



## Santa Claus Oath

I will seek knowledge to be well versed in the mysteries of bringing Christmas cheer and good will to all the people that I encounter in my journeys and travels.

I shall be dedicated to hearing the secret dreams of both children and adults.

I understand that the true and only gift I can give, as Santa, is myself.

I acknowledge that some of the requests I will hear will be difficult and sad. I know in these difficulties there lies an opportunity to bring a spirit of warmth, understanding and compassion.

I know the "real reason for the season" and know that I am blessed to be able to be a part of it.

I realize that I belong to a brotherhood and will be supportive, honest and show fellowship to my peers.

I promise to use "my" powers to create happiness, spread love and make fantasies come to life in the true and sincere tradition of the Santa Claus Legend.

I pledge myself to these principles as a descendant of St. Nicholas the gift giver of Myra.

-Phillip L. Wenz

### About the Oath

The eight principles that make up the Santa Claus Oath were written with the ideals of what portraying Santa should be about. Authored by professional Santa, Phillip L. Wenz, the Oath was inspired by the lives of the two most prolific Santa Claus actors of the 20th century: Charles W. Howard of Albion, New York and Raymond "Jim" Yellig of Santa Claus, Indiana. Upon writing the Santa Claus Oath and publishing it to numerous Santa Claus group websites, the document was adopted by nearly every Santa Claus organization and individual Santa portrayal in the world.

The Santa Claus Oath was dedicated in October 2008 with great pleasure and historical significance. The grandsons of Charles W. Howard and Jim Yellig met in the round room of the historic Candy Castle in Santa Claus, Indiana, where their grandfathers had met 70 years prior. Will Koch, Jim Yellig's grandson and Charles Bergeman, Charles W. Howard's grandson, represented their families and their famous grandfathers by recording the first signatures to the Santa Claus Oath. Mrs. Pat Koch, Jim Yellig's daughter, witnessed the ceremonially signing.

In March of 2009 at the Santa Claus Convention in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, the Santa Claus Oath was presented for the first time in public to the Santa Claus community. At the convention, over 650 Santas, Mrs. Clauses and helpers recited in unison the Oath's eight principles. After the Convention, a traveling ceremony was created for Santa groups to use at their regional gatherings. The Traveling Santa Claus Oath Ceremony has been to 37 cities in the United States and to four other countries; Canada, Denmark, Great Britain, and Australia. Along with the traveling ceremony, an official Santa Claus Oath Book was created to hold the thousands of signatures from these events.

On November 6, 2010, dozens of professional Santas came from across North America to the Candy Castle in Santa Claus, Indiana to encapsulate the Santa Claus Oath Book. The Santa Claus Oath's historic journey had taken nearly two years with over 3,100 Santas and Mrs. Clauses in the signatory. Though the collection of signatures has been completed, the Santa Claus Oath will continue to be recited and pledged by Santa and Mrs. Claus portrayers at local, regional, and global meetings, along with Santa Schools and at Santa Conventions.

Included in the pages of the Oath Book are the origins of the Oath, Jim Yellig dedication and bio, Charles W. Howard dedication and bio, a memorial for outstanding Santas of the past, the story of the first Santa Claus group, the story of the first Santa Claus convention and subsequent conventions, the Santa Claus prayer, "What Matters" poem, Oath title page, October 2008 Oath dedication, the signed Oath page by the two grandsons, witness page, Charles W. Howard's historic Santa Claus School information, Santa Claus, Indiana history and ambassador page, Candy Castle history, the Oath committee roster, traveling Oath information, Santa Claus Hall of Fame charter members' bios, a dedication to the Santas of the world, historical overview of St. Nicholas and how St. Nicholas became Santa, title page for signatory and the signature pages, custodianship of the Santa Claus Oath Foundation, and a commentary by the Oath's author.

