



Christmas Cards Launched On Commercial Basis 85 Years Ago

American Christmas cards were launched on a commercial scale exactly 85 years ago by an eminent Boston lithographer named Louis Prang.

A penniless immigrant when he landed in America in 1850, Prang made a big impact on America's celebration of Christmas, earning him the title of "Father" of the American Christmas card.

Prang got started publishing greeting cards in a rather strange way. In 1874, one year before he marketed his first American Christmas cards, a young art student by the name of Miss D. E. Whitney, who worked in his shop, presented him with a painting of a budding moss rose which she had done.

There was something about this simple moss rose that appealed to both his artistic sense and to his commercial instincts. Prang saw a golden chance to increase his business. He decided to print "Merry Christmas" on small floral decorated cards as the British had been doing since the early 1840's.

Prang was an expert in the art of what he called "Chromolithography" and his work and reputation was well established throughout Europe. By using slabs of a particular limestone found only in Bavaria, he printed pictures in multi-colors, as many as 32 different shades, at times. He reproduced them so perfectly that you could scarcely tell them from the original paintings.

He had Miss Whitney's painting copied on lithographic stones and attached a holiday sentiment to it. He experimented with his British customers first and the next year Prang tried out the Christmas cards on the American people. Within five years he was turning out five million cards a year, and it wasn't long before Prang cards, trimmed with silk fringe and lace, also became known worldwide.

The painting that inspired Prang to enter the greeting card business is now housed in the Rust Craft antique greeting card collection along with several hundred of his "chromolithographs."

Unlike today's Christmas cards, Prang used very few of the standard Christmas motifs on his cards. His favorites were illustrations of spring flowers, harvest scenes and pictures of children playing. The Killarney rose, of all things, was the most popular of all. Religious scenes began to appear on Prang's cards in the mid 1880's.

Prang's delicate cards were typical of the Victorian era in

which he lived. Many of them were equipped with silk cords for hanging, others were edged with inch-wide fringe and folded cards dripped with tassels. Fan-shaped cards bedecked with both fringe and tassels, competed with lustrious satin-and-plush creations. There were even some cards encrusted with blown glass frosting.

To insure that he would always have an ample supply of the finest designs for his cards, Prang conducted an annual competition with prizes totalling as much as \$3,000.

In the 1880's, people were paying up to \$1 each for a deluxe Prang card. The costly cards were usually stamped on the back with a notice that the design received one of Prang's prizes.

Prang continued to make Christmas cards for 20 years, until German imitations began to crowd the market. A proud craftsman, Prang retired from the greeting card scene and turned his efforts to other activities, rather than have his quality cards compete with the cheap German imports.



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Carolina Given Honors On High School Driver Plan

Durham.—North Carolina received national honors this week for its high school driver education program.

The "achievement award," highest in the 1959-60 National High School Driver Education Award Program, was presented at the annual conference of the Superintendents' Division of the North Carolina Education Association at the Jack Tar Hotel.

Presentation was made by Thomas A. Seals, traffic consultant for the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Washington, D. C., sponsor of the award program. C. A. Furr, Concord, president of the Superintendents' Division of the NCEA, accepted the award. Seals said North Carolina and

seven other states qualified for the "achievement award" by having at least 60 per cent of their public high schools provide a "qualifying course" in driver education, with at least 50 per cent of the annual number of eligible students enrolled. (A "qualifying course," according to the award program sponsor, consists of 30 clock hours of classroom instruction and six hours of practice driving, and is taught by teachers who have met specified requirements.)

In North Carolina 84 per cent (or 751) of the State's 890 public high schools conducted courses meeting these nationally recommended standards in the 1959-60 school year, with 63 per cent (or 41,071) of the 64,740 annual eli-

gible high school students participating.

Forty-eight states and the District of Columbia participated in the 1959-60 Award Program. This program is the medium recognized by the President's Committee for Traffic Safety as the annual measurement of driver education progress.

Seventy-three per cent (12,000 of 17,227) of the nation's public high schools covered in the 1959-60 program report offered a course in driver education. Fifty-six per cent of the schools provided a "qualifying course."

Of the 2,085,734 "annual eligible students" (those reaching legal driving age during the year) enrolled in the public high schools, 1,212,992 or 57 per cent took a course in driver education in the 1959-60 school year. A little more than 770,000, or 34 per cent took a "qualifying course."

ASC Signup To Begin Jan. 3

The regular signup period for the 1961 Agricultural Conservation Program will begin January 3, 1961 and continue through January 27, 1961, County ASC Chairman, Vaughn Tugman, announced today.

Farmers should make early plans for the practices they intend to carry out next spring and be ready to apply for whatever assistance it is felt will be needed on their farms.

Farmers will be advanced the small cost-share payment increase on the materials used in carrying out approved practices. In a lot of instances this will enable many farmers to secure their materials from vendors with very little cost. This should encourage many farmers who have not participated in

the program to undertake one or more practices needed on their farms.

Conservation of the soil and water resources is vital to the economy of our country. A prosperous agriculture cannot continue unless these measures are continually carried out.

Travel On Parkway

The Bluff district of the Blue Ridge Parkway had a decrease in travel of 7.2% as compared to the same month last year. The travel for the entire Parkway during the month showed an increase of 8.1% over November, 1959.

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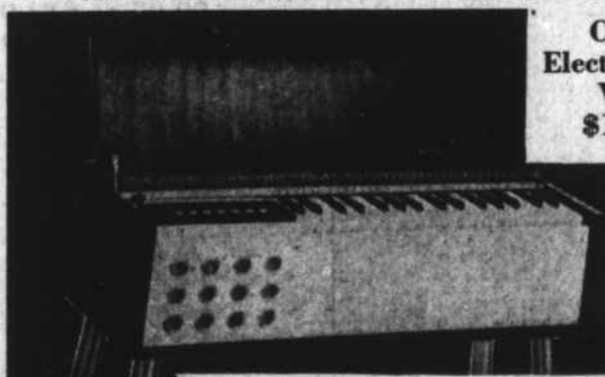


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