

By : Thurston "Bubba" Bland

oobubba@icloud.com

The Practical Collector II  
The Treasures We Over Look

Trying to Find the District Overprint's Name



1856 (Colima) Dos Reales Sz 179

Last week, we explored the cancels and postmarks that are difficult to find, but in this message, we will talk about those hard-to-figure-out overprints of the district names. Yes, I know that many of these are hard to read. Maybe it might be only half-shown or plain over-inked to the point it is not readable. I also hate the ones where some clerk were too lazy to use more ink on their device after many strikes on the new sheet of stamps. Weak, blurry, smeared, and plain hard to tell, these faults are the pain many of us have to find where we might look for a postmark on an otherwise nice stamp. If you are lucky, you have found a chart that lists the overprints for the different districts. So, I suggest some things I do when an overprint is difficult to determine.



District by a few letters  
SLPotosí, Oaxaca, Veracruz & Tampico

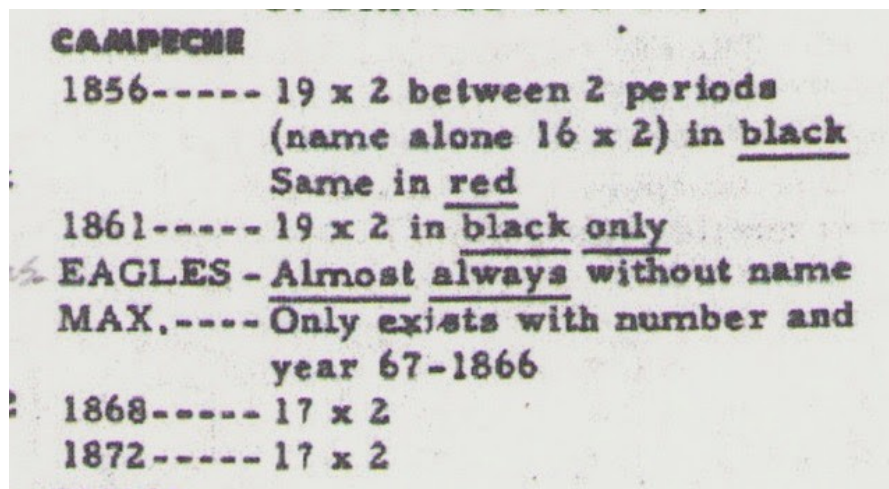
First of all, I hate it when the cancel or killer postmark makes it tough to figure out what the overprint is. Once you have a good catalog that lists all the districts for the issue, such as Nick Follansbee's excellent 1856-1910 issues of Mexico. Look for key letters that you can make out. This might be an 'ato' at the end of Guanajuato, or the 'ere' in the middle of Queretaro. Key letters are one of the first things I look for. Then there are things like the length of the overprint, such as

a small one, which might be Lagos, or a long one, Hermosillo. Of course, the postmark may be the answer, especially for one you might recognize from Veracruz or making out the letters 'ORIZ' in the common Orizava box cancel.



By cancels confirming District  
Guadalajara Sz 297, Mazatlan Sz 739, Puebla Sz 1147 & Mexico Sz 821

Not all overprints are easy to find, but it is easy to be mistaken about what the overprint should be. Colima district had overprints from Morelia, Guadalajara, and their own, but one of their issues has no overprint and is the 1856 really rare issues used from Colima. So, when I am looking for a stamp that shows no overprint, I check out the NF catalog listing for those that were used without an overprint. These are best found by the cancel or on the cover with the docket. So, all of these tricks might make the difficult overprint, or lack of it, much easier to find.



Details from the Trevor District Chart  
Blurry do to photo copy

Not all overprints are genuine, so you need to use a chart. A chart of the overprints will likely have a size, length, and height for the genuine example. It would be great if the overprint were complete, but there are other things to look for. Many district overprints had dots at the front or back, and some had both. The dot's position may tell you if it is genuine or not. The chart I used the most is an old one by Henry G. Trevor that was reprinted in an old Mexicana many years ago. Unfortunately, it is not a good copy that I can put up in this message. I will send a copy to anyone who emails me if you want a copy.

Before I finish this message, the problem with overprints is that if they are not genuine, they likely were done on a reprint from the first design issues. The good thing is that Marc Gonzales has put out a new reference book on these fakes and counterfeits. I mentioned his book in recent messages. If you are a serious collector of Mexico, this is one of the best books to add to your library.

Enjoy!