



Down thru the years Christmas has always meant so much to us. Perhaps you would be interested in two personal events that stand out in our memories of Christmas celebrations.

Year 1908 - A small country church at Pratt Creek, Iowa where a Christmas Eve program was presented with songs, recitations and gifts brought by each family for themselves and relatives. Some close friends would receive surprise packages, like pigs tails, given as jokes. Little folks were so excited awaiting the coming of Santa. We heard he had just left a nearby town, when suddenly with the thunder of hoofs - caused by throwing stones on the roof - the front doors opened, and Santa appeared shouting, "HO HO HO!" He was pulled on a small wagon by his chargers, dressed up in cow skin coats, with huge antlers made from the branches of trees. Bucking and rearing of the reindeer made a noisy scene. One of the antlers caught on a gas chandelier, pulling it from the ceiling, and a fire was narrowly averted. After greeting each one of the children, Santa departed into the night calling "A Merry Christmas to All!" Ushers then would distribute the huge pile of gifts, much to the pleasure and merriment of all. It was truly a very Merry Christmas Eve. *Phil*

Time 1911 - At our farm home near Aptakisic, Illinois. It was two weeks before Christmas. Monday was always wash day and Mother would go outside to hang up sheets, which froze stiff as a board, almost before they reached the line. Then I hurried in to look in the bottom drawer of the bureau, to admire the beautiful doll hidden there. Christmas Eve, 14 pair of stockings were hung on the backs of chairs with our names attached, so Santa would make no mistakes. In the early morning, to the joy of all, each stocking had been filled, and I received this same lovely doll. Finally everyone settled down to the family tradition of sticking a candy cane in an orange - which we only received during the holiday season - and sucking out the orange juice. Another tradition was the eating of a sugar cookie for breakfast. It was large as a plate and shaped like a tulip flower from a pattern brought over from Alsace Lorraine by my Grandfather. They were frosted and sprinkled with plenty of blue and red sugar. These traditions are still carried on by many of the relatives. *Paul*

At this Christmas, we pray for Peace, Tolerance and Faith. May each one of you have a very Merry Christmas.

THE TAYLOR'S

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