

Sonora printed Issues

In my last message I gave a quick lesson on the overprints and how to tell them apart. This week we will visit the issues that were printed by separate political factions. Apparently, the rebels that controlled the northern states of Mexico either ran low on the familiar Mexican stamps of the 1910 series or simply didn't want to use the old stamps any more. The new stamps designed for postage were printed for the State of Sonora where the Constitutionlists were under the leadership of Venustiano Carranza. These first issues are called by collectors the White issues or "Sonora Whites". They were not printed white but it is the background color of the white paper that was used. The printing was black with red denomination numbers and names. These stamps were issued without gum and the paper also have watermarks showing on some of the stamp with company names of Peerless Mills or Yukon Aurora. The watermarks are mentioned in Scott, but no value is added. Nicholas Follansbee assigns a 50% increase for those stamps having the watermark showing.



Sonora White 1 ctvs and Sonora Green Seal without embossing

The White issues were first available on June 17, 1913. These issues have a perforated 12 Cinco centavos stamp, that is also identical to the Cinco centavos issue with colorless roulette type. So, care should be taken to have any of these stamps certified by MEPSI. Fakes are plentiful even with the high price of the lesser value 5 centavos stamp at around \$200 mint and \$75 used, compared to the perforated stamp carrying a \$4,250 mint and an \$800 value in used condition. These White issues in perf and roulette were embossed with the word "CONSTITUCIONAL" reading from top to bottom. Gothic style 5 centavos were also printed with a black colored roulette. This stamp would be the last of the embossed stamps without the later used Green Seal until the last part of September 1913 when some of the Green Seal issues were embossed and also lacked the colored roulettes. All these rare later Green Seal issues with embossing are rarely seen by the average collector.



Sonora Green Seal with light colored Roulette and one with the heavy Roulette color.

The Green seal with its picture of a scale was added and the embossing was dropped in July 1913 just weeks after some of the White issues were first used. The green seals seem to have more varieties in both ink and printing fonts than found on the earlier issues. Deeper study will open the specialist into a number of paper types used, colors of the seals and in some cases missing letters to form the "erano" errors. On cover, these stamps are not very common in the White issues, but much more available in the more common Green Seal types. Since all of these stamps were issued without gum, gum pots were placed in the post offices to allow the clerks or patrons to slap on glue to the envelopes and put the stamps down on the wet glue. This left many of these covers looking like a child had started an art project, that had gone bad.



Sonora Coach 1ctv, Baja 1ctv and 10 ctvs Baja without the seal.

Following the White and Green Seal issues were the Sonora Coach Seal Issues of October 1914 with the picture of the familiar Diligencia, Stagecoach. The format was smaller than the previous issues and the background had small X shaped marking that had circles in the v shaped side of the X. One side had the little circle slightly further away than the others. Orientation would be effected by the direction that the stamps would be printed over this pre-printed background. So, by using the orientation of these marking, it is possible to discover which plate the stamps come from. Specialized collections of these plates and positions have formed some wonderful exhibits. Some of these stamps can be found without the seal printed without the seal. An additional issue, with the 'SONORA' removed, the colors changed and with a new inscription "DISTRITO SUR DE LA BAJA CAL" were printed in Sonora for use in Baja. Few of the Baja stamps were ever used and most likely only on philatelic covers. Counterfeit cancellations are found on these more commonly seen mint stamps.



Sonora Anvil 5 ctvs, Sonora Plata 20 ctvs and 50 ctvs Plata with the Anvil Seal

The following issue called the "Anvil" Seal Issue is similar to the Sonora Stagecoach seal issues along with similar colors but with a large Anvil. Some of these can be found without the seal and can only be identified because the printing is not spaced the same as the earlier Coach Seal issues. The last of these issues with the Anvil Seal had the word "PLATA" overprinted on the Anvil Seal Issue. None of these "PLATA" issues were ever found used outside the 50 centavos. They are also found without the seal, but the overprint sets them apart from the earlier issues. Other varieties in all these issues can be found with double seals missing print. These different varieties will enhance the collecting experience and make these some of the most interesting stamps of Mexico often overlooked by the general collections. Postal History items for the Coach and Anvil Seal stamps are some of the least expensive of the Civil War issues.