

A VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS

JOY TO THE WORLD



BY CYNTHIA HART, JOHN GROSSMAN AND PRISCILLA DUNHILL

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BY CYNTHIA HART AND JOHN GROSSMAN
TEXT BY PRISCILLA DUNHILL

WORKMAN PUBLISHING ■ NEW YORK

For our children, Thomas Ando-Hart; Jason Grossman, Roger and Christopher Bussell; Adam, Gita, Christman and Liza Dunhill; Emily and Joshua Tex.

And for our families and friends, who through the years have created our Christmas memories.



For their generous loans of Victorian buttons, jewelry, toys and other antique objects for our photographs, we thank Ilene Chazanof Decorative Arts (New York City), Nancy Marshall Antique Collection (New York City), Susan Hoy (Susan's Storeroom, San Anselmo, California), Karin Hassel (Fantine, Cornwall Bridge, Connecticut), Molly Blayney, Cyril Tunis and Starr Ockenga. For her thoughtful advice and considerable hard work, we thank Pat Upton. For his photography skills and consistently sunny disposition, we thank Steven Tex's mom and dad.

For the rich images and objects of our Victorian Christmas heritage, we thank the artists, craftsmen and printers who created them, the many anonymous families who cherished them generation to generation, and the antique paper ephemera and collectibles dealers who located, secured and offered them so they can now be enjoyed here.

For giving form and substance to the study of ephemera and its social importance, we thank the Ephemera Society of America (Schoharie, New York) and its president, William F. Mobley.

For their endurance and perseverance in transcribing the Notes on the Ephemera & Collectibles, we thank John's wife, Carolyn Grossman, and Irene McGill. For their gracious help and support, we thank Petra Koencke (Petra's Gallery of Flowers, Sausalito, California), Elisa Davidson, Harumi Ando, and everyone at Workman Publishing.

The photographic illustrations were created by Cynthia Hart and recorded on film by Steven Tex. All the paper ephemera c1820-1920 is from The John Grossman Collection of Antique Images.

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MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR







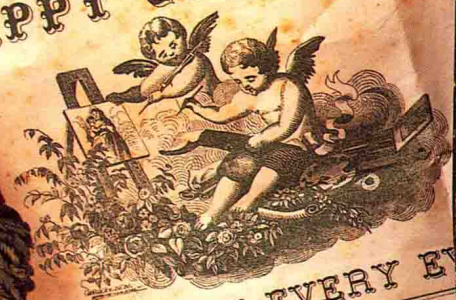
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TO THE
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DAY OF DAYS

Christmas, the Day of Days. The house smells of brandy, candied orange peels and evergreens. Cinnamon cookies are baking in the kitchen; tissue paper and whispered secrets rustle behind quickly closed doors. Holly, *Silent Night*; the velvet dress and white damask tablecloth are laid out in readiness—this is the Christmas of childhood memory, the Christmas of our grandmothers, a resplendent Victorian pageant of opulence, warmth, generosity and love.

While Victorians didn't invent Christmas, they certainly wrapped it with tinsel, golden-haired cherubic angels and jolly Santas. They moved the traditional German Christmas tree from table to floor and hung it with *kugels*, Dresden silver stars, and fruits; invented Christmas cards, resuscitated the



What
Shall we put
in the
Children's
Stockings?

See inside.



medieval custom of Christmas carols, and elevated gift-giving to a frenzied and delicate social art.

But above all, the Victorian Christmas was a family celebration. On this Day of Days, children could be seen *and* heard. In the 1893 December issue of *Ladies' Home Journal*, in a column entitled "The True Spirit of Christmas," the editors reminded readers: "Children are God's own angels, sent by Him to brighten our world, and what we do for these messengers from the sky, especially at that time of the year which belongs to them, will come back to us threefold, like unto bread cast upon the waters." What mother could resist that challenge?

So she joyously prepared feast and festivity, decked the halls, and lit Advent candles to symbolically welcome the Christ Child and members of her own far-flung family.

Like their predecessors, valentines, early Victorian Christmas cards incorporated cherubs, love messages, butterflies and flower-spangled meadows—all harbingers of rebirth and the new year.

