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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

BY: SUE SENIAWSKI

Hi Genealogists,

As I was pondering what to write this month, this song came to me.

*Oh give me a home
Where the buffalo roam
And the deer and the antelope play
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word
And the skies are not cloudy all day.*

Growing up in Great Falls, Montana I loved to sing this song. It didn't occur to me that other people in the United States weren't seeing these things. I'm a fourth generation Montanan. I *assume* those ancestors saw much the same things I saw. How different were their lives from mine, or were they remarkably similar?

I have a tendency to project my experiences onto my ancestors until I find out something different. That makes for some surprising discoveries. The above-mentioned Montana family was Episcopalian. Imagine my surprise when I learned that just one generation back they were Mennonites. No one in my family ever spoke of it.

As I research my family's history farther and farther back, I'm still assuming they saw buffalo roaming, deer and antelope playing, and clear, not cloudy skies. That is until I find information to the contrary.

Sue



HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND
A
HAPPY, HEALTHY, AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

THE GERMAN CHRISTMAS PICKLE TRADITION: MYTH OR REALITY?

It never fails. Every December someone asks about the German **Christmas pickle ornament** that's supposed to have a long tradition in Germany.

Here's the pickle "legend" from one Web site: "A very old Christmas eve tradition in Germany was to hide a pickle [ornament] deep in the branches of the family Christmas Tree. The parents hung the pickle last after all the other ornaments were in place. In the morning they knew the most observant child would receive an extra gift from St. Nicholas. The first adult who finds the pickle traditionally gets good luck for the whole year." This Christmas pickle story, with a few minor variations, can be found all over the Web and in print inside the ornament package. It says that Germans hang a pickle-shaped glass ornament on the Christmas tree hidden away so it's difficult to find. The first child to find it on Christmas morning gets a special treat or an extra present.

Of course, anyone familiar with German Christmas customs can see the flaws in this "legend." First of all, the German St. Nick doesn't show up on Christmas Eve. He arrives on the 5th or 6th of December. Nor do German children open their presents on Christmas morning. That happens on Christmas Eve in Germany. (See our [German Christmas Guide](#) for more about German Christmas customs.)

But the biggest problem with the German pickle (*saure Gurke*, *Weihnachtsgurke*) tradition is that no one in Germany seems to have ever heard of it. Over the years this question has repeatedly come up on the [AATG](#) (German Teachers) forum. Teachers of German in the U.S. and in Europe have never been able to find a native German who has even heard of the pickle legend, much less carried out this Christmas custom. It may have been some German-American invention by someone who wanted to sell more glass ornaments for Christmas. Or could the *Weihnachtsgurke* be an obscure regional custom that few people are aware of?

<http://www.german.about.com/library/blgermyth11.htm>



HISTORICAL TIDBITS

In the spirit of the Holidays, I am including copies from the book 'A Social History of Cheyenne, Wyoming, 1875 - 1885' which was written by William Robert Dubois, III. This book presents an excellent view of the social life in early Cheyenne. Our thanks to Mr. Dubois for this great addition to Laramie County Library's Carpenter Collection.

THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving was always a very pleasant holiday in Cheyenne. Then, as now, dinners would be provided for the poor or for transients. A large dinner was held at the Inter. Hotel in 1875. The holiday was preceded by a hop at McDaniels Hall given by the Clark Hose Company; over two hundred and fifty tickets were sold.

An elaborate description of the Thanksgiving festivities appeared in the November 29 issue of the Cheyenne Daily Sun. Many people made an excursion to Colorado even though the weather was cold and raw. But, many remained at home to enjoy the day to its fullest extent.

Union services were held in the Congregational Church with Rev. Gillam, the Methodist minister, giving the introductory remarks. Governor Hoyt's prodamation was read, and then the sermon was preached by Rev. Sanders of the Presbyterian Church. The Presbyterian choir, under Professor Inman, provided the music.

In the evening was a fair and festival at Recreation Hall for the benefit of the Catholic Church. This was a continuation of a festival begun two days before. The attendance was large. Dancing continued until the small hours in the morning. The supper table was well patronized, and the good things there were enjoyed with a keen relish. There were many items for sale; Mrs. W. W. Corlett won a silver pitcher after being voted the most popular lady.

Throughout Thanksgiving day in 1884, music could be heard coming from all the downtown places, the most popular being Germania Hall.

Preceding the day in 1885, the Typographical Union held a Masque Ball netting themselves \$50.00. Following the church services and dinner on Thanksgiving day a three-mile foot race was held at the driving park, and the skating rink was opened. The Congregational Church held a special dinner that day with 65 present for the usual turkey and all the trimmings.



