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The History of Santa Claus

(KTNC) -- It is countdown time and Santa knows if you've been naughty or nice but what do we really know about the man in red?

According to Anne Eftland, the U-S Department of Agriculture's historical expert, the first St. Nicholas was a Bishop of Myra in the 4th Century known for giving gifts to the poor. Eftland says most cultures have their own legend of St. Nicholas but it was the Dutch created the Santa Claus that we know in America.

In England he was called Father Christmas. In France he is Papa Noel and in Italy he is Babbo Natale.

The modern version of Santa Claus in the U-S started in 1823 when Clement Clark Moore's "Twas The Night Before Christmas" was published. That is where stockings were hung with care and flying reindeer have children dreaming of sugarplums. We get our first images of Santa in 1863 when Thomas Nast's drawings were published in Harper's Weekly.

In the 1930's, Coca-Cola published images of Santa and that is the image that children hold near and dear today.

Nebraska Radio Network