

The First Rudolph



Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer was invented in 1939 as a holiday promotion for Montgomery Ward. You can look it up. What you *can't* look up because the department store successfully kept it quiet (till now) is the fact that Rudolph was originally cast as a bellicose elephant whose trunk spat terrible fire upon his enemies, such as Richard Sears, Alvah Roebuck, and James C. Penney. Fearing that such a concept wouldn't resonate with its target audience of youthful consumers, Montgomery Ward's marketing department shortened the ears, changed his snout from incendiary to incandescent, and halved Rudolph's memory to 10 megabytes. While the resulting animal was free of controversy, Santa Claus vastly preferred the prototype, which to this day he keeps at his North Pole office and brings out when he needs to throw a scare into any really naughty children.