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Today’s Collector part 2

Finding Answers

How Easy a Philatelist’s Mistake Is Made



Plate I and Plate III Oaxaca 1856 issues from Tehuantepec

It is interesting how a week-by-week message can follow one another. Again this week, Bill H., a client I have had for some time, sent another question. Like me, he is trying to gather his material and sort out what he has and what he doesn't. I received a quick note explaining why Oaxaca cancels show up for the Sub-Office Tehuantepec in most classic issues, but not for the 1856 issues. The notation was missing in Taylor but present in Schatzkes. I went to my Oaxaca album and found Oaxaca Cancel Sz 1070 on a couple of 1856 stamps and at least one other cover from the 1856 issue. I then looked in one of my Red Boxes that holds the different district duplicated issues for that issue, and after counting out other 1856 Dos Reales from Oaxaca/Tehuantepec, I had another 12 examples. The truth is, this cancellation is broader than the stamps, and most show only the left side. Also, many of the issues I have were poorly postmarked. A question may arise: why was this issue missed for that cancel? I certainly don’t know. I suppose it was just a typo. Unfortunately, mistakes can carry over for many years.



Chapman cover with 1856 split Ocho Reales with docket September 22, 1861

Today, I am going to show you another cover from the 1856 era, actually an 1856 #8 Ocho Reales split for a Cuatro Reales rate. What's interesting is that Samuel Chapman owned this cover and placed it at auction in October 1930 with much of his other Classic holdings. The half stamp is overprinted with the San Luis Potosi postmark, Sz 1445, and is considered used during the 1856 and 1861 issues. The Docket says it was sent September 22, 1861. The auctioneer wrote that it was well tied, Super and Very Rare. It was lot number 347, and I found out it sold for 2 lb 15 shillings, or $13.75 at the time. That would likely be over $ 100 today. I found this cover in my Forgery and Faked Collection. I put most of the items there in binders and boxes at random when I found them in collections or in lots I purchased. So, when I found this cover, it had no real history of being studied to determine whether it was genuine or fake. The first thing I noticed was that its September docket date was after the first delivery of 1861 issues, which arrived with large numbers of stamps, both Cuatro and Ocho Reales. These numbers don't seem correct, but September 10, 1861, was about five to six months after the letter was sent. They had 1080 Ochos and 660 Cuatros in stock in April of the new 1861 issues.

San Luis Potosi	128	21	Dec	1859	1856			800	760	60	
San Luis Potosi	21	15	Feb	1860	1856		1200	1000	950	120	60
San Luis Potosi	111	31	Dec	1860	1856		300	1000	950	120	60
San Luis Potosi				1861	1856		352	1279	1373	121	68
San Luis Potosi	130	19	Apr	1861	1861		1152	1073	2070	660	1080
San Luis Potosi	10	23	Jan	1862	1861		1200	4000	3800	600	300
San Luis Potosi	17	10	Feb	1862	1861		1200	4000	3800	600	300
San Luis Potosi	33	7	Mar	1862	1861		480	1000	950	240	120
San Luis Potosi	37	27	Mar	1862	1861		600	1200	1140	300	

These stamps sent for delivery to SLP show us that the last of the 1856 issue arrived in early January 1861.
Next delivery of 1861 issues was that same year in April.
With the cover carrying old stamps month after SLP had the new ones, this doesn't seem right.

So, I examined the stamp and the cancel closely and found a few things that made me doubt it might still be genuine. First, I looked at the diagonal crease that looks as if it was torn to make a Cuatro split, but no, it was only a crease. Second, I looked at what appears to be a torn part of the stamp on the left, with a piece of another Ocho issue added to the split stamp. Lastly, I looked closely at the cancel, and honestly, it doesn't look like it matches, except possibly for the right area of the tight oval that runs through the stamp. The added portion of the stamp past the tear doesn't match

in size or placement. It's unclear what it looked like before the attempt to seal the stamp. What I do know is that someone's attempt to restore it to what it might have been failed.



A closer look at the stamp shows where a new left side was attached.
Also note that the lines of the Oval do not line up correctly.
The stamp piece is smaller than the surrounding cancel.

Studying this stamp, cancel, and cover shows how closely we need to examine what we buy, study, or find in our collection. Yes, I was a little disappointed to find it was a fake, but it's still amazing that one of the greatest collectors of Mexican philately once owned it. I think he would have known it was a fake, but the auctioneer who sold his collection didn’t and sold it along with everything else.

Enjoy!

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