

Theodore Roosevelt's Letters to His Children



EDITED BY JOSEPH BUCKLIN BISHOP

In leaving the United States for his trip to Panama, President Roosevelt shattered a tradition of the White House. He was the first president to leave this country while in office; the first to enter a foreign country; the first to visit a dependency of the United States. At this time he was putting forward his simplified spelling ideas, in the face of much opposition. In fact, Theodore Roosevelt seemed to be attracted most to causes in which he was certain to encounter vigorous antagonism.—The Editor.

Names of the Guns.
On Board U. S. S. Louisiana, Sunday, Nov. 11, 1906.

BLESSED ARCHIE:
I wish you were along with us, for you would thoroughly enjoy everything on this ship. We have had three days of perfect weather, while this great battleship with her two convoys, the great armored cruisers, Tennessee and Washington, have steamed steadily in column ahead southward through calm seas until now we are in the tropics. They are three as splendid ships of their class as there are afloat, save only the English dreadnaught. The Louisiana now has her gun-sights and everything is all in good shape for her to begin practice of the duties which will make her crew as fit for man-of-war's work as the crew of any one of our other first-class battleships. The men are such splendid-looking fellows, Americans of the best type, young, active, vigorous, with lots of intelligence. I was much amused at the names of the seven-inch guns, which include Victor, Invincible, Peacemaker, together with Skiddoo, and also one called Tedd and one called the Big Stick.

Reflections on the Way.
On Board U. S. S. Louisiana.

DEAR KERMIT:
So far this trip has been a great success, and I think mother has really enjoyed it. As for me, I of course feel a little bored, but I have brought on a great variety of books, and am at this moment reading Milton's prose works, "Tacitus," and a German novel called "Jorn Uhl." Mother and I walk briskly up and down the deck together, or else sit aft under the awning, or in the after cabin and read, and I also spend a good deal of time on the forward bridge, and of course have gone over the ship to inspect it with the captain. It is a splendid thing to see one of these men-of-war, and it does really make one proud of one's country. Both the officers and the enlisted men are as fine a set as one could wish to see.

It is a beautiful sight, these three great warships standing southward in close column, and almost as beautiful at night when we see not only the lights but the loom through the darkness of the ships astern. We are now in the tropics and I have thought a good deal of the time over eight years ago when I was sailing to Santiago in the fleet of warships and transports. It seems a strange thing to think of my now being president, going to visit the work of the Panama Canal which I have made possible.

Mother, very pretty and dainty in white summer clothes, came up on Saturday morning to see inspection and review, or whatever they call it, of the men. I usually spend half an hour on deck before mother is dressed. Then we breakfast together alone; have also taken lunch alone, but at dinner have two or three officers to dine with us. Doctor Rixey is along and is a perfect dear, as always.

Events Since Columbus' Discovery.
The fourth day out was in some respects the most interesting. All the forenoon we had Cuba on our right and most of the forenoon and part of the afternoon Hayti on our left; and in each case green, jungly shores and bold mountains—two great, beautiful, venomous tropic islands. These are historic seas and mother and I have kept thinking of all that has happened in them since Columbus landed at San Salvador (which we also saw), the Spanish explorers, the buccaneers, the English and Dutch sea-dogs and adventurers, the great English and French fleets, the desperate fighting, the triumphs, the pestilence, of all the turbulence, the splendor and the wickedness, and the hot, evil, riotous life of the old planters and slave-owners, Spanish, French, English and Dutch; their extermination of the Indians and bringing in of negro slaves, the decay of most of the islands, the turning of Hayti into a land of savage negroes, who have reverted to voodooism and cannibalism; the effort we are now making to bring Cuba and Porto Rico forward.

Today is calm and beautiful, as all the days have been on our trip. We have just sighted the highest land of Panama ahead of us, and we shall be at anchor by 2 o'clock this afternoon; just a little less than six days from the time we left Washington.

Pride in America.
On Board U. S. S. Louisiana, Nov. 14.

DEAR TEDD:
I am very glad to have taken this trip, although as usual I am bored by the sea. Everything has been smooth as possible, and it has been lovely having mother along. It gives me great pride in America and to see not only the material perfection of the ship herself in engines, guns and all arrangements, but the fine quality of the officers and crew. Have you ever read Smollett's novel, I think "Roderick Random" or "Humphrey Clinker," in which the hero goes to sea? It gives me an awful idea of what a floating hell of filth, disease, tyranny and cruelty a warship was in those days. Now every arrangement is as clean and healthful as possible. The men can bathe and do bathe as often as cleanliness requires. Their fare is excellent and they are as self-respecting a set as can be imagined. I am no great believer in the superiority of times past; and I have no question that the officers and men of our navy now are in point of fighting capacity

CHIPLEY PLANS HOME-COMING

Chipley is to have quite a unique celebration day, Tuesday December 30. All the white soldiers, sailors and marines and all the old veterans and Spanish war veterans have been invited to participate. A parade formed under officers of each war, from generals to captains, and led by the Fort Barrancas band is to start the day's program at 10:30 a. m. The parade will be followed by a band concert and speaking at the high school building. Among the speakers, will be Lieut. J. Mason Douglas, who after an unusual record for time and service in the late war, a severe wound received during the Meuse-Argonne campaign and his reception of American, French and Italian decorations, has returned home. After the program at the school, there is to be a barbecue dinner on the school grounds followed by a basket-

ball game and a band concert. The day is to be quite completely given to the celebration and, to cap the climax, there will be free movies at the Alvin theatre from noon until 4:00 p. m.

