

Mary's Velvet Rose

March 2023

ASSOCIATION OF LINCOLN PRESENTERS

December 2023



Mary Christmas Present



Victorian Christmas Trees

Christmas trees have been around in some form or another for centuries. But the modern version of the Christmas tree and Christmas decorations apparently originated in Germany. People would go to the huge fir forests in Germany and cut off the tops of the trees for their Christmas celebrations.

Queen Victoria's Christmas tree established traditions of a fir tree to be decorated for Christmas. They became so popular that they began to be sold commercially in the 1850s. President Franklin Pierce is credited with bringing the first Christmas tree to the White House in 1856. Concerns about over-harvesting in both America and Germany resulted in the invention of artificial trees such as feather trees, and in tree farms (first established in 1901).

Decorations on the tree were mostly all homemade and included strings of bright berries, small bouquets of

paper flowers, strings of beads, tiny flags of gay ribbons, stars and shields of gilt paper, lace bags filled with colored candies, and knots of bright ribbons. A German newspaper in Allentown, PA, dated

December 15, 1869: "Christmas rosettes. Rosettes are the loveliest decoration for a Christmas tree and are being used more and more each year. Two to three dozen suffice to do a rather large tree. They can be used year after year. The price is thirty cents a dozen."

Tiny candles were wired to the tree. Long pieces of fine wire were passed through the taper at the bottom, and these clasped over the stem of each branch, and twisted together underneath. Great care was taken that there should be a clear space above each wick, that nothing might catch fire.

~ Mark your calendar ~
Association of Lincoln Presenters Conference
Dayton, Ohio ~ April 25 -28, 2024.

Teena Baldrige has planned a great conference for ALP members. Thursday evening after dinner we will test our knowledge of products that were produced during the Civil War. Friday we will have a relaxing day listening to 4 dynamic speakers about Lincoln. Saturday is our Mary Lincoln luncheon at the Dayton Woman's Club with a first person presentation of a Civil War nurse and then our own MaryAnne Mathews will give a short history of the hammered dulcimer and play some tunes. That afternoon Holly Ray will show us how to craft Victorian era earrings from acorns!!

Then a buffet dinner and a show on Saturday night.

*This year after the silent auction there will be a consignment sale.

Members can sell extra costume items that they no longer wear or want. Cost – 75% of the item to the owner and 25% to the association.



The schedule, registration forms and information has been sent to President John Cooper to be uploaded and available on our website early in the New Year. Please make time to be with your friends and colleagues at the annual Association of Lincoln Presenters Conference.



New Mary Lincoln Patch

There is a new patch just for Mary Lincoln members of the ALP. We have Dianne Broski and Joan Howard to thank because they paid for the cost of the new patches.

All Mary members of the ALP will receive one for free at the Mary Lincoln luncheon at the 2024 conference.

After that the patches are \$5 each and the proceeds will go into the ALP general fund.

Victorian Era Christmas Cards

The Victorian era, spanning from 1837 to 1901, was a time of profound cultural, social, and industrial changes. One of the most charming aspects of this era was the emergence and popularization of Christmas cards. As the Industrial Revolution transformed society, the tradition of sending Christmas greetings through intricately designed cards became a hallmark of the holiday season.

Origins of Victorian Christmas Cards

The practice of exchanging Christmas cards gained momentum during the Victorian era, influenced by various factors.

Sir Henry Cole, a key figure in the establishment of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, is often credited with commissioning the first commercial Christmas card in 1843. With limited time to write individual Christmas greetings, he collaborated with artist John Callcott Horsley to design a card featuring a festive scene that could be mass-produced. The design depicted a Victorian family raising a toast, accompanied by a charitable message encouraging recipients to help the poor. This early Christmas card set the stage for the widespread adoption of the tradition, blending festive imagery with social consciousness.



Designs and Themes

Victorian Christmas cards featured a diverse range of designs and themes, reflecting the cultural and aesthetic sensibilities of the time. Many cards showcased scenes of snowy landscapes, idyllic villages, and festive gatherings, capturing the romanticized vision of Christmas popularized by writers such as Charles Dickens.

Religious motifs were also prevalent, with depictions of nativity scenes, angels, and biblical references adorning many cards. The Victorian era was a time when the celebration of Christmas was undergoing a revival, and these cards played a role in reinforcing and spreading the festive spirit.

Elaborate ornamentation, intricate lacework, and vibrant colors were characteristic of Victorian Christmas card designs. The cards were often adorned with embossed patterns, gilded edges, and delicate die-cut shapes, making them not only a means of communication but also cherished keepsakes.

Cultural Significance

Victorian Christmas cards were more than just festive greetings; they reflected the values and sentiments of the era. The exchange of these cards became a social ritual, symbolizing goodwill and strengthening personal connections. As the postal system improved and postage rates lowered, sending and receiving Christmas cards became accessible to a broader segment of society.

Legacy and Modern Resurgence

While the Victorian era officially ended in 1901, the tradition of sending Christmas cards persisted and evolved over the years. The influence of Victorian designs can still be seen in modern Christmas cards, with many contemporary cards featuring nostalgic or vintage-inspired themes.

In conclusion, Victorian age Christmas cards are a charming reflection of a bygone era's festive spirit. These intricate and sentimental greetings not only captured the essence of the Victorian Christmas but also laid the foundation for the enduring tradition of sending cards during the holiday season. As we continue to exchange greetings in the digital age, the legacy of Victorian Christmas cards lives on, reminding us of the enduring power of festive traditions and the timeless joy of spreading goodwill.

Today

The tradition of sending Christmas cards has evolved over time, and there are several reasons why some people may be sending fewer Christmas cards today.

Digital Communication: With the rise of digital communication, people often send holiday greetings via email, social media, or messaging apps. It's quicker and more convenient, but it lacks the personal touch of a physical card.

Time Constraints: Modern life is often busy, and people may find it challenging to take the time to select, address, and mail physical cards. Digital greetings can be sent instantly with minimal effort.

Cost: Purchasing cards, along with postage, can add up, especially if someone has a large network of friends and family. Digital greetings can be a more cost-effective option.

It's essential to note that while the practice of sending traditional Christmas cards may be declining among certain groups, many individuals and families still value and participate in this tradition. The reasons for sending or not sending Christmas cards can vary widely among different people and communities.

