



UNITED STATES STAMPS
COMPLETE
The William H. Gross Collection

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AUCTION PREVIEW

JUNE 14-15, 2024 • NEW YORK CITY

Offered by

CHARLES F. SHREVE AND TRACY L. CAREY

In association with

Robert A. Siegel

AUCTION GALLERIES, INC.

POSTAGE

1867-1868

Printed by National Bank Note Co.

GRILL WITH POINTS UP

A. Grill covering the entire stamp



3c Rose
Scott 79



5c Dark Brown
Scott 80a



30c Orange
Scott 81

B. Grill
about 18 x 15mm



3c Rose
Scott 82

C. Grill
about 13 x 16mm



3c Rose
Scott 83

GRILL WITH POINTS DOWN

D. Grill measuring about 12 x 14mm



2c Black
Scott 84



3c Rose
Scott 85

Z. Grill measuring about 11 x 14mm



1c Blue
Scott 85A



2c Black
Scott 85B



3c Rose
Scott 85C



10c Green
Scott 85D



12c Intense Black
Scott 85E



15c Black
Scott 85F

The page of rare grilled stamps in the Gross collection, with a total 2024 Scott Catalogue value of \$7,382,000

UNITED STATES STAMPS COMPLETE

The William H. Gross Collection

The Time Has Come

Ever since the William H. Gross United States Treasures, Multiples, Postal History and 1847 First Issue sales were held from 2018 to 2020, collectors have been wondering, asking, and even pleading, is he ready to sell his collection of singles?

To all of you eager collectors, yes, the time has come.

As we said in the 2018 preview brochure, the last part to be offered would be the collection in Mr. Gross's Scott U.S. National Album. It has always been his favorite, offering not just a visual feast of the rarest and best of U.S. stamps, but representing the collecting goal of every collector, from beginner to advanced... *completion*.

Between the singles in his National album and the multiples in his exhibit collection, Mr. Gross succeeded in checking off every Scott number on his want list over a period of 13 years. With the acquisition of the One-cent Z Grill (Scott 85A) in 2005, every space in his album was filled. That's the stamp collector's dream. However, when a few of the stamps are so rare that only one or two collectors can own them at any given time, the dream can only come true at those special moments when opportunity knocks. Opportunity will knock on June 14, 2024.

The One-cent Z Grill has always been and is likely to remain the most valuable U.S. stamp. We could calculate its value in dollars per square inch or per ounce, but that exercise would fail to convey its significance, or *why* it is so coveted and valuable.

Some collectors will tell you there are rarer stamps—"I own the unique 1879 One-Lucre Surcharge of Upper Slobbovia"—and others will say a U.S. stamp collection is not complete without the "Missing Phosphor Tagging Flag" stamp. In stamps, as in life, status is earned, not proclaimed.

Collectors decided more than a century ago that the grilled stamps issued in 1867 and 1868 deserve special recognition. When they looked at the different types of grills, they gave them major numbers in the Scott Catalogue, and they created spaces for them in a complete album of U.S. stamps. Since then, countless One-cent Franklin grilled stamps have been turned over and examined with the hope that the grill would be the coveted Z grill, not the common E or F grills. Only twice has the outcome been positive. The first was the One-cent Z Grill discovered by William L. Stevenson and sold to Benjamin K. Miller in 1923, which has been held by The New York Public Library for nearly one hundred years. The second—the stamp offered here—was discovered in 1916 and reemerged in 1957, becoming the only example available to collectors. No other has come to light since then.

By focusing attention on the star of the show, we do not intend to take anything away from the supporting cast. The 15¢ Z Grill (Scott 85F), of which just two are known, is another multimillion dollar stamp. The Postmasters' Provisionals include the uncancelled Alexandria 5¢ on buff paper and the Millbury 5¢ with original gum. The One-cent 1851 Type I (Scott 5) sound unused single (with its adjoining pair of Scott 5A) offers collectors an opportunity to obtain one of the few unused examples of this rarity. The 24¢ Continental (Scott 164) is the *only* recorded example of this rarity—maybe it will catch up to the rarest Z grills in the June sale. In 20th century issues, there are the rarest coils (Scott 316 and 321), the famous 24¢ Inverted Jenny and the rotary press rarities (Scott 596 and 613).

