

All Ages Online Learning Activities

A Look at the History of Santa Claus Parades in Newmarket Through Vintage Ads and Articles

The first Eaton's Santa Claus Parade was held in 1905.

When the T. Eaton Company of Toronto staged their first **Santa Claus parade**, the Cane firm built a log cabin for them. The **parade** began at Cane's factory and upon this miniature structure sat **Santa Claus** beside the chimney, ruddy and smiling, waving to the delighted spectators as the cortege moved south along Yonge Street. Their products may well be described as "homemade," when for their production magnificent trees had been felled and hauled to the factory by their own workmen and converted into the finest of lumber.

Source: *History of the Town of Newmarket* by Ethel Trehwella

Headline: The Santa Claus Parade in Toronto Turns 100: The Early Days

The parades from 1910 to 1912 were the longest both in distance travelled and duration. "The little procession came jingling all the way down the muddy road from Newmarket to Toronto. It consisted of one float – a tally-ho on a sleigh – a band, and six or seven people".

Source: Archives of Ontario

Vintage ad: Newmarket Era, November 24, 1911



Santa Clause
Will Pass Through
NEWMARKET
—ON—

FRIDAY, at 2.30 p.m.,
On His Way to Toy Land
—AT—
Eaton's Store, Toronto.
WATCH FOR HIM!

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Article from December 1, 1911

Headline: Old Santa Claus

On Friday of last week, Old Santa Claus that is to say, the Eaton sample – paraded the streets of Newmarket, to the very great delight and pleasure of the school children of the town, followed by two or three guardians in an auto car. Perched on the top of his snow clad cabin, dressed in winter wraps, and surrounded by numerous musicians and attendants, he first paid a visit to the public school and from hence up Main St. to the North End, followed by an excited throng of young folk.

The log cabin was constructed at Cane's Factory and was about 7x10 feet with walls 6 feet high surmounted on a 4-ton auto truck. It looked like the real thing.

Vintage Ad: Newmarket Era

November 15, 1912

In 1912, Santa arrived in a "gorgeous decorated auto" accompanied by a body guard. Writing letters to Santa has been a tradition for over 100 years!

Santa Claus Arrives Friday!

Passes Through Newmarket on His Way to Eaton's.

In his Gorgeous Decorated Auto, accompanied by a Body Guard, Santa Claus will pass through Newmarket.

About 2.30 p. m., on Friday, Nov. 15th.

He has a Souvenir for each of his little friends and would like to see all the little folks who can come to see him. And he writes to all who sends him a letter. This year he has a great, new wonderful Toyland on the corner of James and Albert Sts., Toronto, and he has with him a real Punch and Judy Show and wonderful figures, such as Jack and Jill, Sambo, Sailor Boy, etc., that Talk and Sing.

He will travel as far as York Mills on Friday, where he will remain over night.

Saturday morning, his Brass Band and retinue meet him and the whole cavalcade goes down Yonge St., arriving at Eaton's at about 10.30 A. M.

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**Vintage Ad: Newmarket Era
November 14, 1913**

In 1913, Santa Claus arrived in a gorgeous car of silver and white with four real live reindeer from Grenfell Mission, Labrador. Brass Bands and reindeers arriving with Santa Claus has been another long tradition.

SANTA CLAUS arrives TO-DAY!

Will pass through Newmarket on his way to EATON'S
In a Gorgeous Car of Silver and White with his own **BRASS BAND**

HE WILL PASS THROUGH NEWMARKET
About 2 p. m. on Friday, November 14th,
ACCOMPANIED BY HIS
Special Car with Four Real Live Reindeer.

As he passes through Newmarket, Santa Claus will be pleased to receive letters from all his little friends and will reply to them after he reaches Toronto. He will remain at North Toronto over Friday night and proceed down Yonge Street, with his whole retinue, arriving at Massey Hall about 10.30 a.m., where a splendid reception will be given him.

