

GUATEMALA 1898 FAKES AND FORGERIES SCOTT 75-85

By David Reitsemá ISGC No. 803

The 1898 provisional issue is replete with forged and bogus examples [1]. Over 22 fake 6c surcharge types have been identified, and this does not include the varieties in which some were produced such as double and inverted. Many of these forgeries consist of 'errors' which for decades were listed in major catalogues and they will be the focus of this article. These forgeries are commonly offered for sale as 'unlisted' varieties and as such pose the greatest threat to collectors. In addition to the forged varieties of the issued stamps, there are also bogus stamps which have various surcharges but are not listed in major catalogues and were never issued. Most of the forgeries are found on the lower value 5c and 10c stamps, as higher value stamps were more expensive to acquire for contemporary forgers.

The purpose of this article, in an effort to keep it a reasonable length, is to illustrate and describe the most blatant varieties. There are genuine varieties of this issue and specifications of the genuine errors based on measurements of the surcharges are contained in *Guatemala 1* ("G1") which enable anyone to identify a genuine surcharge [2].

To identify a genuine 6c surcharge at a glance, the first test is to see that the '6' is located over the 'ta' of 'centavos'. If it is over the 'a' it is a forgery. An illustration of the genuine surcharge is shown in Figure 1 [3]. The Scott catalogue lists five genuine varieties; four additional varieties are listed in G1.

There are at least six outright bogus stamps unlike any issued stamp:

- 6c on 2c engraved
- 6c in black on 5c engraved
- 6c in red with '1988' on 5c engraved
- 6c in black on 10c lithographed
- 6c in red or red plus black on 10c engraved
- 6c in red or black on 20c engraved



Position of '6' on Genuine



Fake Scott 75a with '1988'

The forgery varieties designed to deceive collectors ("fakes") are numerous. A sampling of these is shown on the following page. These are not recognized as genuine and there is no reason to measure the surcharges, but again, for normal stamps, and especially the higher catalogue value 6c on 10c engraved, the surest test is the measurements of the surcharge.



Examples of Bogus Stamps



Typical Forgeries Created to Defraud Collectors

A

much more serious problem is fakes on covers which passed through the mail. Genuine stamps of this issue on cover are scarce. Error varieties on cover are extremely rare. The cover shown here is an example of fakes on a cover with genuine cancels. It is franked with a forged 2c on 1c rose (Scott 92, Forgery Type A3), bogus 6c on 2c, bogus 6c on 20c engraved (Scott 49) and bogus red plus black double surcharge on 20c engraved. It was prepared by Guatemalan stamp forger Frederico Saureck and addressed to a German stamp dealer. The cover is not backstamped and therefore the cancels are likely favor cancels. However, there are numerous other similar covers by Saureck and others which did pass through the mail [3].



References:

- [1] Lind, Walter, "Guatemala – The 1898 Surcharges", *Collectors Club Philatelist* (year unknown)
- [2] *Guatemala 1*, Roland A. Goodman, ed., pp. 167-72, Robson Lowe (London) 1969
- [3] Spycher, Mark, "Are Expert' Certificates Always Reliable?", *El Quetzal*, Vol. 49, No. 297, pp. 10-11, International Society of Guatemala Collectors (1999)

The International Society of Guatemala Collectors was formed in 1948 and is Affiliate No. 38 of the American Philatelic Society. The Society is committed to assisting everyone interested in collecting Guatemala. Its award winning journal El Quetzal is published quarterly. Membership levels include a US\$10 online membership which includes access to most society publications including its two award winning handbooks, and the electronic version of the journal. If you collect Guatemala you will find much more information available on the society website:

<https://guatemalastamps.clubexpress.com/content.aspx?sl=197696320>