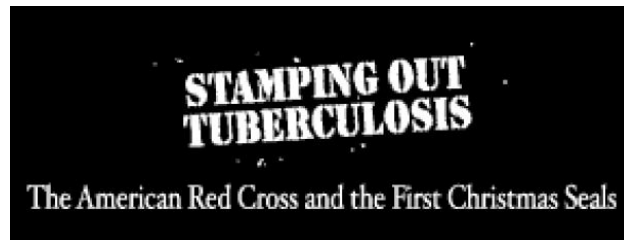


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Before the invention of antibiotics in the 1940s, tuberculosis (TB) was one of the world's deadliest killers. Thousands of Americans died annually from the spread of this airborne disease. No class, ethnic group or region of the country was immune. Though the specific bacteria that carried the disease had been discovered in 1882, the treatments available to patients at the time were relatively primitive. Rest, proper nutrition and "clean" air at sanatoriums or special hospitals located in rural areas were the only treatments known to work.

The idea of using Christmas Seals to combat Tuberculosis began with Danish postal clerk Elnar Holbell in 1904. Stamps could be sold for a penny each and the proceeds would go to support the care of tuberculosis patients. By 1907 the idea had spread to the United States through an article written by Danish-born journalist Jacob Riis in the popular magazine, *The Outlook*. Emily Bissell, secretary of the Delaware Chapter of the American Red Cross, seized upon the idea to help a struggling tuberculosis sanatorium in Delaware. Later, the American Red Cross further developed the idea as an annual, nationwide campaign, enlisting the talents of many of this nation's best-known artists and illustrators.



1904 Seal from First Campaign in Denmark
Artist and Lithographer: Alfred Jacobsen
Private Collection

The American Lung Association continues to sell Christmas Seals annually and it remains a vital source of revenue for their work against lung diseases. Though the focus of the campaign has shifted from tuberculosis to lung diseases, like asthma, and the greeting inscribed on the seal no longer reads "Merry Christmas" but "Season's Greetings," the ultimate aim of the program remains the same—compassion and help for those who are afflicted.



1907

Artist: Emily P. Bissell, 1861-1948

Lithographer: Theodore Leonhardt & Son

Funds raised: \$ 3,000

Emily Bissell designed the first Christmas Seal for the American Red Cross and was the originator of the first drive in the United States to fight tuberculosis. Born in 1861 to an affluent Delaware family, she could have lived a sheltered and comfortable life. However, she chose to become a social worker, a profession she practiced until her death in 1948. She began her social work in 1876 and was active in founding

the first social services organization or settlement house in Wilmington, Delaware. She also lobbied for a child labor law. In 1907 she was asked to raise funds for a local experimental tuberculosis hospital. As a contributor to popular magazines she was familiar with an article about Denmark's pioneer Christmas Seal drive written by the popular journalist Jacob Riis. Bissell adopted the idea and organized her own campaign in Delaware. As secretary of the Delaware Chapter of the American Red Cross, she obtained permission to use the Red Cross emblem in her design. On May 31, 1986 she was honored with a 15 cent postage stamp that bears her image.



The 1907 seal shows a wreath of holly surrounding the familiar greeting "Merry Christmas." Two days after the first supply went on sale more than 30,000 were sold and a new supply was needed. Since the Wilmington printer was swamped, one from Philadelphia was chosen. The distance between the two cities caused a delay in getting the Christmas Seals printed in time for the holiday. Adding the words "Happy New Year" solved the problem.



