

National Parks, 1934 and Beyond by The Editor

Part I of IV

I am a collector of Classic U.S. material and the National Parks Series of 1934 has always intrigued me with the detailed renderings of iconic scenes of ten prominent parks. In my mind the series is one of the gems of post 1900 production. This four part article will endeavor to explore the different aspects of the series and its ties to modern era with an overall objective – to make you love them as I do. In part my desire to visit the national parks was sparked by this series of stamps and as of 2016 I have been to eight of the ten – with the hope of adding the ninth one next year.

The basic elements of the series are the ten issued commemorative stamps with the associated, plate blocks, First Day Covers, postal history (tough to find) and a smattering of pricey EFO material. What adds tremendously to this series, are the souvenir sheets of the 1¢, 3¢ and 10¢ values and the Farley reprints.

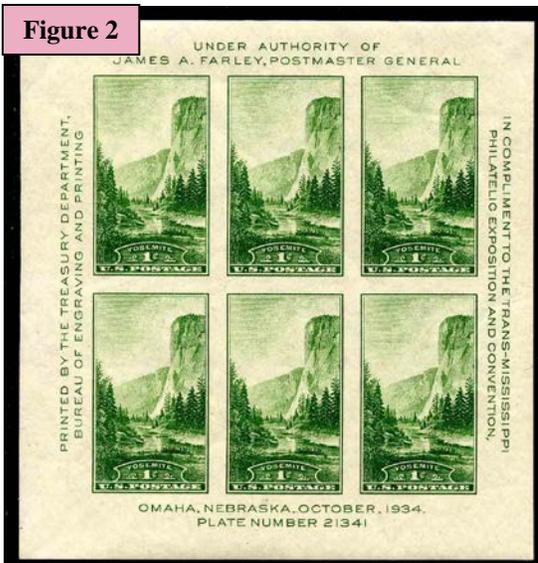
The one cent value, in nice shade of green [Figure 1] was the first issued on July 16, 1934 with the iconic image of El Capitan, Yosemite as the central design -- beautiful is one word that can be used. I have visited the park twice in 1978 and 1993 and can say -- without hesitation -- it is in my top five destinations. This national park should be on everyone's



Figure 1

travel list! The highlight of the first stamp in the series is the souvenir sheet [Figure 2] issued on October 10th in support of the Trans-Mississippi Philatelic Exposition.

Figure 2



As I mentioned earlier, one of the interesting elements of this series is the creation of items thanks to James Farley. These sheets were issued without perforations and gum. Later some collectors returned full sheets to the Post Office Department for gumming – these varieties are very difficult to find in the market place and command moderately high premiums over the standard issue



Figure 3

without gum. This is something to hunt for!



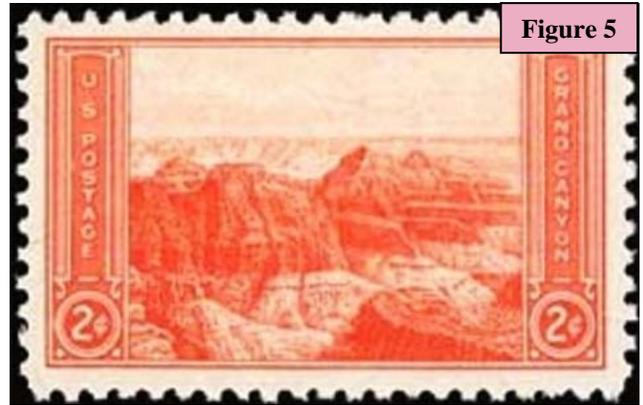
Figure 4

issued in 2006 and does an admirable job of capturing the scenery of the park thanks to the use of color.

The Farley issues yielded a whole new collecting field of position pieces. There are vertical and horizontal pairs with or without the guideline. The block of four -- Figure 3 is a block of four with crossed guidelines. There are other collective position pieces and elements besides those already detailed. All of the special position pieces can be found on all ten stamps in the Farley re-print set.

The National Parks have been used in modern Air Mails as subjects, Figure 4,

The second stamp in the series **[Figure 5]** —the two cent value depicting the Grand Canyon was issued in the color of red on July 24, 1934. This stamp in my opinion fails to capture the magnificent scenery of the Grand Canyon. I have been lucky enough to have visited the South Rim in 1978, 1993 and 1998. A truly magical visit to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon happened in 2007. While views at both locations are beyond words, the South Rim is often plagued by haze that dulls the colors, while the North Rim at nearly 8,300 feet about sea level is almost always crystal clear and much cooler than the desert like conditions of the South Rim.



This issue also has position pieces of the Farley reprints.



Figure 6 is a plate block of six. **Figure 7** is of a block of four with the top arrow and guideline. **Figure 8** is of a vertical pair with a horizontal guideline while **Figure 9** is of a horizontal pair with a vertical guideline. **Figure 10** shows the modern air mail issue depicting the Grand Canyon. Issued in 2000, this gorgeous multi-color stamp does a great job of capturing the essence of the Grand Canyon.

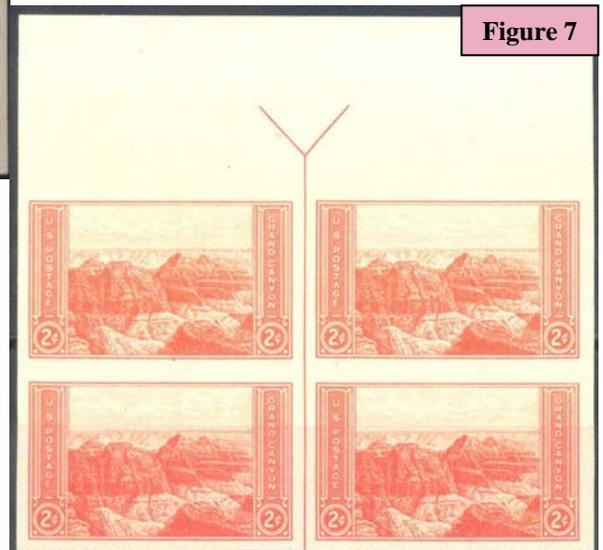


Figure 8

Figure 9

Figure 10



Look for the additional parts of this series:

- Part II, September 2016
- Part III, October 2016
- Part IV, November/December 2016