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Viewing Collections: **Hall Outstanding U.S., Part 3**

by John F. Dunn

On April 30 Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries auctioned off the Robert R. Hall Collection of Outstanding United States Stamps. In Part 1 of this “Viewing” we covered the 19th Century U.S. postage stamps through the Bank Notes, in Part 2 the later 19th and the 20th Century postage issues, and in Part 3 we will look at the Back-of-the-Book issues.

This section opened with the 1918 24¢ Air Post (Sc. C3) N.H., with a forward shift of the plane vignette into the frame, described as “approaching the ‘fast plane’ variety, with huge balanced margins...a wonderful combination of centering and vignette shift...Scott Retail as normal \$140.” The stamp sold for \$600. (All prices quoted here do not include the 15% Buyer’s Premiums that are added on to these hammer prices.)



I selected the next C3 for viewing to show the evolution of these shifts. Per the auctioneers, “Position 21 with left selvage, Mint N.H., rich colors, vignette shifted strongly to bottom with wheels just short of touching ‘CENTS’, Fine, Sanabria handstamp guarantee with position number 21 in pencil, this is from the Sanabria sheet, at the time it was thought that in the upper rows of the sheet the shift was strong enough to qualify for the ‘grounded plane’ variety—today’s standard requires that the wheels need to touch or go into “CENTS”—a ‘low flying’ or ‘nearly grounded’ variety nonetheless”



This raises the question of why the “standard” needed to be changed? And will it be narrowed even further some day in order to create even more scarcity?

This is no reflection on the auctioneers as the change was made based on the work of specialists in the issue and promulgated in a paper by the Philatelic Foundation. But it does reflect the need to have “nothing but the best” on the part of some collectors, whether it be NH, huge margins, etc., and their redefining of what should be—and in this case WAS—good enough.

In any event, with an estimate of \$750-1,000, this “nearly grounded” stamp sold for \$1,200.

No surprise that a collection of this magnitude would have an Airmail Invert—the original invert, not one of the ‘virtual inverts’ created by the U.S. Postal Service. This lightly hinged example was described as “very fine and choice. One of the widest-margined and freshest examples...



“Many of the original 100 stamps were mistreated by collectors during the years, despite the stamps’ rarity and value. Colonel Green himself allowed moisture to affect some of the stamps he retained. Other examples have become slightly toned from improper storage and climatic conditions. Hinging has caused thins and creases in numerous stamps, and at least seven have been “lost” to philately—or nearly so as in the case of the copy swept up in a vacuum cleaner. This Position 69 stamp is in an extraordinary state of freshness, with excellent color and brightness.”

With an SCV of \$350,000, it could do no better than \$300,000. This may be a reflection on the stamp’s not being never hinged as well as on the gradual recognition that past realizations and the resultant Scott values got ahead of the intrinsic value of these errors, particularly when you compare their quantities and values with those of other much scarcer U.S. Inverts.

Next we have the 5¢ Deep Blue Buffalo Balloon Semi-official airmail stamp (Sc. CL1). The Buffalo Balloon stamps were printed by Wheeler Brothers Printers in Nashville Tennessee. They were intended for use on a flight of the

“Buffalo” balloon from Nashville to Gallatin Tenn., which took place on June 18, 1877. You can see the name on the balloon image in the stamp. Of the 300 that were printed, only 23 were used.

This example, unused (no gum), with large margins to just clear at bottom right, rich color, but with a few thin spots—and with a Sanabria certificate and backstamp—realized \$5,000 against a \$7,500 SCV.



In the Special Deliveries section I selected this 1885 10¢ Blue (Sc. E1) top right corner imprint and plate no. 495 block of ten with unusually wide selvage, natural straight edge with part arrow at left (part of the guide along which the full sheets of 100 were cut into panes of 50), original gum, lightly hinged, with a few minor perf separations that were expertly reinforced.

Per the auctioneers, “Each of the first four Special Delivery Issues (Sc. E1-E4) are extremely rare in plate block form. We believe the 1885 Issue, E1, is the rarest of the group with perhaps 5-7 known (including one pane).”

With an SCV of \$21,100 for a plate block of eight and two singles, it sold for \$17,000.

Next we view the 1879 1¢ Deep Brown Special Printing Postage Due (Sc. J8), with lightly hinged original gum, described as “one of the finest of the few known examples” of this stamp.

The auctioneers offer this interest-



ing commentary on available supply: “The 1¢, 2¢ and 3¢ are undoubtedly the rarest values of the American Bank Note Co. Postage Due Special Printings, although the sold quantities in the official records are relatively high. William E. Mooz, in an article on the 1¢ appearing in Chronicle [of the U.S. Classics Society] No. 170, May 1996, offers evidence to support his theory that the actual number of true Special Printings sold was significantly lower than the reported figures. For the 1¢, Mooz estimates 500 sold, but it is possible that as many as 400 purchased by G. B. Calman were destroyed. It is widely accepted that nearly 9,000 1¢ stamps sold as Special Printings were actually regular issues.”

