

Baker Street Elementary

Presents
"The Life and Times in Victorian London"



Baker Street Elementary

The Life and Times in Victorian London
AB012 -- Victorian Christmas Traditions - February, 2022



Welcome to topic # AB012... Today we'll be looking at Victorian Christmas Traditions... Thanks so much to AboutBritain.com for use of their summary text for this lesson...





*Although the birth of Christ
has been celebrated for the
best part of 2,000 years...*





*...it only became a
festival as we know
it in Victorian
times.*



Imagine a Christmas with no Christmas tree, no Christmas crackers, no Christmas cards, no traditional Christmas decorations and no time off work!



Many of these Victorian Christmas traditions were introduced to English society by Queen Victoria and her husband, Prince Albert.



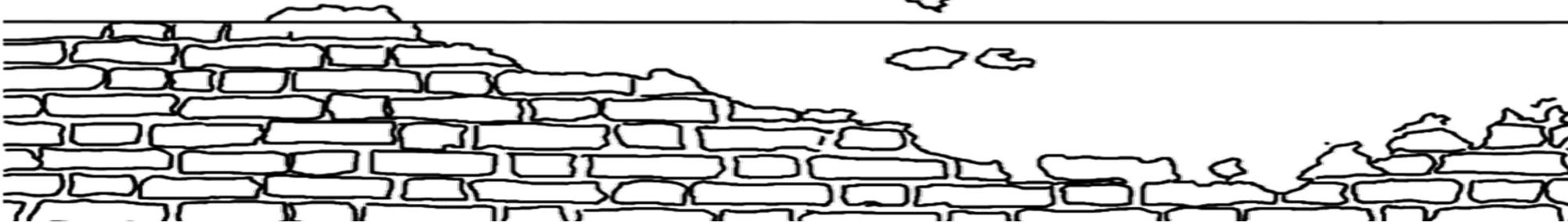
Being from German aristocracy, Albert was used to the custom of bringing a fresh fir tree into the home and decorating it on Christmas Eve...



*...so he had the first
Victorian Christmas tree
brought to Windsor Castle
in the 1840s.*

