

Synopsis:

Haiti's Agriculture & Commerce Series of 1920

(a 5-frame exhibit)

An exhibit focusing exclusively on this series has never been shown at the National or International level.

Aim: The purpose of this 5-frame exhibit is to comprehensively illustrate the production and use of five stamps issued in 1920.

Scope/ Importance: This traditional five-frame exhibit incorporates the majority of ABNC archival material which exists for this issue. It can not be replicated because it includes many one-of-a-kind items and documents the earliest known uses (EKUs), largest known multiples (LKMs), the variety of cancels which exist off and on covers. Covers illustrate different points of origin, destinations, rates, etc. If one uses the Sellers Collection as a standard, one can better appreciate the importance of this exhibit, in contrast to what it lacks. Holistically, a more comprehensive collection of this issue does not exist.

Challenge Factor: These stamps were printed in relatively large quantities, used for many years, and are common with low catalog values. Multiples of this series are, however, scarcer than for many earlier issues (i.e. Liberty Head issues, 1887 Salomon, 1891 Date Tree etc.), many of which are exist in full panes.

Domestic or internal covers are rare but well represented which makes this exhibit special. Such covers had a difficult time surviving because of Haiti's hot and humid climate, earthquakes, fires, and individuals who supplied foreign dealers with bundles of 100 stamps tied with a thread. Considering that these stamps franked domestic covers helps to explain why internal covers, inter-town and intra-town, are so difficult to find. Just because a collection such as this includes multiple examples of an item does not preclude it from being a rare or very rare item.

In contrast to the pre-war period, there are no HA-PAG German ship cancels and few Dutch paquebot cancels or purser marks, on and off covers.

This exhibit, unrivaled rarity and quality, represents five decades of actively collecting Haiti. Many one-of-a-kind items included make duplication or a better exhibit impossible.

Few examples die proofs, printer's waste, such as pre-printing paper folds and perforation varieties, left the ABNC printing establishment. Examples of ABNC printer's waste for this issue are rare. For individual values probably very rare. Printing freaks or perf freaks likely occurred but were destroyed. Before the ABNC sold its archives in 1990, the best collections included few if any proofs. This is why the ABNC was a well respected secu-

rity printer of not only stamps, but of banknotes and stock certificates for many countries.

Some items which exist for other issues do not exist for this issue (i.e. artist's sketches, and forgeries).

Just because one collection has several examples of a rare item does not make it less rare or common. The concentration of several rare items in a few specialized collections makes the acquisition such items even more difficult.

Rarity: The label "very rare" denotes items for which 2-5 examples are known or estimated to exist; "rare" 6 - 15; and "scarce" 16 - 100. Assigning such labels is based on the exhibitor's half century of collecting and having known and communicated with many advanced specialized collectors of Haiti throughout these years. Many have been members of the Haiti Philatelic Society who have also been queried about the presence or absence of items in their collections. Also when evaluating rarity, the frequency of items being sold in auctions and stamp bourses has been considered. Some "very rare" items likely are the only known examples (OKEs), as is the case for most ABNC archival material, except for specimens.

Highlights:

- ABNC trial color sunken die proofs, sunken die proofs, and index copy cards of all values except the 25c. The index copy for the 25c likely existed but its existence, or whereabouts, has not been verified or no longer exists.
- EKU of 3c on cover postmarked Jun. 4, 1920
- 2nd EKU of 5c on cover postmarked Jun. 4, 1920;
- 2nd EKU of 10c on cover postmarked May 3, 1920
- EKU of 15c on cover postmarked May 3, 1920
- EKU of 25c on cover postmarked Apr. 21, 1920
- LKMs of 3c (5 x 10) unused; 5c (5 x 2) on 1927 AM cover; 10c (2x7); 15c (4x 6).
- properly franked covers paying the rare or very rare domestic 15c rate.
- rare points of origin: 5c Jean-Rabel; 10c Aquin; 15c Plaisance; and, 25c Plaisance.
- rare destinations: 10c Lisbon; 25c Czechoslovakia, 25c Milan; 25c Constantinople; and Addis Ababa.
- 5c red "T.M." red overprints.
- 5c "T.M." on doc (according to Boarino, only 2 examples exist; the other example is a 50c Nord Alexis stamp with a blue "T.M." stamp.
- 5c "T.M." on cover (only known non-philatelic use).
- 5c, 10c, and 15c "T.M." blocks of 4 (only known examples).

- 5c postage due cover (no other postage due has been recorded for the 5c or any other value).
- 25c multi-colored advertising cover (only reported cover for this issue, only other is for 5c de p Leconte issue).
- 25c avis de reception receipt (very rare).
- 25c block of 8 (2x4) with SS *Amassia* cancel (second largest used multiple).
- 25c 1929 cover to Santo Domingo.
- 25c cover registered with 15c (1x) and 25c (2x) with US registry label and USPO seal.
- Compagnie Lithographie d'Haiti 1924 essays.

