

First Christmas gift a vivid memory

OHSWEKEN — One evening, as I drove down Chiefswood Road, south of the village of Ohsweken, I saw many houses decorated with Christmas lights. Soon there will be piles of presents under many of the Christmas trees. When I was little, things were a bit different.

The first Christmas that I can remember was back in the 1930s, before I started school. It was in the middle of the depression and money was very scarce. I recall my father telling how he used to work for a dollar a day at that time.

We were fortunate because we had a small mixed farm. It meant we had cows and milk to make the cake, pies and bread for the Christmas dinner. It also meant we could have roast chicken at Christmas. As a small boy, I cannot remember ever seeing roast turkey. I guess the neighbors also could not afford turkey for Christmas.

The reason I remember this particular Christmas was because it was the first time I can recall that one of us got a real Christmas present on Christmas morning. The only place we ever got presents was at the Christmas program at the old Medina Baptist Church. It was

Our Town

George
Beaver



usually mitts or socks. Toys, at that time, were few and far between. On Christmas morning, our stockings always had nuts and candy in them, but never presents.

On this Christmas morning, my two younger brothers and I got up before the rest of the family. My father had a fire going in the woodstove so the house was not as cold as usual in the early morning. There was ice and fancy frost pictures on the windows and snow was thick on the ground.

We raced to where we had left our stockings near the wood stove. They were filled with nuts and candy. My older sisters had said that somebody called St. Nicholas was coming but

we didn't really care who had done it. We began to eat.

Then my younger brother went to put on his little bib overalls. Something was inside. He reached in and pulled it out. To our surprise, we saw that it was a doll. I could hardly believe his good luck. Imagine actually getting something to play with! I rushed to my overalls to see if there was a doll in mine. No such luck. I was bitterly disappointed, so I helped my brother play with his gift.

I never found out where the doll came from. I'm sure my parents didn't have the extra dollar or so necessary to buy it. Perhaps one of my teenaged sisters had received it and decided to secretly give it to her little brother. If this is what happened, it's too bad she wasn't given two dolls. Then it would have been an even more memorable Christmas for a small boy.