



*Preserving, promoting and developing Wellington North's unique cultural resources to build a vibrant community and a prosperous economy.*

## **Our Cultural Moment for December celebrates past Christmases**

Christmas in rural areas has changed over the years. The concert in the one room school no longer exists, where every student participated, leaving many in tears because they forgot or fouled up their lines. In some cases it was one of the few times that mother got to visit with her neighbours. Usually when the husband took grain to the mill, he left his wife's list of items at the grocery store to be picked up on his way home. Quite often the only time mother left the farm was to go to church.

The harnessing of the team, hitching to the sleigh, remembering where the fence openings in the neighbours fields were, because the roads were too deep in snow to traverse. Everyone in the sleigh would be bundled under a buffalo robe. Now you travel on cleared rads in a warm car.

Prior to the mid 1900's, husband and wife usually grew up in the same community or one close by, so relatives were close. Now, in many cases they have grown up on different continents.

Giving of gifts, usually restricted to the youth, were made by the giver (with help from mother or father). Now you spend money to buy what someone in a far away country has sometimes made. The adults caught up on each other's lives, even though they lived less than an hour away, they may not have seen one another for months. Now men usually watch sports on TV, while the ladies catch up on the latest gossip.

Families are now more likely to jet off to some sunny destination, or drive for hours to visit family. It is easier to meet at a restaurant for their Christmas meal, where everything is cooked for them. Gone are the days when the host family cooked the bird or roast and made the potatoes. The rest of the meal, turnip, squash, salads and deserts were brought by the other attendees and warmed or cooled as necessary.

Christmas has changed from mainly a religious and family celebration to a very commercial one. Most young families of today don't know what they are missing. Yes, there were hardships, but most of today's older citizens treasure those memories of Christmas past. Season's Greetings!

Submitted by Robert Macdonald; Wellington North Cultural Roundtable