

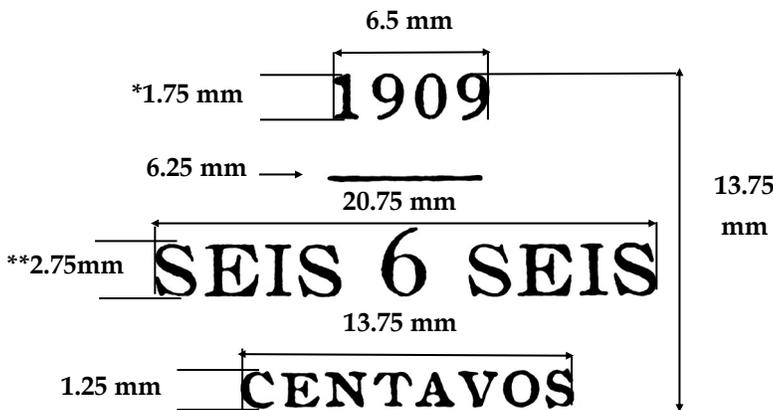
# GUATEMALA FORGERIES AND FAKES 1909 SCOTT 136-39

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The surcharges on the stamp issues of 1908-13 were extensively faked to defraud collectors, and this 1909 issue is no exception. It wasn't until the 1916-17 surcharge issues that forgers set out to defraud the government. At least two fakers were responsible for the 1909 fakes primarily created to defraud collectors unlike the 1916 fakes which were also created to defraud the postal system.<sup>1</sup>



Collectors of these issues need a quick way to verify whether a surcharge is genuine. As with all surcharge overprints, the quickest way to determine if they are genuine is to measure these surcharges. This will eliminate almost all fakes. The second way is to compare the stamp with the listings in *Guatemala 2* ("G2"); any variety not listed there is a fake.<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, and particularly if you think a variety is genuine but it is also unlisted, you will need to compare the printing of the basic stamp and verify that it corresponds with the particular printing of the basic Waterlow stamp used in the production of the 1908 surcharges.



The measurements of the genuine surcharges are illustrated here as described in G2 (but see following). The red and the black surcharges on the 50c are identical. Please note that these images were obtained by using color separation technology with the assistance of ISGC member Eric Dyck, and have been enhanced due to the difficulties of this process, and therefore the individual letters as illustrated may not be 100% accurate. Full sheets of genuine surcharges existed in the Luff collection at the Philatelic Foundation in New York.<sup>3</sup>

For the 2c and 6c the genuine surcharges are clean-cut and a deep, glossy black. The fakes are often in a grayish black with a somewhat blurred impression.

There are two notable font varieties. The 'small 's' variety in centavos in the 2c and 6c surcharges (positions 92 and 97) always occurs in conjunction with a 'C' of 'CENTAVOS' that has a nick or break at the top. The 'CFNTAVOS' found in two sheet positions has a small opening or nick in the '0' of '1909'. Both are illustrated here. Note that these font varieties also occur in various

\* This is closer to 2 mm

\*\* Height of letters is 2 mm

forgeries of these stamps.

G2 lists over twenty fakes of these issues and there are surely additional types.



*Small 's' variety*



*Fake 'CFNTAVOS'*

*NOTE closed '0' and poor quality of printing*

*Unlisted Double Overprint*



*Genuine CFNTAVOS*

#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>This information is contained in the editorial notes and correspondence of Roland Goodman, Editor of *Guatemala 2*, the handbook of Guatemala stamps published by International Society of Guatemala Collectors, and located in the Society archives (Eric Dyck, Librarian). Goodman often referred in these notes to the Luff collection which he had personally viewed and which remains in the custody of the Philatelic Foundation. Luff identified the faker of all of the fakes of the 1909 issue as "Wenck" (first name?) except the 'normal' red surcharge on the 50c which is credited to Reinoso & Sons. Both fakers were from Guatemala City; Wenck was said to have arrived in New York City in the early 1910's with a suitcase of faked material.

<sup>2</sup> Goodman, Roland A., ed., *Guatemala 2*, pp. 361-5, Robson Lowe, Ltd., London (1971).

<sup>3</sup> See footnote 1.

*The International Society of Guatemala Collectors was formed in 1948 and is Affiliate No. 38 of the American Philatelic Society. The Society is committed to assisting everyone interested in collecting Guatemala. Its award winning journal El Quetzal is published quarterly. Membership levels include a US\$10 online membership which includes access to most society publications including its two award winning handbooks, and the electronic version of the journal. If you collect Guatemala you will find much more information available on the society website:*

[www.GuatemalaStamps.com](http://www.GuatemalaStamps.com)

