

The Story of the Christmas Seal



By **ELMO SCOTT WATSON**

WHEN you buy a big sheet of Christmas seals, does it ever occur to you that there's an interesting story back of the addition of these little "scraps of paper" to the list of symbols of Christmas time? And do the names of Einar Holboell and Emily P. Bissell come to your mind when you stick one of these gayly-colored little stamps on a Christmas package and send it away to carry its message of Yuletide cheer as well as the message that you are thus helping in a great humanitarian work? If not, they should, for it is to a Danish postal clerk and an American Red Cross worker that we owe the idea and development of the Christmas seal.

Back in 1903 a man named Einar Holboell, a postal clerk in the post office at Copenhagen, Denmark, was busy in the division of outgoing mail. It was Christmas week and he was literally buried in cards and letters. The faster he sorted the faster they flowed in.

For a moment he paused in serious thought; then his face brightened. "These Christmas cards and letters should have an additional stamp—a benevolent stamp or seal at a small price within the reach of all. Why not call it a Christmas stamp?"

"Even a two ore (about one-fourth of a cent) stamp on all these cards and letters would create a mighty sum if the plan could only be realized. Christmas is a time of generosity and good will, when we send a kindly thought even to those whom we neglect the whole year through. Two ore on each every greeting would mean a sum to be reckoned with—well, then, to the task!"

He went with his plan to the head of the postal service and others with influence and authority. And so, when the first Christmas seal committee was formed, including, among others, six representatives of the postal department, the interest of the postal employees was insured from the start.

In 1904 the committee met to discuss the purpose and use of the possible income from the Christmas seal, and it was decided that the first object was the erection of a hospital for tubercular children, and, in general, the income from the seal should always be for the fight against tuberculosis, in one form or another.

Upon application to the then King Christian IX, Holboell secured the permission to have a likeness of the deceased Queen Louise on the first Christmas seal, and the king became so interested that he himself selected the picture which he wished used.

phlet form by the National Tuberculosis association. His story of "The First Christmas Seal" follows:

December, 1907—the World war seven years ahead, but a deadlier war at flood—tuberculosis taking one-tenth of all who died from disease—folks everywhere wondering what could be done to stem the tide. Mid-morning, December 13—a ragged, dirty newsboy walked into a Philadelphia newspaper office. Reaching up to a marble counter higher than his head, he put down a copper cent.

"Gimme one, me sister's got it." (What he was given is the seal illustrated above directly under the letters "Ch" in the title of this article.)

Noontime, December 9, 1907, in Wilmington, capital of little Delaware, two pretty girls in Red Cross uniforms taking their place at a table in the post office corridor, asking a quarter each for little penny envelopes thus labeled:

25 CHRISTMAS STAMPS
One Penny Apiece
Issued by the Delaware Red Cross, to stamp out the White Plague.

Put this stamp with message bright on every Christmas letter, Help the tubercular fight, And make the New Year better.

These stamps do not carry any kind of mail, but any kind of mail will carry them.

Mid-morning, December 11, 1907, eighteenth floor of the North American building in Philadelphia, a day member of the staff in his cubby-hole, "A lady to see you," passing a card engraved "Miss Emily P. Bissell." "Is she good looking?" "Sure." "Show her in."

Enter the secretary of the Delaware Red Cross on unofficial business. She had come to ask a favor of the Sunday editor and thought she'd pay her respects to the columnist, who hoped the Sunday editor had granted her wish.

He had not. She had wanted him to run a little story about this, taking sheet of stamps from her handbag. Delaware was worried about tuberculosis, needed a few hundred dollars to start caring for poor patients. She had read Jacob Rills' story about the Danish Christmas Stamp in the Outlook, wondered if Delaware couldn't issue one and sell enough to build a small shelter—here it was, but she was afraid—

Downstairs went the occupant of the cubby-hole, two steps at a time, to the office of E. A. Van Valkenburg, president and editor of the paper that had been first to dispel the doctors by proposing publicity as the weapon to use against the white plague.

with the stamps selling by thousands and telegrams from many parts of the country asking about them.

