



*From the
Presidents Quill*
Happy Holidays!

The Holiday Stroll is right around the corner and the Basalt Regional Heritage Society is always willing to participate in this community event. With your help we can truly show our appreciation of the communities support for our organization.

As you know, each year we are in charge of the Hay Wagon Ride and the Chili dinner. We will need several pots of homemade chili and donations of corn bread or biscuits. The dinner is \$5.00 no matter what your age. However if you are 5 and under will let you eat for free.

We would also like to put a call out for volunteers to help serve the hungry and festive crowd that always gathers for the Holiday Stroll. So if you have a moment to spare or have a chili recipe to share please call and let me know how you can help.

Matt Nieslanik will be our hay wagon driver once again for this event. He will be bringing Santa into Lion's park around 4 p.m and the band will ride with him at 5:00 p.m. He will offer rides to the holiday strollers through downtown Basalt from 4-6:00 p.m. Town Center Book-sellers will play music as you sit back and enjoy the trip.

The Lions Club will pass out free cookies and hot chocolate, while the Waldorf Carolers entertain us with song. Warm yourself at Mason and Morse's warming station while sipping eggnog and taking a look at Basalt's past through photos.

Several downtown merchants will be open during this event. Don't forget to stop by Wyly Arts center to look at the cerative gingerbread houses designed by local architects. Kids can decorate cookies while you gaze. Put on your best warm clothes as we will be taking lots of photos to add to our web site. Join us once again for a sup, a song and a sweet.

Sincerely,

Diana C. CordovaElliott



Basalt, Colorado Midland Town
Ralph's Memories

Christmas Presents and Trees

Christmas was then, as now, a big time for children. We hung our long black stockings behind the heating stove in the parlor; no one had fireplaces in the frame houses, but somehow Santa got down the chimney. In as much as, after Uncle Albert was killed, there was only one Danielson family in town, most of the presents were from relatives elsewhere. The gifts for the children, therefore, came by mail, and going to the post office before Christmas was an eager and expectant daily performance. Then waiting to open the presents was a difficult time indeed.

The other pleasant part of Christmas, in addition to getting presents, was the decorating of the tree at home and in the church. There were no purchased trees; everyone just took the liberty of going up on the hillside and cutting down his own. A couple of years our father took a hatchet with him on his trip and when coming back light would stop somewhere up around Nast and he and his fireman would cut a fir or spruce and bring it home on the tender.

A dangerous practice was the use of lighted vari-colored candles clipped on with a metal holder, instead of the light bulbs in use today. This was particularly perilous in the church with the big tree. Our parents would place presents for each of us children at the church. One year my parents put some money anonymously in a package for the minister's family.

The decorations were largely cranberries and popcorn strung on thread with a large needle. However, we did have ornaments, and the best tree in town by far was the Hyrup's. People in Basalt looked forward to being invited into their home to see the display. The reason for this excellence is explained by Walter Hyrup in a letter in this manner:

"Yes, Ralph, all the trimmings on our Christmas trees of my youth came from Germany. We had an Aunt Amelia in Germany and each year she sent a package of gifts for each of us. Boy! O! Boy! How the Hyrups looked forward to receiving it. Most of the time there was a new decoration to add to our collection. My Aunt Mary had brought some with her when she came over to live with us. Our Christmas tree was one of the best and believe me my memories go back to boyhood days each year. I would like to see the colored candles and the smell of them when blown out."

On New Year's Day the men would go to the roundhouse and pull the whistles loud and long on all the engines that were there.

Editors note: In this column we will be reprinting excerpts from "Basalt, Colorado Midland Town" by Clarence and Ralph Danielson. We hope to re-publish this book in the coming years.