

## A Christmas Visit To Adler's

I may have covered these memories in another area, that's the problem with a lifetime of memories, even after I've written them down, a year passes, another holiday arrives, and the same thoughts drift through my mind.

In the Savannah of childhood Adler's was the big department store downtown. In those days going downtown was an event, somehow different from a trip to Wal-Mart or the Mall today; you bundled up from the cold while going from store to store down Broughton Street, enjoying the sights and sounds, the Christmas lights over the streets and the hustle and bustle of people shopping.

Streets were safe in those days, just taking the bus downtown and going what mama called "window shopping", which meant we had no intention of purchasing anything, this was just a trip to get out of the house, look in the store windows, dream a little and get some exercise.

Adler's was the big store at Bull and Broughton, usually the home of Santa during the Christmas season, this was the old days, before he had a helper on every corner, this was the one spot in town a kid wanted to visit, this was my spot, and the place to be was in the basement where the Christmas toys were displayed.

The big toy that Santa never brought to me was the electric car, like the red metal cars and fire trucks of the time, except instead of pedals to push this one had a gas pedal like a real car and a battery to make it go, guess it doesn't seem like much today, times have changed. Small battery propelled toys seem pretty common and inexpensive today, yet in those days this would have cost mama her total wages for a month or two, but what does a kid know when he is still a kid?

My other toy of desire in their basement was a steam engine, no not a locomotive, this was a brass model of an old time steam engine such as was used on the farm to operate machinery, it actually burned charcoal or some fuel, made steam and operated small items just as was done by the real machine. The fact that this was a "big boy" toy was lost on me at the time. I'm sure mama knew that I would quickly tire of the novelty of the item and that it would have needed mom or dad to actually make it go for me lest I burn the house down or at least my fingers.

I hope young people still look forward to Christmas the way I did as a child, somehow we have so much today, everyday, and I fear it takes away from that holiday excitement. Mama, your mother, remembers Christmases even simpler than mine. I was one of the lucky kids in a way, while not rich, dad did have a good job and I was an only child. Mother was the oldest in a larger family, Christmas was often a new dress and shoes and maybe a basket of fruit, and toys were few and far between.

Do I still want "things", sure, guess we all do, but I hope we don't lose touch with the real blessings and riches of life in our quest for material things.

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