1908
Artist: Howard Pyle, 1853-1911
Lithographer: Theodore Leonhardt & Son
Funds raised: \$135,000

Often called the “Father of American Illustration,” Howard Pyle established an extraordinarily influential art school in 1903. Located in Wilmington, Delaware, and Cjadds Ford, Pennsylvania, it is known today as the Brandywine School. There, Pyle taught dozens of artists, including well-known illustrators such as N.C. Wyeth, Maxfield Parrish and Jessie Wilcox Smith. Pyle was instrumental in promoting his students’ work to his publishers to start them on long and productive careers. Many of the works he illustrated were books he wrote himself, such as *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*. Most of his illustration were in his distinctive pen and ink style comparable to the wood-engraved images that were common during his childhood. When color was added to his compositions, he used rich earth tones against brighter primaries with areas of deep shade and bright light. His work was highly prized by his publishers such as *Century*, *Everybody’s* and *Harpers*. The Brandywine Conservancy and the Delaware Art Museum are two institutions that maintain and exhibit his works.



Although Pyle’s seal is similar in style to the 1907 seal by Emily Bissell, there are many differences. Pyle’s design is a more disciplined green and red rendering of the wreath with an opening at the top. The seal is somewhat larger to allow for the words “American Red Cross” and “1908” along its perimeter. In 1908, the Red Cross used this seal in its first coast-to-coast campaign.



1909

**Artist: Carl Wingate, 1876-Unknown
Lithographer: Strobridge Lithographing
Company**

Funds raised: \$250,000

Carl Wingate, a pupil of renowned artist and teacher Walter Shirlaw, was a painter, illustrator, etcher and writer. Wingate's 1909 Christmas Seal design was the winner of a national competition sponsored by the American Red Cross. Originally from Brooklyn, New York, he spent much of his time in both Milton and Marblehead, Massachusetts. At the time of the 1909 Christmas Seal competition, he was living and working in New York City. Today, a collection of 14 of his drypoint etchings is owned by the Museum of the City of New York.

According to the July 1909 *Red Cross Bulletin*, more than 1,200 designs were received in response to the Christmas Seal design competition announcement, which far exceeded expectations. Requirements were for a simple design with distinctive lettering and the prominent use of the red cross. Many motifs were well executed and showed artistic merit but could not be considered because they would not work well when reduced to the size of a postage stamp. The Fine Arts Federation of New York set up a jury at the request of the American Red Cross. In addition to first place, twelve other prizes were awarded. All of the drawings were exhibited in May 1909 at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.



1910

Artist: Frances Lee Thompson, 1881-1964

Lithographer: Theodore Leonhardt & Son

Funds raised: \$300,000

Frances Lee Thompson lived near Litchfield, Connecticut, when she made her Christmas Seal design in 1910. Although little is known about her work, family history describes Frances as “involved in the arts” and her daughter as an “artist.” Both shared a strong interest in stamp collecting, which may have led to her designing this Christmas Seal. Thompson also designed Christmas cards as late as 1927 which were labeled “made by Mrs. Guion Thompson.”



By 1910 the phrase “Christmas Stamps” was causing confusion. Many people who bought Christmas Seals thought they were buying “postage stamps” to pay for mail services. During 1910 the campaign name was officially changed to Christmas Seals.

Here the red cross emblem dominates the seal’s symmetrical design. Stylized poinsettias and tulips fill the four corners and quadrants of the cross. In this image are errors that occurred in the printing process. Note the movement of outlines to the right.



1911

Artist: Anton Rudert, 1889-1964

**Typographer: Eureka Specialty Printing
Company**

Funds raised: \$320,000

Anton Rudert, a mural painter in his youth, was just twenty-two years old when he designed the 1911 Christmas Seal. He exhibited at the Salons of American Art, an offshoot of the more conservative Society of Independent Artists. The Salons of American Art organized and held nonjuried exhibitions between 1922 and 1936. Rudert was also a well-known art expert with the Parke-Bernet Galleries and its predecessor, the American Art Association, for 51 years. Widely respected for his knowledge of painting, he was also a judge of arms and armor. He frequently appeared at art auctions as an agent bidding for works by such masters as Van Dyke and Titian.

Unlike earlier seal designs, his is the first to show a snow scene. The image has the appearance of a coin-within the circular outline, a cabin sits between two fir trees and is topped with a relatively large red cross emblem. It is the first seal in which typography was used instead of lithography. Typography produces stamps through a letters press, which makes an impression. In lithography, an image is inscribed on a smooth plate.



