

of town on the Burkesville Road. The train display in F. P. Williams Furniture Store. Visiting Santa to share dreams of things wished for. The joy of seeing an occasional snowflake as it drifted to the ground to create a white Christmas. Christmas pageants held at nearly every church and school. In addition to all of these recollections, there is the most frequently mentioned memory: the National Store Santa Claus.

In keeping with the tradition of Santa, no one really knows the origin of the display featured in the window of the popular department store. The display was there as early as the holiday season of 1951 when The Glasgow Times noted, "adding to the Christmas spirit on the east side of the public square is the mechanical Santa Claus which occupies the central show window

of the National Store. Surrounded by toys and gifts, St. Nick and the rest of the attractive display, which includes phonograph-supplied carols and familiar Yule music, have been catching the eyes of most of Glasgow's swelling holiday crowds." The children of the The Barrens growing up in the early part of the third quarter of the 20th century were the generations treated to this spectacle. No one seems to recall when the display ended, but many remember it being there into the mid-1960s.

Gayle Arterburn, now of Bowling Green, recalls being a student at Liberty Street Elementary and stopping by the store to see her father, Bobby Minor, who was the jeweler for the business. Gayle recalls that one of her father's responsibilities was the creation of the annual display featuring the

Santa. The creation of the display itself brings memories for Billie Bellamy Tabor also of Bowling Green, "Do you remember them putting paper over the big window while they were getting the big Santa ready? You could peek in the sides where the cracks were and see him sitting in the chair!"

The physical description of the Santa rests firmly in the memories of many people. He was life-sized, if not a bit larger, but certainly larger than life in the minds of little children. Linda Nance Cook notes that "I remember loving to go by the store and see the Santa Claus in the window. He wasn't just a mannequin - he even moved." Kristi McDaniel Smith, now of Tamuning, Guam, recalls "one of my favorite Christmas memories as a child was walking up to the National Store window and gazing at the moving Santa Claus. I can still see it plainly. I can close my eyes and see him moving and turning!" The jolly old elf wasn't just on display, he was scrutinized, studied and contemplated, his every movement recorded in the viewer's mind. Theresa Garmon Nelson adds that "he was sitting and I remember that his arm moved up and down and where his hand touched his pants at the knee, there was a small hole caused by the repetitive movement."

Lesa Lindsey Mattingly grew up in Glasgow and at one time owned and operated a retail business on the square. She recalled, "I don't remember when it was that I first saw Santa Claus in the National Stores window but I do remember it was WON-DROUS! He was bigger than life. He sat there with that big smile on his face, his hands on his knees were moving up and down, as if

he was laughing so hard he was slapping his knees. The Christmas music playing. It was the greatest thing I had ever experienced. It stays with me now. I can also hear the bells being rung across the square in front of Newberry's. The Salvation Army bell ringers. Christmas in Glasgow was such a wonderful time in the '50s and '60s. But even more, Glasgow's downtown square was life and joy to me...it was the BIG TIME!"

In speaking of the display, Joyce Faye Landrum noted, "such a thrill at Christmas, just the simple things of childhood, but hold such dear memories" while Carla Pursley Jones, now of Bowling Green, added "he made a big impact on a lot of little kids in the 50's and '60s." When discussing the Santa, the most asked question is "what happened to him?" Oddly, no one seems to know. Rusty McCandless, also of Bowling Green, pondered "for years I have wondered what ever happened to the old Santa. Was it put in storage, or sold, or did it go to a land fill? I remember standing out in front of that window in the snow watching the giant Santa. That's when Christmas as a child was magical."

For readers unfamiliar with where things were in town, the National Store was located in what is now Glasgow City Hall on the East side of the public Square. In paying homage to the memorable display of the past, the City places a large Santa in a first floor window of the government building. Other current comparisons include a Santa display in Barren County Judge-Executive Davie Greer's office in the Barren County Government Center and a waving Santa positioned among elves at Ford's Furniture.

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