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**FAKES, FORGERIES**

**AND**

**THEIR CREATORS**

A Paper Read Before

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by

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**GUIDE TO THE SHEETS IN THE FRAMES**

## FAKES, FORGERIES AND THEIR CREATORS

### FORMAT OF THE DISPLAY

The display is divided into three main parts:

REPRINTS - Frame 1

FORGERIES - Frames 2-11

FAKES - Frame 12

All genuine items for comparison are highlighted by the use of a black line surround, which is also used occasionally where a reprint is used as the comparison.

FRAME No: 1

### OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL REPRINTS

In the nineteenth century many of the major collectors not only approved of, but actually negotiated, the production of reprints. Over the years, opinion changes as to what is proper and what is improper. At that time many senior philatelists were engaged in this pursuit and members of this Society were produced items that today we would frown on as being designed to exploit or fool the collector.

Volume 2 of *The London Philatelist* is famous for containing reprints taken from the original dies and plates of the stamps of Prince Edward Island to illustrate a paper presented by J. A. Tilleard, who was at that time secretary to the Philatelic Society, London.

FRAME No: 2

### SPIRO BROTHERS, HAMBURG - 1862 to circa 1880

The Spiro Brothers were the first mass producers of stamp forgeries.

The Spiro productions are now classed as forgeries and, indeed, at the time were much criticised as such. However, they were created more as imitations whereby the collector could fill those gaps in the first printed albums more cheaply than buying the real thing.

Literally millions of stamps must have been printed by them since, to this day, their productions are probably the commonest of all forgeries that are encountered. All Spiro forgeries were lithographed and, with few exceptions, were printed in sheets of 25. A high proportion of those stamps known at the time were imitated by them.

Production ceased in about 1880 as opinions against the selling of forged stamps hardened.

GEBRUDER SENF (LOUIS & RICHARD SENF) - 1884 to 1890

The Senf brothers were partners in the stamp dealing and publishing firm of Gebruder Senf of Leipzig, which had traded since the early 1870's. The firm published a magazine *Illustriertes Briefmarken-Journal* which, commencing in January 1884, gave away facsimile stamps to its subscribers. This continued until January 1890 when the growing criticism of the practice led them to cease.

In total some 112 stamps and 4 stamped envelopes were reproduced, most of which were distributed free with the *Journal*. All facsimiles were marked 'Falsch' or 'Facsimile'<sup>1</sup> as part of the design or by overprinting.

PETER WINTER (PROPHIL FORUM) AND HOUSE OF STAMPS

Peter Winter, a resident of Bremen, West Germany, was founder of ProPhil Forum. This company started to produce forgeries of numbers of the rare stamps of the world in 1986. These were advertised as replicas, and some have the word 'REPLIK' on the reverse, but are liable to deceive the unknowledgeable collector.

Some of their productions were taken from photographs obtained from The British Library for 'research' purposes and thus the Library was able to bring an action against Winter and ProPhil Forum for breach of copyright. An out of court settlement was reached in May 1987. Stocks of items produced from the copyright photographs were destroyed and various dies and plates were surrendered to the Library.

Under the name 'House of Stamps' some of these replicas had been offered from Switzerland. On a visit to the House of Stamps, which was run by a young lady with very little knowledge of philately, a well known American member of the Royal acquired the balance of the stock and many of those in private collections come from this purchase. Robson Lowe has described a number of these forgeries in articles in the *'Philatelist and PJGB'* in recent years.

FRAME No: 4

RAOUL CH. DE THUIN, MERIDA, MEXICO - 1916 to 1966

The career of Raoul de Thuin lasted from circa 1916 to 1966 and beyond. He was born in Belgium and early records show him as proprietor of a business in Brussels in 1927, which offered to clean stamps and to forge overprints and cancellations.

In 1931 he moved to Mexico and traded under various names and forged a wide variety of stamps, postmarks and overprints. In December 1966, his stock was purchased by the American Philatelic Society. It consisted of over 1,600 metal cliches, plus many drawings, tracings, and reference works and notes.

This stock formed the basis for the information in the book *'The Yucatan Affair'* published by the American Philatelic Society. His activities covered items from many countries in the world but he had particularly focused on Mexico and other South and Central American countries.

