

APPENDIX

THE CHRISTMAS STAMP IN AMERICA

(Reprinted from *The Outlook*,¹ October 3, 1908.)

Last year, on July sixth, *The Outlook* contained an article on "The Christmas Stamp," by Jacob Riis. Mr. Riis had been struck by the possibilities of the government stamp in Denmark, put on sale each year in the holidays, to aid the anti-tuberculosis fight in the little kingdom. He desired to transplant it to America, and had suggested that the National Anti-Tuberculosis Society should take it up with the Government. But the United States postal authorities did not view the scheme with favor, and the workers in the Anti-Tuberculosis Society were overwhelmed by more pressing duties. So Jacob Riis, being a wise man, cast the seed into the furrow by publishing the story in *The Outlook*, and then left it to grow in its own way.

It took root, of all places, in the most conservative little state in the Union, not usually given to new ideas—the State of Delaware. Delaware, as a state, was doing nothing whatever to fight tuberculosis. A small Anti-Tuberculosis Society

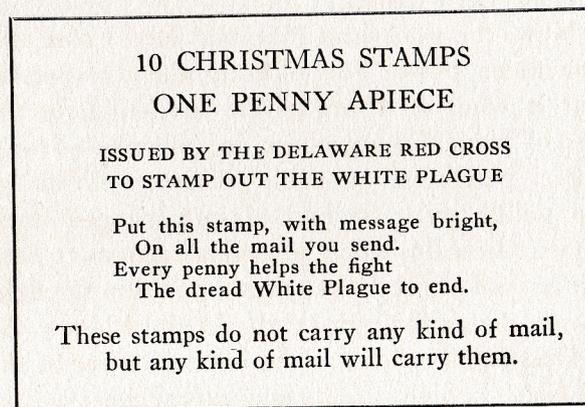
¹This article was written by Miss Bissell for *The Outlook*.

was struggling along with no money, with a dispensary without a nurse, and able to give its destitute patients advice and nothing else, and with a sanitarium consisting of a few open shacks in an upland meadow. Necessity is the mother of invention, traditionally, and the anti-tuberculosis cause in Delaware was in dire necessity. Jacob Riis's article came home with force to some of those interested who were also enlisted in the membership of the Delaware branch of the American Red Cross.

Now, the American National Red Cross is a tremendous power for meeting the unexpected. That is what it is organized for—to help the cause of humanity anywhere, in any crisis of war, famine, pestilence or public disaster. With its keen public spirit, it had already ranged itself against tuberculosis, and given instructions to each state branch to take what part it could in the fight all over the nation against the White Plague. So the Delaware branch had the central power of the Red Cross behind it in its new experiment; and as the Red Cross stands in extremely close relations with the Government, it had a peculiarly good chance to issue a stamp without interference from the postal authorities.

The seed, therefore, germinated under favorable conditions. What grew from it in the three weeks before Christmas last year was, like Jack and his Beanstalk, a sort of holiday fairy story.

To begin with, the design of the Christmas Stamp² was made for love, the printers issued it at cost, and the advertising department of a great company prepared the advertising campaign as a free gift. The Wilmington street-cars carried its muslin banners on their fenders for a fortnight, and the dry-goods stores gave the muslin. The stamps, at a penny apiece, were sold from the sheet, and also in envelopes of tens, twenty-fives and fifties marked like this:



Such an envelope system looks as easy as it is attractive. But to put one hundred thousand

² The Christmas Stamp of 1907 was designed by Miss Emily P. Bissell, Secretary of the Delaware Red Cross, and drawn by Mrs. Lewis C. Vandegrift. It was printed by the Charles L. Story Co. of Wilmington and Leonhardt and Co., Philadelphia. The advertising was prepared by the duPont Company, and Leigh Mitchell Hodges, of the *North American*, gave most valuable help. General Charles Bird, the head of the Delaware Red Cross, and Henry M. Canby, the treasurer, were also most active in the work.

stamps into ten-stamp envelopes is no joke; and some one had to do it. That is where the New Century Club of Wilmington came in. Its five hundred members held "stamp bees." They took the sheets of stamps in the morning, counted and divided them, and had them ready in the afternoon for the stores and the table in the post-office corridor, where two girls in the uniform of Red Cross nurses sold them all day to the senders of Christmas mail. Up and down the state the women's clubs sold the stamps and helped the work. So did the school children.

The first stamps were out on December seventh—eighteen days before Christmas. That was the Denmark post-office rule—but it was a mistake in hustling America. It was too late, for America begins to buy Christmas "stickers" in November. The Christmas Stamp found footing in spite of this, but soon suffered from the lack of time to print and distribute it so as to meet the sudden demand. It reached Philadelphia on the twelfth of December, and so had only twelve days to run there. Backed by the Pennsylvania Red Cross, and supported mightily by the *North American*, its sale in the department stores and elsewhere mounted day by day, the presses running day and night by this time to supply it. A reproduction in miniature of a big poster used to tell the story is shown on the next page.

