

# Santa Uses Space Ships as Well as Reindeer

AP Newsfeatures  
NEW YORK. — Maybe Santa Claus will be waiting for you in front of a space ship instead of a sleigh, when you visit him in your favorite toy department this Christmas.

Saint Nick — always a fellow to keep up with the times — has taken note of the youngsters' interest in rockets and trips to the Moon. This year, his lieutenants in a number of stores throughout the country plan to have him receive a rocket ship in a star-studded Milky Way. Some of the rocket ships have a moving floor and moving pictures of a star-studded universe scudding past the windows, so that the youngsters can have the illusion of a ride in a space ship.

You have all that on the word of George Messmore, head of Messmore and Damon, New York producers of many of the animated figures used by department stores. "The astronomical idea is the newest trend for toy departments for Christmas," he says, "but a lot of the old favorites will be there too."

The workshops at the back of his plant are busy today turning out jolly nodding store-window Santa Clauses, reindeer to gallop over snow-capped roofs, Little Miss Muffet, The Three Bears, and the cow that jumped over the moon.

A visit to the Messmore studio is like a trip to fairyland. A flick of an electric switch and the place comes to life. Jumbo, the giant elephant, loses his trunk in the air. A pair of reindeer covered with tiny mirrors prance in glittering light. Santa Claus nods from his place beside them. A clown band tootles with him.

George Messmore has been working with animated figures ever since he was a stage-struck schoolboy in Detroit. His brother was property man in a local theater and, by using family influence, George managed to make his unsalaried stage debut at seven as the hind quarters of a cow in Jack and the Beanstalk. At 17 he came to New York, worked in a shop which built properties and eventually started his own factory.



**SPACE SHIPS WILL BE MIXED** with the traditional Christmas decorations in store toy departments this year, says George Messmore, who makes many of the animated animals and figures which are used by stores. Traditional reindeer are still a staple product turned out by his New York City shop, accompanied by Santa Claus (as in the upper two pictures), but modern Santas are likely to use atomic age transport, a space ship propelled by rockets.

## Toys for Shut-Ins Provide Diversion

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Little shut-ins lives can be brightened considerably at Yule time with the proper gifts. Experts on child care agree that the important thing to remember is to get them the kinds of toys that provide quiet play, and a wide variety of interest. The child should be able to play by himself with easy-to-handle toys that provide imaginative play, and that are right for his age.

Perhaps we could do well to follow the suggestions and observations of Caludia D. Gips, a registered nurse now teaching at Teachers College, Columbia University. Her opinions are based on research she did at the Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City with sick children confined to their beds and some able to get around.

Her research shows that balloons were enjoyed by every age group. The great versatility of the balloon seemed especially appealing, she says, because children who were more active could bat the balloon to the ceiling while those in bed could dress it up with a little paste or paper to make it animal. If the balloon is vivid in color it can serve as diversion for children with hospital-weary eyes. Children too ill to play can have balloons tied to their beds, where they can watch them in motion or touch them occasionally. Even when play is impossible it is possible for the child to derive comfort from having a toy by him, as though it represented an object from his own world.

Pull-toys come next in frequency of use, she says. "Perhaps they were so popular because the confined child needed activity and these toys gave some meaning to his trot around the ward. Pull-toys were used mainly by the 2-to-5-year-old group but were not scorned by the 6-to-8-year-olds."

Another group having great appeal are the Imaginary-Play type, she reports. These include nurse and doctor kits, family of dolls, bathroom and living-room doll furniture, set of small wooden warships, telephones and wooden milk bottles in a rack. Little shut-ins display a constant and enthusiastic interest in the doctor and nurse kits especially. In the hospital, little patients who could walk about included bed patients in their play. Where a child could not undertake such stimulating play, the relation of doctor and patient would be played out with a doll.

The construction toys — large domino-like blocks and the set of blocks, train and track — as a group were next in popularity. They are used by all ages of children with equal enthusiasm, she says. These toys can lead to group play or, in the case of a child confined to bed in a home, to play with his parents.

Another set of toys that were popular without requiring sustained interest, were the manipulative toys, such as those that move in response to having their bases pressed, or have the ability to turn a doll's head or walk her. Puzzles are popular, also.

For infants still confined to their cribs, says Miss Gips, it was found that baby crib toys distracted the infants from their crying and served to provide them with exercise they probably would not have had otherwise.

**BE READY**  
Be sure to have staples on hand for the popular holiday relish tray. Super colossal ripe olives are a must, pickled onions and bears of artichokes packed in oil are good teammates. Your produce man will augment this trio with celery and carrots.



## Stained Glass Window Inserts Colorful

Here's a new idea in holiday decorating that will appeal to those who prefer to emphasize the true meaning of Christmas.

Simulated stained-glass window inserts in translucent plastic can quickly transform the windows of your home into miniature cathedral settings.

These stained-glass plastic inserts are available in several sizes and include scenes of The Nativity, Flight From Egypt, Three Kings of Orient and Shepherds.

In the large size 26 x 38 inches, plastic panels are edged in lightweight aluminum so that they may be "framed" in place with strips of wood. Other styles 20 x 28 are firm sheets of colored plastic may be attached to the window glass with special tape.

When using plastic inserts, lighting specialists suggest lighting them from inside with a small 75-watt floodlight in a clamp-on type holder. Locate lamp about three feet from the window to get a smooth lighting effect.

Michigan State scored against Syracuse this season when the game was only three seconds old. The Spartans tackled Syracuse's Ben Leberman in the end zone on the opening kick-off.



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## Holy Grotto Caused War

The site of the birth of Jesus Christ is marked by the Church of the Nativity, and that church once was one of the causes of a war.

Constantine the Great in the 4th Century had a church built upon the site of the nativity. It was destroyed and another built some time in the 6th or 7th Centuries.

The latter, with additions, is still standing. A dispute over the right to possess the key to the Holy Grotto beneath the church, supposed to be the site of the manger where Jesus was born, was one of the causes of the Crimean War.

The Russians had extended their protection over the Greek Orthodox church, and the French protected the Latin church, and a dispute arose as to the protection of the holy places in Palestine.

A decision was made in early 1852 favorable to the Greek church and the Russians, and toward the end of that year the decision was reversed in favor of France and the key to the Holy Grotto was delivered to the Latin church patriarch.

That set up a diplomatic dispute and negotiations between England, France, Russia, Austria, Prussia and Turkey, and precipitated the start of the Crimean War between France and Russia in 1853 and 1854.

The church now is shared by various communions. The choir belongs to the Greek church alone, while the Grotto of the Nativity is open to the Roman, the Greek and the Armenian churches, which hold services there in turn.

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