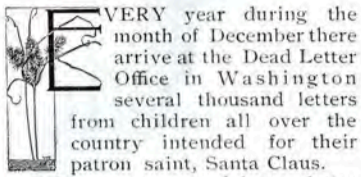




WHAT CHILDREN ASK OF SANTA CLAUS

By Patti Lyle Collins

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EVERY year during the month of December there arrive at the Dead Letter Office in Washington several thousand letters from children all over the country intended for their patron saint, Santa Claus.

Only once on record has a letter been sent after the holidays returning thanks, and though it sometimes happens that gifts are asked for mamma and papa it is not usual. There is generally a decided stress upon "I want." Some children, boys generally, know what they want, and have no hesitation in asking for it in a "stand-and-deliver" tone.

ONE little girl wrote last year from Los Angeles, bribing "dear old Santa Claus" with two pressed violets. She modestly did not mention them, but allowed the graceful tribute to speak for itself.

Dear Santa Claus, Please bring me a printing press for Christmas

Dear Santa Claus I am 9 years old my papa has gone and my mama has no money so please write me and my baby sister some candy for Christmas

reached this country. It was addressed to Mr. Santa Claus, Green Mountain, Vermont.

There seems to be no doubt as to the primary instincts of children, no matter what education and emancipation may develop, for the boys nearly always want soldier suits, steam engines, milk wagons, horses, and such things as indicate to them power and business pursuits; and the girls, first, last and continuously ask for dolls, and more dolls, proving that the mother instinct dominates all else.

Dear Mr. Santa Claus Please send me a drum some iron trousers and a Gyron hat

Buffalo, Bids book
Love book
Barnie book 50 cts
Candy about 79

Dear Santa Claus I want a horse and a big tail and big mane and eyes and nose and mouth and a saddle and a saddle and a book and a brown and a brown and a country doll a little wagon and take lots and some milk and milk wagon and some candy apples oranges bananas

From your friend baby
Dear Santa Claus I want a big doll. With blue eyes and pretty hair, and I want some candy please. I want a Christmas tree. And bring papa and mamma something, and please remember the poor little girls to, and bring the baby and George something and I am eight years old and I live on Market Street. Good By

Dear Santa Claus I would like to have a very large doll, and a machine and a doll's bed, and please bring a xmas tree, please have the doll in white clothes and I would like to have pillows and blankets and sheets. Your little friend
ELLSIE MILLS
New York.

Dear Santa Claus please bring me a nice doll and a carpet sweeper and a bed.

Dear Santa Claus I wish to have a sleigh and a doll head with nice long white curls and a chair.

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THE letters given on this page were those which were turned over to the Dead Letter Office at Washington during the holiday season of 1897-98.

Perhaps among the millions of letters written during the year there are none to whom the performance is such an unmixed joy as these little correspondents of old Santa Claus.

MR. SANTYCAUS Dear Sir: Will you come to me and my little sister we like to play. Please send us dolls and everything nice and we will thank you if you will come. We are to little girls. We will not be very afraid of you if you do not look at us much. Be sure and come my little sister and I will look for you every day.

Your little girls
SANTYCAUS
Lizzie, Croton on Hudson, N. Y.

Dear Santa Claus: I want a big doll. With blue eyes and pretty hair, and I want some candy please. I want a Christmas tree. And bring papa and mamma something, and please remember the poor little girls to, and bring the baby and George something and I am eight years old and I live on Market Street. Good By

Dear Santa Claus: I would like to have a very large doll, and a machine and a doll's bed, and please bring a xmas tree, please have the doll in white clothes and I would like to have pillows and blankets and sheets.

Dear Santa Claus: I wish to have a sleigh and a doll head with nice long white curls and a chair.

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THIS is so well known abroad that an address like the following, in a good, clear business hand, does look a trifle suspicious; Santa Claus
Care of Uncle Sam
Prosperity Street
Washington, D. C.

THIS also is delightfully specific, considering that the writer begins by saying, "I am four years old."

It is a relief to turn from these juveniles to the real children who go to bed early on Christmas Eve, and ask to have the fire put out so that Santa Claus can come down the chimney comfortably, and who fancy they hear the jingling bells of Dancer and Prancer, Vixen, Dunder and Blitzen as they fall

Dear Santa Claus I want a sailor boy

Dear Santa Claus I want a sailor boy

Dear Santa Claus I want a sailor boy

Dear Santa Claus I want a sailor boy

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Dear Santa Claus I want a sailor boy

Dear Santa Claus I want a sailor boy

WI... L... ROUSE... GIVE ME... B... B... AND... W... B... GRADY

Dear Santa I will you send me workbasket and a watch and some your picture and a doll please you send these things

Dear Santa Claus I want a sailor boy

IT IS embalmed in the chronicles of the Department that a very long time ago when the clerks came across the Santa Claus letters they would be moved to great pity by the childish petitions, and often were their prayers answered by these unknown friends.

Since those days the Christmas letters from a very small beginning have grown into—shall I say an "institution," or an incubus of most overwhelming proportions?

DEAR OLD SANTA I WANT A STOVE AND A HAMACK AND A HOUSE

THE following are addresses which have been copied at random from the large collection of letters which was received last season:

"Dear Santa Claus City"; "Mr. Santa Claus, North Pole"; "Send this to Dear Sandy Klossie; He lives in the moon"; "Mr. Santa Claus, in the Arctic Regions"; "Leave at town nearest the North Pole and give to Santa Claus as he passes"; "Mr. Santa Claus, Snow Mountain"; "Mr. Santa Claus, North Land, U. S. A."; "To Santa Claus, Santaclausville, Don't forget me"; "Santa Claus, A Hundred Skies High"; "Santa Claus, Rock Candy Castle, Fairyland"; "Santa Claus, Care of the Polar Bear, U. S. A."; "Santa Claus, Up in The Clouds"; "Mr. Santa Claus, Jerusalem Gate"; "Santa Claus, On the House-top"; "Santa Claus, on the Roof."