



# El Salvador Filatelico – El Faro

Official Journal of the El Salvador Philatelic Society - ACES

---



## INDEX

|   |    |
|---|----|
| The Director's Column .....   | 2  |
| The 1879 Issue Decree.....  | 3  |
| Enigmatic Postmarks .....   | 6  |
| Who's Who on the stamps of<br>El Salvador – Juan Jose<br>Cañas..... | 8  |
| Those Pesky 'S' Overprints.....                                     | 11 |
| Adlets .....  | 20 |
| Show-n-Tell .....   | 21 |
| Archaeology ... On the Stamps of<br>El Salvador .....               | 22 |

## Board of Directors

|                                   |                      |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| President                         | Ramon de Clairmont   |
| Vicepresident                     | Jose Luis Cabrera A. |
| Secretary                         | Robinson Cruz B.     |
| Treasurer                         | Jose Luis Alonzo     |
| Legal Affairs                     | Manuel Duarte        |
| 1 er Vocal                        | Tomás Rodriguez      |
| 2 o. Vocal                        | Armando González     |
| Director of<br>Philatelic Studies | Guillermo Gallegos   |
| Director of<br>Special Events     | Jose Manuel Molina   |
| Director of PR                    | Mario Galán          |
| Director of Auctions              | Pierre Cahen         |

## On The Cover

**1892 1 cent on 25c provisional overprint. Possibly the rarest XIX Century El Salvador stamp. Collectors still debate whether it actually circulated or if it is a trial color of the overprint.**

## The Director's Column

### Some Words from Our Editor

Dear Colleagues,

This time, instead of inviting you myself to collaborate with the journal, the handbook, or the Society, I present you this adaptation of a very well known poster:



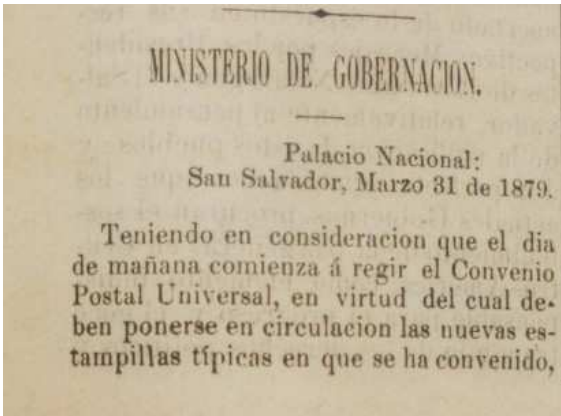
Because images are better than a 1000 words....

Cordially,

Guillermo Gallegos

## The 1879 Issue Decree.

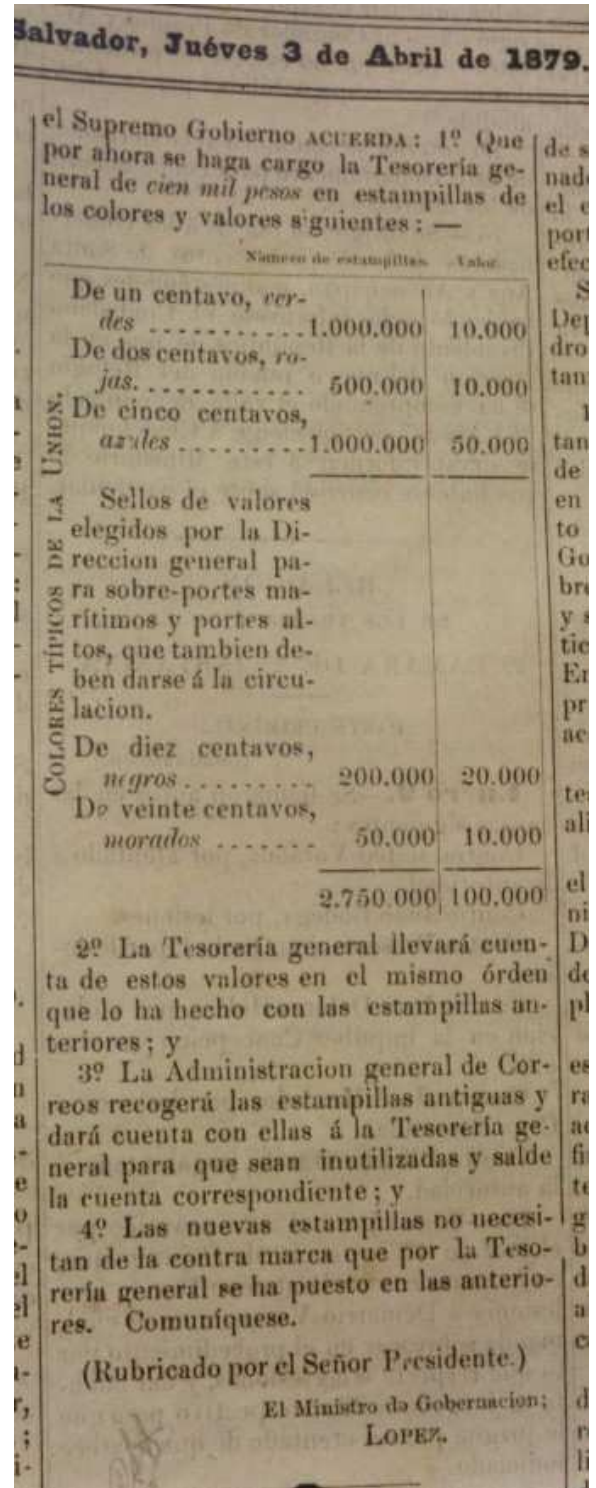
Guillermo Gallegos



**Decree published in the Diario Oficial of April 3, 1879 announcing a new stamp issue caused by the entry of El Salvador into the UPU.**

1879 was a very important year for the postal history of El Salvador, as the country joined the UPU and issued its first stamps in decimal currency, leaving the reales behind. Although everybody that collects El Salvador knows these two basic facts, it is not generally assumed that they were interconnected. Therefore, the finding of the original text of the 1879 issue decree, published in the Diario Oficial of April 3, 1879, is a very important source of information both for understanding the reasoning behind this issue and for recovering some little-known facts about it.

Before discussing some of the relevant aspects of this decree, we believe it is important to present its full translation:



Ministry of Government

National Palace  
San Salvador, March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1879.

