

GUATEMALA FORGERIES AND FAKES 1871 SCOTT 1-4

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The 1871 first issue of Guatemala has been extensively forged and the problems for collectors are compounded by the proliferation of fake cancels. The purpose of this article is to describe these forgeries and help collectors unknowingly keep from acquiring these fanciful items.

The genuine stamps were engraved and perforated 14x13.5. The sun in the center of the stamp has 36 rays. The shield in the center has six and one-half vertical white bars in the upper left.



Original

6 Vertical Bars
plus part of 7th

6 Vertical Bars



Forgery Type 2

The forgeries are all rather crude lithographic printings and readily identified in comparison with the genuine once a collector is aware of them. They are roughly perforated 13 and printed in many colors. They are characterized by easily identifiable fake cancels done by the forger to obscure the printed impression. Other occasional fake cancels include smudged bogus large numeral cancels and the circular date cancels common

on the indian woman issue. There are at least three different forgeries.

The first lithographed forgery (Alexander) is on white wove paper has 34 rays around the sun and the upper half of the shield has five white bars and often parts of a sixth and seventh. They are often cancelled with the obliterator having parallel horizontal lines above and below slightly curved vertical lines (*Album Weeds* ["AW"] image type 62).



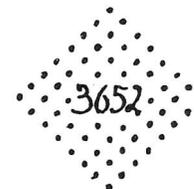
Fake Cancel on Original



62

The second lithographed forgery (Spiro) is on medium very yellowish-white paper has about 32 rays around the sun and the shield with six vertical bars but no trace of a partial seventh bar. They are usually cancelled with the same obliterator (image 62).

The third lithographed forgery (Zechmayer) is on hard very white wove paper has 31 rays and the shield has seven perfect vertical bars. They are usually cancelled with a diamond shaped array of dots (AW type images 37 and 38).



37



38



Un Centavo Forgery Color Varieties



Diez Centavos Forgery Color Varieties

References:

Earee, Rev. Robert B., *Album Weeds*, reprinted in *El Quetzal*, Vol. 31, No. 227, p. 6, International Society of Guatemala Collectors (1980).
 Serrane, Fernand, "The Serrane Guide", *The American Philatelist*, p. 640, American Philatelic Society (July, 1994).
 Jickling, David L., "Detecting Fakes Among The Classic Issues", *El Quetzal*, Vol. 44, No. 280, pp. 90-4, International Society of Guatemala Collectors (1994).

This is an expanding series of articles describing common Guatemalan forged and bogus stamps. Its purpose is to assist collectors to identify these items. There are collectors who seek these items and most are scarcer than the genuine stamps. The general collector, however, should be aware of these and able to easily recognize them. For example, there are currently listed on ebay a set of four blocks of Scott 7-10 which are clearly forgeries with easily identifiable faked cancels – offered as genuine for \$100.

The purpose of these articles is to permit a fast and reliable way to identify forgeries. The focus is on stamps with lower catalogue values. It has been many decades since most of these have been described in philatelic literature. Although references to authoritative source material will be included, these are not exhaustive of existing research and resources, and it is not the purpose of these articles to expand on what is already known.

The Society's existing publications including particularly the two handbooks and the issues of *El Quetzal* contain useful information regarding both the genuine and the forgeries. Many stamp issues are complex in the first place, and the information to verify genuine stamps requires the information contained in those publications. It is interesting to note that the nineteenth century forgeries were the topic of many articles in the philatelic press of the time, as philatelists were deeply concerned with the negative impact the proliferation of these bogus items were having on the reputation of the hobby and on the unsuspecting collectors. Much of the philatelic literature describing these has been out of print for many years and is difficult to locate and not available to the general collector.

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:

<https://guatemalastamps.clubexpress.com/content.aspx?sl=197696320>