

CARRANZA'S VALIDATION OF THE EARLIEST *DOS CARITAS*

In an article entitled "*State Seal*" or validation stamp? (March 2000) Dave Watson suggests that the *Ejercito Constitucionalista* (EC) seal applied to Chihuahuan *dos caritas* was a validation stamp applied to authorise the circulation of Chihuahuan notes amongst Carranzista units. This is partly correct. In fact the seal distinguishes the first issue of *dos caritas* that were authorised by Carranza when Villa was still nominally subordinate to the *Primer Jefe*.

The *San Antonio Express* reported on 8 May 1914:

Adding \$5,000,000 to the volume of the circulating medium of the Mexican Constitutionalists, the Maverick-Clarke Litho Co. yesterday completed the huge task of lithographing 1,652,500 pieces of currency ranging in value from 50 cents to 50 pesos. Contract for the big job was executed at Juarez, March 24, it being stipulated that the last of the bills was to ready by midnight Monday night. The final number of the hundreds of thousands of pieces of the currency was finished at 8 o'clock, four hours ahead of the required schedule.

Agents of the Constitutionalists, Jose Ferlas and Senor Gonzales, paid the contract price yesterday in gold coin of the United States and the plates were turned back to the Carranza government. The issue is divided as follows: Five hundred thousand 50 cent pieces, 750,000 1 peso bills, 200,000 5 peso bills, 150,000 10 peso certificates, 37,500 in twenties and 15,000 in fifties. Paper used in the making of the money that is worth at least a fourth of its face value in United States cash, and will rise materially in value if the Constitutionalists succeed, consists of what is known as Woronoco parchment. It is not only strong and flexible, but resists use and wear and tear equal to any currency made in any Government establishment.

Before it can be put into circulation, however, it will have to be signed by both the tesorero general and the interventor. It is presumed this will be done at Chihuahua. The signature of M. Chao, lately deposed as Governor of Chihuahua by orders of General Villa, is lithographed upon all the currency contained in the issue.

Contract for the work was signed by L. de la Garza, as the representative of the Constitutionalists. He sent a dozen or fifteen men to San Antonio to act in various capacities while the lithographing was being done. Extreme care was taken by all these men to prevent any publicity in connection with their mission.

Messrs. Ferlas and Gonzales left to the firm doing the work the matter of selecting the designs. Every piece save those of the 50-centavo size bears excellent likenesses of the men whose memories are revered by Constitutionalists: the two martyrs, Francisco I. Madero and Abram Gonzales. Gonzales was the Governor of Chihuahua, who is said to have been murdered by being hurled from a train on which he was a prisoner under the moving wheels. On the reverse side is a splendid reproduction of the National Palace in the City of Mexico, guarded at either side by a huge griffin. Men familiar with such matters say it will be an absolute impossibility to ever successfully counterfeit any of this currency.

Though nobody connected with the contract seems to have any idea as to the point on the Rio Grande where the money was taken for crossing, Constitutionalists said last night the currency was already over the river and that the task of signing it will be on in a day or two.

According to the *El Paso Morning Times*, 9 May the money (in this report six million dollars) was shipped from San Antonio to El Paso for forwarding to Ciudad Juárez and Torreon.

As stated, these earliest notes carried an EC seal. The full range is

50c (Series U)

- (1) scalloped red EC seal and round black/green Tesorería seal on face, vertical control letters. The control letters are B-I; J-II; G-III; U-IV; E-V; L-VI; A-VII; T-VIII; A-IX; O-X commemorating B(enito) J(uárez), who was born in Guelatao, Oaxaca. As there were 500,000 notes in total each control letter will have been on 50,000 notes.
- (2) scalloped red EC seal on face; round black *Tesorería* seal on back. As the original printing was of five million pesos and Carranza later (*El Liberal*, 25 October 1914) held that he had given Villa permission to issue six million pesos it is tempting to suggest that Carranza recognised notes with the EC seal and that therefore there were a million pesos (two million notes) in this subseries. However, it is also possible that Carranza was referring to six million pesos in *Ejército Constitucionalista* notes.

\$1 (Series A)

scalloped red EC seal and vertical control letters on face; round black *Tesorería* seal on back. The controls are a Roman numeral and letter on either side, e.g. I-C C-I, II-O O-II. The Roman numerals progress every 10,000 notes and correspond to the first or first two digits of the serial number: thus LXXIV is found on note number 74(3878). There were 75,000 notes so the numbers reach LXXIV and the corresponding letters spell CONSTITUCION Y REFORMAS CONSTITUCION Y REFORMAS CONSTUCION Y (The TI of the third CONSTITUCION was missed out). One error note has LXXXIV-Y on the left but the correct Y-LXXIV on the right.

