



0. SINTERKLAAS VISITS AMERICA - Story Preface

1. NICHOLAS OF MYRA

2. THE LEGENDS OF SAINT NICHOLAS

3. SAINT NICHOLAS OF BARI

4. SAINT NICHOLAS, GIVER OF GIFTS

**5. SINTERKLAAS VISITS AMERICA**

6. A VISIT FROM SAINT NICHOLAS

Thomas Nast, a prolific German-American artist, created this illustration of "Merry Old Santa Claus." It was published in the January 1, 1881 issue of *Harper's Weekly*.

Christmas was not the celebration it is today when St. Nicholas of Myra (St. Nicholas of Bari) died. Later, after he was made a saint and the Church began to observe Christmas as a yearly event, the Feast of St. Nicholas was incorporated into the season.

But when the Reformation took hold in Europe, Protestants had a dim view of saints. They especially opposed their veneration.

As a result, each country developed its own unique holiday gift-giver:

- Pere Noel, for example, in France;
- Father Christmas in England;
- Kris Kringle in Germany.
- The Dutch Sinterklaas, with his flowing bishop's robe and white beard, could be said to most nearly resemble the original Saint Nicholas.

When Dutch colonists settled in New Amsterdam (now known as New York City), they brought their Christmas culture and their Feast of St. Nicholas to the New World. Understandably, non-Dutch speakers mispronounced "Sinterklaas." Soon the famous bishop was called "Santa Claus."

In those days, Santa Claus was not yet the "jolly old elf" he became in the 19th century. For that transformation, we have to thank Clement Clark Moore, Professor of Classics (and son of Columbia College's president), who had written a scholarly work on the Hebrew language.

Fortunately, the prof had children who needed more than old books and ancient words to entertain them.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/SINTERKLAAS-VISITS-AMERICA-Miracle-on-34th-Street>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/SINTERKLAAS-VISITS-AMERICA-Miracle-on-34th-Street>