

How I Remember Christmas as a Child

I was born in Cleveland Ohio on an old-fashioned street. We had streets with sidewalks and lots of trees. All the homes had porches and backyards. It was a fun neighborhood to live in and we knew all the neighbors. We had a long alley that connected our street called Lakeview to the next street over. The alley was a great way to travel to other areas in the neighborhood. We shopped for food at a small grocery store that was across the street and the owner knew everyone in the neighborhood.



Mom would sometimes phone ahead or give us a note to give to the owner and he would let us bring the groceries back home knowing very well that mom would pay for them at a later time. On the same street closer to Euclid Avenue was a bakery called Hough Bakery. They made magnificent cakes and cookies and cream puffs. Everyone loved the frosting on everything they baked it was outstanding.

We walked to and from school as it wasn't very far from our home. The crossing guard knew all of our names and she spoke to us like we were her own kids. I remember school being a fun and exciting place. We all enjoyed walking to school and we had a great time in school every day was fun.



Rosedale elementary school was the best. In school we enjoyed reading about Christmas and working together in class on



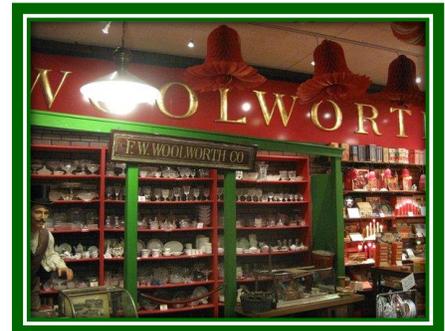
projects and waiting for the great Christmas vacation that would soon be upon us. We had fun making cards, potholders and other gifts to give to our parents. We even wrote stories about what Christmas meant to us and our families. The family was the center of living

for us kids. Back during my childhood we had what was called a blue law. Stores were not allowed to be open on the holidays or on Sundays that was family time. Families could spend time together. As it turns out this was a well-meaning law.

Walking to school and home was always an adventure because we would throw snow balls, make snow angels, snowmen and build igloos.

My sister and brother and I would walk down to East 185 Street to do our Christmas shopping.

This was the street that had many stores and places to eat. One of our favorite stores was called Woolworths. They had everything in this store and you can eat right at the food counter, I loved eating



BLTs there. The floors were wooden and made a creaking sound when you walked on them. They had bins all over loaded with things to buy. It was fun looking through them and deciding what you wanted. In the back of the store they sold various different kinds of pets. This was the best store in the whole world. I remember I used to buy my little green army men from there.

I knew this was the time of the year to buy gifts. Our mom was a great mom, she always cooked and needed pots and pans so the bigger the pot and pan the better the gift I thought. Of course they had very fine plastic jewelry for her too. I had the same idea with the jewelry, if the stone was real big the better it was as a gift. Mom was easy to buy for.

As a family we would take a trip downtown to Higbees department store during the Christmas season. At night there were countless numbers of people walking around and we would have fun looking through the windows at everything that was on display. Inside the Higbee store was exciting also, to



look at all the decorations that they put up for the holidays. It was a grand time being a kid in wonder of everything. We would visit Mr. Jingeling. He was on TV back then as he was the keeper of the keys for Santa's



To make extra money my dad sold Christmas trees in the front yard of our apartment building. It was fun to watch the people shop and buy trees off of our dad. When you are little it looked like a forest of trees and we would walk up and down the rows of trees playing and watching all the people.



On Christmas morning we would wake up early, run down stairs, and as quickly as we could rip off the wrapping on all of our presents. What a mess we made!

It was a lot of fun and our parents took care to make sure we all received what we wanted and everyone

had an equal number. A month before Christmas we received an order book in the mail. It was a great paperback filled with images of toys that we could decide



upon. My brother, sister and I would cut out the picture of the toys we wanted and placed them around the house to give our parents a hint of what we wanted and really needed.



We always setup our train set and played with it during the holidays. It was fun long ago to just see your train go around and around on a track.

On Christmas day after church we would have a big family dinner that was special because it was fun to have everybody at the table. Mom was a great cook. Lot of our relatives would drop by on Christmas day to visit and mom would feed them her special spaghetti sauce. My one uncle would give my brother and me a silver dollar every year.

He would say, “now don’t spend this silver dollar, but save it”. That didn’t last long as we would spend it as soon as we could. It took him a few years to figure out this was not going to work. To make sure we wouldn’t do that anymore he would have it attached firmly to a belt buckle each year. It took us a little longer but we were able to pop it off of that buckle and spend it. We collected quite a few belt buckles year after year.

It is sad to say that all we have are memories of those times. If we only realized, we would treasure those memories for the rest of our lives. Maybe we shouldn’t have been in such a hurry to grow up. They are all good memories that I will cherish forever.

The End