The presses in Wilmington couldn't print them fast enough, so a Philadelphia printer was enlisted. Through its Washington correspondent, the newspaper got the postmaster general's permission to put up a booth in the Philadelphia post office lobby.

From Jacob Rills, on December 19: "Good for you and for Philadelphia and the North American. Keep it up. I am glad the little seed I sowed in the Outlook last summer has borne fruit."

Five days before Christmas the governor of Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania branch of the National Red Cross endorsed the stamp. Four days before Christmas an editorial urged that "A Million Mercy Messages" be bought by the people. Two days before Christmas "Happy New Year" was added to the stamp design, the demand having grown so. The day after Christmas more than half a million already distributed to city, state and nation.

Then a flight of signed indorsements from Washington, President Roosevelt, Secretary of State Root, Secretary of War Taft; from Baltimore, Cardinal Gibbons; from other places leaders in public life, philanthropy and education all featured on page one.

On January 8, a check for \$1,013.37 sent to Miss Bissell, the proceeds of the North American's part in this preface to stamping out the plague—several times the sum Delawareans had wanted to raise and feared they could not get. And as much more from other sources in Pennsylvania. All told, Delaware and Pennsylvania raised \$3,000 from this first sale of stamps.

Meantime, the National Red Cross stopped, looked and listened, at an annual meeting, to Miss Bissell and the cubby-hole man, and slowly but surely decided to get behind the stamp. So the field was widened for the second round of these harmless "bullets," harmless to all save the deadly germs.

On November 12, 1908, the first gun in the second campaign was fired by the North American, a page-one promise to sell 1,000,000 of the 1908 stamps, and one month later to the day it ordered its fourth million. Meantime—

Every day from November 12 to January 1, the Red Cross Christmas Stamp was a matter of first-page moment, and many a day it was given precedence over all other news in the North American.

"It is splendid," said President Taft at the meeting of the Red Cross in Washington, December 8. Two days later the first page of the North American came out with a border of the stamps in red and a three-column facsimile likewise colored. Other newspapers in many parts of the land were joining the procession. When the curtain was rung down on this act, in January, the net result of the stamp sale throughout the nation was \$135,000.

"I never could have believed it," said Miss Bissell. "Gimme one—" and how the tinkle of that copper coin has grown! Annual sales of Christmas seals amounted to \$53,000,000 to date, from this source alone. Yet the money is the least part of it. The message is what has counted most. Between them, the death rate from tuberculosis has been cut in half. And it is still going down. Its fate is sealed.

Boy Falls in Lye Box; Burns Fatal
Waterbury, Conn.—Peter Rizk, six years old, son of Mr. and Mrs. Sheehan J. Rizk of 119 Windsor street, died of burns suffered when he fell into a mortar box filled with lye at a building under construction near his home.

ALLEGED SLAYER OF FIVE MAILED
Caught After Two Days Hunt of Countryside.
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.—Hunted for two days in the bush country near Smoky Lake, 50 miles northeast of here, George Dverchuk, alleged slayer of five persons on a lonely farm near Smoky Lake, was captured here a short time ago.

For 48 hours provincial police and a posse of neighbor farmers scoured the countryside near the Walanski home for Dverchuk, who is alleged to have slain four members of that family and a neighbor farmer.

According to information received at Alberta provincial police headquarters here, Constable J. Christophers picked up Dverchuk, while he was loitering near the depot in Vegreville, Alta, 60 miles northeast of here and only about twenty miles from Smoky Lake.

Recently a man armed with a 12 gauge shotgun entered the farm yard at the Walanski home, shot and killed John Walanski, his wife, their invalid daughter, Mary, sixteen, and seriously wounded Mrs. Anna Huchaluk, mother of Mrs. Walanski. The aged woman died in a hospital in Smoky Lake several days later.

Fleeing the scene of his crime, the slayer started down the road, where he met John Darichuk, a neighbor farmer, driving along in his wagon. Darichuk was shot dead, his body being found in the wagon box when the unguarded horses reached the farm yard.

