

This Day in History... November 17, 1989

World Stamp Show '89

On November 17, 1989, World Stamp Show '89 opened its doors and held 11 first-day ceremonies to mark the exposition.

The 1989 World Stamp Show marked a significant first. It was the first international stamp show ever sponsored by the US Postal Service.

The show began at 9:45 am on November 17, 1989, when Vice President Dan Quayle joined in the official opening ceremonies at the Washington Convention Center. One of the most memorable stamp issues from the show was issued on opening day. That was US #2433. It was issued imperforate, making it the first imperforate souvenir sheet since the SIPEX sheet of 1966.

The sheet featured four individual stamps – a reproduction of the original 90¢ Abraham Lincoln stamp of 1869 and three trial color proof combinations, which had been issued for the International Cotton Exposition in 1881. Held in Atlanta, Georgia, October 5 to December 31, 1881, this exposition was the first world's fair to be held in the South.

The 1989 souvenir sheet was available to collectors only through USPS philatelic centers and by mail order, and was valid for postage, as was each of the four individual stamps. Unfortunately, many postal clerks were unaware of this and were rejecting the stamps as invalid for postage. One confused clerk told a patron, "These are only pictures of stamps." Of course, customers who had paid \$3.60 – the highest value on a souvenir sheet at that time – were none too pleased to hear that their stamps weren't "real."

World Stamp Show '89 saw several other interesting new issues. The US issued a holographic envelope and the Soviet Union issued a sheet of stamps honoring American and Soviet space accomplishments. A total of 16 other countries issued stamps at the show, including St. Vincent, whose stamps pictured Disney characters at various American tourist sites.

The show also boasted a number of celebrity visitors, including Buzz Aldrin, who was part of the ceremonies of new space stamps, Olympic gold medalist Carl Lewis, aviation pioneers Dick Rutan and Jeana Yeager, and many others. Children got in to the show for free and there was a special dinosaur youth area celebrating the issue of new dinosaur stamps a month earlier.

Each day of the show had a special theme. These included Lincoln, Education, Old West (the USPS issued

their classic mail transportation stamps this day), Universal Postal Union, Space, International, Dinosaurs, Aviation, Transportation, America the Beautiful, Olympics, and Stamp Designers. The Universal Postal Union held its 20th Congress during the show and many stamp issues were related to this event.

There were special presentations, such as the Post Office of the Future, a video about express mail rockets delivering mail to other planets in 2089. The Smithsonian had several valuable stamps on display and collectors could buy stamps from 132 foreign countries.

World Stamp Show '89 ran for 14 days over a 17-day period, until December 3.



Issued in advance of the show to promote it.



These stamps paid the one-ounce international airmail letter rate.

Mystic Stamp Company • Camden, NY 13316

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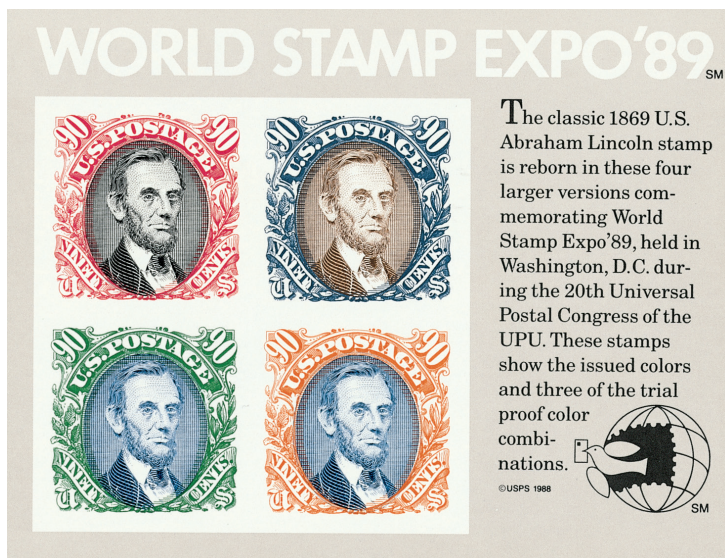
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