

This Day in History... July 20, 2012

Modern Imperforates



Major League Baseball All-Stars Imperforate stamps

On July 20, 2012, the USPS issued the first of several modern stamps in imperforate press sheets, which caused quite a stir in the stamp world!

The US Post Office has issued imperforate uncut press sheets in the past. In 1902, some stamps were sold in this format to commercial users of stamp vending and affixing machines. When collectors found out, they demanded the stamps be made available to them too, and they were.

One of the most famous stories of uncut press sheets is the Farley's Follies of the 1930s. When Postmaster General James A. Farley gave imperforate ungummed sheets to friends and the public heard about it, there was an uproar. In response, the Post Office re-issued all of the stamps he had gifted as uncut sheets. You can read the full story [here](#).

Beginning in 1994 with the Legends of the West sheet, the USPS began issuing uncut press sheets specifically for collectors, though these sheets did have perforations.

Then on July 20, 2012, the USPS issued the Major League Baseball All-Stars stamps. A limited number of these stamps were released as press sheets with die cut perforations. To the surprise of many collectors, officials then issued a small number of press sheets without perforations.

The uncut sheets were only available in Kansas City, Missouri, yet most sold out immediately. In an instant, the imperforate stamp sheets became modern rarities. For example, only 75,000 Baseball All-Star se-tenant sheets were issued compared to 118,000 Bugs Bunny sheets with the 10th stamp imperforate.

In a controversial move, the editors of *Scott Catalogue* announced they would not list or give numbers to these stamps because they did not fit Scott guidelines. This decision was strongly debated since the imperforate stamps are valid for postage. Two years later, Scott reversed its decision and assigned minor catalogue numbers to these stamps.

In 2013, imperforate press sheets continued to be made available to the public. Collectors began cutting up the sheets and using individual stamps as postage, creating a new demand for used imperforate examples.

The USPS continued to issue select stamps in imperforate uncut press sheets through 2016. The last one of 2016 was the Chinese New Year stamp, issued on February 5, 2016. The USPS was relatively silent on the issue of new uncut imperforate press sheets for some time, but eventually said they didn't plan to issue any more at the time, but might consider it in the future. Finally, in 2021, new stamps were released in imperforate uncut press sheets and have continued to be issued into 2023.

Imperforate-Between and Imperforate-Within Stamps

In an interesting turn of events, some stamp booklets issued between 2016 and 2019 were sold in full uncut sheets with some stamps partially imperforate. Press sheets of sheet stamps don't have these imperforate varieties – only booklet press sheets do. When these sheets are finished into booklets, the booklets are cut apart. But on unfinished press sheets the booklets remain attached. This makes some stamp blocks and pairs horizontally or vertically imperforate between – where the cut would have been made between two different booklets.

Unfinished press sheets also include some even scarcer varieties – blocks of four stamps imperforate both horizontally and vertically within having perforations appearing only around the outside of the block. These blocks contain stamps from four different booklets. These stamps went unnoticed for some time and only the USPS knows exactly how many were produced.



Imperforate between "The Snowy Day" block

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