



THE RICHARD C. FRAJOLA COLLECTION OF CLASSIC WORLDWIDE COVERS, 1840-1860

When Great Britain issued the first stamps in May 1840, a new era in postal communication was launched. The simplified rates, the incentives to prepay postage, the convenience of adhesive postage stamps—all of these fundamental aspects of Rowland Hill's postal reforms succeeded in expanding correspondence and use of the mails, while maintaining postal revenue. The Penny Black, Two-Pence Blue and Mulready lettersheets paved the way for other nations to implement similar reforms and to issue postage stamps. For the next two decades, many countries followed the same road and issued the plethora of stamps that collectors hold in esteem as the "classics."

Upon this simple fact of history Richard C. Frajola based the concept of his collection of worldwide covers. As a postal historian, Richard views stamps as tools within a mail system, each of which had an intended purpose when issued. As an experienced philatelist, he defines the *Classics* as the stamps issued in each country before perforations were introduced. And, as a professional who has handled many outstanding collections over decades of service, he has an eye for quality.

A single imperforate stamp, issued from 1840 to 1860, paying a simple rate in the intended manner, in condition that is both pleasing to the eye and in accordance with the philatelic definition of *superb*.

That statement is the definition of Richard's collection. In my opinion, it is one of the most aesthetically pleasing and exciting collections of worldwide covers I have seen. From little "gems"—relatively common items in exceedingly uncommon high quality—to major classic rarities, such as the Basel Dove and Saxony First Issue, each item in the collection causes one to pause in admiration.

European collectors have traditionally placed a premium on covers with a single-stamp franking paying the proper rate. Richard had to overcome significant competition from European collectors in major auctions, in order to acquire items for this collection. Our estimates are quite conservative in comparison to the prices these covers realized in their previous auction appearances. Richard believes that the market will take its natural course and strongly advocated conservative estimates in this sale.

To give prospective buyers the opportunity to see the lots in this sale, we will show them at our stand during London 2015 EUROPHILEX on May 13-16. Andrew Titley and I look forward to greeting old friends and meeting new ones at the exhibition.

As much as we have tried to convey the beauty and rarity of the items contained in this catalogue, I assure you that the actual items, in their resplendent quality, will make even the best color photo and effusive description look inadequate.

Sincerely,

Charles F. Shreve
Director
Siegel International