

Hello to all,

You shall find here attached two files. They contain the translation in English of the first chapter of the book written by Paul de SMETH and Marquis de FAYOLLE in 1935. First is the table of contents, the second is the first chapter, titled "Introduction".

I have realized this translation, but Martin Spufford has corrected it strongly. Jesper Andersen and Bubba Bland have added their own "dos centavos" when they find and correct some errors. I wish thank them very much for their helps. Definitely this work is the fruit of a collective contribution. That give to us the possibility to read this text in idiomatic British English. The original text was written in French, but in a French language of an erudite man with an 19<sup>th</sup> century dated education, relatively different of the language of 21<sup>st</sup> century.

My works consisted, after an attempt to translate it myself (more of 2 hours for one page of the original book), to scan the text from a copy of the book with an OCR software, correct it for delete bad translation of some characters (for example "M" was translated by "l|", or some "m" by "rn"). After, when I had a good French text I have used a professional software for translation (Systran) that I have used since some years. The total translation of the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter needs around two minutes only. After this operation I must read again this text and verify some expressions, because a lot of French words have a double meaning (or more). I have also cut some too long sentences, but finally according the advice of Martin less than I thought in a first time.

Finally the time used for this work was around 20 hours (during 2 months), instead of more 30 if I had made it with my own intellectual means.

The original text contains some expressions in *italic* or CAPITAL characters, they are the emphasis of the authors. I have decide finally to not use the first and keep the second. This choice was dictated by the easiness and the wish to have a text more fluent for reading. In original text *italics* was often used when a technical expression (for example "sub-consignment" or "invoice number") were used for the first time, but CAPITALS was used for signal a very important concept.

In the translation I have used some special symbols, here under are the explanations. (\*n\*) where "n" is number indicate the number of the page in the original book. Some of you have this book in hands, and I think that will be more easy for you have it beside the translation. For this first chapter it is not very important because there is only picture on it. But in other chapters there is a lot of pictures (stamps, overprints, etc... ) and the text can be incomprehensible if you have not the picture. In the same way I have indicated the pictures by [PICTURE] and the caption by [CAPTION = and its text].

The authors used some footnotes, I have keep and indicate them by "NofA" (for Note of Authors) and I have used when necessary "NofT" for "Note of Translators".

This text is free for all persons who wish use it for private usage. It was realized for enable the knowledge of this particular domain of philately to my own correspondents. All commercial usage is forbidden and I shall never give my authorization for that. Therefore, concerning me, the dissemination of this text among collectors is absolutely free for private usage, in the respect of the mind of international (and national) laws concerning the copyrights.

Because I wish devote some time to my other philatelic studies, I don't plan to translate next chapter concerning "Issues of 1856 and 1861" before the end of the year. For me the period October-March of next year is the more active in my job, and the time for philately will lack probably.

I hope you will find some interesting contents in this text, and you will have a good time with your collections.

Comments and criticisms will be welcome, but please, on Meximail only.

Kind regards to all.

André NAVARI



(\*Title page \*)  
Paul de SMETH and the Marquis de FAYOLLE  
THE FIRST ISSUES OF MEXICO (1856 TO 1874)  
HISTORY – CLASSIFICATION – FORGERIES

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FIRST ISSUES OF MEXICO  
(1856 to 1874)

HISTORY - CLASSIFICATION - FORGERIES

By Paul de SMETH and the Marquis de FAYOLLE

INTRODUCTION

The old stamps of Mexico enjoyed great popularity at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and many eminent philatelists endeavoured to clarify the seemingly complex question of their classification. But after the year 1900 the popularity of these stamps underwent a decline due to the appearance on the market of large quantities of reprints, which seriously tested the knowledge of the specialists of the time.

With the complicity of some Postal Administration employees a part of the materials used in the manufacture of the issues of 1856 and 1861 fell into the hands of a band of forgers and skilful reprints were made of several values with the assistance of certain merchants of Mexico City. This group of forgers also made some of the district overprints and cancellations.

