

Revolutionary Issues 1913-1916

In my last message, I spent a lot of time writing about the overprints found on the earlier issues of 1899-1910 used during the Revolutionary period from 1913-1916. After I wrote my message I felt that I had left many of my readers wanting to know how to tell genuine from fake. Surely I wrote a lot about this subject sometime ago, but I have also added a lot of new readers that did not receive those messages and many of you that may have lost the information in the black hole of cyber space. So before I pick up on more of the Revolutionary issues I will revisit the Villa and Carranza overprints and how to easily tell the differences from fakes and genuine issues. I will borrow from Nicholas Follansbee's catalogue covering this era, *The Stamps of the Mexican Revolution 1913-1916*.



Genuine (left) and Bogus (right) Villa overprints.

Nick's book is a necessity if you are deep into the Revolutionary issues. It covers a lot more than I can in my short message each week. He gives up a great help in determining the genuineness of most of the Villa and Carranza overprints with a simple test. First the Villa, has a small mark missed by all the fakes you will encounter. The upswing of the "C"'s bottom curve comes close to the right leg of the "M". At this point there is a small bump on genuine examples. There are other things that make a difference in the overprint from genuine to fake, but if you do not find the small bump, the chances are not good for the validity of the stamp you hold in your tongs.



Genuine (left) and Bogus (right) Carranza overprints.

The Carranza overprint has its own special test that will help you determine if you have the genuine or a fake

overprint. Where the left leg of the “M” sweeps into a curl over the bottom of the “C”, there should be a small break at this point, as seen in the picture above. Now you may want to know, what about the times this area is covered with a cancel and you cannot tell if there is a break or not. This situation becomes a lot more difficult, because the differences are much harder to determine. But, if you take a good example of an overprint with the break and compare it to the one in hand that you are not sure about, look at the various part of the overprint, such as if the “G” and “C” are too close together or if the upsweep of the right leg of the “M” is too close or too far away from the upstroke of the “C”.

When we are looking at our stamps one at a time, the genuine and the fakes can look a lot alike, but when we compare what we know to be a genuine examples side by side, the fakes become very apparent. It has been said many times that the best reference collection for telling what fakes look like is a collection of genuine examples. Rarely do the fake stamps whether printed or just overprints compare to the genuine. If the stamp is rare, it is always good to have a certificate from MEPSI for Mexican stamps, or at least get an opinion from someone you trust. The scary part is that most dealers have no idea whether they are selling a fake of the genuine when it comes to Mexico. Not that they are trying to make a quick dollar, but that they have not specialized in this country.



Genuine part showing of Carranza inverted.

So much about overprints can be found in Nick’s wonderful catalogue or in the pages of *Mexicana*, MEPSI’s quarterly journal, now available for the first 60 years to members in digital form. The fear many collectors have about buying a fake goes away if you just know some of the easy tips on what is real example look like. Comparison, reference and study go a long way in making the collector safe from the bogus. Another short tip for all is to be wary of double overprints, inverted and overprints found on issues that were never known to have them. Many of these will be faked, such as one of the overprints is genuine and the other is fake. Unusual configurations of overprints need special attention and finding an overprint on something that isn’t in the books is like buying a lotto ticket with the winning numbers on a ticket with the wrong date.

Overprints of the Local Issues needs to be covered on the references I pointed out above. Many of the best genuine examples are those that were used on covers during the Revolution and wound up in the Dead Letter Office, “*Rezagos*”. Mint copies or those on cover should still be tested against the criteria that Nick sets up in his book. Although the book is long out of print, copies can be found from time to time in auctions and on eBay. Prices run around \$150 for this book, but if you are really a collector of the Revolutionary issues, the price will give you so much information that it will pay for itself many times over.

My next message will be a continuation of the stamps of the Revolutionary period and how to make a specialized collection of them.