

Fellow Collectors,

What is it worth?

As both a collector and a dealer, the question about value is always in my mind when I am either buying or selling stamps. As collectors we may face dealers that have no idea what something is worth, because they are not really sure about catalogue values, types, special circumstances and many other factors that effect the value. Knowledge is the key to making good buys on items that fall outside of the easy to find catalogue values listed in Scott and other reference books. When the item can look alike and the only difference is color or a particular watermark, many dealers are oftentimes stumped at what they are looking at and unfortunately they often go to the greater of values when two or more similar stamps are listed.



Both Plate III, left stamp is normal green, right stamp is Deep Blue green, and neither are Emerald.

As a collector of Dos Reales, I often face the problem of a dealer calling the stamp an Emerald Scott #3b or a Blue Green (actually a Deep Blue Green), which both catalogue for much higher than the normal Yellow Green. So, it hard to add a nice example with even a good cancel to my collection for a stamp that should sell for less than \$10 when the price is \$30 - \$50 more. Sometimes it plays the other way when the seller out of ignorance of that they may have will price something at cat that really is worth more to the collector. Yes, there is an ethical consideration that the collector with the knowledge feel torn in telling the dealer that his stamps is really a 'fill in the blank'. There is also the reality that the seller should know what they are selling. It takes time, a little study or just asking someone that is familiar with the issues or country to come up with the right value of an item.



*Left stamp normal 25 centavos and right stamp is the rare 'Lacroix' Wmk.
Values mint, Scott #109 \$0.85, Scott #109g \$300.*

Have you ever been at a dealers table and offer the information that they are selling the overpriced item for the wrong catalogue value? The normal reaction from the guy behind the table is to pull the item aside and express thanks, but the look on their face is "Who is this yoyo that is telling me I am pricing/listing or whatever the stamp wrong?". I used to do this and don't do it anymore. It normally is a waste of time. Sometimes the dealer realizing who I am they will ask me for my opinion, and I always give this free of charge. So, doing the right thing is right to do, but with knowing it may fall on deaf ears.



C13 Sc \$37.50, C23a Sc \$0.50 & C62 Sc \$0.35

I have also made the mistake of guiding collectors away from what I feel was too much for an item. I learned that it is not my place unless ask if I feel the price is too high, too low or just right. What is just right is what the collector is willing to pay. I will say again that knowledge is the real key to purchasing stamps or anything else that is of collectors value. I bet there is not one person that will read this that will go out and spend \$1,000 on stocks that they have never heard of, buy some diamonds from a guy in a back alley, or ask someone to hold their wallet that they don't know while they go into the bathroom. It takes education. Last week I sold what most people would think was a very common stamp that I said had an unlisted cancel for the issue. I was running it very low, but a couple of collectors spotted this and it brought a nice but reasonable price under \$20; however, to the average collector the stamp was only worth a couple dollars at best. It was those two collectors that knew something was special about this hard to find cancel.

What is the right price. It is the price you are willing to pay for something you know is worth what you are paying, something you need for your collection and something you feel comfortable in paying. Do not let other arm chair collectors sit around and tell you "Oh, that's too much" or "You're missing a great deal". These statements remind me of the guys that would say the first to someone selling something unless they are the seller. You know, the buy cheap sell high guys in the club.

Best thing to know about price is anything is only worth what someone is will pay for it at the time of the sale. Supply and demand. They have it, you want it equals coming to terms with what is fair and all sales are fair if they both know what they have or want.