The study of the first issues is dominated by two issues: Firstly the understanding and deciphering of the various district name overprints and later, invoice numbers and year dates, which took a long time to be fully understood by collectors of the early issues.. Secondly the identification of the distinctive marks of the reprinted stamps which could only be identified by long and arduous study and which enabled them to be differentiated from the authentically issued stamps.

In such an immense country as Mexico, where armed highway robbery was a common occurrence and where mail coaches (diligencias), which constituted almost the sole means of transport for travellers and mail, were periodically attacked and robbed, the Central Administration of the Mexican Post Office, which was obliged to send stamps to the most distant districts, had had to formulate a system preventing the robbers from benefiting from their crimes.

The Postal Administration came up with a practical solution whereby delivery to the various districts was only of un-overprinted stamps or stamps without handstamps. It was only after receipt of the sheets of stamps in the various districts that the relevant handstamps were applied thus making them valid for postal use.

The stamps thus overprinted with the name of a particular district were however also valid for use in all the other postal districts of Mexico.. This regulation was set out in article 15 of the General Regulation of the Post published on July 31st, 1856, prior to the printing of the 1856 issue.

The postal organization covered, in addition to the federal district (DF) of Mexico City, all of the main

districts to which the stamps were delivered directly by the Central Office of Mexico City and also all the sub-districts, which were supplied by the main districts from their stock supplied from Mexico City.

A rigorous accountancy procedure was instituted to track these deliveries and also the returns as follows:

- 1) At the Central Office of Mexico City, for deliveries to the main districts;
- 2) At each Main District Office for recording deliveries to the sub-offices together with identifying numeral handstamps for each office.

The progression of this double accountancy system can be seen as new issues were printed.

In the “Hidalgo” issues of 1856 and 1861, the stamps carried an overprint only of the name of the main district, but later, under the Empire, this system was maintained only for a brief period covering the first 117 invoices of the Eagle issue and starting from the 118th delivery on July 7, 1864 to Guanajuato, the Central Office of Mexico City further identified the stamps by printing the invoice number and year date of each consignment, in this first case “118-1864”. On arrival at each main district the sheets of stamps were additionally handstamped with the district name, which only then validated the stamps for postal use.

It was at this time that sub-consignment (handstamped) numbers were introduced for each delivery to a sub-office. In the case of the main office of Guanajuato having employed part of its stock of stamps to supply its sub-district of Leon, it applied the overprint number 51, thus indicating that in 1864 it had already previously carried out 50 deliveries of stamps to its various sub-districts and that this delivery was the fifty-first. Thus the term “sub-consignment number” came into being.

This system, now that its mechanism is known, appears to-day to be logical and easy to understand, but this was not the case fifty years ago<sup>1</sup> when amateurs of the time were confronted with stamps bearing various names and numbers and for which there seemed to be no official explanation. (\*3\*) This was especially true of the issues of the empire whose markings were almost totally incomprehensible.

For instance, during the Imperial period in one of the main districts, that of Guadalajara, the name of the main office was not applied to the stamps when these were sent on to some of the larger Sub-Offices ( Sub-Main Offices) who in turn were charged with supplying stamps to smaller Sub-Offices. This is why one finds stamps sent from Mexico City to Guadalajara with the appropriate invoice number and year and which, instead of Guadalajara, bear the overprints of Tepic, Zapotlan or Cocula, all three Main Sub-Offices, applied to the stamps.

In addition, some Main offices, like Durango, Jalapa, Toluca, Zacatecas and others added the year in addition to the sub number to the overprint using in fact the same format as the stamps sent out from Mexico City.

This system was used for a short time in Guadalajara also and during the “Maximilian” issue the process was extended even further: on number 41-1866, appears the name of Cocula with sub-consignment N°20, and when Cocula in its turn made a delivery of stamps to Cuale, as they had a surplus of stamps in Cocula, the result was that there exists on these stamps three numbers for three different deliveries.