Taking into consideration that tomorrow the Universal Postal Agreement starts ruling, in compliance of which a newly agreed typical stamp issue must be placed in circulation, the Supreme Government decrees:

1<sup>st</sup>. That for now, the General Treasury should take charge of one hundred thousand pesos in stamps of the following colors and values:

|  | Number of Stamps | Value   |
|--|------------------|---------|
| 1 cent, green  | 1,000,000        | 10,000  |
| 2 cents, red   | 500,000          | 10,000  |
| 5 cents, blue  | 1,000,000        | 50,000  |
| Stamps of values chosen by the General Direction for maritime rates and high rates, that must be also placed in circulation. |                  |         |
| 10 cents, black  | 200,000          | 20,000  |
| 20 cents, purple   | 50,000           | 10,000  |
|  | 2,750,000        | 100,000 |

2<sup>nd</sup>. The General Treasury will keep account of these values in the same way that it has done for the previous stamps.

3<sup>rd</sup>. The General Administration of the Postal Service will collect the former stamps and will take them to the General Treasury for removing

them from valid circulation and in order to cancel the respective account.

4<sup>th</sup>. The new stamps do not need the counterstamp that the General Treasury put on the previous ones.

Let it Be Known.

(Signed by Mr. President)

Minister of Government  
LOPEZ

The Decree clearly mentions two important facts not widely known:

- The stamps were issued because El Salvador joined the UPU.
- The colors of the 1, 2 and 5 cents were chosen to reflect the colors then in use by UPU members (to think of an equivalent, in Germany's 1875 issue –the first in pfennigs - the 3pfg value was in green, the 5pfg in mauve, the 10pfg in red, and the 20pfg in blue, a color scheme that was in use throughout all German Empire issues until 1918).
- Stamps of the previous issue were to be picked up for taking them out of circulation, so at least according to the decree, combination covers were not officially allowed.

Another important point is that according to the decree, the initial delivery of stamps was 2,750,000. However, taking into account the great number of later printings (9 for

the 1c, 2 for the 2c, and 4 for 5c), it could be questionable that the quantities stated were really delivered by the local printer (Rufino Flamenco) by April 1st. However, no records have been found to confirm or deny this conjecture.

Finally, one of the most important points in the decree is instruction #4, which clearly states that the new stamps do not need the counterstamp put by the General Treasury on the previous ones – this counterstamp being the “*Contra Sello*” of 1874. As we still do not know for sure the reasoning behind the “*Contra Sello*” issue, the fact that now we know for sure that the counterstamp was applied by the General Treasury is important, but sadly it still is not enough for knowing its cause.

The interest of the Salvadorian Government in complying to the UPU convention was shown all throughout 1879, as besides this decree there were several others published in the *Diario Oficial* explaining in great detail how the new tariffs were classified and their respective costs. These decrees merit a separate article for themselves, so they will probably be covered in a future issue.



Visit us at:  
[www.elsalvadorphilately.org](http://www.elsalvadorphilately.org)

**El Salvador, truly one of the last frontiers in Philately. Where else can you find a country with such an impressive array of complex issues still waiting for new discoveries to be made? Whatever your interest (Prephilately, early classical issues, modern adhesives, airmail, stationery, revenues), El Salvador has it all. Let us help you build your collection!**

## Enigmatic Geometric Cancellations.

Bill Wagner



This is the reverse side of an (unused and ungummed) 29 centavos Figueroa Official (Scott O302). Can anyone supply information on what this marking might be? Or perhaps other members have similar items that we might compare to form some idea of what this is?

Whatever it might be, it does not seem to be a catalogue number applied by a stamp dealer, for far more than 116 official stamps bearing Salvador's name had been printed and catalogued by 1910. (Whether or not some of these were ever actually used in Salvador is, of course, another matter).

This cancellation resembles a New York Foreign Mail numbered mute, but the bars run horizontally on it rather than vertically. Joe Hahn tells me he recalls it having been an English marking. Perhaps another member can narrow this down further (?)



This is not among the rarest cancellations that can be found on the early stamps of El Salvador, but it is among the more interesting ones. It is the personal handstamp of Juan Navarro, who was the Postmaster of La Libertad. He probably had it made to spare him the trouble of signing documents, but he occasionally used it to cancel stamps as well – perhaps when the office grew too busy for the window clerks to keep up with the volume of mail.

Many times people waited until the last moment to send letters, whether from procrastination or so as to be able to include the latest news. This created a rush of mail at the post offices in port cities. In other cases, although it was required for outgoing letters to go through the Salvadoran postal system, people sometimes took them directly to a ship that was about to leave, or handed them to a ship's officer on shore as departure time drew near.



Either way, mail could and did end up on ships which was not postmarked in Salvador. The stamps on it almost always got cancelled en route - thus the *Transito Panamas*, *New York Foreign Mail* numbered killers, *Paris Etrangers* and other foreign markings that can be found on the stamps of the 19th century in particular.

Some of the scarcest cancellations are those applied on the ships of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, which had the mail contract with Salvador and other countries of Central America. This straightline marking is that of the S. S. *San Juan*, a PMSSCo ship in service from 1882 until 1915.

### El Quetzal #325 February 2006 - Contents

The cover page illustrates the varied productions of traditional majolica wares as an introduction to the latest new issues: this actuality is completed by a note on forthcoming issuances and the illustration of a spectacular misperforated sheet. *Interexpo* in the Dominican Republic had a good showing of Guatemalan collections and literature and quarterly talks are now organized to promote the hobby to the public in Guatemala. The forged "Servicio interno" overprint on 1897 postal stationery has been found double, one inverted! A new list of Guatemala's postal agencies will certainly be useful to the cancellation collector. A second early 20<sup>th</sup> c. illustrated folded letter has been found, raising the question of how many others might have existed? Postal historians will appreciate photos of the Guatemalan government around 1896, and enjoy reading the stagecoach stories vividly describing the difficulty of travel before the advent of railroads. A new series of prison censorship markings and an uncommon addition to the cover log close off the journal.

[www.guatemalastamps.com](http://www.guatemalastamps.com)

## Who's Who on the Stamps of El Salvador: Juan Jose Cañas

*The Who's Who section contains a brief biography of a personality who has been honored on the stamps of El Salvador.*

Again, we would like to thank historian Carlos Cañas-Dinarte for allowing us to summarize his biography of Juan Jose Cañas for El Salvador Filatélico – El Faro.



**ABN Specimen of the stamp  
issued on June 9, 1945 at 150%.**

Juan Jose Cañas Perez was born in the city of San Miguel on June 20, 1826, son of Colonel Manuel Cañas and Antonia Perez. Although he was born in a family of limited economic resources, he finished school in his native town, and then moved to the University of Leon in Nicaragua.

In 1843 he returned to El Salvador to enroll in Philosophy courses, studies that were completed two years later in Guatemala, where he obtained his Bachelor in Philosophy diploma. Although he also started to study medicine, by 1848 he was in California as one of many adventurers in the Gold Rush. He failed in this endeavor and lost all

his money, with the result that he was able to return to El Salvador only because of the generosity of an American millionaire who became impressed with one of his poems. This poem, written when the boat “Gold Hunter” was leaving harbor, became one of the most popular poetic pieces in the isthmus during the XIX century.

