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CSF

A WALK AROUND DAMASCUS

busily taking notes on everything along the way. He is working now on a little Greek inscription over the eastern door of the Great Mosque. When he gets home, he will find that it comes from Byzantine days, when the mosque was a Christian church. For such a studious type, Damascus is a veritable gold mine.

Within walking distance of each other are sites which allow one to jump from the days of the Roman general Pompey down to the romantic era of the Crusaders. The history of the Great Mosque reflects the changes this span of years brought. On the ruins of a pagan temple to the god Rimmon, the Romans erected a temple to Jupiter. When Christianity gained ascendency, the temple became a church, with the head of John the Baptist as its most cherished relic. Byzantine rulers refurbished the place from time to time, vying with each other in munificence. In the seventh century the building finally became a mosque, after being shared as a place of worship by both Christians and Muslims. Because of the political prominence of Damascus, the Great Mosque soon became a major place of Muslim worship and was adorned by skilled craftsmen from all parts of the world. So great was their skill that the mosque surpassed even the splendors of Byzantine days in the lavishness of gold and silver, thick carpets, carved columns and lofty minarets.

A small side-door of the mosque leads the historian-tourist to the tomb of Saladin. There rests Islam's victorious champion against the crusading armies of all Europe. When the group visited the Silk Market, they passed the tomb of another opponent of the "Franks," the mighty Nur ed-Din of Aleppo. Much of the building in the old part of Damascus was done by this medieval ruler and many of his immediate successors.

"How about seeing some of this building?" asks the architect in the party. For students of architecture, the old buildings of Damascus are priceless because of their preservation in the midst of modern urban expansion. Not only are there the ruins and remains of the early periods of Damascene glory – many early buildings are still in use! This is more particularly true of the sixteenth and seventeenth-century structures, of course. Among these, visitors never miss the impressive Tekiyeh Sulemaniyeh, erected by Suliman the Magnificent in the middle of the sixteenth century, on the site of Sultan Beybars' "Black and White" palace; the Adiliya School, now the seat of the Arab Academy and of interest to educators (especially linguists), as well as to the architect; the Zahiriyeh School, once Beybars' palace, then his tomb, and now the National Library; the Silk Kahn, at the entrance to the Silk Market; the Wood Turners' Mosque, with its carved plaster decorations; and the Turkish-style Mosque of the Derwishe.

Folklore and dance are not to be overlooked in the city, either. The "Dancing Dervishes" are a familiar sight in Cairo, but their "home," the Tekiyeh of the Mevlevis, is to be found in Damascus, on the way to the railway station. The descendants of the sixteenth-century Jabbawiya society still recite their old liturgy each week in a meeting house (Mastabat Sa'ad ed-Din) in the Midan Quarter. Likewise, the splendidly restored Azem Palace, near the Great Mosque, is a "must" on every visitor's list. This magnificent private residence took twelve years to build. Appropriately, it is a folk-lore museum of fascinating interest, today. Stepping into its fountain-cooled garden court, the tourists are transported into another world. On every side they may ramble through apartments showing the daily life and culture of a wealthy Arabic family of two centuries ago, its richness in striking contrast to the simplicity of Colonial America of the same period.

And finally, for those in the party with the interests of "armchair" archaeologists, there remains yet a final sight in this old, old city – the Syrian National Museum. There, in a superbly laid-out building, is housed a sampling of everything seen up to this point, along with specific material from some of the major archaeological "digs" of the past – Palmyra, Dura Europos, and the more recent work at the eighth-century Qasr el-Hair. The Museum also contains one of the best collections of Islamic art in existence – and the rich blue-green glazes of Raqqa and Rasafa wares reflect back the brilliance of gold and silver filigree, enameled glass, and ceramic tile. Faded Arabic manuscripts whisper again the eternal secrets of forgotten science which once awakened the minds of Western men long wrapped in the slumbers of the Dark Ages. Here is the Old, displayed in the bright lights and glass cases of a new age.

This storehouse of antiquity is perhaps the best place to end a tour of Damascus, to summon the genii once again, and to depart from this incense-laden memory of the ancient Syrian city. ■

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ISLAMIC ART IN GLASS

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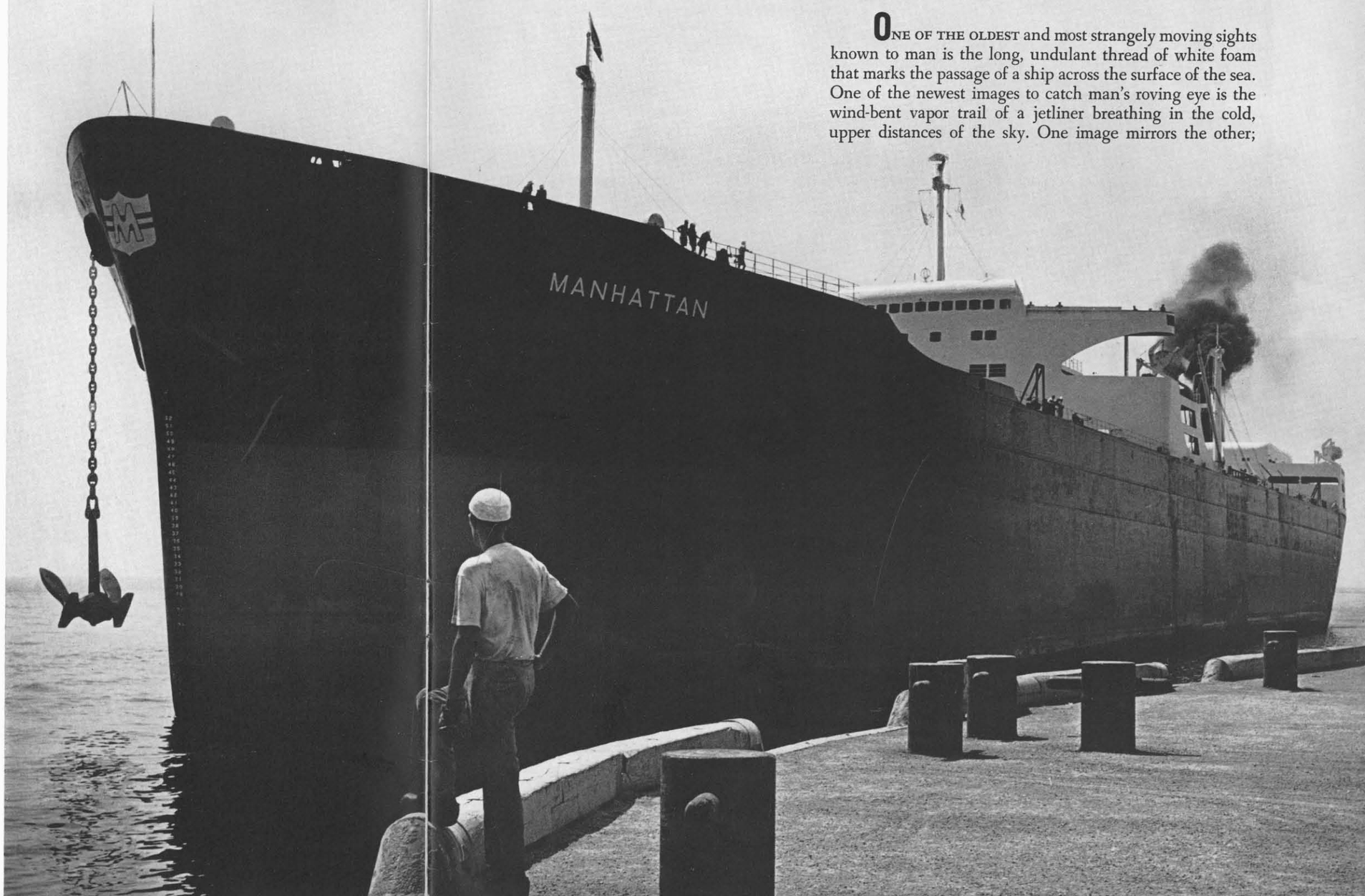
GIANT ON THE SEAS

The waterline high and dry as she docks at Ras Tanura, Saudi Arabia, supertanker "Manhattan" will draw almost 50 feet of water when she takes on her capacity of 700,000 barrels of crude oil

ONE OF THE OLDEST and most strangely moving sights known to man is the long, undulant thread of white foam that marks the passage of a ship across the surface of the sea. One of the newest images to catch man's roving eye is the wind-bent vapor trail of a jetliner breathing in the cold, upper distances of the sky. One image mirrors the other;



GIANT ON THE SEAS

each marks the advances man has made in transporting himself and his goods.

Most of us know what has happened at the front of the vapor trail, for developments in jet flight have been dramatic and swift. Already the far whistle of giant aircraft has become an aural commonplace the world around. However, few men know the full story of what has been happening at the front of the white threads of foam that mark the intercontinental sea lanes.

One of the most interesting developments along these sea lanes since the end of World War II has been the appearance of a growing fleet of oil tankships that challenge the greatest passenger liners in both size and speed. They have been for the most part unheralded by the pomp and glamor that attends the maiden voyages of the sea queens of the Atlantic passenger runs. But some of them are so large that only a few deep-water terminals around the world can berth them. Naval architecture has developed these superships to carry the tremendous cargoes demanded by greatly increased worldwide oil consumption.