We could go on and on highlighting the rarities in this collection. On Friday, June 14, the top 100 rarest and most valuable lots will be offered in an evening auction at the Lotte New York Palace Hotel. The next day, Saturday, June 15, the remaining stamps will be offered in a sale at the new Collectors Club of New York location.

Between now and the sale dates, we will produce informative stories for mass distribution and publish a sale catalogue worthy of the Gross collection. Sometime during the night of June 14, one collector will be able to say they own the key to completing a U.S. stamp collection. We can barely wait to see who emerges victorious.

CHARLES F. SHREVE

SCOTT R. TREPTEL

The Alexandria Postmaster's Provisional

ESTIMATE
 \$300,000-400,000

Alexandria's postmaster Daniel Bryan issued his provisional stamps in 1846-47, as the city retroceded from the District of Columbia to Virginia. The circular typeset stamps were printed at a nearby newspaper office. Six are known. The uncanceled stamp in the Gross collection was removed from a letter in 1879 and sold by two Philadelphia stamp dealers to the famous French collector, Philippe la Rénotière von Ferrary. In the 1922 Ferrary sale it was bought by Henry G. Lapham and passed to his son. Sometime after 1939 the stamp was acquired by Peter H. B. Frelinghuysen Jr. When the Frelinghuysen collection was sold by the Siegel firm in 2012, Bill Gross added this superb rarity to his holding of provisionals.



Although Col. Asa H. Waters II was postmaster of Millbury, Massachusetts, in 1846, it was his deputy, Henry Waterman, who issued the provisional stamp. Nineteen are recorded, but only one is unused—the sound, four-margin stamp with original gum in the Gross collection. It was first reported in the Ferrary collection and then passed to Henry G. Lapham and his son. The Weills acquired the stamp from Colson and sold it to Josiah K. Lilly Jr. In the 1967 Lilly sale held by Siegel, the stamp sold to A. T. Seymour, a Texas collector. The Weills reacquired the stamp from Seymour and sold it to Edward Grombacher. It sold at auction in 1989 to a dealer and was subsequently acquired by Bill Gross.

The Only Unused Millbury Provisional

ESTIMATE
 \$150,000-200,000

The 5¢ & 10¢ St. Louis "Bears"

ESTIMATE
 \$75,000-100,000

The St. Louis provisionals issued by postmaster John M. Wimer are called the "Bears," in tribute to the design's main element, the Great Seal of Missouri. The three different denominations—5¢, 10¢ and 20¢—were printed from a single plate. As this pair in the Gross collection shows, it is possible to have different values joined together in a so-called *se-tenant* multiple. There are only six known—this is one of four with the 5¢, and it is the only multiple cancelled solely by the red St. Louis date-stamp, without the usual pen cancel.





The blue One-cent Franklin stamp issued from 1851 to 1861 was printed by Toppan, Carpenter, Casilear & Co. from plates numbered 1 through 12. There were numerous modifications to the entries on the plates, essentially erasing or omitting portions of the outer ornaments. In doing so, the printers unintentionally created stamps that future collectors would examine, classify and list by number in the Scott Catalogue. The rarest is Type I, Scott 5, with the nearly complete design. In imperforate form, it comes only from Position 7 in the right pane of Plate One Early. Only three unused examples are recorded, including this sound single, which was originally part of a strip of three in the Ferrary collection. The strip was acquired by an agent for Arthur Hind and remained intact when sold to Sir Nicholas Waterhouse in the 1933 Hind sale. Waterhouse severed the single Type I from the strip and offered it during World War II in one of the charity auctions in England held on behalf of the Red Cross and St. John Fund. When the Waterhouse collection was sold at auction in 1955, Raymond H. Weill flew to London with the specific goal of acquiring the Type Ib pair, which he reunited with the Type I single. The single and pair will be offered separately in the June auction of the Gross collection.

The finest of
three unused
examples of
the One-cent
1851 Type I,
Scott 5

ESTIMATE
\$200,000-300,000



The single Scott 5 and pair of Scott 5A shown together in their original configuration—the single and pair will be offered separately in the June auction

The only
One-cent Z Grill
available to
collectors

ESTIMATE
\$4,000,000-5,000,000

In 1916 a philatelist from Flint, Michigan, named William L. Stevenson, published a booklet on the United States grilled issues, based on his earlier series of articles that established the system of grill classification we use today. That system was adopted by the Scott Catalogue in 1926 and led to the listings and album spaces collectors still use to define a “complete” collection of United States postage stamps.