CHRISTMAS

Christmas day in 1877 was a bright dear day, and it appeared more like the month of May than December. At an early hour people were out visiting with friends and neighbors; many held informal openhouses providing eatables and drinkables of the season to their friends. The bars were setting them up for the boys in the shape of egg-noggs and Thomas and Jeremiahs.

The only religious service of the day was held at the Episcopal Church. The edifice has been beautifully and tastefully decorated with evergreens and other appropriate decorations.

In the afternoon people either went out riding, waited at home for dinner, or attended the theatre. The last activity was so poorly patronized, however, that it had to be called off.

A superb Christmas dinner was given at the E. W. Whitcomb residence six miles northwest of Cheyenne. Among those enjoying the hospitalities were the musical quartette of Messrs. Joslin, Inman, Whipple, and Whitcomb; and also the Warrens, Guiternans, Miss Lottie Smith, the Nagles, Millers, Terrys, and others.

Also in the afternoon a pigeon shooting match was held at Major Talbots, and races were held north of the city.

At two o'clock a very special dinner was given in the Fisk block for the members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

The festivities at night included the Richmond operetta troupe at McDaniels Theatre which presented the musical extravaganza of "Kenilworth." It turned out to be a low-tone production which was an insult to "the better part of a woman's nature".

The Concordia Club held a masquerade, at the New Dramatic Theatre, at which at least two hundred persons were assembled. Elaborate preparations had been made for the affair. In describing it, the Cheyenne Daily Sun stated that the universal verdict of those who attended was that it was one of the most elaborately prepared collations ever furnished in our city. The costumes alternated from grave to gay, lively to severe. The king and the clown, the city belle, and the untutored Indian maiden, jostled against each other, and for once all stations in life were on a par. Most notable of the costumes were Mrs. Fred Landau representing the "Queen of Night," Cass Davis as a "baseball," Mrs. James McDaniel "highland lassie," etc.

On Christmas morning a surprise party was held for Mr. F. E. Warren by his employees at the firm of Converse and Warren. He was presented with a gold ebony cane which was fully encribed. B. Hellman, a clothier, was also given a cane, and Russell Thorpe was sent a beautiful horse from a friend in the East; W. P. Carroll, city attorney, was the recipient of a costly volume of Shakespeare as well as numerous other smaller gifts. John Shay, corral master at Camp Carlin, was the recipient of another gold-headed cane.

An elaborate Christmas Eve was planned and executed in 1884. At the Episcopal Church appropriate exercises were held with the Christmas tree being the center attraction. All the other churches held festivities and services too with the exception of the Presbyterian Church which could not get ready in time. They postponed their service until New Year's Eve. In addition to the church activities a masquerade was held by the Sons of Veterans at Library Hall and several attractions were present at Keefe's Hall Skating Rink. The former was well attended and the decorations were most beautiful. The church services were also well attended; Santa Claus made his appearance at each place giving joy to the hearts of the little ones.

Many of the citizens were recipients of beautiful and valuable gifts from their families. Governor Hale was presented a handsome gold-headed cane while his wife received an elegant breast pin and diamond earrings. Charles Blindt was sent a costly large silk handkerchief from his mother-in-law in England. Mrs. S. A. Pierce was presented a purse containing \$60.00 in gold from Mrs. Will Swan and other ladies to show their esteem for the former. They gave her money so that she might select her own Christmas gift. Honorable M. P. Keefe received a beautiful cane as did Mr. W. A. Whitcomb.

Christmas of 1885 was similar to 1884. A skating masque carnival was held at the West End rink, and a large party was held at the Five Mile Ranch. Cheyenneites drove to the affair in a four-horse rig. A large dance was held Christmas Eve at Library Hall with music by the city band and string orchestra.

The usual church services were held both on Christmas Eve and Christmas day. The Methodist service Christmas Eve was rather novel. A neatly rigged sloop was placed on the platform with an American flag at the masthead and bright lanterns suspended from the rigging, while the snowy sails were decked with sweetmeats. The program included singing, praying by the minister, and a dialogue given by several of the little ones. Santa Claus came, and with the help of three little lads clad in sailor outfits, distributed candy packages to all the children. The church was decorated with evergreens and pretty colored candles.

The Congregational Church made special efforts to collect gifts money for the poor. The ladies distributed these to over 100 people.



SPECIAL DAYS NEW YEAR'S DAY

Holidays gave people in Cheyenne an excuse to have a brilliant party which might be either an open house, a formal dance, a banquet, a picnic or a masque ball depending upon the time of year and the occasion.

Taking these festive times in a chronological order we first come to New Year's Day. In 1877, The New Year was ushered in by two large dances. One was a Masque Ball at Fort Russell by the enlisted men, and the other was given by the International Order of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. To the latter came trains from both Denver and Laramie. A grand supper was served from eleven until twelve.

