

*It's a season to be joyful, thankful and reminiscent. Westview's residents have experienced a lifetime of Christmases. Here are their favorite memories from years past.*

### **Vi Baerg**

Vi Baerg remembers living in the North country (Canada) and all the family gathered at grandpa and grandma's house for Christmas! The whole family was there and it was very festive! They received a bag filled with candy, peanuts, and an orange for a gift!

### **Joyce Long**

Joyce Long reports that they had a real Christmas tree with lights, but NO candles. She went caroling with a group and thinks she was probably very spoiled!

### **Donna Bishop**

Donna Bishop recalls ALWAYS going to Grandma Whips' on Christmas Day (having spent Thanksgiving with Grandma Brown). She remembers one Christmas when her parents couldn't afford to get her a doll, but Santa had left a doll for her at Grandma Whips'.

### **Frank Jantzen**

Frank Jantzen remembers taking part in the program at the country school he attended south of Paxton. (But doesn't remember what part he played!) The tree had candles. The school board provided gifts for Santa to come and hand out to each child.

"Holiday memories warm even the coldest of days." Anonymous

### **Delores Swan**

Delores Swan shared that when she was a little girl, perhaps eight or nine, her family visited her grandma, and when they got back home, there was a doll under the tree for her! She also remembers the Christmas of 1982 when they were snowed in. Mary and David were still home at the time and Bob put on a beard and a red hat. They drank "punch" (Kool-aid) out of tall glasses.

### **Ruby Porter**

Ruby Porter's memories include a special gift she got when she was 14 or 15. It was a beautiful onyx ring that she cherished. Unfortunately, she lost it when she was chasing chickens and it was never found! She thinks the best Christmases were when her girls were small. After her girls married, they would bring their spouses and have shrimp on Christmas Eve. Ruby's parents, who lived in North Platte, would join them.

### **Edith Hartwell**

Edith Hartwell has a very interesting memory. Her grandmother sold the "War Cry" pamphlet. When she stopped by one house with her pamphlets, the lady asked her if she knew anyone who would like a doll. The grandmother of course did know of a little girl who would enjoy it so that was Edith's first doll! And her motto is "you can never have too many dolls!" They made paper chains and strung popcorn for the tree.

### **LaVene Burge**

LaVene Burge remembers stringing beads for tree decorations and later making bells out of beads and crocheting decorations. She had four siblings and on Christmas they would have roasted chicken and beef for dinner. Two uncles and the grandparents would join them so it was a big family celebration! She remembers getting a doll one year for Christmas. Her sister took it outside but left it in the doorway of the garage. That night her father closed the garage doors but didn't see the doll. It rained during the night so the next morning her sister went outside to get the doll and she had mud spots on her face so LaVene said she had "freckles"! Her sister felt really bad about it.

### **Gerald Burge**

Gerald Burge's dad got the boys two pairs of boxing gloves one year for Christmas! Since there were five boys, they had to share. Evidently they got too rowdy when mom and dad were gone one time, and it was announced that the gloves would only be used when the parents were around to referee!

### **Theone Kent**

Theone Kent likes all the Christmas music. Son Ron arranged for John Long to show up as Santa one year! The whole family celebrated Christmas in Arizona and also celebrated Gerald and Theone's 50th anniversary. She remembers playing with her dolls and buggies in the upstairs of their home and they could leave the toys out!

### **Alice Jantzen**

Alice Jantzen recalls that her grandpa had a Christmas tree with candles and remembers the year she got a "big doll!"

### **Bev Norman**

Bev Norman always enjoyed going to Midnight Mass. Santa Claus always brought her a nice doll. Her folks had a silver tree (it's in Bev's attic now but she doesn't have the color wheel that went with it). Bev's mom was a great cook and Bev thinks her pies were the best—especially the apple pie!

### **Norma Kroeker**

Norma Kroeker remembers going to church on Christmas Eve and the people brought presents. Since she lived in the country and they were poor, she didn't think she would get anything but her folks brought her a "big doll!" They had candles on the live Christmas tree but they weren't lit until Christmas Day. She and her sister helped fix a big meal and got tired of peeling potatoes!

### **Gladys Tharp**

Gladys Tharp lived on a farm in Chase County as a kid. Her dad chopped down the tree for Christmas and they strung cranberries and popcorn to decorate the tree. "Silent Night" is her favorite song. Pulling taffy was a favorite activity and she remembers going to "The Friends," a Quaker Church, for their Christmas program.

### **Marilyn Poppe**

Marilyn Poppe's family made ornaments out of pinecones to decorate their tree. She remembers being an angel in the church program. After they were married she remembers a Christmas where there were five babies at the gathering, including their twins, so there was lots of diaper changing and feeding of babies!

