

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



Genuine 1881,
plate 1, pos. 1.

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.

Introduction: A counterfeit is a fake stamp created to deceive the postal system (i.e., to avoid paying postage), while forgeries and fakes are created to defraud collectors. Haiti's first stamps were issued 1881 - 1887. The genuine stamps, both imperf and perf, were printed on paper which had a tint applied by lithography and the stamps were printed by typography. Postal forgeries were printed by lithography on non-tinted paper.

The tint and shade of genuine stamps and forgeries, both imperf and perf, can vary even for values which had only one printing. All genuine stamps, both imperf and perf, can be plated which is a conclusive way of establishing whether a specimen is genuine. It is much less time-consuming, however, to use the identifying features of the different forgeries to determine whether a stamp is genuine or which type of forgery a specimen is.

In October 1885, postal counterfeits appeared and continued to be used until as late as 1891. Within a few years, forgeries and fakes were created for collectors. An illustration block used in 1895 by Jean-Baptiste Moens of Belgium, in his *Catalogue Prix-Courant* (6th ed., published in 1883), was later used to make forgeries or facsimiles. The US Secret Service in 1895 arrested *Maximilian Maitret* for forgery. The type of Liberty Head forgery he was responsible for is not known. A illustration block was used by *Mekeel* in 1907 to create another forgery type. Forgeries attributed to Alfred Baguet of Paris were in circulation by 1908. Francois Fournier's 1914 Price List of Fac-similes included both imperforate and perforated Liberty Head issues. Angelo Panelli of San Remo, Italy is known to have produced forgeries in the 1920's - 30's. Excluding postal forgeries and fakes, five different forgers have been identified and three are of "unknown origin."

All but two date from the late 19th or early 20th century. One type of fake was made by trimming a stamp issued in 1884. The most recent forgery is a 2c imperf tête-bêche pair produced in more recent years. The number of different types of Liberty Head forgeries is quite limited and they are not numerous. Forgeries of the Liberty Head issues are considerably scarcer than the genuine. Many are worth more than the genuine.

Outline:

I. Postal Counterfeits

II Philatelic Forgeries

- A. Fakes
- B. Moens.
- C. Mekeel
- D. Baguet
- E. Fournier
- F. Panelli
- G. Unknown origin

Highlights:

- earliest known use (EKU) of 20c perf 16 dated Oct. 24, 1885
- postal forgeries with a variety of different cancels (i.e. Port-au-Prince, NY IFMs, Uber Cöln, Otto Schutt forwarding agent) seldom found on forgeries
- 2nd largest known multiple (LKM) of 2c perf 14 postal forgery, a block of nine
- three of six LKMs of the 2c postal forgery
- only known example (OKE) of 3c perf 14 postal forgery
- four examples of the very rare 3c perf 16 postal forgery (3 used, 1 unused)
- 5c perf 14 postal forgery used horizontal pair
- one of three covers known showing use of a postal forgery, each franked with a different value and OKE
- Baguet forgeries printed in sheets of 25 (5 x 5), only known sheets and the LKMs; also OKE of Baguet forgeries tied to piece with cancels (20c and 5c)

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