

Friday December 5, 1952

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COMMUNICATION

Editor,  
Record Eagle,

Dear Sir:

When I see the strenuous program of advertising of articles which are supposed to add to the beauty and happiness of the Christmas season I cannot help thinking of the happy family relationships of bygone years which tended to strengthen family ties because of the struggle for existence, and draw them closer.

I wonder what the youngsters of today would think of the methods of travel, the Christmas gifts (if any) we had back in 1880. That was the year my parents moved back to Michigan from Nebraska with a family of five children. I was eleven years old. We came with two high wheeled covered wagons and a team of horses and another of mules. We came through Wexford, where snow was 18 inches deep and roads were deep sand east of Traverse City along the bay shore. It was in December. We ate our dinner near the old "G. R. & I." tracks, later the Pennsylvania road. My parents had previously lived in Michigan. I was born here in 1869 and the family went west when I was a baby. They found a few people in Traverse City they knew, among them Truman Scofield, Charles Truax and Matt. Glendenning. We came back to Mabel, where my grandfather was living, and he came out to greet us with a small kerosene hand lamp. No flashlights those days. If there were any Christmas gifts or toys they, of necessity, had to be hand made and with very little to make them with. Hand made mittens and stockings and shirts on which my mother had lovingly embroidered our names. But I feel sure we appreciated and enjoyed them as much or more as the expensive gifts one feels they must have today in order to "keep up with the Jones." Class distinctions were unknown those days as financially we were pretty much on the same level.

Anyway, when one is 83, memories come back in a flood. I have often wondered how my grandfather managed to crowd our family into his small house. Later, in our own home, five more children were born—of whom only two remain from ten children.

James A. Button