Through research and documentation, the Oath has linked Santa Claus' first visit to a dry goods store, J.W. Parkinson's in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1841, to the first known department Santa, James Edgar in 1890, and to the meeting of the Legendary Santas, Jim Yellig and Charles W. Howard in 1938. By the signing of the Oath by Will Koch, Jim Yellig's grandson and Charles Bergeman, Charles W. Howard's grandson in 2008, the Santa Claus Oath has connected the past with the present.

In the year 2035, twenty five years from the encapsulation date, a new generation of Santas will be given the Santa Claus Oath Book to open. This date will correspond with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the Candy Castle and the Santa Claus statue, both in Santa Claus, Indiana, along with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of Jim Yellig organizing the Santa Claus American Legion to answer Santa letters and Charles W. Howard's first year as a department store Santa. All four of these things happened in 1935.

On Saturday November 3, 2035, a set of instructions will be opened and enacted. The Santa Claus Oath and Book will once again be re-dedicated to Jim Yellig, Charles W. Howard, and all those who pass on the loving traditions of the Legend of Santa Claus. After the ceremony, new signatures and information will be added for one calendar year. Then the Oath Book will be resealed for another period of years. This program has been worked out and legally planned to insure the proper transfer of the Santa Claus Oath and the supporting documentation over time.

It is the hope that the new generations of Santa and Mrs. Claus portrayers from years yet to come will embrace their Santa tradition's history and the endowment of the Santa Claus Oath from the thousands of signers and the many supporters of the Oath from the current generation of Santas and Mrs. Clauses.

### **Santa Claus Coat of Arms**

A historically accurate symbol for the Oath was created with the goals of developing a Coat of Arms that represent the Santa Claus History and Legend. The eight elements of the Santa Claus Oath Coat of Arms are the Shield, SC Letters, Crossed Candy Canes, Traditional Symbols of Saint Nicholas, Reindeer, Grapevines, Banner and the Colors. Each element represents the following:

Shield - The shield shape is consistent with the time of Saint Nicholas.

**Symbols** - The letters S and C represent the name of Santa Claus. The candy canes symbolize the two legendary Santas, Charles Howard and Jim Yellig. The canes are crossed as Yellig's and Howard's paths crossed only once. The lower part of the shield has the three acknowledged symbols of Saint Nicholas, the miter (bishop's hat) the crosier (shepherds staff) and three gold coins, representing the gold given to provide dowries to impoverished maidens.

**Reindeer** - There are two reindeer that flank the shield. One reindeer represents traditional bearded Santas and the other represents real bearded Santas. The reindeer have come together in unity to uphold the shield and uphold their pledge to the Santa Claus Oath.

**Grapevines** - At the top and bottom of the shield and reindeer there are grapevines. The grapevines are an ancient symbol for the thirst and quest of knowledge.

**Banner** - Completing the Coat of Arms is a banner with "Santa Claus Oath" on it.

**Colors** - The colors of the Santa Claus Coat of Arms are the traditional Christian colors of Christmas. Red is for the blood of Christ, green is for the eternal life in Christ and gold is for Christ the Divine.

### **Copyrights**

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### **Santa Claus Oath Foundation**

As the author of the Santa Claus Oath and a premiere historian of the Santa Claus Legend, Phillip L. Wenz has been asked to consult on numerous projects in the television, film, literature, and media industries. In 2009, he developed the Santa Claus Oath Foundation to make his research materials and collections available to more people, companies, and organizations, including the Santa Claus community itself.

### **Mission Statement**

The Santa Claus Oath Foundation is an establishment specializing in the preservation and perpetuation of the Santa Claus Oath, the Santas of the past, Santa history, and Santa artifacts as a chronological part of the Legend of Santa Claus to educate the current and future generations of those who are or will be a Santa Claus in the tradition of St. Nicholas the gift giver of Myra.

### **Synopsis**

The Santa Claus Oath Foundation is a private non-governmental entity that derives its funds from private sources with a principle purpose of the studying, collecting, and archiving of the history, memorabilia, props, artifacts, and folklore of the Santa Claus Legend. The Foundation acts as a research and historical alliance with the general Santa Claus community to spread available resources throughout the community by special events and seminars.

