**It Took a While**

**Archbishop Trench tells how, in 1690, an agave plant was brought over and planted in the gardens of Hampton Court Palace by Queen Mary. The last ten years of the seventeenth century passed, and the plant gave no sign of flowering. The whole of the eighteenth century passed, and never a bud did the plant put forth. Eighty-eight years of the nineteenth century passed, and still no sign of a flower. But in 1889 the venerable plant burst into blossom. *(Paul Lee Tan, in Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations, p. 1145)***

**The Swiss alpenhorn has turned up of late in TV commercials. Understand it takes a good artisan about 40 hours to make one of those huge horns. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Not many apples have come from scientific, commercial breeding. It takes about 50 years to produce and market a new variety, and often the results are poor. So, current apple production leans heavily on the old ones. *(Jack Denton Scott, in Reader’s Digest)***

**A celebrated artist finally had his work exhibited in New York City this week, 14 years after his death and six years after his life’s work was narrowly saved from being tossed into a dumpster. Around 3,000 of Arthur Pinajian’s canvasses were discovered in a garage in Bellport, New York, in 2007, and the purchaser of the property, Thomas Schultz, salvaged as many of them as he could for posterity. Now, 50 of Pinajian’s restored artworks are being shown at a New York gallery, with asking prices of up to $500,000. “It was important that this collection and this artist gets the recognition he deserves,” said Schultz. *(The Week magazine, March 22, 2013)***

**A man walked into a credit office to pay the final installment on a baby crib. “Thank you,” the manager said. “And how is the baby today?” “Oh,” the man replied, “I’m fine.” *(George Fetter, in Reader’s Digest)***

**A six-person team at PricewaterhouseCoopers spends 1,700 hours counting and verifying ballots for the Oscars. *(BusinessWeek, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 9, 2007)***

**George Bancroft used 26 years of his life onHistory of the United States. *(Paul Lee Tan, in Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations)***

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**Baseball: It took 30 years. Baltimore’s win Sunday gave the Orioles the season series (10-9) against Boston. The O’s hadn’t won 10 games against Boston since 1974. *(Rocky Mountain News, October 4, 2004)***

**Was at least 20 years after he wrote “Take Me Out to the Ballgame” that Albert won Tilzer saw his first baseball game. *(L. M. Boyd, in Boyd’s Book of Odd Facts, p. 62)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**Years before six inventions and creations became popular:   
Camera (1861) -- no demand until 1880s   
Canned food (1811) -- until can opener, 1855   
Abacus (2600 B.C.) -- introduced in Europe, A.D. 945  
Microwave (1957) -- available to public, 1967  
PEZ Mints (1927) -- no dispenser until 1948  
Ice cream cones (late 1890s) -- popularized 1904. *(World Features Syndicate)***

**The first bicycle, a stained glass window in Stoke Poges, England, depicting a wingless angel on a “bicycle,” was created in the 17th century – nearly 200 years before the invention of the bicycle. *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Weird Inventions & Discoveries, p. 112)***

**Rocky Mountain male bighorns sometimes battle 20 hours to win a chosen female. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Ten years after being falsely linked to the bombing at the Atlanta Olympics, security guard Richard Jewell has been honored for saving lives on that day. On July 27, 1996, Jewell motioned people away from a suspicious backpack in Centennial Park, just before it exploded, killing one person and injuring 111. Though never arrested or charged, Jewell was considered the top suspect for a time and was widely tarred with the crime in thousands of news reports around the globe. The real killer, Eric Rudolph, was caught in 2003. “No one can rewrite history,” said Jewell upon receiving his award from Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue. “We can only learn from it.” *(The Week magazine, August 18, 2006)***

**A book on electricity was returned to a Massachusetts library nearly 120 years after it was checked out. “This is definitely the longest overdue book that we’ve gotten back,” said Olivia Melo of the New England Bedford Free Public Library. The book, James Clark Maxwell’s An Elementary Treatise on Electricity, was published in 1881 and checked out around 1904. A rare-bookcurator at West Virginia University’s library found it among some donations. It was in “optimal shape,” noted Melo, who said the book “is going to be here 100 years from now.” *(The Week magazine, July 28, 2023)***