When the eighteen days of the campaign were over, there were nearly four hundred thousand

stamps sold, and nearly three thousand dollars cleared for the anti-tuberculosis fight.

But that was not the greatest result of the campaign. What Jacob Riis had insisted on in his article proved true—that the Christmas Stamp is inspiring and educational, quite apart from its

GOOD WILL TO MEN
THE CHRISTMAS STAMPS

Issued by the Delaware Red Cross
to stamp out the White Plague.

ONE PENNY APIECE

They will not carry any kind of mail
but any kind of mail will carry them.

Put Them On	CHRISTMAS	Letters Packages Cards.
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Every Stamp Means A Bullet In The
Fight Against Tuberculosis.

money-raising side. The vast majority of Delawareans, before the Stamp came out and the newspapers wrote up its mission, believed consumption to be incurable, non-contagious and hereditary.³ They had never thought about either curing or preventing it. It was a scourge of God, to be deplored and let alone. The Christmas Stamp waked up every town, every post-office, every club, every school. "What does it mean?"

³ Dr. John J. Black, of New Castle, had been a pioneer in tuberculosis work, but had found few to follow him.

was the universal question; and Delaware, when it found out, did not forget.

The first thing that the Delaware Red Cross did was to bring the big Pennsylvania Anti-Tuberculosis Educational Exhibit to Wilmington, and send invitations broadcast through the state to the granges, the schools, the women's clubs, the doctors, the politicians, the labor unions, to come and hear lectures on tuberculosis, examine models for sanatoria, and learn the truth about consumption, its causes and cure. The Board of Education in Wilmington closed the schools on one day set apart for the purpose, and had every boy and girl march in line, with their teachers at their head, to attend the exhibit and hear a ten-minute talk on tuberculosis. Thousands of leaflets were given away with brief directions how to avoid tuberculosis or cure it in its first stages. From one end to the other the state was waked up. The next Legislature, in 1909, there is no reasonable doubt, will authorize state tuberculosis work.⁴

One thousand dollars was set aside by the Red Cross as a nucleus for a fund toward securing a new, up-to-date tuberculosis hospital. The rest has been used for the dispensary, in providing a first-rate trained nurse and supplying drugs and

⁴The 1909 Legislature created the Delaware Tuberculosis Commission, with an annual appropriation of \$15,000, the vote being unanimous in both houses. "Hope Farm" was bought by the Red Cross, and a sanitarium was soon erected there, now Brandywine Sanitarium, a state institution.

milk and eggs to destitute consumptives. All cases are visited by the nurse and supplied with what they need, from bedding and linen to sputum cups. Consumptives are taught how not to infect their families or neighborhoods. The meadow sanitarium has been helped by sending a capable nurse there to take charge, although only part of her salary is now being paid by the Stamp fund. All these details are given to show exactly what has been accomplished in one small corner of the United States by the application of *The Outlook* article of last July. It is now time to take a broader range.

The American National Red Cross, in its central organization, has considered the Christmas Stamp, and decided to adopt it all over the country this year (1908). Instead of the stamp being issued by private presses, the American Bank Note Company and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing will issue a much handsomer one; and Howard Pyle has furnished the design for it. Announced at the Anti-Tuberculosis Congress, the new stamp will be on sale in the fall. The thirty-three state branches of the Red Cross will have it on sale, and every reader of *The Outlook* buying it in his or her own state, will thus be contributing to anti-tuberculosis work in that state. New York, for example, will apply all moneys raised from the sale of the Christmas Stamp in New York to the day camps and other tuberculosis work in New York State. The central National

Red Cross will print the stamp and supply it to the state branches, but claims no part of the revenue beyond enough to pay for the printing. Each state is thus enabled to apply the money to the special work that needs it most; and each state that needs educational work—and what state does not?—will find the little penny stamp a messenger of inspiration. As Jacob Riis says: “Every one who sees this stamp on a letter or a post-card wants to know what it means. And when people want to know, the fight is won. It is because they do not know a few amazingly simple things that people die of tuberculosis.”⁵

The Delaware Red Cross has a sheaf—a highly prized one—of letters and telegrams that came last year from well-known men who saw the possibilities of the Christmas Stamp in America. Governor Stuart of Pennsylvania was one, Secretary Root another, William H. Taft a third to wish it God-speed. Jacob Riis’s letter, the Red Cross hopes, is a prophecy for this year’s greater campaign. Here it is:

Dear Miss Bissell:

Good luck to you in your work. Tell the people of Delaware that they never put hand to a greater, and that they shall live to see it bear such fruit as now they do not dream of. For in another year or two, please God, the whole country will follow suit, and then it is a question of the briefest span before consumption will be as rare as small-pox is now.

⁵The death-rate from tuberculosis has dropped one-half since 1907.