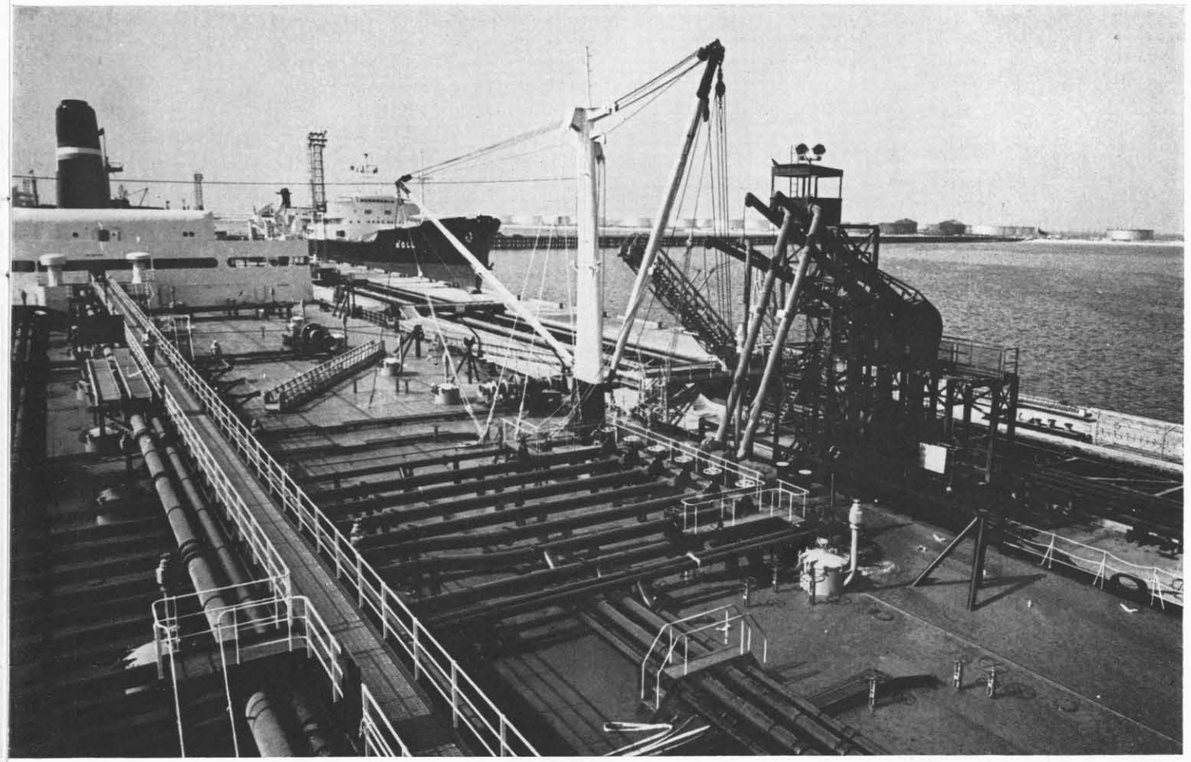
Today, a man who wistfully follows a line of white foam as it bends below the horizon may well be watching the wake of a supertanker with more than 35 million gallons of liquid in its hold. If the same volume of water were used to form a shallow artificial lake, Columbus' ship *Santa Maria* could easily sail back and forth upon it. "The Admiral of the ocean sea" would marvel at the size of today's largest petroleum carriers, and he might equally be seized by their beauty of line.

Not long ago the *Manhattan* – the third largest supertanker then on the seas–made an historic call at Ras Tanura, the marine terminal of the Arabian American Oil Company on the Persian Gulf in eastern Saudi Arabia. The berthing of the *Manhattan* at Ras Tanura pointed up the enormous changes that have taken place in tankship design in recent decades. These changes can best be appreciated through the perspective of history.

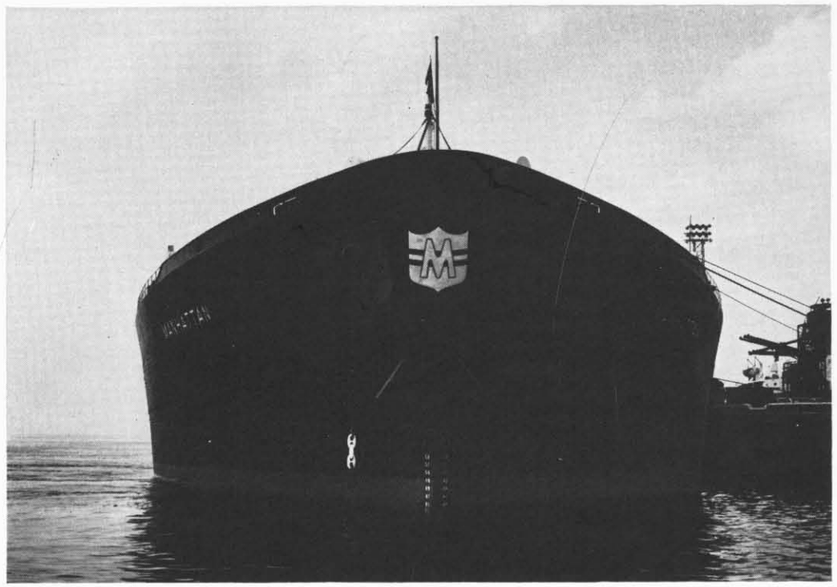
On May 1, 1939 the tanker *D. G. Scofield* arrived at Ras Tanura to take on the first cargo of crude oil ever shipped out of Saudi Arabia. To celebrate the event, the late King 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud paid his first visit to Aramco's operations. Several thousand people joined in the three-day festivities that marked the pioneer loading.

The historic significance of the arrival and loading of the *Manhattan* in late August this year lay largely in the successful solution of technical problems. Actually, the giant vessel's arrival and departure was pretty much a workaday affair which was carried off without fanfare. When the

Tanker's chief mate Charles Daly (left) and Aramco employees Louis Johnson (right) and Mansoor Mohammed discuss loading at Ras Tanura.



Almost a thousand feet long and 130 feet wide, "Manhattan" takes on cargo of crude oil from "chiksan arm" loaders at Ras Tanura terminal.



Filled with petroleum, "Manhattan" sits low on water. She carried a record load of 102,000 long tons of crude oil from the Persian Gulf to California last summer.

GIANT ON THE SEAS

Manhattan weighed anchor on a Sunday morning at high tide, it carried in its hold 718,597 barrels of crude oil and 68,018 barrels of fuel oil, or bunker oil as it is called. It was the largest cargo carried away from the port of Ras Tanura up to that time.

In contrast, the *D. G. Scofield* was designed to carry 81,224 barrels of crude oil cargo and 10,676 barrels of fuel. In other words, the *Manhattan* can transport about *ten times* as much crude oil today as the *D. G. Scofield* could in 1933. The older tanker was 457 feet long and 58 feet wide. The *Manhattan,* which went into service just this year, is 940 feet long and 130 feet wide. It is about 90 feet shorter, but 12 feet wider, than the *Queen Elizabeth*.

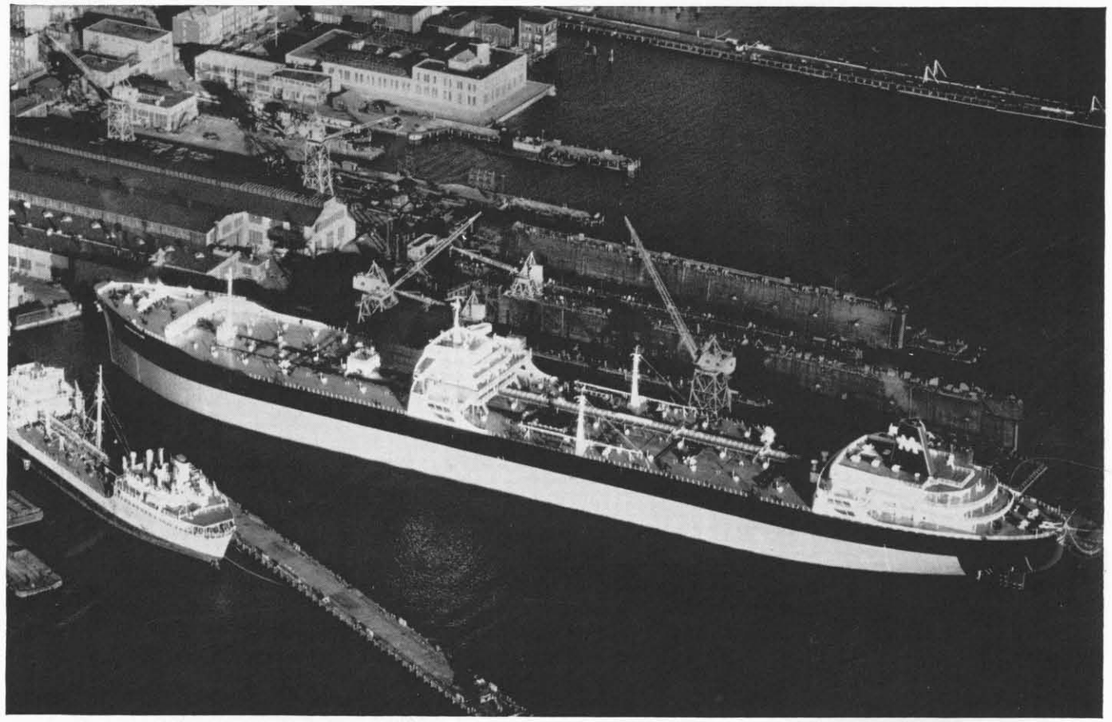
When fully loaded, the *Manhattan* lies 49 feet, 4 inches deep in the water. This deep draft poses severe berthing and loading problems. When the new ship completed its maiden voyage at the port of New York earlier this year, it could not dock at any of the city's famous piers. The crude oil it carried had to be transferred offshore to smaller tankers for dockside unloading.

In mid-March the *Manhattan* passed through the Suez Canal. However, it was traveling light. When loaded, it cannot negotiate the Suez Canal. It cannot use the Panama Canal at any time because of its breadth of beam.