**Johannes Brahms, 43, debuted his Symphony No. 1 in C minor in Karlsruhe, Germany, on November 4, 1876. Critical of his own work and burdened by his reputation as the next Beethoven, Brahms worked for 15 years on the piece, which he deemed “long and not exactly lovable.” The critics were kinder, praising its “Homeric simplicity” and quickly dubbed the dramatic work “Beethoven’s Tenth.” The form conquered, Brahms produced three more symphonies in the next ten years. He died in 1897, at age 66. *(Alison McLean, in Smithsonian magazine)***

**Years until they were canonized saints:**  
**St. Thomas Aquinas - 53 years after he died**  
**St. Martin de Porres - 323 years**  
**St. Francis Xavier Cabrini - 29 years**  
**St. Pius X - 119 years**  
**Joan of Arc - 500 years. *(World Features Syndicate)***

**Word is it takes about five years for a beginning catfish farmer to see some return on the money. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**In the oceans, photosynthesis is carried on mainly by algae. Long before anything could live out of water, these plant dynamos did most of the work of changing the earth's atmosphere from poisonous gases to breathable air -- a process which probably took some 2 1/2 billion years. Today, tiny algae called diatoms carry on the bulk of aquatic photosynthesis. (Rutherford Platt, in The Living World of Nature, p. 235)**

**Their droning love songs have faded, the skies are free of their tumbling flights and the carcasses that littered sidewalks have washed away. The Brood X cicadas, vintage 2004, are gone. But in the trees of several mid-Atlantic and Midwest states, the next generation is just beginning its 17-year life. Within the next few weeks, billions of eggs deposited in tree branches will hatch and rain down tiny white nymphs no bigger than sesame seeds with beady red-eyes. They will burrow through the dirt to tree roots and won’t emerge as adults until 2021. *(The North Platte Telegraph)***

**When a coffee seed is planted, it takes five years to yield consumable fruit. *(Noel Botham, in The Book of Useless Information, p. 96)***

**Adam Clark labored forty years writing his commentary on the holy scriptures. *(Glenn Van Ekeren, in The Speaker’s Sourcebook)***

**How long does it take to make a 30-second commercial with those singing and dancing raisins? About four months. Each plastic figure has to be moved between stop-action shots. That’s 14 times for every second of action. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**How long it took five major companies to earn profits:**

* **Pixar – 10 years**
* **Blockbuster – 18 months**
* **Bristol-Myers – 13 years**
* **Fisher Price – 6 years**
* **FedEx – 26 months. *(World Features Syndicate)***

**You probably wouldn’t be logging on to your computer today if it weren't for a weaving machine invented about 200 years ago. In the early 1800s, a Frenchman, Joseph Marie Jacquard, invented a weaving loom that used holes punched in cards to control the pattern. About 30 years later a mathematician, Ada Byron, wrote the first computer programs. She based them on Jacquard's punch-card idea. Her programs were for the first general-purpose mechanical digital computer, which had just been invented by Charles Babbage. About 60 years later, an American, Herman Hollerith, built on these three people's ideas. He invented a machine that used punch cards to electrically count the information collected in the 1890 census. He was so successful that he started a company, later called IBM. *(Betty Debnam, in Rocky Mountain News)***

**It takes about 200 frost-free days for** cotton **to grow. (L. M. Boyd)**

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**Leonardo da Vinci spent ten years perfecting The Last Supper. He reportedly became so engrossed in his work he would forget to eat for several days. The Last Judgment, considered one of the twelve master paintings of all time, consumed eight years of Michelangelo’s life. *(Glenn Van Ekeren, in The Speaker’s Sourcebook)*It took Leonardo da Vinci about five years to complete his famous Mona Lisa. *(Bruce D. Witherspoon, in Astounding Facts)***

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**Although Daylight Savings Time was originally proposed by Benjamin Franklin in 1784, it wasn’t adopted in the U.S. until 1918. *(Charles Reichblum, in Knowledge in a Nutshell, p. 227)***

**U.S. postal folk didn’t start delivering mail to the countryside until 32 years after they delivered in the cities. *(L. M. Boyd)***

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**How long it took to develop:**

