

## My Christmas Story



Christmas has always been a time of excitement, happiness and pleasure to most people. Before the Second World War, children waited in great anticipation for Christmas Eve when they would hang up their stockings and wait for Santa Claus to fill them. There were requests to Santa for certain gifts but it was not the end of the world if they did not receive exactly what they wanted. It was a time of depression and many poor families found it difficult to manage. Fortunately at Christmas time a group called 'The Good Fellows' made it their business to check out the needy and just prior to Christmas these families were given a hamper containing ham, cheese, butter, bacon, sausage, cake, mincemeat, sometimes a chicken and also balloons and toys for the children.



I remember one Christmas in particular. My brother and I had been out carol singing on Christmas Eve. We had been well fed during our outing. We went to bed very late and we were both very tired. At approximately one o'clock in the early morning, I woke up to hear piano music. I thought I was dreaming but the next minute my brother came into my room and said to me "Someone is playing the piano, I think it must be a ghost." I said to him, "Don't be silly I expect you were dreaming", not telling him that I had also heard the music.

Then we sat and listened together and sure enough we heard the music again.

We then decided to go and tell our mother about this strange phenomenon. When we woke her up she was not too pleased but decided to come and investigate. As we entered the 'sitting room' (as it was called in those days), the music from the piano was very apparent. My mother then approached the piano to investigate and saw a small mouse running up and down the keys. The music sounded to us like 'Silent night, holy night'.

I must say I find that Christmas these days is not as before. It has become very much commercialised in every way. Children's expectations of Christmas gifts are much higher now than in previous years. It seems since the aftermath of the war, parents were determined to make up to their children for their previous hardships. I just wonder has the beauty, mystery and real understanding of Christmas passed us by. I really hope this is not true.

**Uella Amah**