



CHRISTMAS AT THE BENNETT RANCH HOUSE

Early 1900's CHRISTMAS AT THE BENNETT RANCH HOUSE-- Frances and Harvey Bennett raised six children in this house on an eighty acre ranch. They were Helen, Beverly, and Evelyn and seven years later the family grew to include Bonnie, Harvey, and Richard. A warm and close-knit family, let's reminisce about them.

The ranch was pretty much self-sufficient; they raised their food and had a cow and horses as well as the citrus, fruit, and nut trees. Eucalyptus wood was burned in the fireplace and cook stove and was the only source of heat for the house. The children rose quickly and dressed before the fire when it was cold.

The smell of the turkey cooking and the gathering of the family appears to be the strongest memory. Along with traditional foods like pumpkin, mince, and pecan pies an Angel Food cake was a must. In early years Christmas was held at Grandmother McDonnell's and gifts were opened there. The children received one large toy such as a truck, wagon, or doll, plus clothing. Gifts were opened Christmas Eve and sleigh bells were shaken prior to the opening to let them know that Santa had arrived.

Decorating the tree was a family affair; popcorn was strung, and each child had a special ornament to hang and take down. Straws were drawn to see who would put the angel on the tree top. Each child took a turn hanging tinsel on the tree. A wooden box with Red Delicious apples in was placed on the stairs to the attic. The mantel was decorated with Juniper sprays and Eucalyptus pods.

Popcorn balls and taffy pulls were the children's projects. Decorations made in school were put on the tree.

Christmas Eve was a soup and sandwich supper, served before the opening of gifts. The soup was homemade New England style clam chowder. Christmas morning relatives brought pot-luck foods and cookies. After the festive Christmas dinner everyone sat around the dining room table, relaxing and talking, then later they left for a walk down the road along Cherry Street. After the walk, desert would be served and the girls would begin the task of dishwashing.

During World War II, servicemen were welcome guests.

WE WELCOME YOU TO SPEND A FEW MINUTES IN A HOME OF OUR HERITAGE.

