

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF LONE PINE – 1900 TO 1906

By Beveridge Ross Spear

There were two town-wide events each year, the Fourth of July and Christmas, in which the entire population united socially.

The Christmas celebration centered in the upstairs hall of the schoolhouse on Locust Street. The school children supplied the program.

Young men and a six-horse wagon drove to the end of the wood supply road south of Lone Pine canyon. The men entered the canyon near the first falls, and brought out two beautiful fir trees. They were cut off at the top and bottom to fit the height from floor to ceiling of the hall, and to preserve the wide-spreading branches.

The platform was at the west end of the hall with a tree on each side. These were decorated with strings of popcorn, and Christmas glitter. On the tip of each bough was a small candle.

Beforehand, each family brought a pillow case or two filled with family presents which were piled under the trees.

When Christmas Eve arrived, heaps of brightly wrapped packages surrounded each tree. Many dolls and small toys dangled from tree branches. The town people packed the place to utmost capacity. Then the candles were lighted and the platform curtains drawn aside.

When the program of music, recitations, and a skit or two was over, every child present received a big red apple, a large navel orange, a colorful bag of candy, and a bag of nuts.

Suddenly the excitement was elevated by screams from the children. Santa Claus came bounding in, jumping up and down, and cracking a teamster's blacksnake over the heads of the audience like gunfire. This reminded the children that Santa's sled-team would shortly dart away at the crack of his whip.



His red suit was trimmed with white. He wore high, black, shiny boots. His beard and hair were white and long. His high red cap had a white ball at the top.

Santa rushed over, pulling a package from under the tree. He called, "Zella Meysan." She hurried forward, excited and bewildered at receiving a present from the hands of Santa.

Bobbie Harry ran down the aisle, his big eyes bulging, to receive his gift from Santa. Santa presented several others packages - taking some off the tree.

Then those appointed rapidly distributed all presents to the crowd. In the whirl of this excitement Santa disappeared unnoticed by the children. "Where is he?" they would cry.

"Oh, he has many more places to go

tonight, he couldn't stay long."

When the trees were stripped of all presents, families refilled their bags, carrying them home to open and enjoy.

There were no chimneys in Lone Pine for Santa to slide down. Hence no need of hanging stockings on the mantel. Neither was there a Christmas tree in any home. This was a community night. Ollie (Oliver) Dearborn was rated the best performing Santa Claus in town.

Next morning, at ten, all the children gathered in front of the E. H. Edwards store, and Mrs. Edwards came out greeting them with a hearty "Merry Christmas." This stately lady, the school-teacher type, then scattered hundreds of marbles in the street while we children scrambled like a mob, each one to get his share.

When that was over we started playing "for keeps." By night Grover Anton had most of the marbles in town. He was marble king with bags and bags of the little toys.

Then came the all-night dance, ending the Christmas celebration.