**Chocolate that didn't melt in hands -- seven years**

**Ready-mixed paint -- 10 years**

**The atomic bomb -- three years**

**Birth control pill -- 10 years**

**Insulin -- eight months**

**Canned food -- 14 years**

**Safety pin -- three hours. *(World Features Syndicate)***

**They developed over time:**

**Head & Shoulders – took 13 years to develop**

**A safe electric blanket – took 23 years to develop**

**Slinky – took two years to develop**

**Velcro – took 12 years to develop**

**Crest toothpaste – took eight years to develop**

**Orville Redenbacher popcorn – took 40 years to develop**

**Lincoln Logs – took 10 minutes to create. *(World Features Syndicate)***

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**It took nearly one year to cut the 128-carat “Tiffany” diamond. *(Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts)***

**The Karl Lagerfeld-designed Chanel dress that Sarah Jessica Parker wore to the 2003 Emmy Awards took 250 hours to make. *(Noel Botham, in The Best Book of Useless Information Ever, p. 71)***

In 1925, a banyan tree was brought to Thomas Edison's home in Fort Myers, Florida. It was gifted to Edison by his friend Harvey Firestone in the hope that the tree's white sap could be used as a domestic source of rubber, but the tree grew too slowly to prove viable. Nevertheless, the tree has remained on Edison's estate for nearly 100 years. Its sprawling drooping limbs have grown to cover one acre, and it stands 60 feet tall. For many, Edison's banyan is the most striking feature of the inventor's Florida estate. *(The Daily Chronicle)*

**What was Albert Einstein doing for a living at the time he revolutionized physics with his three historic papers in 1905? Clerking in a Swiss patent office. Took him another five years to get an underpaid professorship at the University of Zurich. But he never did sweat the matters much. *(Boyd’s Curiosity Shop, p. 243)*  
  
In the election of 1800, Thomas Jefferson tied with Aaron Burr for president in the Electoral College. The election went to the House of Representatives, where Jefferson was elected president on the 36th ballot. *(Robert C. Baron)***

**Thomas Edison’s first light bulb was produced centuries after the first scientific experiments with electricity, “and it would be many more years before cities would blaze with electric light.” *(The Week magazine, December 30/January 6, 2023)***

**The first fax machine was patented in 1843 -- 33 years before the telephone -- by Scottish inventor Alexander Bain. His device read text written in raised metal letters and transmitted it through telegraph lines. Eight years later, Frederick Bakewell, an English physicist, demonstrated a similar machine at the Crystal Exhibition. A commercial fax system was established in 1865 by Italian Giovanni Caselli between Lyon and Paris in France. German inventor Arthur Korn upgraded the fax in 1902 by adding an optical scanner and started a wire photo service for newspapers. In 1948 Western Union started its DeskFax service. Xerox introduced the first general-purpose fax machine in 1966, which operated over telephone lines. In 1980, fast digital faxes using uniform data standards appeared. Now that most computer modems can function as faxes, the stand-alone fax may vanish within a decade. *(Fenella Saunders, in Discover magazine)***

**At 12:30 p.m. on June 12, 1935, Senator Huey Long of Louisiana began a filibuster in the Senate. When Long finally dropped into his seat from physical exhaustion at 4 a.m. the following day, he had been speaking continually for 15 1/2 hours--the longest speech on record. The speech was 150,000 words long and included such irrelevancies as cooking recipes and humorless anecdotes. Long's marathon monologue filled 100 pages in the Congressional Record, and cost the Government $5,000 to print. (Timothy T. Fullerton, in Triviata , p. 47)**

**After waiting over three frustrating hours at the airport for the arrival of a plane that had been delayed in takeoff, a man approached the boarding desk and asked for an arrival-time update. He was concerned because he was meeting his nephew and this was the boy’s first flight. “How old is the boy?” the airline representative asked solicitously. “He was six when he left,” the man replied sharply. *(Thomas J. Doran, in Reader’s Digest)***

**LOST AND FOUND – Invented, then forgotten:**

**False teeth – invented, then forgotten for 2,500 years**

**Corks – forgotten for 1,300 years**

**DDT – forgotten for 80 years**

**Cement – forgotten for 1,400 years**

**Modern mirror – forgotten for 800 years**

**Umbrella – forgotten for 1,300 years. (*World Features Syndicate)***

**In 2010, Germany finally paid off the last of its debts from World War I, for reparations they agreed to in the 1919 Treaty of Versailles for the damage done to Allied countries. *(Don Voorhees, in The Indispensable Book of Useless Information, p. 194)***

**Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address wasn’t a hit at the time. Edward Everitt warmed up the crowd with a two-hour ovation, before Lincoln’s two-minute speech. After Lincoln spoke, there was just a smattering of applause. (Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 75)**

