



Lot 103



Detail

LOT 103°

The finest known used single of the 4¢ 1908 Imperforate Issue, used on a pristine cover addressed to Karl Koslowski, the discoverer of the entire supply of this 20th century rarity

ESTIMATE \$100,000-150,000

## DESCRIPTION

**4¢ Brown, Imperforate, Schermack Type III (314A)**, huge margins with left sheet margin, superbly centered, rich color, neatly tied by “Sicklerville N.J. Apr. 8 1909” circular datestamp and duplex grid cancel on self-addressed cover to “*Mr. K. Koslowski, 329 Cass Ave., Detroit, Mich.*”, Philadelphia transit backstamp (Apr. 8, 7:30 p.m.)

## PROVENANCE

The stamp comes from the supply discovered and acquired by Karl Koslowski, May 1908; affixed by Koslowski to self-addressed envelope and sent inside parcel to his brother in Sicklerville, N.J., bearing a strip of three of 314A, with instructions to return the cancelled strip in envelope bearing single—postmarked at Sicklerville April 8, 1909

Sold to or through William C. Rhodes, Hugh M. Clark sale, June 9, 1911, to Worthington

George H. Worthington, J. C. Morgenthau sale, 8/21-23/1917, lot 1050, to Cameron Sperling (Lawrence citation from marked catalogue)

Siegel Auction Galleries, 1965 Rarities of the World, 2/24/1965, Sale 283, lot 115

Siegel Auction Galleries, 11/25-26/1969, Sale 362, lot 949—this sale included part of the A. T. Seymour collection

Siegel Auction Galleries, 1985 Rarities of the World, 4/20/1985, Sale 645, lot 265, to Dr. Agris

Dr. Joseph Agris, Shreves Philatelic Galleries, 9/5/1997, lot 254, to William H. Gross

## CENSUS, LITERATURE AND EXHIBITION REFERENCES

Siegel census no. 314A-COV-03  
<https://siegelauctions.com/census/us/scott/314A>

Ken Lawrence, “The Scarce Imperforate 4¢ Ulysses S. Grant Stamp of 1908,” *Linn’s Stamp News*, August 3, 2017 (online)

World Stamp Show 2016 Court of Honor (Gross)

## CONDITION NOTES

Extremely Fine stamp and cover

Separate pencil notations in different hands:

“6/9/11 *W C Rhodes*” (Worthington’s source notation)

“*Worthington Sale 8/22 1917*” and “*Rarity, only 31 copies known of which 15 are unused*” in same hand

“*RSS 28 Kelleher*” on hinge

“R.H.W. Co.” backstamp (Weill)

## HISTORY AND COMMENTARY

## Koslowski’s Fortuitous Find

With the rising popularity of vending and affixing machines, numerous requests were made by manufacturers for supplies of imperforate stamps, which could then be privately perforated to conform to each firm’s machine. In May 1908, a supply of 25 sheets (400 stamps per sheet) of the 4¢ 1902 Issue, without perforations, was delivered to the Schermack Mailing Machine Co. in Detroit. The entire supply was cut into coils with Schermack Type III perforations, designed for the firm’s patented affixing machine and delivered to the Winfield Printing Co. for use on mass mailings of advertising material. Approximately 6,000 were used on a mailing for Hamilton Carhartt Manufacturer, and almost all of the 4,000 balance were used on a mailing for Burroughs Adding Machine Co.

All of the Scott 314A stamps in unused condition originate from a local Detroit stamp collector, Karl Koslowski, who was the only one to purchase some of the 4¢ Imperforates, from the Winfield Printing Company. His earliest account of the event appeared two years later in the *Philadelphia Stamp News*, and is considered to be the most reliable of several conflicting stories told by Koslowski (and interpreted by others) at later dates. In the 1910 article, Koslowski explains that he purchased 50 stamps and expected to be able to buy more, but the supply was destroyed when he returned. We can account for 34 of the 50 stamps Koslowski claims he acquired. There are 21 unused stamps currently in our census, all of which must have come from him, and he used at least 13 stamps on mail to friends, including the strip of three on a Koslowski cover, two used strips of three off cover (the mass mailings were all singles), a used pair, and two singles on separate Koslowski covers.

The earliest known cover is dated at Detroit on May 27, 1908, from Koslowski to a friend in Austria, and the latest is dated April 8, 1909, which is the cover offered here with a sheet-margin single. Apart from the stamps Koslowski used, there is one recorded commercial cover (June 2, 1908) and 32 used single stamps, most of which were probably removed from the mass-mailing covers.

This self-addressed cover bears a stamp that is the finest known used example. Koslowski undoubtedly selected for his self-addressed envelope a stamp with the widest margins and best centering, cut from the end of the strip with the left sheet margin intact. The cover was sold to or through William C. Rhodes and appeared in the June 9, 1911, auction held by Hugh M. Clark. It was bought in that sale by George H. Worthington, whose philatelic secretary wrote in pencil on the back “6/9/11 *W C Rhodes*.” After 86 years gracing various collections, the cover was sold to Mr. Gross in the 1997 Shreves auction of the Dr. Joseph Agris collection. ■