



# Caroler Chronicle

Edition I

Winter 1998

*Celebrating 20 Years*



To commemorate our 20th anniversary, we are recreating one of our first characters, the Belsnickle. Our early Belsnickle was renamed the Old World Santa by sales representatives who thought it would be easier for people to understand. Twenty years later we are going to try again with this 18th century Pennsylvania Dutch Christmas tradition. The Belsnickle is the opposite of the Christ Kindle (Kris Kringle). His role was to frighten and punish the naughty children. Usually portrayed by a neighbor in outlandish dress of fur, with a bushy beard and a grinning mask, carrying a buggy whip and a sack of treats, the Belsnickle was a frightening sight. Children would tremble in his presence. He would jabber in some unknown tongue as he threw a handful of treats onto the floor. Older children would shyly pick one up. If a boy behaved rudely or was unable to recite a Bible verse, the Belsnickle would snap him across the back with his whip. Small children would hold onto their mothers with fright.





## Candlestick Maker

*Rub-a-dub-dub Three men in a tub  
And how do you think they got there?  
The butcher, the baker, the candle stick-maker  
They all jumped out of a rotten potato!  
Twas enough to make a fish stare.*

The butcher, the baker, so everyone asked where is the candlestick maker! Here he is accompanied by a woman selling candles and children carrying candles.

The candlestick maker was obviously kept very busy before the invention of the oil lamp, gas lamp and finally electricity. It is difficult for us to imagine a world 200 years ago lit only by candles. Our Candlestick Maker is selling candlesticks of brass and tin. He also carries a candelabra in one hand. Of course a candlestick is of no use without a candle, so our candle vendor is following right behind him. The woman selling candles will be dressed in many different styles and colors as will the children holding candles. The Candlestick Makers will all be dressed in the same garb.





## 18th Century Photographer

The 18th century saw photography become a reality. The first successful picture in 1826 required 8 hours of exposure. By 1839 Daguerre reduced the exposure time to one half hour.

"Daguerromania" hit over night. The process was good but expensive, plus the photos could not be duplicated. Many Daguerrotypes taken during the middle of the century survive and can be found in attics and antique shops today. By 1850 there were 77 photographic galleries in NYC, and by 1860 there were 42 photographic establishments along London's Regent Street.

In 1871 Dr. Richard Maddox discovered that gelatin could be used instead of glass as a basis for the photographic plate. This dry plate could be developed much faster. Celluloid developed in the 1860's inspired George Eastman to introduce flexible film in 1884. Four years later he developed the box camera, thus putting photography into the grasp of everyone.

We hope our photographer will put a smile on your face. He is pictured above photographing toddlers on Santa's knee. One toddler will come with each Santa. Others will be available so that you can create your family.

A girl holding a china doll and a boy holding an ark are also seen with Santa. These two toys were perhaps most cherished by the children of the late 1800's. They were frequently kept in a special place and only played with on Sundays.





## The Nurse

In 1837 Florence Nightingale felt God called her to "serve" him, but she was not clear just how she was to do this. Six years later she decided to dedicate herself to works of charity in hospitals. Her family was horrified, as ladies of refinement did not enter hospital work. She became self taught in sanitation and hospital care. In 1853 she accepted her first official position, and in 1854 she assembled a group of 38 women who went to Turkey to nurse soldiers wounded in the Crimean War. Following the war she helped found the Nightingale Training School for nurses and almost single-handedly invented modern nursing and the positive professional image of female nurses.

## Man with Bike

Research shows us that the Chinese gave the bicycle some thought over 1,000 years ago, but it wasn't until the late 1800's that the bicycle really caught on. This type of bicycle, called a "safety," set off a bicycle boom which resulted in more bicycles per capita in the U.S. than we have today. Certainly it was a viable alternative to a horse.



# Salvation Army

As much as the world around us continues to change, one wonderful thread continues to weave its way through the human spirit - the spirit of giving. In 1992, Byers' Choice started the Salvation Army line to capture that spirit and to give back at the same time, with five percent of all Salvation Army sales going directly to support their service programs. Since 1992 Byers' Choice has been able to donate \$317,569 with the help of collectors. The Army uses these and other funds to counsel, feed, clothe, house and teach life skills to millions of people all year round.

The Salvation Army piece for 1998 is a Man with Tuba dressed in his Army uniform.

The Salvation Army isn't the only way the the extended Byers' Family gives back to the community. During this holiday season the employees at Byers' Choice will provide meals to those in need. They will adopt local Bucks County families, making sure each child gets a gift, piece of clothing or item they have wished for. In the lobby of the Gallery and Emporium, there is an old-fashioned sleigh filled with gifts and toys brought in by collectors to be donated to needy children. The spirit of giving - catch it!



# The Prince

Nutcracker and the King of the Mice was written by E.T.A. Hoffman in his native tongue, German, in 1816. Subsequently there have been many translations & interpretations. We used the description for our prince found in *The Best Tales of Hoffman* (Dover Publications, Inc., 1967). It reads in part, "A very small but very handsome young gentleman. His little face was red & white; he had a beautiful red coat trimmed with gold lace, white stockings and shoes, with a lovely bouquet of flowers in his shirt frill. He was beautifully fringed and powdered, and had a magnificent queue hanging down his back. The little sword at his side seemed to be made entirely of jewels, it sparkled & shone so, and the little hat under his arm was woven of flocks of silk."





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