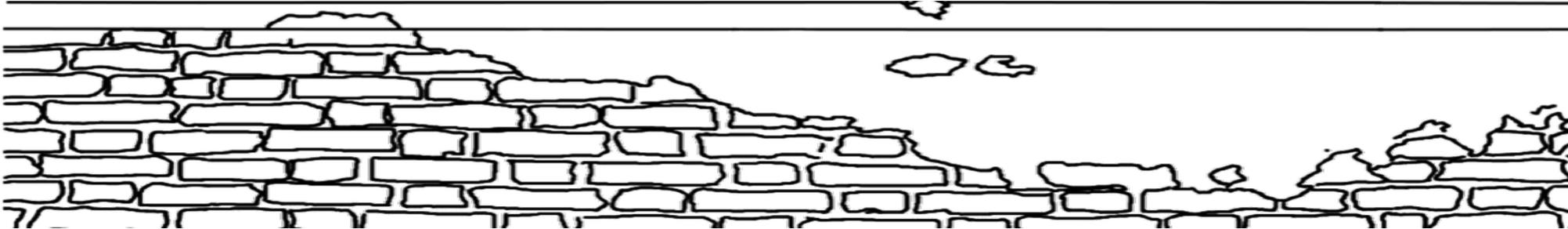


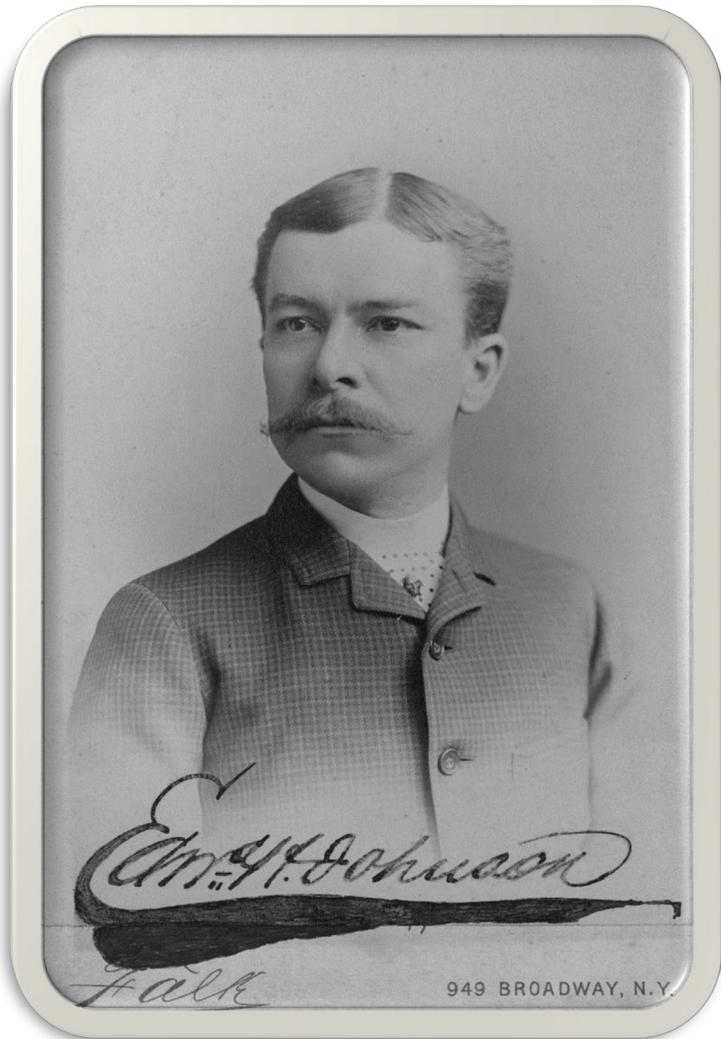
Introducing Victorian Christmas decorations, the burning wax candles and decorative Christmas baubles were a focal point of Victorian Christmas decorations...





...and quickly the idea became fashionable in Victorian parlors everywhere.





Electric lights for Christmas trees were invented by Thomas Edison's assistant, Edward Johnson, in 1882.



However, they did not become mass-produced and affordable to the general public for many more years.



NO DANGER
from the Lights on
CHRISTMAS TREES
when **Edison Miniature Lamps** are used.
No Smoke, Smell or Grease.
Lamps can be either bought or rented at a low cost.
Anyone can readily wire and put up the lamps if there is
electric current in the house.
Our leaflet on Christmas Lighting tells all about it.
**EDISON DECORATIVE AND
MINIATURE LAMP DEPT.**
General Electric Company,
Harrison, N. J.

The advertisement is a rectangular leaflet with rounded corners. It features two side-by-side illustrations. The left illustration shows a Christmas tree decorated with strings of small lights, with a small boat and figures at its base. The right illustration shows a Christmas tree decorated with candles, with a small house and figures at its base. The text is centered between the two illustrations.



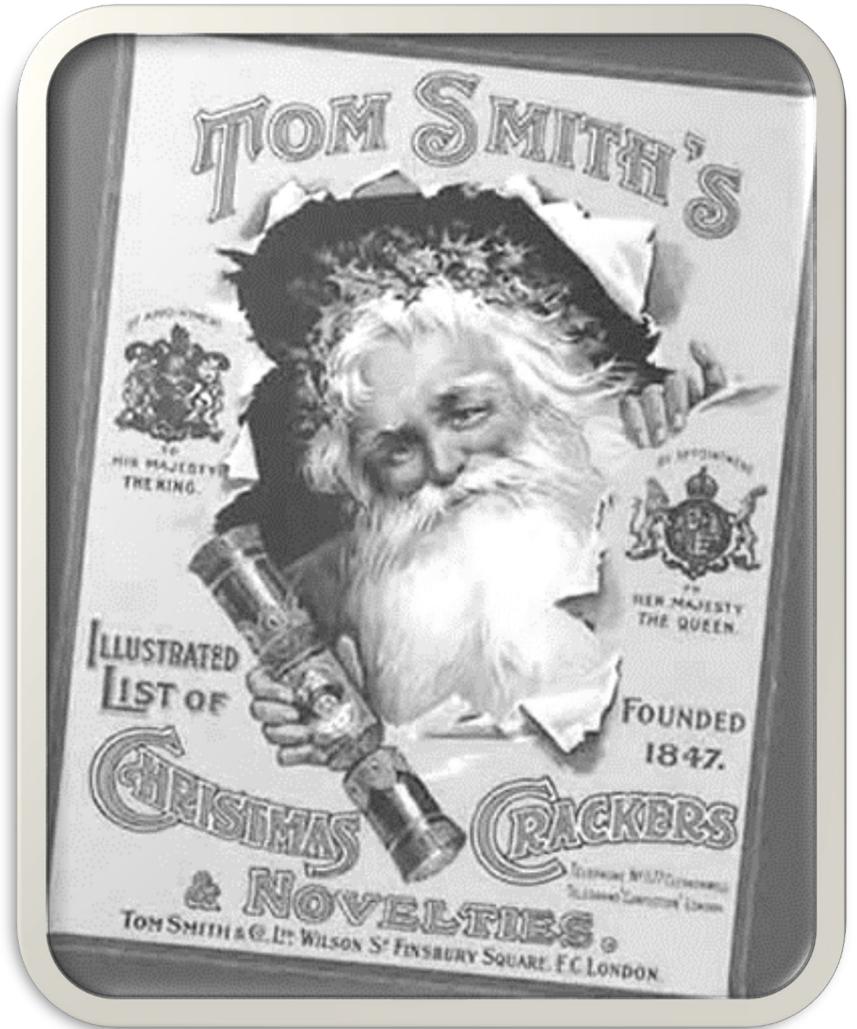
In 1846, Thomas J. Smith, a London confectioner, had a great idea for selling more sweets at Christmas.



