

Argentina 1892: The World's First Columbians

America's First Commemorative Stamps

FIVE PHILATELIC FIRSTS

On Columbus Day, October 12, 1892, Argentina issued two stamps honoring the 400th anniversary of Columbus' first American landfall. The 200,000 specimens of each denomination, 2¢ and 5¢, became —

- **America's First Commemorative Stamp Issue.** 1, 2
- **The World's First Commemoratives honoring an event of global—not just national—significance.**
- **The World's First Stamp Issue to be on sale—and valid for postage—for one day only.**
- **The Occasion for The World's First Commemorative Souvenir Cards with FD Cancels.**
- **And a Proud Achievement of The World's First Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee.**

Proposed by Dr. José Marcó del Pont, president of the Sociedad Filatélica Argentina and chairman of the world's first Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee, and based on a sketch by marine painter Eduardo de Martino, the stamps were designed and produced by the Compañía Sud-Americana de Billetes de Banco (CSBB), founded 1887.

Their artistic design, meticulous engraving and superb printing were widely praised by contemporary philatelists worldwide.

This exhibit, *the best ever of this issue*, covers its development from conception to emission, postal usage, and its aftermath.

It is the culmination of a 30-year search for elusive materials—among them six items that are unique—previously distributed among several prominent Argentine collections.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bose, Walter B.L. *Primera Emisión Conmemorativa Argentina del IV. Centenario...* (Buenos Aires, 1968).
 Kneitschel, Victor. *Catálogo de los Sellos Postales de la República Argentina.* (Buenos Aires, 1958).
 Marcó del Pont, Ernesto. "Emisión conmemorativa del IV centenario del descubrimiento..." *Revista de la Sociedad Filatélica Argentina.* (Buenos Aires, 1918).
 Spille, Wolf. "The World's First Columbians — America's First Commemorative Stamps". *Discovery!* Christopher Columbus Philatelic Society (Hillsboro NH, 2003).
 —> *Argentina 1892: America's First Commemorative Stamps* <http://www.japhila.cz/hof/0102/index0102a.htm> (2006).
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SCOPE & KEY ELEMENTS OF EXHIBIT

Essays, Proofs & Commemorative Cards. [8 Pages]

- A *unique* stamp sized CSBB photo essay.
- A *unique* artist's pen-ink-and-wash drawing, one of the first three essays presented by the printers.
- A large engraver's *first* progress proof (ex-Bose, ex-Nüesch, from engraver's estate), one of three existing.
- A *unique* progress dual die proof, one undenominated, the other with 5¢ value. Both defaced by pen strokes.
- A rare undenominated die proof from the master die which became the finally authorized design version.
- Large die proofs — and scarce perforated presentation plate proofs.
- Trial color plate proofs — *Two of only three known entire sheets with still attached plate numbers, #127 (2¢ red) and #119 (5¢ blue).*
- Two commemorative souvenir cards, one a scarce variety with text omitted, the other canceled on the day of issue.

The Emission & Its Only Varieties. [1.5 Pages]

- Unused sheets of both values with matching sheet nos.
- Two blocks-of-four of the double impression variety, one of them *unique*, found on just one 2¢ sheet; an unused single with double transfer, and, with 'kiss impressions', another single and *the only known used copy.*
All five items with APEX certificates.

One-Day Domestic & Foreign Usage. [4.5 Pages]

- Representative examples of urban, inland, and overseas covers—regular, registered, special delivery, and letter cards—including a rare if not unique 2¢ strip-of-ten on cover, and a bisect 2¢ on piece (magazine rate for 51-100 grams).

Post-Issue Proofs. [1 Page]

- Defaced die proofs—one signed and dated by the Postmaster General—and defaced plate proofs sent with news releases to the philatelic world.
(Mislabelled by Victor Kneitschel as '*unadopted designs*').

Outside The Law. [1 Page]

- Italian forgeries and a contemporary fake cover.

TRACK RECORD

- BANGKOK 2003.....: *Gold & Special Prize*
 AMERISTAMP EXPO 2004.....: *OFE Champion of Champions*
 ESPAÑA 2004.....: *Gold*
 ROSARIO CENTENARIO 2004.....: *Gold & Special Prize*
 WASHINGTON 2006.....: *Gold & Special Prize*
 BELGICA 2006.....: *Gold & Special Prize*
 ISRAEL 2008.....: *Gold & Special Prize*

1. ...*And The World's Fourth*, preceded only by New South Wales' '*One Hundred Years*' issue (1888), Romania's 5-stamp set for King Carol I's Silver Jubilee (1891), and Hong Kong's one overprint celebrating the colony's 50th anniversary (1891).

2. *Scott* and *Michel* assign this honor to Peru's 5¢ '*Trencito*' stamp supposedly issued for a railroad anniversary in 1871, yet both Juan G. Bustamante ("*Catálogo Especializado*", 1981) and Herbert H. Moll ("*Historia Postal y Filatélica del Peru*", 1983) have documented its *definitive* use on mail carried between Lima/Callao & Lima/Chorrillos as early as June 1870. [01/2009]