DR. HUGO HAHN - 1910

Hahn was a well known specialist in the stamps of Chile, living in Valparaiso. In 1910, he purchased the original engraved plate for the 20c value of the first Columbus issue of Chile.

He persuaded the Chilean Government that it was a good idea to print certain reprints, overprinted with new values, to celebrate the centenary of Chilean independence. The public outcry at the proposed limited numbers to be issued led to the withdrawal of government permission. Nevertheless, a number of reprints of the 20c value and the same value overprinted 1p, 5p, 10p and 20p were made, as were lithographic forgeries from the original plate.

ARTHUR A. BARTLETT- 1896

REMAINDERS OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND ISSUES & NOVA SCOTIA CENTS ISSUE OF 1860

The Nova Scotia Government sold the remainders of the 1860 issue of Nova Scotia to a syndicate formed by A.A. Bartlett and D. A. King. Whilst the numbers of stamps was never divulged by the government, it has been estimated that between 25,000 and 100,000 of each value was included.

Bartlett was also head of the syndicate that purchased the remainders of the Prince Edward Island pence and cents issues that were sold by the provincial government in 1874.

FRAME No: 4 CONTD.

ADRIAN ALBERT JURGENS - circa 1940

A.A.Jurgens, a noted specialist collector and expert on the stamps of South Africa, received permission in 1940 from Dr. E.L.Gill, director of the South African Museum in Cape Town, to make some reprints from the plates of the 1861 Cape of Good Hope Woodblock 1d and 4d values which were held in the museum.

Later, Jurgens was accused of faking certain postmarks of the Cape, an accusation which he vigorously denied. However, after his death in 1953, it was discovered that he did indeed make many such fakes. The expert committees of both the RPSL and BPA have reference collections of these.

FRAME No: 5

SAMUEL ALLAN TAYLOR - 1860 to 1891

Samuel Allan Taylor was born in Scotland but emigrated to the U.S.A. in 1850 at the age of 12. He was to become the most notorious member of what came to be known as the 'Boston Gang'.

Taylor forged many different stamps but will always be best remembered as the inventor of various bogus issues or values. In particular, he was attracted by the local stamps of the United States of America. He forged numerous U.S. locals and also invented numerous bogus ones as well as certain non-U.S. ones.

OSWALD SCHRODER - 1870 to 1900

Oswald Schroder of Leipzig produced forgeries of numerous stamps between the mid-1870's and the end of the century. They were described in the *Deutsche Briefmarken-Zeitung* (November 1890) as among the most successful forgeries ever made. A collection of 48 of them was shown at the Philatelic Society, London in October 1904.

Schroder was a printer by profession and most of his forgeries were printed by the collotype process. Today most of them are seldom seen and, even as late as 1980 when Robson Lowe published his monograph on the Oswald Schroder forgeries, several new ones were listed that had never previously been recorded.

## FAKES, FORGERIES AND THEIR CREATORS

FRAME No: 5 CONTD

### BREWSTER COX KENYON - 1886 to 1941

Brewster Cox Kenyon (alias Kenyon Brewster Cox) traded as a stamp dealer from Long Beach, California. Throughout his life he was always prepared to involve himself in producing and selling forged stamps. A number of completely bogus issues are also attributed to him.

### PRE-STAMP COVERS AND MARKINGS

Today many covers bear stamps that did not originate on that cover. These 'marriages' have become extremely common with the rapidly increased demand from the collector for 'used on cover'.

Perhaps it is only a matter of time before the greater interest in early pre-stamp material will generate the manufacture of such items to fulfil the demand. At present, however, there would seem to be few areas where there has been extensive forgery of pre-stamp material. Of these, the Venetian Republic, Argentina and the Dutch East Indies are the most extensive.

FRAME No: 6

### FORGERIES TO DEFRAUD THE POST OFFICE OR REVENUE

The earliest forgeries were not aimed at collectors but at the government or the post office. Such efforts at fraud were generally treated extremely harshly, with punishments as grave as death or transportation being the norm.

Because of the seriousness of the crime, the perpetrators of such forgeries have normally remained mysterious.

