



Greeting Card Association
FACT SHEET

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GREETING CARD TRIVIA

Historical Connections...

- **Sending greeting cards** to friends and family is a tradition **dating back hundreds of years** -- the Chinese celebrated the advent of the New Year with messages of good will and good cheer, and the Germans printed **New Year's greetings from woodcuts as early as the year 1400.**
- In the early to mid-1800s, most of the **greeting cards were hand delivered and quite expensive** – sent primarily by the elite wealthy. But with the introduction of the postage stamp in 1840, greeting cards gained mass popularity.
- By the 1850s, printers and manufacturers designed both elaborate expensive cards as well as simple affordable ones.
- Cards gained strong popularity in the late 1800s and early 1900s offering some of the most unusual art.

Love is in the Mail...

- **Valentine greetings were popular** as far back as **the Middle Ages** – written Valentines didn't begin to appear until after 1400.
- The **oldest known Valentine greeting card** is on display at the **British Museum.**
- The **first commercial Valentine's Day greeting cards** produced in the U.S. were **created in the 1840s by Esther A. Howland.**
- Esther Howland, known as the **Mother of the Valentine**, made fancy Valentines with **real lace, ribbons and colorful pictures** known as "scrap."

Season's Greetings...

- Christmas cards were introduced **in 1843 in London** by **John Calcott Horsley**, the **artist of the first Christmas card.**
- **Louis Prang**, known as the **Father of the American Christmas Card**, perfected the lithographic process of color printing and in **1875 introduced the first line of Christmas cards** to the American public.
- The **most popular card-sending holiday** is Christmas, which accounts for more than 60 percent of all individual seasonal cards sold.