When we talk about “A”, “B”, “C” grills—and so on up to “J”—we are referring to the letters and characteristics used by Stevenson to distinguish different grill types, which are based primarily on size. The letter “Z” was used by Stevenson to identify a distinctive grill that is approximately the same size as an “E” grill, but has different shaped embossed points. The top of each grill point forms a horizontal ridge that looks something like >—<. None of the other grills have this point shape. Stevenson had difficulty placing this grill neatly in his letter system, so he gave it the letter “Z.”

In 1915, Stevenson had examined only one example of the One-cent Z Grill stamp. It is probably the stamp he owned. In his 1916 publication, Stevenson stated that he had recorded two examples. The stamp with the grid cancel was acquired by Benjamin K. Miller on December 16, 1923, when a group of Stevenson’s grilled issues was sold by Elliott Perry. That stamp is still part of the Miller collection, owned by The New York Public Library and on display at The Smithsonian National Postal Museum.

The other One-cent Z Grill stamp, which is cancelled by a Philadelphia circular datestamp, is the one in the Gross collection. The whereabouts of this stamp between the time Stevenson first recorded it in 1916 and it appeared in 1957 is not known. In 1957 it was certified by The Philatelic Foundation for the first time and sold by Lester G. Brookman to a well-known collector named Wilbur H. Schilling, Jr. When the Schilling collection was dispersed in 1975, the stamp was offered in the 1975 Rarities of the World sale and realized \$42,500 versus its \$25,000 Scott value. In May 1975 it was again certified by The Philatelic Foundation as a genuine “double Z grill, cancelled Philadelphia.” In 1977 the stamp was sold at Sotheby’s for \$90,000, doubling its Scott value, to Superior Stamp & Coin, who in turn sold it to Dr. Jerry Buss. When the Buss collection was sold through Superior in 1986, the One-cent Z Grill smashed all records, selling to Robert Zoellner for \$418,000 (with 10% premium) nearly quadrupling its \$110,000 Scott value. On January 22, 1987, The Philatelic Foundation issued its third “Genuine” certificate, signed by the preeminent philatelic expert, Herbert Bloch.

In 1998, at the sale of the Zoellner collection, an 11-year old Zachary Sundman held the paddle for his father, Don, when they outbid Bill Gross for the stamp at \$935,000 (including the 10% premium). In 2005, the “Greatest Stamp Swap in History” happened when Sundman and Charles Shreve traded the One-cent Z Grill for the 24¢ Inverted Jenny Plate Block bought by Mr. Gross for \$2.97 million. Acquiring this stamp completed Mr. Gross’s U.S. collection.

Donald Sundman (left) and Charles Shreve (right) in the “Greatest Stamp Swap in History”—the 24¢ Inverted Jenny plate block was traded for the One-cent Z Grill (held by Shreve), in a transaction valued at \$3 million in 2005





The finer of
two known
15¢ Z Grill
stamps

ESTIMATE
\$1,500,000-2,000,000

The 15¢ Z Grill stamp, Scott 85F, is actually just as rare as the One-cent Z Grill, Scott 85A. Only two of each are known and certified genuine. However, since both of the 15¢ Z Grill stamps are in private hands, it is possible for two collectors to possess an example of this major rarity at one time.

There were no known 15¢ Z Grill stamps for more than 40 years after Stevenson first published his definitive work on grilled stamps in 1916. Remarkably, a stamp residing in the Saul Newbury collection was misidentified as the much more common 15¢ E Grill for the entire time the Newburys possessed it. In 1961, soon after Michael Newbury consigned his father's collection to the Siegel firm, a member of staff spotted the grill on this 15¢ stamp as having the distinctive horizontal ridge points of the Z Grill. It was submitted to Elliott Perry, who determined it was genuine, and then to The Philatelic Foundation, where it received certificate 14038 on June 5, 1961.