### HENRY FLACHSKAMM - 1902 to 1912

In about 1902, as owner of the Standard Stamp Company of St. Louis, Flachskamm used the original dies of the 1872 Hidalgo head issue of Mexico to produce new lithographic stones. These reprint/forgeries are easily recognised because the die for the original moire pattern printed on the back of each stamp was not found and thus this aspect is a complete forgery.

Many of the Hidalgo forgeries were sold to a Hamburg dealer (?Julius Goldner) and continued to come onto the market for many years. Flachskamm himself was jailed for mail fraud in 1906 but, after his release, continued in the stamp trade as manager of the C. E. Hussman Stamp Company of St. Louis.

## FAKES, FORGERIES AND THEIR CREATORS

FRAME No: 6 CONTD

### RODOLFO HENSEL - circa 1895 to 1910

Hensel operated in Genoa around the turn of the century, trading under the name of Balbi & Company. He produced large numbers of forgeries, particularly those of the Italian States.

Some faked covers of various Italian States were shown by C. J. Phillips of Stanley Gibbons in a display to the Herts. Philatelic Society in 1909. These he attributed to Hensel. They were made up with genuine stamps, but all other postmarks and transit handstamps were forged.

FRAME No: 7

### FRANCOIS FOURNIER, GENEVA - 1890 to 1917

The business run by Francois Fournier originated from the firm of Louis-Henri Mercier (whose real name was Henri Goegg) in Geneva in 1890. The business went into bankruptcy and the stock was bought by Fournier at the bankruptcy sale. The House of Mercier specialised in Swiss Cantonal stamps, among which were some very deceptive forgeries.

Francois Fournier made considerable numbers of forgeries but his company also handled quantities of forgeries made by other forgers. This causes considerable confusion when trying to attribute specific forgeries to Fournier. Fournier's main contribution was to the marketing of what he termed 'Facsimiles'. He contended from the start was that he was only supplying reproductions and did not pretend that his wares were genuine. His house magazine, 'Le Fac-Simile' advertised these wares and fought numerous battles in its pages with those who accused him of seeking to defraud his customers.

He did, however, advertise his 'Repair Clinic' to improve and repair damaged stamps.

Fournier died on 12th July 1917 and his stock passed to Charles Hirschburger, who continued the business for a time until, eventually, the Fournier stock was sold to L'Union Philatelique de Geneve, who published their 'Album de Fac-similes' in the Spring of 1928.

This consisted of circa 170 pages containing examples of Fournier's stock, as well as prints from numerous overprint settings, zinco blocks and perforating machines bought as part of the transaction.

FRAME No: 7 CONTD

#### ARGENTI'S FORGER 'A'

This forger produced very high quality engraved forgeries of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia first issues. These were photo-etched in small plates of four of each value.

Until recently the source of these forgeries was unknown. However, in 1989, the plate of the 1/- value of New Brunswick was offered in a Sotheby's auction (although withdrawn prior to the sale) by a vendor from Belgium.

#### MIRZA HADI - 1911 to circa 1967

Of Persian extraction, Hadi operated as a stamp dealer in Paris in the early twentieth century. He is best known for having arranged the many reprints of the later issues of Transvaal, although a number of other spurious items are attributable to him.

Around 1911, he discovered that the original plates for the 1885, 1894, 1895 and 1896 issues were still in the possession of Enschede & Sons, Haarlem and, because Transvaal was no longer an independent state, was able to order the extensive reprints that are still common today. The settings for the 1900 & 1901 overprints were not with Enschede, the overprinting having been done locally, and thus these overprints are completely forged.

#### FORGERIES MADE BY THE POSTAL AUTHORITIES

Since the issue of the first postage stamp in 1840, the issuing authorities have been concerned at the possibility of forgeries being made to such a high quality that they would be undetectable and would undermine their position.

From time to time, the authorities have officially commissioned the production of forgeries to test the ease with which the current stamps could be reproduced. These are termed 'Official Forgeries'.



FRAME No: 8

LUCIAN SMEETS - circa 1900 to circa 1920

The shadowy figure of Lucian Smeets hardly appears by name in any notes on forgeries in contemporary or more modern literature. However, there are numerous references in literature on forgeries to 'the Belgian forgery'<sup>1</sup> of the stamps of many countries and it is apparent that his business was extensive.