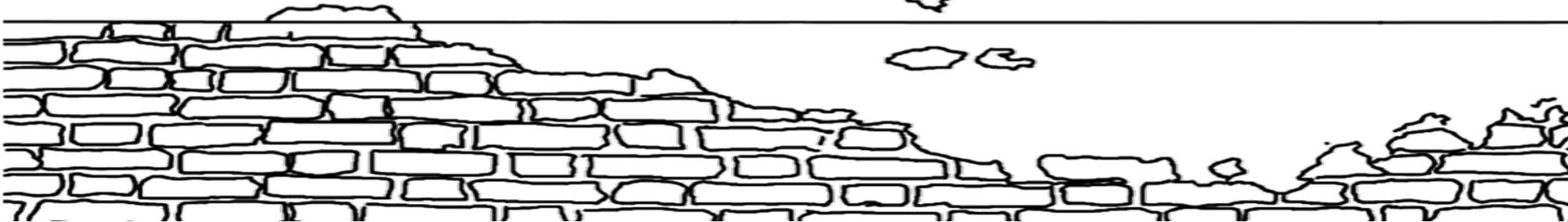
He wrapped a bon-bon in a twist of coloured paper, added a love note, a paper hat and a banger mechanism which was said to have been inspired by the crackle of a log fire!



This new idea took off, and ironically the bonbons were eventually replaced with a small toy or novelty.



The first Christmas cards in England were designed for Sir Henry Cole, the Chairman of the Society of the Arts.





*The year was 1846
and the first 100
Christmas cards...*



*...designed by John Calcott
Horsley, were printed at great
expense which rather hindered
the idea from taking off.*



