- History of the British Christmas Pudding
- Recipes & Supporting Local Shops this Season
- 2022 Calendar

A GIFT FOR THE MAN WHO HATED CHRISTMAS

How families celebrate the holidays will differ as much as the families themselves. Even Christmas tree decorations often have traditional meanings. Other Christmas traditions develop spontaneously, then are repeated year after year. This was the case in Nancy Gavin's family. Their tradition began some 40 years ago and is still being followed in her family and others. Her story, "The Man Who Hated Christmas," was published in Woman's Day magazine in 1982.

Gavin's husband, Mike, was always aggravated by the hectic effort to buy gifts. He loved the true meaning of Christmas but not the commercialism.

One year, their 12-year-old son was on his school's wrestling team when a match was scheduled with a new team from an inner-city church. Her son's team, with their new uniforms and equipment, met the inner-city team shortly before Christmas. The new church team was strutting and proud, but they had no uniforms, wrestling shoes or helmets to protect their ears.

Mike loved kids and coached several sports, he wished the church team had won just one match, but they did not. It gave Nancy the idea for Mike's gift. She visited a sporting goods store, bought an assortment of headgear and wrestling shoes and sent them anonymously to the church.

On Christmas Eve, she placed a note explaining what she had done in a small, white envelope on the tree. With no name and no identification the envelope was just there, stuck between the branches of the tree. The next morning, the white envelope was the last, surprise gift, given to Mike. He was delighted and moved by Nancy's gift.

The envelope became the highlight of the Gavins' Christmas. It was always the last thing opened on Christmas morning, and their children, ignoring their new toys, would stand with wide-eyed anticipation as their dad opened the envelope.

After Mike died, Nancy struggled just to put up a tree. But on Christmas Eve she placed an envelope on its branches. In the morning, she found that it was joined by three more. Each of their grown children had placed an envelope on the tree for their dad. Nancy said, "Mike's spirit, like the Christmas spirit, will always be with us."



HISTORY OF THE BRITISH CHRISTMAS PUDDING

In the traditional song, carolers first enthusiastically sing "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" then move on to the second verse, which is a puzzling demand for figgy pudding.

Figgy pudding is a desire not likely to be satisfied in the U.S., which has not embraced the British tradition of a Christmas (also called figgy) pudding.

But the Christmas pudding endures in Britain, lingering in America mostly in song.

Christmas puddings, or dishes like it, appeared in England as early as the 14th century, but the dish really became a tradition in the 1800s.

Experts generally agree that English puddings started as savory meat dishes made with beef or mutton and doused with sufficient alcohol to allow the mixture to keep well for weeks or months. Even as it evolved into a sweeter dish, the pudding was aged considerably in a pudding cloth typically hung on hooks.

By the 1830s, noble families were making sweet Christmas Puddings in a more modern form in steamed basins.

Ingredients included raisins, currants, prunes, wines and spices. Puddings were and still are doused with brandy or rum to set it alight for a festive display.

There are also an array of ancient traditions that surround Christmas Pudding. One holds that this dish should be made using 13 ingredients, to represent Jesus and His disciples, and that every member of the family should take turn about stirring the pudding with a wooden spoon. The stirring should be done by moving from East to West, to honor the Wise Men.



LIVE LONGER

HAVE A CUP OF COFFEE (OR TWO)

Is there a link between drinking coffee and living longer? A recent analysis of study data suggests that. Analyzing study data, researchers found that, during an 18-year period, the relative risk of death decreased among study subjects in direct proportion to the amount of coffee they drank.

The coffee consumption was self reported among the 41,736 men and 86,214 women in the Nurse's Health Study and the Health Professionals Follow-up Study.

Researchers divided subjects into six categories ranging from less than one cup per month to more than six cups per day. They found that the relative risk of death from all causes decreased in proportion to higher coffee intake. The decrease in deaths was primarily due to fewer cardiovascular deaths.



