

Introduction to The Natalee Grace Collection

The “Natalee Grace” collection was formed over a 20-year period by a collector dedicated to acquiring the finest postally-used example of every United States 19th and 20th Century stamp listed in the Scott Catalogue. Contemporary post office cancellations were an important criteria. Precancellations were accepted only if the stamp did not exist with normal handstamped or machine-applied postal cancels. This distinction is significant, especially for production varieties, because the presence of a contemporary postal cancel is assurance that the stamp was sent through the mail and used for its intended purpose. The character of such stamps — those that actually performed postal duty — is what most appeals to the collector who formed the Natalee Grace collection.

Every stamp collection reflects the individual personality of the collector. Whether it is a general collection or specialized study, the collector’s personal inclinations shape the content. This is especially true of used stamps, which can be collected to include a wide range of cancels and varieties.

As the Natalee Grace collection was formed, different challenges had to be met. How should imperforate stamps be chosen? The answer: seek out corner margin copies or imprint copies. In what format should 20th Century coils be collected? Acquiring superb used line pairs would certainly raise the bar. The collector always pushed the envelope to see if something truly exceptional could be accomplished. Completeness was one goal, but self-imposed requisites added to the challenge.

Beyond the objective of acquiring all major Scott-listed stamps, the collector sought important printing varieties. Almost every letter-designated shade variety listed in Scott is contained in the collection, if it is known in used condition. The sale catalogues will give students an excellent reference for these shades. Other printing varieties of interest were stamps with double impressions or printed on both sides, some of which are extremely rare or unique.

The Natalee Grace collection has achieved a degree of completeness surpassing that of any other previous or existing collection of used United States stamps. In fact, it is the dwindling number of want-list items that has prompted the collector’s decision to sell.

Personally, I have shared in the fun experienced by the collector during the process of building this collection. Chasing after the elusive issues and varieties is now being followed by presenting the collection to the market. I hope the series of catalogues conveys what we learned over 20 years.

— JOHN ZUCKERMAN