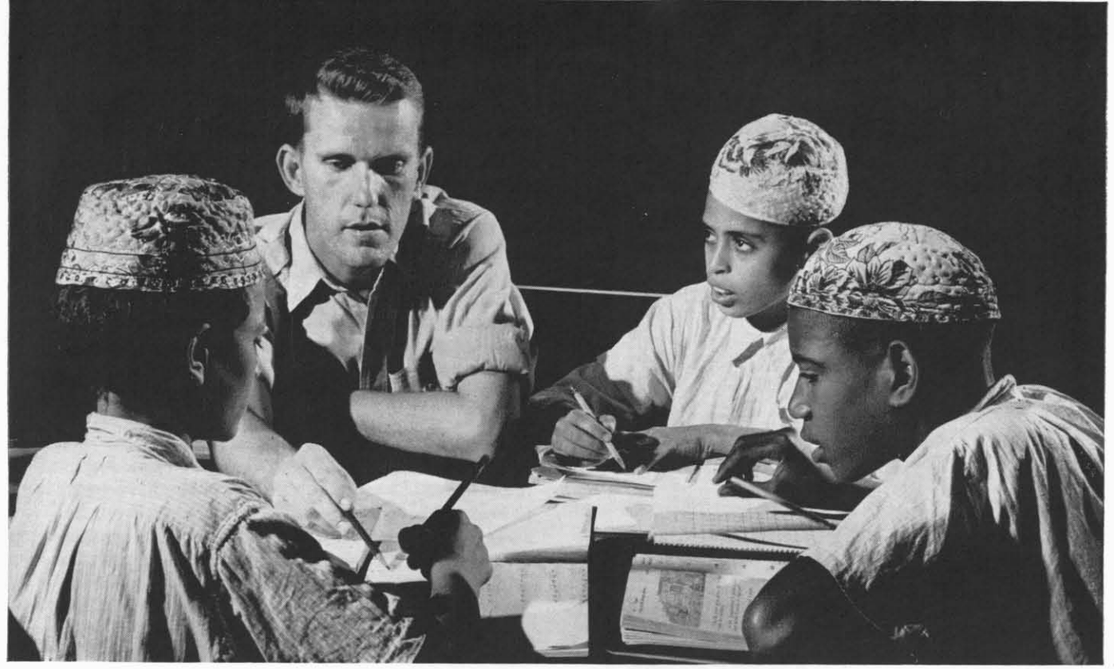
The arrival of the *Manhattan* at Ras Tanura required careful planning. The depth of the water at Aramco's Berth 8 ranges from 46 feet at low tide to 54 feet at high tide. Fully loaded, the *Manhattan* would rest on the bottom at low tide. Therefore, the loading of the supertanker was suspended as the tide dropped until the next incoming tide provided a safe depth.

The *Manhattan* is rated at 106,568 deadweight tons – the weight of the ship itself. At the close of World War II, the largest tanker afloat was about 24,000 tons. The more than four-fold increase in tanker size represented by the *Manhattan* is a reflection of the tremendous increase in world oil consumption since the end of the war.

In the not too distant future the *Queen Elizabeth* may have to yield her rank as the largest ship ever built. Plans for two 130,000-ton supertankers have been announced. The growing fleet of giant petroleum carriers weighing more than 100,000 tons is bringing to a close the long reign of passenger ships. The oil tanker has become the new monarch of the seaways. ■



Docked next to a standard T-2 tanker at her builder's yard in the United States, supertanker "Manhattan" demonstrates the increase in oil-carrying capacity of tankers since W.W. II. "Manhattan" transports loads of oil ten times greater than older tankers.



Pencils come in mighty handy when it's time for young Saudi Arab boys to study English language lessons with their American engineer friend.

from writing stick to precision instrument

the pencil

LIKE THE MODEL SAILBOAT moored mysteriously in the bottle, the pencil has prompted children for generations to ask the question: How do they put the lead inside?

The answer is simple, but it took man about 3,000 years to find it. Now that he has, he uses more than a billion and a half pencils a year in the United States alone—an average of one a month for every American man, woman and child.

Direct ancestor of the pencil was the little shaft of lead or silver the ancient Greeks, Romans and Egyptians used 3,000 years ago to etch their words on tablets. Similar to the small brush the Roman scribes had been using to write on papyrus, they were given the same name – *penicillus* or Latin for "small tail."

The first improvement on the old stylus was noted in mid-sixteenth century when a German-Swiss scholar named Conrad Gessner described a new writing implement in a footnote to a treatise on fossils. The implement consisted of a soft metallic stick (believed to be antimony) sharpened at one end and placed in a crude wooden holder. Judging from the woodcut illustrating the article, the "lead" must have fallen out frequently. Actually, the "lead pencil" we know today is as much misnamed as the novelty described by Gessner. The modern pencil contains no lead but a mixture of graphite and clay.

The origins of today's pencil date back to the year 1564 when a hurricane roared across the British Isles. The wind uprooted a mammoth tree near the town of Borrowdale, turning up a strange black substance. Later, a passing farmer noticed that some of the black matter had rubbed off on his trousers. He broke off a chunk and found he could make indelible markings with it. Word of the substance soon spread, and shepherds in the region began to mark their sheep with it. Before long, it was decided to dig the ore on a commercial basis.

Thus was discovered the Borrowdale mine, which contained the purest graphite deposit the world has ever known. Noting its similarity to the lead stylus, scientists called the graphite "plumbago" – Latin for "acting like lead." To this day the term has stuck.

The Borrowdale graphite was so solid that it could be cut into lengths to be peddled in London streets as "writing sticks." The more enterprising hawkers wrapped the sticks in string that could be unwound as the graphite wore down. The graphite made a much more legible mark than the silver and lead shafts and soon replaced them altogether.

Determined to keep their find to themselves, the British placed the mine under armed watch and banned any shipments of graphite abroad. But despite the fact that they guarded their graphite bonanza like the crown jewels, the lode finally gave out, and it remained for an eighteenth-

century French engineer to hit upon a technique for making pencil lead as it is known today.

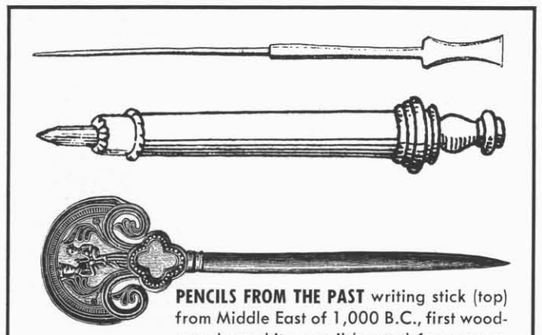
Engineer Jacques Conte, working for Napoleon, sought a refractory composition for making cannon balls to lob against the British and others. He tried crushing an inferior graphite and mixing it with powdered clay. Conte fired the mixture in a furnace and produced a substance that was as smooth as the Borrowdale graphite. It soon proved as much in demand for pencils as it did for Napoleon's artillery.

Conte's successors made another discovery. Only one clay existed with the proper greasy mixture to make a good lead. It was and still is produced by the Shippache Mines in Bavaria. Today, however, American manufacturers use excellent grades of domestic as well as Shippache clay. In World War II, cut off from imports of Bavarian clay, pencil manufacturers reserved their stocks for drafting pencils needed by the armed forces. The public had to get along with leads made with lower quality clays.

The manufacture of a good pencil requires the same precision workmanship that goes into a Swiss watch. The process involves more than 125 technical steps and ingredients from 25 nations. So exacting is the craft that in a quality pencil the thickness of the lead and its grooves are permitted to vary only one thousandth of an inch.

The blending of the lead alone gives an idea of the complex procedure involved in pencil-making. The lead is made by grinding Shippache clay with graphite from Madagascar and Ceylon, with the amount of clay determining the hardness. The mixture is agitated for days in a tumbling mill that resembles a giant clothes washer. Inside this device are placed pebbles from the beaches of France and Denmark which have the special hardness to grind the clay and graphite to a fineness that makes face powder seem coarse. This mixture is blended with water and forced through diamond dies until a spaghetti-like mixture comes out that can be cut to pencil size.

Providing the right wood for pencils is also an exacting business. The wood must be knot-free, soft enough to whittle to a point and yet strong enough not to break in one's pocket. For years American manufacturers used only Southern red cedar for making pencils. But about 30 years ago, they discovered that the incense cedar, which grows in the High Sierras near the West Coast, was just as good and far more plentiful. A mature cedar tree contains enough wood to produce 300,000 pencils.



PENCILS FROM THE PAST writing stick (top) from Middle East of 1,000 B.C., first wood-cased graphite pencil (center) from seventeenth century, graphite stick from 1800's.

And now the answer to the question: How do they put the lead into the pencil?

Actually, the process is much like making a sandwich with wood for bread, lead for filling and adhesives for butter. Here's how it works: Seven parallel grooves are cut in slats planed to half the thickness of a pencil. Then the leads are rolled into the grooves. An identical grooved slat, glued on the underside, is placed on the one holding the leads, thus making the "sandwich." Hydraulic pressure then clamps them together into a permanent bond, and the unified slat is cut into pencils. The newly cut pencils are next sanded and coated with up to a dozen baths of lacquer – more than an expensive car gets. As a final step, they are imprinted and fed into a machine that fits on a metal ferrule and inserts the eraser.

The wood casings are painted a multitude of colors, but for some inexplicable reason, 75 per cent of the public will buy nothing but yellow pencils. Stores have discovered that if they persuade a yellow-pencil-customer to try the identical product in another hue, he will complain that a non-yellow pencil is hard to sharpen or does not write clearly.

Pencils have changed a lot since the days of the string-wrapped writing stick that left the writer's hands covered with graphite. They are smaller, more slender and the shape has been altered. Pencil leads originally were all square, but in 1876, it was found that round leads were less apt to break and sharpened more easily. Today only a few special types of lead are unusually shaped, such as the carpenter's pencil with a lead that is oblong. This pencil, incidentally, is painted red so it can be spotted among wood shavings.

