

## The Moravian Star

The Moravian Star is an illuminated Christmas decoration, popular in Europe and America where there are Moravian Congregations. There are many forms of Moravian Stars, but the most commonly seen and most widely available is the 26 point form.

The very first Moravian Star is known to have originated in the 1830s at a Moravian school in Niesky, Germany. It is thought to have been a geometry lesson or project. Although the star originated in the church's schools it was soon adopted throughout the Moravian Church as an Advent symbol. It did not take long for the stars to go from a pastime for children to an occupation for the congregation. Many congregations build and sell the stars as fundraisers.



By 1880, Peter Verbeek, a former student of this particular school, began making these stars and their instructions were available for sale through his bookshop. His son, Harry, founded the Herrnhut Star Factory. It was the main source of stars until World War I. During World War II, the factory was heavily damaged but was returned to a company owned by the Moravian Church in 1950, and it continues to make the famous stars.

Sophie, wife of Charles Joseph La Trobe, introduced the first Christmas tree to the early settlers of Melbourne, and the Moravian Star would certainly have enjoyed the honoured place at the very top of the family's tree.

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