

Christmas Parties at Glen Eyrie, ca.1905

In 1909 when General Palmer died, Charlotte Ann Wolgamood was seven years old. Her father, Pat (James) Wolgamood was a finish carpenter foreman at Glen Eyrie for General Palmer. Charlotte and her brother were invited to some of the children's Christmas parties at Glen Eyrie for which General Palmer was famous. Here are some of her (Charlotte W. Edgar's) recollections, taken from an oral history tape of reminiscences in 1995 when she was 93 years old. This oral history tape is part of the archival collections at the Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum.

She said:

Every Christmas he'd have several parties for the children. One would be for the children of those who worked for him. Others would be for different groups of children from around town. There were always quite a few children; didn't remember exactly how many. General Palmer would be brought down to the Great Hall on his bed. They'd all go over and shake hands with him and surround him. Then they would look at the big Christmas tree, which was placed in the Great Hall.

After that, they always started out with dinner in the dining room. The table would be just beautiful. There were different types of candy at each place: first a Santy Claus, then a Christmas tree, then deer, red, green and gold, and then it would start over again. There were paper hats.

After dinner the Palmer girls, Elsie, Dorothy and Marjory, would take us to the bowling room and push us. We'd go sliding down the bowling alley. They'd just give us a shove and away we'd go! They were grown young ladies. We were just little kids.

Every year each child who attended the parties would be given Christmas gifts. Charlotte and her brother received several gifts from General Palmer including stuffed animal pull toys on wheels that were a horse, an elephant and a dog; as well as a toy stove with an entire set of dishes and silverware.

She said:

There's not much left of the little stove. I had twelve of everything for the dishes, but now there is only one plate left. (There is also a lidded cook pot and a spoon.)

We at the Museum had always heard about the famous Christmas parties, but finally it became real for us when Charlotte's family donated the toys and the oral history tape after her death in 1998 at age 96. We are so grateful that these beautiful things survive to tell the tale of General