

Pictures of Christmases Past

by Marilyn Reeves

Back in the days before Smart Phones, before Camcorders, Dad had an old-fashioned movie camera. He took footage of Salida's annual Boat Race Parade, our trip to California, our trip to Cypress Gardens in Florida. And, of course, pictures of the family gathered around the Christmas tree opening presents. Through the years, he would drag out his projector and set up the small screen in the living room, and we would watch those home movies time and again, marveling at how young we were, the clothes we used to wear, the forgotten presents we had opened, and revisit the old house where we used to live. Precious memories of times past.

My favorite was the one featuring my sister Rosie, just past a year old, toddling around the tree, playing with the ribbons and bows. There were my older sister Jan and myself in our brand new matching bathrobes – she with her hair cut short in a curly perm; my own long, sandy-hued hair hanging down past my waist. We were both skinny back then. She still is.

Most treasured of all were the shots of Mom and Dad (sadly, very few of him, as he was the one holding the camera). How young they looked! How pretty Mom was! How handsome our Dad!

Somehow those old home movies stopped being made. Perhaps Dad's camera got broken, or simply set aside.

Many years later, during the years I spent with Jim, *he* took still-shots of the family gathered around other trees at other houses, opening still other presents; or seated around the table feasting at our annual Christmas buffet. Nieces and nephews never seen during the rest of the year were always there, happy to partake of the bounty!

I treasure those pictures that Jim took which now fill my albums. Too bad there aren't more pictures of him. But he was the one holding the camera.