

# Santa Claus' LIFE STORY

**S**anta Claus is old – very old. One thousand six hundred years old to be exact. And he hasn't always lived in the north. He was born in Turkey. His name was Bishop Nicholas. He was rich and kind. He liked to make poor children happy by throwing presents through the windows of their houses.

**T**he church made him a saint – Saint Nicholas. Soon he was famous all over the Christian world. Everyone knew him, but they had problems saying the name. People pronounced it Santa Claus.

**S**o why did he move to the North Pole? Well, his name day is in December and European Christmas cards showed him bringing presents through the snow. He rode in a sleigh wearing warm winter clothes. When children asked where he lived, parents invented a place far, far away – the North Pole.

**T**hen came the big news. In 1925 newspapers explained that there is nothing for reindeer to eat at the North Pole. Santa Claus really lived .... wait for it ... in FINLAND! That's why, every year, millions of children in the world send letters to his home in Korvatunturi.



## At Christmas Even the Flies are Happy Christmas in Australia

*The News talked with Jillian Maskill, an Australian exchange student*

**The News:** So Christmas is a bit different in Australia?

**Jillian:** Totally different. Remember that everything in Australia is upside down. Not just the country – the seasons too. When you have summer we have winter. When you have winter, we have summer. So Christmas Day is hot, hot, hot. 39 degrees is typical.



**The News:** Hard work for Santa and his reindeer!

**Jillian:** Yes, we have a story about that. In the story Santa changes the reindeer for six white kangaroos when he comes to Australia. And in our Christmas cards you can see him wearing a Akubra hat. The dangling corks keep the flies off.

**The News:** You're joking!

**Jillian:** I'm not. My dad used to tell me Santa comes in the night because it's cooler. The children are asleep then so he leaves their presents by the bed.

**The News:** How early do they wake up?

**Jillian:** Too early. They want to open their presents. When the sun comes up on Christmas morning the city streets are full of children. They are trying their new bikes, their remote control cars, their super-soaker water pistols.

**The News:** What about the food? Do you eat turkey like the Brits?

**Jillian:** Aussies have Christmas barbecues. Sausages, chicken, steak – but the flies can be a problem.

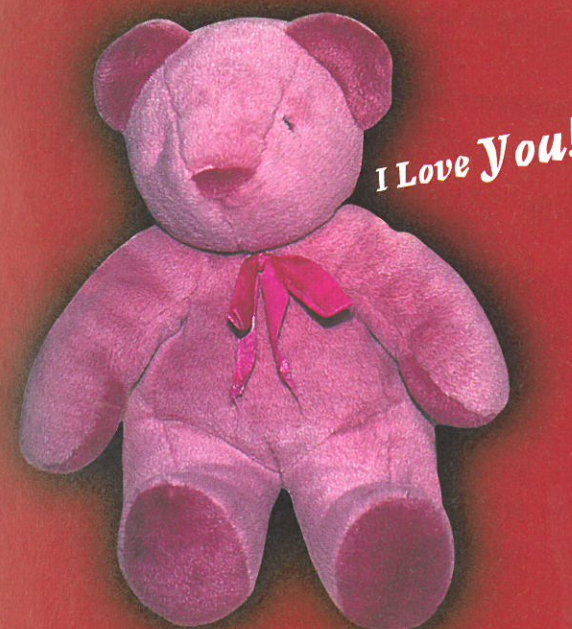
**The News:** Flies?

**Jillian:** Yeah, they're everywhere. Christmas is a great time for them too.



## America's Most Unwanted

Do you get presents you don't want? Here are some Christmas presents given to American children.



### Christmas Cake

I remember one year we got a fruit cake from my godmother. She's the world's worst cook and no-one in our family wanted to eat it. Then mom had a great idea. We could give it to uncle Frank. He eats anything. So when he came to visit us on New Year's Day we gave it to him. When my godmother asked us about the cake we said it was delicious. Next Christmas we got a shock. My godmother phoned and said she'd been given an unusual present from uncle Frank – a homemade fruit cake, just like the one she had baked us.

(Darcy, Michigan)

### Tasteless Tie

My grandad has no taste. One Christmas he sent me a yellow tie with a go-go dancer on it. When he saw I wasn't wearing it he wanted it back! Now he wears it when he comes to visit us.

(Jud, Miami)

### Stupid Socks

A few years ago an aunt of mine in the Midwest sent me six pairs of thermal socks. I live at the beach, don't ski, and hate the snow. Huh?

(Katie, Malibu)

### I love you

One year I got a pink teddy bear from my aunt. It said 'I love you!' when I pulled a string. Very nice but I was fifteen years old.

(Shawn, Denver)

### Book Bargain

My grandad is careful with his money. One year, he gave me a set of encyclopedias for Christmas. I couldn't believe it! Then I tried to read them. They were all in German! He had bought them cheap from a used book store.

(Janie, Illinois)

### Horror Hamper

I received a hamper from my brother. It was full of chocolate covered ants, grilled caterpillars, barbecued stag beetles etc. He thought it was amusing. I did not.

(Amy, Newport)