Wartime Cards Marked By Individuality

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Wartime Cards
Marked By Individuality

Julie Johnston explains the simple techniques of making clever, personalized Christmas cards

WARTIME restrictions have aroused the resourcefulness and originality of those who plan to send Christmas greetings during the coming holidays.

This year the expensive greeting cards will be unpatriotic, and the cards that are purchased more difficult to find and more standardized. Unusual and clever handmade, original cards are an excellent solution to the problem. Anyone from eight to eighty can make attractive ones with a small amount of effort, and the value received is doubled when personalized cards are made.

For the novice with little training and equipment, four different techniques can be used. The one chosen will determine the design of the card to some extent, so the method to be used should be chosen first. Block printing is probably the most familiar to everyone. The design is drawn and cut on a block of linoleum, paint is spread on, and the block is stamped on the paper. If more than one color is to be used in the design, a different block will be needed for each one. A simple way of achieving variation in a block print is to add touches of other color with a paint brush which makes possible several colors with only one linoleum block. The materials needed are few—a single edged razor blade, a block of linoleum, a small amount of paint and paper on which to make the cards. The paint used depends on the paper but tempera paint usually is the right consistency, inexpensive and easy to use. The design for block printing should be simple and each line must be wide enough so the linoleum block won't break.

Splatter painting is fun to do and professional effects can be achieved by using it. The parts of the paper not to be colored are covered and the paint is splattered evenly over the design. The paint is spread sparingly on a little piece of screen wire held above the paper and brushed lightly with an old toothbrush. The paint can be directed so that parts of the design may be emphasized by more color.

Another method that is suitable even for children is stenciling. The part of the design to be painted is cut out of paper. Straight lines and sharp corners are easier to attain if the design is cut with a razor blade. A regular stencil paper is available which is easy to cut, inexpensive and helps keep color from running under the edges of the design, but any rather heavy paper can be used. A different stencil must be used for each color and the outstanding results of this method are the sharp, bold edges possible. Crayons may be used by younger card-makers and the stencil makes it easier for them to stay inside the lines.

Paper cutting may be used for actually making cards but it is also helpful in making the design for other methods. When cutting paper, it isn't always necessary to have an idea; the cut paper may suggest one. Geometric designs are always good and it is fun to combine paper squares, circles, lines and triangles to make animals, trees and other shapes. The animals needn't look like any that actually exist; they are more interesting if people can't decide what they really are.