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LARGE NUMERAL CANCELS

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With the advent of Guatemala’s first postal issue in 1871 postmarks were required to be applied to covers and not to the stamps themselves. The purpose of this regulation was to insure that the cancel and date be visible as shown in Figure 1. Each post office was provided with individually numbered obliterators to cancel the stamps and numbers 1 to 31 are known. Some were used into the early 1900’s.



*Figure 1 Chiquimula to London, December 7, 1874
 Numeral Cancel 19 separated from town cancel*

The numeral cancels have always been popular with collectors. Their distinctive shapes and variety offer challenges and many are possible to obtain with minimal effort. The cancels are often striking as seen in the example in Figure 2. While covers as in Figure 1 are very difficult to find, it is possible to find most of the cancels on individual stamps and to assemble groups of stamps with these cancels as in Figure 3. This article is meant to be a general introduction to these cancels; the topic itself is extremely complex.



Figure 2