



# **A Mile of Make-Believe: A History of the Eaton's Santa Claus Parade**

*Steve Penfold*

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*A Mile of Make Believe* examines the unique history of the Santa Claus parade in Canada. This volume focuses on the Eaton's sponsored parades that occurred in Toronto, Montreal and Winnipeg as well as the shorter-lived parades in Calgary and Edmonton. There is also a discussion of small town alternatives, organized by civic groups, service clubs, and chambers of commerce.

By focusing on the pioneering effort of the Eaton's department store Steve Penfold argues that the parade ultimately represented a paradoxical form of cultural power: it allowed Eaton's to press its image onto public life while also reflecting the decline of the once powerful retailer. Penfold's analysis reveals the "corporate fantastic" – a visual and narrative mix of meticulous organization and whimsical style– and its influence on parade traditions. Steve Penfold's considerable analytical skills have produced a work that is simultaneously a cultural history, history of business and commentary on consumerism. Professional historians and the general public alike would be remiss if this wasn't on their holiday wish list.

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