Dverchuk, who has operated a store in Edmonton for about two years, left here recently for Smoky Lake. On reaching the home of some friends there, he is said to have borrowed a 12 gauge shotgun, ostensibly to start on a hunting trip.

It was a 12 gauge shotgun that was used to kill all five victims.

His Lucky Star Winks Clue to Stolen Auto
New York.—When Lee Wick's automobile was stolen from his home in Brooklyn, he notified the police. Nothing happened. Wick asked neighbors if they had seen the car. Still nothing happened.

Anyone else might have shrugged his shoulders, recalled the thousands of cars stolen every year, collected the insurance, if any, and bought a new model. But not Lee Wick, who is a musician by vocation and a student of astrology by avocation. He consulted his brother, Clarence, also a sky seer, and they sought the answer in the stars.

They were impressed by the proximity of the Gemini twins to the Charlot; the significance of Sirius, the dog star, and the contiguity of Venus in the ascendant. By pouring over charts and graphs they figured this:

"The car is southwest of the point whence it was stolen and hard by a large body of water."
"The Atlantic ocean is the largest body of water near Flatbush, and the brothers sped together to Coney island, proceeded west on Surf avenue, and voila, there was the missing chariot with two men, by Gemini, near and a radiant girl, a veritable Venus, munching a hot dog—Sirius, no less!

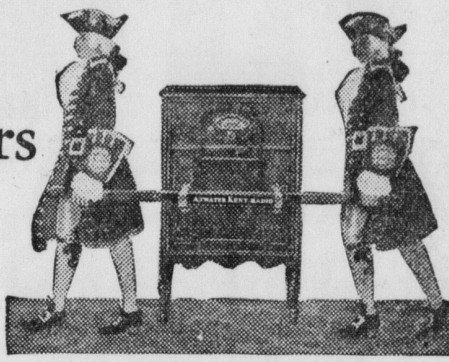
The Wick brothers saw the light. They called a policeman, who arrested John McCarthy and Edward Stankov, Brooklyn. Venus was permitted to go into eclipse. The accuracy of the astrological arrest was assured when the prisoners pleaded guilty before County Judge Conway.

Wagon Falls 26 Feet, but Boy Is Only Bruised
Kingston, Canada.—A boy and the driver of a horse wagon narrowly escaped serious injury when the horse ran away here recently and fell a distance of 26 feet into a quarry, dying instantly.

When he saw that his bolting horse was headed for the quarry, A. McGregor, Russell street, Carter, leaped from the wagon, suffering no injury. A moment later horse and wagon tumbled into the quarry. It was soon discovered that a youngster who had been riding in the wagon with McGregor, had clung to the vehicle, but with the exception of minor bruises had escaped injury in the fall.

ATWATER KENT RADIO

with the **GOLDEN VOICE**
Make your Christmas Dollars count!



THE Golden Voice of the 1931 Atwater Kent means glorious, life-like, year-round entertainment for the whole family for years to come.

Perfected Tone Control lets you make the most of every program, emphasizing bass or treble at will—shutting out disturbing noises. And you can have this modern radio, with every up-to-the-minute feature, plus the vast power of Screen-Grid, for either all-electric or battery operation. Rural families never have to take a back seat in radio reception when they own the new Atwater Kent. Your nearest dealer will deliver an Atwater Kent when-

ever you say, right up to Christmas. Only act now. Many others have the same thought as yourself.

dependability means long life for the radio—trouble-free enjoyment for you. NEW QUICK-VISION DIAL—whole range of stations right in front of you. Easy to read at a glance. Touch of your finger whisks in your program. Speed! Convenience! Accuracy!



ATWATER KENT MANUFACTURING COMPANY A. Atwater Kent, Pres. 4700 Wissahickon Ave., Philadelphia, Pa.

Individuality in Birds
Individuality is that thing which causes the bluebirds, wrens and martins to expect houses with built-in features while the sparrows multiply prodigiously in eaves' troughs and drain pipes.—Fort Worth Record-Telegram.

Wright's Indian Vegetable Pills correct indigestion, constipation, liver complaint, biliousness. They're Sugar Coated. 25c a box. 372 Pearl St., N. Y. Adv.