The Newbury 15¢ Z Grill was sold in a 1963 Siegel auction—part of the Newbury series—to Eugene N. Costales as agent for Bernard Peyton, a descendant of the du Pont family and reclusive collector from Princeton, New Jersey. The Peyton collections of United States and other countries were sold by Christie's and Siegel in the 1980s under the name "Isleham." At the 1986 Siegel sale of the "Isleham" United States collection, Robert Zoellner acquired the 15¢ Z Grill as an important step on his path to completion. The sale price of \$110,000 (including the 10% premium) eclipsed the \$90,000 paid for the One-cent Z Grill in 1977, but it would be a mere fraction of the \$418,000 Zoellner paid for the One-cent months later in 1986. At the 1998 Zoellner sale, Bill Gross acquired the 15¢ Z Grill for \$209,000 (including 10% premium) in his own significant step toward completion.

The publicity generated in 1961 by the discovery of the Newbury 15¢ Z Grill led to the search and discovery of the other 15¢ Z Grill by Eugene Costales. The second example received a "Genuine" opinion from The Philatelic Foundation in 1962 and was sold to Wilbur Schilling, Jr. The Schilling example came to market in the 1975 Rarities of the World sale and sold to a New York City collector. It next appeared in the 2019 Cherrystone auction of the "New Amsterdam" collection and realized \$1,610,000 (including the 15% premium), thus establishing a new benchmark for this rare grilled issue.



Saul Newbury



Robert Zoellner





One of three possible unused sets of 1869 Pictorial Invert Errors

15¢—ESTIMATE
\$400,000-500,000

24¢—ESTIMATE
\$300,000-400,000

30¢—ESTIMATE
\$300,000-400,000

The ten stamps issued in 1869 are known as the Pictorial Issue, because instead of following the tradition of depicting famous Americans, seven have engraved images of significant historical events or symbols of American progress. The four top denominations were printed in two colors, a first for U.S. postage stamps. Three of the bicolored stamps were misprinted with one color—a part of each design—inverted relative to the other. The 1869 Inverts are among the rarest and most desirable stamps, and in unused condition they are of the greatest rarity.

The maximum number of unused 1869 Pictorial Invert sets possible is three, because there are only three unused 15¢ Inverts extant. The number is also limited by the circumstance that only three of the four 24¢ Inverts are available (the fourth is in the Tapling collection at The British Library). Since the stamps were issued, only 16 collectors have assembled a complete set of unused 1869 Inverts. The first to do so, according to Williams' *Stamps of Fame*, was a German collector, Otto von Transehe-Roseneck, whose collection was bought by a dealer in 1899. The remaining 15 collectors include Bill Gross.

The stamps in the Gross set have the following provenance:

15¢—H. Houghton Phillips Jr. (sold to Weills)

24¢—George Worthington, Henry C. Gibson, Frank Joseph

30¢—Arthur Hind, Philip H. Ward Jr., Benjamin D. Phillips,

Ryohei Ishikawa



The sole example of the 24¢ “Large Bank Note” issue on ribbed paper is an essential element of a complete collection of U.S. stamps. Its status as Scott 164—the 1873 Continental Bank Note Co. printing—was affirmed when the Scott Catalogue identified ribbed paper as the defining trait, since this paper was used exclusively by Continental. Prior to this change in the catalogue, there was no means of separating 24¢ 1870 National (ungrilled) and 1873 Continental printings. Once ribbed paper became the defining trait, only the one stamp known on ribbed paper could qualify as Scott 164. That is the stamp in the Gross collection.

In April 1873, all of National’s dies and plates were turned over to Continental. Secret marks were added to the dies of all values, and new plates were made for the 1¢ to 15¢ denominations. For the 24¢, 30¢ and 90¢ values, the same National plates were used by Continental. Therefore, philatelists separate National and Continental printings of the 30¢ and 90¢ according to differences in shade, paper, perforations and gum. However, identifying the 24¢ Continental has always presented difficulty, and, for a time, the Scott Catalogue dropped the 24¢ (Scott 164) from its listings, because it was believed that no reliable method existed to distinguish the Continental printing from the National.

The certification of a 24¢ stamp on ribbed paper was heralded as the discovery of the Holy Grail, a 24¢ printed by Continental. After the discovery of the 24¢ ribbed paper stamp, the Scott Catalogue reinstated Scott 164. An explanatory footnote was later added: “The Philatelic Foundation has certified as genuine a 24¢ on vertically ribbed paper, and that is the unique stamp listed as No. 164. Specialists believe that only Continental used ribbed paper. It is not known for sure whether or not Continental also printed the 24¢ value on regular paper; if it did, specialists currently are not able to distinguish these from No. 153.”