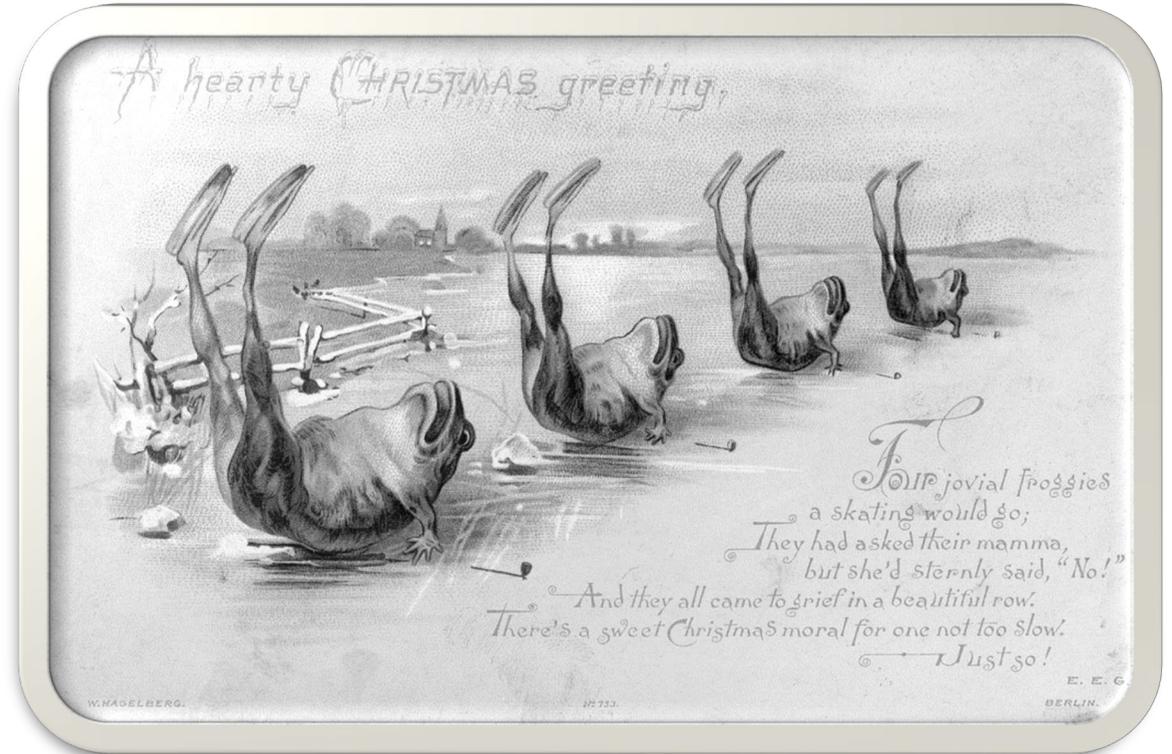
*However, shortly afterwards
color lithography was
developed making printing
much cheaper.*



Another significant factor was the rising popularity of the Royal Mail allowing postage costs to be reduced to one half penny per ounce.



By the early 1870s,
anyone who was anyone
could afford to send
Christmas card greetings.

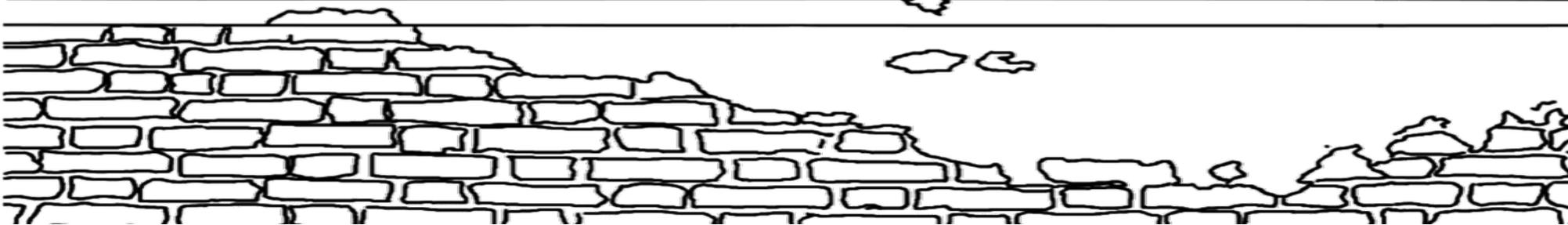


Initially, Victorian Christmas cards were single postcards with simple designs but soon plum puddings, robins, and snowy scenes became popular designs.



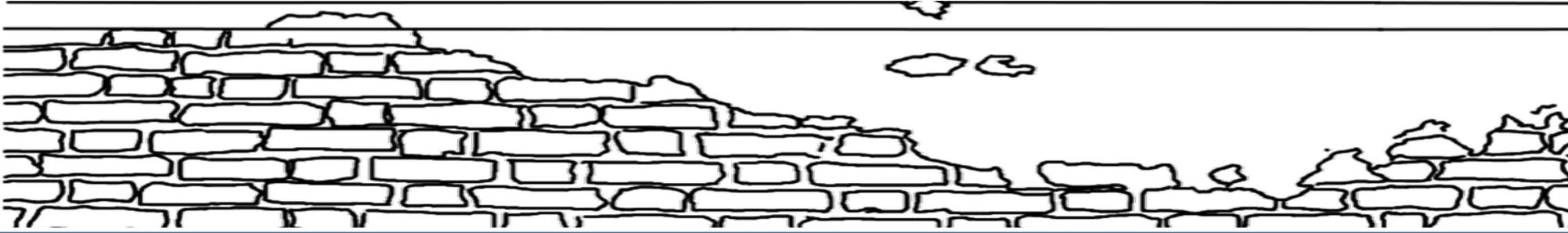


The common plants, holly, ivy, and mistletoe all produce winter berries and were held to be "magical" long before Victorian times.