American manufacturers began tipping their pencils with erasers around the turn of the century so that the user would not have to tote an unwieldy lump of rubber around in his pocket. Like the lead, the rubber tip is also a misnomer. Actually, an eraser is a compound of rubber, pigment and abrasive, mixed like bread dough and vulcanized to give it strength. The rubber-tipped pencil did not catch on in Europe until World War II when American soldiers made them popular. In many European countries pencils are still made without erasers.

For years, the best pencils retailed for a nickel. Now they cost a couple of cents more. But consider the fact that it would cost a home craftsman about $50 to make a single pencil, if he had to buy the raw materials and start from scratch. Consider also that a standard pencil can draw a line 38 miles long – if you keep sharpening it. The average pencil can be sharpened about 17 times before it is thrown away, but the American consumer can do this in *no* time wading through crossword puzzles, jotting down requests to the milkman or firing off complaints to the janitor.

The pencil has not always been used for such prosaic chores. Abraham Lincoln scribbled the original draft of his immortal Gettysburg Address in pencil. Francis Scott Key pencilled the "Star Spangled Banner" on the back of an envelope by candlelight during the bombardment of Fort McHenry. Ernest Hemingway poured out his many novels through the end of a lead pencil, and Theodore Dreiser wrote *Sister Carrie* with such a soft point that the manuscript had to be treated with a fixative to prevent smudging.

Some of the world's great art is in pencil. The eighteenth-century English artists Thomas Gainsborough and George Romney were masters in this medium. A century later Edgar Degas used the pencil to create some of his famed fluid sketches with their soft, limpid shadings.

Pencil art has played a role in making history. The seventeenth-century French explorer Champlain returned to Europe with many detailed pencil sketches he had made of the North American continent. The drawings served those pioneers who later followed his pathway through the great Canadian wilderness.

Today, the pencil serves many purposes. Designers have produced more than 350 varieties fashioned to write on special surfaces. Special composition pencils have been perfected that can make their mark on glass, cellophane and plastics. Less known are those used by the steel industry to write on white-hot ingots, by butchers to identify meat cuts or by surgeons to outline areas of the human skin.

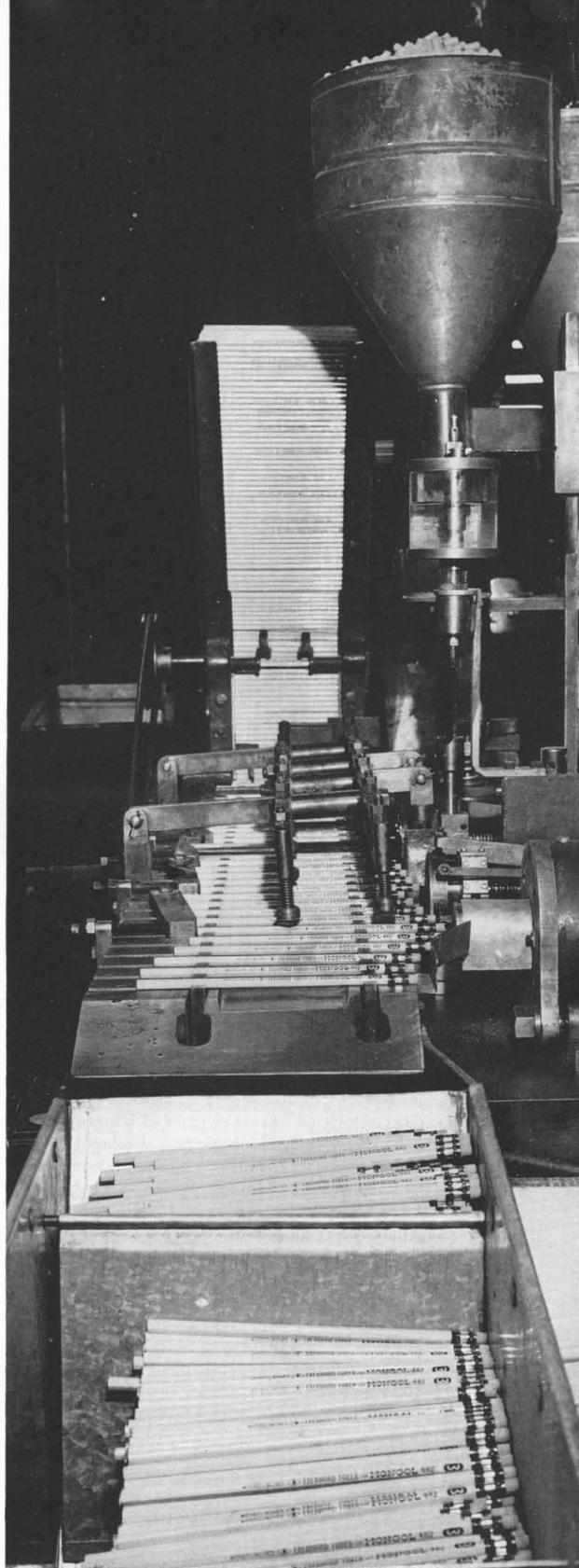
Now pencil manufacturers are branching into other fields. One lucrative sideline in the toy market is a type of water-soluble colored lead pencil that brings new popularity to the familiar numbered painting set. With these pencils, a child colors in part of a drawing and then spreads the color with a brush moistened with water. And, of course, "jumbo" pencils, a foot long and two or three times thicker than usual, have become favorites with small fry because they are easier to hold.

Business concerns are beginning to find the pencil, like the matchbook cover, is a rewarding medium for advertising. More and more pencils are showing up in office reception rooms with the name of a product stamped on the side.

The big pencil companies keep teams of researchers at work trying to figure out new uses for pencils in industry. As new industries arise, new needs arise. For example, automation brought copying machines and giant computers, both of which require special pencils. The copying machines need reproducing and non-reproducing pencils. With one, pencilled notations remain visible; with the other, notations don't show up, thus remain confidential. The giant "brain" machines use an electricity-conducting pencil for writing on coded cards. Ordinary lead pencils won't do, for their leads are non-conductive and foul up circuits.

For outdoor use by surveyors, nursery and farm employees, and engineers in the oil fields, a moisture-resistant pencil has been developed that makes a virtually permanent mark. Tests have shown that these marks hold up without fading after a full year of exposure to the elements.

But the undisputed leader in the field is still the plain lead pencil that continues to be the world's most popular writing tool. ■



High-speed equipment turns out modern lead pencils, which American public bought last year at an average of nine per person for a total of a billion and a half pencils.

MASTER OF LOGIC

From Islamic Spain a beacon of enlightenment pierced the haze of ignorance and superstition that clouded Europe in the twelfth century

THE TALL, grey-bearded man in the scholar's robe smiled indulgently at the twelve-year-old boy who was speaking so gravely. "This son of our distinguished host," he was musing, "thinks he can define a point of logic that has baffled Spain's best philosophers." As with the others in the learned circle, good manners kept him quiet. But as the boy brought his argument home to an irrefutable conclusion, the silence spoke of profound respect for a master logician. His arm around the boy's shoulder, the grey-bearded scholar turned to the host. "Be proud of your son," he said. "This boy has the finest mind in Spain."

The compliment offered was no small one. For this was said in the twelfth century, when Spain was often thought of as the most enlightened country in Europe. The twelve-year-old Abu al-Walid Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Rushd was surrounded by an assembly of philosophers, artists, historians, poets, scholars of a brilliance that has never been surpassed. When the Spanish Caliphate ranged from lush Andalusia to the northern mountains, the culture and civilization of Spain were like a warming beacon to the surrounding cold and darkness of the continent. The rest of Europe was still trying to struggle out of the miasma of the Dark Ages, when the conquerer and soldier were the only admirable figures. Only in Islamic Spain was a man of learning and creative thinking held in high esteem.

The youngster who spoke so boldly in his father's house grew up to crown with his personality and achievements the tree of learning his ancestors had planted. For centuries, in Cordova, which was Spain's center of scholarship, his forebears had been judges, physicians, scholars and respected members of the intelligentsia. Their name was already high in the annals of the learned. The boy was eagerly received by the teachers in the Cordovan schools, who felt that here was a mind they could ripen to a fine level of development. But it wasn't long before the youngster was explaining theology to the theologians, law to the lawyers, mathematics to the mathematicians, medicine to the physicians.

His real learning came from the books he devoured in his own time. Soon his questing mind found one line of thought to which it returned time and again. Philosophy seemed to the youngster to hold the answers not only to the meaning of life, but the ethics by which a man could live and make his own life meaningful. Thus he discovered Aristotle. He ranged through the entire spectrum of great thinkers of the past. He read the dialogues and discussions of them all. He was impressed by the vaulting imagination of Plato. But always he came back to Aristotle. It seemed to the young Spanish Muslim that Aristotle, of all the brilliant thinkers, had been of the greatest service in furthering man's knowledge, for the Greek had set down the principles of logic – that science that forced man to explain his world in terms of what he could *see* and *prove*. Long accepted explanations derived from folklore or superstition were disallowed.

While he was eagerly absorbing all the intellectual riches of the Aristotelian system, he was also under the obligation of choosing a profession for himself. He had been officially certified as a master in all the courses he had studied, but none really appealed to him as a life work. He thought astronomy might be the answer and went to Morocco to study at the celebrated North African observatory. But he found this was not his course either and chose the one which seemed the most immediately useful. He became a physician.

Even here his enthusiasm for the logic of Aristotle took over. Aristotle had studied the world from observable facts; his young follower did the same. He used the observations of a practicing physician to formulate a new theory of medicine, which he wrote down in a scientific treatise called *Universal Medicine*.

This was the beginning of fame for the man who later became called the "Master of Cordova." Because Latin was still the cultured language of Europe, and in fact was still current in high circles in Spain, Abu Walid was better known by the Latinized form of his name: Averroes.

