

# This Day in History... July 16, 1934

## National Parks Issue

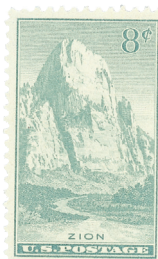
On July 16, 1934, the first stamp in the National Parks Series was issued, honoring Yosemite National Park. Decades before it had been suggested that more US stamps feature natural scenery, but most stamps stuck to the tradition of picturing deceased military and political leaders. When Stephen Mather became the first director of the National Park Service, he specifically recommended that national parks be pictured on US stamps, but no action was taken during his tenure.



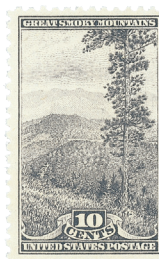
*Yosemite, California*



*Yellowstone, Wyoming*



*Zion, Utah*



*Great Smoky Mountains*

Over the years local postmasters created special cancels for their nearby national parks. Notably, in Colorado, one postmaster created a cancellation that announced the Rocky Mountain National Park's opening day.

Then in 1933, a newspaper editor shared his opinion in the Greeley (Colorado) Tribune Republican, "While the (Eastern) seaboard flocks to Europe on vacations, Uncle Sam misses a great opportunity by not issuing series of pictorials on the national parks. It would be Federal advertising paid for many times over by philatelists." That same year, President Franklin Roosevelt appointed Harold Ickes secretary of the Interior. Ickes also supported stamps honoring the national parks and declared 1934 to be National Parks Year to help further his cause. Ickes felt many Americans were unaware the federal government had set aside vast amounts of land for their enjoyment and for future generations.

In January 1934, Ickes met with President Roosevelt and Postmaster General James Farley and convinced them to issue a set of 10 stamps featuring America's national parks. Roosevelt was a stamp collector himself as well as a major supporter



*Grand Canyon, Arizona*



*Mt. Rainier, Washington*



*Mesa Verde, Colorado*



*Crater Lake, Oregon*



*Acadia, Maine*



*Glacier National Park, Montana*

of national parks (he would greatly expand the park system during his term in office).

The first stamp honoring Yosemite was issued on July 16, 1934. The stamp, printed in bright green, pictured the park's famed El Capitan. Between July and October, a total of 10

stamps were issued in the series. In addition to the 10 single stamps, there were also two imperforate national parks souvenir sheets issued. One was for the American Philatelic Society Exhibition and the other for the Trans-Mississippi Philatelic Exhibition. The national parks issue was popular with collectors and postal patrons alike, and was also part of one of the most infamous stamp stories in our nation's history...

### Farley's Follies

As the stamp sheets were coming off the printing press, Postmaster Farley removed a few sheets before they were gummed or perforated and autographed them for friends and family. He was creating precious philatelic rarities. Farley had been doing this since 1933, and once stamp collectors learned of what he was doing, they were outraged.

In 1935, the post office came up with a solution – the reissue in sheet form of all the stamps issued since March 4, 1933, in imperforate, ungummed condition, and in sufficient numbers to satisfy public demand. Among those stamps re-issued ungummed and imperforate were the national parks stamps.

**Mystic Stamp Company • Camden, NY 13316**

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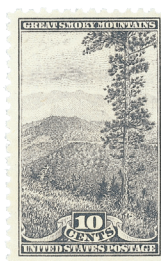
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