



News and Articles from America's Premier Stamp Auctioneer

Issue No. 70

The Siegel Despatch





Commentary
Scott R. Trepel

The Brown Furniture Syndrome

By now most of us have heard anecdotes or witnessed firsthand the lack of interest in brown furniture—you know, the polished mahogany furniture much of Western civilization prized for nearly three centuries.

As a child, visiting my grandparents apartment in Brooklyn meant sitting at an extendable polished mahogany table for dinner with the aromas of percolated coffee and London broil in the air. Every major furniture store carried dining sets imitating the English or Chippendale style. Wealthy friends' homes had actual “antique” furniture, which is where I learned my first lesson about the perils of not using a coaster.



I remember looking at *Architectural Digest* and other magazines in the 1980s showcasing the interiors of America's wealthy tastemakers, and they had rooms filled with brown furniture. When I worked at Christie's, the Americana sales exhibitions meant the entire place would be filled with ball-and-claw tables, chests of drawers and grandfather clocks. I admired them and thought, one day I'll make enough to have a home filled with these beautiful antiques.

Now, my home is bright and contemporary, and the furniture is something between Danish modern and Restoration Hardware. Shockingly, this stuff costs as much if not more than the antiques I once coveted.



What happened? Why did an entire generation reject the aesthetics of their forebears? What caused The Brown Furniture Syndrome?

From a market perspective, this has produced a drastic devaluation of once valuable heirlooms. Heirs tasked with clearing out their grandparents' or parents' homes have discovered that leaving a can of soda on the “expensive” side table, which elicited a harsh reprimand, really did not matter in the long run.

My father-in-law is an amateur auction buyer—perhaps frustrated junk shop or pawn shop owner is a better description—and he has told me shocking tales of Chippendale style tables being “given away” for \$75 or \$100. If he owned a warehouse, I think he would buy them all.

Taste in collectibles can be a fickle thing. My brothers, who collect vintage cars, have talked about the market downturn in really great classic cars from the pre-WW2 era, and the escalation of prices for cars we actually bought as new. Oil paintings of grapes, apples and pears on a 19th century table top are not exactly what young men hang in their first apartments if they have any intention of procreating the next generation. And gifting a silverware set to a couple of newlyweds would be considered more of a curse than an act of generosity, unless a silver polisher’s services came with it.

By now you have probably deduced that I am writing about The Brown Furniture Syndrome, because I stay awake at night worrying that all of philately might be the next Chippendale pie-crust table. You are correct, but only to a certain degree.

The difference between furniture, cars and paintings, and the stuff of philately, is that people rarely study their furniture, cars and paintings. They display them. While conspicuous display makes certain collectibles more valuable for a while, it comes with the potential for extreme devaluation if (or when) tastes change.

Philately has been around for about 160 years. Numismatics for centuries. That does not assure longevity into the future, so we need to examine why people want to assemble stamps in an album, explore postal history and acquire covers, and generally show pride in the non-conspicuous collecting of philatelic artifacts. Understanding the appeal could well be the path to ensuring its future.

I have read that old books are back in vogue—a surprising resurgence, considering the high cost of space to keep them. Old vinyl records and record players have been popular among the Gen WhatEVERs for several years now. It’s called Retro.

And with digital communication dominating all of our lives, perhaps some quiet time spent with old paper offers a comforting feeling, like the aromas of percolated coffee and London broil.

Upcoming Sales

January

United States Stamps Paperless Catalog—January 13
The Dr. Joseph Leadon Collection of U.S. Plate Blocks & Plate Number Coils
U.S. Postal History Paperless Catalog—January 27

February

United States Stamps Paperless Catalog—February 10
Outstanding United States Stamps, featuring
The Dragonfly Collection
The Dragonfly Collection of
U.S. Private Die Proprietary Stamps
U.S. Postal History Paperless Catalog—February 24
featuring the Dr. Tesmer Collection of Buffalo

March

The Dr. Géza Homonnay Collection of First Issues of the World on Cover*
The World Traveler Collection, Part II*
The Magnolia Collection of U.S. Mail to and from China and the Philippines
United States Postal History, featuring a portion of the
Award-Winning Carol Bommarito Exhibit Collection
The Eugene L. Grace Collection of U.S. and C.S.A. Stamps and Covers