74 Ties	1017 Broadway St, Mt Vernon, IL
Anchor Garden Rental	1701 Perkins Ave, Mt Vernon, IL
Audio Visionz	1419 S 10th St, Mt Vernon, IL 62864
Blossom Shoppe	301 S 12th St, Mt Vernon, IL
Carl's for Men	3004 Broadway St, Mt Vernon, IL
Cedarhurst Gift Shop	2600 E Richview Rd, Mt Vernon, IL
Daydream Boutique	236 S 9th St, Mt Vernon, IL
Designer Kids Consignment	1110 Salem Rd, Mt Vernon, IL
Easton's Flowers	229 S 10th St, Mt Vernon, IL
Hembeez Honey	521 E. IL Hwy 142, Mt Vernon, IL
Holz Tool Supply	819 Broadway St, Mt Vernon, IL
Jackson Jewelers	3002 Broadway St, Mt Vernon, IL
Kingdom Seasonings	120 South 9th St, Mt Vernon, IL
Laced n Grace	1714 Broadway St, Mt Vernon, IL
Little Britches & Co.	3300 Broadway St, Mt Vernon, IL
Main Street Records	313 S 10th St, Mt Vernon, IL
Mt. Vernon TV & Appliance	3006 Broadway St, Mt Vernon, IL
Newell Furniture & Gifts	600 N Main, Woodlawn, IL
Rovals Antiques	1406 Salem Rd, Mt Vernon, IL
Sissy's General Store	104 N 9th St, Mt Vernon, IL
Steffy Home Furnishing	700 S 42nd St, Mt Vernon, IL



Christmas - 1881

Pa never had much compassion for the lazy or those who squandered their means and then never had enough for the necessities. But for those who were genuinely in need, his heart was as big as all outdoors. It was from him that I learned the greatest joy in life comes from giving, not from receiving.

It was Christmas Eve 1881. I was fifteen years old and feeling like the world had caved in on me because there just hadn't been enough money to buy me the rifle that I'd wanted so bad that year for Christmas.

We did the chores early that night for some reason. I just figured Pa wanted a little extra time so we could read in the Bible. So after supper was over, I took my boots off and stretched out in front of the fireplace and waited for Pa to get down the old Bible. I was still feeling sorry for myself and, to be honest, I wasn't in much of a mood to read scriptures. But Pa didn't get the Bible, instead he bundled up and went outside. I couldn't figure it out because we had already done all the chores. I didn't worry about it long though, I was too busy wallowing in self-pity. Soon Pa came back in. It was a cold clear night out and there was ice in his beard. "Come on, Matt," he said. "Bundle up good it's cold out tonight."

I was really upset then. Not only wasn't I getting the rifle for Christmas, now Pa was dragging me out in the cold, and for no earthly reason that I could see. We'd already done all the chores, and I couldn't think of anything else that needed doing, especially not on a night like this. But I knew Pa was not very patient at one dragging one's feet when he'd told them to do something, so I got up and put my boots back on and got my cap, coat, and mittens. Ma gave me a mysterious smile as I opened the door to leave the house. Something was up, but I didn't know what.

Outside, I became even more dismayed. There in front of the house was the work team, already hitched to the big sled. Whatever it was we were going to do wasn't going to be a short, quick little job. I could tell. We never hitched up the big sled unless we were going to haul a big load. Pa was already up on the seat, reins in hand. I reluctantly climbed up beside him. The cold was already biting at me. I wasn't happy. When I was on, Pa pulled the sled around the house and stopped in front of the woodshed. He got off and I followed. "I think we'll put on the high sideboards," he said. "Here, help me." The high sideboards! It had been a bigger job than I wanted to do with just the low sideboards

on, but whatever it was we were going to do would be a lot bigger with the high sideboards on. When we had exchanged the sideboards, Pa went into the woodshed and came out with an armload of wood--the wood I'd spent all summer hauling down from the mountain, and then all fall sawing into blocks and splitting. What was he doing? Finally I said something. "Pa," I asked, "what are you doing?" "You been by the Widow Jensen's lately?" he asked. The Widow Jensen lived about two miles down the road. Her husband had died a year or so before and left her with three children, the oldest being eight. Sure, I'd been by, but so what? "Yeah," I said, "why?" "I rode by just today," Pa said. "Little Jakey was out digging around in the woodpile trying to find a few chips. They're out of wood, Matt." That was all he said and then he turned and went back into the woodshed for another armload of wood. I followed him. We loaded the sled so high that I began to wonder if the horses would be able to pull it. Finally, Pa called a halt to our loading, then we went to the smoke house and Pa took down a big ham and a side of bacon. He handed them to me and told me to put them in the sled and wait. When he returned he was carrying a sack of flour over his right shoulder and a smaller sack of something in his left hand. "What's in the little sack?" I asked. "Shoes. They're out of shoes. Little Jakey just had gunny sacks wrapped around his feet when he was out in the woodpile this morning. I got the children a little candy too. It just wouldn't be Christmas without a little candy."

We rode the two miles to Widow Jensen's pretty much in silence. I tried to think through what Pa was doing. We didn't have much by worldly standards, course, we did have a big woodpile, though most of what was left now was still in the form of logs that I would have to saw into blocks and split before we could use it. We also had meat and flour, so we could spare that, but I knew we didn't have any money, so why was Pa buying them shoes and candy?