**Gibbon spent twenty years writing The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. *(David Louis, in Fascinating Facts, p. 88)***

**“If I had been technically trained, I would have quit,” said King Gillette after spending eight frustrating years striving to invent and introduce his safety razor. *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts, p. 186)***

**It grows very slowly over long periods. Fields used to remain fallow for   
ten to fifteen years, with supplements of organic material regularly plowed in. Ginseng is planted from seed taken only from four-year-old plants. The seeds usually require eighteen months to two years to sprout. The roots are pulled up after six or seven years, carefully so that all the fine rootlets remain intact. *(Stephen Fulder, in The Tao of Medicine, p. 94, 96)***

**Irving Berlin wrote the song “God Bless America” for a show in 1918 – but it was never used in that show, and it was never sung in public until 1938. The song got its public debut when Kate Smith introduced it on a radio program. Strangely, “God Bless America,” which has become one of the most famous songs in the U.S., sat in a drawer – never sung – for twenty years from the time it was written in 1918, until 1938. *(Charles Reichblum, in Knowledge in a Nutshell, p. 84)***

**Takes 31 days to make a golf ball. *(Boyd’s Curiosity Shop, p. 190)***

**It took the Colorado River 5 million years to carve the Grand Canyon. *(Don Voorhees, in The Super Book of Useless Information, p. 57)***

**The Great Wall of China -- 2,500 miles long, stretching over more than one-twentieth of the Earth’s circumference -- was the longest continuous construction project in history. It was built over a period of 1,700 years; enough stone was used to build an eight-foot wall girdling the globe at the equator. *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts, p. 318)***

**A five-star hotel in India filed a police complaint last week against a guest who checked in for a single night and stayed almost two years before checking out without paying his $71,000 bill. *(Bloomberg, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July 7 / July 14, 2023)***

**It takes a hippopotamus six years to reach full growth. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Dustin Hoffman joked that it took him ten years to become an overnight**

**success. *(Mark Fisher & Marc Allen, in How To Think Like A Millionaire, p. 17)***

**The 1994 song, “All I Want for Christmas Is You,” co-written by Mariah Carey and Walter Afanasieff, dominates radio playlists every Christmas, and has been streamed more than 1.2 billion times on Spotify alone. Singable, up-tempo, and with musical themes borrowed from pop classics, it has earned Carey more than $60 million and a perch atop the Billboard charts for the fourth winter in a row. Still, it took 25 years for this song to reach the top spot, and it may take at least as long for another holiday song to make such an impact. *(The Week magazine, December 30 / January 6, 2023)***

**How long it took to build:**

**Brooklyn Bridge – 17 years**

**Empire State Building – one year, 45 days**

**Lincoln Memorial – seven years**

**Transcontinental railroad – seven years**

**Panama Canal – 10 years**

**Washington Monument – 45 years**

**Golden Gate Bridge – four years. *(World Features Syndicate)***

**Some modern inventions were on the shelf for some time before becoming reality:**  
**Photography was conceived in 1782 but only came into use in 1838.**  
**Television was thought of in 1884 but we first began to tune in 63 years later.**  
**Nuclear enegy seemed like a good idea in 1919 but only became reality in 1965.**  
**Instant coffee was introduced in 1934 but only began to be produced in quantity in 1956.**

**Filter cigarettes were invented in 1953 -- and were on the market in 1955! *(Ripley's Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 149)***

**Jaws: As the shoot schedule spiraled from 55 days to 159, and budgets escalated, crew members began calling the film “Flaws.” (Charlotte Lowe, in Fact-O-Pedia, p. 134)**

**Took James Joyce about 17 years to write “Finnegan’s Wake.” *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Actually there are only two philosophies of life: one is first the feast and then the headache; the other is first the fast and then the feast. Deferred joys purchased by sacrifice are always the sweetest. *(Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, in Life of Christ)***

**Adam Clark labored forty years writing his commentary on the holy scriptures. Milton rose every morning at 4:00 a.m. to write Paradise Lost. The Decline and The Fall of the Roman Empire took Gibbon twenty-six painstaking years to complete. Ernest Hemingway is said to have reviewed The Old Man and the Sea manuscript eighty times before submitting it for publication. It took Noah Webster thirty-six years to compile Webster’s Dictionary. *(Glenn Van Ekeren, in The Speaker’s Sourcebook)***

