

(Having recently been loaned a file of the Philadelphia Stamp News, including the issue of Dec 16 1911, containing the following interesting and (even now) informative article, I will type a few copies for reference DG)

RED CROSS SPECIAL
MERRY CHRISTMAS

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS STAMPS.
By Percy McG Mann.

Introductory Remarks.

Many the time we have heard the word pass saying the Red Cross Stamps and Seals were of no interest to stamp collectors as collectible varieties to be included in a postage stamp collection. We are of the same opinion, because the Red Cross stamps issued in America are not for postal use. The continuance of their issue at each yuletide has created enough of them to form an independent and individual collection of interest to postage stamp collectors, because such labels are generally used as seals for matter transferred through the posts. And anything used in connection with the posts should find a warm spot in the hearts of stamp collectors.

Formerly such stickers and labels were only considered as collectible as side-lines by side-line collectors; it has been our pleasure to see at each Christmas time a renewed interest taken in such stamps, and the demand for the previous years issues, by stamp collectors, when they have become obsolete tells us the truth that the majority of stamp collectors have at least one of the American National Red Cross stamps somewhere placed in their stamp collections. They would have them all if it were possible to get them. We ourselves have not all the varieties, but we are pleased at the present Holiday season to be able to present a little article on the Red Cross stamps, perhaps proving interesting to most of our readers, which will incorporate what information we have been able to gather about them, and to illustrate them where possible. Our thanks are due to the many friends who have contributed information and Red Cross stamps to our collection; some information and some stamps having been given us by Messrs. Walter D. Bush, Jr., of Wilmington, Del., Bert. J. Turner, of Winnipeg, Canada, A.F. Henkels and Gibson Weber, of Philadelphia.

The Originator.

It was the happy thought of Miss Emily P. Bissell, Secretary of the Delaware Chapter of The American National Red Cross, with offices located in Wilmington, Delaware, which caused to be issued in 1907 the first Red Cross stamps in the United States. Miss Bissell, who has always been an ardent worker in the fight against tuberculosis, conceived the idea of a Christmas stamp to raise funds to fight the scourge. Perhaps Miss Bissell had heard of the Danish Christmas stamps, but we rather imagine that her idea to issue these stamps under the auspices of the Delaware Chapter of the American National Red Cross, was quite original.

The 1907 Stamps.

Following her own idea to its conclusion, Miss Bissell designed a little label composed of holly leaves on either side of a Red Cross with the words "Merry Christmas" below, all within a square outline. Cuts of this design were prepared

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and the stamps were printed in red by Mr Chas.L.Story, of Wilmington, Delaware. Of these, before Christmas, 1907, 100,000 were printed, and they were sold in Delaware and the city of Philadelphia.

It was soon seen that the demand would be greater than the supply. Miss Bissell suggested that the sale of the Red Cross stamps should continue until New Years Day, 1908. This having been decided upon, a change was effected in the design, the words "Happy New Year" being included.

The 1908 Stamps.

The fight-on-tuberculosis movement by the sale of Red Cross stamps proving so successful the first season, preparations were soon made to supply the large demands for such stamps for the Christmas, 1908, season, and the matter was made a National one by the American National Red Cross. Mr Howard Pyle, a prominent artist, being interested contributed a design which was accepted for the 1908 stamps.

The movement started by the Delaware Chapter was conducted by the American National Red Cross in 1908, and the contract for the printing of the stamps was given to Mr Story, of Wilmington, Delaware. Mr.Story printed a million and over of them but it was soon apparent that the supply would be inadequate, so a printing house in Philadelphia and The American Bank Note Company, New York, took over the production of some of the stamps. Altogether 3,563,230 of the 1908 stamps were printed.

The Philadelphia printing concern used electros made from the original electros used by Mr Story for printing the stamps, both the Wilmington and Philadelphia productions being typographed, but the stamps produced by the American Bank Note Co were lithographed.

The difference in the typographed and lithographed stamps is noticeable not only in the workmanship but in the designs, which can be seen at a glance at the illustrations. The typographed stamp has right-angled corners, while the lithographed stamp has rounded corners. The "90" in "1908" is larger in the lithographed, as is the "C" in "Christmas", etc.

Both types of the 1908 stamps were printed in red with green holly leaves, the Wilmington and Philadelphia printings being of slightly different shades, which being which we do not know; the lithographed type showing blended red shading in the leaves. A sheet of the typographed stamps in our possession contains 250 stamps, 18 rows of 14 stamps except that the first space of the ninth and eighteenth rows are blank. Whether this was printed in Wilmington or Philadelphia we are unaware.

The 1909 Stamps.

In May, 1909, at the suggestion of Mr Joseph A. Steinmetz, of Philadelphia, a competitive design contest was conducted by the American National Red Cross, the success of which was apparent because over a thousand designs were submitted in competition.

Carl Wingate, of New York, submitting the winning design, and this was used for the 1909 stamps. He was awarded the first prize of \$100, and the second prize of \$50 was given to Auguste Bissiri, of South Framingham, Massachusetts. Ten others received honorable mention; to them was given a prize of \$10 each. The winning designs and the others submitted in the contest were exhibited in various cities of the country

which created considerable comment.

Considerable excitement was caused in early December of 1909 by the action of Great Britain's post office authorities refusing admittance to the country of mail bearing these stamps. After some little persuasion on the part of this government the British post office rescinded their ruling in the matter and the mail bearing these stamps was admitted. Today they have taken the style of "seal" and are to be used on the backs of letters and packages only.

The inability of Mr Story to provide the stamps in sufficient quantities to be distributed on time throughout the country, especially in the Western States, lost him the contract for printing the 1909 stamps. They were produced by government printing offices in various sections of the country. The 1909 stamps, Mr Wingates Prize Design, were printed in sheets of 100, 10 rows of 10. The Red Cross, the holly berries and the little crosses within the outside border line are in red, the rest of the design being green.

The New Hampshire Chapter overprinted the Red Cross stamps of 1909 with "New Hampshire" in sans-serif capitals in carmine.

The 1910 Stamps.

The 1910 design was one of the honorable mention designs submitted in the 1909 contest. The usual custom of having holly leaves on the stamp was excluded and the 1910 stamps show a pretty design of poinsettia. The flowers in the four corners, the Red Cross in the center, the double circle containing the ~~PHILADELPHIA~~ inscriptions and the outline around the cross are in red, the balance of the design being in green.

The 1910 stamp was designed by Mrs Guion Thompson, of Waterbury, Conn. These were also printed by the government offices to supply all sections of the country as quickly as possible

The 1911 Stamps.

The 1911 design is a very pretty one, showing as it does a little Christmas scene of "The Old Home Among the Cedars" covered with snow. As usual the Red Cross is in red, the light in the windows and a holly berry at either end of "Happy New Year" in the same color, while the other parts are in green. They were placed on sale in Philadelphia on November 27th.

The design was made by Anton Rudert, under the direction of F.D.Millet, of Washington, D.C.

This years stamps take on the name of "seal" more readily because the design is round like a seal, but the stamps are square and perforated as usual. They are issued under the auspices of the American National Red Cross, but the sale is being conducted by the National Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis, which has had charge of their preparation and distribution. They are being printed by the Eureka Specialty Printing Co, Scranton, Pa.

(The above article carried illustrations in red, of both types of the 1907 and 1908 issues, and the one type of 1909, 1910, and 1911. The remainder of the text deals with various local seals)