

THE WILLIAM H. GROSS
COLLECTION

**Selections from The William H. Gross Collection of
United States 1847 and 1851-56 Issues**

Introduction by Charles F. Shreve

William H. Gross has always been fascinated by the provenance of items in his collection. In addition to studying and admiring the actual items, Mr. Gross has carefully researched old auction catalogues from the great “name” sales of the past century—collectors such as Emerson, Caspary, Newbury, Rohloff, Grunin and Ishikawa—and from his research he has learned how important items move from one outstanding collection to another. The motion of material, giving each new collector an opportunity to acquire and learn, is what keeps philately alive. So, if you ask why Mr. Gross is selling a selection of items from his magnificent United States collection, therein lies the answer.

The 375 lots in this catalogue comprise a selection of items from the 1847 and 1851-56 Issues collected by Mr. Gross during the past twenty years. Since Mr. Gross had privately acquired three large collections of these issues, in addition to buying individual items as they came up, he possesses an impressive quantity of 1847 and 1851-56 Issue covers. So much, in fact, that he feels he might be depriving other collectors of the opportunity to build their own collections. His instructions to Tracy Shreve and me were clear: go through his holdings and choose a variety of items in terms of importance and value, then sell them at unreserved auction. As he and his wife, Sue, have so generously done with all of their stamp proceeds, the money from this auction will be immediately donated to two major charitable institutions—Doctors Without Borders/Médecins San Frontières and Millennium Villages Project at the Earth Institute.

The selection of these items was made by Mr. Gross in careful consultation with myself and Scott Trepel. The 1847 Issue exhibit, which he plans to continue displaying, was kept out of the selection process, since each item fits into a story line. Apart from the exhibit there are many 1847 proofs, stamps and covers from the collections formed by John R. Boker, Jr., Wade Saadi and Joseph Hackmey, all three of which Mr. Gross acquired intact. In addition to the 1847's, Mr. Gross also acquired the entire Hackmey collection of 1851-56 Issue covers. From these groups, Scott, Tracy and I have created what we believe will be an auction for everyone who collects United States classic proofs, stamps and postal history.

As a whole, this sale is one of the most outstanding offerings of classic imperforate United States covers ever made. The presence of so many highlights from past collections is staggering. One of Mr. Gross' favorite legendary collections is Caspary's. In this sale are several wonderful ex-Caspary covers, including the superb 10¢ 1847 used from Canada and tied by the New York “Paid” cancel. Hawaii is another area Mr. Gross enjoys collecting, but he has included a 13¢ Missionary cover in this sale, as well as the 3¢ 1851 and Hawaiian Kamehameha mixed-franking cover to Persia (he is retaining another one from the same correspondence with a 10¢ 1855 and Hawaiian 5¢ surcharge).

If such “iconic” covers are beyond your reach, you can choose among dozens of “little gems” in this sale, such as the off-cover 1847's in choice quality with unusual cancellations, all of which come from the Saadi collection. Many covers from the Boker 1847 collection will be found, including unusual postmarks and cancellations, carriers and locals, railroads and waterway mail, Valentines and advertising covers, U.S.-Canadian mail, foreign destinations and post-demonetization use of the 1847 Issue.

In closing, please allow Tracy and myself to once again thank Mr. Gross for his enduring support of the hobby and of organizations that benefit those much less fortunate than all of us. The decision to return this fabulous classic United States material to other collectors is based on Mr. Gross' hope that a new generation of philatelists will carry on, deriving the same great pleasure from these items that he has enjoyed for years.

Charles F. Shreve

Tracy L. Shreve