

The story behind the world almanac

By Nevyle Shucklitz
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In the more naive and less sophisticated times before radio and television meteorologists, farmers depended heavily upon the almanac for their weather information, and so profound was their belief in this little publication as a compendium of weather truths, it occupied a place in most rural households second only to that driven in the marketplace or in the kitchen wall, it was consulted regularly on matters of "signs" and weather.

The story behind the almanac is an interesting one. Research reveals it was originated hundreds of years ago by tract writers who, utilizing information furnished by astrologers, forecast weather a year in advance.

Then, as printing spread, so did almanacs. These tract writers found that sales soared when they spiced up their publications with predictions. Some "not only predicted the daily weather, but also such cat-a-tropical incidents as famines, plagues, and "nocturnal rumblings," whatever that is. These writers and almanac makers, however, faced occupational hazards. They faced burning at the stake as sorcerers if they were right too often or wrapped up their prophecies in ambiguous language. As a consequence a 1580 almanac predicted, "The summer and autumn shall some-

times incline into dryness, sometimes unto moisture; for the winter shall be partly rough and partly mild.

Also, as in this day and time, some almanac writers came in for a lot of ridicule. Rabelais, the French satirist, took great delight in needling them as did the actor, Duke Jonathon Swift.

Back in the early years of the 18th century, there was an English almanac writer named John Partridge. Adroitly styling himself "Physician to the King," Partridge filled his almanac with portentous prophecies and predictions. Annoyed at these pretensions, the sarcastic Swift predicted that on March 29, 1708, "Old Partridge will die of a raging fever."

The frightened almanac astrologer took to his bed two days before that date. He didn't die, as Swift predicted, but when he eventually got out of bed and announced he was alive and well, he found himself the laughing stock of his former almanac customers.

But over the years some almanac writers have had the nail on the head" and, as in the case of weather writers and almanac makers, however, faced occupational hazards. They faced burning at the stake as sorcerers if they were right too often or wrapped up their prophecies in ambiguous language. As a consequence a 1580 almanac predicted, "The summer and autumn shall some-

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Sat., Dec. 18, at 10:00 A.M.
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Farm Will Be Shown By Agent Or Owner
OWNER-CURTIS JONES
Fightmaster Real Estate Agency
Carlisle, Ky. Phone 289-2470

POSTED

All persons are hereby notified not to trespass, fish, hunt, trap or shoot upon the land of the undersigned. Any person caught trespassing in violation of this notice will be reported to the Sheriff and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. It is necessary that we take this step to protect our property and wildlife.
Mrs. Clara McGowan, Route 1, Bowling, Ky.
Linda Palmer and Cheryl Flora, Needmore Road, Carlisle, Ky. Ex. 1-31-72
Ann and Cecil Rogers, Route 2, Carlisle, Ky. Ex. 2-28-72
John Hall, Headquarters Pike, Carlisle, Ky. Ex. 2-28-72
Virgil Ritchie and Addie Ritchie, Myers, Ky. Ex. 3-30-72
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