**The concept of the laser was developed by Einstein in 1917, but the first laser wasn't built until 1960. *(Sid Ascher)***

**Disneyland celebrated its 40th anniversary by burying a time capsule. They say it will be dug up in 50 years -- or when the last person in line at Space Mountain gets to the front, whichever comes first. *(Jay Leno, “Tonight Show,” NBC)***

**According to the Big Bang Theory, it took five hundred thousand years for the early universe to expand enough for light particles to travel freely, i.e., produce light. *(Don Voorhees, in The Indispensable Book of Useless Information, p. 122)***

**I was sitting for a long time in the doctor’s crowded waiting room, thumbing through a bunch of magazines at least two years old. A patient who was about to leave looked around the room at the rest of us and said, “Believe it or not, those magazines were up to date when I first came in.” *(Frances J. Eberhard, in Reader’s Digest)***

**The safety razor took nine years for Gillette to manufacture; television, twenty-two years; radio, eight years; the cotton picker, fifty-three years; nylon, eleven years; the zipper, twenty-seven years. *(Joe Griffith, Speaker’s Library of Business, p. 304)***

**It takes at least forty years for one maple tree to get to be ten inches thick chest-high, which is the minimum diameter to tap. Some of the trees that I tap are two hundred years old. *(George Butler, in Reader’s Digest)***

**The Mayflower took sixty-six days to sail from Plymouth, England, to Plymouth, Massachusetts. The Mayflower landed on November 21, 1620, just as winter was setting in. The Pilgrims spent the winter on the ship and moved ashore in March. *(Don Voorhees, in The Super Book of Useless Information, p. 243)***

**Baseball legend Willie Mays got only one hit in his first 26 at-bats in the major leagues. (L. M. Boyd)**

**Michelangelo’s Last Judgment, one of the twelve master paintings of the ages, was the product of 8 years’ unrelenting toil. *(Paul LeeTan, in Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations)***

**Construction of Milan’s great cathedral, the Duomo di Milano, lasted more than 450 years. The first bricks were laid in 1386, and the structure was finished in the 1880s. (*Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Wise Up!, p. 259)***

**On the “David Susskind Show” a few years ago, he had three guests who were self-made millionaires. These men, in their mid-thirties, had averaged being in eighteen different businesses before they hit it big. *(Joe Griffith, in Speaker’s Library of Business, p. 251)***

**Sir Laurence Olivier revealed that when he co-starred with Marilyn Monroe in The Prince and the Showgirl, she would fluff her lines “for ten or more takes.” “But,” he added, “It was the 11th that counted. Then she was perfectly adorable, and did it right, and I was so exhausted by then, she out-acted me.” *(Earl Wilson, Publishers-Hall Syndicate)***

**Most of the work on these colossal figures of Mount Rushmore was performed by Gutzon Borglum, who had to blast away close to a million tons of granite as well as chisel in the delicate features of the likenesses. He labored on the project from 1927 until his death in 1941 without seeing it completed. His son Lincoln Borglum finished the monuments later in that year. *(Richard B. Manchester, in Incredible Facts)***

**Alan Jay Lerner took two weeks to write the last line of “Wouldn’t It Be   
Loverly” for My Fair Lady. The line is “Loverly, loverly, loverly, loverly.” *(Ripley’s Believe It or Not!: Book of Chance, p. 26)***

**What was the first instant coffee? Nescafe, developed by the Nestle Company and introduced in Switzerland in 1938. It had taken eight years to develop. *(Barbara Berliner, in The Book of Answers, p. 108)***

**The French started numbering their houses in 1463. Specifically, along the Pont Notre Dame in Paris. Visitors from England thought it a good notion, but it took them 250 years to adopt it. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**To create the** olive**, king of all trees, a hundred years is required. (Og Mandino, in The Greatest Secret in the World)**

**Orchid seeds bloom for a very long time because their pollination systems are so specialized that their chance of being pollinated is low. Thus they stay in flower for as long as possible to increase the odds of attracting the particular pollinator specific to the species*. (Don Voorhees, in The Super Book of Useless Information, p. 9)***

**It takes about an hour and a half to make an Oreo cookie. *(Kathy Wolfe, in Tidbits)***

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**Takes an oyster about five years to produce a medium-size pearl. *(L. M. Boyd)***

