

Merrimac Santa Parade Committee

The first Merrimac Santa Parade was in 1949 and was a very short parade. It consisted of a small car, a few marchers and a trailer with Santa and his sleigh decorated with greens. The parade started at Kimball's barn located to the left of Skip's, went to the square and back.

Sometime around 1952 or 1953, masonite reindeer were added to the sleigh. The early 50's also brought the annual Christmas Eve ride into being. Only once, in the late 50's was the ride cancelled due to road conditions.

The mid 60's brought the eight reindeer as we know them today and a dedicated trailer for the float was acquired. In 1989 a ninth reindeer was added, as there are 8 reindeer plus Rudolph.

As mentioned, the Christmas parades started in 1949 and went to 1971 when they were discontinued due to the high cost to run. Bands used to come if you provided a bus and a meal at the end of the parade, usually a ham and bean supper. 1984 brought back the parade that we all enjoy today.

Funds needed to run a parade (bands, costumes, specialty units), to decorate the square and fire station, and to up keep the sleigh and reindeer are running approximately \$15,000 a year. Present fund raisers include the annual golf tournament, Kelly Miller circus, Old Home Days duck race and food concession, and support from our annual request for donations.

Organization and planning of the parade and fundraising events is a year round job and new members are always welcome. The Santa Committee wishes to thank you for supporting the fundraisers, participation in the parade or being a spectator. Without all of you, we would not be able to accomplish the things that we do.