



# **A Guidebook and Checklist: U. S. Postal Service No-Die-Cut Stamps 2012 to 2015**

*Jill R. Ambrose CH, James A. Siekermann*

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We are pleased to present to the philatelic community the first ever detailed guide and checklist of no-die-cut stamps. This new category began without any grand announcement. The U.S. Postal Service in their mysterious way of doing things, began this new program in the middle part of 2012. What it has turned into is a serious area of stamp collecting. This has been going on long enough now that there really is a need for a comprehensive guide to what has been produced thus far to help the collector get a solid footing, and this is it. To begin with, every U. S. stamp produced today begins its journey printed on a web press and then cut into large press sheets. In the process, the vast majority of the sheets are die cut, then cut further into individual panes and packaged for sale enabling the user to peel the stamps and place them on covers. Recently, a few thousand press sheets have been set aside and remain without the die cuts. Thus this new collecting phenomena has been born. For years a big deal has been made of stamps having a different number of perforations. Well now, we have stamps with none. This makes these a different stamp, with their own Scott Catalogue number, even though it contains the same subject matter as a regular die cut stamp. The exciting part of these stamps is their rarity, as they only come in the full press sheet format, in very limited numbers. The collector can do their own custom cutting making truly unique specimens. When a regular stamp is peeled from its backing for use, all you have is the same stamp everyone else has. When a no-die-cut stamp is cut for use, whatever selvage, or plate number that's adjoining, comes with the stamp for use, making a very unique and rare specimen. Imagine having a regular non coil stamp with a plate number as part of the stamp! Add to this the scenario of a very limited production in the low thousands, and the even smaller number of press sheets actually cut into individual stamps gives us the possibility of historic rarities in our present time. This area is open to all, and is actually illustrated by the backgrounds of both authors of this guide. Jill Ambrose has collected seriously for over half a century, having extensive U.S. and worldwide collections. I have not collected stamps at all, save accumulating small quantities here and there. The fact that collecting a used copy of every no-die-cut stamp issued thus far, and that it is very much possible, is what brought me in. Jill has a complete collection of press sheets, panes, and used copies, more than likely the only collector to do so. While I can't go that far, I can acquire a used copy of each of the 273 stamps issued thus far, which likely will only be accomplished by a limited number of collectors. Thus, whether your personal collecting background is limited, or extensive, this can be for you. We don't know how much longer all back issues will be readily available, as the available copies are limited. The future value of these stamps is something we hesitate to estimate as it depends on future demand. Right now a good rule of thumb for most issues either new or used is approximately double face. With these no-die-cut issues, some of the rarer ones are already ten times or more than face. This brings us to this guide. We now are three and a half years into the program, with 108 different press sheets containing 273 individual stamps. Every stamp, and in some cases, the entire pane is pictured along with a description of content, plus the issue date and Scott number. We at the Greater Cincinnati Philatelic Society have given our own unique numbering system to each press sheet, and each stamp that has been issued through 2015. We will continue adding to this as we go forward through 2016 and beyond. With each stamp described, we have added boxes that can be checked as the collector acquires these stamps in all formats we can presently think of.

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