

CHARITY SEALS

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Your editor was very kind to ask that I give your readers a few paragraphs on Christmas seals and Charity stamps.

Naturally thinking in terms of Christmas seals and charity stamps my mind turns immediately to the Christmas Seal & Charity Stamp Society of which I am Secretary. This Society was formed in September, 1931, by several interested collectors who foresaw the need of such an organization and it has prospered in amazing steps. National, local and foreign seals and charity stamps have been brought to light from many sources and catalogues thereof are in the process of being published soon, many new contacts have been formed all over the globe and much interest has been stimulated in this very interesting branch of the stamp collecting hobby.

Another plan to bring before the membership pictures of the seals of the principal countries is the planographed check lists prepared by one of our members. To date two countries have been made up, Denmark and Sweden, and the check list of Norway is in the offing.

Each year the Christmas season brings a flood of seals, both old and new, and of course the collectors are all eager to get copies of each for their collection much as the U. S. collectors want the new issues just as they are issued. Every year more philatelic societies recognize the seal hobby, more magazines and philatelic publications entertain space for seal columns and our greatest compliment in recent years is the addition of National Tuberculosis seals to Scott's Specialized Catalog, listing and pricing the major and minor varieties.

There are many classes of both Christmas seals and Charity stamps. In this country in addition to the seals printed by the National Tuberculosis Assn. there are many state and local organizations printing and issuing charity stamps for all sorts of charities and causes. In the foreign field there are the National Associations as well as semi-postals issued in many countries which have postal value and an additional charge for various causes, principally of course tuberculosis. In addition both here and abroad seals are issued by various religions, for various funds, health seals, Red Cross, Sanitary

Fairs, Poster stamps and many others too numerous to mention. Ardent specialists collect advanced samples, proofs, progressive color proofs, essays, covers with seals tied on, buttons, letter heads, inserts, seal sale envelopes and all other literature pertaining to the sale of the various seals.

The first Christmas seal was conceived by Elinor Holboell during the Christmas rush at the post office in Copenhagen. He made this statement: "That all these friendly thoughts at Christmas time—written on Christmas post cards—could also serve charitable purposes, if every card was charged a very small, and voluntary rate." This was in 1903. In 1904 the first seal appeared and in November that year also Sweden came forth with their first seals which also proved successful. The first seal in this country was conceived by Miss Emily Bissell and was issued and sold by the Delaware Chapter of the American National Red Cross. The first seals were sold on Dec. 7, 1907 and by the addition of "Happy New Year" the sale was extended to New Year's Day, 1908. In all nearly \$4,000.00 worth of seals were sold. In 1908 the sale was extended to the nation by the American National Red Cross and \$135,000.00 was realized from the sale. From 1911 to 1918 the seals were issued by the American National Red Cross but sold by the National Association for the study and prevention of tuberculosis. In 1918 the seals were issued still by the American National Red Cross but sold by the National Tuberculosis Association. In 1919 both the Red Cross and the National Tuberculosis emblems appear on the seals. From 1920 on the seals have been issued and sold by the National Tuberculosis Association and in 1934 almost four million dollars was realized from the seal sale.

There are 66 major varieties listed by Scott of these seals and 59 minor varieties, not including of course essays, advance samples, imperfs., proofs, printer's marks and many more plate defects which of course are detected each year.

All in all, a collection of Christmas seals and Charity stamps, in addition to being very pretty and interesting, bring a certain amount of satisfaction to its owner in knowing that in collecting or assembling such a collection, he or she does someone some good.