\$5 (Series C)

scalloped blue EC seal and vertical control letters on face; circular black *Tesorería* seal on back. So far the sequence has been established as

Control	Number range	Control	Number range
I-	1 10000	XI-	100001 110000
II-	10001 20000	XII-	110001 120000
III-	20001 30000	XIII-	120001 130000
IV-	30001 40000	XIV-	130001 140000
V-	40001 50000	XV-	140001 150000
VI-I	50001 60000	XVI-I	150001 160000
VII-	60001 70000	XVII-S	160001 170000
VIII-	70001 80000	XVIII-T	170001 180000
XI-	80001 90000	XIX-A	180001 190000
X-S	90001 100000	XX-S	190001 200000

which suggests that some of the missing codes were VII-S, VIII-T, XI-A.

\$10 (Series D)

scalloped blue EC seal and vertical control letters on face and circular black *Tesorería* seal on back. Only I-P P-I and II-R R-II are known. The highest recorded number is 10640.

According to the *San Antonio Express* there were originally 150,000 notes in total, so these must have been used not only for the EC seal but also for the later blue and blue/black *Tesorería* seals.

\$20 (Series E)

circular black *Tesorería* seal, scalloped red EC seal and vertical control letters on back. The four control letters spell AMOR (or ROMA). The sequence is:

Control	Number range	II-M O-II	10001 20000
I-A R-I	0001 10000	Control	Number range

III-O M-III 20001 30000 IV-R A-VI 30001 37500

\$50 (Series F)

circular black Tesorería seal, scalloped red EC seal and vertical control letters on back. The only code known is XIV-A F-XIV, though perhaps the sequence was intended to spell FRANCISCO VILLA,

I-F	A-I
II-R	L-II
III-A	L-III
IV-N	I-IV
V-C	V-V
VI-I	O-VI
VII-S	C-VII
VIII-C	S-VIII
IX-O	I-IX
X-V	C-X
XI-I	N-XI
XII-L	A-XII
XIII-L	R-XIII
XIV-A	F-XIV

and there were 15,000 notes originally printed. If the control code was Villa's name it is not surprising that these notes did not last.

The *dos caritas* were produced over a period of more than a year, possibly by a number of firms with the final total exceeding 500,000,000 pesos. They may even have been produced in Chihuahua itself: on 23 December 1914 Sebastian Vargas wrote to Villa suggesting that, given the high cost in American currency of printing notes and the fact that the government already had the plates, facsimiles and other tools, the government should purchase the necessary machinery and print the notes in Chihuahua.

By September 1914 Carranza intended to unify the currency and withdraw all his earlier issues so on 19 September he authorised the issue of the *Gobierno Provisional* notes with earlier notes of the *Ejército Constitucionalista* to be exchanged for notes of the new issue. In the meantime, however, the notes had to be made acceptable to the public so on 23 October the Constitutionalist *Secretario de Hacienda* issued a clarification that all paper money with Constitutionalist identification or the authorisation of the *Primer Jefe* were legal tender.

So far Carranza had supported the issues made in his name by colleagues such as Villa but by November 1914 he had been driven out of Mexico City and had established his government in Veracruz. From there he issued decrees invalidating the issues of his former allies. In a decree dated 27 November he stated that, in view of the large quantity of notes that Chihuahua had issued beyond the number authorised by his *Jefatura*, its notes were no longer legal tender and would cease to circulate, and that, in due course, he would arrange the exchange of those notes of the *Gobierno del Estado de Chihuahua*, whose issue he had authorised (*los billetes emitidos por el Gobierno del Estado de Chihuahua cuya emisión haya sido autorizada por esta Primera Jefatura*). On 8 December he published a decree that identified those issues that his government acknowledged as its obligation and which, after 1 April 1915, would be exchanged in some still to be determined manner. All other notes were null and void.

It is difficult to determine which Chihuahuan notes Carranza was willing to acknowledge, and it is possible that he himself never really knew but besides the *Ejército Constitucionalista* notes, which

bore the seal of the *Primer Jefe* and were never, except unintentionally, disowned, it is likely that Carranza was willing to acknowledge these earliest *dos caritas*.

In the beginning it seems that Carranza was willing for people to hand in any *dos caritas* in the hope of some future compensation but by February 1915 Carranza's commanders were disowning any notes with a Villista connection and people had to hand the notes in merely to avoid the accusation of being in possession of counterfeit money.