The certified Scott 164 stamp was sold to Bill Gross in the Siegel firm’s 2004 sale of the “Lake Shore” collection. Its status as a unique example of a major Scott number puts it on a par with the One-cent and 15¢ Z Grill stamps. Perhaps its value will catch up with those more famous rarities in the June auction.

The only known
24¢ Continental
printing, Scott
164—with the
identifying
ribbed paper

ESTIMATE
\$400,000-500,000



The rarest of 20th Century coil stamps

1¢—ESTIMATE
\$150,000-200,000

2¢—ESTIMATE
\$750,000-1,000,000

The use of coin-operated vending machines at the start of the 20th century to dispense a variety of products inspired U.S. postal officials to consider using machines to sell postage stamps. At the same time postal officials were showing interest in adopting vending machines for stamp sales, private individuals and businesses were inventing and patenting mechanisms needed to dispense stamps and to protect against theft and fraud (including the use of slugs or foreign coins). Their goal was securing a lucrative government contract to have their machines installed in post offices around the country.

The Post Office conducted a survey of available technology in October 1907 in Washington, D.C. According to newspaper accounts, there were 27 models (and 15 other design concepts). From this field of contenders, six were selected for further testing in 30-day trials. Five manufacturers were authorized to test their machines, including two that used rolls of vertical (endwise) coils manufactured by the government. These 1908 vertical coils—Scott 316 and 321—are among the rarest of all U.S. postage stamps.

The Gross collection contains a re-joined line pair of Scott 316 and pair of Scott 321, both acquired in the 2002 Shreves sale of the Roger Brody collection.



Bill Gross has owned more examples of the 24¢ Inverted Jenny than any collector since Colonel Green bought the sheet in 1918. No less than six blocks of the world's most famous stamp have been a part of the Gross collection at one time or another. For a single example, Mr. Gross chose Position 69, a stamp that was sold in the Siegel firm's 2015 sale of the Robert Hall collection.

The Inverted Jenny sheet was purchased by a 30-year old stamp collector named William T. Robey on May 14, 1918, at the New York Avenue branch post office in Washington, D.C., near the brokerage firm where Robey worked. After drawing money from his bank account, Robey visited the post office and approached the clerk to ask for a sheet of the new 24¢ airmail stamp, the first issue for the world's first regular government airmail service. As soon as he saw the deep blue biplane flying upside down in its crimson red frame, his "heart stood still," as Robey later recounted. One week later, Robey and his father-in-law took the train to Philadelphia to conclude a deal to sell the sheet to Eugene Klein, the dealer who had made arrangements to sell it to Colonel Edward H. R. Green, the famous collector who once owned all five 1913 Liberty Head nickels. Robey received a check for \$15,000, and Colonel Green paid \$20,000 for the sheet, while Klein and two others who assisted in the transaction pocketed the \$5,000 profit.

Colonel Green authorized Klein to divided the sheet into singles and blocks, and to sell off what was not needed for the colonel's voluminous stamp collection. To identify each stamp in the sheet for future generations, Klein presciently penciled the position numbers on the backs. Singles were sold for about \$250 each, and possibly more for the best centered examples.

A choice example
of the world's most
famous stamp—the
24¢ Inverted Jenny

ESTIMATE
\$300,000-400,000

UNITED STATES STAMPS COMPLETE

The William H. Gross Collection

Planning for the Gross Sale

The auction of United States Stamps Complete from the William H. Gross collection will be held in New York City on Friday, June 14, in an evening sale at the Lotte New York Palace hotel at 455 Madison Avenue, followed by an afternoon sale at The Collectors Club of New York's new clubhouse at 58 West 40th Street.

The hardbound sale catalogue will be sent to Siegel clients who regularly receive printed catalogues. If you are not a subscriber and wish to receive the catalogue, please call 212-753-6421 or email stamps@siegelauctions.com to request an order form.

Clients may stay informed about the Gross collection, sale dates and special events by visiting our website:

siegelauctions.com

The fifth Gross sale will conclude this historic series of philatelic auctions. We look forward to working with collectors and the trade to enhance each individual's personal experience. Please feel welcome to contact our offices in New York or Dallas to discuss your personal needs and interests.

We are ready to assist...



SCOTT R. TREPEL



CHARLES F. SHREVE

To consult with Scott Trepel or Charles Shreve about items in the Gross collection or bidding in the auction, please contact:

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