

The Christmas Encyclopedia

Second Edition

William D. Crump



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www.mcfarlandpub.com

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The Year without a Santa Claus

Classic children's book (actually a narrative poem) published in 1956 by Phyllis McGinley, adapted for television as an animated cartoon special.

In the book, Santa suffers from a cold and other ailments and announces that he will take a vacation from the hassle of delivering Christmas gifts. At first the news is devastating to children around the world, but six-year-old Ignatius Thistlewhite argues that it is time for Santa to have his own Christmas holiday for a change. Rallying behind Ignatius, children forward millions of gifts to the North Pole, an act that touches Santa beyond measure. With gifts filling his abode, there's no place for the toys except in his sleigh. Seeing his sleigh packed with gifts, Santa declares that he doesn't need a holiday after all. Not only does he make his usual rounds on Christmas Eve, he also leaves a special gift and a note of thanks for Ignatius.

The 1974 television special features stop-motion puppets (Animagic). When Santa believes that the world no longer cares anything about Christmas, Mrs. Claus sends two elves, Jingle and Jangle Bells, out into the world to find some remnant of the Christmas spirit. They find it in Ignatius, and together the three experience a whirlwind of adventure with Snow Miser, Heat Miser, Mother Nature, and the mayor of Southtown, U.S.A. Featured songs: "Blue Christmas," "Here Comes Santa Claus," and "Sleigh Ride." Narrated and sung by Shirley Booth. Principal voices: Mickey Rooney, Dick Shawn, George S. Irving, Robert McFadden, Rhoda Mann, Bradley Bolke, Ron Marshall, Colin Duffy, Christine Winter, and the Wee Winter Singers. Written by William Keenan. Produced and directed by Arthur Rankin, Jr., and Jules Bass. A Rankin/Bass Production. DVD: Warner Studios. 51 min.

The television special is further detailed in Rick Goldschmidt's book *The Enchanted World of Rankin/Bass*.

See also Rankin/Bass Christmas Cartoons.

Yes, Virginia, There Is a Santa Claus

Title now applied to an editorial by Francis P. Church that appeared in the *New York Sun* on September 21, 1897. Originally headed "Is There a Santa Claus?" the editorial was published in response to a letter written by eight-year-old Virginia O'Hanlon of 115 West 95th Street. Virginia had always believed in Santa but began to have doubts when her friends scoffed at her notions. Well acquainted with the *Sun* because her family often submitted queries to its question-and-answer column regarding matters of historical fact, Virginia wrote, "Papa says, 'If you see it in the *Sun*, it's so.' Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?" Church's editorial, a masterful and sensitive appeal for Virginia to have faith in what she could not always see, answered with an emphatic, "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus." It became an instant success and was published annually thereafter in the *Sun* until 1949, when the newspaper folded.

Virginia O'Hanlon received numerous inquiries about her letter, to which she always replied with an attractive, printed copy of Church's editorial. Receiving her education at Hunter College and Columbia University, she taught in the New York City school system and also became a principal, retiring after 47 years of service. Virginia O'Hanlon Douglas died in 1971 at the age of 81.

Francis P. Church covered the Civil War for the *New York Times* and spent 20 years as an editorial writer for the *Sun*. His literary interests included controversial issues, especially theology.

Two television versions of the story remain holiday favorites. The animated cartoon *Yes, Virginia, There Is a Santa Claus* (1974), featuring actual photographs of Virginia, Church, and Virginia's father, Dr. Philip

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Chatterbox / New

O'Hanlon, won an Emmy Award for Outstanding Children's Special for the 1974-75 season. Narrated by Jim Backus. Vocalist: Jimmy Osmond. Voices: Courtney Lemmon, Susan Silo, Billie Green, Sean Manning, Tracy Belland, Christopher Wong, Vickey Ricketts, Jennifer Green, Herb Armstrong, and Arnold Ross. Written by Mort Green. Produced by Bill Melendez and Mort Green. Directed by Bill Melendez. A Burt Rosen Company Production in association with Wolper Productions and Bill Melendez Productions. VHS: Paramount Home Video. 25 min.