It is easy to understand how these varieties in the text of these overprints caused great confusion amongst the collectors who were trying to understand the complex postal system of the period

Once the system itself was understood there next came the formidable task of identifying the deliveries and sub-deliveries from their allocated numbers to a list of place names and following their trail from Mexico City to Main District to Sub-Office.

Certain important sub-districts like Silao, Leon and some others, had larger populations than their Main District Offices: For instance Cuautla and Tula de Tamaulipas compared to Chalco and Victoria. Conversely some sub-districts were of little or no importance comprising only a few houses or a large farm.

Because of the huge difficulty of communication - for there were only roads suitable for mail coaches

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<sup>1</sup>NofT: This book was published in 1935

between the main centres and so most of the deliveries were done by pack mules - there was a considerable lack of correspondence and the number of stamps sent to many sub-offices was extremely small.

With the lack of available official documentation it is easy to see how slow identification of sub-offices was when the only means available was the cancellation on the stamp. (\*4\*) It would have taken even a longer period of time to list and index the sub-offices had it not been for groundbreaking work done by Samuel Chapman when he unearthed and codified the official records discovered and fortunately preserved in tact at the several relevant ministries in Mexico City.

Here is an example of the difficulty faced by Mr. S. Chapman. He had a "Dos Reales Eagle" overprinted 143-1864 and bearing a number "2" sub-consignment number. On the face of it this was an impossible identification but by checking against the postal registers, it was found that this invoice number matched a delivery to Tepeji del Rio and that this office had dispatched, by means of overprinting them with the number "2", 39 copies of the Un real and 80 copies of the dos reales to the sub-office of Ixmiquilpan.

It becomes clear furthermore that by the addition of these various overprints and handstamps distinctly separate SPECIFIC POSTAL ISSUES came into being as the stamps then became unique for usage in the various main and sub-offices throughout Mexico and furthermore it is one of the reasons why any collection of Classical Mexico has an astonishing diversity and many stamps an exceptional degree of scarcity.

It was Samuel Chapman who first shed light on this matter by establishing a register of the main and sub-districts on a year by year basis complete with the relevant numbers for the sub-consignments thus making it possible to track every stamp of every issue to its office or sub-office.

It is thanks to his research in the postal archives, which were kindly placed at his disposal by the governmental authorities, that he managed to complete this not inconsiderable work. He tells the reader in the foreword of his great work "The Postage Stamps of Mexico City, 1856-1868", published in 1926 under the auspices of "Collectors' Club" of New York, how, provided with the necessary government authorization, he visited in turn all the post offices of Vera-Cruz and Puebla in the south and as far north as Saltillo and Monterrey and at each office collected all the necessary and absolutely essential information for the two offices of Morelia and Puebla..

For the issues of the Empire, the "Eagles" and "Maximilians", which were by far the most complicated, the statistics, which he drew up for the districts and sub-districts, were virtually complete.

Because of the huge amount of philatelic material he had collected over a period of many years when undertaking this task he had the advantage that when the official records failed to fill a gap in the identification procedure he was able to fall back on the cancellations on his own material to identify a particular sub-office. (\*5\*) It can be said therefore that it was only because of a combination of access to the official records and his own vast holding that Mr Chapman was able to publish his masterly work and thus solve the riddle of the classic stamps of Mexico.

Had it not been for the emergence in 1901-2 of the group of forgers who made the reprints of the 1856 and 1861 issues in such large quantities, all the problems pertaining to these two issues would have been solved. However their arrival on the philatelic market was not immediately apparent because of the skill of the imitations and a quantity of these reprints made their way into some of the most important collections. When this was discovered it caused a loss of confidence in and aroused suspicions concerning all stamps of these issues and had the effect of putting off new collectors of the area as well as some of the established ones.