Back in El Salvador by mid 1850, he enrolled in the army with the grade of Sub-Lieutenant because of his bachelor degree. A participant in the failed battle of La Arada (February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1851), in 1856 he was sent to Nicaragua as part of the Salvadorian contingent against William Walker and his Filibusters. In this theater of war, the by-then Captain Cañas formed part of the High Command of the expeditionary army, to which El Salvador contributed with 1700 soldiers and officers led by General Ramon Belloso. He was also commander of the ship “Centro America” which transported Guatemalan troops to Nicaragua (August 1856), and took part in the ferocious battles of Masaya (October 12 and November 15-18, 1856), and in the assault to the church of Guadalupe in Granada. Sent back to El Salvador in order to inform President Rafael Campo

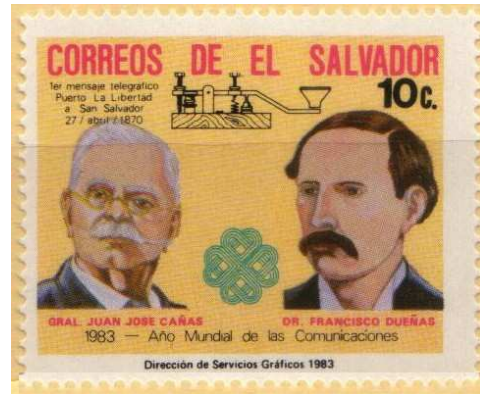


about the results obtained and the need for more troops, supplies, and payment of due salaries, the President ordered him not to return to Nicaragua, instead appointing him as Adjutant to the Commander of the Port of La Union (May 1857).

During that time, Juan Jose Cañas was already a Lieutenant Colonel. He was promoted to Colonel thanks to a poem composed spontaneously at a ball in honor of Juan Rafael Mora, former Costa Rican president, general, and hero of the Anti Filibuster War, who arrived at the port of La Libertad on August 31<sup>st</sup>, 1859 on board the American ship *Guatemala*. That same year, he was promoted to General of Division, and in 1885, he was again promoted to General of Brigade.

He married Rafaela Perez on July 6, 1861, with whom he had three daughters: Antonia, Victoria, and Carmen. Although he was a close aide of President Gerardo Barrios, after his fall he became very close with the government of Francisco Dueñas, who was heavily supported by the Guatemalan President Rafael Carrera.

On April 27, 1870, an improvised telegraphic office was set up by Elias Angulo at one of the rooms of the National Palace in San Salvador in order to transmit the first telegraphic communication in El Salvador, which was sent by General Cañas (then Commander and Administrative & Customs Officer of the Port of La Libertad) to President Dueñas.



Stamp issued on November 23, 1983 at 150%.

In 1872 he became governor of the Department of San Salvador and deputy of the Constitutional Assembly convoked by Marshall Santiago Gonzalez, successor of Francisco Dueñas. In that same year, Cañas moved to Nueva San Salvador (Santa Tecla), a city he contributed to its development by his work as government official, introducer of telegraphic service, and coffee grower. Three years later, he was appointed as Plenipotentiary Ambassador of El Salvador to Chile, where he produced a diplomatic treaty between the two governments. While in Chile, he became Corresponding Member of the Royal Academy of Language in Madrid (1876), of the Colombian Academy of Language and of the Academy of Beaux Arts of Chile, as well as a founding member of the Central American Academy of Language, now known as the Salvadorian Academy of Language.

Juan Jose Cañas is also the author of the lyrics of the National Anthem of El Salvador, interpreted for the first time in front of the National Palace on September 15 of

1879. The music for this work was composed by Giovanni Aberle (see *El Salvador Filatélico – El Faro Year I, Number 1*) and orchestrated by Heinrich Drews. As none of their authors received payment for this work, in September 1902 the Salvadorian Government gave each of them a gold medal in recognition of the task.



**Stamp issued on September 14,  
1979 at 150%**

During 1880, he was again elected as deputy for the Constitutional Assembly which drafted the Constitution project presented that same year. A few months after, he was named Honorary Academic of the University of El Salvador. Around this time, he also met Ruben Dario, who was living in El Salvador (1882-1883). General Cañas advised Dario to go to Chile, a suggestion followed by Dario, who was able to publish his first works there, including “Azul” in 1888. During the second time Dario lived in San Salvador, General Cañas wrote the prologue for his book “A. de Gilbert” (1890).

From 1889 to 1911, he was appointed by the successive governments as Under Secretary

and Minister of Foreign Affairs, with a brief interruption in 1893 when he became Major of Santa Tecla.

Like many Salvadorian writers, he never published a book. However, his poems were collected in many XIX Century Anthologies, newspapers and magazines of the time, where he was very active both socially and culturally, although in many cases with literary results of doubtful quality. Nevertheless, he was recognized for his services to the country by President Manuel Enrique Araujo on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1912.

General Cañas died almost blind in Santa Tecla on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1918.

Mainly because of his writing of the National Anthem lyrics, General Cañas has been honored with a stamp on three occasions: 1945, 1979, and 1983. The first one was approved by the Government on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1944 and issued on June 9, 1945. The total quantity issued was four million stamps, printed by American Bank Note Company. The second stamp was part of a set commemorating the centenary of the National Anthem, where Giovanni Aberle was also depicted in another stamp. Both stamps were issued on September 14, 1979. Finally, in 1983, a stamp depicting General Cañas and President Francisco Dueñas in connection with the first telegraphic service in El Salvador was issued as part of the set commemorating the World Communications Year.

## Those Pesky “S” Overprints

Joseph D. Hahn



The Regular Stamps



The one official stamp

Controversy has surrounded the El Salvador National Palace issue stamps with the “S” overprint ever since they first appeared. The question has always been “Are they a legitimate Government Issue or not?” They are known on cover, but that in and of itself is no guarantee of them being a legitimate issue. I have seen covers with Christmas Seals being used as stamps and they went through the mail without postage due

being charged. I have also seen covers with bogus items on the front of the cover and with a genuine cancel, but with a piece of paper glued on the back bearing legitimate stamps that actually paid the postal charges. (Normally, this piece of paper would have been removed to make it appear that the bogus stamps paid the fee, but in this particular case someone forgot to do this.) Guillermo Gallegos noted in a

private correspondence, seeing the “S” overprinted stamps in the U.P.U. archives when he visited the U.P.U. office several years ago.