On New Year Day, as if to inaugurate a year of transportation, Governor John N. Thayer rode through the streets of Cheyenne in a carriage driven by six milk-oxen in harness, driven by a man named Dexter. There were several open houses.

In 1878, the holiday passed, in a similar fashion, but in 1879, according to Agnes Wright Spring, Cheyenne outdid itself with the most festive New Year holiday ever.

The wind had blown on New Year's Eve, but on the next day, the sun came forth "smiling with all the radiancy and brilliancy of a mid-winter day. The light snow of the night before had cast over the wonderously wild surroundings of the Magic City a silvery sheen of fairy like splendor."

Many Cheyenne ladies held open house and welcomed the people with smiles and cordial welcomes. They were determined to greet their callers with "Metropolitan Etiquette", and their efforts were more than successful.

At Fort Russell Mrs. Dr. Gibson and Ms. Captain S. P. Ferris gave a cordial welcome to their Cheyenne friends and spread before them tempting and delicate viands served with chocolate, coffee, and light wines.

"Mrs. Captain Babcock, assisted by Mrs. Captain Auger, presided over a banquet board with the rarest delicacies which were served to their visitors with irresistible grace."

In Cheyenne people did not begin their "pilgrimage of pleasure" until nearly noon. At the home of A. H. Swan a whole battalion of beautiful, vivacious ladies assembled to receive the persistent raids of the gay young gentlemen of Cheyenne, and at Mrs. Annette's, the house was converted into a bower of floral beauty in which was spread a luncheon fit for the Gods.

Mrs. Addoms and Mrs. Warren greeted their callers in evening full dress toilette, and the banquet made the most critical epicure wild with delight.

At the palatial home of Mrs. J. M. Carey was a Miss Fitch, an accomplished musician from Chicago. Mrs. Carey had decorated her home with flags, drapery, evergreens, rare exotic flowers, ferns, and wreaths. There was a magnificent lunch table.

The table spread at the Draper home was unsurpassed for taste, luxury, and the profusion of viands. The Governor held open house in the parlors of the Inter-Ocean Hotel.

In addition to the above, parties were held at the homes of Mesdames W. H. Hibbard, Furness, J. S. Taylor, Jr., W. Wham, E. A. Slack, B. Hellman, Horn, C. L. Wells, Slaughter, and Frank Hurlbut; each of the above ladies was assisted by a host of other ladies making the total list quite impressive.

The Mule Club, with chairman E. A. Slack, was out in an original and attractive tally-ho with seating capacity for 20 persons. The group created fun and merriment and not a small amount of sensation in its grand rounds. They visited all the parties coming back to headquarters after a seven-hour trip. They confined themselves strictly to coffee as a beverage.

The hotels were at their best too. Strict temperance was universally observed.

In 1880 similar open houses were held though this year was not nearly so festive as its predecessor.

By the year of 1881, New Year's calls were no longer made with such rigid formalities. The ladies no longer dressed in their most elegant clothes. Young men in parties of three or four would pass around to the several houses, extend the compliments of the season, and partake of ordinary refreshments. In earlier years, the food tables had groaned under every substantial and delicacy that the country could afford.

The women who held open house included Mesdames S. N. Morgan, Governor Hoyt, Thomas Sturgis, W. W. Corlett, C. N. Potter, F. E. Addoms, R. S. Van Tassel, A. H. Swan, etc.

A funny episode of the day occurred as a party of young gentlemen dressed in plug hats, coats with buttons like tin saucers, and carrying umbrellas, hitched an old gray mule to a dump cart, painted with New Year signs, and rode through the town. They created much amusement and enjoyed the day themselves, hugely and harmlessly. No drunkenness occurred throughout the day and an air of serene happiness and good will seemed to pervade all classes.

Special note was made of the pleasant open house held at the Swan home in 1882. In February of that year, there were several open houses celebrating the Chinese New Year observance.

The following homes were open for callers on January 1 of 1883: Mesdames R. B. Home, F. E. Warren, C. Calloway, Charles Russell, William Hale (the Governor's wife), A. B. Banks, A. H. Swan, E. S. N. Morgan, and the Misses Alice and Grace Hebard. Each of these women was assisted by several other women too numerous to mention.

The day was observed in an appropriate manner; there was social entertainment for all. "The elegance of the tables prepared for the visitors surpassed anything hither to displayed in the West, and the rich display of floral decorations and menu delicacies baffles any descriptions at all brief in its character." In the evening there was a ball at Library Hall with a sumptuous banquet prepared by Dyer's Hotel. There were also several private parties.

"Hello, 1884", was the title of the article describing New Year's Day of that year. A lengthy description of the progress of Cheyenne, during 1883, followed the headline. Mention was made of the building boom, the immense cattle, coal and oil resources and development, and the plans for a new railroad. Several women again held open house, some in a formal method and others informally.

