

BETHINKING OF OLDE ORLEANS VOL. XXXII, NO. 50 SANTA AT WORK

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Our photo shown here was taken in 1959 at the Arnold Gregory Memorial Hospital in Albion. Charles W. Howard (1896-1966), dressed like Santa Claus, visits Paul Reiferson who was sick at the time (December 1959). We see that Santa has delighted the ailing child with innumerable gifts bringing the magical dreams of Christmas into reality.

This picture epitomizes the humanistic persona that Charles Howard lived by example. Paul Reiferson was the youngest child of five who died in 1961 at Children's Hospital in Buffalo. Knowing that Paul could not celebrate Christmas like most children Charlie went to the hospital to brighten up his life.

The Charles W. Howard Day celebrated back in September was a tribute to



the many humanistic gestures given so freely by him. A little known plaque in Howard's honor is located at Swan Library. It

came in April 1979 following the Village of Albion Sesquicentennial. The plaque states: "Macy's Presents to the

People of Albion, NY 1828-1878. In Honor of 'Santa Claus' Charles Howard creator of Santa Claus School and Christmas Park Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade Santa Claus For his Contributions to the advance of the Eternal Spirit of Christmas as the Magical Dreams of Childhood."

Indeed a Christmas time never goes by when those of us who knew Charlie Howard always remember him so fondly as we sat on his lap and truly believed he was Santa.

In hind sight no one who every portrayed Santa ever did it more convincingly than Charles W. Howard. His visage was very believable but the true essence ran much deeper as our picture gives evidence to the real heart and soul of Santa Claus.