He appears to have supplied his forgeries through various undercover addresses, or through accomplices. Many of the forgeries now attributed to Smeets were made by the process later perfected by Sperati; that of bleaching all or part of the design of a low value stamp and substituting a forged imprint of a more valuable stamp. Some interesting 'used abroads' occur in this way.

JEAN DE SPERATI - 1910 to 1953

Jean de Sperati was the youngest of three brothers, all of whom, together with their mother, were engaged in the forgery of stamps. His eldest brother, Mariano, ran a photographic laboratory where Jean learned many of his techniques and learned about paper, photography and inks.

In the 1890's Mariano moved to Turin and may well have assisted Erasmo Oneglia in the production of some of his forgeries. There is no concrete evidence to confirm a connection between Oneglia and the Sperati brothers, but enough circumstantial detail to suggest a relationship. Sperati moved to Paris after he married in 1914 and spent the rest of his life in France. By 1930 the family had moved to Aix-les-Bains, where Sperati became a full time stamp forger.

His stock of forgeries and reference collections were purchased by the British Philatelic Association in 1953 and details of his work were described in the book *'The Work of Jean de Sperati'* parts I & II, published in 1955. Jean de Sperati is regarded as the most technically proficient forger this century.

FRAME No: 9-10

THE CULLUM STREET GANG -circa 1885 to 1891

George Kirke Jeffryes forged a number of British Empire as well as a few foreign country's stamps during the 1880's. He also invented a couple of bogus issues.

Most of his wares were sold through the shop at No. 1 Cullum Street in the City of London run by Alfred Benjamin and Julian Hippolite Sarpy. Benjamin and Sarpy advertised themselves as "dealers in all kinds of fac-similes, faked surcharges, and fiscal postals" and customers were warned that Benjamin "would not be answerable for the genuineness of any stamps bought at this establishment" by a small notice not very prominently displayed.

Of the three, Jeffryes was the skilled engraver and certain of his productions rank as some of the most deceptive of forgeries. As well as the forgeries themselves, the Gang made many forged overprint and postmarks.

With the discovery in 1995 of most of the plates and a large number of the overprint settings and postmarks used by the Cullum Street Gang, it is now possible accurately to attribute a number of forged items to the Gang.

FRAME No: 10-11

ERASMO ONEGLIA - 1892 to 1921

Erasmus Oneglia was born in Turin in 1853. He stands out as one of the most prolific producers of high quality forgeries of all time. He was, quite likely, the hub of the group of North Italian forgers operating during the last years of the 19th Century and the first years of the present century.

He had connections with other forgers such as Raoul de Thuin, Francois Fournier, Nino Imperato, Edoardo Spiotti and A. Venturini. It is more than possible that Jean de Sperati learned much of his early skills working for Sperati's elder brother, a printer and photographer, making forgeries for Oneglia.

Oneglia made both lithographed and engraved forgeries but, at this distance in time, it is virtually impossible to attribute particular lithographs to Oneglia due to the number of other potential 'authors'.

The engraved forgeries are, however, a different matter. The price lists published by Oneglia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century detail engraved forgeries that can be matched exactly to many known forgeries. It is thus certain that most of the engraved forgeries traditionally attributed to Angelo Panelli were in fact made by, or for, Oneglia. Panelli, who was some 41 years younger than Oneglia, may have been related, and certainly sold many of his forgeries, but denied having actually having made any himself. It is quite possible that Panelli continued to sell Oneglia stock after Oneglia's retirement in 1921.

FAKES AND REPAIRS

A 'Fake'

a stamp or cover that is substantially genuine but purports to be something that it is not.

- colour changed, or removed;
- perforations added, changed or removed;
- watermark added, changed or removed;
- overprint or surcharge added, changed or removed;
- postmark added, changed or removed.

A 'Repair'

a stamp that still purports to be the same as it originally was but which has been 'restored' to a greater or lesser extent.

GEORGE KIRKE JEFFRYES

REPRINT FROM THE ORIGINAL JEFFRYES ENGRAVED PLATE - MARCH 1996

Bogus issue - There were no issues of Paraguay in this design.