This damage to the confidence of collectors was only repaired after years of detailed research and we devote a special chapter in this work to this subject. By referring to the combined works of Messrs. S. Chapman, C.J. Phillips, J.H. Barron, L.M. Josling, W.T. Wilson and by adding in our own research on the subject we have tried to show the "distinctive signs" which will make it once and for all possible to unquestionably recognize these reprints.

In 1868, at the same time as the issue of the new lithographed stamps, the postal system which had been in force since the issue of the 1856 stamps was modified to no longer show invoice numbers and year dates. Now each district was assigned an proper identification number which was to be accompanied by the abbreviated year printed at the Central Office of Mexico City on the right side of each stamp: Mexico City carried on the right "1 68", Vera Cruz "2 68", Guadalajara "3 68", etc., with modifications applied according to the years: 69, 70, 71 and 72.

Nevertheless, as in all the previous issues, the district name was still applied on arrival at the district post office by means of a handstamp and before sale of the stamps to the public.

Despite not having the complexity of the preceding issues, these stamps offer from a rather technical point of view a very wide field of research and collectors are able to study the many plate varieties, different printings, types of paper, stone retouches and lithographic transfer types.

For this reason, this issue can be particularly appealing to the amateur who might be frightened off by the research required to study the previous issues.

The same applies to the lithographed issue of 1872, which was issued under the same postal regulations as that of 1868 and it too offers many interesting and purely philatelic varieties, such as retouches, rare paper types and watermarks.

We find it interesting to recall, now that the necessary knowledge of the early stamps of Mexico has been acquired, the successive phases which preceded this situation and to quote the philatelic amateurs and authors who contributed to this satisfactory conclusion.

"It has been forty years", observed Mr. CH J Phillips, "since a group of eminent philatelists discovered the captivating character of the old stamps of Mexico and interesting articles have already been published by the Caillebotte brothers of Paris, Mr. Lockyer of London, Messers F. de Coppet and A.E. Lawrence of New York, Señor José Marco del Pont of Buenos-Ayres and in 1896 a very thorough study has appeared in "Heitman's Hand Book" published in Düsseldorf."

But the first really important treatise on the subject, although still far from being complete and rather general in scope, was compiled per Messrs. Collin and Calman as "The Catalogue for advanced Collectors" and published in 1900 by the Scott Company of New York.

These two authors had largely taken as a starting point the studies of those who had gone before and while adding a considerable quantity of their personal research on the overprints, varieties, reprints, etc., and while providing a partially formed basis for classification, they inevitably avoided tackling a host of controversial issues which were only completely clarified in recent times.

It was shortly after the publication of this work that the difficulties mentioned above occurred and were greatly increased by the appearance on the market, from 1900 to 1906 of a large number of fraudulently reprinted stamps of the issues of 1856 and 1861 and whose skill of execution initially misled the majority of collectors.

It was the principal concern of Mr.C.J.Phillips, the eminent director of Stanley Gibbons of London, to decipher and describe the characteristics of these fraudulent stamps when in 1917 he published his "Catalogue on the Issues of Mexico of 1856 to 1872". Mr. J.H. Barron continued a similar expert work of identification in his articles published in February 1913 in "The Stamp Lover" and again in October 1923 in "The London Philatelist".

As we have stated previously the defining work on the subject by Samuel Chapman appeared in 1926. In the following year, complementary to this work, Mr. W.T. Wilson, of Birmingham who had specialized for many years in the study of these stamps and in particular of their cancellations, published "The Postmarks of Mexico City 1856-1872", which showed reproductions of the almost all of the cancellations known to date.

The issue of 1868 was the subject of an interesting study published in 1912 by Mr. P.L. Pemberton in "The Philatelic Journal of Great Britain", in which the author especially endeavoured to identify the transfer types which were used to make up the lithographic printing stones and to illustrate the final retouches that may be found on several values of this issue.

