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Today's Collector
New Opportunities

What You See in Stamps Matters



What a Beauty this block is. Too bad it is fake, but it taught me a lesson.

Do Not Ever Buy 'Sold As Is'.

One of the most difficult things we often face when viewing Classic Stamps, regardless of country or type, is that many of them were printed, shipped to small post offices, and carry tens of thousands of cancellations and postmarks. They reside without the paper or envelopes they once had. Or, if we are lucky, they are still found attached to a small piece of paper or, better still, on a cover. Some of these stamps may be easy to tell their story. The fact that many stamps received postmarks that are obviously normal for the used examples we have. What factors may change this supposition can be determined through study and reference material. We, collectors of early Mexican material, have several books on cancels from different periods. If we are lucky, we may have other examples that might establish the validity of the studied piece.



This one came to me from a Collection I purchased.

Looked great, but the collector didn't look at the incorrect vertical-grain paper.

Bad overprint and cancellations were also overlooked, proving a fake reprint.

When I purchased the collection, I did not include it.

Colors are another factor that often leads to a wild goose chase. As we pull out color charts, study catalogs for hints, and pass along emails to friends, we may find an answer. Generally, if the color betrays our eyes, we need to do some extra searching. Oftentimes, a color change is found to be due to fading or chemical alteration by an unknown collector using bleach. But color is just one of many other things that can make our search difficult. Added overprints are likely among the most common problems when there are numerous examples of the issue in mint, unoverprinted condition. Many of the Latin American issues were printed abroad. The stamps would be sent, and later the country's postal authorities would add a surcharge overprint. Many of these are not copied by fakers unless the fakes give the stamps a supposed higher commercial value. My examples are just a small part of the iceberg, because when we evaluate stamps, especially the scarce ones, fakery is always a problem that must be dispelled through good evaluation. The best advice is to study, look closely, and realize that if it looks too bad or too good, it might not be good after all.

Enjoy!

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