

The John Hudson Hall Collection of Spain's 6 Cuartos of 1850

by Peter A. Robertson

[Editor's Note: John Hudson Hall's specialized collection of Spain's first stamp is one of the most remarkable parts of the PF's 250+ volume Reference Collection. The Hall collection has been exhibited on several occasions in Spain. In 1987 it was awarded the Spanish National Mint Award in the Court of Honor of ESPAMER 87, held in La Coruña, Spain. As a companion piece to the "Pillars of the PF" article on John Hudson Hall, PF Curator Peter A. Robertson opens the doors of the vault for a look "Inside the Reference Collection," and a chance to view this magnificent study.]

Advanced collectors will often study a particular stamp to the point where they reconstruct the original plate layout from multiple copies. Since for many early issues each different stamp in a pane or sheet will show minute differences in the design, advanced specialists are able to determine the plate position from which a particular stamp was printed. This type of original philatelic research is rarely encountered today. Most of this work has already been accomplished and documented and the collections long since broken up. This is not the case with John Hudson Hall's specialized study of the Spanish 6 cuartos of 1850 since this collection has never been broken up. It remains intact as it was donated to The Philatelic Foundation, after he died in 1952. It is one of the centerpieces of the PF's Reference Collection as a major study of a singular postage stamp.

The first stamp of Spain was released on January 1, 1850. The face value was 6 cuartos, the then first-class letter rate in Spain. Since it was printed by lithography, numerous minute differences existed in every stamp of the 255 printed from the setting. In the lithographic process, the device from which the stamps are printed is technically referred to as a "stone" rather than a "plate" since this form of printing does not involve engraving. A demanding enough prospect for any stamp, plating stamps printed by lithography is even more difficult than plating those printed by line engraving. In lithography when the stone became defective or

worn, the printers would plug in a new design. Mr. Hall meticulously tracked down and documented these "misplaced clichés," as they were referred to, and properly placed them in their proper location within the printing "stone."

Mr. Hall's collection, which he started in the 1920's, begins with a listing of all information regarding the authorization and production of the issue. The original essay for this stamp, from the "Hind" collection, is the first important philatelic item in this study. Illustrated as Figure 1, this essay has a value of 5 cuartos, rather than 6 cuartos, as the stamp was issued. Only one other example is reported, which was in the collection of the late Miguel Galvez, a well-known dealer and collector. It is currently held by the Galvez family.



Figure 2 (see next page) shows an unused block of 63, the third largest known unused multiple. Blocks of 72 and 81 stamps exist, but this smaller block is important because it places seven stone varieties in their proper setting positions. Used blocks of 39 and 60 illustrate gigantic postal rate usages. The block of 60 is shown in Figure 3 (see next page). The collection also displays the different densities and thickness of paper that one can encounter in this issue, from a very thick, almost cardboard, to a very thin, pelure-like paper. *[Editor's Note: Notice the*

1 JAN. 1850.

6 CUARTOS

LITHOGRAPHED: TYPE I, "AND" OF CUARTOS NOT JOINED. A LATE COMPOSITION: ~UNUSED~

~A BLOCK OF SIXTY-THREE (63) STAMPS (7x9) WITH A LEFT MARGIN OF 12 MM. UNUSED AND WITH FULL GUM: ROUGH IMPRESSIONS, IN BROWNISH BLACK ON THICK YELLOWISH WOVE PAPER: (EX ACKERMAN COLLECTION) IN FUTURE TO BE REFERRED TO AS BLOCK "J".

IT IS NOTeworthy, NOT ONLY IN FIXING THE COMPOSITION IN THE LOWER LEFT PORTION OF THE SHEET, BUT IN REVEALING SEVEN (7) HITHERTO UNLISTED TYPE-PLANS, OR VARIATIONS, AS NOTED BELOW, WITH DIAGRAM OF BLOCK PLACEMENTS:



~ROW 6~
TYPES 7 TO 7
NOTE
10 AND 12

~ROW 7~
TYPES 12 TO 13
NOTE
17 AND 18

~ROW 8~
TYPES 19 TO 19
NOTE
23

~ROW 9~
TYPES 1 TO 1
NOTE
1 AND 2

~ROW 10~
TYPES 7 TO 7
NOTE
11

~ROW 11~
TYPES 13 TO 13
NOTE
13

~ROW 12~
TYPES 18 TO 18
NOTE
18

~ROW 13~
TYPES 1 TO 4
NOTE
1

~ROW 14~
TYPES 7 TO 10
NOTE
7

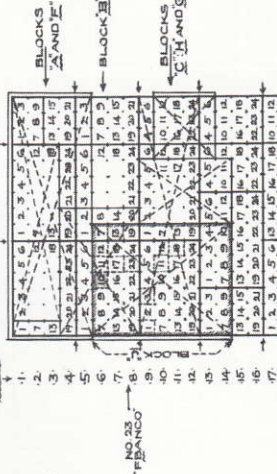
IMPERFORATE:

~THE DIAGRAM BELOW SHOWS THAT THIS BLOCK OF 63 (U) WOULD FILL THE FIRST SEVEN POSITIONS IN EACH OF THE 6TH TO 14TH HORIZONTAL ROWS INCLUSIVE.

THE RELATION TO IT OF SIX OTHERS OF THE KNOWN LARGE BLOCKS, VIZ. (A) (B) (C) (D) (E) (F) (G) AND (H) ARE INDICATED BY CROSSED PLOTTINGS.

IT WILL BE NOTED THAT FOUR OF THE FIVE ROWS AT THE LOWER PART OF THE COMPOSITION ARE LAID DOWN IN A SEQUENCE OF A HALF-GROUP, A FULL GROUP AND TWO HALF-GROUPS, DIFFERENTLY ARRANGED FROM THOSE IN OTHER DIAGRAMS. SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT, BESIDES BEING CONFIRMED BY THIS BLOCK (U) ALSO SHOWS THAT BLOCK (H) FITS PERFECTLY, WITHOUT ANY QUESTION AS TO ANY IRREGULARITIES, AS SUGGESTED BY MR. GRIEBERT ON PAGE 31 OF HIS BOOK.

~DIAGRAM~
SHOWING PLACEMENT
OF SEVEN LARGE BLOCKS.



~NOTABLE NEW TYPE VARIETIES~

4TH STAMP OF 1ST ROW (NO. 10 OF A GROUP) IN RED ABOVE: THE WELL KNOWN VARIETY, NUMERAL 1 EXTENDS DOWN TO LOWER MARGIN: POSITION NOW DEFINITELY LOCATED.

6TH STAMP OF 1ST ROW (NO. 12 OF A GROUP) IN YELLOW ABOVE: BASE OF "C" OF CORREOS JOINED TO INNER FRAME BY A WHITE LINE.

5TH STAMP OF 2ND ROW (NO. 17 OF A GROUP) THIS AND OTHERS IN YELLOW: A PROMINENT WHITE SPOT ABOVE AND TO LEFT OF "C" OF CUARTOS.

7TH STAMP OF 2ND ROW (NO. 13 OF A GROUP) TOPS OF "R" AND "S" OF CORREOS JOINED TO MARGIN WITH WHITE LINES.

5TH STAMP OF 3RD ROW (NO. 23 OF A GROUP) "R" OF FRANCO IS SO ALTERED AS TO FORM A PERFECT "B", READING "FRANCO". SOME TYPE 7s SHOW A STUB-TAILED "R", BUT THIS ONE IS MORE EXTREME, PRODUCING A FINE VARIETY.

1ST STAMP OF 4TH ROW (NO. 10 OF A GROUP) WHITE SPOT ON TOP OF "G", JOINING IT TO TOP MARGIN.

3RD STAMP OF 4TH ROW (NO. 3 OF A GROUP) A LONG WHITE CURVE, TANGENT TO TOP OF "O" OF FRANCO.

6TH STAMP OF 6TH ROW (NO. 13 OF A GROUP) A LARGE WHITE PLAIN IN RIGHT PANEL, JUST BELOW NE. SQUARE.

EX ACKERMAN COLLECTION

1 JAN. 1850.

6 CUARTOS.

LITHOGRAPHED: TYPE I: "T" AND "O" OF "CUARTOS" NOT JOINED: ~USED~ A LATE COMPOSITION:

IMPERFORATE:

A BLOCK OF SIXTY (60) STAMPS (5x4): LISTED AND DESCRIBED AS "C" BY MR. GRIEBERT (PAGE 33): ROUGH IMPRESSIONS, IN BROWNISH BLACK ON THICK YELLOWISH WOVE PAPER: BLACK "QUATREFOIL" CANCELLATIONS:

THIS BLOCK, OWING TO THE ROUGHNESS OF THE IMPRESSION, WAS EVIDENTLY PRODUCED BY A LATE COMPOSITION OF THE TRANSFER-GROUP SUCH AS IS INDICATED BY DIAGRAM 2 BELOW, OCCUPYING THE "HATCHED AREA" C ACROSS MIDDLE OF SHEET, BUT ALSO COULD HAVE BEEN LOCATED IN THE "CROSSED" AREA DIRECTLY BELOW "C". IF THE BLOCK HAD BEEN A FINE IMPRESSION IT COULD HAVE BEEN FROM AN EARLY COMPOSITION SIMILAR TO DIAGRAM 1, WHEREIN THE TWO "CROSSED" AREAS (C) COULD HAVE ACCOMMODATED ITS PARTICULAR GROUPING:



EARLY:

A LATE COMPOSITION:

LATE:

THIS EARLY COMPOSITION DIFFERS FROM THE LATER ONE, IN THE "HALF-GROUPS" USED TO FILL OUT THE THREE RIGHT HAND VERTICAL ROWS. THE EARLIER ONES HAD THE RIGHT HALVES OF DIVIDED TRANSFER-GROUPS AT THE TOP OF THESE ROWS, AS A BLOCK OF SIX (3x2) WITH TOP AND RIGHT MARGINS IS KNOWN, AS INDICATED BY THE "HATCHED AREA" IN THE N.E. CORNER OF DIA-

(c)

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(c)

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| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
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| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |

(c)

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| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
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| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |

A LATER COMPOSITION, AS IN DIAGRAMS 2 AND 3 REVERSED THE POSITIONS OF THE HALF-GROUPS AND USED A DIFFERENT ARRANGEMENT OF HORIZONTAL STRIPS IN FILLING THE LOWER ROW OF THE COMPOSITION; AS IS PROVED BY SEVERAL LARGE BLOCKS KNOWN WHICH CAN BE LOCATED THEREIN "BLOCK C" AS MOUNTED AND DESCRIBED ABOVE: "BLOCK C", A BLOCK OF 56 (15x4) WITH WIDE LOWER MARGIN, ALSO MENTIONED ON

elaborate system Mr. Hall used in mounting his collections.]

Cancellations are illustrated next to the stamps on which they appear. Since Spain is quite large -- there were 29 districts where this stamp was valid for postage -- numerous types and town cancellations are possible. The John H. Hall Collection shows a wide variety and an excellent range of these different cancellations.



Where different colored cancels exist, Mr. Hall tried to have an example of every color used.

Figure 4 shows a typical, "araña," or spider cancellation, developed by the Spanish postal authorities;

it was so named due to its resemblance to that insect. It was created to ensure sufficient defacement of the stamp in order to prevent re-use, without marring the image of Spain's then ruling monarch, Queen Isabella II. Examples of all known colors are shown in the collection: black, red, vermilion, yellow and blue. Although the "spider" cancellation was the overwhelming choice for a cancelling device, numerous other types exist and are shown in the study. A few examples, ranging from very scarce to extremely rare, are illustrated in Figure 5. Most of these cancellations were used only in certain towns or districts. While technically not proper usage, according



to the Spanish postal authorities anyway, they were employed in some limited capacity in almost all districts in a variety of different colors.

Spain's uniform circular date stamp, designed by Juan Baeza, Postmaster General of

Spain on May 15, 1842, consisted of a double ring surrounding the date, the town name above and the district name below. A small box be-



tween the two rings on each side contained a number indicating the province where the town was located. The town name was printed at top and the district below, both within the double rings. Figure 6 shows a typical "Baeza" marking. The stamp pictured at the lower left in Figure 5 is struck with a Baeza cancellation, against postal regulations. Interestingly, the used block of 39 in the Hall collection is also cancelled by a Baeza marking. Since Mr. Hall was also an enthusiastic student of postal history, his collection contains covers that illustrate



unusual routes and rates. Figure 7 shows one such cover with a strip of eight stamps used from Malaga. Wherever possible, each and every stamp is identified by plate position.

Mr. Hall completed this erudite project in the 1930's. This was the first specialized study of any Spanish stamp formed in the United States. Such a study could probably not be duplicated today. There would not be enough multiples and other necessary material available to even start such a project.

John Hudson Hall was not only an excellent student, but a gentleman who was well-liked by his fellow collectors. He was truly a philatelic connoisseur, and many will be surprised to learn that this was not his main interest in stamps. Chile, Siam, U.S. first issues, carrier and local stamps of the United States -- these were just a few of his many interests. The Spain 6 cuartos collection remains as a remarkable legacy of this modest giant of philately. ♦