Any gifts, offerings, seminars, and events are presented to individual people or organizations and are at the sole discretion of the Santa Claus Oath Foundation. Loans of memorabilia displays and/or artifacts to museums or groups will be reviewed on a case by case basis. A formal and binding written agreement will be used in all matters.

## **Funding**

The funding of the Santa Claus Oath Foundation is solely from the personal finances of the principle individuals and their companies, which are privately held. No monies are or will be accepted from any individual Santa actor or related industry organization. The Foundation will at all times stay free and clear of the Santa Claus Community in all of its financial dealings.

## **Assets**

The Santa Claus Oath Foundation's Memorabilia and Archives are assets are privately and physically held in central Illinois by Santa Claus Productions and are registered possessions, belongings, and resources by Phillip L. Wenz with a private insurance provider and a State of Illinois recognized appraisal institution. Historical documentation has been provided to the State of Illinois, along with the Library of Congress numbers, if applicable, to copyrighted and published materials. The archives and memorabilia are not on display for public viewing. Viewing is by appointment only. A complete list of archives and memorabilia is cataloged with documentation. Finances, insurance, appraised values of assets, and chain of custodianship are on file with legal counsel in the State of Illinois. Absolutely at no time is any part of the memorabilia or achieves for sale.

## **Origins**

The holdings are a result of more than 35 years of research, collecting, and being given special access to numerous archival materials of private individuals and companies. The holdings also include a substantial individual collection of artifacts from Santa's Village theme park in Dundee, Illinois along with the personal career materials and research notes of Phillip L. Wenz. The achieves also includes numerous audio, video, and musical assets in many types of mediums.

## **Holdings**

The following list is only a very small portion of the archives and memorabilia holdings. There are many one of a kind and rare items.

Santa Claus Oath assets include copyrights of literature, usages, and images; signed and original numbered Oath documents; profile biographies overviews; custodianship of Oath Book with over 3,100 unique signatures; original and copyrighted videos; original 1938 Howard and Yellig in Santa Claus, Indiana materials, original 1935 bricks from the Candy Castle signed in 2008 by Oath Dedication participants.

Charles W. Howard's scrapbook micro-films, original Christmas Park materials, original Santa Claus School materials, numerous photographs and film resources. Jim Yellig research materials include over 70 newspaper and magazine articles, film resources, photos, and personal letters. Candy Castle includes historic documentations from the 1930s to current, Millers & Rhoads Department Store's public relations archives of Christmas and Santa promotions, which include inter negatives, ad layouts, scripts for lunch with Santa, commercials, and radio spots, the 1994 remake of Miracle on 34th Street includes scripts, background material, photos, location shoot guide, and footage. Numerous materials on Santa Doug Mellor and Santa Robert George. Department store profiles of Santa programs from Macys, Gimbles, Marshall Fields, PA Bergners, Carsons, Dillards, Foleys to mention a few, along with Santa Parade documentations of New York, Los Angeles, Detroit, Houston, Toronto, Philadelphia, and Chicago, along with Peoria, IL, the oldest Santa Claus parade. Plus numerous "Santa" theme parks and related attractions materials and memorabilia.

Numerous historical costumes and costume patterns with documentations. A comprehensive study of the evolution of Santa Claus costuming, hair-goods, props, sales materials, specification sheets and the manufactures that produced them. Electronic media includes an extensive video library of historic Santa Claus and Christmas related movies, newsreel, films, commercials, and television programs dating from the late 1920s to current. The audio library includes records, piano reels, CDs, and tapes with over 150 different album productions. Various advertisements that use Santa Claus as a "spokesperson" that were first published in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and advertisements that span the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

The collection also includes rare Christmas books, Santa stories, magazines that date to the 18th and 19th centuries, and numerous "Coca Cola" Santa research materials. More research documents include Santa's family tree dating back to the Norse Gods traditions to St. Nicholas to current legends, numerous Christmas cook books (over 100), antique and new cookie cutters and Christmas tins, extensive research on "photo companies" and Santa dating back to the late 1940s to current, along with working documentation of major shopping malls and Santa's role in them. Other materials include many boxes and file cabinets documenting numerous local Santas from different regions of the US, Canada, Europe, and Australia.

