

# WHAT CHRISTMAS IS TO ME

This poem below tells how it was on a January day in 1946, of a Christmas celebration. It also tells how it was before January 1946, and how it has been after that time. Oh! The Lord has been good to me!

Christmas is so special to all in many ways, but what it is to me is very heart touching to say.

Can you remember the first time "Santa" came to see, to put all those goodies and gifts for you under your Christmas tree?

The first Christmas that I can recall was such a long time ago; there were no lights on our Christmas tree to make it glow.

Our first Christmas tree was a real live holly with green leaves, red berries and all, with popcorn that was strung to decorate it, as it stood so tall.

The first Christmas I remember was in the year that I turned five, and the joy it brought me caused me to realize.

I learned that Christmas was the time of year for love to abound, and while gifts under our tree were few, there was love enough to go around.

The love of others and especially of Mother and Daddy became to me, far more important than all the gifts that were put under our first Christmas tree.

Time went by; the nineteen thirties came and went, in the nineteen forties world happenings caused mankind all over the world to rent.

My love for country required me to go away, to do my part to preserve this great land so we could still have joy and happiness on Christmas Day.

I was blessed to return safe, sound, and whole in January nineteen forty-six, and I found out then the love and thanks of my family as on me they played a "trick."

When I returned home the big surprise trick turned out to be, when I went back to my old room there it stood... a fully decorated Christmas Tree.

Christmas in January nineteen forty-six was so memorable to me, as there my family and I stood hugging, crying, and expressing our love for each other beside that most beautiful Christmas tree.

Nineteen forty-six to nineteen fifty-two the years went by so fast... my how they flew, and when Christmas came that year my life and Christmas became anew.

Each Christmas thereafter was events, which brought a new and more beautiful joy to my life, because the "Biggest Kid" to help me celebrate Christmas was my new and precious wife.

Then here they came, the first was William Thomas number three, he celebrated one Christmas with us alone as we opened presents from under our Christmas tree.

John Stanford came awfully quick.... just fifteen months from the time of his brother, the way it turned out, two boys in a row, we knew in our heart there had to be others.

As fate played out the game, the way fate does you see, Martha Gay was the first baby girl in the family to share Christmas with the boys, Bobbie and me.

Seven years went by and what a surprise Dawn Annette turned out to be, she was so beautiful and sweet and easy to love she got more attention that all the other three.

Christmas was so wonderful back when our children were small, the beautiful lights and decorations, the visits to Santa, making pictures while sitting in his lap and all.

The joy children bring to Mother and Daddy's heart at "Christmas Time," will live in their heart and cause this old dad to write about it in words that rhyme.

Four beautiful and precious children—two sons and two daughters whom I love with all my heart, each of them (individually) at Christmas time ALWAYS won Santa's heart.

Christmas and the joy of the season with our children did not end; along came our grandchildren the source of more Christmas happiness and joy all over again.

You ask, "What is Christmas to me?" It is the joy and happiness of giving of love and being with each member of the family.

You ask, "What is Christmas to me?" It is the love and joy I want to give and receive from grandchildren, JOSH, RICKY, KATIE, HAYDEN, JANIE, KELLY, and HUNTER.

You ask, "What is Christmas to me?" It is what I have been taught by my wife. She is the joy and happiness of Christmas and giving.... "SHE IS MY LIFE."

So in celebrating Christmas may our joy and happiness be rich with LOVE and let us all give thanks and remember LOVE, JOY, and HAPPINESS come as BLESSINGS from HIM above... "MERRY CHRISTMAS FAMILY".

*William T. (Bill) Richardson, Jr.*