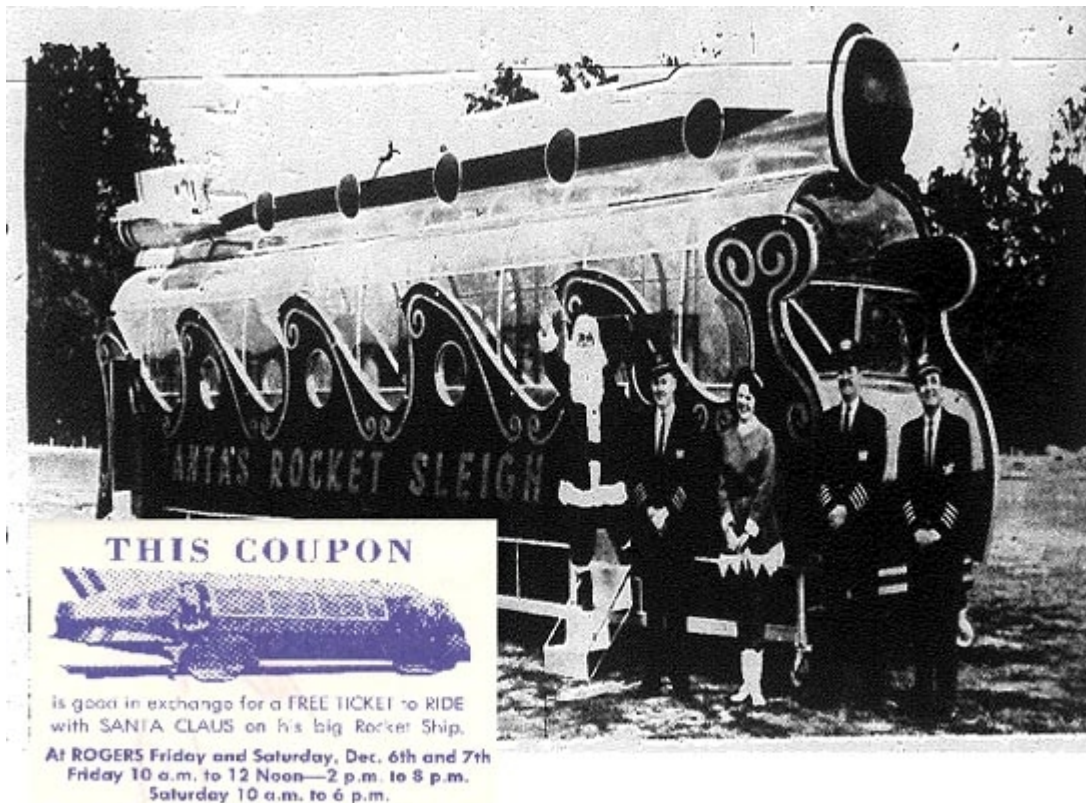


Photo of the Month

Christmas in July: A Look Back at Santa's Rocket

By: Nathan Redman, Research Assistant



Santa's Rocket Sleigh coupon courtesy of Debbie Lynch.
Rogers Historical Museum

In October of 1957 the Soviet Union launched the world's first man-made satellite, Sputnik 1, which marked the starting point of a space race that would last the next decade and a half. By 1962 the world was in a space frenzy as the United States and the Soviet Union entered the race for the moon. References to space can be found throughout the American popular culture of the 1960s, from children's cartoons such as "The Jetsons" to "Tang," the world's first space-age beverage.

It seemed that everyone was taking part in the space-race, even Santa Clause was trading in his reindeer for rockets. During the 1960's Santa visited Rogers several times in his "Super Rocket." The Progressive Merchants Association funded Santa's Operation, and with a free coupon from one of the participating businesses, children could board Santa's space age sleigh and ride around Frisco Park during the holiday season.

The original super rocket was 42 feet long, 8 feet wide, made of aluminum, trimmed in red and blue, and proudly flying the official flags of the North Pole. It was equipped with a full crew, seating for 65, and a speaker system to listen to Santa. As is typical of the space race, by 1964 Santa had the brand new upgraded Rocket Sleigh pictured in this photograph from the Rogers Democrat December 2, 1964. Inset

in the corner of the photo is a scan of a coupon for a ticket for one free ride with Santa in his ship; this coupon was recently donated to the museum by Debbie Lynch.