The auctioneers further state, “A Power Search review found only one other stamp that rivals the quality of this choice original-gum stamp (there are none in the P.S.E. Population Report).” Despite this evaluation, with an SCV of \$22,500, the stamp could do no better than \$11,000.

The 1914 50¢ Carmine Lake (Sc. J58) has the highest catalogue value of any regularly issued Postage Due stamp, and on that basis the auctioneers tell us that it is “the key to any meaningful collection of the Postage Due issues.” With an SCV of \$11,500, this stamp with a small hinge remnant and with the deep rich color that is seen throughout the Hall Collection, sold for \$4,000.



This 1916 1¢ Rose (Sc. J59) presents vivid color and very fine centering in an original gum example. Per the auctioneers, “The Postage Due stamps on unwatermarked paper were perforated with 10-gauge pins for a brief time. Well-centered original-gum examples are exceedingly rare.”

Reflecting that scarcity, the realization for this stamp matched its \$4,000 SCV.



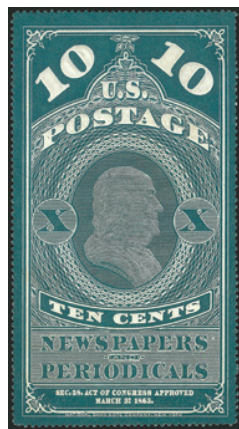
In the Offices in China (“Shanghais”) section I selected a couple of high quality stamps. To the left is the 1919 \$1.00 on 50¢ Offices in China (Sc. K15), N.H. with wide balanced margins, “post-office fresh,” and a 2006 P.F. certificate (VF-XF 85), SCV \$1,300, realization \$1,400; and to the right is a 1922 2¢ on 1¢ Offices in China (Sc. K17), N.H., with “precise” centering, deep rich color, with a 2006 P.F. certificate (XF 90), SCV \$250, realization \$900.



This \$5.00 State Department Official (Sc. O69) offers us an interesting twist. It is described as having “slightly disturbed original gum, exceptional depth of color, well-centered, **perf tip at top extended.**” [Emphasis added.]

The auctioneers also note, “With 1996 P.F. certificate stating ‘previously hinged’ and not mentioning the perf tip enhancement.” In some instances, particularly with older certificates, we can never be certain if the experts missed something or if there has been a change in the stamp itself subsequent to the cert being issued.

Either way, the stamp, with an SCV of \$8,000 did relatively well given its condition, fetching \$3,000.



We now come to an extensive section of Newspapers and Periodicals, starting with a 10¢ Dark Bluish Green 1875 Reprint (Sc. PR6) of the 1865 First Issue, without gum as issued, “Very Fine and choice,” with 2002 P.S.E. certificate, SCV \$250, hammer price \$275.

To the right we see a 3¢ Black 1875 Issue (Sc.



PR10) with original gum and a hinge remnant, SCV \$300, realization \$475.



I selected as many Newspapers as I did because of the excellent color condition they displayed. In these two examples we see the 84¢ Rose 1875 Issue (Sc. PR22), unused (no gum), bright shade, Very Fine, with a 2006 P.F. certificate, SCV \$650, realization \$425.



To the right is a \$9.00 Yellow 1875 Issue (Sc. PR27), with original gum, a hinge remnant, intense color, and choice centering. Per the auctioneers, “Sound, original-gum and centered examples of high-denomination Newspaper stamps, particularly of the First Issue, are incredibly rare. Only a handful of PR27s exist in this grade.”

With an SCV of \$4,000, this stamp sold for \$2,200.



Still more excellent color examples, from left to right we have:

\$60.00 Violet 1875 Issue (Sc. PR32), unused (no gum), fresh and Fine, SCV \$2,400, realization \$850.

\$1.92 Pale Brown 1879 Issue (Sc. PR71), o.g., fresh and Very Fine, SCV \$550, realization \$250.

\$6.00 Blue 1879 Issue (Sc. PR73), o.g., Very Fine, SCV \$1,050, realization \$700.

\$12.00 Yellow Green 1879 Issue (Sc. PR75), o.g., “barely hinged,” Very Fine, SCV \$850, realization \$375.



Completing this color display, to the left is the \$36.00 Indian Red 1879 Issue (Sc. PR77), o.g., lightly hinged, Very Fine, SCV \$850, realization \$300; and to the right is the \$48.00 Yellow Brown 1879 (Sc. PR78) o.g., LH,



Extremely Fine, SCV \$850, realization \$550.

