

This Day in History... December 10, 2014

Scarce Circus Souvenir Sheet



Imperforate Circus Souvenir Sheet issued on this day in 2014

On December 10, 2014, the USPS issued the scarce \$2 circus souvenir sheet. Issued in two formats, it sold out before it was even issued, and even scarcer errors were later discovered...

On May 5, 2015, the USPS issued eight Vintage Circus Poster stamps designed to look like circus posters of the 19th century. The set of eight stamps was so popular, the USPS decided to use the same theme for a souvenir sheet issued at the end of the year.

The USPS also decided that this would be the start of a new series of sorts, issuing souvenir sheets in both perforate and imperforate formats. However, these circus souvenir sheets wouldn't be available at any post office.

The imperforate Circus sheet was only available by mail order in press sheets of 12 souvenir sheets each. First made available on November 10, 2014, the USPS's entire stock of 10,000 press sheets was sold out in just over three weeks, on December 3. The stamps were officially issued a week later, on December 10, in Baraboo, Wisconsin.

The die-cut souvenir sheet was sold only with the Postal Service's Stamp Yearbook, which also sold out quickly. A total of 900,000 stamps were issued between both formats. The souvenir sheets featured a \$1 Circus Poster stamp similar to #4898 and two 50¢ Circus Wagon stamps like the 1990 5¢ stamps (#2452) in the Transportation series.

On February 23, 2015, one of Mystic's own colleagues discovered a remarkable error. The sheet was designed to be issued with a gilt edging around the selvage. The error sheet we discovered lacks the edging, and so far, is the only one we know to exist. The 12 panes had already been separated by the time the error was discovered.

It was also discovered in 2015 that there are several "freaks" in which the gold foil shifted between .4 mm and 1.3 mm. The misregistration is most noticeable in the bottom left corner of the \$1 stamp. On a normal sheet, there will be no white underneath the gold box surrounding the stamp, while the freak stamps will have white areas of varying sizes.

Mystic Stamp Company • Camden, NY 13316

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