

From Saint to Santa



Nast often depicted Santa as an ally of the U.S. military. Here he wears both an Army backpack and dress sword.



"O Holy Night" (also known as "Cantique de Noël") is a well-known Christmas carol. Originally based on a French-language poem by poet Placide Cappeau, written in 1843, with the first line "Minuit, chrétiens! c'est l'heure solennelle" (Midnight, Christians, is the solemn hour) that composer Adolphe Adam set to music in 1847. The English version is by John Sullivan Dwight. The carol reflects on the birth of Jesus as humanity's redemption.

Illustrator Thomas Nast has been called the "Father of the American Cartoon" for the illustrations he featured in *Harper's Weekly* magazine in the 19th century. It was Nast who first used a donkey and elephant to symbolize America's political parties. He fought corruption with scathing political cartoons. But Nast's most enduring contribution to popular culture might be his depictions of Santa Claus as a jolly, fat man from the North Pole dressed in red and white.

Long before he was Santa Claus, he was Saint Nicholas, the Bishop of Myra. The Dutch venerated him as Sinterklaas, and when the Dutch set sail for the New World in the 17th century, they brought Sinterklaas with them.

Sinterklaas, or Santa Claus, and Christmas, were well-established in America by the

1800s. But in December of 1823, Clement Clark Moore published his poem 'Twas *the Night Before Christmas*, and first described Santa Claus not as an austere bishop, but "chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf." By January of 1863, with the United States plunged into Civil War, Thomas Nast had plenty of inspiration to draw on for his first cartoon depicting Santa Claus.

Nast's first depictions of Santa portray him not just as a jolly old elf but as an ally of the Union Army, and he used his own long beard as inspiration for Santa's flowing white one. Over the next 23 years, Nast would make 33 illustrations of Santa, none more influential than his 1881 image of "Merry Old Santa Claus," complete with a white beard, rosy cheeks, red suit, and pack full of toys. This image has made Santa Claus who he is today.

Employee of the Month

CONGRATULATIONS to our December Employee of the Month, Kayla!!

We are so appreciative of all that Kayla does for our residents. Not only is she a dependable and hard worker, she brings so much laughter and many smiles to everyone's face. Thank you, Kayla!



Cade's Cove Bus Trip & Cracker Barrel Lunch



Bah, Humbug!



Dorothy once called the Wizard of Oz the "Great and Terrible Humbug."

Maybe it's the long lines at shopping centers or the drone of holiday music, but some people just don't enjoy the holiday season. Luckily, December 21 is Humbug Day, a day to embrace your inner Scrooge.

No one knows where the word *humbug* came from. Some think it came into use during the 18th century as the word *Hamburg*

during a time when England was flooded with counterfeit coins from that German city. Others think that it comes from a humming bug, something small, but incredibly irritating. Either way, the word denotes something that is a hoax or nonsense. When Scrooge utters, "Bah! Humbug," he is bitterly declaring Christmas to be a fraud.