

Fellow Collector,

## What is it?

Every collector comes across something they may have never seen before, and the first thing that jumps in their head is, "This could be rare". Well, as the old story goes, something is rare because, it is rare. In other words, you have about as much chance of finding something that is really rare as winning the Lotto, especially if you don't know what you are looking at. I could say that study is the key to knowing your material, but sometimes you will come across something that is just out of your league. The best approach is to go to "google", but with stamps the best approach may be to ask another collector that may know what you have.



What is the cancel?



Consignment is wrong for Mazatlan, what happened?

The likelihood of finding something that is rare and valuable may be pretty small, actually it is more likely you will find something really interesting. So, before you get excited about value, the first thing is to find out what you have. Now, it may be as simple as finding out if the stamp really doesn't have a watermark or if you are just missing something, like the wrong catalogue number for the stamp. I remember when I first started to collect Mexico and I found a stamp that I was sure didn't have a watermark. I took the stamp to a stamp show Ray Ameen, the dealer known better as 'Doc'. He pulled out a bottle of watermark fluid and although the results showed very little of any watermark, a close look and it was there. My problem was using lighter fluid, which works only of fairly visible watermarks.



Why is the color different?



What are these overprints?

So, make sure you have something that really is different that anything you can find in a catalogue. Next, try to find out what the use of the stamp, postal card or whatever may have been. The key may be the lack of value, the word postage or correos, the picture used or any of other things that make the item different from what you would expect to find. There are a lot of things that may look like postage stamps that are not. Some of these stamp like stickers are made for advertising, commemoration, political groups and many other things. We call these Poster stamps. Some sticker-like stamps made to look like stamps and including a value, for places that had no postal authority recognized by any other countries and we call these Cinderella stamps.



State revenues on cover?

Often revenue stamps are mistaken for legitimate postage. Some are placed on letters as postage and actually make it through the mail, but others were only philatelic creations. As far back as people started collecting stamps bogus stamps or philatelic concoctions have been made to sell to collectors. During the Mexican Revolution of the early part of the 20th Century there were people making covers and using odds and ends to sell as collectable covers. It is hard to know if they are real or just a product of someone's imagination.



What is this odd cancel and what is this stamp for?

When you ask a question of something worth, it all boils down to what the item is and how much demand there is for it. It is easier to sell things that are listed in catalogues than it is to sell something hardly anyone knows about. Another thing you may run across are proofs, essays and specimens. These are highly valuable, but they are so specialized that sometimes the only way to know the value it to see what they sell for. Joe Arce has been collecting these for years and he has already turned out his first volume of these type stamps on a DVD on the Revenues of Mexico. This DVD can be obtained from the Society at a nominal cost. His volumes on the ordinary postage stamps of Mexico are being worked on as I write and hopefully will be available soon from MEPSI.

Regardless whether your interesting item is worth a lot or a little, it is always fun to hunt for the answer. I would suggest that you join Meximail, the online forum for collectors of Mexico, where you can find other collectors that may help you locate information about what you have. You may be pleasantly surprised at what you learn about these odds and ends that you have accumulated over the years. Or be able to identify some of the hard to tell colors or watermarks. There is a lot to learn, but there is always a lot of fun to find out what you have and what it might be worth.

To see what is on the Society's web pages: [mepsi.org](http://mepsi.org)

To join Meximail please contact me at: [iam1bubba@hotmail.com](mailto:iam1bubba@hotmail.com)