

Overlooked Issues - Part 8 – The Eagles

These past weeks I have been covering some of the areas or issues of Mexican classic issues that are often overlooked by many of the collector of Mexico. Over this period I have received a number of emails from the collectors of these past issues I have been covering and how they appreciate my comments on their chosen interest. I have already reach the eight message covering an overall look at Mexico's overlooked issues and only three areas with more in-depth commentary. So, today I would like to cover an issue that has a fairly wide audience but still often overlooked my many in our hobby, the 'Eagles'.



*Mint Tres Centavos Mexico District
A rare issue from only this district and few consignment numbers.*

When I first started collecting I was amazed at the beauty of these stamps designed and put into service during the Mexican Imperial period when the French took over a limited control of the Mexican Post office. The stamps followed the same format of the traditional Mexican seal with the Eagle on cactus image, but an untraditional added crown above the eagle to signify the imperial crown. By the time this issue was in service the Austrian prince, Maximilian had become the Emperor of Mexico. Although this beautiful engraved stamp was only in service for not even three full years, the number of wonderful stamps to collect is only unsurpassed by a couple of other issues.



Remainder lost in war time and never returned to Mexico City

These stamps were the first in Mexico to have not only the district names overprinted on them, but when released from the printing offices under the Mexican postal authorities most of these stamps were overprinted for the first time with the actual consignment and the year they were sent out to the various districts. To understand this, it should be pointed out that when a group of stamps from a few in number to thousands that were to be sent to a particular district office, a number was assigned and printed on the stamps that would be sent directly to the proper office. Outside of Mexico City the stamps would travel by stagecoach. As I have mentioned before, overprinting of stamps by district was done to protect against theft, but the consignment and year overprint became a secondary security measure. When stamps did get stolen or taken in war from opposing forces, the post offices could, through official circulars, identify stolen consignments being use fraudulently. A good guide to this subject has been done in the recent article by Farley Katz, in the January 2015 issue of Mexicana.



1st period 2 Reales San Luis Potosi from the Matehuala sub office without sub office number.

With both consignment numbers, years sent and the district overprints the picture is still not finished. With the large number of stamps being sent to smaller sub offices around the different districts, sub office consignment numbers were starting to be added to these groups leaving the district office. The collectable number of different stamps were not just expanded by the numerous cancels outside the district offices, they also have these sub office numbers to be added to a specialized collection. So, with the expansion of roughly 5 stamps (not counting the 3 centavos issue) into 5 periods with about 50 districts, adding hundreds of sub office cancels and sub consignment numbers a collection of this type seems overwhelming.



Same Veracruz district on three different periods and consignments, same cancel used.

Limitation is the answer for many collectors. Many collectors are content with only getting one of each issue, but this can easily be expanded to one of each issue in each period. color variations of Eagle can be another area to explore. Then we have five periods are made up of three in the year 1864, consisting of ones without anything but the district overprint, followed by those with large and small numbered consignments (period I and II). The following two year dates 1865 and 1866 make up the last two periods, IV and V. These periods are often referred to as types for simple listing in catalogues and on sales sites. A nice, small collection can be made with this arrangement of issues and types or periods represented. In other ways that some collectors collect the consignments, either by districts or by just acquiring one example regardless of stamp denomination per consignment, limit scope of the collection can be made. I also know of collectors that will only collect something like the Un or Dos Reales issues with their consignments cutting out the cost of many more expensive stamps.



Brown Medio Reales found only in the first period.

Whichever way the collector may choose to form their collection, the Eagles can be formed into one of the most interesting and historical collection of Mexico. Many of the stamps are not expensive and the chances of finding better districts and consignment is real. Because of the complexity of these stamps, and the depth of their study, many good stamps go unrecognized in collections and group lots. Many of the stamps that are true rarities will sell at prices far less than rarities of other countries because of the limited followers for these better items in Mexico. The Eagles can be one of the special areas to think about for collecting or expanding your own collection.

Information on the consignment and other aspects of these issues can be found in David Pietsch's recently published update of Corbett's expanded coverage of the Eagles. To contact Dave for information on purchase of this book, his email address is: mepsi@msn.com Other reference material can be found in the digital Mexicana publications and Mark Banchik's Handbook that lists consignments and numbers sent for most of the classic issues of Mexico. Samuel Chapman's book, in the Quatermain edition, is also very helpful, but outdated.