The physician Averroes was summoned to the court of the Caliph Yusuf, a cultured man who surrounded himself with the finest minds in Spain. At first it was Averroes' healing skill which the Caliph sought, but when the Caliph found his physician could also untangle the most knotty points of law, Averroes was asked to stay. So attached to Averroes did the Caliph become that he began affectionately referring to the physician-lawyer as "my wizard."

High indeed was the place to which Averroes was raised, but the very height brought its dangers. There were men at the court envious of his close relationship with the Caliph, and jealous of the fact that Averroes had been appointed to judgeships in Seville and Cordova. So much honor to one man was more than petty minds could tolerate.

There was another, greater danger which the narrow-minded felt emanated from the Caliph's wizard. The Caliph Yusuf was intrigued by Aristotle, and when he found how much of Averroes' discoveries stemmed from the philosopher's influence, he asked his wizard to write an analysis of the Greek's philosophy. The analysis grew into a series of scholarly works whose remarkable insight caused Averroes to be known throughout Spain as "the Aristotelian."

For instance, the logical mind of Averroes was able to present clearly the meaning of Aristotle's great invention, the syllogism. This is a logical scheme of formal argument. It consists of three propositions, called the major premise, the minor premise and the conclusion. As an example: *Every virtue is laudable; kindness is a virtue; therefore kindness is laudable*. The whole Iberian peninsula, both within the borders of the Spanish Caliphate and outside it, gratefully seized upon Averroes' clarification of these and other Aristotelian thoughts. But at the height of his fame, Averroes was being mentioned as a dangerous thinker who was best ignored. His detractors waited their chance, and when the Caliph Yusuf died, they persuaded the new Caliph, a rather naive man, that the Aristotelian was really a dangerous influence. Averroes was promptly exiled from court.

But his exile did nothing to dim the lustre of his name. He was still the Master of Cordova. Beyond the borders of the Caliphate his name was Hispanized to Avén Ruiz. And even beyond those borders his works carried their message of enlightenment. The eager boy was now grown to a tall, lean, piercing-eyed man, with a hawk-like nose and wide forehead, and wherever he went he was hailed with respect and affection for his work in spreading the thinking of the man he regarded as his master and real teacher.

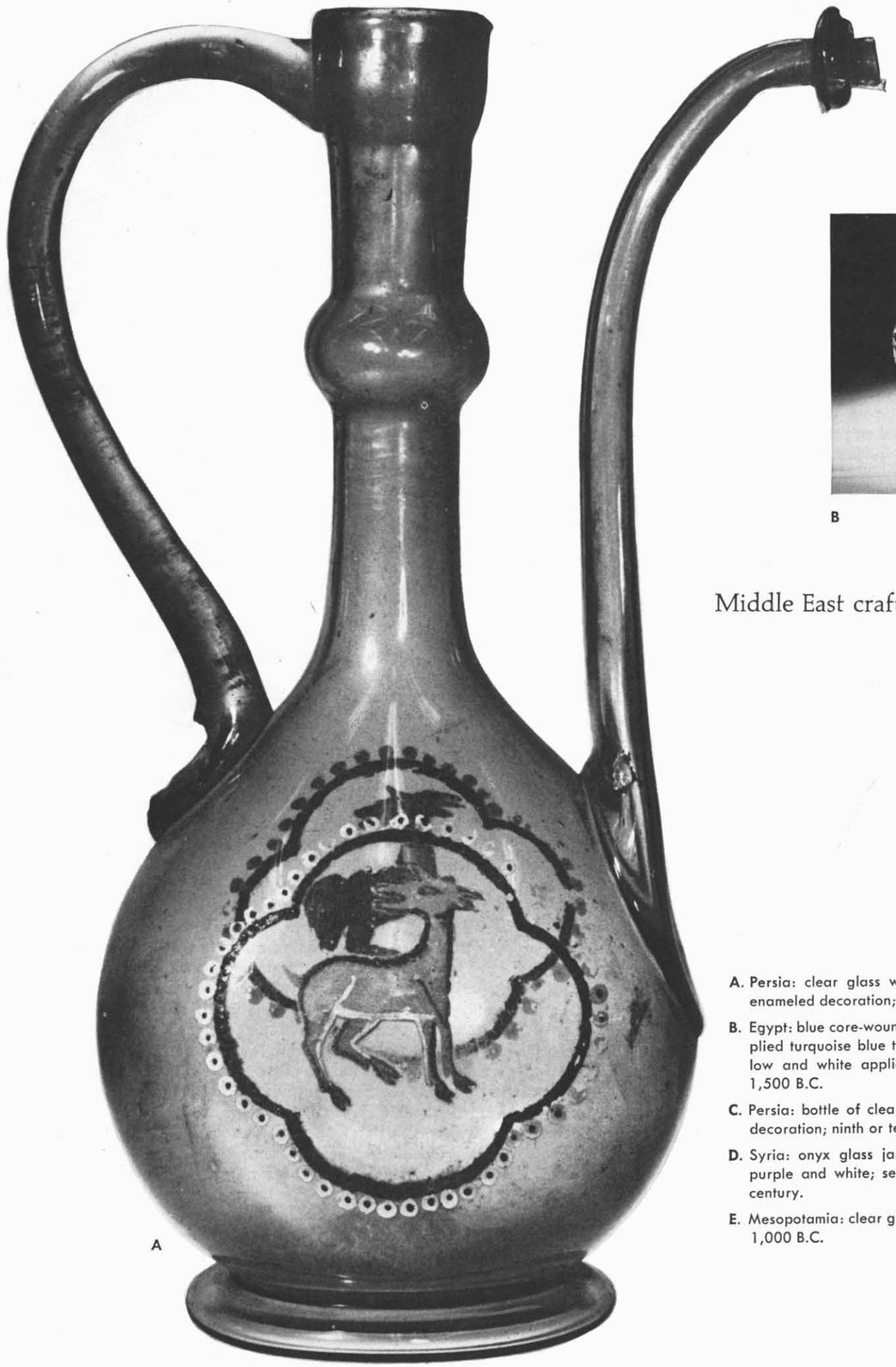
Despite the stagnation of the Dark Ages, there were those in Europe who were looking for intellectual enlightenment. To this segment, welcoming the riches of classical Greek thought, Aristotle was known simply as "the philosopher." For further understanding of that great mind, they seized on the published works of Averroes. And throughout France, Italy, England, Germany and other European countries the Islamic philosopher became known as "the Commentator."

Averroes of Cordova, from an old woodcut.

Whole cults of Averroist followers sprang up, identifying themselves with the Master of Cordova and with the systems of thought he had evolved from his Aristotelian studies. One group, calling themselves the Latin Averroists, made a whole school of philosophy out of one idea developed by "the Commentator."

Averroes himself was not interested in cults or in mere segments of his philosophy. More important to him than any concept was the system of thinking that lay behind it. He opened to the world the mind of Aristotle, father of logic, who made philosophy rigorously rational, who demanded that every step of an argument be guaranteed by strict logical reasoning. What might have seemed cold and inhuman became, in the hands of the Master of Cordova, a warm, bursting cornucopia of thought that, far from restricting original thinking, opened up new intellectual and human possibilities. A current of speculation on all aspects of living began to trickle through the Middle Ages, shining forth brilliantly in the Renaissance.

Averroes, at the age of 70, was welcomed back to the court of the Caliph in Cordova. Two years later, in 1198, he died. The poet Dante paid simple tribute a century later in these words: "Averroes, who wrote the great commentaries." ■



A

B

C

D

E

A. Persia: clear glass with yellow tint; enameled decoration; age unknown.

B. Egypt: blue core-wound glass with applied turquoise blue threads and yellow and white applied decorations; 1,500 B.C.

C. Persia: bottle of clear glass with cut decoration; ninth or tenth century.

D. Syria: onyx glass jar with cover in purple and white; seventh or eighth century.

E. Mesopotamia: clear glass vase; about 1,000 B.C.

Middle East craftsmen learned long ago how to turn sand and soda ash into objects of art

BEAUTY IN GLASS

THE FLICKERING DINNER FIRES began to die down, and darkness slowly covered the Syrian coast. A party of Phoenician traders, who landed earlier on the deserted beach, now gathered to sit on the warm sands and spend the evening telling of their adventures. One of the sailors rose and stirred the coals in the hope of bringing the fire to life once more. Suddenly at the center of the coals, a sparkling greenish-blue substance caught his eye. He called excitedly to the others, who quickly sprang to their feet and helped retrieve the shiny material from the glowing coals.

Because the Phoenicians had used blocks of soda taken from their ships' cargoes, near their campfires, explains Pliny, famous Roman historian of the first century A.D., the heat of the fire had combined the soda and sand to form mankind's first glass.

It's a romantic story, but Pliny is wrong. The Phoenicians were not the first to discover glass, but then Pliny did not have the benefit of modern research techniques, which have proven glass to be at least 14,000 years old. What is true, however, is that the story of glass unfolds almost entirely in the countries of the Middle East. And as Pliny suggests, the stage is set in the land of Syria, as well as Persia and Mesopotamia. It begins, perhaps, in the desert of ancient Egypt. From the very first, artisans found glass an ideal medium in which to express their art.

About 12,000 B.C. the Egyptians perfected a green glass glaze and with it coated pebbles and stones to make jewelry. It took another 5,000 years for the jewelers to discover that a pure glass bead could be formed by building up layers of the glaze. The necklaces made in those lost ages were not unlike the strands of inexpensive, gaily colored glass beads so common today.

The first glass bottles and jars were created during that same period. The process was so slow and tedious, however, that only kings and queens or people of immense wealth could afford them. Thin threads of molten glass were skillfully wound around a mold of wet sand which was later removed. These coveted jars served as containers for perfumes, cosmetics and ointments. Some of the glassware was used as tear vases. When a king or important official died, mourners

shed their tears in the little bottles, which were then sealed in the tomb. The deceased would see these tokens of grief when he reached the next world.

