UNITED STATES LOCAL STAMPS (1)
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Under this head we propose to give a list of all the stamps used to pre-pay postage on letters carried by private firms or persons in the United States.

There is probably no subject more interesting, or less understood by Philatelists, than that connected with the large number of local stamps used in the various portions of our country. We have noticed with regret; that quite a number of postage stamp collectors of the present day refuse to admit local or express stamps into their albums; to discover the reason for this, and if possible prevail upon collectors to reconsider their verdict, has induced us to study the grounds on which a branch of Philately, is thus neglected.

As works of art, they are probably not much of an ornament to our albums, but if this was to stand for any thing, what would become of Corrientes, New Caledonian and others? so we must look farther to account for the apathy manifested in regard to them. Is it because “a great prophet is not without honor but in his own country”? but we cannot accept this as a reason for if “distance lends enchantment to the view” they would certainly be more honored here than the Canadian stamps, for many come from a much greater distance, they are spread over the length and breadth of the land from the pine forests of Maine to the cloud kissing cedars of California, from the great lakes of the north-west, to the swamps of the Carolinas, and from nearly every section of our republic has arisen some bright genius, who thought he could make money by running opposition to the government in carrying letters. Is it because of the large number of these stamps? but we do not think the solution of the problem will be found in any of the above queries. Our opinion being that collectors have become disgusted by the enormous amount of counterfeits that are in circulation, and sold even by respectable dealers, men who would scorn to sell counterfeits of any other stamps under any circumstances whatever, sell fac-similes of locals, (of course stating that they are not genuine) and in this way support as great a set of thieves as ever existed, and by their means a large quantity of these base imitations of some of our most interesting stamps, find their way into the albums of our most discriminating collectors.

The next question that arises, is, how is it that this state of affairs can exist so long, which we will endeavour to answer.

First, genuine original impressions of most of the local stamps used in this country, are nearly unattainable, on account of the majority of them having been in use for but a short time, and some of them having been out of circulation for upwards of twenty years so that a large portion were destroyed before postage stamp collecting was much in vogue.

Second, nearly every U.S. local stamp has been counterfeited, some as much as four times, making it very difficult to discriminate between them and discover which really is the genuine, for the counterfeiters have all the impudence imaginable, and are always ready to show a certificate from the original proprietor of the plate, to certify to their goods being genuine. Likewise the original plates and blocks being in the hands of private parties, who when they had given up the express business were
mostly willing to sell them to the various dealers, who not content with reproducing the stamps in their original colors set to work manufacturing varieties, and flooded the country with their trash, printed in every color of the rainbow. It will probably surprise some of our European readers to know that the U.S. local stamps in their collections, are, say at least seven out of twenty rank counterfeits, five reprints, in fancy colors, three, that never existed, two, that were never intended as stamps to pay postage, but simple business cards fixed to the envelopes of express companies, two reprints of the correct shade and one genuine original stamp, and they may consider themselves lucky if they possess one in every twenty.

The work we have laid out before us, is to give as correct a list as possible of all genuine locals, and describe all the counterfeits of the same, together with a list of the various advertisements printed on the envelopes of express companies that are sold as stamps, and the many fanciful humbugs that have been imposed upon the credulity of collectors.

Before concluding our opening remarks, we take this opportunity of asking any of our readers that can give us authentic information about any local stamps, or generally received humbugs, to send us full information concerning the same at their earliest convenience, or, if during the progress of the list they can prove our statements incorrect, we shall be most happy to make the necessary corrections.