

Overlooked Issues - Part 3 – The 1872 Hidalgo Head Issue

Over the recent weeks I have done a brief survey of some of the overlooked issues of Mexico in both classic and modern. Considering that I have just touched on some of these issues, I would like to spend some time dealing with the unique qualities that some of the early issue have, and the what specific things related to some of these issues that make them both challenging and rewarding for the specialist. I hope that my coverage of some of these issues will lead you to either start up a new speciality collection or to broaden the collection you may already have.



Mint 6ctv la Paz 23-2

Many years ago, when I was started out selling Mexican stamps and postal history, there seemed to be issues I avoided and one of them was the 1872 issue. For some reason, I thought of it as unimpressive stamp with little character and not of much interest to collectors of Mexico in general. Little did I know at the time the depth of this series would hold. My mistake was overlooking this stamp because I didn't know much about it. I had an eye opening experience when I picked up a nice lot of 1872 issues in auction, which turned out to be one of the best learning experiences I had in Mexican stamps. Today I will cover the 1872 issues because a recently large acquisition of these stamps has renewed my interest to learn more about these often shunned stamps as I offer them to you.



Mint 12ctv Pair Tixtla 11-72

This issue has taken on the nickname of Profile Hidalgo, due to his profile portrait on this series. The very unflattering image has often been the reason a lot of collectors have not been attracted to this issue, but following the 1868 issues, the bright colors and variations of them can be a whole new area of study for the specialist. The truth is, not many of the early stamps of Mexico can be called beautiful by any standard, and once the collector gets past this unsightly portrait of Padre Hidalgo, the other factors of this series can open up a very interesting door of collecting.



25ctv San Luis Potosi 37-72 / Cerritos Sz 1480 200pts

One of the first things the collector will notice is the interesting 'moire' printed pattern found on the back of these stamps. Likely this was an added effect to make counterfeiting of stamps more difficult. Remember that this was the first national Mexican issue after the postal fraud of the 1868 issues, where postal printers were faking and selling stamps while they should have been on break. The Mexican postal authorities were not only concerned with fakes depriving them of revenue, they also created new rules governing how stamps should be sold. During the 1872 issue, stamps were supposed to be only

sold and placed on mail at post offices. Of course, this created hardships for businesses needing to mail volumes of mail. It also added more to the clerk's duties. So, this rule was broken sometimes, but the use of district overprinted stamps outside of district pretty well came to an end.



*50ctv San Luis Potosi 37-72 Sz 1416 24pts
Un-Overprinted 50ctv in Blue*

The papers of the 1872 series took on another interesting turn when revenue paper was used in some of the stamp production. The Papel Sellado of 1872 and La Croix Freres (LA+F) used mainly in 1873 were watermarked papers, used on a very limited number of stamps, creating many rarities. There are numbers of other varieties and errors found on these stamps from double impressions, “Moire” on both sides, blue colored 50 centavos stamps, imperforate between on perforated stamps to rare splits. Since these stamps were printed by the Lithographed process there are also a number of constant plate varieties that developed over the issue's production. There was 52 district office numbers, with two of them going to two different districts, Orizava and Morelia. The District of Durango was the only one to use Sub office numbers on their stamps, which turned out to be some of the rarities of the series. These are just a few of the things that make this issue interesting and worth further study.



*Lilac 100 ctv San Luis Potosi 37-72 Sz 1460
Gray Lilac 100ctv pair Saltillo 36-73 Sz 1360 30pts*

Reference material you may want to pick up would be articles in the past Mexicana issues, available in digital for members of MEPSI. Mark Banchik's notes on the 1872 Hidalgo Head Issue is a very good source of information regarding shipping numbers, rates and other things pertaining to these stamps and can be found as a supplement to Mexicana (July 1997), the quarterly publication for MEPSI. Of course there is far more to this issue that I cannot cover in such a short space, but I invite you to explore the 1872 issues for an exciting philatelic adventure.