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**It takes 62 weeks to manufacture a $70,000 Bosendorfer piano. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Harold Terens, 100, and his fiancee Jeanne Swerlin, 96, are planning to marry this June in France eight decades after he first traveled to the country as a U.S. Army Air Forces corporal. Terens arrived in Normandy 12 days after D-Day, and helped transport German prisoners and recently freed Americans to England. His actions earned him several recognitions, including a medal from current French President Emmanuel Macron. The couple plans to tie the knot in Normandy after Terens is honored again by French authorities. “I love this girl – she is quite special,” said Terens. *(The Week magazine, March 22, 2024)***

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Pledge of Allegiance – “under God" added 60 years later   
Cracker Jack -- sold in 1872 -- prizes added in 1912   
Pap test -- created in 1928, accepted worldwide in 1948  
Contact lens -- proposed in 1827, used in 1`887   
San Francisco Bay -- Europeans discovered in 1542, mapped in 1775   
Koch -- discovered TB bacteria in 1882, got Nobel Prize in 1905   
Golf tee -- patented in 1899, first official use in 1922. *(World Features Syndicate)***

**Schoolchildren in Nashville bought themselves a place to play last week, after saving up spare change for three years. When Lakeview Elementary Design Center couldn’t get funding for a new playground, it asked pupils and their families to start collecting. “We had penny drives, we had nickel drives, we had days for dollars and days for quarters,” said principal Robin Shumate. That saving eventually paid off; the thrifty kids raised $30,000, and there were further donations of $12,000. Whenever she glances at the new playground, said Shumate, “it really just tugs at my heart strings.” *(The Week magazine, March 22, 2013)***

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**It took Polaroid many years to reach $1 billion in sales with their innovative camera because they had to teach people how to use it. *(Joe Griffith, in Speaker’s Library of Business, p. 304)***

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**Good week for: Christmas miracles, after a postcard featuring a color drawing of Santa Claus mailed in Alma, Nebraska, in 1914 was delivered to Oberlin, Kansas, last week. “It is kind of curious,” said Bernice Martin, who took the card on behalf of her sister-in-law, who is now deceased. *(The Week magazine, December 28, 2007 – January 11, 2008)***

**A postcard arrived at a bank in Wales 121 years after it was sent to that address. “It turned up completely out of the blue,” said Henry Darby, an executive at the Swansea Building Society. Marked “August 3, 1903,” and bearing a stamp depicting then-monarch King Edward VII, it was sent by a friend to a woman who lived at the address now occupied by the bank, and makes vague references to “something they are both aware of but don’t want to reveal,” said Darby. A Royal Mall spokeswoman said the postcard was likely found in a postal facility and “placed back in the system.” *(The Week magazine, September 6/September 13, 2024)***

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**Proposal to completion:  
Golden Gate Bridge - proposed 1872, built 1937  
Lincoln Memorial - proposed 1867, built 1922  
St. Lawrence Seaway - proposed 1808, built 1959  
FDR Memorial - proposed 1946, built 1997  
Library of Congress building - proposed 1817, built 1888. *(World* *Features Syndicate)***

**If a celestial scientist in the middle of the Milky Way had sent a powerful radio wave to us in 25,000 B.C. it might be getting here just about now. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**How long do you have to sun-dry a grape to turn it into a raisin? *21 days. (L. M. Boyd)***

**A mother passing by her young son’s bedroom overheard a rather interesting prayer: “Dear God, make me a good boy, but it’s all right with me if you’d like to take your time about it.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**Five months is said to be the typical time needed to recover from a broken romance, if it was really serious. Recovery from a broken marriage may take closer to five years, according to students of such matters. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Peter Mark Roget, the author of the Roget’s Thessaurus, was a doctor by profession. Working in his spare time, it took him fifty years to finish the book. *(Paul Stirling Hagerman, in It’s A Weird World, p. 59)***

**The words to “Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer” were written – not for a song – but for a newspaper ad in 1939, by Robert May. Then, eight years later, Johnny Marks wrote music to those words. Marks and May tried to get someone to record it, but nobody would. Finally, Gene Autry agreed to put it on the flipside of a record – and to everyone’s surprise, “Rudolph” became one of the biggest hits in music history. *(Charles Reichblum, in Knowledge in a Nutshell, p. 90)***