Lastly, the lithographed issue of 1872 was made the object of a long and interesting study by Mr. J.H. Barron appearing in "Philatelic Journal of Great Britain" (in the issues from May to October 1915). Moreover, each of the 12, 25 and 100 centavos values was analysed and was separately studied by Mr. H. Griebert in "Griebert's Philatelic Notes and Offers" in the issues of June 1912, August 1913 and July 1914, while the same work was undertaken for the 6 and 25 centavos by Mr. Ch. J. Phillips and published in "Gibbons Stamp Weekly" of November 1909 and December 1912.

(\*7\*)

## POSTAL HISTORY

It was on February 21st 1856 that the Presidential decree of Don Ignacio Comonfort, announcing the introduction of the first postage stamps, appeared. The issue was scheduled for July 15th but in the event did not take place until August 1st and then only in Mexico City itself and the first eight deliveries of stamps to the principal districts offices throughout the country were not made until August 19th.

On July 15th 1856 "The General Postal Regulations" were published but are too long to reproduce here in full; however it would be instructive to quote some of the more important articles.

Article 15 instructed the District Postmasters, on receiving the stamps and before issuing them to the public, to apply by means of a handstamp the name of the district on each stamp to validate them for lawful postal use. It is very probable that the handstamp devices for these overprints accompanied the first deliveries of stamps to many of the districts. As can be seen, there is a strong resemblance among them of the style, type and dimensions of the letters; nevertheless, the relevant district authorities without doubt manufactured many of these locally.

Conversely, canceling devices were not dispatched from Mexico City to the various districts and it was left up to the local authorities to decide on the shape and the inscriptions of these postal marks, which were then manufactured locally.

That is why we have such a wonderful diversity of overprints and cancellations from some of the more isolated localities, sometimes of little importance and often very far from any industrial or commercial centre and where local resources precluded any but the most rudimentary means of manufacture.

For this same reason, a series of quaint and sometimes very basic overprints and more especially cancellations, exists depicting a host of national symbols or items of a localized character such as an eagle overwhelming a snake (which is an old Aztec symbol) or a mail coach harnessed to a team of mules. This last device was used to cancel the stamps on the mail entrusted to the mail coach service of Toluca. A postman depicted walking between two trees is a cancellation from Miahuatlan (Oaxaca).

Article 15 of the regulations also specified that the stamps with the overprint of one district could be used for postage in any of the other districts (for example stamps sold in Vera Cruz (\*8\*) would be valid for postage from Mazatlan) and so one often finds stamps of one district cancelled in another and very commonly in Mexico City itself.

Despite the fact that Article 15 forbade the postal use of stamps without district handstamp, stamps from the 1856 and 1861 issue are found WITHOUT HANDSTAMPS and still used postally thus contrary to the regulation.

Such exceptions were due to the negligence of post-office employees or in some cases the misunderstanding of the postal regulations and as a consequence of this some postal workers omitted to handstamp the district name on the stamp.

Furthermore in the 1856 issue there exist 4 principal districts, Colima, Polotitlan, Tepeji del Rio and Texcoco, the stamps of which were consigned directly from Mexico City and did not receive overprints and can thus be identified only by their cancellations. Similarly in the 1861 issue there are 6 districts, Cuautitlan, Huejutla, Polotitlan, Tepeji del Rio, Texcoco and Tuxpan.

Article 7 of the General Regulation for Posts dated July 15th 1856 contained another stipulation, which is most important for the full understanding of Mexican postal history. It stipulated that any delivery or consignment of stamps made by the Central Office of Mexico City either to the Principal District Offices or to any of the offices of Mexico City must have a sequential number issued by the accountancy department of the Central Office.

This article is of a great interest as it shows that right from the start the basic principles for the working of the postal system were fixed and remained in force until 1868.

Each delivery or consignment of stamps was thus listed in the registers with a sequential invoice number although this number was not reproduced on the stamps of the 1856 and 1861 issues..

