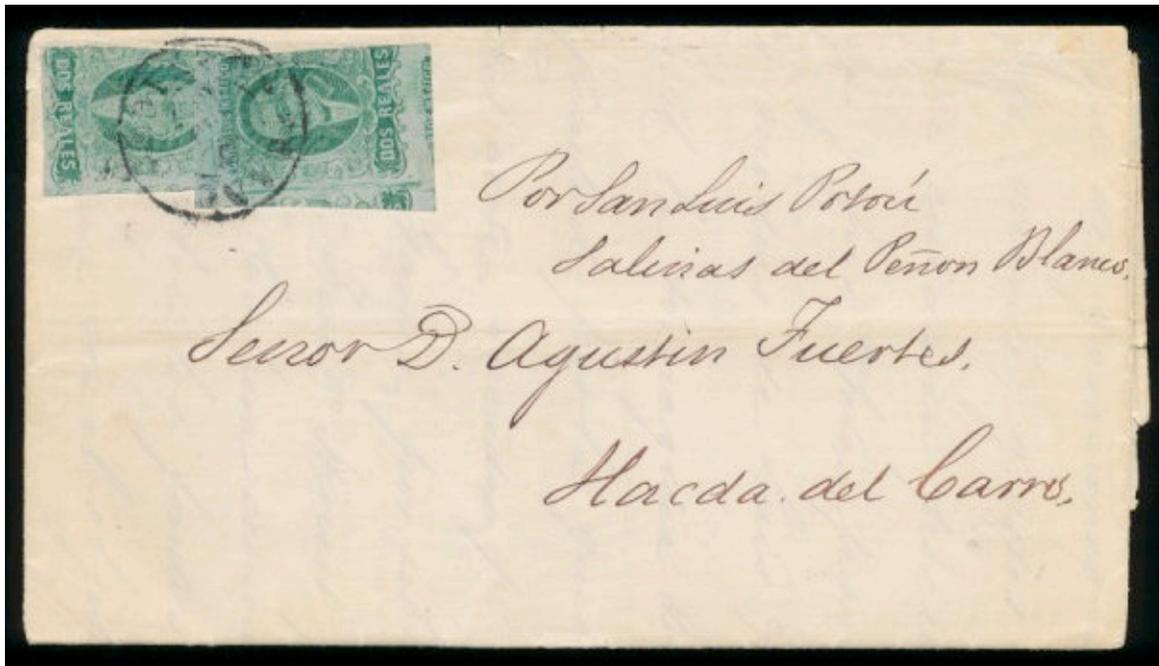


### Overlooked Issues Part 4 – Provisional Issues of 1868

To continue what I have been writing about the overlooked issues of Mexico, I would like to back track from the 1872 series to the previous issues before the 'Full Face Hidalgo' issues of 1868 we collectors call the 'Provisionals'. To give you a little background on what was happening before the 1868 series had even been conceived, the French forces were gaining control of much of Mexico beginning in the early 1860s. By the time the 1861 issues were coming to a close in 1864, the French army had gained control of a very large portion of Mexico and the European Prince Maximilian had been declared Emperor of Mexico. This did not mean the wealthy conservative land owners and business backed European style government had established a firm control on much of the country, and they were already faltering in their control by the time the civil war was ending in the United States of America. There was now great concern that the United States would again enforce the Monroe Doctrine regarding foreign control of a country located in the American Hemisphere.



Emperor Maximilian wound up losing the support of the conservative party in Mexico and his life ended, in Queretaro, on the wrong side of a firing squad in the Spring of 1867. Philatelically the ending of the French military control of Mexico would open up a short but very interesting period before the Mexican Postal Authorities could produce and print a totally new issue for the nation. Before the new 'Full Face Hidalgo' issues could be designed, printed and distributed, the lack of stamps to supply all the districts of Mexico opened up one of the most interesting periods for stamp collectors that Mexican Philately has ever seen before or since. We call this period between the Maximilian issues and the 1868 issues the 1867-68 Provisional period.



*Gothic Mexico overprints on stamps issued during the Provisional Period of 1867-68*

One of the first things we think of about the Provisional period is the prominent “Gothic” issues done for the Mexico District using of older remainders of the previous 1861 issue and some rare examples of some of the 1856 issues. This series was also lacking enough remainder stamps to supply the needs of the Mexico district, so this required the resurrection of the old first design plates for new printings. The Gothics are divided into two groups, and the first are those like the previous issued stamps and the second style were printed on thin bluish-gray watermarked paper done in new colors. Actually the bluish-gray paper types divided the release of the earlier type stamps. All these stamps were overprint by the Gothic script Mexico overprints that had been adopted during the Eagles and Maximilian issues.



Printed on back & the Big Plate Crack 189-III



1867 provisional use of early overprinted Mexico + details of '67' dating.

During the Gothic period, there were some interesting varieties, such as stamps printed on two sides, stamps recognized by dating that had no overprints or ones that had the earlier district overprints and stamps from the watermarked paper that were also without overprints. Other varieties that are similar to the other issues with pre printed folds or plate cracks can be found on many of these stamps, but the rarest varieties are some of the issues themselves like the Medio Reales with black on buff, Cuatro Reales in red on white paper and the Ocho Reales with green print on brown paper.



Guadalajara Provisional issue



Rare Jalapa sm. ovpt. / Misantla Sz 621  
Orizava used provisionally 1094 w/ 1867 dating

Guadalajara, Chiapas, Cuautla and Cuernavaca districts produced their own stamps during this period, and Jalapa, Orizava and Puebla districts are well known to have used old stamps. In these districts, the stamps are recognized by the different overprint, cancels or dated covers used. There may have been other districts that used old stamps, but they would require docket evidence to prove their provisional use.



*Guanajuato Sello Negro cover dated Oct, 31, 1863 Sz 468A Scarce*

Lastly during the provisional period, to supply postal patrons with a means to send letters, the Sello Negro, “black mark”, stampless covers were used. The normal method was to pre-pay for the mailing and the covers were either marked ‘Franco’ or had the black rate paid marking placed on the back of the cover to indicate no postage was due. There is a great deal of interesting material for the collector that were used during this gap in national stamps. With these Sello Negro covers and special stamps, a wonderful collections can be achieved. Some of the material is very expensive, but with a keen eye and patience a number of these stamps and covers can be found at reasonable cost. For any collectors, what better part of collecting is the hunt?

Further interesting reference to this area of study can be found in James Mazepa’s article “Provisional use of the 1856 and 1861 Issues” found in Mexicana January 1997 pages 292-307.

Enjoy!

I wish you the Merriest Holidays and a very Prosperous New Year, and especially the opportunity to pick up wonderful material for you collection.