

HISTORY OF CHRISTMAS SEALS

When you see the Christmas seal do you ever wonder how it started?

It was born in Denmark, home of the fairy tales of Hans Christian Anderson.

Einar Holboell, a Copenhagen postal clerk, was sorting mail one snowy afternoon before Christmas, 1903, when he thought of the idea of a penny stamp to swell a fund for children's hospitals.

Authorized by King Christian,



Merry Christmas

the first Christmas seals were sold in Copenhagen in 1904.

Holboell's scheme outgrew his wildest imaginings, for before his death in 1927, he lived to see it spread to 45 countries, including Korea, India and French-Indochina.

The seals found their way to America on letters and packages and first attracted the attention of Jacob Riis who wrote an article about them. Few people, however, were interested in the idea.

Then, in the autumn of 1907, Emily Bissell, a public health worker, concerned about the fate of a small sanatorium, recalled the article and sat down to sketch America's first Christmas seal, a wreath of holly encircling the words "Merry Christmas."

With 50,000 stamps printed and nowhere to sell them, Miss Bissell at last enlisted the aid of a columnist on a Philadelphia newspaper. The idea caught and within a few weeks \$3,000 was collected.

The first nation-wide sale was held the following year and was backed by newspapers all over the country, religious and civic groups and sponsored by the American Red Cross and the National Tuberculosis association.

The Santa Legend Needs Explanation Psychologist Says

"Children 'enjoy Santa Claus more when they know what he really is," Duke University psychologist Dr. Gelolo McHugh says.

"No one enjoys finding out that he has been kept in the dark," says the specialist in psychology, "and children are no exception." The real meaning of Santa Claus is the joy of giving to make others happy, says Dr. McHugh, and no child should be deprived of this privilege.

Later parents have the difficult job of explaining that there is no jolly old Christmas man, Dr. McHugh points out. When the truth comes out the parent has placed himself in the position of being responsible for Santa's disappearance.

Santa should be a part of Christmas, however, Dr. McHugh believes, but from the very beginning, he should be treated as a wonderful pretend game. This method has proved successful with many children, the specialist says, including his own two young boys.

"MERRY CHRISTMAS" In Other Languages

Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!

The spirit conveyed by these words is the same in all countries, but the words themselves some-

Children, who love to make-believe, are perfectly capable of enjoying Santa, reindeer, chimneys and all, while knowing in their hearts, when they stop to ask themselves, that he is a pretend person, he says.

The child who takes part in the Santa game doesn't have to wonder on Christmas morning why Santa didn't like him well enough to bring the expensive toys that were ordered from the North Pole, the psychologist points out.

The young Indianapolis mother who recently wrote a Christmas letter for her 5-year-old son just before her death in an airplane crash, had wonderful understanding, Dr. McHugh says. She ended her letter by telling her little son that anyone who loves and gives is real Santa."

times fall harshly on American ears.

"Merry Christmas" in French has a soft and musical sound. It is "Joyeux Noel."

In Spain the greeting is "Feliz Pascuas," and in Italy, "Buon Natale." For Sweden it is "God Jul," and Norway, "Gladig Jul."

In Germany and Holland the greeting is a tongue-twister that will stump the average American. The Germans say "Froehliche Weihnachten" and the Dutch, "Plezierig Kerstfeest."

But whatever the language, the spirit behind this greeting is the same wherever there are men of goodwill.

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A Prayer For Christmas

GOD GRANT this day of Christmas dawn on one honest man.

On one happy child, secure in the perfect idealism of the very young. . .

On one act of pure generosity, consecrated to the Christ whose birth we celebrate now . . .

On one word of peace, spoken in faith to still the clamorous horror of cannon, bomb, and bullet . . .

On one deed performed for love and not for gain . . .

On one leader who himself is not led astray in arrogance but humbly guides others in the paths of goodness and true progress . . .

On one follower who is willing to play the role not blindly but with the alert and critical wisdom which is the heritage of all people . .

On one great human thought that will not be crushed and rent by the cynical, the hopeless, the greedy, and the ignorant. . . .

God grant that some essence of these miracles be performed in all of us, and we shall see a Christmas that is like unto the first one the angels watched over.