1912
Artist: John H. Zeh, Life Dates Unknown
Lithographer: Strobridge Lithographing Company
Funds raised: \$402,256

Although John H. Zeh was a finalist in the 1909 Christmas Seal competition, it wasn't until 1912 that this Santa Claus design of his was selected. A handbill featuring an illustration of the 1912 seal stated the following:

WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN THE FIGHT

BECAUSE one death in every ten in your locality is caused by tuberculosis.

BECAUSE every seal you buy will be used to fight consumption in your community.

BECAUSE the tuberculosis cannot be stamped out unless you do your part.



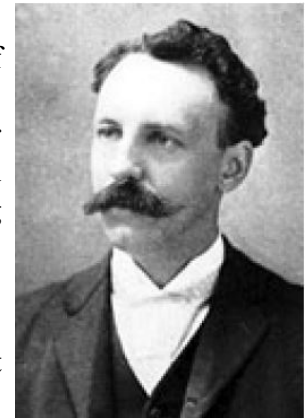
1913

Artist: Charles Jay Budd, 1859-1926

Lithographer: American Bank Note Company

Funds raised: \$449,504

Charles Jay Budd received his training at the Hudson River Institute, the Art Student's League of New York City and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, where he was a pupil of the renowned artist, Thomas Eakins. Budd began his professional career in Philadelphia in 1885 as an illustrator for magazines and children's books. In 1890 he moved to New York and began contributing regularly to *Life* magazine from 1894 to 1917. During his retirement he ran a successful artistic gift manufacturing business.



The 1913 seal is different from other years because of its oblong shape. The central scene is of Santa Claus and his sleigh being driven by eight reindeer over a snowy landscape with the aurora borealis shining above the hills. A decorative border of holly, text scrolls and red crosses surrounds the whole seal.



1914

Artist: Benjamin S. Nash, Life Dates

Unknown

**Lithographer: Strobridge Lithographing
Company**

Funds raised: \$555,854

“The Executive Committee of the American Red Cross has just officially approved the design for the 1914 Red Cross Christmas Seal, shown in the accompanying picture. Here you see the reproduction of the little stamp, which will be sold throughout the United States during the coming Christmas season to help in the unrelenting campaign which is being waged in the country against the white plague [tuberculosis]... The 1914 stamp is brightly colored with red and green predominating. It is taken up almost entirely by the laughing, ruddy, applecheeked face of Santa Clause. The background in vivid green represents part of a Christmas tree. Instead of the oblong design as used during the 1913 Christmas season, the 1914 stamp is square-practically the size of an ordinary postage stamp.”

From the *American Red Cross Magazine*, July 1914



1915

Artist: Benjamin S. Nash, Life Dates

Unknown

Lithographer: Andrew B. Graham Company

Funds raised: \$760,000

“It was interesting to note that the purity of the conventional design appealed more to the artist than to the popular fancy. The public likes better the seal which arouses its imagination by the face of the merry Santa Claus, or the laden boughs of a Christmas tree. The earlier stamp designs were composed of a red cross surrounded by holly in convention form. But the seals of the last few years have depended upon the benevolent face or form of Santa Clause to enhance their popularity.”

Mabel Boardman, Secretary of the American Red Cross, from her book *Under the Red Cross Flag*, 1915



1916

Artist: Thomas M. Cleland, 1880-1964

Lithographer: Strobridge Lithographing Company

Funds raised: \$3,857,085

Born and raised in New York City, Thomas Maitland Cleland became one of this nation's premier graphic artists and typographers. At age 15, Cleland convinced his family to send him to the Artist Artisan Institute, a struggling art school in New York City. It was there that he became fascinated by graphic design and typesetting. His first success as a graphic artist came when he submitted a series of drawings to a trade journal, the *American Bookmaker*. Later, he sold a decorative border to an illustrated sports magazine for five dollars. Flushed with these small successes, he left art school for good at age 16.

