

Fellow Collectors,

Relative Values How to tell values on stamps.

No other things changes the value more on early classic Mexican stamps than a) the district overprint and b) the cancel or the consignment numbers. Collectors of Mexico's material are an odd lot of collectors, because they value finding the used stamps more than the mint in the classic district overprinted stamps. The mint examples may catalogue for more than the used, simply due to their scarcity, but as a dealer I can tell you, the mint examples just do not sell as easily as some beat up example of a better district with a nice cancel.



When I started to collect Mexico, I was befuddled by the different overprints I found on the early Mexican stamps. There were names of places that I had hardly heard of and a number that meant very little to me. With a handout that I got at one of the stamp shows I was able to tell what districts some of those numbers went to, but how much better one was from another was a huge mystery to me. It wasn't until I was able to pick up a copy of the Schimmer's updated postal marking of early Mexico by Schatzkes that it all started to fall into place. This was before Nicholas Follansbee had put out his first catalogue on the issues that had district overprints and consignment numbers. So, as I turned to the back of my new copy of Schatzkes, the charts of different districts rarity became my working guide to what one stamp or cover would be worth from different issues.



		½	1	2	4	8	4a	8a	7	13	25	50
Cordova												
1856	. . . . .	50	20	20	150	350	-	-	-	-	-	-
1861	. . . . .	800	40	40	150	600	250	-	-	-	-	-
Eagles	1st period . .	800	90	90	800	800	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2nd period . .	-	90	60	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	4th period . .	90	15	15	-	250	-	-	-	-	-	-
	5th period . .	-	25	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Maxim.	. . . . .	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	500	100	50	175

If you have this book and you can find the values for the issues in district and cancel. The rarity values of each will help you understand the general rarity of both the district and the cancel locations determined by the postmark. With the cancel value and the district value you can determine about what your stamp's rarity is in numbers that would be relative to other stamps from the same or different district. We do the similar thing today using Follansbee's catalogue and the Schatzkes value for the cancel we find on the stamp. Regardless of how we work out what we feel a stamp or cover is worth, they all have relative values to each other.



So, the most difficult thing to do may be turning what we find in catalogues into practical guides for what we may wish to pay for a stamp. Other things may determine values outside of that lone stamp. It may be the popularity of the issue, the condition of the stamp, the demand for the country's philatelic material and how easy the stamps is to find. Some issues are very popular with collectors and others may only have a few hundred or less collectors worldwide that specialize in that particular issue. Condition is always important, since a less than sound stamp will not sell for what a clean well margined sound item will. There is also a big in-between a space filler to a lightly thinned example. Some countries like Mexico have a following of collectors in the thousands or less and other countries like the United States of America my have hundreds of thousands of collectors. Not all supposedly common stamps are easy to find and some rare items are in almost every auction. Each factor of what makes up the value of a stamp has to be considered.

When we look at items on eBay, at a stamp show or in an auction catalogue, there is always a challenge to figure out value based on sometimes sketchy details. With the Internet we now have the opportunity to have a stamp blown up in size to what a very good glass may reveal. We may only have a few moments to make the decision of whether we want to study a stamp more to figuring out what we are willing to pay for it. As a sellier, I buy large lots from auctions in order to offer what I do on eBay. I may only have a few minutes at the most to figure out what I am willing to pay for one of many lots I will be looking through. So, either as a collector or a buyer the process is pretty much the same.

Experience is one of the things we told our kids they needed when they started driving. The same is true for the novice collector when they start buying for their collection. The need to look at each part of the item you are buying become s paramount for the new to the experienced collector. Check your references and look out for something that catches your eye, like a variety, special postmark or if the stamp has something special. I do not know about you, but if I find something that holds my interest in an items, I have to have it if I can justify the price. Since I generally sale everything outside of my collecting interest, I also try to buy stamps that are interesting for my sales material.

I hope you find items that will make your collection special and personal. Those two things are to me the most important factors in developing a collection you will not only be proud of but one you will enjoy working with and just admiring for years to come.