30-Cent 1869 Pictorial Invert  
The Worthington Copy

Lot 2°

30¢ Ultramarine & Carmine, Flags Inverted (121b). Small part original gum, bright and fresh colors, unusually clear impressions, choice centering far from Eagle-and-Shield and Flags-and-Stars on all sides, small “W.H.C.” handstamp applied on back by Warren H. Colson

EXTREMELY FINE. THE FINEST OF THE SEVEN RECORDED UNUSED 30-CENT 1869 PICTORIAL INVERT STAMPS, AND THE ONLY EXAMPLE KNOWN WITH ORIGINAL GUM. A MAGNIFICENT STAMP THAT IS PERFECTLY MATCHED WITH THE 15-CENT 1869 INVERT OFFERED IN THIS SALE, BOTH OF WHICH WERE AMONG GEORGE H. WORTHINGTON’S MOST PRIZED PHILATELIC POSSESSIONS.


Ex George H. Worthington (possibly from the Frederick W. Ayer collection), Alfred F. Lichtenstein and Steven C. Walske (see the following Sale History for additional past owners and sale information).

Siegel Census No. 121b-POG-07. Certified by The Philatelic Foundation in 1990 as “Genuine, with traces of gum” (certificate 232679, which no longer accompanies stamp). With 2013 Professional Stamp Experts certificate (1270179), which states “genuine unused, small part o.g.” with a grade of Very Fine-Extremely Fine 85, Mint POG. The Stamp Market Quarterly values the 30¢ Invert in VF-XF 85 No Gum grade at $660,000, but does not list a value for this Part Original Gum stamp.

2013 Scott Catalogue Value: $1,000,000

Sale History of the 30¢ 1869 Invert with Part Original Gum

This 30¢ 1869 Invert was owned and exhibited by George H. Worthington, but there is no information about when and from whom he acquired the stamp. Worthington must have purchased the stamp before 1907, because in that year Warren H. Colson described Worthington’s 15¢ and 30¢ 1869 Inverts in his book, Postage Stamps and Their Collection (page 10). As discussed on page 18 of this catalogue, there is a strong possibility that this 30¢ and the ex-Lichtenstein 15¢ came from the collection formed by Frederick W. Ayer. Worthington bought a significant number of items from the Ayer collection through Colson in 1903 and 1904.

The 15¢ and 30¢ 1869 inverts with original gum were displayed by Worthington at the Garfield-Perry Stamp Club event in Cleveland in 1910. The stamps were mounted with twelve other worldwide errors on an exhibit page headed “The World’s Greatest Errors,” which was pictured in the special “Cleveland Edition” of Mekeel’s Weekly Stamp News (March 26, 1910—see following page).
Worthington also exhibited his 15¢ and 30¢ 1869 Inverts at the 1913 International Philatelic Exhibition in New York. The description of this exhibit specifically mentions the two inverts and the fact that each stamp is “unused o.g.” Significantly, there is no mention of an unused 24¢ 1869 Invert in the exhibit. The 1917 Worthington sale included an unused 24¢ (Census No. 120b-UNC-03), which he must have acquired between 1913 and 1915, shortly before his collecting activity stopped.

Portions of the Worthington collection were sold privately by Warren H. Colson in 1915, at a time when Worthington’s financial position was beginning to falter. In 1917 the entire balance of the collection was sold privately to Alfred F. Lichtenstein, who was 41 years old and wealthy enough to pay $455,000 cash for the collection. Lichtenstein consigned portions of the Worthington collection, including the 15¢ Invert his father had sold some thirty years earlier, to J. C. Morgenthal & Co. for sale by auction. The 1869 Inverts were offered in Part I of the Worthington sales, held in New York City on August 21-23, 1917.

*New York Times* article (above) and exhibition catalogue entry for Worthington’s United States exhibit at the 1913 New York exhibition, which specifically mention the 15¢ and 30¢ 1869 Inverts with original gum (both stamps offered in this sale)

Worthington’s 15¢ and 30¢ 1869 Inverts with original gum (lots 1 and 2 in this sale) are pictured in this special Garfield-Perry Stamp Club edition of *Mekeel’s Weekly Stamp News*, March 26, 1910—the “U.S. Postage” labels were blocked out in accordance with postage stamp reproduction laws.