During a recent visit to the American Philatelic Research Library I came across a series of letters to the editor of *Mekeel's* showing this controversy. I have reproduced the comments here and other collectors can decide for themselves the status of these issues. I also will state my opinion of their status at the end of this article.

The first mention I have found of these items was in the July 29, 1916 issue of *Mekeel's*, “SALVADOR – The C. E. Hussman Stamp Co. has shown us a new set of provisional stamps from this Republic, the 1915 National Palace series in a single color on bank safety paper, brown tint, having been overprinted ‘S’ in black in large Roman type. This appears in the vacant space just under the ‘U. P. U.’ By the way, this 1915 set, like the King George set of New Zealand, has not yet been listed by Scott, nor does Scott mention the fact that Salvador Nos. 415 and 416 are printed on the bank safety paper, with a brown tint. The stamps seen with the ‘S’ are the 1c gray green, 2c red, 5c ultramarine, 6c pale blue, 10c yellow, 12c brown, 50c violet, and 100c black brown, all used.” [Note the 100c is the official stamp not the regular issue.]

A correct listing of these items appeared in the 31 January 1917 issue of *L'echo de la Timbrologie*.

In the July 21, 1917 issue of *Mekeel's*, on page 243, the following appeared. “SALVADOR – (1383) - *Gibbons Circular* offers for sale ‘Official stamps of 1915 overprinted with an ‘S’, instead of Oficial 1915.’ We are now wondering whether there are two series thus overprinted or not, one of the regular postage type, Scott’s A66, which would be the series of 1915 with ‘S’ instead of “1915” and the other of the official type, Scott’s O3, which would include Scott’s numbers 960 to 965 without the date and word ‘Oficial’, but with an ‘S’ overprint, and a new value in that type, 6c pale blue. It will perhaps transpire that there are two series and that our former chronicles were correct after all, the two series being confused as one. We would be glad to hear from any of our readers who will throw light on the subject.”

Page 331 of the October 6, 1917 issue of *Mekeel's* had the following – “SALVADOR – (1394) - ...Continuing his letter, Mr. v. d. Wettern states: “Same case with the ‘S’ stamps. They were placed on mail by a few interested to show they did postal duty; after that they were immediately withdrawn. Of the stamps overprinted with the letter ‘S’, they have down there 3500 sets imperforate. Same party is now trying to unload them in this country at a high figure. The earthquake had nothing to do with the making of these stamps, they are purely speculative and in the hands of one party as stated above.” [Note the first part of the letter deals with a 1917 provisional issue outside the scope of this article. It states these were in

the hands of Manuel De J. Tablos, probably secretary to the present Postmaster General.]

*Mekeel's* of October 20, 1917 (pg. 347) notes the following letter "SALVADOR - (1382, 1383, 1391, 1397) – This list of numbers refers to the editions of the Weekly in which chronicles of certain stamps of Salvador overprinted with an 'S' have been listed. We draw attention to them at this time because we have been advised by Mr. Eugene Klein that the 'S' means 'Sin Valor' (without value) and therefore the issues thus exploited to the detriment of the pocketbooks of purchasers are simply remainder with have been overprinted with the 'S' to make them valueless and, therefore unavailable for postage. It is probable that any cancelled copies were thus postmarked through favor and never did postal duty."

Further commentary appeared on pages 367-368 in the November 3, 1917 issue of *Mekeel's*. "SALVADOR – (1399) – The discussion regarding the 'S' stamps waxes wroth. We are swamped with pros and cons one way or another. We haven't space to give up to the subjects. If any one has absolute proof that the 'S' labels are postage stamps and not an issue provided for speculative purposes, we will gladly give space to the clearing of the Salvadoran sky. It is curious to see them put out a very fine issue for legitimate purposes and yet provide unnecessary provisionals which are immediately withdrawn from use and sold in bulk to some one who in turn sells them to a stamp dealer. Mr. A.

W. Dunning takes exception to Mr. Klein's statement to us that the 'S' means 'Sin valor' (without value). He states that the 'S' could mean 'Sin moth-balls' as well. Mr. Dunning very graciously submits the following story: 'The explanation I had from a resident of San Salvador was that the P.M.G. had the stamps so surcharged stating that the 'S' stood for 'Salvador.' He intended to have a few actually used and the usual number was sent to U. P. U. headquarters in Bern. The balance were to be withdrawn and sold as a speculation for the P. M. G.'s benefit. However, someone outside the P. M. G.'s 'inner circle' caused the report to become current that the P. M. G. (whose name has S for its initial letter) was advertising himself at the expense of his country – *a la Connell* of New Brunswick. This report spoiled the P. M. G.'s plans and the entire lot of 'S' stamps were withdrawn from circulation and sold *en bloc* to a local purchaser. My correspondent is a merchant in San Salvador and has nothing to gain by this tale. In fact he was unable to obtain the 'S' stamps for me at the time of their issue, as he is not a member of the 'inner circle.' Personally we cannot see the necessity of placing an 'S' to mean 'Salvador' on stamps which already have "Salvador" as part of their designs. We also heard the tale about the P. M. G., but the same thing is said about the President of Salvador, whose name begins with an S. It is also plainly to be seen that Mr. Dunning's correspondent was unable to purchase the 'S' stamps in San Salvador at the time they were supposed to have been in

use. We also hear that some of the 1915 issue of the same type with the '1915' overprinted on them are about with the letter 'S' on them. What is, however, a sure bet is the fact that the Salvadoran Post Office Dept. must have a big stock of stamps, both postage and official, of Scott's

type A66, unoverprinted, in the 1915 colors, both perforated and unperforated, with which it could arrange to place any old overprint or surcharge it wanted to on them.



**Sheet Size**

The horizon is kind o' hazy, and what is needed is a good strong wind to clear the atmosphere which enshrouds these so-called stamps. If they are good and legitimate postage and official stamps we want the owners of them to reap their proper profit, but if they are fake stamps, speculative in other words, the sooner the philatelic public refuses to buy this kind of trash the sooner governments will discontinue preparing them for such purposes as sale to collectors. Salvador is not the only country.

*Later* – The following letter, received just in time for this edition, establishes the standing of the 'S' and 'Corriente' stamps, all information to the contrary, and we are pleased to say that collectors can include these stamps in their collections and feel that they have genuine, legitimately issued postage stamps.

Post Office Department,  
Office of the Chief Clerk

Washington, October 25, 1917  
Mr. Percy McG. Mann,  
Philadelphia, Pa.

