



SANTA CLAUS pops up around the world under a number of assumed names, but in this country he is as we see him above, a jolly old fellow with a long white beard, carrying a big bag of toys for all boys and girls.

History Dates Tree Trimming

NEW YORK (UPI)—The New York Historical Society reports that the custom of decorating Christmas trees began, according to legend, in the Eighth Century when St. Boniface, a missionary, introduced it in Germany.

The evergreen adorned in tribute to the Christ child replaced the symbols used in pagan rites.

Authorities differ as to who should have the honor of having set up the first Christmas tree in America, according to the historical society.

For some time, it said, credit went to August Imgard of Wooster, Ohio, who in 1847 decorated a small spruce for his young nieces and nephews. However, recent research has shown that Charles Follen, Harvard's first German professor, had a tree for his son, Charles, each year starting in 1832.

Harriet Martineau, an English novelist, was a guest in the Follen home that year, and in her book "Retrospect of Western Travel" she described how the evening was spent decorating the tree.



JULENISSEN is the name Santa is known by in Norway where he visits good little girls on Christmas Eve.

Santa Claus, A Very Wanted Man, Travels Under Different Names

Santa Claus is a wanted man. But he won't be easy to track down, for he has too many aliases.

In one part of the world he pops up under the name of Jule-nissen; in another, the Abbot of Unreason; in a third, as Saint Nicholas, or Father Christmas.

Santa's rewards, as well as his name, vary from place to place. In one country, a bad kid is liable to find coals in his stockings. Elsewhere, a good child may discover a "Yogi Bear."

Santa's timetable and the gifts he brings vary with the particular country where he has staked out operations.

In Spain, he bears gifts on January 6, Epiphany, in celebration of the Three Wise Men. Kids put their shoes in the windows and fill them with straw for the neighbors' horse — in the hope that while the horses may neigh, Santa won't say "nay."

In Germany, he wears a big chain which he rattles at the door, and enters bringing candy and cookies for the good youngsters, an empty potato sack for the bad ones.

In the United States, Santa fills the good kids' stockings with everything from electric trains and model space rockets to toys testing their skills and expanding their knowledge. Among the toys that fill his treasure trove, Transogram makes a realistic doctor and nurse medicine chest with play-safe medical supplies and equipment; a game chest with boards and implements for 32 children's games; and an action ball toss game called Yogi Bear, with automatic scoring dial and ball return. The object of the latter contest is to ring up points by tossing plastic balls into the toy bear's gaping mouth!

In Italy, Santa comes as an old woman on a broomstick, named La Befana, and leaves gifts in the shoes of nice children. But woe to those who don't mind their parents—they're apt to find ashes in their brogans!

Santa Claus has been known by many names in his remarkable career.

Saint Nicholas. In the Fourth Century he was modeled after the original St. Nicholas who lived in Turkey and whose deeds of courage and kindness earned him after death the title of pa-

tron saint of children. The legend of the good saint as gift giver later spread to Russia, Scandinavia, Holland, Belgium and Germany.

The Abbot of Unreason. In the Middle Ages, the gift-giver took human form and became an officer who directed the festivities of the holiday season. Dubbed the Abbot of Unreason for the Scots, and the Lord of Misrule, he held office from Christmas till January 6, and his word was law. Either elected or appointed, he ruled over the holiday activities in royal household, colleges, and inns. The English called him King of the Bean, and to the French he was the Boy Bishop.

Christkindle. In Germany during the 15th Century, Martin Luther, a religious leader who also invented a lot of new German words, substituted the Christ Child, or Christkindle, for St. Nicholas as the bearer of gifts. He wanted to make the bearing of gifts a symbol of the Wise Men's visit to Bethlehem, bringing gold, frankincense and myrrh. So the Christ Child came secretly to German homes on the Eve of Christmas.

Kris Kringle. In the 16th Century, a German colony led by William Penn settled in Pennsylvania, and again Santa changed his name! The settlers had brought the Christkindle with them, but somehow it got transformed into Kris Kringle.

Santa, himself! The Dutch nickname St. Nicholas "Santa Claus" for short, but his image as a fat little man with rosy cheeks and white beard comes down to us from a poem written in 1822 by Dr. Clement C. Moore, an American minister. Dr. Moore based the poem on a colorful old Dutch

man he once met, and named it, "The Night Before Christmas."

He recited it to his children, who were delighted. Then he threw it away. A lady visitor rescued it from the wastebasket and had it published in the Troy, N.Y., Sentinel. It became a literary classic and almost every child now knows about the creatures that were not stirring, not even a mouse.

Father Christmas. During the 19th Century, Santa recrossed the Atlantic from the USA and became known as Father Christmas in England and Pere Noel in France.

Jule-nissen. That's what the Norwegians call him, and he works overtime in the land of the fjords. He brings gifts to good kids before they go to bed on Christmas Eve, after the family has finished Christmas dinner; and in the week between Christmas and New Year's he totes his sack to a community party for the children called "Jultrefest."

Regardless of the name by which Santa is known, and no matter where he appears, one thing is constant: He is a wanted man!

From A to Z on your Christmas List



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