

# Santa's Sack Stocking

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Now that I'm retired, I've had the chance to revisit some of my vintage toy patterns, created back when I was regularly designing toys for craft shows and shops, as well as for a series of articles and books. It's been lots of fun, too.

Just as I do now, I loved making Christmas stockings back then, and I designed a series of specialty socks based on the image of Santa opening his sack. (In addition to Santa, there were also an elf, a cat, a teddy bear, and a pig; the cat and elf below were made back when.)



Long ago, I made a Santa for a friend's little daughter. She's now grown up with a baby daughter of her own, and reports that the Santa stocking finally gave out after years of use (Her mom may have laundered it; unfortunately, felt doesn't stand up to regular laundering. Stockings made with felt should

always be drycleaned, should they ever need to be cleaned. )

I decided to surprise her with a replacement stocking, so last week I made one of my Santa sacks -- for the first time in decades.

This time around, I used red pinwale corduroy for the body, and made the beard from a piece of upholstery fabric with a textured nap. I assembled the face using traditional applique on the sewing machine, just as I did for the original. This time, though, I made the eyes using the embroidery machine, then sewed them to the face before finishing the stocking. The embroidery is a luxury I didn't have back in the old days, and I must say I like the effect.



When I showed the finished Santa sack to my friend, she asked me to make two for her. Since I also wanted to make an additional one for my own Christmas decor, I ended up making three more after finishing this first one.

As an interesting embroidery-related twist, I had only enough of the textured upholstery fabric left to make the two stockings for my friend, so I needed to figure out an alternative for my own version. I wanted some texture in the beard, and initially tried a couple of different fur fabrics, but they were too fuzzy and overwhelmed the face. What to do?

Then it occurred to me that I could digitize the beard and face as an embroidery design, incorporating a quilted effect on felt to give the texture I wanted for the beard.

I sized the design according to the original pattern template, then backed the felt with a light fleece and stitched the whole thing in my largest hoop.



All I can say is WOW -- I just love the way this embroidered version turned out!

The light quilting gives just the right amount of texture to the beard, and the eyes and eyebrows look great.

I finished up the final stocking for my own decor, and I must say I'm so tickled that I may have to make a few more just for the pleasure of stitching this design!

One of the satisfactions of doing your own digitizing is that you can create just the design you need, just when you need it. I just love that.