

Seniors remember simpler Christmas

STOUFFVILLE — Christmas today is not the same as it was 70-odd years ago, three senior residents of Parkview Home agreed last week.

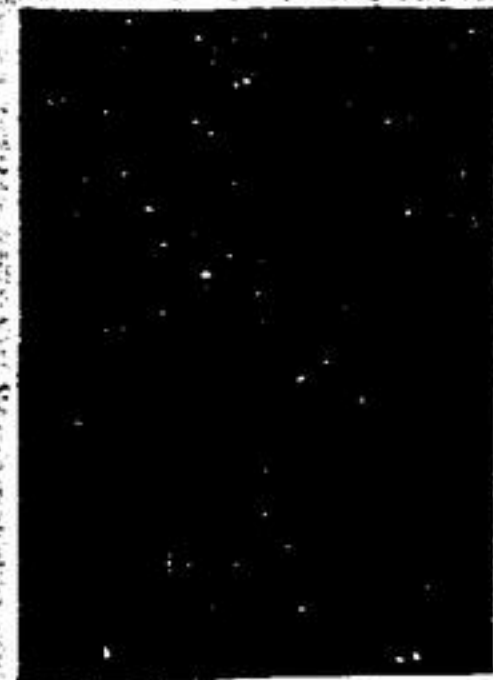
The residents, aged 88, 77, and 78, told The Tribune in separate interviews that they believed that something has been lost in the celebration of Christmas from the time they were children.

Wesley Powell, 88, was born and raised much of his life in Innisfield, north of Oshawa. "Well, at that time it meant a whole lot," he recalled, "but it don't mean a thing today..."

"Now, we're all grown up and one's here and one's there," he said.

Christmas in those days, he said, involved everyone. "We used to be all together. All the people had a Christmas concert the night before, Santa Claus would hand out the toys to the children."

"It just fell out from that time," he went on. "There doesn't seem to be any now. You see, we've got too old to have it. And my brother, he



Frances Rattlee

died when we were younger. He used to be right in on it."

Another resident was Elizabeth Williamson, 77. She was born in Dublin, Ireland, and lived much of her life in Plymouth, England.

At Christmas time, she said, "We were always happy. We always had plenty to eat and plenty to drink."

"Our neighbors always came in for any holiday at all. They'd make a joke and have a laugh and they were always happy."

Christmas today "is not the same," said Mrs. Williamson. "You don't



Elizabeth Williamson

have the same get-together, somehow... It's different altogether."

Frances Rattlee, 78, remembers that "things were simpler" when she was a girl. The Christmas tree, she said, was decorated with little candles "which you lit briefly, 'cause of the peril."

"We really thought that what we received was really wonderful in those days. An orange — it was a remarkable thing — and ice cream was just out of this world..."

"I really sort of pity the children today. We have so very very much..."



Wesley Powell

"My father carved me a plain wooden doll one Christmas which I christened 'Richard' and 'Richard' remained one of my treasures."

"I believe," Mrs. Rattlee continued, "that when we get a superabundance of things you lose a sense of values."

"Just know-how is not enough," she said regarding modern life. "To me, the whole of life is bound up with knowing Christ as Savior."



Young carollers entertain

Grade 1 students from Orchard Park Public School travelled to Testa Villa apartments Thursday afternoon to sing some Christmas Carols.

They sang in the lobby for a number of senior citizens that live in the building. Christmas goodies were handed out to the young singers.

John Montgomery



Santa Claus was a popular figure during the pre-Christmas period just completed and he talked to Tribune reporter Ted Wilcox about his role.

Santa Claus talks about kids' requests

STOUFFVILLE — Half of the children at "Santa's trailer" in Stouffville are asking for Evel Knevel toys, Mr. Claus told The Tribune last week.

In exclusive interview (arranged by The Tribune editor when he expressed the hope for an "electric train"), Mr. Claus took time out from a busy pre-Christmas schedule to talk about his work.

Other children, he said, are asking for "trains, which is normal — the old stand-by, mini-bikes, skidoos — they want practically everything."

The most unusual request Santa received was by a small boy, for a corn planter. "He said, he wanted to plant it, then put it on a wagon."

Older girls are asking for tape recorders, Mr. Claus said, "and some of them want new boy friends."

Do the children still believe in him, we asked?

"Any kid up to six and seven years' old does," he replied. "From then on, they have their doubts."

As to how he enjoyed his duties, Santa said, "I love it. I get a great kick out of it."

The most fun is "the smiles I get from the kids and the way the little kids are scared of Santa Claus."

Having Santa downtown "is really a good community venture to create the proper spirit for Christmas," he concluded.

With that, Santa gave a hearty laugh as we bid him good-bye.

But somehow, we thought as we left the trailer, the jolly old elf bore an impressive resemblance to a man we know who lives on Main Street West, and goes by the name of Len Buckland.



Grade 13 students at Stouffville Dist. Secondary School were in charge of a Christmas assembly the last week of school. This particular doll is called "Suzie Woozey" and is portrayed by Susan Eidd. Various dolls were presented as appropriate gifts for Christmas. Svend De Bruyn



An old-fashioned Christmas

Students at St. Mark's School in grades 6 to 8 wound up a unit on pioneer life last week by having a Christmas party — the way the pioneers did. The games, the food, the dances, the decorations, and much of the clothing was

pioneer-style also included a form of entertainment that common for pioneers, but not much in evidence in the twentieth century: a "puppet show" using silhouette figures. Ted Wilcox

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