Sir: - In answer to your letter of October 22, which the Postmaster General has referred to me, you are informed that this Department has received from the International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union certain stamps of Salvador overprinted respectively with 'S' and the word 'Corriente'.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) Ruskin McArdle  
Chief Clerk"

The *Mekeel's* issue of November 24, 1917 has the following comments on page 331. "SALVADOR - (1402) we have the following letter from Mr. Geo. J. Carter: 'I note your comments on page 347, re the 'S' overprint on Salvador stamps...I happen to have a regular correspondent in San Salvador, who sends me stamps every month and quite recently I found a large percentage of the surcharged 'S' used, about the genuineness of which there can be no question. I also found a few with a double surcharge 'SS'.'" [Has any reader seen a copy with a double "SS" overprint? I never have.]

The debate continues in the December 1, 1917 issue of *Mekeel's* on pages 339-340. "SALVADOR - (1404) – In connection with the 'S' surcharges, the C. E. Hussman Stamp CO. give us permission to publish the following extract of letter addressed to Dr. V. M. Berthold by Mr. Florentin Souza, Postmaster General: -

'5<sup>th</sup> October 1917.

Complying with your wishes as stated in your favor of September 15<sup>th</sup>, I beg to submit the following information'

*Surcharge S on Palace Stamps*- Impression was decreed by the Government on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 1915, and were put into circulation August 25, 1915, having then forwarded the

corresponding sets to all Administrations of the Universal Postal Union through the International Bureau of Bern, after which they were sold to the public. The circulation, however, lasted only eight or ten days, because it was found that the printed S could be imitated for fraudulent purposes.

Some imperforated specimens were found in use, and upon investigation we discovered them to be genuine, having come out of our stamp department, possibly through oversight of the printing office.

Eight values, 1-2-5-6-10-12-50 and 100 cents, were used ordinarily of this issue.

The 100 cents is the only value placed in circulation with surcharge 'OFICIAL' of the issue Palace 'S.' Owing to the stated reason that the printed S might be imitated, this surcharge was substituted by '1915' engraved.

By act or decree of May 29, 1916, the sale was accorded at public auction in my office, of the unused issue S of the eight mentioned values, adding 589,250 specimens, including the imperforated stamps and also 23,100 of the surcharge 1915 which turned out to be errors in the engraving and printing. This was made to the highest bidder, Mr. Manuel de J. Tablas, with legal formalities. [The letter then goes on to deal with some of the issues of 1917, which is outside the scope of this article.]

I, Florentin Souza, Postmaster General of the Republic of El Salvador, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct extract of a letter dated October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1917, written by me and addressed to Dr. V. M. Berthold of New York City.

San Salvador, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1917

(Signed) F. Souza (Seal.)

(Attest) C. Estrada M.  
Ass. Srio.'

Official communications of this kind are very valuable to the students of Philately, and we appreciatively thank the C. E. Hussman Stamp Co. for their permission to publish the above. We will not add any comment, with the exception that we note the 100 centavos with 'Oficial' in the design, as we understand from the above, was the only value with the overprint 'S' which was placed in circulation, besides the eight values of regular adhesives with overprint 'S.' and the imperforate 'errors' of these."

Further commentary appeared in the December 15, 1917 issue on page 356. "SALVADOR – (1405) – We have the following as part of a letter from the C. E. Hussman Stamp Co.: 'We are perfectly convinced that the Salvador 'S' issue was intended to be used and for the reason stated, was withdrawn and the surcharge substituted by '1915.' We were, however, under the impression that these stamps were in use in 1916 instead of 1915, however, the



postmaster states in his letter that they were used in August 1915.

The letter refers to the letter from the Postmaster General of Salvador, kindly supplied by the C. E. Hussman Stamp Co., and published by us with their permission in the Chronicle of December 1<sup>st</sup>. The postage stamps with the 'S' overprint were distributed by the U. P. U. in *October 1916*, and were chronicled in *Scott's Circular* in November of the same year. The letter of the Postmaster General of Salvador clearly states that the stamps were only in use for a few days from *August 25, 1915*, the corresponding sets having been sent out for distribution by the U. P. U.; that owing to a possible imitation of the letter 'S,' the stamps were withdrawn and the surcharge substituted by '1915.'

It seems a little out of the ordinary for stamps issued for a few days in 1915 to be circulated by the U.P.U. over a year afterward, in 1916, but this was probably on account of delays occasioned by the war and would be excusable under the circumstances. If the Postmaster of Salvador sent the stamps to Berne to be distributed, and when the International Bureau of the U.P.U received them, as fourteen months is a little out of the ordinary for stamps issued on August 25, 1915, to be circulated by the U.P.U. on October 16, 1916 fourteen months all but a few days from the time the stamps were, as it is claimed, in actual use.

The Postmaster General's letter also discloses the fact that the

'S' stamps were sold at auction on May 29, 1916 to the lot of which were added 589,250 specimens including imperforates and also 23,100 of the '1915' overprints which were errors in the engraving and printing!

We have accorded full honors to the regular postage stamps with 'S' overprint, and the collector will, of course, have to have the set to be complete according to the Catalogue, which, by the way, lists them as of 1916, but there is one sure thing, you won't have to collect the imperfs, nor the 'errors' of the "1915" overprint series, unless you have a hankering for such things."

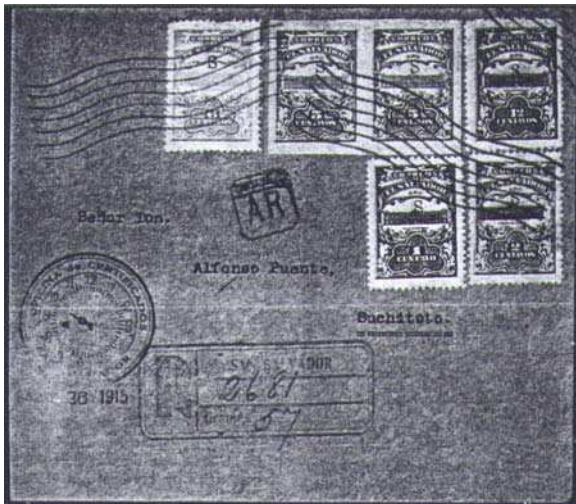
In *Stamp Collecting* on page 183 of the December 29, 1917 issue the following appeared: "SALVADOR – (Vol. IX, 103),

The controversy over the debatable 'S' surcharges has brought up no less a champion than Mr. Joseph B. Leavy, Philatelist to the United States Government Museum, who is now conducting an exhaustive monthly New Issue chronicle in the *Philatelic Gazette* from the November number of which we venture to take the following lengthy extract: -

The Universal Postal Union distribution sent out from Berne, under date of October 16, 1916, contained these stamps, and Circular No. 4071/200, which accompanied the distribution, listed them as the eighth item as follows: -

'SALVADOR. – Provisional postage stamps of 1 centavo, 2, 5, 6, 10, 12, 50 and 100 centavos, overprinted with letter 'S' (Salvador).” [The rest of the comments are a repeat of several of the above from *Mekeel's* and so are not reproduced again here.]

