

Synopsis:

Counterfeits, Fakes, and Forgeries of Haiti's Liberty Head Issues

(1-frame exhibit)

Since being exhibited for the first and only time in 2009, this 1-frame traditional exhibit of Haiti's earliest stamps has been revised with numerous items of significance added.

Purpose: The aim of this 1-frame traditional exhibit is to comprehensively display counterfeits, fakes, and forgeries of Haiti's Liberty Head issues, point out their identifying features, and correct or clarify misstatements made in the philatelic literature.

Challenge Factor: Numerous items in this exhibit are the only known examples, or one of a very few, which makes replication of this exhibit impossible. Most examples were collected individually over the course of 50 years and were acquired because of the exhibitor's interest in plating.

Scope: All known counterfeit and forgery types are included except for the 20c perf 14 postal forgery and one philatelic forgery erroneously attributed to Maitret [*sic*]. Holistically, a better collection is not known to exist. Any variety not included is more than compensated for by two or more equally scarce items included.

Research: The list of references reflects the exhibitor's long-time interest in forgeries. This exhibit corrects and clarifies several inaccuracies recorded in the literature. The accumulation and variety of dated examples of postal forgeries is qualitatively and quantitatively better than any grouping ever assembled (i.e. Moorhouse). According to Purves (1973) and Sellers (1986), the earliest use of a postal forgery was early in 1886. Included in this exhibit is a 20c perf 16 with a French maritime cancel dated Oct. 24, 1885. This exhibit includes one of three covers known with Liberty Head postal forgeries. Each is with a different value and therefore each is the only known example. Moorhouse (2017) indicated that only two covers were known.

Only six multiples, larger than a pair, are known of the postal forgeries. All six are of the 2c perf 14. Three of the six are included in this exhibit. Five of an estimated ten examples of the rare 3c perf 16 are included. Purves (1973) had only one example, Moorhouse's Liberty Head collection (2017) had two examples of the 3c postal forgery, both perf 16, one unused and one used.

According to Moorhouse (2017), the 1c perf 14, 3c perf 14, and 5c perf 16 are not known. An example of the 3c perf 14, however, is included in this exhibit. Although printed by halftone, the perfs of Moorhouse 20c perf 14 (p. 198) appear to have been accurately gauged. It can not be



Genuine stamp
Plate 1, position 1

determined if the perfs on the Sellers example were correctly measured. If so, these are the only two known examples.

The exhibitor (1990) discovered that a forgery type labeled "of unknown origin" and illustrated as Figure 11 by Sellers in his *Congress Book 1986* article ought to be attributed to Moens. This attribution is made because forgeries were derived from an illustration block used by Moens in his *Catalogue Prix-Courant* (6th ed.) published in 1883. All forgeries, attributed to Moens, are characterized by a white intrusion into the colored background of the vignette just to the right of and between the letters "UB". Other identifying features described by Sellers (1986) for individual values exist but are not constant for individual values and/or do not appear on all values. Nevertheless, these are helpful in identifying Moens' forgeries.

The forger Maximilian Maitret had his name misspelled a "Maitreat" by more than one writer (Tyler, 1976). Sellers (1986) indicated that his collection included a specimen which was a "may be" or a "probable" Maitreat forgery. Purves had corresponded with Sellers and reported Sellers' example when he wrote his 1973 article. There is a sentence which suggests that it was illustrated by Purves but it was not illustrated (Purves 1973, p. 291). No distinctive identifying characteristic(s) were described by either author which might identification possible. Halftone printing makes it difficult to see the details which might make identification possible. The photograph used for the halftone illustration (<https://tinyurl.com/Maitret>) by Sellers in his *Congress Book 1986* article shows a specimen distinctly different than all other forgery types. The lines of shading on the face and neck are drawn differently and less pronounced than on any other forgery type. Purves (1973, p. 290-291) wrote "Since *all* the other forgeries seen evolved from the original design via photography, and since I only have *one* type of forgery which came from a design separately *engraved all* over I am assuming, failing proof to the contrary, that this specimen was a Maitreat." Even if true, which this exhibitor seriously doubts, it still does not indicate that the example is a Maitreat. Other than what was written by Purves and Sellers, not a word exists in the philatelic literature suggesting a connection between this forgery and Maitreat. The exhib-

itor therefore has concluded that this forgery type ought to be categorized as one of “unknown origin.”

Sellers (1896, p. 44) stated that he knew of a collector in Sweden who indicated he had “one or possibly two” forgeries of this same type of the 1c value which Sellers attributes to “Maitreat.” Sellers is the same exhibitor, it is to be noted, who stated unequivocally, that Fournier produced two types of Liberty Head forgeries (see Baguet forgery below) without any supporting evidence,

Carroll L. Lloyd who purchased Purves’ Liberty Head collection *in toto*, in personal correspondence with the exhibitor, indicated that a forgery that Purves had in black with printed type on its reverse was not a proof but was an illustration from a price list or some other type of publication. Mr. Lloyd indicated that the other Purves example was identical to the two included in this exhibit (i.e. with serifs at the base of the “1”) without any printing on the back of the stamp. One can reasonably suppose that the Purves’ example was cropped from a publication of some sort and that the “die” was photographically reproduced. The exhibitor (1990) discovered that this forgery type, previously of “unknown origin” ought to be attributed to Mekeel and was produced circa 1907.

It has been reported that *Fournier* produced two types of Liberty Head forgeries. This myth originated with Nils Farnstrom and was repeated by prominent philatelists. It was stated in *The Congress Book 1986* that “the preponderance of evidence” supported this view (Sellers 1986, p. 44). In fact, there is not one iota of evidence to suggest this (Jeannopoulos, *The Cinderella Philatelist*, 1990). More than a decade after Sellers’ statement, Dr. Gerald L. Boarino (1997), the editor of *Haiti Philately*, in the “Editor’s Corner & Varia,” conceded:

Examples of the second series of forgeries of the imperforate Liberty Head of 1881, which had previously attributed by Sellers and others to the forger, Francois Fournier, were shown in support of a subsequent Jeannopoulos study in which he dubbed them as the ‘Paris Forgeries’ and attributed them to another well-known forger, Baguet. His study was well reasoned and Sellers and other Haiti collectors now accept them as the product of someone other than Fournier, quite probably Baguet.

Although the Baguet forgery is the type most frequently encountered, it is not at all common. The exhibited Baguet sheets of 25 (5 x 5), ex-Livingston, are the largest and only known examples. Multiples larger than a pair are rare. The Sellers Collection included only one example (i.e. a 5c imperf block of four). One set of blocks of 10 (5 x 2) is known.

“*Caveat emptor*” applies not only to when purchasing stamps, but also reading what has been published by others.

References:

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