All those who wish a copy of the specially written song "Santa Claus is Coming!" will receive one free of charge by writing to the "Shopper," T. EATON CO., Ltd., Toronto.

Bring Out All the Kiddies to See Santa

The Newmarket Era, November 20, 1914

Santa Claus Arrives (TO-DAY) Friday, Nov. 20

In the Gorgeous Car of Icicles and Silver Shells, Jangling Bells and Festoons of Gold, with Band playing and Banners waving, Santa Claus will make his Royal Entrance on Friday, November 20th.

He leaves Newmarket at 2 p. m., passing through Aurora about 2.30, getting to Richmond Hill about 3.30, and will stop at Thornhill about 4 o'clock.

If the Weather is Fine, and his Car can make good time, he will stop in each Town for a few Minutes where he will greet the Boys and Girls.

The T. EATON CO., Limited,
TORONTO, CANADA.

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The Newmarket Era, November 12, 1915

Santa Claus Coming.
For the third year in succession the T. Eaton Co. of Toronto are sending Santa Claus and his retinue to Newmarket by way of introducing the Christmas Season. Each year the display excels the previous one, so do not let the kiddies miss this annual treat. The Icicle Car and Band will proceed along Main Street on Friday, Nov. 19th, at 2 p.m., and Aurora at 2.30. See ad. on page 1 for further particulars.

**SANTA CLAUS ARRIVES
ON FRIDAY, NOV. 19TH**

Band Playing, Banners Waving, Plumes Nodding and Bells Jingling, Santa Clause will make a glorious entry this year and will be glad to greet all his little friends (and big ones too) once again.

If his Car makes schedule time, he will stop a few minutes in each town and have his Band Play.

His Great Royal Car of Icicles and Silver Leaves Newmarket on Friday, November 19th, at 2 p. m., getting to Aurora about 2.30 p. m. and to Richmond Hill about 3.30. He will get to Thornhill at 4 o'clock.

He arrives in Toronto on Saturday morning where a reception is tendered to him at Massey Hall by clever children of Toronto. After Monday he will make his headquarters in the Store.

THE T. EATON Co., LIMITED,
TORONTO - CANADA

Articles from the Newmarket Era

December 16, 1927 the Newmarket Era reported that the Town Band was putting on a Santa Parade the next Saturday afternoon to inspire the spirit of Christmas among citizens. The parade, consisting of school children, headed by the band and accompanied by Santa Claus and two or three uniformed assistants was to start at Cane's Factory at 2p.m. and proceed to the Town Hall by way of Huron (Davis Dr.), Main and Timothy Streets with the band proving a one hour program of music to be followed by Santa Claus distributing gifts to the children. Subscriptions were received towards the purchase of 1,000 pounds of candy, as well as other donations. Acting Mayor Lundy will give Santa Claus a civic welcome.

Saturday, December 23, 1927 The Town Band was congratulated on the success of their community effort on behalf of the children of the Town. The sidewalks were lined with people. The band was driven in a sleigh; three clowns were reported to have caused much laughter and were followed by a Christmas float on runners. School boys and automobiles made up the end of the parade.

The Town Hall was overfilled with people as Acting Mayor Lundy gave a big welcome to Santa Claus. The Band played several selections and the children sang Jingle Bells with great delight. Candy was distributed to small children and larger children received lead pencils made in Newmarket as souvenirs of the occasion. It was reported in the Era that 231lbs of candy were distributed to 880 boys and girls, also 300 lead pencils and 300 suckers.

In 1930-31, in order to stimulate a Santa Claus parade in Town, members of Newmarket's First Bugle Band borrowed eight bugles and four drums.

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December 19, 1930

Headline: Greet Santa in Town Hall Saturday

Santy is going to bring Amos and Andy with him in their fresh-air taxi. Children had written in to the paper asking if the Wooden Soldiers, the big white bear, the lame rabbit, Felix the Cat and Puss-in Boots would be back in the parade again.