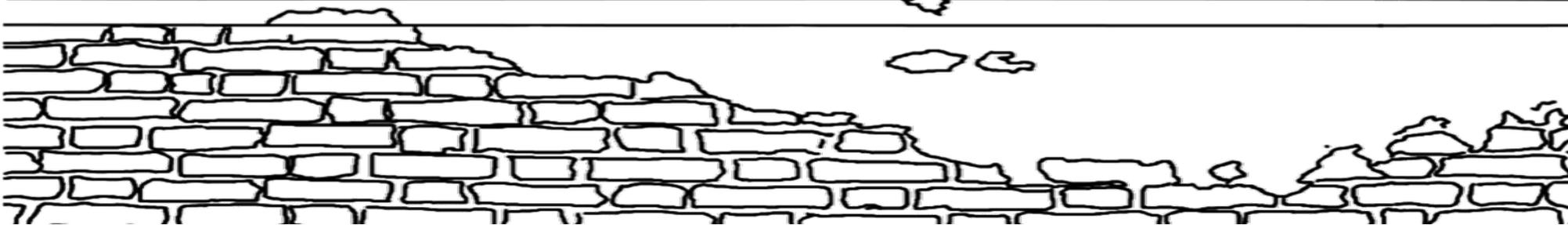


*The holly berries were said
to repel witchcraft and a
berry-laden sprig...*





...would be carried into the Victorian house by a male and used to decorate the Christmas pudding.



***Mistletoe had pagan origins
and in Victorian times it was
not allowed in churches.***



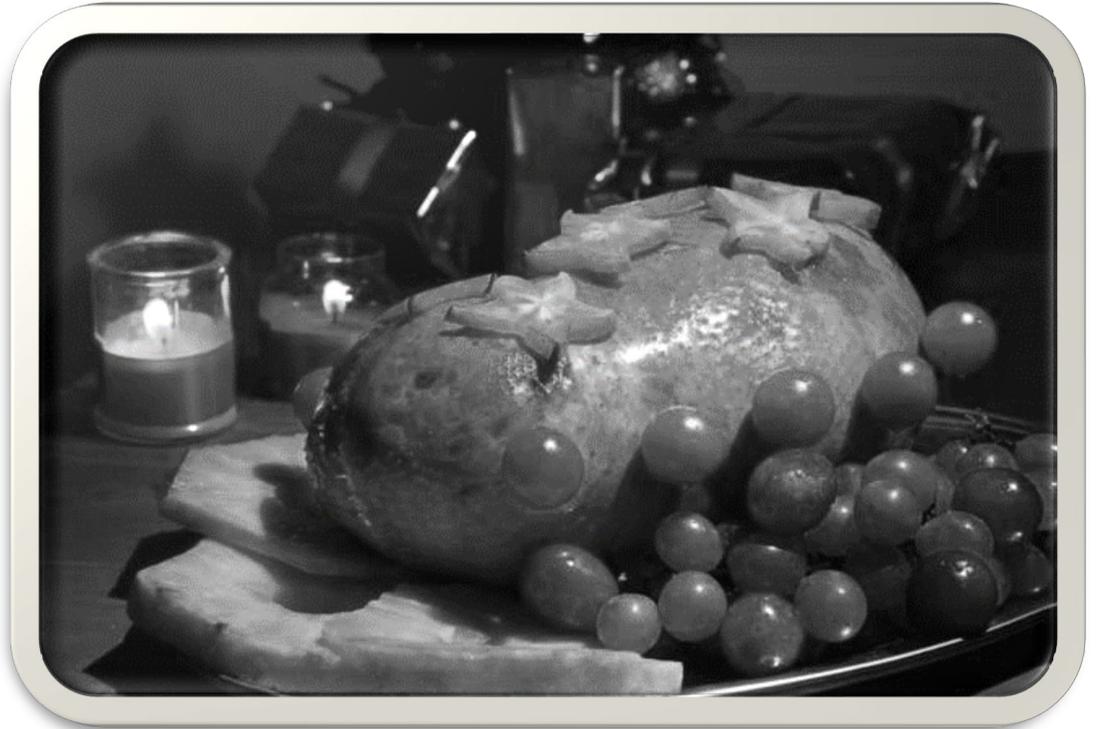
*However, kissing under
the mistletoe was
popular in Victorian
homes.*



After each chaste kiss a white berry had to be removed from the sprig until there were none left - and no more kisses were to be had.