### **Santa's Village Illinois Archives**

The current archival holdings are without doubt the most complete historical documentation of the Dundee Santa's Village. The archives include certified copies of the original corporation charter of Santa's Village Corporation (California) of 1954, the 1956 addition of the Scotts Valley Santa's Village, Santa's Village Corporation business plan, the original 1958 lease for the 38 acres of the Dundee park, the amendments of the Polar Dome Project, the sale of the park to Everding Management, the sale to the Medina Investors, and the sale to North Pole Corporation. Documentations from the attempted purchase by North Pole Village, L.L.C., the auction of 2006 and the complete list of buyers who bought the assets. Other holdings include the Park's original blue prints; the foreman's working blue prints, the Polar Dome prints, Snowball ride prints (Arrow Development), the Antique Cars prints (Arrow Development), the 1966 redevelopment prints for the Polar Dome, and each sequential addition prints, plus the listing of key management, contractors, entertainers, and employees. (Note: Any and all information on pertaining to management, contractor, entertainers or employees of Santa's Village is used in the historical context only.)

The visual archives include over 12,000 individual images of Santa's Village from the ground breaking of September 1958 to current photographs taken in July of 2008, complete sets of the 1959, 1963, and 1972 post card series (plus the inter-negatives that produced them), film footage from 1958 through 2006 including 1958's ground breaking, Santa's make-up test shots, opening day activities, the inflating of the Polar Dome, opening of the Dome activities, 1963-1966 ice shows, park commercials from 1963, 1966, 1968, 1970, 1971, 1973, 1975, 1978, 1980, 1981, 1983, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2005.

Public relations footage filmed for various promotions (group sales, picnic videos, etc), newspaper articles dating from 1958 to 2007, over 5,000 slides, park presentations, complete sets of brochures 1959-2003, park fun guides 1985-2003, aerial photo mapping pictures 1959, 1963, 1969, 1972, 1978, 1983, 1989, and 1994. Complete public relations archives including, image negatives, press photos, promotional partners, press releases, media kits, media coverage, interviews, stationary, business cards and artworks. Other visuals include numerous park photographs of the Sky Forest, California Park and the Scotts Valley, California Park, a 1963 feature film "Santa's Village" that was filmed at the Scotts Valley, California Park and three K. Gordon Murray featurettes that were filmed at the Dundee Park in 1964 and 1965. Audio archives include radio spots from 1966-2005.

The collection includes some of the most hard to find Santa's Village memorabilia such as Park originals as the complete Santa's House (ownership) and props (chair, good book desk, sleigh bed, side tables, Santa's sleigh, etc), the Frozen North Pole, large pocket watch, numerous 1959 park murals and signage. Rare items including the one of a kind Mrs. Claus' Candy Kitchen static display, cookie cutters, logo candy boxes, weighted rolling pin and the Santa's Village Cookbook that was used at all three parks. Other originals include a complete Pixie costume, Santa Sac burlap bag, reindeer puppet from the Wee Puppet Theatre, "In search of Santa" a Santa's Village adventure book and numerous early logo items such a tea candle holders, view master reels, plates, cups, post cards, shirts and elf hats. Coloring books, maps, games, felt boards, pennants, Santa's Helper pins and private photographs, all from the years 1959 through 1962.

The collection continues with Polar Dome items such as 1963 skating programs, ice hockey programs, logo hats and shirts. The 1963 through 1969 memorabilia includes series number two post cards, letters from Santa, new maps with the Polar Dome and traditional logo items such as park coloring books, hats and shirts. Rare items include a complete set of Pixie Pantry menus and Gingerbread House display props. The 1970s and 1980s brought new items such as logo salt and pepper shakers, mugs, series three post cards, shirts, hats and coffee cups. The 1990's had logo playing cards, shirts, hats and shot glasses.