During the Imperial period this invoice number was added to the year date and printed on the stamps sent by the Central Office to the principal districts and by extension of the same process, the principal districts also applied a sequential invoice number by way of a handstamp to the sub-districts, which we have called a sub-consignment number.

The postal rates for the carriage of letters and newspapers then in force was revised by means of a circular on July 15th 1856 and stipulated as follows:

From 1 to 30 leagues with payment in advance for letters weighing:

- less than one ½ ounce:	½ real
- one ½ ounce:	1 real
- ¾ ounce:	1½ real
- 1 ounce:	2 reales
- 1¼ ounce:	2½ reales
- 1½ ounce:	3 reales
- 1¾ ounce:	3½ reales
- 2 ounces:	4 reales
- over this last weight:	½ real for each additional ¼ ounce up to 10 ounces
- over 10 ounces:	½ real per ounce.

For distances in excess of 30 leagues the rate was raised by approximately fifty percent.

All these rates were doubled if the payment was to be made on delivery at the destination.

(\*9\*) However it soon became apparent that these tariffs were insufficient in such a vast country with such difficult means of communication and on December 20th 1856 a new table of postal rates was issued which is shown below:

Ordinary letters weighing	From 1 to 16 leagues	In excess of 16 leagues
Less than one ½ ounce	1 real	2 reales
From ½ ounce	2 reales	3 reales
From ¾ ounce	3 reales	4 reales
From 1 ounce	4 reales	5 reales
From 1¼ ounce	5 reales	6 reales
From 1½ ounce	6 reales	7 reales
From 1¾ ounce	7 reales	8 reales
From 2 ounce	8 reales	9 reales

- One league = approx. 2.6 miles = approx. 4 kilometers. 30 leagues are therefore about 78 miles or 125 kilometers.

And so on up to a weight of 10 ounces over which it was charged at a ¼ real per ¼ ounce, irrespective of distance traveled.

These modifications, made to the tariff on July 15th 1856 explain why the stamps of Medio Real are relatively common in 1856 but become scarcer from 1857 until mid-February 1861 when they again became more common due to the Postal Administration, which, in order to save printing more 1 and 2 Reales stamps and before the changing of color in April, sent out large quantities of Medio Real stamps which had been sitting up to that date in storage.

The Constitution worked out in 1824 by the first Mexican Congress on the establishment of the United States of Mexico had divided the country into 18 states, 4 territories, and a federal district, that of the town of Mexico City in line with the example set by the United States of America.

At a later date some modifications were made to the number of the states and territories. The current Constitution was promulgated in 1857 under the presidency of Benito Juarez.

With reference to the general organization of the country, the Administration of the Posts had created in each State or territory a certain number of main districts to which it dispatched the batches of stamps directly: these main districts in turn served a certain number of secondary offices or sub-districts.

In 1875, according to a decree issued on September 10th by the Postal Administration, the number of the States was revised to 27 plus 2 Territories and the Federal District of Mexico City.

There were also at this time 53 main postal districts of which, we give the list below, and 799 sub-districts. (\*10\*)

PRINCIPAL DISTRICTS	Number of sub-districts
Acapulco	3
Aguascalientes	5
Apam	5
Bravos (Ciudad)	11
Campeche	4
Chalco	10
Chihuahua	16
Cocula	14
Colima	1
Cordoba	4
Cuatitlan	5
Cuernavaca	7
Durango	27
Guadalajara	27
Guanajuato	17
Guzman (Ciudad)	14
Huejutla	17
Jalapa	21
Jilotepec	5
Lagos	9
La Paz	15
Maravatío	5
Matamoros	5
Mazatlán	24
Merida	33
Monterey (or Monterrey)	28
Morelia	28
Oaxaca	34
Orizaba	5