### **Orville Poppe**

Orville Poppe carries on a tradition of his dad and uncle by playing Santa Claus such as he did on a recent weekend at Brule and Big Springs. He remembers getting a big sack of goodies when he was little that only cost \$1. One year, the tub of water was still in the kitchen after

everyone had their bath. When his brother, LaVern, came dancing in all decked out and excited for the Christmas program, he fell in the tub of water! So his mom had to dry him off before they headed out the door, and then he fell asleep before his performance!

### **Cliff Sexson**

Cliff Sexson remembers getting a White King Soap semi truck. It was a promotional gift that his folks wrapped up. Another time he got a violin, but his half-brother broke the strings! And another time he got a cork gun, but when he spooked the horses with it, he was told to put it away!

### **Yvonne Sexson**

Yvonne Sexson recalls that she and Cliff made a special trip and brought back a Shetland pony. They left it with a neighbor who dressed up as Santa and led the pony into their living room on Christmas Eve! Their children were four, five and six years old. She remembers getting a little red wagon one year, but when she and her uncles loaded it up with wood, the giver didn't appreciate it!

### **Marguerite Ott**

Marguerite Ott's mother made her girls a new dress every Christmas. Her favorite was a yellow and white checked dress with black smocking. Her dad made them a toy out of wood and her favorite was a jumping jack (when you squeezed it, it would go up and down!) Her mom was a good cook—especially donuts. When her dad came in and had a cup of coffee and a donut, her mom would ask how it was. He would answer that it went down so fast, he guessed he'd have to have a couple more so he could taste them!

### **Dorothy Meyer**

Dorothy Meyer remembers that Christmas wasn't a big deal—nothing like what it is now! They would decorate the tree only a day or two ahead of time. They put candles on the tree but only once! Her mom made candy—peanut brittle and chocolate fudge. One year she got a big, beautiful doll. She still had it when she got married, but since then, it has been lost. Her family had an orchard so they always had plenty of fruit, except bananas, so getting a banana was special! When she was 13, she bought her dad a really nice tie.

### **Lucille Bates**

When Lucille Bates was small, all the relatives lived close so they had big family gatherings and everyone brought something for the meal so it was quite a "spread!" After looking the table over, one uncle remarked, "No baked beans?!" She recalls that one year her dad dug up a tree from the timberline, then after Christmas, he planted it in the front yard. She usually got clothes for Christmas because times were hard. The year that a family member shipped them a piano from Colorado, she got sheet music for a gift. They had oyster stew to eat but invariably her dad would eat a couple of the oysters raw prior to Christmas!! She did get a "doll to save" one year but it disappeared!

### **Ted Heinemann**

Ted Heinemann and his brother got a sled one year for Christmas. They had a big pond out behind the barn that they went sledding on. They also got to go sledding when they visited grandparents who lived by the lake. The Model T Ford was not heated so when they drove five miles cross country to visit the other grandparents, they bundled up in blankets. It was dark when they returned home, so a couple of uncles took lanterns and walked one-and-a-half miles so they could see to get through the gullies!

### **Dorothy Pelster**

Dorothy Pelster's grandparents lived in Grand Island so they spent several days there for the

holidays. They had an artificial tree that they decorated with paper chains, popcorn, and cranberries. Dorothy loves all the Christmas music! She grew up in the Elsie area and went to a country school about a mile from her home. She participated in the school program there. Dorothy has a beautiful nativity scene. Her husband made the wooden stable and a friend made the ceramic figurines.

### **Kevin Tickle**

Kevin Tickle helped put the multi-colored lights on their big Christmas tree. His mom made his favorite pumpkin pie. "Pretty Ribbons" by Roy Orbison is his favorite holiday song.

Les Vapenik

Les Vapenik got an apple for Christmas! He liked to hunt rabbits. He participated in the program at the country school. "Silent Night" is one of his favorite Christmas songs. Their boys got a shotgun one year.

### **Dorothy Keuten**

Dorothy Keuten is the middle of nine children. She remembers that two of her brothers were in the service and when they came home for Christmas, it was very special! Their pasture had hills that were great for going sledding and they had a pond, too, for going ice skating. She remembers playing checkers and card games. Her favorite carol is Silent Night.

### **Gen Bullock**

Gen Bullock had four sisters. Her mother was an exceptional seamstress and cook and was very loving. Gen liked everything she made. She even remade hand-me-down clothes so they looked new. Christmas was a very festive time with homemade decorations and paper snowflakes.