

## MY FIRST CHRISTMAS IN KIPLING

by FRED A ENGSTROM

Over 48 years ago, I spent my first Christmas in Kipling with my husband David and my daughter Karen. We stayed with Rev. Gust Engstrom, my husband's father. David's mother had been dead for a few years and David's brother Joe was a bachelor living at home with Mr. Engstrom. It was a two-bachelor household that year.

David was just out of the Air Force and we came to stay with Mr. Engstrom, while David tried to buy Kenny Monroe's farm through the veterans. The deal fell through and as it was close to Christmas, Mr. Engstrom asked us to stay.

Since we had very little money and no job, David decided he would do some trapping for Christmas money so that he could buy Karen and me some Christmas treats.

After a very frustrating few weeks, David finally caught a red fox and he left it on the drying board too long. It was so dry that he had to try for hours to turn it without tearing the skin. Finally, very discouraged and in a big temper, he threw it in the corner and slammed out of the house. But, kind big brother Joe rescued the hide and he turned it for his baby brother. David was very happy and took his two pelts to town and he received 20 dollars for them. David and I thought that we were very rich and were able to buy nuts, candy and a gift for Karen.

Meanwhile, Mr. Engstrom had sent to Eaton's for a child's rocking chair for Karen. When it came into the station in Warren, Mr. Engstrom had Joe hitch up the horses and had to go to town to get it. The roads at that time were not ploughed in the winter so that is why we had to use the horses.

When Joe returned with the little rocking chair, I wanted Mr. Engstrom to wait until Christmas but he was so pleased with it that Karen had to have that chair right away. A week before Christmas ! Karen still has that rocking chair and will use it for her own grandchildren when they come along.

Mr. Engstrom and myself liked to put up the Christmas decorations early. We had nice old-fashioned Christmas garlands that are not seen to-day. Mr. Engstrom brought in a large tree that was so big that it touched the ceiling. He also had old-fashioned candle holders that snap on the tree branches. After they were attached to the tree, he filled the holders with candles and then lit them. What a lovely sight ! However, Mr. Engstrom was kept busy watching and snuffing out the candles that burnt down too far. He then had to replace them with new candles.

On Christmas Eve, Mr. Engstrom made us a swedish rice dish and on Christmas day he served us waffles, something that I had never seen being made before. He had a long-handled waffle iron that he set over the open flame of the wood stove. They were very good and made from pure cream but he had made too much for us to eat. So as not to hurt his feelings by not eating them all, we hid them under the couch until he went out.

We also had homemade cheese from Mrs. Carlson. I remember that it smelt very bad, but once you tasted it, it tasted very good !