

The REAL Santa Claus, A “Real Historical Person”

By [Washington's Blog](#)

Theme: [History](#)

Global Research, December 27, 2014

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Saint Nicholas was a [real, historical person](#).

But he didn't live in some snowy Northern place like the North Pole or Scandinavia. And he probably wasn't fair-skinned with ruddy cheeks.

He lived in the town of Myra – on the Southern Coast of Turkey – in the fourth century (it was then part of Greece). So he likely had an olive-colored, Mediterranean complexion.

And he didn't ride a magic sleigh driven by flying reindeer, have a workshop full of elves, squeeze through chimneys with belly-defying dimensions, or maintain a naughty-or-nice list rivaling the NSA.

The *real* St. Nick came from a wealthy family, and his parents died in an epidemic when he was young. Nick used his large inheritance to help the poor.

For example, poor young girls were likely to be sold into slavery because they didn't have a dowry with which to attract a husband. So on 3 occasions, Nicholas threw a bag of gold into a poor girl's house through an open window ... enough to provide a dowry so the girl could get married.

The bags of gold are said to have landed in stockings or shoes left in front of the fire to dry. This led to the custom of kids hanging stockings or putting out shoes, hoping for gifts from Saint Nick.

Wikipedia [notes](#):

He had a reputation for secret gift-giving ... and thus became the model for Santa Claus, whose modern name comes from the Dutch Sinterklaas, itself from a series of elisions and corruptions of the transliteration of “Saint Nikolaos”.

My wife and I visited Nick's church in Myra (now called Demre) on the beautiful Antalya coast of Turkey, where he served as Bishop for many years.

In addition to the bags of gold mentioned above, Wikipedia notes another basis for the Christmas stocking tradition: St. Nick put coins in the shoes of those who left them out for him.

[Further information](#).

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