In the April 1976 issue of *The American Philatelist* Steve Ross illustrated a registered cover from San Salvador to Suchitoto with a date of August 26, 1915. Here is a copy of that illustration



The Registration cancel is dated August 26, 1915.

Note the imperf pair of the 5c stamps. At this time the domestic letter rate was 6c, registration 10c and AR was 5c for a total of 21c. There is 31c on the cover so that it is overpaid by 10c or more likely the imperf pair of the 5c did not pay anything.

The roller cancel is unusual for this time. Bill Wagner has seen it on numerous “used” copies of this issue but I have not seen it on any

other “non-S” covers during this period.

That is the information that has generally been available to collectors. So, what do you think, are the “S” overprinted stamps legitimate or not? Before you decided, look at the following, which I also found in the American Philatelic Research Library.

**“Se hizo una nueva emisión provisional de estampillas postales, adoptando el modelo del Palacio Nacional y contramarcándolas “1915”, las que se han ejecutado en el Taller Nacional de Grabados.”**  
**INFORME del Director General de Correos**  
**San Salvador, 3 de enero de 1916**

**F. Souza**

A new provisional issue of postal stamps was produced, adopting the design of the National Palace and overprinted “1915”. They have been produced by the National Printing Workshop.

**REPORT OF THE POSTMASTER GENERAL**  
**San Salvador, 3 January 1916**  
**F. Souza**

In my opinion these stamps are not a legitimate issue but a speculative one. I base this on several points.

- 1) In an official report by the PMG there is only the mention of the “1915” provisional issue and nothing about a previous

- provisional issue with the “S” overprint.
- 2) The stamps were not distributed by the UPU until over a year after they supposedly were issued. I submit that they were sent to the UPU after the sale of the “remainders” in the attempt to make them appear legitimate. This would have been very easy for the PMG to do.
  - 3) Apparently they were not readily available in San Salvador as Dunning’s correspondent said he was unable to obtain any.
  - 4) The “1915” overprint is no more difficult to counterfeit than the “S” overprint, which the PMG had claimed as the reason for the change. As Bill Wagner pointed out in a private correspondence, “Only somebody with the host stamps could put ‘S’s on them. The whole justification seems like scrambled eggs.” I submit that the “S” overprint was placed on the stamps in order to render them unusable for postage so the government would not be defrauded of revenue after the sale of the “remainders.”
  - 5) The cover illustrated in Steve Ross’ article as well as all the others I have seen strike me as being “philatelically inspired” and so of doubtful provenance as to the legitimacy of the issue.

It would be interesting to know the exact language of the May 29, 1915 decree referenced by PMG Souza. I suspect it just authorized a provisional issue without stating any specific details about it.

---

### **Cast of Characters**

(For those of today who are not familiar with some of the people of this era.)

---

**C. E. Hussman Stamp Co.** – major dealer of the time in St. Louis, MO.

**William v. d. Wettern** – person unknown to me.

**Manuel De J. Tablos** – an official in the Post Office but his exact position is unknown to me.

**Eugene Klein** – A knowledgeable and respected dealer in Philadelphia, PA.

**A. W. Dunning** – A New England stamp dealer who saved a lot of issues addressed to him on the original cover. Many lovely Salvador covers would not exist today had he not saved them.

**Charles O’Connell** – Provincial Postmaster of New Brunswick, Canada who had a 5c essay prepared with his picture on it in 1863.

**Dr. V. M. Berthold** – Victor Berthold was an early collector and writer on the stamps of El Salvador. He was a friend of Ernest Schernikow, N. F. Seebeck’s brother-in-law.

**Mr. Joseph B. Leavy**, Philatelist to the United States Government Museum (Curator of the National Stamp Collection) and author of the classic work, “Stamps of Salvador” that appeared in 1907 and 1908 in *Stanley Gibbon’s Monthly Journal*.

I would appreciate hearing from any collector who can identify and provide information on the two

people listed above as unknown to me.

## Adlets.

*Our adlet service allows members to publish their philatelic interests on each 'El Salvador Filatélico – El Faro' so they can buy, sell, or exchange with other collectors. Every member is eligible to place one adlet in the journal. In order to send us the adlet you want published, please access the 'Adlet' page on the member's section of the website.*

Looking for El Salvador stamps Scott #'s: 57, 229, 247, 252, 257, 293, 558, C31, O223, O224, O226, 1 of (O227, O228, O230, O231), O355. If you have any of these, please e-mail price to [CraigLJensen@msn.com](mailto:CraigLJensen@msn.com) -- will respond promptly.

Wanted: Errors, proofs, oddities of El Salvador. If you have any of these for sale or exchange, please send an e-mail to: [gfgallegosc@hotmail.com](mailto:gfgallegosc@hotmail.com) .

Looking for Scott #'s: 25E, 190, 191A, 211, 212A, 225, 227, 230B, 232, 237H, 240A, 297 y 311B; Officials O66, O67 y O68/O72. All of them either mint or used. Please contact at [kikoaro@cwpa.net.pa](mailto:kikoaro@cwpa.net.pa) .

Essays, Color Trials, Proofs, Freaks, Fakes, Oddities. Your offers most welcomed to Pierre Cahen: [pcahen@tutopia.com](mailto:pcahen@tutopia.com) or POB 483 San Salvador, El Salvador.



Visit us at:  
[www.elsalvadorphilately.org](http://www.elsalvadorphilately.org)

## Want to be updated in the New Issues of El Salvador?

Ask for the New Issue Service of the El Salvador Philatelic Society – ACES!

Check terms and conditions at the members' section of [www.elsalvadorphilately.org](http://www.elsalvadorphilately.org)

## Show-n-Tell

This section presents an illustration of an interesting item from the collection of one of our members.



Engraved 3c printing plate of the 1906 Escalon Issue. (Illustration at 100%).  
(Joe Hahn Collection)

## **Archaeology ...on the Stamps of El Salvador**

Guillermo Gallegos

*Because of the popularity of topical philately, this section will present in each number a short study about an specific topic that has appeared on the stamps of El Salvador.*



**30c stamp issue of 1946.  
Specimens in blue color are known.**

Archaeology on stamps is a very interesting, albeit not very common subject of stamp collecting. For those interested, there is a philatelic society devoted to this kind of stamps, the Old World Archaeological Study Unit (<http://www.owasu.org>).