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**The Saguaro Cactus, found in the southwestern United States, doesn’t grow branches until it is seventy-five years old. *(Noel Botham, in The Book of Useless Information, p. 198)***

**Takes that saguaro cactus 30 years just to form one branch. *(Boyd’s Curiosity Shop, p. 246)***

**It takes a saguaro cactus two hundred years to reach its full height of forty-five feet. *(Don Voorhees, in The Indispensable Book of Useless Information, p. 158)***

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**The loftiest architectural achievement of the Renaissance, Rome’s St. Peter’s Basilica is by far the largest and most famous edifice in Christendom. Built in the form of a Latin cross, it is almost 660 feet long, 450 feet wide across its transepts, rises to a height of 435 feet, and spreads over nine acres. British historian Edward Gibbon pronounced it ‘the most glorious structure that has ever been applied to the use of religion.” St. Peter’s fame as one of the world’s wonders, however, does not depend on its size or cost (an estimated $300 million), but rather on the holy urge that impelled 20 different popes, over a span of 120 years during the 16th and 17th centuries, to keep at its construction. *(Lowell Thomas, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Such a simple little tool, the sewing needle. Manufacture of same, though, is a complex job. More than 20 processes. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**During the colonial period in North America, a package was not always shipped by the most direct route. A package from Virginia that was destined for Massachusetts might be shipped to London, where it would be transferred to an English vessel for delivery to Boston.** ***(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts, p. 446)***

**So much candle smoke accumulated on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel over the years that a cleaning process that began in 1979 took 20 years to complete. *(mentalfloss.com)***

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**Slow-developing products:**

**McDonald’s Egg McMuffin – developed 1971, marketed 1975**

**Ketchup – marketed 1690, popular here 1870s**

**Powdered gelatin – invented 1840s, successful 1890s**

**Potato chips – invented 1853, popular worldwide 1910s**

**Popsicles – invented 1905, patented 1923. *(World Features Syndicate)***

**Slow product development:**

**Pitney postage meter – patented 1902, metered mail 1920**

**Gillette razor – patented 1895, first marketed 1901**

**Ice box – patented 1803, common use 1838**

**Motor scooters – made 1920s, not popular until mid-1940s**

**Lego toys – invented 1949, sold in the United States in 1961. *(World Features Syndicate)***

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**It just goes to show you, you never know when the best day of your life is going to be. *(Lesley Stahl, 60 Minutes correspondent, talking about a friend whose wedding took place 30 years after the couple met)***

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**According to the story pieced together by astronomers, a star’s life begins in swirling mists of hydrogen that surge and eddy through space. With the passage of time, the continuing attraction of gravity, pulling all the atoms together, causes the cloud to contract. After 10 million years the temperature has risen to the critical value of 20 million degrees Fahrenheit. When the temperature reaches 20 million degrees, a nuclear fire flares up in the center of the star, releasing vast amounts of energy. The energy passes to the surface and is radiated away in the form of heat and light. A new star has been born; another light has appeared in the heavens. *(Robert Jastrow, in God And The Astronomers, p. 115)***

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**The American national anthem “The Star-Spangled Banner” was written in 1814 but only adopted over one hundred years later, in 1931. (The Diagram Group, in Funky, Freaky Facts, p. 184)**

**If you read, or listen to, all the words in all four stanzas of “The Star- Spangled Banner,” you’ll find three words missing. The words “United States” and the word “America” are never mentioned anywhere in “The Star-Spangled Banner.” Another surprise is that Congress didn’t make “The Star-Spangled Banner” the official national anthem of the U.S. until 1931 – and that was 117 years after it was written. *(Charles Reichblum, in Knowledge in a Nutshell, p. 81)***

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**It took two hundred men, working seven days a week, nine years to build the Statue of Liberty. *(Don Voorhees, in The Super Book of Useless Information, p. 244)***

**George Stephenson spent fifteen years to perfect the locomotive. *(Paul Lee Tan, in Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations)***

**A sunbeam setting out through space at the rate of 186,000 miles a second would describe a gigantic circle and return to its origins after about 200 billion years. *(David Louis, in Fascinating Facts, p. 172)***