The live-action drama *Yes, Virginia, There Is a Santa Claus* (1991) is a more fictionalized account of the lives of Virginia (Katherine Isobel), her poverty-stricken father (Richard Thomas), Church (Charles Bronson), and Church's editor (Ed Asner). There, a cynical Church, broken by his wife's death, battles alcoholism amid the holidays. Written by Val DeCrowl and Andrew J. Fenady. Produced by Duke Fenady. Directed by Charles Jarrott. American Broadcasting Company. Video N/A. 95 min.

Yogi Bear's All-Star Comedy Christmas Caper

(1982). Made-for-television animated cartoon, featuring an all-star cast of Hanna-Barbera characters.

With Christmastime at hand, Huckleberry Hound, Super Snooper the Cat, Blabber Mouse, Snagglepuss, Quick Draw McGraw, Auggie Doggie, Doggie Daddy, and Hokey Wolf all arrive at Jellystone Park to visit pals Yogi Bear and Boo Boo for the holidays. Instead, the troupe and Mr. Ranger discover that the two bears have escaped and are en route to the city on a similar visitation mission. Seeing bears loose, the police chase them into Gacy's Department Store, where, disguised as Santas, they meet Judy Jones, a little seven-year-old who has run away because her billionaire father has no time to spend Christmas with her. As Yogi and Boo Boo commiserate with Judy in a nearby park, Huckleberry Hound and the gang catch up with them and, when the child refuses to provide her address, launch a search for her residence. This endeavor involves inquiries with other Hanna-Barbera characters, who

make cameo appearances: Fred Flintstone, Barney Rubble, Jinx the Cat, mice Pixie and Dixie, Magilla Gorilla, Yakky Doodle Duck, and Wally Alligator. Soon, J. Wellington Jones, Judy's father, arrives with the police, who would arrest the bears, but after Yogi explains the reason for Judy's disappearance, the man realizes his error and is reconciled with his daughter.

Voices: Daws Butler, Mel Blanc, Henry Corden, Georgi Irene, Allan Melvin, Don Messick, Hal Smith, John Stephenson, Janet Waldo, and Jimmy Weldon. Written by Mark Evanier. Produced by Art Scott. Directed by Steve Lumley. Hanna-Barbera Productions. VHS: Turner Home Video. 30 min.

See also **Hanna-Barbera Christmas Cartoons; Yogi's First Christmas.**

Yogi's First Christmas

(1980). Made-for-television animated cartoon, based on characters from *The Yogi Bear Show*, a series of 97 episodes from Hanna-Barbera Studios that aired in syndication from 1961 to 1962. In addition to Yogi, that series included cartoons devoted to Snagglepuss the Lion and Yakky Doodle Duck. Additional Yogi series followed over the decades.

Ordinarily hibernating in Jellystone National Park at Christmastime, Yogi Bear and pal Boo Boo are awakened by the revelry of other Hanna-Barbera cartoon characters: Huckleberry Hound, Snagglepuss, Augie Doggie, and Doggie Daddy, who are attending Christmas Carnival Week at Jellystone Lodge. The week is fraught with a series of mishaps created by Herman the Hermit in an attempt to get Mrs. Throckmorton, the owner, to sell the lodge. Collaborating with Herman is Snively, Mrs. Throckmorton's young brat of a nephew, who despises Christmas as much as Herman does. Barred from the Christmas Eve tree-trimming party because of his attitude, Snively finds Herman poor company compared to the gaiety at the lodge.

At the party, Mrs. Throckmorton also hosts a group of orphans, to whom Yogi and Boo Boo (respectively disguised as Santa and elf) distribute gifts. Eventually she takes pity on the two culprits outside and shares Christmas cheer with them as well. When they both receive unexpected and undeserved gifts,

Christmas means more than before. Melody lodge as a year for orphans, and the ideal gift for Yogi.

Voices: Susan Silo, Paul DeKor, Lehmann, Ida Marilyn Powell, Robinson, Mark Stephenson, and Willie Gilbert. Directed by Robert Productions. Video 98 min.

See also **Hanna-Barbera Christmas Cartoons; Yogi Bear's Christmas Caper.**

Yule

Midwinter Christian Celtic festival from northern Europe. What extended from January, other mended in November of the winter so influence from view is that the around the winter

"Yule" derived thought to deriving the German (both meaning "feast"); and "Odin or Woden whom sacrifices (a boar symbol of Yule celebrated and the sun, the "burning w

Yule was a the returning promise of spring to repel evil spirits inhabit the winter divination and upon his vicer, descended warriors slain i