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## The Practical Collector II

### The Treasures We Over Look

#### When Paper Makes a Difference



USA 1894 & 1895 Two Cents Issues, look alike  
left w/o watermark, right w/ watermarked paper

When we start to collect, we aim to find the stamps we want to add. As a kid, I was only interested in finding a picture in my album for the stamp I had in hand. Frustrated that my Dime Store album did not have a picture of the stamp in hand, I was forced to figure out what country it might be from and put it in one of the few blank spaces. When I graduated to an "All American" album, they had the unwatermarked and the watermarked stamps requiring me to look at the paper. Paper, as any advanced collector knows, is a never-ending story. For more issues, the United States Banknote series was filled with grilled, soft porous paper and un-grilled thick and thin papers. When I arrived at Collecting Mexico, they had similar Banknote-designed issues without any grilling, but after changing the printer to Mexico, the floodgates were open for numerous varieties. The varieties of those 1874-83 Banknote issues from Mexico were also filled with scarce watermarked paper. Just reminiscing about my collection of these issues points to the fact that we collectors cannot get away from paper, the holder of these stickers we call stamps.



Banknote types ten cents / Diez centavos US and Mexico  
Numerous papers were used during their issues.

It does not matter when they were issued; the type and style of the paper tell the story of our stamps. Early in collecting the Dos Reales of the first issue, I discovered three types of paper used in the first issues of 1856-61. The first two plates of the Dos Reales were printed with plain and lineal wove paper, and the later third type paper, with its heavy grain, was used on all printings from the end of 1857 and onwards. Knowing these papers set me on studies that went through all the rest of the first design issues. I even did an article in Mexicana about the special varieties of paper used during the 1867-68 Gothic Mexico issues. Of course, those issues had the shortly lived Blue-Gray, very thin paper with watermarks. So, just the story of my favorite Dos Reales used multiple papers. The papers would tell me when the stamp might be issued just by looking at the backs or with a backlight. My experience is not uncommon for any collector that specializes.



49-77 10ctv from URES with Horizontal Laid Paper

We look for anything that can be found on the stamps. The postmarks, colors, design, watermarks, and paper tell the story we seek. Scarce to rare examples may come our way, along with interesting backgrounds to enhance our albums. Many of the questions I received about the stamp a collector has found are answered by simple things like looking at the differences between what is in hand and what the catalog says. For those collectors who are not interested in the varieties and only want to put a stamp in the album, it is hard to get away without seeking what the stamps you have can tell you. Truly, as a young collector, I was only interested in doing this. Still, when I started to specialize in stamps, the story they held changed me forever as a collector/philatelist.

Enjoy!