

This Day in History... May 9, 1936

Opening of TIPEX

On May 9, 1936, the Third International Philatelic Exhibition (TIPEX) opened at Grand Central Palace in New York City. The exhibition included the issue of a four-stamp souvenir sheet, a visit from he Hindenburg, and more.

The show opened its doors to the public at 9:30 am that Saturday morning to thousands of excited collectors. The official opening ceremonies went underway at 1 pm when the US Army released a flock of carrier pigeons from Rockefeller Plaza. Those pigeons carried invitations to President Franklin Roosevelt, Vice President John Nance Garner, the governors of all the states, and other US officials.

Shortly after that, President Roosevelt pressed a button in Washington, DC, that turned on the lights in the court of honor to signal the opening of



This sheet was issued on the opening day of TIPEX.



FDR was the patron of the show and pressed a button in Washington, DC to turn on the flood lights and officially open TIPEX.

the exhibition. He also sent a telegram to be read that said, "I am deeply sorry that I cannot get to New York to see the great stamp show before it closes. My congratulations on its success and on the interest it has aroused among the army of stamp collectors throughout the country."

Controversial Postmaster General James A. Farley (of Farley's Follies fame) spoke at the opening ceremonies, stating, "The decade that has elapsed since the last meeting of the International Philatelic Exhibition in this city has been a most important period for the advancement of stamp collecting." Farley then went to the US Post Office booth to sell the first TIPEX souvenir sheet to the show's chairman, Alfred F. Lichtenstein.

The Post Office booth had 12 windows that serviced long lines of collectors awaiting their TIPEX souvenir sheets, which were issued on the first day of the show. The souvenir sheet reproduced four previous US stamps commemorating the Connecticut Tercentenary (#772), the California Pacific Exposition (#773), the Michigan Centennial (#775), and the Texas Centennial (#776). These stamps were chosen to represent the four corners of the United States. In all, 1,121,056 sheets were sold over the course of the show.



Earhart had a display of airmail stamps in the show's competition, but didn't win. She did, however, give out the awards to the winners.

Visitors to the show were treated to 3,000 frames from 900 exhibitors spanning three floors, for a total of 125,000 square feet of exhibition space. There were 101 dealers present, with Scott Stamp and Coin Company holding the largest booth ever constructed up to that time.

One of the show's major highlights was the arrival Hugo Eckener and his airship Hindenburg on May 10. Eckener gave a speech and expressed his thanks to collectors, who had made his flight, especially his "Around the World Flight," possible. That flight was largely financed by the sale of special covers to collectors.

As they had done before, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing brought a portable printing press for their popular booth. Throughout the show, they printed TIPEX souvenir sheets as visitors watched, however, they made sure to destroy all of these prints.

The show concluded on May 17 and was considered a great success. Collectors would have to wait 11 years for the next show, CIPEX, which was delayed a year to celebrate the 100th anniversary of America's first stamps.



1936 TIPEX Poster Stamp

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