



*What is the history of sending Christmas cards?*

It was in England that Christmas cards were first produced. People had, of course, sent private notes of good wishes to each other for uncounted Christmases, marking the birth of hope and peace and the beginning of each new year. In addition to these notes it was customary in the first part of the nineteenth century for British students to prepare and send, at Christmas, handsome and painstaking scrolls conveying their greetings and displaying their prowess in handwriting, composition, and art work.

It was in 1843, and this date is now generally agreed upon, that Sir Henry Cole arranged to have an illustrator named John Calcott Horsley design a card especially for the day. It was printed in lithography and tinted by hand, by a professional color. One thousand copies were sold that first Christmas, and literally billions of cards have been sent out in the ensuing years; they bear out Sir Henry Cole's original intention to have "artistic treatment applied to 'unconsidered trifles' as well as to weightier matters."