

# Christmas Tradition

## Sharing The Joy Of The Christmas Card

(NAPSA)—Knowing the story behind the Christmas card helps make sending and receiving them feel even more special.

### The Past

The sending of Christmas cards began in Great Britain in 1843 when businessman Sir Henry Cole and commercial artist John Horsley designed and posted out seasonal greetings to business acquaintances. At the time, the cost of printing and sending cards was high. Technological advances in printing methods and reductions in postage costs, however, brought about largely by replacing the horse and carriage with bulk train transportation, made card sending affordable to the general public.

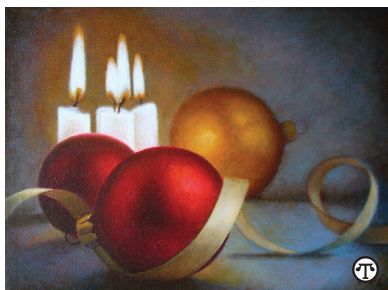


**The first-ever Christmas card sent in 1843.**

The custom of sending Christmas cards soon spread around the world, and in 1875, printer Louis Prang began mass producing less expensive Christmas cards in North America. With many people then moving to distant cities to live and to work, the greetings card became a popular way for people to convey to those they most cared about that they were thinking of them at this special time and wished to share with them the joy of the Christmas message.

### The Present

Today, the Christmas card has taken on a particular significance for a group of talented, disabled artists called the Mouth and Foot Painting Artists (MFPA). Without having the use of hands to paint, these people create their original works by holding a brush in their



**"Christmas Serenity," mouth painted by Mariam Paré. Now you can send greetings cards like this and others created by her fellow artists.**

mouth or with their feet and make their living by reproducing these images as Christmas cards and selling them direct to the public.

The MFPA is a worldwide commercial cause and choosing to support its efforts is a caring, thoughtful message to both send and receive at Christmastime.

One of the talented artists is Mariam Paré from Chicago. She became a quadriplegic while an art student, when she took a stray bullet to the back in gun cross fire at age 20. She then retaught herself to paint again by holding a brush in her mouth.

These days, her paintings reflect her love of art and the freedom of expression it brings to her life. Among her works is a portrait of Hoda Kotb and Kathie Lee Gifford that she presented to them when she recently appeared on "The Today Show." Another of her paintings adorns a wall at the home of Hollywood film star Pierce Brosnan.

### Available Online

Christmas greetings cards designed by Mariam Paré and her fellow artists can be viewed and purchased along with other seasonal products including calendars, wrapping paper, puzzles, prints and books.

Visit the Mouth and Foot Painting Artists website at [www.mfpausa.com](http://www.mfpausa.com) or call (877) MFPA-USA.