

Fellow Collectors,

Condition and What It Means

The Mexican stamps of the 20th Century are not unlike many of those produced during the same periods from other countries. The overall quality was always getting better until both printing, centering and overall condition has become excellent during the 21st Century production of stamps. We have already covered stamp conditions up until the Civil War era of 1913-16 in my coverage of perforations. I detailed the centering and information on most of the local issues of the Revolution as well, so I will now talk about what to expect in condition and quality for many of the later issues.



After the Civil War in 1916 there were stamps with both normal perforations and Roulette type perforations. The general acceptance of the roulettes had improved, but as normal the centering and division of these would still prove problematic. The perforation of Mexican stamps until the late 30s were sometimes poor, but generally it is possible to find these nicely done on most of the issues. Centering depending on margin sizes allows for most of the issues to be found with nicely centered examples. The mid-century found a number of commemoratives issued in larger formats. The style of printing also went from engraved types to photoengraved types.



Considering that printing was improved, as was the quality of paper and gum, most of these stamps didn't have problems because of these attributes of the stamps. I must remind you that due to the wide acceptance of hinges on these stamps, un-hinged stamps are rarely found in the mint condition stamps, until the 1950s. As a side note, during the earlier Civil War period, many of those stamps that are now available to collectors were subject to a flood that destroyed the gum on a large percentage of those stamps that we now find available. Hinging can also be problematic for the collector, since early hinges were not easy removable types as in the later years. So, heavy hinges can be expected on many of the stamps prior to the 1950s. The collector interested in stamps of the later half of the 20th Century to present time, can find many of the mint examples in Never Hinged condition, but should also expect to pay more for these stamps than the hinged examples.



Many of the modern commemorative stamps of Mexico produced in the 1960s through the early 1990's were being produced in huge quantities and often done for private corporations and organizations, so a great number of them can be found in mint never hinged (MNH) condition. These stamps flooded the market during those years. By the 1990's, the postal system started producing only 300,000 examples each of many of their commemoratives, and these later issues are much more difficult to find, especially in used condition. Many of the used regular issued definitive stamps of 20th Century Mexico are generally much easier to find at very low prices. The irony of this situation is that inexpensive mint or used stamps of Mexico are rarely found on places like eBay unless they are in large groups. So, the collector can be mistaken by the rarity of items that have very little value.



Due to the limited space in catalogues like Scott, there are many varieties of many of the definitive issues that are known only to the specialist. Stamps like the Arts and Architectural as well as the Exports are both found in many varieties non mentioned in Scott. There are also many stamps that came be found with misprinting and what many collectors call EFO's, short for Errors, Freaks and Oddities. Many of these are items found there way out of the printing offices , but should be called printers waste. Always be careful of paying high prices for items that have colors missing, printing flaws and other things that could not have happen to stamps in constant production. True errors never come unique.

This next week I will have a new topic about Mexican stamps. I will be looking forward to more discussions on these interesting stamps of Mexico.