For El Salvador, this topic starts on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1946, when the Postal Service issued a definitive air mail set with one of the values (the

Thirty years after this stamp, El Salvador again issued a set related to archaeology (October 11, 1976). This time, the set was dedicated to Pre-Columbian pottery, a total of 6 stamps (3 for ordinary mail, 3 air mail) with pieces mostly from El Tazumal and El Trapiche in Chalchuapa. Archaeological work in these sites also started in the 1940's, resulting in the finding at El Trapiche of the earliest evidence so-far of human occupation in the country

30c) depicting the Ruins of San Andres. The stamp was printed by Waterlow & Sons. At that time, archeology in El Salvador was a nascent science; the first archaeological site to have been significantly excavated had been Cihuatan in 1929. Archaeological work at San Andres was started on March 1940 by the John & Chris Dimick and Maurice & Muriel Ries. During the next year, Stanley Boggs, a young archaeologist who was to become a very important personality of the field in El Salvador, stated working there. Their studies confirmed that San Andres had its pinnacle during the Terminal Late Classic (600 – 900 AD). It is now the second largest archaeological site after Tazumal in Chalchuapa, and has a small site museum.

(Preclassic around 999BC). Tazumal was a town that grew after the abandonment of El Trapiche at the start of the Classic period (around 260 AD) becoming a very important metropolis with connections to Copan and other cities in the Maya Area. It was abandoned around 1200 AD at the start of the Post-Classic Period. Now El Tazumal is the largest Pre-Columbian ruin open to the public in the country.



1976 Issue (Illustration at 120%).



1982 First Day Cover (Illustration at 75%).

On January 22<sup>nd</sup>. 1982, the Postal Service issued a set depicting Pre-Columbian stone sculptures in an effort to promote the knowledge of this scarcely known art. All of the pieces were sculptured between the second and the twelfth century AD, and present very distinct styles mostly due to their different provenances, although they are all connected somehow or another to

religious subjects. The quantities printed vary depending on the value: 1,000,000 stamps each of the 10c ordinary and 25c air mail, 300,000 stamps for the 20 & 40c ordinary and 30c air mail, and 100,000 stamps for the 80c airmail. The stamps were printed by the “*Dirección de Servicios Gráficos*” (Direction of Graphic Services).

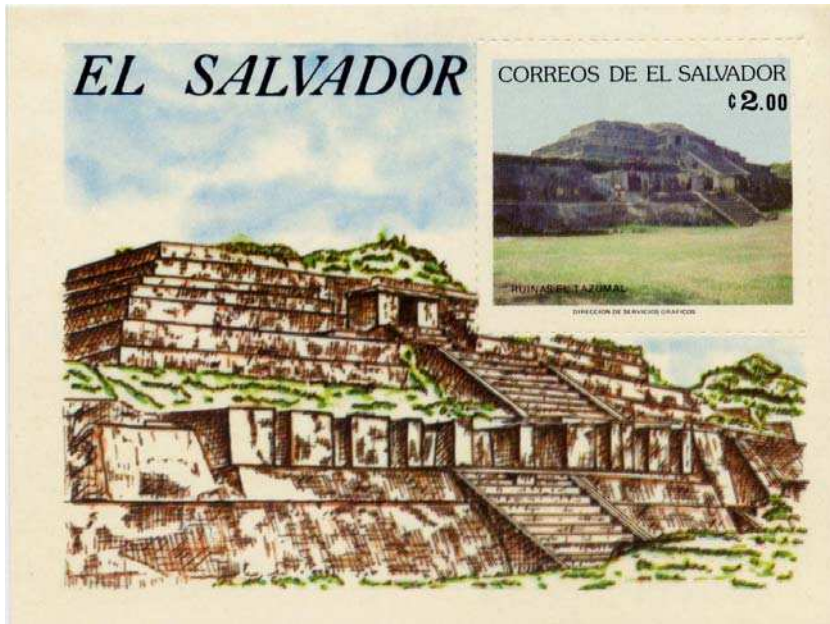


**1983 Issue (Illustration at 100%).**

The following year, another archaeological issue was placed in circulation (February 18<sup>th</sup>, 1983). Its main motif was to show daily life activities found on Pre-Columbian pottery pieces unearthed in El Salvador. All of these scenes were done during the Late Classic Period (around VII-VIII Centuries) and were mostly found on cylindrical vases. Of the seven stamps, four of them formed two se-tenants with a larger design. Some of the activities or

persons depicted were dancing (10c), a sewer (20c), a flying man (25c), an archer hunter (se-tenant formed by the 60c stamps), and a procession (se-tenant formed by the 1 Colon stamps). Again the quantities varied depending on the value: 800,000 stamps for the 10c ordinary and 25c air mail, 30,000 stamps for the 20c stamp, and 100,000 of each stamp of the 60c and 1C values, making a total of 50,000 se-tenants of each design.





1985 Pre-Columbian ceramic issue with the 2 colones souvenir sheet depicting El Tazumal (Illustrations at 110%)

In 1985, as part of the initiative to promote the knowledge of the country's past, the Postal Service again issued a set with Pre-Columbian ceramic as its main motif. The designs present important pieces of different periods and

provenances, including a Pre-Classical figure of a seated woman (15c value), a decorated vase from the Late Classic (20c), two figures from the Post-Classic (25c ordinary and 55c airmail), a Post-Classical hollow statue of a priest dressed as

Xipe Totec (a Toltec god venerated in Pre-Columbian El Salvador – 70c), and a figure with wheels also from the Post-Classic (1 Colon). The quantities printing as usual vary depending on the value: 200,000 stamps for the 15 and 25c values, 300,000 for the 20c, and 100,000 each for the three airmail values: 55, 70c, and 1 Colon.

The souvenir sheet depicts a view of the main structure of El Tazumal seen from the west side. The design of the stamp is the photograph of the same structure drawn on the remaining space of the souvenir sheet and it is rouletted; 30,000 sheets were printed.



**1986 Definitive Issue (Illustration at 110%).**

The next issue with archaeological subjects was remarkably a definitive set, issued on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1986. These stamps were printed by the French printing house Cartor, and its motif is a Pre-Columbian clay seal, possibly from the Late Classic Period (600-950 AD) and found in Cara Sucia, Ahuachapan. These seals usually had symbolic or even abstract designs and were generally used to accompany ceremonial rites.

This specific seal seems to represent to upper half of a monkey or a person disguised as one seen from the front. However, the highly disproportioned face with a slight hint of a type of spectacles suggests that maybe it could be a representation of Tlaloc, God of the Rain and one of the main gods in the Pre-Columbian pantheon.



1987 Musical Instruments (Illustration at 110%).

Archaeology was again included in the stamp program of 1987. This time the subject was Pre-Columbian musical instruments. These instruments were made of diverse materials such as pottery, bone, and marine shells, and have been found both as physical remnants (as the ones depicted on the 20c and 1.50 colones stamps) or depicted in ceramic pieces (as the scene of the 70c stamps).