Pachuca	13
Parral	9
Puebla	45
Queretaro	32
Saltillo	31
San Cristobal	16
San Juan Bautista	19
San Shine Potosi	27
Tacubaya	7
Tampico	11
Tehuacan	6
Tepic	10
Texcoco	2
Tlaxcala	6
Toluca	24
Tula (de Tampas)	2
Tula de Allende	8
Tulancingo	8
Tuxpan	3
Ures	46
Vera Cruz	26
Victoria (Ciudad)	12
Zacatecas	26
Zamora	11

In total:

Central office of Mexico City	1
Principal Offices	53
Sub-offices	799
<b>TOTAL POST OFFICES</b>	<b>853 <sup>2</sup></b>

With the passing of time this list of Principal and Sub-Offices, together with the number of Offices themselves, varied considerably and changed constantly. Some Offices lost their importance and became Sub-Offices and conversely a Sub-Office might become a Principal Office.

In 1856, at the time of the introduction of postage stamps and during the time of the first issue the number of the Principal Offices was 53, although the register of the Administration of Posts, compiled by Mr. S. Chapman mentioned 60 locations to which deliveries or consignments of stamps were made directly.

At the beginning, 3 of these localities or offices, Guadalupe Hidalgo, Tacubaya and Tlalpam, received their stamps directly from the Federal District of Mexico City and carried the overprint 'Mexico'.

A special lozenge-shaped device consisting of dots was probably used in these offices and a rectangular cancellation with the name of Guadalupe de Hidalgo in a single line is also known.

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<sup>2</sup>NofA : This list was published in the book on Stamps of Mexico by Mr. S. Chapman

(\*11\*) Four offices, Perote, San Felipe del Obraje, Villa Del Valle and Zitacuaro, were never Principal Offices at all. [...]

[\*PICTURE\*]

[\*CAPTION\* = Reproduction of one of the of documents which Mr. S. Chapman used as a basis for the quantities appearing in his published work. ]

[...] but remained respectively Sub-offices of Jalapa, Guanajuato, Toluca and Maravatío. It is understood that the deliveries made directly by Mexico City to these Sub-Offices were due to (\*12\*) temporary difficulties of communications between them and the Principal Offices on which they depended for their supply of stamps.

There were 4 Principal Offices, which neglected to overprint their stamps during the period of the first issue. Colima was promoted to the rank of Principal Office in 1858 but no overprint was applied to the stamps before 1861. Tepeji del Rio and Texcoco became Principal Offices only in 1859 and lastly Polotitlan which received 2 direct deliveries in 1860 and 1861 the quantities of which are in doubt.

To sum up these observations it can be seen that during the issue of 1856, there were 49 Principal Offices with the overprint of the district, 4 Principal Offices without overprint, and 4 Sub Offices, which received deliveries directly from Mexico City but which naturally, not having been overprinted, can only be identified by their cancellations.

During the period of the 1861 issue 58 different district offices received direct deliveries of stamps. However it was considered necessary to reduce the number of Principal Offices to 51 by firstly removing Guadalupe Hidalgo, Tacubaya and Tlalpam, and including all three within the Federal District of Mexico City and to then remove Huatusco, Huichapam, Rio Frio and San Martin to which stamps had previously been sent directly and incorporate them into the deliveries to Cordova, Tula de Allende, Mexico City and Huejutla.

It is not certain that Tuxpan was ever a Principal Office but it did receive several direct deliveries.

Six of the Principal Offices did not overprint their stamps and they were Cuautitlan, Huejutla, Polotitlan, Tepeji del Rio, Texcoco and Tuxpan, so that ultimately, by the time of the 1861 issue there remained only 45 Principal Offices whose stamps bore an overprint, and 6 which did not.

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## CANCELLATIONS

Cancellations play a great part in the old issues of Mexico and they were mainly of local manufacture and generally show their primitive origin by their poor quality, both in their make-up and in the errors in their nomenclature. It was often the case that these cancellations were very large and used old –fashioned script and showed patriotic emblems and items drawn from local folklore.