A dramatic advance in the art of glassmaking occurred in Syria about 250 B.C. when the "blown" method of making glass replaced "wound" glassware. How the discovery was made no one is quite sure. Perhaps an artisan was stirring a batch of molten glass with a hollow rod and decided to clear the end by blowing through the rod. Or perhaps a glassmaker blew through a hollow glass rod which had been closed by heat at one end. At any rate, a much more practical means of producing glass had arrived. With one puff the glassblower could obtain a finished shape. No longer was glass made by the slow and expensive "wound" process suitable only for royalty's purse.

A further refinement came with the discovery that molten glass blown into a mold would give a uniform, distinct shape. With the two new processes, bowls, vases, glasses, and cruets were produced in countless numbers. Even some "frivolous" objects could be afforded for the first time—toys, finger rings and twisted glass bangles.

Glass became the property of the average man, and people who used it in those days liked it for the very same reasons glass is useful today. It was leakproof, evaporation was slowed, it did not leave a taste – especially when oils, wines and honeys were kept in the containers for any length of time. Men of science adopted glass jars for their chemicals and medicines, and traders preferred glass containers for carrying certain cargoes on long voyages. But, best of all, the glass vessels could be used over and over again.

Color, or lack of color, then became an area of experimentation, especially in glassware intended to please the eye as well as being practical. Artisans in Syria, Persia and Arabia added chemicals such as cobalt, manganese and copper to give color to glass, and were constantly on the lookout for new means of obtaining colors.

Advances were often made by trial and error or perhaps accident. One story tells of a glassmaker who, while bending over his mixture of molten glass, lost a silver button from his coat. The mixture instantly turned a bright yellow, much to the amazement of the glassmaker. Another story tells of silver coins thrown into a mixture with the hope that a sparkling silver glass would appear. Instead, the mixture turned a dull black. However, when gold dust was tried, the particles were imprisoned in the glass. The result was not yellow or gold but a deep ruby red!

Completely transparent glass was also much sought-after. Pliny mentions that "The highest value is placed upon glass that is entirely colorless and transparent as possible, resembling crystal." For centuries the iron deposits in the sand had kept the glass from being clear. Finally about 200 A.D. the Romans discovered the right ingredients to render glass entirely transparent – so clear, in fact, that they called it "cristallo" because it reminded them of rock crystal.

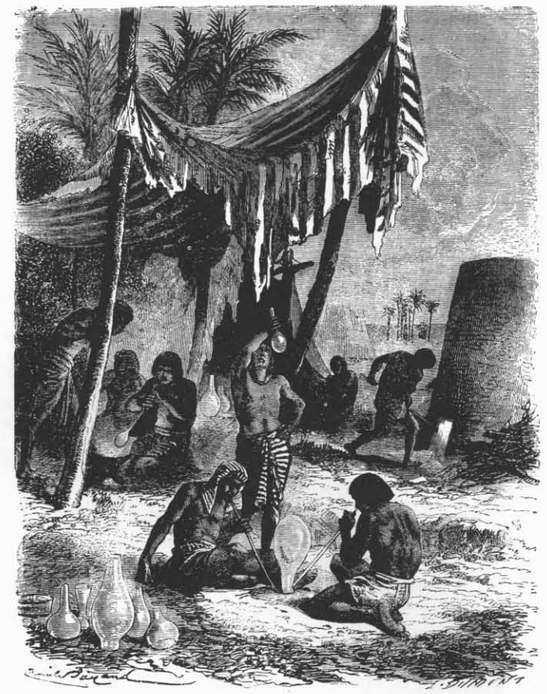
The art of glassmaking was greatly refined by the Romans, but when Rome declined, the skills were all but lost to Europe. In the Middle East, however, craftsmen were busy working in the traditions associated with typically Islamic art. The traditional Islamic motifs were celebrated – elaborate scrollwork, animals, arabesques and inscriptions.

A new enamel process was invented during the Fatamid Dynasty which brought new beauty to Middle Eastern glassmaking. Although the process is a thousand years old, it is still in use. It is not enamel used today to paint household objects, but a special preparation of finely ground glass combined with metallic oxides for coloring. Gum arabic is then added so that the mixture may be brushed onto the vase or bottle before the object is placed in a kiln to bake slowly. The oven's heat fuses the two glass mixtures.

Glass centers at Damascus and Aleppo spread the fame of Islamic glass. Glass from Syria was exported throughout the known world – even to the far reaches of Asia Minor and China. Travelers wrote with great praise of their visits to the glass centers. One such person was al-Kazwani who, in the thirteenth century, referred to the magnificent ware to be found in the glass bazaars of Aleppo. Another traveler who wrote of glass was the Persian geographer Hafiz-I-Abru, who in his memoirs noted that the glass of Aleppo was "decorated with elegance and taste."

In Persia, glassmaking became an important craft during the reign of Shah Abbas in the seventeenth century. Persian glassware kept the traditional decorative designs, but in later centuries equally beautiful glassware with jewel-like colors and unusual shapes became popular.

Indeed, all over the Middle East the old, old craft of glassmaking was firmly established as an industry that would, in coming centuries, keep an eye on both utility and beauty. ■

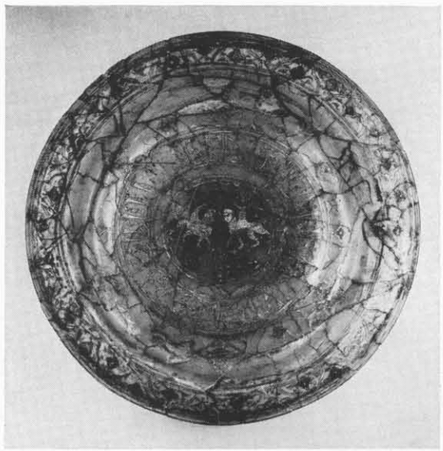


Artisans blowing glassware in Middle East factory 2,000 years ago.

Jug of transparent amber glass mold-blown in Syria, 500 A.D.

Ewer (wide-mouthed jug) in green glass from seventh-century Persia.

Three-inch-tall glass measuring cup, probably made in Arabia in seventh or eighth century.



Ornamental glass platter fifteen inches in diameter was crafted in Persia sometime during the eighth century.

Sweetmeat cup with pattern of enamel and gold from fourteenth-century Syria.

Christmas in America a century ago.

christmas yesterdays

Yuletide celebrations have changed many times and in many ways since America's early days

PUTTING UP the family Christmas tree, gift shopping on snowy evenings, singing the old caroles that seem ever new—these are but a few of the activities that make December 25 the most warmly anticipated holiday. Of course, the spirit behind that very special day is unchanging. But the way the day is celebrated *has* changed, with each period of America's age.

A look backward at past Christmases in the United States, be it from the vantage of 50 years ago or 300 years ago, proves that Christmas was not always the same. There was a time, for example, when Santa Claus was unknown, a time when in all American forests not a single yule tree was felled. Indeed, there was even a brief era when some Americans were criticized for commemorating the birth of Jesus at all!

1662 A 300-year-old print depicts a Puritan elder frowning grimly at some New Englanders in a parade. Marchers in the fore are carrying circular wooden signs intended to signify the original bright star of Bethlehem. The print points up the conflict that the day brought in some parts of seventeenth-century America: the colonies were deeply religious. Yet, not every colonist believed Christmas should be marked publicly.

Many early settlers looked askance at Christmas, because some of its trappings had foundations in customs prevalent before Jesus. Holly had long been honored in the Middle East, where its greenness in midwinter gave promise of the sun's return for another year. Mistletoe is traced to the Druids. Wreaths come from ancient Rome, where even the day—December 25—traditionally called for annual feasts "to the reborn sun." This is why the Pilgrims made Christmas a regular workway and even defied a 1667 royal order which warned, "No one be hindered from celebrating." As late as 1885, Christmas was a day of work in Boston, and those people refusing to labor might very well lose their jobs.

Despite these mixed feelings, there are stories of some New England settlements lighting an over-sized "yule log" and burning it "The Twelve Days of Christmas." Such towns always saved a remnant of the log to be used as kindling for the following year's yule fire, as dictated by an English custom.

In Southern colonies Christmas in 1662 was observed by mid-day gatherings of neighbors in the home of the wealthiest among them. The focal point of these was "a fine fowl," carried to the table by the fairest female guest. Afterwards, the children would be given token gifts. Lads received wooden knives, little girls simple but highly-treasured dolls made from pine cones and dyed corncobs.

1712 The last colonial critics of Christmas had given up, and along the Atlantic coast the coming of Christmas brought the happy pealing of bells. Laurel wreaths and other "greens," fastened into chains, were placed modestly inside homes. Public stages and the manes of the horses that pulled them were decorated with lengths of red ribbon.

Men and women everywhere spent several hours in church on Christmas Day. On Christmas night it was common for a family man to join other household heads to ritually smoke several long clay pipes of "Christmas tobacco." An evening or two before Christmas, Philadelphia and Baltimore girls tucked "Christmas baskets" inside their bulky fur muffs and went a'mumming. From house to house groups would go, making merry song in each front yard and having their baskets filled again and again with roasted apples and other festive foods. The very young's "mumming" was restricted to a daylight visit to the homes of grandparents, where they were handed a packet of sweetmeats or a single toy.

1762 Fifty years later, America's celebration was becoming more social. Children were allowed to play indoor versions of hide-and-seek and blind man's bluff, a tremendous concession considering the era. Christmas afternoon found adults dressing in their finest and calling at friends' homes to play simple parlor games and sing tunes. All children received Christmas gifts in 1762. New England youths were given metal banks etched with thrift epigrams. America's first dollhouse appeared a generation earlier, and though still expensive they were popular in all colonies. An imported toy that most city children were given this year was the metal horn. Trappers who lived on the frontier and brought them home for sons and daughters could not know the foreign sounds would first frighten terribly then delight many an Indian brave.

