

Chapter 4 Holidays



The Coca-Cola Santa Claus created by artist Haddon Sunblom had its debut in 1931 in The Saturday Evening Post.

Christmas was always so very exciting for me. The magic of Santa Claus, his flying reindeer, the North Pole and his elves. And then there was Toyland, beautiful Toyland. Toyland at M.H. King's and J.C .Penny's always opened the weekend after Thanksgiving. I could hardly wait. I can remember the excitement of going down those stairs and getting the first glimpse of the wonderful toys and decorations for the first time.

Every year Daddy took us to the V.F.W.'s Christmas Party, usually the week before Christmas. Christmas Eve we always went to the Unity Church for the Christmas program and a visit from Santa Claus. Some years

some of us were on the program. We always sang "Jolly Old Saint Nicolas", "Up On The House Top", and others. "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town" always ushered Santa in with his HO HO HO ! Kids now days probably don't even know of those songs.

Christmas Day after the excitement wore off, we went into town to the Elk's free Christmas movie. At each one of these Christmas parties Santa always showed up. Sometimes he was not as fat as he was at his last appearance, or his beard was not as long or as white, but he was still Santa, and he always had a bag of goodies for us. The bags were full of old fashion hardtack Christmas candy, usually more peanuts than any thing else, an orange, sometimes a popcorn ball or an apple. Those little bags of treats were so special to each of us we guarded them with our lives. We each tried to make ours last as long as possible.

Mother always decorated the front room with Christmas tinsel ropes and a large paper bell (the kind that open up into a full bell) The living room was square, so she strung the ropes from each corner with them crossing at the center of the room. She tied them together at the center and fastened them to the ceiling with the bell in the center.

Some years we could not afford a Christmas tree. One year there was no money for Christmas. How Mother and Daddy's hearts must of ached! Daddy went to work fixing up and painting the old toys. That same year he fixed a wooden ladder that we decorated for our Christmas tree.

Lorna and I got Thelma and Eunice's old dolls. They were cleaned up and Mamma had made new dresses that for them. We could tell right away they were not the beautiful dolls that we had picked out in Toyland. It was the custom at school that the girls took their beautiful new dolls to show off for Doll Day... We were embarrassed too take our old secondhand dolls to show. I don't remember what we did about it, probably wanted to stay home sick that day. One year the only present I got was a beautiful gold colored satin blouse with a Peter Pan collar and a tiny black bow at the neck. My mother had made it for me and I loved it and was very proud of it.

When Mamma told me there was no Santa Clause, I was crushed! All the MAGIC was lost! Mamma warned me " Now don't tell the little kids !" Well, to me Lorna was not one of the little kids, she was my best friend and we always shared our innermost secrets. I had a secret and it had to be shared! I was eight and Lorna was five, but boy what a conniver. She literally blackmailed me for years, I was literally her slave. I obeyed her like you wouldn't believe so she wouldn't tell Mamma. And she is still sort of a conniver. I had a chance to get even with her not too long after. One night while asleep I was dreaming that I was at school sitting on the toilet in the girls restroom. When I woke up I found that I had wet the bed. I was not one of the bed wetters, but Lorna was. She took the blame for my puddle. What a sweet sister she did turn out to be.

We had family tradition where we would draw each others names from Daddy's hat. We would make a gift for the name that we drew. When times were better, we got to

buy a gift. That gift exchange was fun, and continued for years.

We could never peek at the Christmas tree or what Santa left until everyone was dressed and fed. Then the unveiling was shared by everyone at the same instant. What excitement filled our house. That was the one day of the year, if you can imagine, we all dressed quickly and ate our breakfast.

Mother made sure that we had a good Christmas dinner each year. One year she raised a goose just for our dinner. There were always potatoes and gravy plus vegetables from our cellar and dessert of carrot pudding covered in lemon sauce, and mince meat pie. Some years we got to wear our new Christmas duds for dinner. We all remember Mother's carrot pudding and have her recipe and still make it from time to time. When my own little ones came along years later, the Christmas magic returned for as long as I had one believer.

Years later as we had all flown the nest, the married siblings started a new family Christmas tradition. Each year we held a Christmas dinner and party held at each others homes a week or two before Christmas. We made and exchanged gifts and had a gay old time. I missed out on them as I was living in California and didn't have time off at work to go home. After I retired I made sure I could get home for Christmas. That tradition is still a happening each year. Only now that we are all much older we go to a fine restaurant for our meals and then head for Turner's home for the rest of the party, most of the gifts now are made in China.

Easter was another holiday that we always celebrated, unlike our birthdays and Thanksgiving. We always had Easter dresses. I mentioned before, Mother was an excellent seamstress, so we did have lovely little dresses. Daddy would get us up early to go into town to the tabernacle for Easter sunrise services. It was a beautiful service with music and talks. We would come home and eat breakfast and then go to Sunday School. The afternoons were spent with our cousins, the Warner's. One year Marian and Keith Warner were breaking eggs on each others heads. One egg happened to be raw. Yuk! I don't remember which one got it. Some Easters were spent at our grandparents with other cousins. If the weather was good we would go to a park for a

picnic.

Halloween was a fun time for us and the Gooch kids. We would carve pumpkins into the most scary Jack-o-lanterns. I remember those messy seeds. We would clean them up the best we could and roast them in the oven. They were messy to shell, but tasted really good. Myron and Joyce Gooch would make what we called Tic-tack-toes. They were made out of discarded thread spools with notches cut all around them with a string fastened to them somehow so when you pulled it down a window pane it made a horrible noise. We would sneak up to someone's window and try to scare them until they came out. Sometimes we were afraid and just ran off, or yell, "Trick or Treat." I don't remember getting very much candy. Our costumes were more than likely just old sheets for ghosts. We would walk up to the corner, $\frac{3}{4}$ ths of a mile, then over to the next mile to Sister Pace's home. She always had the best fudge for us. There were not too many homes along that route at that time to stop at. One Halloween night we started out, picked up the Gooch kids and were headed up the road when we heard loud gun shots. Clifton Stout had just returned from a mission and he wanted no part of us bothering his folks so he scared us off, but good!. We thought that was a real mean thing for a returned missionary. We were preteens at that time and would scare easy.

Thanksgiving was not a big thing in our family. We were out of school for the day, but our dinner was never the big fat stuffed turkey that we always hoped for. Our dinner was usually roasted chicken with cranberries, yams, potatoes and gravy, hot rolls, and canned vegetables from our cellar. We did have all the pumpkin pie we wanted. Only mother made it with squash instead of pumpkin. You couldn't tell the difference, we still called it pumpkin pie. As a family, we knelt around the table and Daddy would always give a very long prayer of thanks to the Lord for all the blessing that he had blessed us with. Other than that it was just another day in the life of the Frost family.

We had a lot of trees around the yard which meant beautiful autumn colors and a lot of leaves to rake up and play in, and rake up and play in again and again. What fun that was. Once all of the fall holidays were past, it was time to look forward to Christmas again!