

Synopsis

The Postage Due Stamps of Peru 1874-1948

Treatment

This is a traditional exhibit of all of the postage due stamps issued by Peru. The exhibit starts with the first issue prepared by the National Bank Note Company in 1874 and ends in the late 1940's when Peru stopped using postage due stamps. All known essays and proofs are presented in the exhibit. Subsequent issues were also printed outside of Peru by the American Bank Note Company, Harrison & Sons, and Waterlow & Sons.

The exhibit is organized chronologically. Each issue and/or overprint is introduced with pre-production material (if available), followed by stamps, varieties, and usages. Usages are divided between domestic and foreign mail.

During this period a number of overprints were applied to these stamps. With one exception, all overprints were prepared and applied in Peru. This exhibit includes all overprints including those of 1897 and 1916 that were done to facilitate the use of these stamps for prepayment of postage and not as postage dues.

The presentation of usages is an important element of the exhibit. Besides the collection of deficiency charges, there were several unusual types of usages of these stamps that were unique to Peru. For a time they were used on official mail, on mail containing legal documents sent between various courts where the recipient was required to pay the postage and for use as postage when regular stamps were unavailable. They were also used to collect penalties for reuse of stamps and for other violations of postal laws. These latter usages are very rare.

Background

Peru was the 8th postal administration to issue postage due stamps and the first outside of Europe. In December 1873, an order was placed with the National Bank Note Company of New York to produce “...*special stamps to pay deficient postage and to prepay letters*”. The design of these stamps is unique for postage due issues. All other countries issued postage dues with simple numeric designs to show the amount of postage to be collected. Peru's design is an elaborate composition featuring two vignettes. The upper vignette is a transoceanic steamship and is identical to that featured on the United States 12 cent issue of 1869, also prepared by the National Bank Note Company. The steamship is the S. S. Adriatic, which had set a speed record in 1861, crossing the Atlantic in less than six days. This design may have been chosen because one of the initial usages of these stamps was to collect local postage on incoming foreign mail, which arrived almost exclusively by steamship.

Like the United States 1869 issue, these stamps (along with an 1874 issue of definitive stamps ordered at the same time) were also grilled to prevent reuse. It makes little sense to apply grills to postage due stamps, unless they were also intended to sometimes prepay postage. Peru was the only

other country to utilize grills.

To understand the foreign covers in this exhibit it is helpful to know Peru's currency equivalent to French gold centimes. When Peru joined the UPU in 1879, its currency was set at the equivalent of 1 centavo per 5 gold centimes. On January 1, 1896 it was revalued to 2½ centavos per gold centime. In the 1940's it was again lowered.

Philatelic Knowledge and Personal Research

The exhibitor has spent 25 years assembling this exhibit. The result is the largest and most comprehensive exhibit of this material that has ever been shown. In the process the exhibitor has made a number of discoveries that were overlooked by previous philatelists;

- 1902 issue date for ungrilled stamps printed from the 1874 National Bank Note Company plates. Previous consensus was that these stamps were issued in 1886.
- Additional 1879 printing of 50 centavos denomination
- Role of Lima, Peru stamp dealer Williams & Company in 1897 FRANQUEO overprint
- 1907 American Bank Note printing of DEFICIT overprint on 50 centavos definitive stamp
- Use of Lecoq machine to apply 1896-97 overprints
- Anomalies in how Peru assessed penalties on short paid mail

One of the challenges with this material is the locally applied overprints that appeared between 1881 and 1902. Most of these were applied by hand from single clichés. The crudeness of the clichés themselves, coupled with the variances that result from hand application and normal wear of the cliché, make accurate identification very difficult. Furthermore, most of these overprints have been extensively forged, especially the inverted and double overprint varieties. Fortunately, almost all forgeries have been restricted to individual stamps and are almost never found on covers. In addition, overprints on ungrilled stamps are, by definition, forgeries, since these stamps were not printed until after the overprints were no longer being applied. The exhibitor's extensive collection of covers and other materials has allowed him to separate forgeries from genuine stamps. The exhibitor is currently an expertiser for Peru for the American Philatelic Society.

Condition and Difficulty of Acquisition

There were not a lot of these stamps printed. The 1874 issue remained in use until 1909 and was subject to several different overprints. Therefore, most usages within any one period are extremely rare. The exhibitor has prepared a census of known covers for the period from 1874 to 1909, currently at 491 items. In the last 5 years, fewer than 5 covers per year have been added to the census. All rarity statements in the exhibit are based on this census. There is currently not a census for covers for post 1909 issues. The issues after 1909 also had relatively small printings and while usages as regular postage are rather common, legitimate postage due usages are also rare. The exhibitor has selected the best examples for inclusion.

Exhibit Organization

The exhibit is organized chronologically. Each issue and/or overprint is introduced with pre-production material (if available), followed by stamps, varieties, and usages. Usages are divided between domestic and foreign mail. The following are the main exhibit headings;

1874	Original Issue
1874-1879	- Pre UPU Foreign Mail Usages
1874-1881	- Domestic Mail Usages
1879-1881	- Foreign Mail Usages
1879	1 Centavo Issue
1880	UPU-Plata-Lima Overprint
1881	Lima Correos Overprint
1881-1883	War of the Pacific
1883-1896	Triangle Overprints
1883-1896	- Domestic Mail Usages
1883-1896	- Foreign Mail Usages
1896-1902	Deficit Overprints
1897-1902	- Domestic Mail Usages
1897-1902	- Foreign Mail Usages
1897	Franqueo Overprint
1899	5s and 10s Issue
1902	Un & Cinco Overprints
1907	ABNCo. Deficit Overprint
1902-1908	Un-grilled Issue
1902-1908	- Domestic Mail Usages
1902-1908	- Foreign Mail Usages
1909-1931	American Bank Note Numeral Issue
1909-1931	- Domestic Mail Usages
1909-1931	- Foreign Mail Usages
1916	Franqueo Vale 2cts 1916 Overprints
1932 -1934	Harrison & Sons Numeral Issue
1932-1934	- Domestic Usages
1935	Overprinted Definitives
1936 -1948	Waterlow & Sons Numeral Issue
1936-1948	- Domestic Mail Usages
1936-1948	- Foreign Mail Usages

Awards

International Large Vermeil (5 frames)- Sydney 2005

International Gold (8 frames) - Washington 2006

Grand Award – EXFILNA Lima, Peru 2004

Large Gold – Asuncion, Paraguay 2005
Six WSP Gold/Large Gold Medals 2003-2018
WSP Grand Award – Colopex 2012
WSP Grand Award – Chicagopex 2012
WSP Grand Award – Stampshow 2018
WSP Grand Award – Florex 2019

Bibliography

Very little has been published on these stamps and most of it is in Spanish. The following is the complete bibliography of published materials;

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An earlier version of Exhibit can be viewed: www.peru-philatelic-study-circle.com

Copies of articles can be furnished upon request