Because of their large size, originality in design and the ease of deciphering their origin, they have compensated to a great extent for a lack of district handstamps and thus have been a great aid in the identification of the district of origin of a particular stamp.

Such was the case during the period of the 1856 issue for the offices of Colima, Polotitlan, Tepeji del Rio and Texcoco whose Postmasters had neglected to add the overprint of the district name and during the 1861 issue for the districts of Cuautitlan, Huejutla, Polotitlan, Tepeji del Rio, Texcoco and Tuxpan.

(\*13\*) During the period of the Imperial Intervention (“Eagles ”and “ Maximilians ”) during which time sub-consignment numbers were applied to the stamps, it was the cancellations rather than the official documentation which made it possible for Mr. Chapman to positively identify the Sub Offices and allocate them to their relevant sub-consignment numbers.

In the case of the reprints it was the cancellations that provided the key to revealing the NON-AUTHENTICITY of these stamps as the forgers had been unable to get their hands on the original genuine canceling devices and almost without exception it has been possible to tell the difference between the cancellers they manufactured and the genuine article by a careful study of the genuine characteristics of the original cancel.

There are exceptions to this where the forgers were able to obtain the genuine original canceling device, but, because of their bad condition and the fact that they had been worn with use and had numerous breaks and cracks and produced blurred results, it was still possible to recognize that they had been applied to reprints because of their degraded condition.

This is the case in the circular cancellation of Chalco which is inscribed "FRANCO MORELOS" and also for the oval cancellation of Cuernavaca which has a simple bar in the centre and also for the round and oval seals of Guanajuato which show in the centre a simple bar replacing the name of the month of the original seals, etc.

Certain of the older offices used colored inks for obliterating their stamps such as several of the sub-districts of Campeche and Guadalajara, which obliterated in red. The same applied for Yrapuato which received its stamps from Guanajuato and others like Parral, Ipala a sub-district of Cocula and occasionally Chiapas, Apam etc. which applied the obliterations in blue.

An interesting category of cancellations is that of the "Diligencias" whose principal companies acted as post offices where customers delivered their letters to the office for cancellation and special devices were made for this purpose and can be recognized by their oval shape with the inscription "Diligencias Generales" above and the name of the locale below. In these general cases the text was limited but there are some more complicated seals such as those of Mexico City which show an eagle with spread wings and that rare cancel of Toluca, much sought after for its originality and which shows a mail coach harnessed to a team of mules, this being the custom in Mexico at the time, as in Spain that mail coaches were drawn by mules.

It frequently happened that offices ran out of stamps completely and the Central Administration allowed the charge for carriage of mail to be collected in advance at the point of departure.

This is clearly stated in a letter of memorandum addressed to the agent of the Sub-Office of Penjamillo on March 15th 1867 by the Postmaster of Morelia.

In this particular case of advance payment the postal clerk applied a postal mark (Sello Negro) to the letter (\*14\*) indicating that payment had already been made and which was generally the word "Franco". Sometimes however, an additional local handstamp or even one of the earlier canceling devices from the pre-stamp era was applied in this situation.

This practice of allowing pre-payment of carriage without the use of postage stamps, to which the name "Sello Negro" was applied, was open to many abuses. Postal Circular N° 27 of April 3rd 1862 set out a strict set of rules to be followed:

"In order to prevent abuses of the system at the point of delivery where a "Sello-Negro" has been used to obliterate the stamps, I am ordering that in the future special seals will be assigned for this purpose similar to that which I am sending you. To indicate the origin of the letter sent without a postage stamp a special cancellation must be applied but without the word "Franco" so that in no case can the obliterating cancel seal be used for stamping purposes and that "Sello Negros" are to be used strictly only by the offices which have the legal right to issue them. You will be provided without delay with canceling devices for the mail of the general public and please take care that the stamps are suitably cancelled in order to prevent any fraud."