December 26, 1930

**Headline: Santa Claus Procession Draws a Big Crowd
As Good as a Circus for the Kiddies**

Main Street was almost entirely free of snow, and no one could imagine St. Nick's reindeer lugging his heavy sleigh, not to mention the equally heavy load of presents, over that long stretch of snowless pavement Old St. Nicholas arose to the occasion though, and he and his army of followers, resurrected a four wheeled coach and decorated it with a Christmas tree. And then with his red coated Wooden Soldiers hastily playing, "Hail Hail, the Gang's All Here", Santa and his animal troops proceeded into Town. Directly behind them followed the "Fresh Air Taxicab" with Amos 'n Andy in person, coaxing the dilapidated and rattling old piece up the hill. Trailing along behind Santa and harnessed (?) in on either side by the Town Fire Brigade, were St. Nick's animal friends, including the Big Bear and Little Bear, the Bunny and many more and a few of his Toymakers. The Newmarket Citizens Band brought up the rear of the procession.

December 23, 1932

Headline: Santa Claus Parade, Like Children's Day at Toronto Ex.

Local writer, Golden Glow, reported in her article that Main St. looked like an auto-show or something; motor cars parked on both sides of the street, and all along the side-streets and plenty more up and down – all with children inside, watching eagerly for Santa. The Post Office was full to the doors with children there to keep warm. The Bugle Band was heard and all the folks rushed out of the shops. Over the hill on Main Street came Santa with his escort and the cheering began. The Town Band headed the parade then came Santa Claus on a dray – wonderfully bedecked. Behind the dray was the *R.S.A. Bugle Band. They all looked their part dressed as wooden soldiers. Felix the Cat, Mickey Mouse and the Lion and the Tiger delighted the youngsters.

The Band led the children to the Metropolitan Car Barn where members of the Lions Club and the Town Council, with Santa Claus handed each child a bag filled with two apples, lollipops, and a Dixon lead pencil. The Lions provided 1500 bags and ran short.

*R.S.A. (Rhinehart, Andrews and Smith).

December 13, 1934

Headline: Lions Would Appreciate Christmas Help, Santa Claus Parade Saturday

The Firemen and Amos 'n' Andy Club will treat the youngsters with candy (1500 bunches of suckers) as the parade winds up at the town hall. The Lions Club will also help with the day's entertainment. The Citizens' Band will lead the parade. Santa Claus will follow in state in a Bell Telephone truck made available through the courtesy of C.W. Holmes, manager. There will be 20 costumes in the parade.

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As a result of reduced funds this year, the Lions Club are planning to send baskets to 238 children, compared with 367 last year. While the heads of many families were unemployed last year are working this year, there will be a lot of hardship this Christmas and many children in the vicinity of Newmarket who will not have a bountiful Christmas.

November 27, 1947

Headline: Santa Claus to Visit Newmarket Dec. 13

A Santa Claus parade will be held in Newmarket Saturday, Dec. 13, under the sponsorship of the Newmarket Lions club. The decision followed a discussion at the club meeting Monday night.

Main Street merchants and the industries will be canvassed in the next few days for financial support and a strong response is anticipated. Already offers of floats for the parade have been received and the committee is out to make this year's parade the biggest and bestest ever.

The Lions also have under discussion the possibility of supervising the proposed outdoor arena at Fairy Lake; a minstrel show and an ice show.

December 7, 1950

Headline: Santa Parade Despite Icy Rain, Cold Wind 5,000 Line the Streets

Over 5,000 Newmarket and district parents and children witnessed the Santa Claus parade in Newmarket on Saturday morning despite the drenching rain and sleet which for a time, threatened to wash out the parade entirely.

The parade was sponsored by the merchants of Newmarket as a treat for town and district children, and was directed by the editors of The Era and Express. The parade was financed by contributions from Main St. businessmen.

Close to 2,000 children walked by Santa Claus in the town hall following the parade. Each received a gift of a bunch of suckers, a candy cane and an orange. Participating in the parade were the two town bands, the Citizens' Band and the Newmarket Trumpet Band.