

The Story behind the Two-Cent American Card Proof Sheet (192P4)

Until this sheet came onto the market there was no way to tell if you had a two-cent Jackson from an American printing. The sheet can be traced to the Earl of Crawford collection. It went from the Earl to Senator Ackerman of New Jersey. His entire collection was bequeathed to the Smithsonian at the time of his death. However, the set of the Earl of Crawford card and india plate proof sheets wound up at Harmer, Rooke & Co. in 1950. The card proof sheets made up sale No. 841 held on March 28th 1950.

This sheet was described in the sale as 183TC4 and was purchased by Max Ohlman. At some point in time, it was purchased by Falk Finkelburg. It had been off the market for 54 years when we purchased it from a Siegel sale which contained material from the Finkelburg estate. This pane of 100 is the only 193P4 sheet that has ever surfaced. The sheet was certified by the Philatelic Foundation, we then signed the back of every proof in pencil and identified the position it occupied on the sheet. This insures that when you purchase a 193P4 you are getting the "Real McCoy."

India and Card Proof Quality

The majority of the choice india plate proofs which are still mounted on card come from the half of the Lilly sheets which were sold in a 1966 Siegel sale. The sheets were then split in half. The half that went to a dealer in proofs has been gradually broken in singles and blocks over the years. However, there are some issues, like the National large Bank Notes, 145-155P3, which the Post Office requested additional sheets for distribution. The examples of india plate proofs that either originated with the Post Office or the bank note companies are usually found off card. Many of these will have small translucencies in the paper caused by their removal

from the card. When buying india plate proofs off card you want to hold them to the light to ensure they do not have tiny thin spots.

The same can be said for the quality of plate proofs on card that came from half of the Lilly sheets. However, most of the card proofs found on the market today will come from the various sets that were distributed over the years for the Post Office. There were five different printings of card proofs and a total of 500 sets made up each time. These were distributed over a 15-year period and went hither and yon. Over the years many sets have found their way into the philatelic marketplace. Since they were a giveaway they were not precisely cut with four nice margins, and generally not cared for while outside our marketplace. So in order to find great sets today that possess great margins and color, you need to look for sets that either came from the Lilly sheets or sets that have been made up out of maybe several sets.

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