

## Overlooked Issues - Part 14 – Large Numerals

### Large Numerals 1886 – 1895

My last installment in this series of weekly messages covered the Medallion issues, used from 1884 and 1885, just two years. Most of these were used extensively and finding nice copies for the average collection is not that difficult, but the series I will talk about today is even easier to obtain and actually has a lot more varieties, the Large Numeral Issues of 1886 through 1894. I hope to show you how a collection of these can be both easy to assemble and sometimes a greater challenge than one might expect. In my own collecting and dealing of these stamps, I am sometimes amazed at the details we often overlook, so before you write off any idea of these stamps as a specialty, consider what we will cover.



*Centering can vary from Scarce VF to common Average on all the Large Numerals.*

My first impression of these Large Numeral issues was a kind of ho-hum feeling towards these fairly bland stamps in basic lilac, reddish shades and blues. With similarities of the previous issue in papers and perforations. the overwhelming task is to find nicely centered stamps.

Whoever was running the perforating machine in the printing office must not have spent much time aligning the perforations nor making sure the punching was done correctly. Finding well centered stamps with good perforations is one of the most difficult things the collector faces. I really cannot blame the guy running the machine, because you will see that breakdown of the perforations lead to a number of issues in this series with oddities and in more varieties than any other issue in Mexico, past to present.

Perforations depend on paper and the quality, thickness and types make a big difference in the end product. There were three basic types of paper used, unwatermarked (1886), blue lined stock (1887) and watermarked papers (1890-95).

The unwatermarked types came in a normally horizontal wove type that was somewhat thin and hard and it normally produced fairly good perforations regardless of the poor centering. The Second type was a thicker and softer type stock found with a vertical grain and the oval is a little taller due to the grain direction. The last of the unwatermarked papers had wood pulp that can be seen in this medium horizontal grain soft paper.



*The shade of the blue lines on this ledger paper is really not blue but a variation of green on this perforated 6 10 centavos.*

The blue-lined paper is actually not blue but either blue-green or dull-green lined blank ledger paper. This paper was used for stamp production due to shortages of normal papers in the TIEV. Stamps with striking blue or deep blue colored lines are likely fakes of these issues.



*Perforations on the thinner, hard paper, compared to the soft paper, varies considerably.*

The water marked papers had CORREOSEUM spelled out on the bed that impressed the paper, where approximately one letter per stamp can be found. The papers used were similar to the earlier papers and in some examples where the watermark did not reach close to the edge of the sheet, it will give the impression the stamp is from an earlier unwatermarked issues. The papers used when the switch was made to watermarked paper was similar to those used on the previous issues or were either thin, hard vertical wove papers. Some of these papers look like they are “laid” types but this is difficult to see and generally not something to which a collector will pay a lot of attention.



*Perforations of 5.5 on the left stamp and 5.5, compounded with 11, on the right are just some of the variations.*

Now for the perforations. The first issues were done in Perforation 12 and the unwatermarked stamps with these would sometimes be produced with Perf 6 when pins were removed, due to breakage. There are even some that were perforated 6 x 12. Most of these are scarce to rare and collectors need to be very careful that many of the stamps that seem to be these stamps have been doctored by forgers. In 1890 some of the stamps were printed in Perf 11, so is is not unusual to find the later printings done in Perf 5.5. These unusual perforated issues can also be found in compound and irregular combinations of different perforations.



*Another variation is that of size. Production values were not consistent. Here are examples of two different stamps, with compound perforations and differing margins.*

Of course, paper and perforation are only a part of what separates the different issues in these stamps. Colors of Yellow Green, Carmine, Ultra and Lilac were used in the first year, 1886. The following year colors changed on some of the issues to Scarlet in 1887. The odd perforated issue for this year had some stamps of all these colors plus Scarlet, Brownish Carmine and Brown. During the watermarked issues, a Vermillion color replaced the Scarlet when the Watermarked issues were released. During 1892 Orange was used as the color on a number of these stamps. Care must be taken with this color, since it is so closely related to Vermillion.

The denominations were somewhat like those of the Medallion issues, but with all the color changes there were a number of these stamps in the various papers and the many different shades. If one were only interested in putting one each into their collection the colors become a beautiful array of shades and varieties. But, paper and perforations are only the start of this often times overlooked series. I will go into the other things that make this so special, such as cancelations, imperforate varieties, the rare peso values and more.

Collecting and understanding Mexico can be very interesting and when the collector looks deeper than just putting stamps into their album spaces, there is a world of philatelic enjoyment, the hunt for sometime inexpensive varieties and the fun of collecting that can last for years working on such a Series as the large Numeral.

Enjoy.