Compared to other realizations in the Back-of-the-Book sections, this next lot did surprisingly well. It is the 25¢ Parcel Post (Sc. Q9) in an N.H. bottom plate no. 6189



block of six with rich color and detailed impression. With an SCV of \$3,900, it soared to an impressive \$5,000.

And now we turn to an extensive section of Revenues, starting with the First Issue 3¢ Playing Cards, Imperforate (Sc. R17a), barely touched at lower left, with an 1864 manuscript cancel. Per the auctioneers, "This issue is exceedingly difficult to find in sound condition. The majority has faults to a lesser or greater degree." With an SCV of \$40,000, this rarity went for \$13,000.



And to the left we view a First Issue 70¢ Foreign Exchange, Imperforate (Sc. R65a) with large to full margins, rich color, and a light manuscript cancel.

With an SCV of \$725, this attractive stamp brought a top bid of \$325.



This \$1.30 Foreign Exchange, Imperforate (Sc. R77a) with large margins on three sides, and sports a perfect central strike of a “Sawyer. Wallace & Co. Sep. 5, 1863” circular date-stamp. But it is just in at left and has a horizontal crease at the center and a pinhole at the bottom, so it brought \$1,100 against its \$9,000 SCV.

Demonstrating the detailed engraving work of these stamps—keeping in mind that they are Revenue stamps and extra care needed to be taken to discourage



counterfeiting—we next view the \$200.00 U.S.I.R., Imperforate (Sc. R102a) with large to full margins, rich colors, and neat face-free handstamp cancels. But it does have vertical creases at left and in the extreme right margin. With an SCV of \$3,000, this high value First Issue Revenue sold for \$800.

Next up is an example of the “Persian Rug” Revenues that are among the most beautiful of all stamps. In this case it is a \$500.00 Red Orange, Green & Black, Large Die Proof on India (Sc. R133P1) in actual stamp size and affixed to card, large margins and beautiful colors. There is a tiny tear at upper right and a scoring line at bottom center—described as “neither are obvious without magnification.” The rarity is such that the auctioneers state, “this is the only die proof we have offered since at least 1993, so despite the flaws, this lot with an SCV of \$3,750 deservedly drew a top bid of \$4,750.



On page 51 we view the actual stamp, the \$500.00 Red Orange, Green & Black, Second Issue, “Large Persian Rug” (Sc. R133), with deep rich colors, a neat July 2, 1872

manuscript cancel. It does have some faults—pinholes, a tiny scuff, a vertical crease at the top, thin layer of paper at bottom that was split “(probably when removed from document) and is re-adhered, not very noticeable”.

Still, per the auctioneers, “Only 210 were issued, and it is safe to say that most examples are faulty to some degree. A document exists from July 24, 1874, detailing the purchaser of each. The Kingsley census records 76 copies, and a handful are known outside of the census.”



With an SCV of \$17,500, it went for \$12,500.



Another key area with Revenues are the Inverts. From the Hall Collection, we have the 20¢ Blue & Black Second Issue with Center Inverted (Sc. R111a). With “better centering than normally encountered” (aka ‘for the issue’), it has a strong herringbone cancel that has been “treated with some white filler in places where it breaks the

paper,” and a thin spot at right. Per the auctioneers, “In his privately published census of Scott R111a, Larry Lyons notes thirteen singles and a pair. Of these, only one single and one stamp in the pair are sound. A footnote in the Scott Catalog states this issue is priced in the grade of Fine with small faults.” That SCV is \$7,000, and the realization was \$6,000.

Next up is a 25¢ Blue & Black Second Issue with Center Inverted (Sc. R112a). It has margins all around, is so lightly cancelled that it appears unused, but has faults including thin spots, a tiny edge tear at bottom and corner creases. There are only 16 recorded examples.

With an SCV of \$12,500, it sold for \$10,000, or 80% of its SCV. I mention this



because one interesting aspect is how this compared with previous realizations. The auctioneers tell us it was previously offered in the 1970 and 1991 Siegel Rarities Sales. Checking the siegelauctions.com website—which has a wealth of information—we find that in 1970 it sold for \$850 against a \$2,000 SCV (42.5%) and in 1991 it realized \$3,000 against a \$9,500 SCV (31.6%).

Next, the “I.R.” Overprints. Per the auctioneers, “To meet the increased demands for federal revenue during the Spanish-American War, on June 13, 1898, Congress approved the War Revenue Law of 1898. The law was to become effective on July 1, 1898, leaving only 17 days before the new stamps were needed. The Bureau of Engraving and Printing had already started work on the dies, rolls and plates in anticipation of its passage, but they were still unable to issue stamps when the law went into effect.