Really, why was he doing any of this? Widow Jensen had closer neighbors than us. It shouldn't have been our concern. We came in

from the blind side of the Jensen house and unloaded the wood as

timeless stories



at Christmas

quietly as possible, then we took the meat and flour and shoes to the door. We knocked. The door opened a crack and a timid voice said, "Who is it?" "Lucas Miles, Ma'am, and my son, Matt. Could we come in for a bit?" Widow Jensen opened the door and let us in. She had a blanket wrapped around her shoulders. The children were wrapped in another and were sitting in front of the fireplace by a very small fire that hardly gave off any heat at all. Widow Jensen fumbled with a match and finally lit the lamp. "We brought you a few things, Ma'am," Pa said and set down the sack of flour. I put the meat on the table. Then Pa handed her the sack that had the shoes in it. She opened it hesitantly and took the shoes out one pair at a time. There was a pair for her and one for each of the children--sturdy shoes, the best, shoes that would last.

I watched her carefully. She bit her lower lip to keep it from trembling and then tears filled her eyes and started running down her cheeks. She looked up at Pa like she wanted to say something, but it wouldn't come out. "We brought a load of wood too, Ma'am," Pa said, then he turned to me and said, "Matt, go bring enough in to last for awhile. Let's get that fire up to size and heat this place up." I wasn't the same person when I went back out to bring in the wood. I had a big lump in my throat and, much as I hate to admit it, there were tears in my eyes too. In my mind I kept seeing those three kids huddled around the fireplace and their mother standing there with tears running down her cheeks and so much gratitude in her heart that she couldn't speak. My heart swelled within me and a joy filled my soul that I'd never known before. I had given at Christmas many times before, but never when it had made so much difference. I could see we were literally saving the lives of these people.

I soon had the fire blazing and everyone's spirits soared. The kids started giggling when Pa handed them each a piece of candy and Widow Jensen looked on with a smile that probably hadn't crossed her face for a long time. She finally turned to us. "God bless you," she said. "I know the Lord himself has sent you. The children and I have been praying that he would send one of his children to spare us." In spite of myself, the lump returned to my throat and the tears welled up in my eyes again. I'd never thought of Pa in those exact terms before, but after Widow Jensen mentioned it I could see that it was probably true. I was sure that a better man than Pa had never walked the earth, save One.

I started remembering all the times he had gone out of his way for Ma and me, and many others. The list seemed endless as I

thought on it. Pa insisted that everyone try on the shoes before we left. I was amazed when they all fit and I wondered how he had known what sizes to get. Then I guessed that if he was on an errand for the Lord that the Lord would make sure he got the right sizes.

Tears were running down Widow Jensen's face again when we stood up to leave. Pa took each of the kids in his big arms and gave them a hug. They clung to him and didn't want us to go. I could see that they missed their pa, and I was glad that I still had mine.

At the door Pa turned to Widow Jensen and said, "The Mrs. wanted me to invite you and the children over for Christmas dinner tomorrow. The turkey will be more than the three of us can eat, and a man can get cantankerous if he has to eat turkey for too many meals. We'll be by to get you about eleven. It'll be nice to have some little ones around again. Matt here, hasn't been little for quite a spell." I was the youngest. My two older brothers and two older sisters were all married and had moved away. Widow Jensen nodded and said, "Thank you, Brother Miles. I don't have to say, "May the Lord bless you, I know for certain that He will."

Out on the sled I felt a warmth that came from deep within and I didn't even notice the cold. When we had gone a ways, Pa turned to me and said, "Matt, I want you to know something. Your ma and me have been tucking a little money away here and there all year so we could buy that rifle for you, but we didn't have quite enough. Then yesterday a man who owed me a little money from years back came by to make things square. Your ma and me were real excited, thinking that now we could get you that rifle, and I started into town this morning to do just that. But on the way I saw little Jakey out scratching in the woodpile with his feet wrapped in those gunny sacks and I knew what I had to do. So, Son, I spent the money for shoes and a little candy for those children. I hope you understand."

I understood, and my eyes became wet with tears again. I understood very well, and I was so glad Pa had done it. Just then the rifle seemed very low on my list of priorities. Pa had given me a lot more. He had given me the look on Widow Jensen's face and the radiant smiles of her three children.

For the rest of my life, whenever I saw any of the Jensens, or split a block of wood, I remembered, and remembering brought back that same joy I felt riding home beside Pa that night. Pa had given me much more than a rifle that night, he had given me the best Christmas of my life.





Painting By The Late Noel L. Smith



2022



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