Research / Findings: Other than illustrating, cataloging, and indicating first printings quantities, Munk (1933) and Montès (1954), provide little information about this issue. Instead, Montès (1933, pp. 127-130) detailed the efforts of the Société Philatélique d'Haïti to put an end to the surcharging of stamps.

Few covers with these stamps postmarked before July 1920 exist in collections. This exhibit includes nine 1920 covers ranging in dates from April - June 1920. The Sellers Collection (v. 16) did not include any covers with 1920 postmarks. The only cover found was in a volume devoted to Dutch paquebot cancels and covers (v. 45, p. 42). Franked with one 5c and two 10c of the series, it is postmarked Sept. 6, 1920 which is not anywhere close to the Apr. 9 or 19th release dates indicated by Huber (1928).

Four specimens exist for the 3c which had three printings. Orders F-8832 and F-9337 consisted of second printing stamps. Different printings can be recognized by the positioning of the specimen overprint and/or the security punch hole. Five orders were placed for the 25c, three of which represent second printings (orders F-6330, F-8407, and F8630).

Reprintings of the 25c in 1927 and 1928 indicate that these stamps continued to be used after the Borno issue of 1924. The ABNC order numbers on specimens indicate the order of different printings.

Other than ABNC files available, Huber (1928) is the best source of information for the number of stamps printed. The number of 3c and 25c stamps, however, is uncertain as information is lacking. Huber (1928) does not provide quantities printed for all three printings of the 3c and 25c values. The 1st printing (F6220) of the 3c consisted 500,000 but Huber does not mention the 2nd printing (F9337) and the 3rd printing (F9721) of the 3c value.

In the case of the 25c Huber indicated that the quantity printed for the 1st printing (F6220) consisted of 2,000,000 and the 2nd printing (F8630) of May 1927 consisted of 200,000. An ABNC document dated Mar. 27, 1929 indicates the print order F-8407 for the 25c was printed in a quantity of 500,000. Huber did not indicate the quantity printed for the 3rd printing (F9122) of March 1928. Sellers

noted on his album page that the 3rd printing consisted of 200,000 stamps. Sellers did not indicate his source of information. See the exhibit's "Title Page" for what are considered accurate figures for the number of each value printed.

Huber (1928) reported: "*In 1923, large quantities of the 5c, 10c and 15c were handstamped 'T.M.' (Timbre Mobile), in blue (5c and 10c) or red (15c), for use as documentary stamps.*" How many stamps were overprinted is not indicated. For each each value, it is estimated that 100 or fewer examples are extant. Huber only reported a blue "TM" for the 5c. He did not report a red "T.M." overprint applied to the 5c. The red "T.M." on the 5c is rare. According to Gerald Boarino, a recognized authority on the subject of Haitian revenue stamps, only two documents are known with "T.M." overprinted stamps. One document has a 5c "T.M." Allegory of Agriculture stamp and the other has a 50c Nord Alexis stamp of 1904 with a "T.M." overprint. This exhibit includes what is considered the only bona fide use of a 5c "T.M." overprinted stamp on cover.

In regard to EKUs, cancels on covers are preferable to cancels on stamps off cover. Off-cover cancels can be suspect of having an incorrect day, month, or even year date. If a postmark on a cover is unclear or illegible, another postmark (point of origin, transit, or arrival) oftentimes can supply the answer.

There are gaps in what is known about postal rates. The Postal Tariff of 1919, as reported by Carroll L. Lloyd (*HP*, 15:3) does not explain the frankings of several domestic registered covers, paquebot covers, and air mail covers which appear to be properly franked and not philatelic. This is an important subject which needs to be addressed. By compiling a database of covers which includes dates, point of origin, destinations and the amount of postage affixed, some rates can be determined. For example, several covers in this exhibit and in the exhibitor's collection, all believed to be rare, confirm that 15c de gourde paid the domestic single weight letter rate of 5c de gourde per 15 grams or fraction thereof and a 10c registry fee. The Postal Tariff of 1919 as described indicated that the registry fee was 25c.

References:

- Huber. Harry E. "Haitian Pictorials, 1920", *Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News*, 42:38 (Sept. 17, 1928).
<http://bit.ly/4kA0RDK>
- Jeannopoulos, Peter C. "Haiti's Allegory of Agriculture & Commerce Series of 1920", *Haiti Philately*, 51:3 (Sept. 2025). <https://tinyurl.com/muzmywzk>
- The Sellers Collection*, Published by the Haiti Philatelic Society, 2007. Vol. 16, pp. <https://bit.ly/3q6Nrcv> ; Vol. 45, pp. 34 - 50 (Dutch paquebot)
<https://bit.ly/3QoIVSx>