“A large quantity of 1¢ and 2¢ stamps were printed with an ‘I.R.’ overprint (Scott R153, R154, R155 and R155A). Additionally, small quantities were produced in the 8¢, 10¢ and 15¢ denominations. These issues mark the first time that the United States had to resort to surcharging. According to *Sloane’s Column* (STAMPS Magazine, July 31, 1948), the Michigan Mutual Life Insurance Co. hand-stamped copies of the 8¢, 10¢ and 15¢ regular issues over a period of five days in July 1898. Sloane states these provisional revenues were brought to the philatelic market by J. E. Scott, a collector and employee of the company. J. E. Scott reported that the company used 41 copies of the 8¢, 66 of the 10¢ and 28 of the 15¢. The Scott Retail values support this relative mix of supply.”

With that preface, we view the 8¢ Violet Brown (Sc. R156) in an intense shade, with a clear “I.R.” Overprint, and a “M.M. L.I.C. July 12” manuscript cancellation (Michigan Mutual Life Insurance Co.). But with a tiny thin spot in the lower left margin, this fine appearing example went for \$1,100 against a \$5,500 SCV.



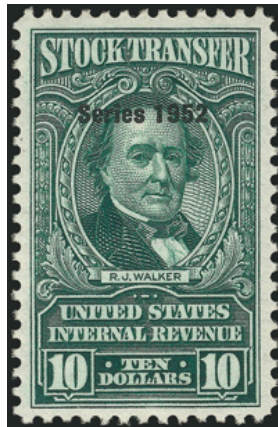
And here we view the 10¢ Dark Green “I.R.” Overprint (Sc. R157) with an “M.M. L.I.C. July 14?, 1898” manuscript cancellation (Michigan Mutual Life Insurance Co.), still with its original gum and a natural straight edge at bottom. With a light corner crease, this well centered stamp with an SCV of \$4,250, went for \$2,300.



Next we have the \$5.00 Green & Black on Violet Paper Proprietary (Sc. RB10a) with a manuscript cancellation removed, small thin spots and minor faults “as usual for this large format issue...Examples of the \$5.00 Proprietary Issue almost invariably have faults, due to the stamp’s large size and the nature of its use.”



Be that as it may, with an SCV of \$11,000, this stamp could do no better than \$2,800.



One of the many appeals of Revenue collecting is the variety of categories you can include, or in which you can specialize. Many of them were represented in the Hall Collection, including this \$10.00 Bright Green “Series 1952” Overprint Stock Transfer stamp (Sc. RD371).

The auctioneers inform us, “1952 was the last year of the Stock Transfer issues. Only 79 were sold of the \$10.00, which is the lowest reported sales total of the series (the \$20.00 is priced higher but 113 are reported sold).” Scott does not give an NH value. As hinged the SCV is \$4,500. This NH example drew a top bid of \$4,250.



To the right we view the \$10 high value from a lot that contained the complete set

of Head of Liberty dollar denomination (\$1.00-\$10.00) “Series 1940” Overprint Silver Tax stamps (Sc. RG49-RG54). The Fine-Very Fine set Complete set (\$2, \$4 and \$5 lightly hinged) has a total SCV of \$4,650 and realized \$1,700.



From the Ducks section I selected this \$1.00 1935 Hunting Permit (Sc. RW2) top right plate no. F 131983 block of six, lightly hinged in the gummed selvage (stamps NH), SCV \$11,500, hammer price \$3,750.



Completing the U.S. sections, we come to a \$5.00 Deep Green War Savings stamp, Rouletted 7 (Sc. WS3), regummed and well centered. With an SCV of \$1,200, it sold for \$400.

Next we come to a sampling of the lots in the Possessions sections, starting with a Canal Zone 1904 8¢ on 50¢ Bister Brown (Sc. 15) with slightly tropicalized



a “Fine example of one of the rarest Canal Zone stamps, only 500 issued.” With an SCV of \$2,000, it realized \$1,100.



And to the left we view a Guam 1899 10¢ Brown Type II (Sc. 9) with

slightly disturbed original gum, well centered and a tiny flaw at top right (“possibly a sealed tear”. With an SCV of \$2,750, it went for \$700.

The Philippines included the 1926, 2p-10p Air Posts (Sc.C13-C15, shown, Sc. C15), each with some faults. With an SCV of \$2,700, the set realized \$500.



Completing our viewing of the extensive Hall Collection, we have a

Puerto Rico 1898-1900 original gum balance lot with (Sc. 201, 210-216, J1-J3) that includes a Coamo Provisional single (Sc. 201), Pos. 5 Type I with a small thin spot. This nice little lot brought \$600 against a \$1,176 total SCV (\$650 of which is for the Coamo Provisional).