

A Rare 1861 Issue Grill Essay

First let me provide you with some background information on where all of the very rare 19th century essays (most are unique) were hiding all these years.

In September of 1999, Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc. offered the essay and proof collection of the late Falk Finkelburg. While the offering was truly amazing, and undoubtedly the most comprehensive offering of this type of material since the Harmer, Rooke & Company offering of the Earl of Crawford collection in the early 1940s, there were many key essays that were not in the Siegel offering. These key pieces had also not been in the 1990 Siegel offering of the Brazer/Joyce collection, either. In my correspondence with Falk, over a 20 year period of time, he had maintained that he did not know where they had gone with the dispersal of the Earl of Crawford collection.

As it turns out, what Siegel had offered in 1999, was the portion of the Finkelburg collection that had been mounted for exhibition. Within a year or two of that sale, the key essays that had not been seen in 60 years started to appear in Siegel sales. They were slowly dispersed over a period of 10 years. Today, they have all been accounted for. I have since learned that the family chose to slowly sell the balance of his holdings. My only surprise is why Falk chose not to mount and exhibit some of the greatest U.S. essay and proof material that he held. That is a question to which we will never know the answer.

For anyone who is interested I can provide you with a key to the additional Finkelburg dispersals.



79-E29i – The Monogram Grill Essay

As a former collector of the one-cent 1861 issue, this is an essay that I had searched for over 20 years. I finally acquired it at a Siegel auction six or seven years ago long after I had sold my collection. It had last sold in one of the seven Earl of Crawford sales. It is Ex-Finkelburg.

What makes this essay so important? It was among the earliest of the grill experiments. This essay is a combination of two different experiments, the grill and network overprinting. The grill is strongly impressed into the paper. Its appearance suggests that it was produced by a single grill (mounted on some sort of plate) that was not part of a roller and impressed down into the paper.

As the grilling experiments progressed, the National Bank Note Company sought to acquire as many of the re-use prevention patents as possible in order to protect their grill patent. Thus this essay represents an attempt to combine their grill patent with a fugitive network overprinting patent which they had acquired.

As more and more archival records become available on the web I am convinced we will learn more about the grilling era.

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