

Chile

Chile has the distinction of being the major Perkins Bacon country in South America. Its first issue of postage stamps in 1853, its second London issue in 1855, and its third London issue in 1862 were all engraved and printed by the renowned British firm. Interspersed among these were the local Desmadryl and Gillet printings in 1854 and the Santiago Post Office printings after 1856.

The locally-produced stamps of 1854, particularly the Burnt Sienna stamps and the Lithograph stamps printed by Gillet, have always been considered the most important stamps of Chile. The Lithograph stamps are one of the great classic imperforate issues in the world, because of the wonderful transfer varieties which form the most remarkable group of lithographic varieties known to philately. These varieties resulted from folds in the transfer papers used to produce the lithographic stones. They have been studied for over a century since the astonishing discovery, almost fifty years after their production, that some Chilean imperforates had been produced by lithography. From the incredible “big squeezes,” where almost the entire denomination is missing from the bottom of the stamp, to squeezed corners and letters, there is a range of the lithographic varieties unrivaled in classic philately.

As early as 1923, a listing of the known lithographic varieties was published by Fred D. Walters of England. The great Chile collector, Joaquin Galvez, formed the largest collection of Chile up to the time of its dispersal by Corinphila in 1979. Galvez specialized in the Lithographs to the degree that he boasted having more than 400 copies, including the two recorded blocks of six.

The second major collection of Chile after World War II, aside from the general classic imperforate collections which contained substantial holdings of mostly single copies of the imperforates, was the Jean Dupont collection formed by the important Belgium collector, who was best known for his major collection of Spain. His Chile collection was auctioned by Willy Balasse in London in 1981.

The major items from the Galvez and Dupont collections were acquired by Gerhard Blank and Islander. The Blank collection was sold at auction by Christie's Robson Lowe in 1991.

The third important collection of Chile after World War II was the Helen Novy collection formed by her with the assistance of her father, B. D. Forster, a prominent collector in the United States. This collection included the greatest piece in Chile, the famous cover bearing a block of fourteen of the Lithograph. The Novy collection was purchased intact by Islander in 1967 and became the foundation of his collection of Chile classics.

In 1994 Islander decided to concentrate exclusively on the Lithographs, and the rest of his Chile collection was auctioned by Corinphila. This became the basis of the Joseph Hackmey Large Gold collection of Chile. However, the Lithographs never became available. Indeed, the Lithograph block of fourteen on cover, considered one of the greatest covers of classic imperforate philately, had been found in a Paris flea market after World War II, was acquired by Helen Novy shortly after its discovery, and has been in the Islander collection for forty years since his purchase of the Novy collection. It has never been on the open market.