

# The South Marysburgh Mirror

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## HOLIDAY GREETINGS

### The Best Christmas Ever

Christmas! It's easy to think of Christmas on a morning like this; snow on the ground, birds cheerily scrapping and shoving each other at the bird feeder. As I am wont to think as the big day approaches, this will be Best Christmas Ever. I'm not so sure this year. Maybe I'm loosing my enthusiasm for Christmas. Too many people who were a part of that celebration have left us the past year or so and it is hard to pick up the threads of the tapestry that is Christmas and weave new people into it.

My mother died this year, having celebrated 102 Christmases, her birthday falling on the 17th of December. That became the day that we put up the Christmas tree. All my life the tree went up on Mother's Birthday. I was given two dolls and one stuffed toy as a child. One doll was the gift I received at the School Christmas Party in 1941 and the second one is a memory of my mother.

Dad had managed to sell some cattle that November and for once we were to have a frivolous gift for each of us. Something bought not to keep us warm or decently covered, but just for us to enjoy. The Eaton's Catalogue that year had a large doll made of composition and with a soft cloth body. It sold for \$2.00 without wardrobe. Mother ordered it. Dad made a crib of wood. Grandma made the bedding and a dress and underclothes for her and Mother crocheted a bonnet, jacket and booties.

I remember lying in bed Christmas Eve. I had heard the scuffling and shushing as Mother and Dad began their rounds as Santa Claus. What had awakened me was Dad coming in and taking the empty stocking hung at the foot of my bed and tip-toeing out with it. I lay waiting. Dad came in carrying a wooden something that he set on the floor at the foot of my bed. Mother



came in with the doll in her arms. She was holding it as gently and as lovingly as any mother with a baby. She laid it in the crib and fussed over it for a minute. I could just make out her face in the lamp light from the hallway. She looked so happy. She is gone now but the doll is upstairs waiting to be repaired.

Cinnamon buns will always be another memory of some of the best Christmases ever. I will remember sitting around the table in Mary's kitchen, Rodger pouring the sherry with which we would toast Christmas and our friendship. Then we would fall to and eat our fill of 'sticky' buns, washed down with tea and digested with laughter.

And puppets are another part of my Christmas memories, from Punch and Judy to simple but loveable hand puppets. Many will remember with delight, the startlement and frisson of fear when the old witch popped the teddy bear's balloon. Others will remember the hand puppets and stick puppets that came to life for the lady, telling stories and making us laugh. These puppets are resting now as their puppeteers are gone from us.

But Christmas isn't looking back and comparing this Christmas with last. It's not the gifts under the tree.

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