### **Santa's Village Illinois Achieves continued**

The collection includes numerous era pieces besides the preceding items. Other Items include employee uniforms - coats, shirts, hats, name tags and handbooks from different eras. Logo - stationary, envelopes, business cards, folders and ink stamps, a complete set of park stationary that starts in 1959 through 2005, Santa Suits - 1959 Santa Suit worn by the park's original Santa, James L. Combs and the last Santa Suits worn at the park by Phillip L. Wenz.

#### **About Oath Dedicattee Raymond "Jim" Yellig**

"The Real Santa from Santa Claus" Santa Claus, Indiana 1894-1984

One of the most beloved and legendary Santas of all time, Raymond Joseph Yellig (better known to his friends as Jim), was known as the "Real Santa" from Santa Claus, Indiana. Born in the small village of Mariah Hill, just a few miles north of Santa Claus, Yellig would become the face of Santa Claus, Indiana, for 54 years. Yellig appeared at Santa's Candy Castle and Santa Claus Town, the nation's first themed attraction, in the late 1930s. He answered children's letters sent to the Santa Claus Post Office. A World War I veteran and an active Legionnaire, Yellig added to his fame by appearing in American Legion Christmas parades in New York City, Miami, Los Angeles and Philadelphia. In 1946, Yellig became the resident Santa at Santa Claus Land, the world's first theme park. A position he held for 38 years. No Santa before or since has had as many children visit him in person as Jim Yellig.

#### **About Oath Dedicattee Charles W. Howard**

"Dean of Santa Clauses" Albion, New York 1896-1966

Charles W. Howard's professional career is that of a legend. He first played Santa as a boy in a classroom play. As an adult he found himself asked to help out a friend and play Santa in a store front window in downtown Albion. This experience helped Howard's urge to perfect the role of Santa Claus as much as he could. In his early career Howard caught the train next to his farm in Albion and commuted to Rochester and then Buffalo to be Santa in department stores. It was about this time he started to develop the idea for a "school" for Santas. Howard's first school was in the fall of 1937. Howard also appeared in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade from 1948 through 1965. Oddly, he never worked as Santa in the New York City flagship store. From 1948-1964, Howard flew from New York City to Kansas City, Missouri to be the Santa at the Macy's store there. In 1965, his last Christmas season, Howard worked at Nieman Marcus in Dallas, Texas.

#### **About Oath Author Phillip L. Wenz**

"Santa from Santa's Village" Dundee, Illinois 1962-Current

If ever there was a man born to be Santa Claus it is Phillip L. Wenz. As a four-year-old child, he donned his first Santa outfit. By the time he was fourteen he was in his first parade and at the ripe old age of twenty-three, he became the year-round Santa Claus for the iconic Santa's Village Theme Park in Dundee, Illinois. It is an association he has now had for more than twenty-five years. Wenz has appeared in nationally televised parades in Chicago and Houston, in TV commercials, and at some of the nation's largest corporate and civic holiday events. His resume also includes work in Santa Claus, Indiana at the historic Candy Castle, consulting on Christmas programs, and being a published author. He is considered a leading authority and historian on the Santa Claus legend, history, and folklore. Wenz is, bar none, one of the most experienced Santas in the world and is the creator of the Santa Claus Oath, which is widely accepted by Santa portrayers across the globe.

### **Privacy, Confidentiality, and Contact Information**

At times, during the course of extensive research, subject information may reveal material and evidence that is considered private, business related or of a family nature. The Santa Claus Oath Foundation fully respects the rights of privacy and confidentiality in these issues and matters. Employment, business, and personal records in the Santa Claus Oath Foundation's possession are being held with the strictest level of confidence with regards to privacy for all that are concerned. Information on these records is available to only those whose business or family it may pertain to. All questions, inquires, and requests must be submitted in writing and sent by e-mail. Please contact the Santa Claus Oath Foundation at [santaclausoath@msn.com](mailto:santaclausoath@msn.com) or visit [www.SantaClausOath.com](http://www.SantaClausOath.com)