April

The Magnolia Collection of German Post Offices in China, Part One*

*Siegel International in association with Charles F. Shreve

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AND SIEGEL LEGACY CATALOG SALES**



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21 West 38th Street, 7th Floor
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UNITED STATES POSTAL HISTORY

PAPERLESS CATALOG



January 27, 2024



The Dr. Irving H. Tesner Collection
of Buffalo Postal History



February 24, 2024



The Dragonfly Collection

This important collection features 19th and 20th century stamps, essays, proofs, errors, multiples and one of the finest Private Die Proprietary collections ever formed

February 2024



This impressive worldwide postal history collection will be offered by
Siegel International in its own special sale catalogue.

March 2024



THE WORLD TRAVELER *Collection*

PART II

March 2024



THE

MAGNOLIA



COLLECTION

The Magnolia sales continue with a fantastic offering of
United States Mail to and from China and the Philippines

March 2024



United States Postal History

The March U.S. Postal History sale features several collections

March 2024

Selections from Carol
Bommarito's Large Gold exhibit
"United States Mail To, From, and
Through Great Britain 1840-1875"



Specialized 2c "Black Jacks"



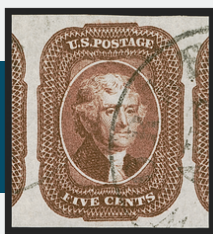
and much more...



The Eugene L. Grace Collection

UNITED STATES AND CONFEDERATE STATES STAMPS AND COVERS

March 2024



37 Million Reasons to Thank You

**\$37,376,154
in Sales**

And that's just the dollar total (including the 18% premium). The following numbers tell more of the success story.

34 Auctions

Plus our two "Cavia Porcellus" test auctions of our new BidBaller software. This is a record for the firm.

**23 "Name"
Collections**

The magnificent Magnolia Collection accounts for \$9.1 million of the 2023 total.

**\$2.006
Million for the
Inverted
Jenny NH95**

That's the highest price a
single U.S. stamp has
ever brought at auction.

**217 Different
Consignors**

From a few hundred
dollars to millions,
each consignor
reaped the benefits of
selling through Siegel.

**1,088
Different
Buyers from
46 Different
Countries**

Remember that
the next time our
competition tells
you Siegel isn't an
"International"
firm.

