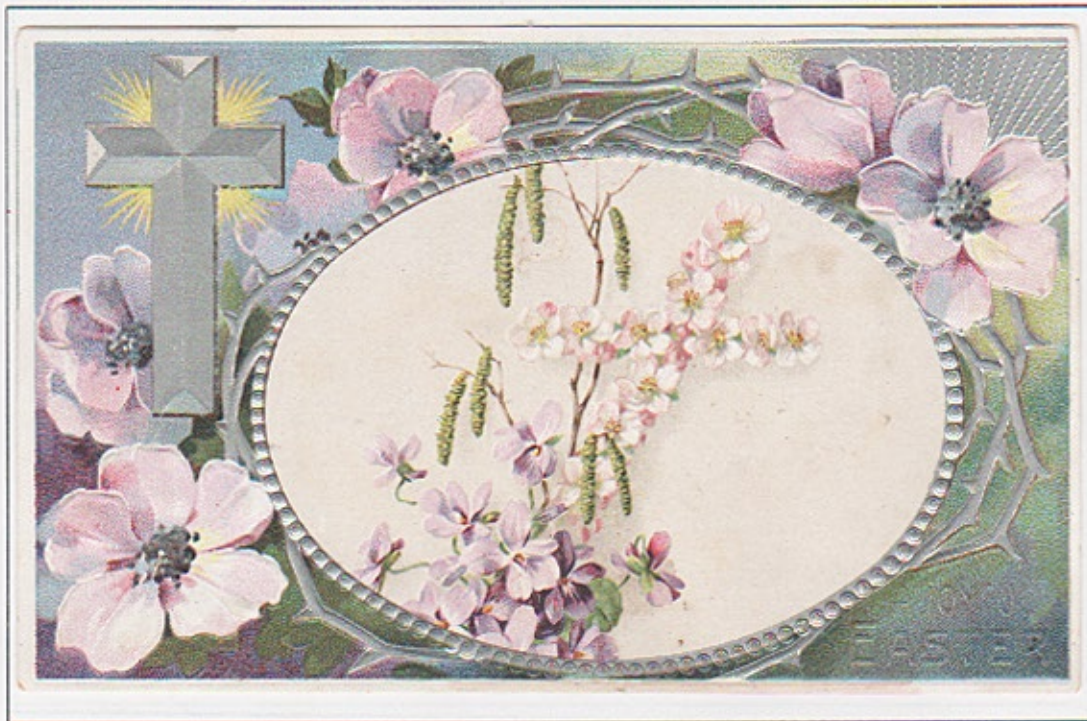


# SYMBOLS ADD MEANING TO CENTURY OLD EASTER POST CARDS

This exhibit demonstrates that vintage Easter post cards integrate both Christian Easter and secular spring festival motifs to create meaningful designs. This cards chosen for this exhibit highlight this integration. Easter borrowed its name from *Eostre*, the Saxon fertility goddess who is responsible in spring for the renewal of all life from flowering plants to the birth of baby animals including chicks and bunnies. *Eostre's* symbol is an egg laying hare. According to Christian tradition, Jesus Christ died on a cross wearing a crown of thorns. He was buried in a sealed cave. At dawn on the third day his followers found the cave entrance cracked open, surrounded by white lilies, with angels telling them that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead and had come out of the cave with new life. Traditional Christian symbols include a cross for darkness and death, a crown of thorns for suffering, an empty cave, angels announcing the resurrection news, and white flowers for new life and hope. Both sacred and secular designs, each giving inspiration to the other, were widely available at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the time period for this exhibit. The pious and secular celebrated spring by sending postcards to family and friends at Easter. They had no difficulty in finding designs that held meaning to them. This exhibit shows many designs and what they mean.

In the early 1900s home telephones were rare. Postcards were the email of their day: quickly and cheaply spreading family news and celebrating holidays like Easter. The best post cards in the early 1900s were printed in Germany which had high quality inks, paper and printing presses. WW1 stopped the flow of quality cards to Canada and together with the spread of the home telephone the golden age of the postcard was over by 1918.

This card features multiple motifs: a cross in front of the rising sun, flowering thorns surrounding an egg shaped frame with a second cross made of apple blossoms



Printed in Germany, divided back, has a border, embossed, chromolithograph, silver highlights

<b>Christian symbol</b>	<b>Saxon symbol</b>	<b>Combined in vintage Easter post card design</b>
Cross for darkness	increasing daylight	cross covered with flowers, sunrise on new day
Crown of thorns, pain	abundance, joy	new hats and new bonnets
Open cave leads to new life	hare with eggs, babies	egg shape, eggs open, lots of chicks and bunnies
Angels sing at dawn	spring birds sing	children spread greetings
Easter lily for hope	spring flowers	spring flowers, pussy willows

**Plan:**

- Christian and Saxon symbols: cross, thorns, cave, angels, hare, egg and flowers.....p. 1 - 5
- Combination of symbols: children with flowers, eggs, chicks, or bunnies.....p. 6 - 9
- lots of chicks.....p. 10 -12
- dressing up for Easter especially with new hats.....p. 13 - 16