Southern plantation owners had assimilated the old world practice of visiting each servant's home Christmas morning with gifts for all. Louisiana, a year away from becoming the first republic in America, had for some time been observing a more complex holiday than the rest of the land. Creole children were putting shoes on the hearth to be filled by Père Noël and perhaps his less popular partner, Père Fouettard (who was not quite as sympathetic with bad boys and girls). Everyone went to mid-

night Mass, and Creoles who lived in the back country braved high winter waters to get to New Orleans for the annual reunion of *"la famille."*

1812 The new sea struggle with England dampened few American hearths this December. Much of the nation's festive tradition had stemmed from the enemy's culture, but Christmas happily remained beyond politics. Those home-for-the-holiday dashes had begun, and host families began early to put fresh husks in the bed tick of the spare room. Christmas was also a time to fill all lamps and clean chimneys.

In Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey Dutch households, women made *Krishtdog Kucha* (Christmas Cookies). On Christmas Eve, Swedish girls wore ringed headdresses of large *lighted* candles, a custom still practiced today in some Midwest communities. Holiday hymns were sung, and children all wanted one of the new miniature carved wooden animals on wheels. Dutch tykes believed "Santer Klass" (Nicholas, patron saint of children) brought them. The Dutch alone hung stockings and put up lighted trees in their houses.

The country's first genuine baby dolls debuted this yuletide. Previously all dolls had been representations of adults. Sometimes little girls dropped these in fits of fright caused by sudden acquaintance with another new toy called a "jack-in-the-box."

1862 The War Between the States made this an unhappy yule for many Americans. Yet, families responded to the day, and troops on both sides received boxes of holiday food from home.

Dozens of changes had transformed Christmas since 1812. More homes had trees; more of these were being mounted on platforms; greetings cards had been introduced a few years earlier and were widely used by 1862; Northern and Midwestern children stuffed themselves with maple syrup mixed in snow and aligned lead soldiers under the tree – the South would soon melt all of theirs for munitions; the world was starting to witness the great age of the mechanical toy. In addition to such exciting newcomers as ice skates and kaleidoscopes, German clockwork toys capable of moving were stocked in every state. Some of these featured prizefighters railing with planned precision at each other's hand-painted chests, chickens with tin eggs to cluck over and dandies who could tip their hats and wink. All were noisy and all were held in high esteem by boys and girls.

Carol singers were learning "We Three Kings of Orient Are," written five years earlier by a Pennsylvania clergyman, and "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear," composed by two Bostonians. Soon (in 1868) they would be able to add to their repertoire a third American carol, "O Little Town of Bethlehem." America's first minister to Mexico, Dr. Joel Poinsett, brought back cuttings of a plant called *Flor de la Noche Buena* (Flower of the Holy Night). The upper leaves of the star-shaped plant turned an exquisite scarlet in winter. The flower was named "poinsettia," and Americans began sharing it with Mexico as a favorite symbol of Christmas. It was much in evidence in 1862, but perhaps the most important of new developments was that Santa had been given features.

Two Americans were responsible for the evolution of Santa. In his poem "A Visit from St. Nicholas," Clement Moore told readers that "St. Nick" was a "jolly old elf" who arrived on rooftops with "a clatter of eight tiny reindeer." Political cartoonist Thomas Nast completed the historic transformation of Nicholas in the early 1860's. His illustration for a magazine reprint of the poem brought a detailed Santa image, complete with a stylized suit Moore hadn't mentioned. The drawing was received enthusiastically, and today nearly all the world's Santas are based on Nast's conception.

1912 Christmas by 1912 was more planned-for than ever. Parlors were opened for the first time since Thanksgiving. Small boys were busy early in the month writing to the North Pole, another Thomas Nast invention. Small girls memorized important parts for important school "dramas." Everyone hung stockings now. A special delight was the box of candy churches gave members Christmas Eve. More than one "Peck's bad boy" with his fellows might skillfully manage to attend services December 24 in at least three of his town's houses of worship.

Under the tree one could find all manner of twentieth-century delights: lapel watches for mother; electric trains (invented 12 years earlier) for dad almost as much as his sons; chemistry sets and teddy bears. The latter, which cannot be found in the most detailed zoology texts, came into being over a 1906 White House wedding breakfast. Theodore Roosevelt's daughter, Alice, had found the table in question decorated with four stuffed bears from Germany. Alice and a journalist friend are credited with naming them after her famous father.

As earlier, Christmas in 1912 often called for large family gatherings in an appointed house. When everyone was crowded in, a dining table might be bursting with extra leaves and 50 relatives. After Christmas dinner, the women would begin a clean-up which lasted almost until dark. The men would get up and stroll into the parlor. There, they inspected new cigars and conversed with brothers and cousins they sometimes hadn't seen in a year. But one by one, they would settle back in stuffed chairs and fall asleep. The children could be found sprawled out on the floors, breaking in coloring books and packs of *Old Maid* cards. Throughout, they munched on oranges, walnuts and jawbreaking shapes of green, gold and vermilion rock candy.

1962 Everyone is familiar with the changes the last half-century has brought to Christmas. Each season, a little of our most recent Christmas past disappears. It's replaced by something new, perhaps a plastic-type tree or a new kind of artificial snow. These changes come each year just as surely as Christmas comes itself. What doesn't change is the real meaning of the first Christmas. ■

With one face to the Red Sea, Jiddah in 1933 was encompassed by a wall built more than 400 years ago. Wall has since been removed.

Mission To Jiddah

A bright future in oil for Americans and Saudi Arabs was assured in 1933, when an energetic lawyer traveled half way around the world to help implement the agreement

THE STEAMER *Talodi*, no longer rolling and pitching, made its way past a half-sunken vessel and eased through the tricky harbor channel. Behind lay Port Sudan and a rough sixteen-hour Red Sea crossing. Ahead there arose from the glistening sand littoral the ancient city of Jiddah, gateway for Muslim pilgrims to the Holy City of Mecca.

On the deck of the *Talodi* two American couples watched the stage-set skyline emerge from the haze. Lloyd N. Hamilton and his wife Airy were newcomers to Jiddah. Karl and Nona Twitchell had already lived there. They were, in fact, among the very few Americans at that time who knew anything about the exotic Saudi Arabian city.

It was February 15, 1933. Hamilton, a lawyer and land-lease expert for the Standard Oil Company of California, commonly called Socal, was bound upon an historic mission. He hoped to negotiate an oil concession with the government of King 'Abd al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, who was to become well known to the West as King Ibn Saud.

Karl Twitchell had previously made both mineral and water surveys for the King. He and his wife knew the non-Muslim enclave of Jiddah, the community of Western diplomatic and business representatives. He pointed out certain features of the old walled city that could be seen from the spacious harbor.

Lloyd Hamilton peered from under his sun helmet. The 40-year-old lawyer was about to enter a world based upon

May 1933: the Concession Agreement was signed by Lloyd Hamilton and 'Abd Allah Al Sulaiman, Saudi Arab Minister of Finance at that time.

Mission To Jiddah

traditions extending back to Abraham. He was shortly to encounter a way of life, rich and complex, footed solidly upon deep religious faith. He and his wife and the Twitchells had only recently left behind them in America an equally complex world, but one shaken badly by the great depression.

Three years had passed since the fateful autumn of 1929. In the twelve months preceding Hamilton's voyage from Port Sudan to Jiddah, Franklin Delano Roosevelt had been elected the 32nd President of the United States. The country had turned with shock to headlines announcing the kidnapping of Charles Augustus Lindbergh, Jr. The Bonus Army had converged upon Washington.

Oddly enough, in the midst of gloom, the entertainment world in the U. S. had begun to flourish. Radio had entered upon its golden years, and Radio City was about to open in startling defiance of many doomsayers. As always, the flood of popular songs flowed without pause, and people hummed and sang "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" "I Gotta Right to Sing the Blues," "Let's All Sing Like the Birdies Sing," and "In a Shanty in Old Shanty Town." Longer lasting "standards" that came from musical theater that year were "April in Paris" and "Night and Day."

In order to combat the growth in popularity of radio, and falling receipts, the motion picture industry adopted the double-feature as standard practice. The year's leading pictures included *Arrowsmith, Grand Hotel, Scarface* (the story of Al Capone who still headed his multi-million-dollar corporate crime ring), and *Back Street*.

Two books had differing, but profound, impacts on U. S. life: *Life Begins at Forty* by Walter Pitkin changed the country's attitude toward middle age, and *Young Lonigan* by James T. Farrell gave realism in literature a big boost.

The Olympic Games were held in Los Angeles, Jack Sharkey defeated Max Schmeling in fifteen rounds and brought the heavyweight prizefight title back to the U. S. from Germany, and on December 4, 1932 Walter Winchell first appeared on radio.

The America of the Hamiltons and Twitchells was undergoing many lasting changes, but no matter how much it might be altered, life in the U. S. could never seem as strange to them as that which awaited them beyond the pier at Jiddah.

Around them in the harbor the Americans could see the odd and beautiful lateen rigs of the Arab dhows, the high-ended traditional coasting vessels of the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf. The slanting sailpole of these doughty craft fascinated the newcomers.

As they neared the pier, the Americans could see looming across the water the sagging façade of Jiddah. Buildings rose four stories, and sometimes five, in a mixed array of very old and recently built dwellings. Some of the structures were 600 years old – tradition assigns an even earlier origin to several.

The Americans saw a city that was tightly concentrated. Houses pushed up toward the sky rather than spreading out. A traveler once remarked that Jiddah slept upon its feet for long ages because there was no space to lie down.

Its architectural distinction, then, lay in the ranks of balconies that seemed to frame every window facing the sea. The Persian provenance of their design details spoke of Jiddah's past. In the opinion of Shaikh 'Abd al-Quddoos al-Mansari, historian of the city and a prominent Saudi Arabian editor and man of letters, the city may be more than 2,000 years old. It may first have been settled and built up by the Persians.