Hoary for the Yam!
The sweet potato has been found to contain a kind of starch needed for weaving cloth. Heretofore 250,000,000 pounds of starch was used annually in textile mills, much of it being imported.—Country Home.

There is no insincerity in anger.

Make Baby Comfortable
Cuticura Talcum
AFTER his daily bath with Cuticura Soap shake on some Cuticura Talcum. Pure and medicated, it soothes and comforts his tender skin and also prevents chafing and irritation.



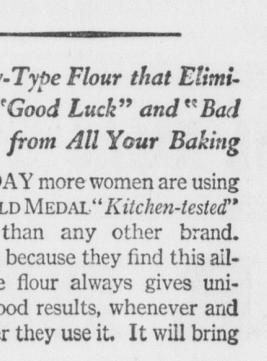
Misunderstood
Mr. Watt—"That bathing suit is positively the limit."
Mrs. Watt—"Oh, thank you, dear! It's so seldom you compliment me on what I wear that I appreciate it."
Answers.

Almost a Monopoly
The United States supplies about three-fourths of the world's demand for dried prunes.

The rain falls, but it gets up again in dew time.

"First Bread Prize Will Be Harder to Win Next Year Because More People Will Be Using Gold Medal Flour"

Says MRS. JOHN MILGRIM, Quincy, Illinois



"I have won first prize with my bread at the Adams County Fair for two years in succession, using Gold Medal 'Kitchen-tested' Flour on both occasions. But it probably will be harder to win next year because more people will be using Gold Medal Flour."

This same success in your baking. Because all GOLD MEDAL Flour is "Kitchen-tested" before it comes to you. Breads, cakes, biscuits, pastries are baked from every batch—in a home oven just like your own. And only the flour that successfully passes this "Kitchen-tested" is allowed to go out to you. You get only the flour that has been tested for baking success in advance!



every sack of GOLD MEDAL "Kitchen-tested" Flour. And new ones appear every 3 months. You'll enjoy making these new baking creations—every one has been simplified and "Kitchen-tested" for perfection. So ask for GOLD MEDAL "Kitchen-tested" Flour today and get the full set of recipes free. WASHBURN CROSKOPF COMPANY GENERAL MILLS, INC., MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

Listen in to Betty Crocker, 10:30 A. M. (Eastern Standard Time), Wednesdays and Fridays—N. B. C. Station WCAE

GOLD MEDAL FLOUR "Kitchen-tested"

Every Wednesday Night at 9:00 (Eastern Standard Time), Gold Medal Fast Freight—Coast-to-Coast—Columbia Stations WJAS-WLBW

oad of Christmas Cheer



angled Tree VOLGER McKINSEY Baltimore Sun

was a forest that bore angled trees, like the pines that dwell everywhere to see; as set them glowing, or in land they're growing, and I never knew—but I very glad it's true!

By have green branches like the pines that dwell in the forest of chestnuts by the sea; that beauty a gradual comes as their swaying boughs memorial gleams.

I remember an old tale of a fairy where grows an angled tree, a December the loving and and snowy miles— and all songs and smiles— our hall.

and I'm living where people live with a pine tree in garden all expands this for little children with a love to kiss!

and I do love Sesame Meich made a box like memory of his vaudeville moreish!" he ex- she had finished, and ended. "If you'll play a piece, I'll try to sing." They alternated at a story, then music. that even laughter one hunger much long- it slipped to the boys riches prepared by her.

The boys collected from their own bags filling passengers, and unced: number will be Santa His sledge is stalled his reindeer lame, and across the snow pur- this party? been performing mir- making car, now ap- bright red handker- lead, a tissue paper poor's fur coat, with me collar over it, and from various boxes sleeves. Then, with ter, he passed down ing a pack looking pair of will-colored

ber Will Be Santa in Person."

fastened with safety back he dispensed to l containing a sand- fruit and a few further suggestion, dren were drinking per train cups; and was finished, the out. "The play's come! Mer- chich was echoed all Newspaper Union.]