

A Letter from Santa Claus, Ind.

by Charles A. Fricke

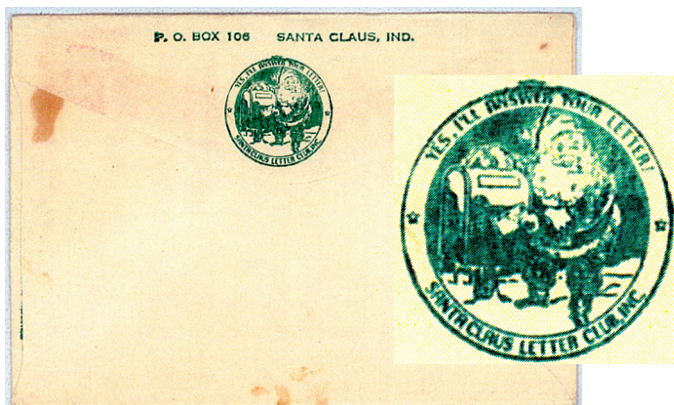


Figure 1

As a child you couldn't wait for Christmas, for then your earnest desire was to send a letter to Santa Claus with your wantlist of toys.

With so many letters being sent and all kinds of forms of addressing, nonetheless each one reached the town of Santa Claus, Indiana, which was literally inundated with the letters mailed to Santa.

But how did the name of Santa Claus come into being? It all began in the 1850s when the town of Santa Fe, Indiana wanted a post office but the post office department informed them that there was already a Santa Fe, Indiana and they had to choose a different name.

Without indicating how the name came about, in the end the name approved by the post office was Santa Claus, Indiana. So in 1856 the town and the post office claimed Santa Claus, Ind. as its official name.

The relationship of the town and the public was not really taken to heart until Robert Ripley in 1929 featured a 3' x 5' wooden postcard to get the postmark of Santa Claus, Ind.

To account for so many letters received in the name of Santa, local organizations formed to respond to the desires of the youngsters to receive a letter from Santa. One of these organizations was the "SANTA CLAUS LETTER CLUB, INC.," which is imprinted on the back of an envelope together with a logo "YES I'LL ANSWER YOUR LETTER!" all within a circle with a picture in the center of Santa Claus with a letter in his hand and a mail box next to him. At the top there is "P.O. BOX 106, SANTA CLAUS, IND." Figure 1.

On the address side of the envelope shown in figure 2 and printed in red and green there is a picture of Santa saying "Merry Christmas" and at the top left "A Letter from Santa Claus." At the top right there is a boxed permit stamp in red "Sec. 562 P.L.&R./U.S. POSTAGE/PAID/PERMIT No.2" with a double circle postmark inscribed SANTA CLAUS/IND. This would indicate the letter was



Figure 2

mailed during the period of 1932 to 1948.

This attractive envelope had enclosed a full color letter with a heading showing Santa Claus at a writing desk with several elves nearby working at all kinds of endeavors, with a Christmas tree in the offing.

The letter shown in Figure 3 expresses the wishes of Santa to his little friends.

Can you imagine how little Nancy felt upon receiving a personal letter from Santa Claus even though it was a promise for next Christmas.

While the letters to Santa compounded the work at the local post office, they also had to

contend with the request of those collectors who wanted a cover with the postmark of Santa Claus, Ind.

While in this day and age there may be a lot fewer letters to Santa, the element of trust in Santa Claus to deliver the presents at Christmas time still exists.

The letter from Santa Claus is now a philatelic item going back more than 60 years, and a remembrance of the past.

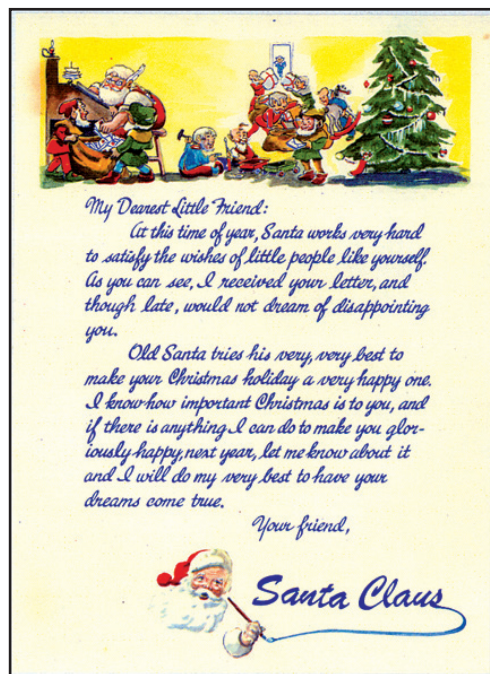


Figure 3