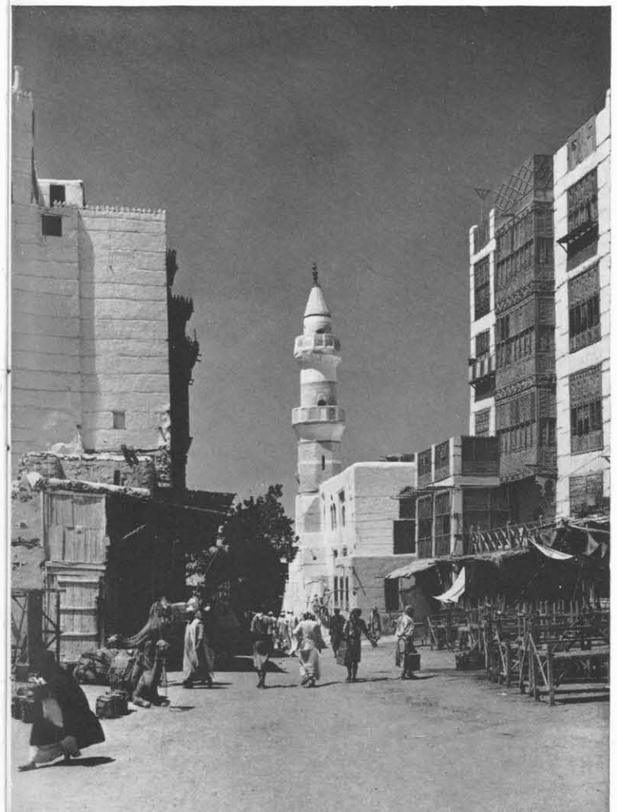
Shaikh 'Abd al-Quddoos has spoken of "the cosmopolitan color of Jiddah where Muslim and Christian live in harmony." For long centuries before the Hamiltons and the Twitchells arrived, Jiddah had the sophisticated flavor of a crossroads trading center. The word *jiddah,* according to Shaikh 'Abd al-Quddoos, conveys the meaning of *road.* Caravans came up from Yemen in old times and stopped in Jiddah on the way to Mecca. Similarly, caravans coming down from Damascus bound for Mecca halted there. For centuries before there was a Suez Canal, spice trade vessels unloaded at the famous Red Sea port, and their cargo was transferred to camels which then hauled it up into Egypt via Gaza or on to the coastal cities of Palestine and Lebanon.

Wood was precious in Jiddah, for it had to be imported for building. Therefore, it was saved for balconies, window frames and carved panels. Some of the balconies rose like the great choir lofts of Western cathedrals. They were cunningly ornamented with a variety of shutters, criss-crossed slatwork and scrollwork of Arabic motifs.

Jiddah, as the Hamiltons would learn, is hot and humid. The least breath of air from the sea is precious. The Arab tradition requires that the family quarters be protected from the eyes of strangers. Thus the colorful balconies and ornate window boxes solved the problem of letting air in and preserving privacy.

The ornamentation of the high buildings was, in the Muslim proscription, entirely floral or geometric. Some of the older buildings canted crazily; they seemed to lean toward one another over narrow labyrinths where pilgrims had walked since the days of the Prophet Muhammad. These labyrinthine ways look, as one observer remarked, as ancient as Genesis – and some think they are.

Balconies in the 2,000-year-old city of Jiddah are traditionally decorated with slatted woodwork for privacy and good ventilation.



From the *Talodi,* the Americans could see parts of the wall built around the city in 1509 by an Egyptian king (and now torn down). The wall demarked the old city.

The narrow ways once bustled with trade in the time of the Persians and the pre-Islamic Arabs who peopled Jiddah. Then, according to Shaikh 'Abd al-Quddoos' researches, the city "disappeared" and another city—Shu 'aiba, 36 kilometers to the south – became the harbor for Mecca and Medina.

Jiddah did not altogether disappear, however, for there exists the record of a man who was sent to murder Muhammad, but whose horse got stuck in the mud "near Jiddah." In 646 the city and its piers were rebuilt, and it became the gateway to Mecca for the Muslim pilgrim.

By the time Hamilton arrived in Jiddah in 1933, change had come in the person of the man known in the West as King Ibn Saud. His conquest and consolidation of modern Saudi Arabia had been completed, and a stable national rule had been enforced. Hamilton brought with him change of a different sort – the modern oil industry – which was to provide a broad economic base for the country.

The Hamiltons and the Twitchells went ashore at Jiddah in mid-February 1933. With Twitchell's aid and assistance, Hamilton settled in, met many of the foreign enclave in the city, and began his mission. The curtain rose on the historic negotiations. But the complex world that Hamilton had left behind in the United States reached into the ancient byways of Jiddah and into the council halls of the King. The shattering effects of the great depression at home played a part in the crucial discussions between Hamilton and the King's advisors.

President Roosevelt was sworn in on Saturday, March 4, 1933, about eighteen days after Hamilton landed. On Monday, the President ordered all the U. S. banks to close, thus heading off financial panic. On April 19, the President banned all gold exports.

These distant events put a severe strain on the concession negotiations. But Hamilton and his associates persisted. On May 29, the concession agreement was signed at the palace in Jiddah by 'Abd Allah Al Sulaiman, Minister of Finance, and Hamilton.

As he stood on the deck of the *Talodi* and got his first look at the desert reaches that all but surround Jiddah and that flow under the wind into the stony, volcanic mountains behind the city, Lloyd Hamilton must have had some notion of the difficulties that might beset his mission. He could not, however, have foreseen the sweep of events at home that would weigh upon the negotiations at a crucial moment. Nor could he have guessed at the effect of an event that had taken place in Berlin a couple of weeks before his landing at Jiddah, an event that was to plunge the world into war and, incidentally, to defer the development of Saudi Arabian oil. On January 30, a man named Adolph Hitler had been made chancellor of Germany. ■

A WALK AROUND DAMASCUS

Travelers to this old, old Syrian city find history underfoot every step of the way

TRADITION makes Damascus the oldest walled city in the world – and the strict truth of that claim is quite irrelevant. Assuredly in one of the old bazaars of this Syrian city is an Aladdin's lamp from the days before magic became neglected. Perhaps some cramped genii will assemble a group of Western tourists through whose eyes this exotic place may be visited. With a rub of the lamp, let them appear in Merjeh Square – between the new and the old city – with guidebooks in hand.

The guidebooks relate that the Barada River, called Abana River in the Bible, flows through the heart of Damascus. Lush groves surround the city's walls. Low hills from the Anti-Lebanon range bound the area to the east, while the peaks of Jebel es-Sheikh (Mt. Hermon), el-Aswad (the Black Mountain), and Mani (the Inaccessible) stand as sentinels over the green valley. Such richness in the midst of desertlands inspired many a Bedouin's voice to song and poetry. Included in the guidebooks is the city's ancient story, when Damascus was renowned over the civilized world for its trade, its silks, called "damask," and the keenness of its shimmering steel blades.

But enough of the guidebooks. The businessman, always on a busman's holiday, will want to drift over to the business district in the Harika Quarter, just south of the thirteenth-century Citadel. In the Midan Quarter, farther on, the glass factories may intrigue him, as well. But equally appealing to commercial souls are the bazaars of the city. These are all "specialized," so that the Harir Suq sell silks, the Kuya deals in leathers, the Arsuniyeh handles hardware, the es-Sagha jewelry, and the Besuriah carries sweets to appease wives who wanted to visit the Dadeh Palace. The potential buyer in the East does his market research simply by walking down the street!

"I want to buy something for the office," says the fellow wearing the straw hat, a sports shirt and sunglasses. The group wanders over to "the" bazaar of Damascus – the Suq Hamadiyeh. There, beneath a covered arcade stretching for blocks, one can find all the products of the East. Silks, brocades, cleverly wrought metals, leather goods of all descriptions, "oriental" merchandise, pottery, glass, and an endless array of camel saddles, braided whips and curved Bedouin daggers are displayed in the shops, on the streets, hanging from awnings, and in the hands of sidewalk salesmen! This is "the East," at least for the tourist, and it has all the sights and noises traditionally belonging to the Arabian Nights. Syrian merchants in business suits, Bedouins from the desert, sturdy laborers, loquacious guides, – and unmistakable tourists – jam the streets. Here, too, honeymooners in the party can pick up great brass trays, inlaid Koran stands, leather hassocks, cigarette boxes, ivory elephants, Persian carpets, or silver coffee sets to adorn their new apartment in authentic Near Eastern decor.

But what of the delightful couple in the group who are on their way to the Holy Land? Surely Damascus has something for them, too. "Isn't this the place where Paul stayed?" they ask. Yes, and also where, so says tradition, Adam took up residence and Cain slew Abel. Jebel Kassiun, far to the west of the city, claims Adam's cave, but the Bab Touma section, over near the eastern wall, is the *actual* Christian quarter. It is there that visitors find the small underground chapel marking the House of Ananias, the instructor of Paul. Just south of it, stretching roughly East-West, is Suq Midhat Pasha. "What would you call this street?" someone asks – and the whole group replies, "the Street Called Straight of New Testament fame."

This street, in good Roman town-planning fashion, was the Main Street, or *carda recta,* of old Damascus. In the middle of its long expanse there stands a Roman arch of the second century A.D., and at its far end is a triple gate called "Bab es-Sharqi," now almost unrecognizable amid the houses which have used two of its arches for rooms.

Leaving the city by that gate, the group follows the wall to the south and stops at Bab Kisan to see the "window" through which Paul is said to have made his prudent, but slightly irregular, exit in a basket! Not far from that spot is the traditional site of his conversion to Christianity, and almost at the other end of the Street Called Straight is the traditional location of the house of Jude, where Paul is said to have been baptized.

"I say, wait a moment until I copy this inscription," says a scholarly-appearing youth in the party who has been