WEBSITES THAT MAY BE HELPFUL IN YOUR RESEARCH

These web addresses can be copied and pasted into your browser to access these web sites.

Footnote.com Launches the Largest Collection of World War II Photos on the Web.

Tens of thousands of photos and documents are made available for the first time on the web for historians, genealogists and the general public- Lindon, UT - December 6, 2007 – Footnote.com today announced the addition of thousands of US Air Force photos to their digital World War II collection. This release coincides with the anniversary of the Pearl Harbor bombing, and contains tens of thousands of original World War II photos and documents from the National Archives. Among this collection are missing air crew reports, documents from allied military conferences and photos of Japanese air targets.

www.footnote.com.

1911 Irish Census Details Now Online.

After a several year project by the National Archives of Ireland, in partnership with Libraries and Archives Canada, anyone may now search the 1911 census of Ireland by first or family name. The site contains the digital equivalent of 4,000 reels of microfilm and 3.5 million images. It currently holds records for Dublin only, but project organisers plan to add the rest of the country, as well as details of the 1901 census, next year.

Each entry includes a person's education, religion, profession and place of birth. A category for "children still living" suggests some astonishing child mortality rates. Another column asks people, in the jargon du jour, if they are "deaf and dumb; dumb only; blind; imbecile or idiot; or lunatic." You can read more about the records at

<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/about/index.html>

NEW ARTICLES IN OUR LIBRARY PERIODICALS

Family Tree Magazine – January 2008

- **State Research Guides with Fast Facts and Key Resources for Alabama and Nevada.**
- **Ladies First** – Bring your female ancestors to the forefront of your family tree. Use these eight research strategies and nine key sources to trace your female ancestors.
By: Lisa A. Alzo
- **Brick Wall Busters** – Piecing together answers about an ancestor's parents.
By: Emily Anne Croom

American Heritage Magazine – Winter 2008

Contains 2 articles about Jamestown.

- **Finding the Real Jamestown** – The archaeologist who discovered the real Jamestown debunks myths and answers long-puzzling mysteries about North America's first successful English Colony.
By: William M. Kelso
- **Why Jamestown Matters** – If the colony had collapsed the English might not have been established as the major colonial power in North America.
By: James Horn

Smithsonian – December 2007

- **Revolutionary Real Estate** – Statesmen, Soldiers and Spies Who Made America – and the way they lived.
By Hugh Howard
with photographs by Roger Straus III

COMPUTER INTEREST GROUP

BY: LESLIE VOSLER

The next meeting of the Genealogy Computer Interest Group (CIG) will be the 1st Thursday of January,

WHEN - 3 January 2008,

WHERE - The in the Willow Room of the Laramie County Library at about 6:30 p.m.

WHAT - Bring your LAPTOP (if you have one and want to do so). Plus bring your questions and problems, solutions and suggestions, 'new stuff' and old stuff'.

The February meeting will be held on 7 Feb 2008 at 6:30 pm, in the Wildflower Room

If you have any desires for programs for the coming year please let us know.

If you have questions, contact
Leslie Vosler
hm: (307) 635-5892
fax: (307) 637-2893
cell: (307) 630-8864

Looking forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

Cheyenne Genealogical and Historical Society

Tuesday 8 January 2008 at 6:30 pm

Meeting will be held in the Wildflower Room on the 3rd floor of the new Laramie County Library.

Bert Budd will present the program for this meeting. His topic will be 'What is in a Name'.

Tuesday 12 February 2008 at 6:30 pm

Jane Carpenter of Carpenter Genealogical Services will present a program entitled "Dead End -Brick Wall - Come Learn the 4 P's of Central Eastern U.S. Research". The meeting will be held in a Laramie County Library meeting room

Albany County Genealogical Society

Tuesday - 8 January 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday - 12 February 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

Programs will be announced the beginning of January

Larimer County Genealogical Society (LCGS)

Meetings will be held at Hamory Public Library, 4616 Shields at Hamory, Community Meeting Room.

Thursday January 17 at 6:60 pm -

Annual meeting with election of officers, dessert social, and a special video presentation of our 2007 society events.

Thursday February 21 at 6:60 pm -

Program will be -

"Learning about the DAR and Its Records" presented by Pat Johnson.

CURRENT OFFICERS OF CHEYENNE GENEALOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

President - Sue Seniawski 307-638-6519

Vice President - Cal Truax 307-638-3482

Secretary - Dorothy Ban 307-778-9595

Treasurer - Henry Miller 307-638-3954

Past President - Bert Budd 307-632-8256

If you have suggestions for newsletter or areas of interest you would like to share please contact me at WADE_27043@msn.com or 307-638-3877.



*He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
and away they all flew like the down of a thistle.
But I heard him exclaim, 'ere he drove out of sight,
'Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night.*

A Visit from St Nicholas.

By Clement C. Moore.