The instrument on the 25c stamp is a ceramic drum found on the site "El Remolino" (Cuzcatlan) and dated from approximately the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD. The drum had a cord for putting around the neck as shown on the stamp.

The shell used as a trumpet on the 1.50 colones stamp was unearthed in La Union department and has been dated around the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. Finally, the musicians' scene was found in Chalatenango on a ceramic vase of the Salua style probably done by Lenca artisans around the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> century. The scene shows from left to right a musician with a rattle possibly of pumpkin, a dancer dressed as a Jaguar, a drummer with a large cylindrical instrument, two trumpeters with long instruments possibly made of wood, and the director of the "band" with two long maracas.

The stamps were issued on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 1987, and the following quantities were printed: 200,000 of the 20c value, 400,000 of both 70c stamps (thus making 200,000 se-tenants), and 100,000 of the 1.50 Colones stamp.



1988 500 years of the Discovery of America Souvenir Sheet (Illustration at 100%).



1988 500 years of the Discovery of America sheetlet (Illustration at 100 %).

The issues related to the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus provided an excellent opportunity to depict more archaeological subjects. Therefore, the first issue related to this historic event was the most ambitious set of stamps devoted to the subject ever done by El Salvador: It was composed of a sheetlet of 10 stamps, five depicting archaeological sites in El Salvador (from top to bottom Tazumal, San Andres, Sihuatan, Cara Sucia, and San Lorenzo), and five with Pre-Columbian ceramic pieces (from top to bottom a multicolored footed bowl, a two-colored censer, a carved head of the Rain God, an old man shaped vessel, and a multicolored vessel). All the stamps had a 1 Colon value. This sheetlet was accompanied by a 2 colones souvenir sheet depicting a portrait of Columbus taken from a

one Colon bill and a caravel. These stamps were issued on December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1988, with 20,000 sheetlets and 15,000 souvenir sheets issued.

Tazumal and San Andres were sites already depicted in previous issues. Sihuatan was the first site to be excavated as early as 1929 and then mainly in the 1970s. It was a city that presented a 400-year occupation during the Terminal Post-Classic (850 – 1200 AD). Cara Sucia was first occupied during the late Pre-Classic and reoccupied at the start of the Late Classic until around the year 1000 AD, around the same time as the larger Maya cities in Honduras and the lowlands of Guatemala were abandoned. San Lorenzo seems to be Loma China, a Late Classic site near the San Lorenzo dam that was excavated in the 1980s.



1995 Joya de Ceren Issue  
(Illustration at 100%).

In 1995, the Postal Service issued a stamp set in honor of “Joya de Ceren”, a site discovered in 1976 but soon covered again until 1989, when extensive excavations were undertaken. Ceren is exceptional because it is not a large city site, rather is a collection of huts that were covered in 3 meters of ash during the eruption of volcano Caldera around 600 AD in a situation similar to Pompeii. The ash remarkably preserved these structures that were made of perishable materials, thus providing an insight into how the common man lived during these times, making it a unique archaeological site in Mesoamerica. In order to fully understand the importance of Ceren, it must be remembered that all other Mesoamerican sites are ceremonial or government structures which were made of bricks or blocks of stone and none of them show the daily life of the peasants – thus making Ceren a very significant source to fully understand Mesoamerican cultures. The UNESCO recognized the

importance of Ceren by including it in 1993 in the World Heritage List – the only landmark of El Salvador in the list so far.

The stamps issued depict four ceramic pieces found at Joya de Ceren (60, 70, 80 cents, and 2.20 colones) and of the main structures (4.50 colones – Structure 3 and 5 colones – Structure 4). The structure 3 was a communal house with two chambers, one of them with two benches at its north and south walls. Each of these chambers have niches that archaeologists believe were used to place lighted torches for providing light to the windowless chambers. At structure 4, found at a depth of almost 6 meters, a garden was found with charred maguey plants. Inside, pots and others kitchen utensils were discovered along with a sort of box protecting a basket full of corn hubs, which was not unearthed in order to avoid its disintegration.



**2002 Tourism Issue  
(Illustration at 100%).**

Joya de Ceren was again depicted in a 2002 issue dedicated to the Maya World, a multinational project whose aim is the increase the tourism flow to the northern Central American countries (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador) and Mexico through an emphasis on Mayan archaeological sites combined with the natural beauties of each country. The Maya World comprises some 500,000 square kilometers, and has 18 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, abundant natural resources, and several colonial monuments.

El Salvador promoted the Maya World route by issuing on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2002 a set of four

stamps with remarkable tourist sites such as the forests at El Picacho (San Salvador Volcano), the Jiquilisco Bay, the town of Juayua, and Joya de Ceren. The structure in the Joya de Ceren stamp is a “*Temascal*” or steam bath used by the community for religious purposes. Two of the stamps have a one colon value or US\$0.11 (from 2001 both the Colon and the US dollar are official currencies in the country) and the other two have a 4 colones or US\$0.46 value. The total printing was 300,000 of each of the two values.

**2003 Tourism Issue  
(Illustration at 100%).**



In 2003 another tourist related issue was placed in circulation. This issue had 4 values, each of them depicting a facet of tourism in El Salvador: The Cofradías de Panchimalco representing traditional dances, the Shalpa Beach for recreational tourism, the Church of Juayua as the symbol of “The Flower Route” a tour of some of the most beautiful and unspoiled towns in El

Salvador, and the ruins of El Tazumal as an example of the archeological richness that can be found in the country.

The stamps were issued on December 10, 2003, and all four of them have the 1.50 colones or US\$0.17 value. The total printing was 200,000 stamps (50,000 of each).



The above are all the issues of El Salvador closely related to archaeology placed in circulation so far. However, in order to be as comprehensive as possible, there are also three stamps that have Pre-Columbian designs although its purpose was to commemorate other

events. The first one is the 40c stamp of the 1985 FAO issue depicting Centeotl, the God of Corn. Its issue date was October 16, 1985 and a total of 400,000 stamps were printed. The other two stamps belong to the 1989 "AMERICA" issue dedicated to Pre-Columbian customs. The 25c value shows a farmer design taken from a ceramic vessel found at the site of Asanyamba (La Union), while the 70c value depicts two potters at their work. Their issue date was October 11, 1989. As in the stamp above, a total of 400,000 stamps of each were printed.



Some of the articles that will appear on our next number are:

- Painting ... on the Stamps of El Salvador
- Claudia Lars in Who's Who on the Stamps of El Salvador

Visit us at [www.elsalvadorphilately.org](http://www.elsalvadorphilately.org) and become a member!