

**BROCKTON, 1934
BOOK 586, PAGE 167**

JAMES EDGAR

DEPARTMENT STORE SANTA TRADITION BEGAN IN BROCKTON

James Edgar, an immigrant from Edinburgh, Scotland, opened Edgar's Department Store on Main Street in Brockton on property owned by the Howard family. He had previously dressed as a sea captain, clown and George Washington to entertain the children of shoppers. In December 1890, he dressed up as Santa Claus based on a popular illustration of a jolly Santa drawn in 1863 by the famous cartoonist Thomas Nast. Edgar did not intend for this to be a commercial attraction. He did it for the enjoyment of the children and to promote Christmas. It began the tradition of the department store Santa Claus. Within days trains from as far away as Boston and Providence brought families and their children to downtown Brockton to see Santa. The idea quickly transferred to department stores around the country and continues to this day. A city park is named for him remembering his generosity to Brockton and its children.

Compliments of Register of Deeds John R. Buckley, Jr.
and Brian W. Morse

From the "Plymouth County Registry of Deeds Notable Land Records Collection"