At Victorian Christmas services, although Christmas songs had been sung by wassailers from the 15th century, it was only at Christmas in Victorian times that they began to be sung in churches.



Silent Night, for example, was written in Austria and was only translated into English in 1871 when it was added to the Methodist hymnal.



*Traditionally the Victorian Era
Christmas began on Christmas
Day when church bells...*





*...called everyone to church
for scripture readings
interspersed with carols.*



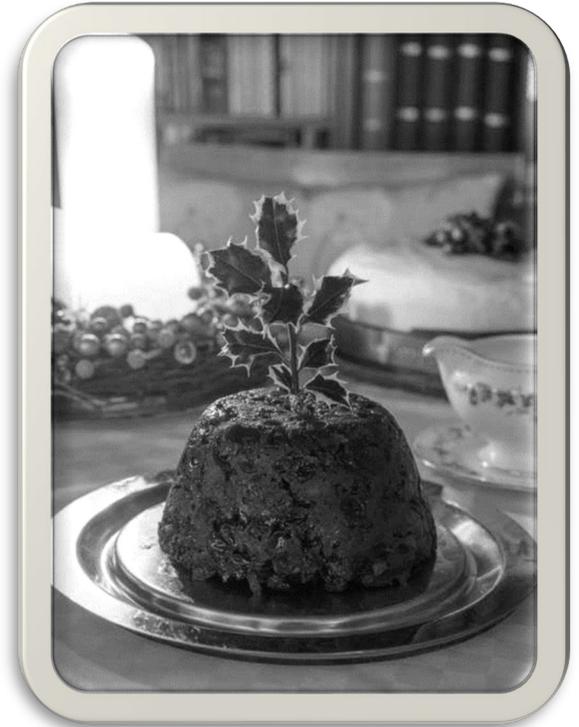
Christmas dinner was a grand family affair for those who could afford it with a goose, chicken or roast beef.



Turkey became popular in the late 19th century.

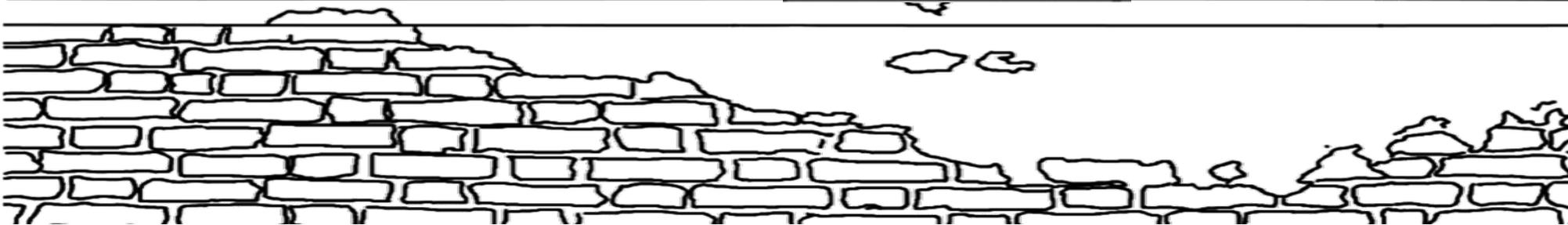


*Christmas pudding was served
then crackers were pulled and
everyone exchanged gifts
before playing parlor games*



*Again, thanks to
AboutBritain.com for their
help... So we have completed
topic # AB012 in our series...*

*Yes, but we'll be back
with another topic
soon...*





Original Source Material for this topic:

1) <http://www.aboutbritain.com/articles/victorian-christmas-traditions.asp>



Baker Street Elementary

"The Life and Times in Victorian London"

IS CREATED THROUGH THE INGENUITY & HARD WORK OF:

JOE FAY

LIESE SHERWOOD-FABRE

RUSTY MASON &

STEVE MASON

