



# Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer: An American Hero

*Ronald D. Lankford Jr.*

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## **Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer: An American Hero** Ronald D. Lankford Jr.

Ronald D. Lankford has written the definitive history of this iconic and much-loved Christmas character. Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer was the creation of Robert May, a staff copywriter who wrote the original poem as a Montgomery Ward Christmas giveaway in 1939. More than 2.4 million copies were printed and given away that holiday season. Thus the legend began. Johnny Marks adapted the poem into what would become the Gene Autry hit “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer,” which instantly became—and still remains—one of the most popular Christmas songs of all time. The legend of Rudolph soared even higher with the Rankin/Bass stop-motion television special in 1964, which has gone on to inspire a cottage industry of toys and decorative items. In this festive and informed look at the most famous reindeer of all, Lankford discusses all of Rudolph’s iterations, including comic books, sequels, advertising tie-ins, movies, and much more. Lankford has produced the first complete history of Rudolph that both celebrates and explains the undying popularity of Rudolph and his friends. The result is both a glowing tribute and a rigorously researched biography that will appeal to fans and lovers of classic American holiday culture.

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