**A preacher was making his rounds to his parishioners on a bicycle, when he came upon a little boy trying to see a law mower. “How much do you want for the mower?” asked the preacher. “I just want enough money to go out and buy me a bicycle,” said the little boy. After a moment of consideration, the preacher asked, “Will you take my bike in trade for it?” The little boy asked if he could try it out first, and after riding the bike around a little while said, “Mister, you’ve got yourself a deal.” The preacher took the mower and began to try to crank it. He pulled on the cord a few times with no response from the mower. The preacher called the little boy over and said, “I can’t get this mower to start.” The little boy said, “That’s because you have to cuss at it to get it started.” The preacher said, “I am a minister, and I cannot cuss. It has been so long since I have been saved that I do not even remember how to cuss.” The little boy just looked at him and said, “You pull on that cord for long enough and it’s come back to ya!” *(The PassTime Paper)***

**500: Minimum years it takes to form one inch of topsoil. *(Audubon magazine)***

**It takes nine months to make a vanilla bean. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Average times to build vehicles from start to finish in North American plants:  
Toyota -- 21 hours, 19 minutes per vehicle.  
Ford -- 22 hours, 51 minutes  
Chrysler -- 32 hours, 9 minutes  
General Motors -- 30 hours, 19 minutes  
Nissan -- 17 hours, 4 minutes  
Honda -- 22 hours, 19 minutes. *(Harbour & Associates Consultants, Troy, Michigan)***

**Mercy Otis Warren, poet, playwright, historian, and political satirist, wrote a three-volume history of the American Revolution that took nearly thirty years to complete. *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts, p. 215)***

**In 1836, the government accepted Robert Mills’ design for the Washington Monument. Twelve years later, Congress issued a grant for the site, but it took them another twenty-eight years to appropriate the money for its construction. It was finally completed in 1884, but it wasn’t until 1888 that the public was allowed inside. Hmm, fifty-two years from design acceptance to opening day -- that’s foot-dragging on a grand scale! *(Donner & Eve Paige Spencer, in A Treasury of Trivia, p. 337)***

**Watts worked for thirty years on the condensing engine. *(Paul Lee Tan)*  
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Noah Webster began writing his famous dictionary in 1807 and finished it in 1828. *(E. C. McKenzie, in Tantalizing Facts, p. 114)*  
Noah Webster labored 36 years writing his “dictionary,” crossing the Atlantic twice to gather material. *(Paul Lee Tan, in Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations, p. 997)***

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**It took eight years to build the White House. *(Uncle John’s Bathroom Reader: Wise Up!, p. 299)***

**The ‘1990s are a toppling time. So it’s nice to see a fallen idol get up, shake off the sludge and battle back. When Vanessa Williams was forced to resign in 1984 as the first black Miss America because she had made “a stupid mistake as a teenager” and posed for nude photos, her ordeal was only beginning. Later she was turned down by a co-op apartment board in New York City as an “inappropriate person.” Director Tommy Tune liked her when she auditioned for the Broadway musical “My One and Only,” but Ira Gershwin’s wife, Lee, vetoed her. Since then, however, Williams has made her mark as a singer with eight Grammy Award nominations, and earlier this year she heard Broadway cheers for her starring role in “Kiss of the Spider Woman.” “It’s been a long 11 years since I resigned as Miss America,” she says. “But I knew when everything was going berserk that one day after the dust settled, people would see what I could do.” *(Jack Kroll, in Newsweek)***

**The Wizard of Oz took 20 years to break even. *(John Eastman, in Retakes)***

**On February 15, 1921, six months after the ratification of the 19th amendment granting women the right to vote, a statue commemorating suffragists Susan B. Anthony, Lucretia Mott, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton was unveiled in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda. The very next day the statue was moved to the Capitol Crypt, which amounted to an underground broom closet. Not until May 14, 1997, was the statue finally put back on display in the Rotunda, memorializing women's fight for equal rights and honoring the sculptor, Adelaide Johnson. (*The Daily Chronicles)***

**Edward Albee was asked how long it takes him to write a play. “It takes an entire life to write a play,” said Albee, “but three months to get it down on paper.” *(James Brady, in Parade magazine)***

**Inventor Chester Carlson pounded the streets for years before he could find backers for his “Xerox” photocopying process. *(Roger Van Oech, in A Kick in the Seat of the Pants)***

**It took 200 years to build Italy’s famed Leaning Tower of Pisa, while India’s main tourist attraction, the Taj Mahal, was built in only 22 years. *(Samantha Weaver, in Tidbits)***

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