

# Toy and Joy Makers in Old Tualatin

WRITTEN BY: **LOYCE MARTINAZZI**

Tualatin firemen became Santa's elves in 1946 when they began collecting and refurbishing used toys and distributing them to less fortunate children in the area for the holiday season. The project was called Toy and Joymakers, and many groups participated by donating new and used items. They took the dolls to the Methodist church's young mothers club called "Twigbenders," (as the twig is bent; so the tree will grow) who cleaned and dressed the dolls for the fire department.

Tualatin Elementary School always had a Christmas program, with all the grades participating, with singing, dancing, and plays. Then a jolly pillow enhanced Santa would enter the gym with a big bag over his shoulder. "Ho, ho, ho, who wants a gift from Santa?" Then he passed out little paper bags filled with striped hard candy, an orange and walnuts to each student.



Chief Bill Barngrover inspects the workers as they work on the new Fire Department building. It was located just west of the Winona Grange hall.

Christmas trees were cut from the side of the road, or in vacant field, always Douglas fir, and un-sheared. To decorate the trees, we kids would make chains from colored construction paper and paste, as well as stringing popcorn garlands. My mom had a string of colored lights and some beautiful glass ornaments, and woe unto us if we broke one.

In another Christmas tradition, the firemen decorated the tallest tree in town; the stately evergreen beside Lizzie Robinson Jones' house on Boones Ferry Road. Using department ladders to reach the top, they hung strands

of colorful lights on what became the town's Christmas tree.



When I was a kid, my folks would order gifts from the Monkey Wards catalog. I especially remember the tin bucket with three divisions; ribbon striped hard candy, some kind of chocolate mounds with colorful fillings, and peanuts.

When the Wizard of Oz hit the screen in 1939, my aunt took my older sister Jo to see the movie. I cried because mom wouldn't let me go, as she said I was too young. But that year, under the Christmas tree, wrapped in white tissue paper, and bearing my name, was a doll that looked just like Dorothy! She was wearing a little blue pinafore and ruby slippers.

As the holiday season nears, whether we celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanza or the winter solstice, let us always remember the less fortunate among us, and be grateful for our blessings. As we decorate our homes with fresh fragrant evergreens, let us remember that as winter comes and the days become shorter and shorter, the sun will slowly return.



**Loyce Martinazzi** was born and raised in Tualatin and is passionate about Tualatin History. She is currently Master of Winona Grange, Co-Founder of the Tualatin Historical Society and Co-Author of *Tualatin... From the Beginning*.



Fireman Guy Scull paints a toy truck for some lucky kid.



Little Guy Scull Jr. (Chico) helps his father Guy Sr., and DeeAnn Conover (Meharry) watches as her dad Merwyn Conover repairs toys.



This little boy looks very happy as he opens his holiday gift from the Toy and Joymakers!



The new fire department was completed in 1948. Most of the men in the community were volunteers.



Christmas at the Tualatin Fire Department in the late 1950s.