

A few rarities from members of the Club de Monte Carlo exhibited in New York

The first US commemorative stamp series of the 20th Century was issued on 1st of May 1901. It celebrates the Pan-American Exhibition held in Buffalo, New York. Each stamp of the set shows an important innovation. The 1c depicts the steamer *City of Alpena* operating on the Great Lakes owned by the Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Company. It was printed in two steps. First the vignette depicting the steamship was printed in black then the frame with value was printed in green. The invert appears when the frame was printed upside down. Technically speaking, the Pan-American inverts have inverted frames and not inverted centers!

The Pan-American inverts were the first bicolored postage stamps produced by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and the first invert postage errors issued by the Post Office since the 1869's. It seems that five sheets were issued with center inverted. The first errors were discovered on covers sent by a banking concern in Minnesota. The 1c Pan-American Inverts were found in several post offices around the country. Thirteen blocks of four, a block of six and a block of 20 are recorded.



William H. Gross collection

The fabulous and unique mint block of twenty of the 1901 One Cent Pan-American Commemorative issue of the United States with Inverted Centers. Not only is this the largest recorded multiple of this striking error by far (next largest is a block of six), it is the largest multiple of any of the classic United States inverted center errors. **It is regarded as the most valuable U.S. Commemorative multiple in existence.**

References:

- Johl, Max G. - The United States Commemorative Stamps of the Twentieth Century, Vol. I, H.L. Lindquist, 1947.
- Siegel, Robert A. - <http://www.siegelauctiongalleries.us>
- Whitman Publishing - 100 Greatest American Stamps, Whitman publishing, LLC, 2007.