COMES TO WEDDING MARRIES THE BRIDE

Chipley, Dec. 22.—A mild sensation was created in the city this morning when it was learned that Miss Gladys Pratt and Roy Blackburn had gone to Geneva, Alabama, during the night and married.

Miss Pratt was to be married on Christmas day to Grady Berdishaw of Dothan, Alabama, and elaborate preparations were being made for a church wedding. The wedding guests had been asked, invitations circulated and the license secured. Flowers had been ordered for the occasion and the minister of one of the Dothan churches requested to be present to solemnize the marriage.

Mr. Blackburn, formerly in the navy, was in New York and learning of his

girl's arrangements to marry, hurried home. Mr. and Mrs. Blackburn are prominent young people of the city and their friends are much elated over the marriage so much so, that the business men raised a nice purse to present them with a handsome set of furniture.

WAR HERO RETURNED FOR HOLIDAY SEASON

Raymond J. Merritt, one of the heroes of the war arrived in Pensacola yesterday to spend the Christmas holidays at the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. M. J. Powell, of 420 W. Government-st., after an absence of four years.

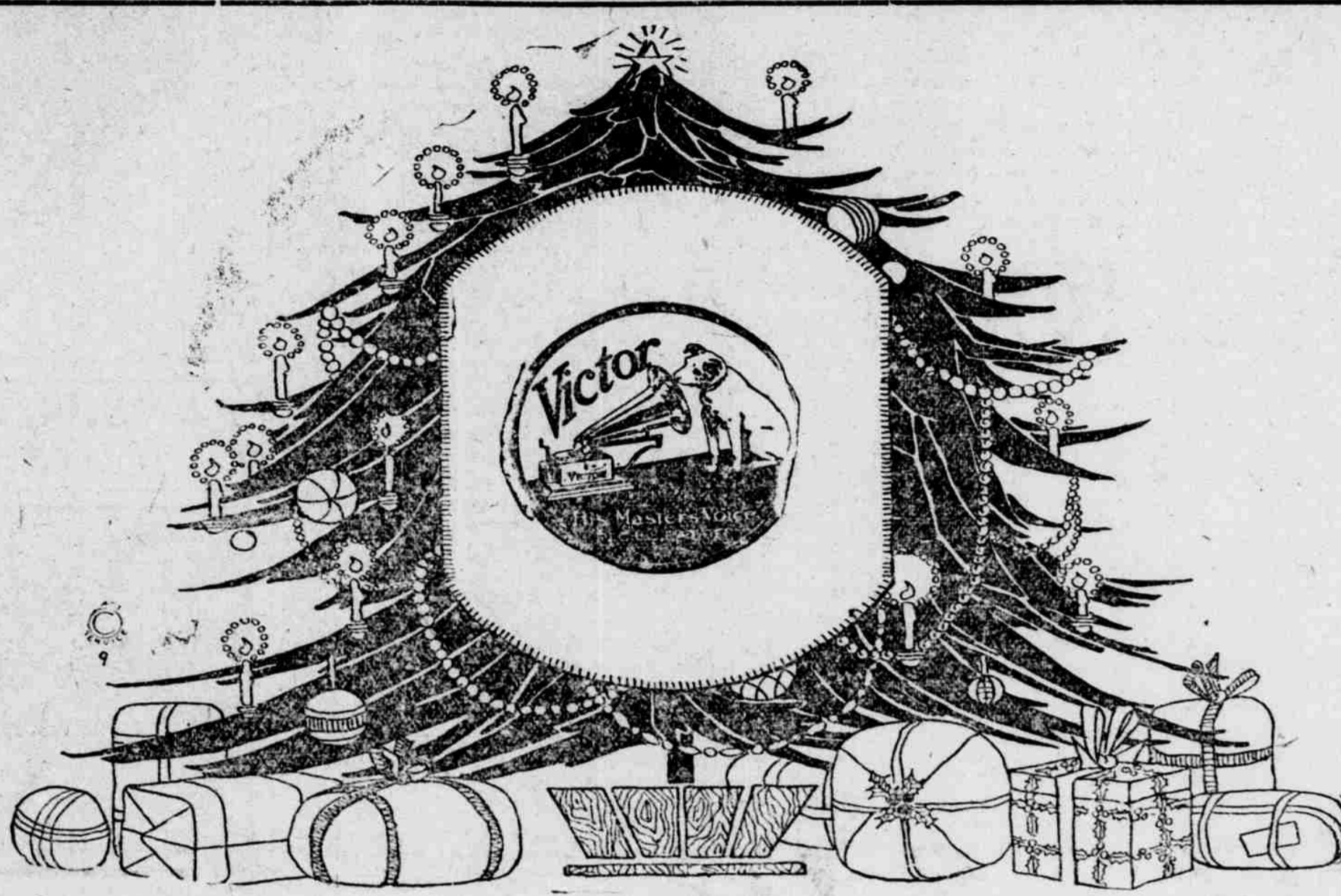
Mr. Merritt has been decorated seven times for heroism in action. He first enlisted in the British army and later joined the Royal Flying corps. During his service he was wounded 97 times.

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