**Thank you for making
2023 a huge success!**

Highlights from 2023

Click on the images to view the full lot descriptions

Each Sale Price is the sum of the hammer price plus the 18% buyer's premium



The William E. Mooz Collection
Sale 1274, Lot 678
Sale Price: \$53,100



The William E. Mooz Collection
Sale 1275, Lot 1215
Sale Price: \$53,100



The Magnolia Collection
Sale 1279, Lot 48
Sale Price: \$123,900



The Magnolia Collection
Sale 1279, Lot 49
Sale Price: \$300,900



The Magnolia Collection
Sale 1280, Lot 516
Sale Price: \$70,800



The Frank A. Lanza Collection
Sale 1281, Lot 704
Sale Price: \$53,100



The Jeffrey M. Forster Collection
Sale 1282, Lot 1039
Sale Price: \$94,400



The Yellowstone Collection
Sale 1284, Lot 527
Hammer Price: \$70,800



The Yellowstone Collection
Sale 1284, Lot 576
Sale Price: \$59,000



The Magnolia Collection
Sale 1286, Lot 131
Sale Price: \$88,500



The Magnolia Collection
Sale 1286, Lot 11
Sale Price: \$94,400

2023 Rarities of the World



Sale 1289, Lot 535
Sale Price: \$177,000



Sale 1289, Lot 509
Sale Price: \$100,300



Sale 1289, Lot 604
Sale Price: \$67,850



Worldwide Stamps and Postal History
Sale 1287, Lot 1358
Sale Price: \$53,100



The Nelson Berman Collection
Sale 1288, Lot 120
Sale Price: \$460,200



The Kenneth D. Gilbert Collection
Sale 1292, Lot 35
Sale Price: \$67,850



The Nelson Berman Collection
Sale 1288, Lot 170
Sale Price: \$236,000

The Barry K. Schwartz Collection
Sale 1302, Lot 6586
Sale Price: \$94,400



The Magnolia Collection
Sale 1301, Lot 6157
Hammer Price: \$47,700



The Magnolia Collection
Sale 1301, Lot 6075
Sale Price: \$35,400

Jenny NH 95



Sale 1299, Lot 2154
Sale Price: \$2,006,000

The world auction record for
a single United States stamp





Worldwide Stamps and Postal History
Sale 1303, Lot 163
Sale Price: \$94,400



Worldwide Stamps and Postal History
Sale 1303, Lot 238
Sale Price: \$31,860



The Brian M. Bleckwenn Collection
Sale 1304, Lot 1312
Sale Price: \$38,350



The Brian M. Bleckwenn Collection
Sale 1304, Lot 1159
Sale Price: \$50,150

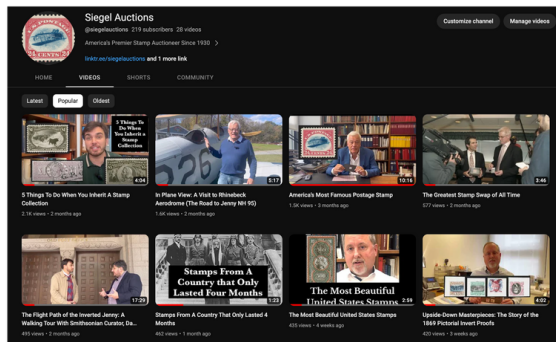


United States Stamps
Sale 1305, Lot 2696
Sale Price: \$112,100

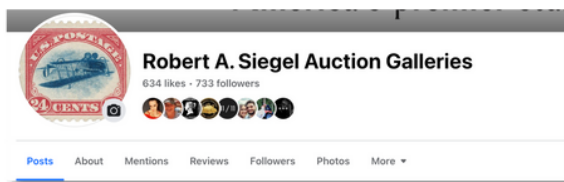


United States Stamps
Sale 1305, Lot 2526
Sale Price: \$76,700

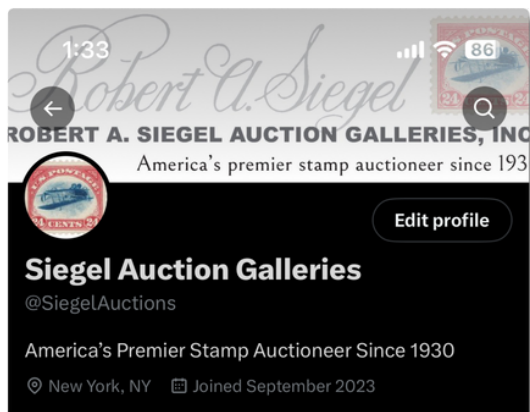
More Ways to Keep Up with Siegel



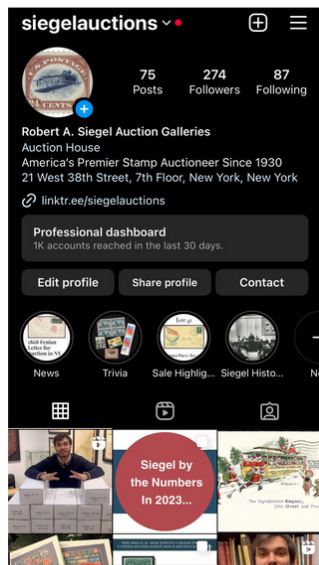
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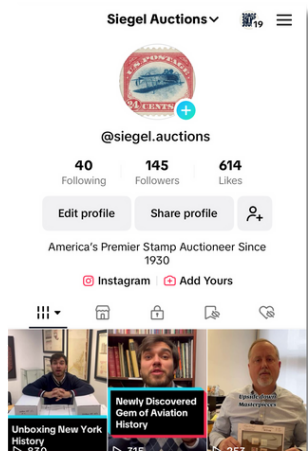
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