With the help of a family friend who was a printer, Cleland began teaching himself the art of typesetting and printing by working on pamphlets, handbills and booklets. In 1907 he became the art editor of *McClure's Magazine* and also did a thriving business in advertising design. His clients included Pierce Arrow and Marmon automobiles. He developed the design formats for *Fortune* and *Newsweek* and included book publisher Alfred A. Knopf among his admirers. In 1921 Cleland published *A Grammar of Color*, a design handbook that is still a standard among graphic artists and designers.



1917
Artist: Thomas M. Cleland, 1880-1964
Lithographer: Strobridge Lithographing Company
Funds raised: \$1,815,109

The 1917 seal by Thomas M. Cleland is a simple, yet elegant snow-covered evergreen tree, bearing a shield with a red cross. The chaste tree is a sharp contrast to his previous year's design of a cheerful Santa. The United States had entered World War I in April of 1917, and a more sober and dignified look to the annual Christmas Seal was called for. As part of the publicity, a popular weekly magazine of the time called *The Outlook* carried images of the seals on the cover of its December 12 issue. The caption beneath the seals read:

SAVING THE WOUNDED
HELPING THE CHILDREN
THE NEW RED CROSS
FIGHTING TUBERCULOSIS
REBUILDING CIVILIZATION



1918

Artist: Charles A. Winter, 1869-1942

**Lithographer: Strobridge Lithographing
Company**

Funds raised: \$2,500,000

Born in Cincinnati, Charles Allan Winter left school at age twelve to work in his uncle's business. At age fifteen he enrolled in the Cincinnati Art Academy part time and continued to work. Eventually, Winter was able to attend the academy full time and in 1894 won a scholarship to study at the art academies in Paris and Rome for the next three years. In 1896 his allegorical paintings *Antigone* and *Egyptienne* were exhibited at the Paris Salon. Two years later, he received a commission to teach portraiture at the St. Louis School of Fine Arts. In 1901 Winter left St. Louis to open his own studio in New York City, where he continued painting and illustrating for the next thirty years. During his years in New York, Winter received commissions to illustrate for popular magazines like *Collier's Weekly*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Hearst's Century*, *Scribners*, and many others.

Winter was also hired by the American Bank Note Company to make figure compositions to be engraved for bank notes and bonds. It was this type of work that probably led to his selection for the design of the 1918 Christmas Seal. Designed at the close of World War I, the 1918 seal is patriotic in theme, with the figure "Liberty" bearing both a torch and shield surrounded by holly leaves. To avoid competition and confusion with other fund drives during the war, the annual seal sale was suspended. Everyone who joined the annual American Red Cross Roll Call was given a set of seals.



1919
Artist: Ernest Hamlin Baker, 1889-1975
Lithographer: Strobridge Lithographing Company
Funds raised: \$3,872,533

As a teenager Ernest Hamlin Baker took a fifteen dollar correspondence course in drawing and studied the drawings of the famous nineteenth century American cartoonist Thomas Nast. A local Democratic newspaper in Baker's hometown of Poughkeepsie, New York, offered him a job as a cartoonist during a hotly contested election for county sheriff, paying three dollars a piece. His unflattering cartoons of the incumbents paid off, and the Democrats won the election. After college at Colgate University, Baker was eventually contracted to do a series of covers, portraits and maps for *Fortune* magazine. Baker is often described as the "father" of *Time* magazine portraiture, where he developed a style known as "facial reporting." Baker's first cover portrait for *Time* appeared in 1939. Some of his more popular portraits included Dwight D. Eisenhower, Earl Warren and Richard M. Nixon.



The 1919 seal marks the end of American Red Cross participation in the Christmas Seal program. Following the 1919 campaign, the entire program would be run by the National Tuberculosis Association and its successor the American Lung Association. The design for the 1919 seal includes both the red cross and the double barred cross of Lorraine used by the National Tuberculosis Association.