

Synopsis

Ecuador: The 1938 U.S. Constitution Sesquicentennial Commemoratives

Importance

ΦΚλă twoππWU·YŜ ŠĚKλÖλŭ presents a comprehensive study of a series of stamps issued by Ecuador in 1938 to commemorate the sesquicentennial of the United States Constitution. Created as a gesture of Pan-American solidarity during a period of rising global tensions, the series includes two distinct sets: a regular postage issue featuring an Allegory of Liberty, and an airmail issue depicting George Washington and the American Eagle. This exhibit explores the entire philatelic journey of these sets. To my knowledge no philatelic exhibit of this kind has been attempted before.

Treatment

The exhibit is presented in two distinct sections. After a general introduction dedicated to the political antecedents of the series, each stamp set is analyzed in detail - from the stages of production to their use, both philatelic and commercial.

Knowledge

While working on an exhibit dedicated to the creation of Ecuadorian stamps from photographs in the period 1930 to 1950, I developed an interest for the U.S. Constitution stamps issued by Ecuador in 1938. I noticed that these sets, even though universally praised for their exceptional quality, had not been the subject of a philatelic exhibit. I started collecting material related to these stamps, and found very interesting details about both their genesis and use. This work has provided me with a better understanding of the political context of the time in the history of the United States and Latin America, and its impact on stamp creation. I also found what appears to be two printing errors, previously unrecorded, in both the regular and the air mail sets.

Difficulty in Material Acquisition

Some of the material included in this exhibit is unique. The proofs and specimens for the series are one of a kind items that are difficult to acquire. Despite searching for months, I was able to locate only one postcard bearing a stamp of the regular postage set. As for the stamps themselves, because they are not considered part of the classical epoch of Ecuadorian philately, they are available for purchase at reasonable prices, in sets or individually, mint and used. First day covers for both sets are extremely rare, as are commercial covers in good shape. To trace postal history is somehow easy for United States destinations, particularly New York City, and less so for Europe. Finding covers destined for Latin America and Oceania is very difficult, and I am still searching for destinations in Asia

Condition

The condition of the material included in this exhibit ranges from pristine to used in regular condition.

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Cover from Quito, Ecuador, to Paris, France, December 27, 1939. U.S. Constitution, 150th anniversary, 2c, 10c and 20c, Sc 366, 368, 369. Portrait of Washington, American Eagle and Flags, 5c, Sc C58. Map of Ecuador, 5c, Sc RA41

Purpose and scope: This two-frame exhibit presents a specialized study of the regular mail and airmail series issued by Ecuador on February 9 and February 22, 1938, to honor the 150th anniversary of the signing of the United States Constitution.

Background: Rooted in the pre-WWII "Good Neighbor Policy," Ecuador's 1938 issues dedicated to the United States Constitution is a landmark in diplomatic philately. Although many other countries issued similar series, none had the breath and visual complexity of Ecuador's issues. This exhibit explores the dual nature of the release: the regular surface mail series (Scott 366-372) portraying the allegory of Liberty holding the Ecuadorian flag, between the American bald eagle and the condor, and the airmail series (Scott C57-C63) featuring George Washington and the American bald eagle. The history of these stamps is examined, from their production by the American Bank Note Company (ABNC), in New York City, through their issuance, overprints and commercial applications on global mail routes.

Organization: This exhibit is organized in chronological order. Important pieces are highlighted in **red**, and original research in **blue**.