

Synopsis

Title of Exhibit - Argentine - The Columbus Landfall Issue. A Unique Issue in the World of Philately.

Purpose - To illustrate how a single stamp issue, in this case America's first commemorative, can be studied. Included are all the printing stages from proofs to plate destruction, postal usages, and concluding with a description of a very dangerous forgery.

Historical Note - On October 12, 1892, a very interesting stamp set of two values was issued by Argentina to commemorate the landfall of Christopher Columbus in America. The stamps themselves are unique in that they:

- were available for sale and valid for one day only - a world's first at the time.
- were authorized for domestic use only - a world's first.
- were America's first commemorative issue.
- they were the first stamps in the world to have gone through the process of a Citizen's Advisory Committee.

Exhibit Plan - The following topics are covered in this presentation.

- The process that takes place before a stamp is issued. Die and plate proofs. (Eight sketches and essays are known to exist, but they are not available to the philatelic market.)
- The official announcement or proclamation of the issue.
- The issued stamps - Printing methods, paper, perforations, plate imprints and pane format.
- An eye-witness account of the chaos that took place when the stamps were sold.
- Covers showing key domestic rates and examples of illegal, but tolerated, international and late date usage.
- Post production defacing of the die proofs and plate proofs.
- Notable fakes and forgeries and how they compare to the genuine issue.

Unique or rare Items - In this exhibit, there are notable rarities (marked with a colored dot on the exhibit pages).

- A large 5c plate proof in dull red, multiple of eight, the largest multiple recorded in this color.
- A perforated plate proofs, a gift to special dignitaries and unreported for three decades.
- The "Proclamation Announcement" of the issue signed by and originating from the Postmaster General's private personal files. A gift to his nephew and a unique item.
- One set of and estimated ten known complete panes of 50 of the genuine stamps. This is a very early numbered set (No 0002), and was likely a gift to a dignitary.
- A rare and very clear 2c double impression with a "kiss" impression to compare.
- An 8c local city rate express cover, one of three known.
- Three examples of illegal, but tolerated covers to foreign destinations.
- Three covers posted on October 13, 1892, an illegal late usage date.
- The only known set of complete panes of 50 of the "Italian" forgeries, correctly identified as being made by Nicola Fiorentino for the first time in exhibition. (Determined in 45 years of forgery research by the exhibitor, a recognized expert in world forgeries).

Knowledge of Subject - All fakes and forgeries have been verified as such by leading dealers and experts in Argentina, as well as by the exhibitors' expertise. The exhibitor has researched the stamps of Argentina for 40+ years, and is currently preparing for publication, a seven volume reference series on early Argentina and provinces. He is considered to be a published expert on B.N.A. and world fakes and forgeries, and has served as a juror forgery expert at CAPEX 2022.

Summary - The exhibit concludes with samples of the research undertaken to identify for the first time in an exhibition format, Giovanni Fiorentino as "The Italian Forger".