

The Barr-Fyke Machine Cancels of Mexico 1900-1908

The Barr-Fyke Machine Company of Kansas City, Missouri, experimented with its cancelling machines fairly extensively in Kansas City and Washington DC from 1896 to 1898, and this work led to a Post Office Department contract to supply a small number of machines for use around the United States over the next several years. Its success was short lived, however, and eventual general dissatisfaction with the machine's performance led to cancellation of the US contract on June 30, 1905. In addition to the machines used in the United States, the Barr-Fyke Company was able to install a few machines in Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, and also the Paris Exposition Post Office in 1900. This exhibit will focus on the Barr-Fyke machine cancels of Mexico.

This marcophily exhibit is divided into four sections, and will show all the towns and types of Barr-Fyke machine cancels known from Mexico, including the earliest and latest known Barr-Fyke cancels from Mexico. Several particularly scarce items will have **text in red** to highlight their rarity or importance.

- I. The initial postmark types used in Mexico City from late 1900 to early 1901, pages 1-2
- II. The additional postmark types used in Mexico City from early 1901 to late 1904, pages 3-5
- III. A sampling of the 'Weather Flags' used in Mexico City from mid 1903 to late 1904, pages 6-7
- IV. All of the towns and major types of postmarks used outside of Mexico City, pages 8-16



The Aug 28, 1900 RECIBIDA (received) and the Sep 4, 1900 markings shown above represent the earliest known use of the new Barr-Fyke machine in Mexico on incoming and outgoing mail. Both types of markings were used intermittently for several months before additional contract machines were introduced.



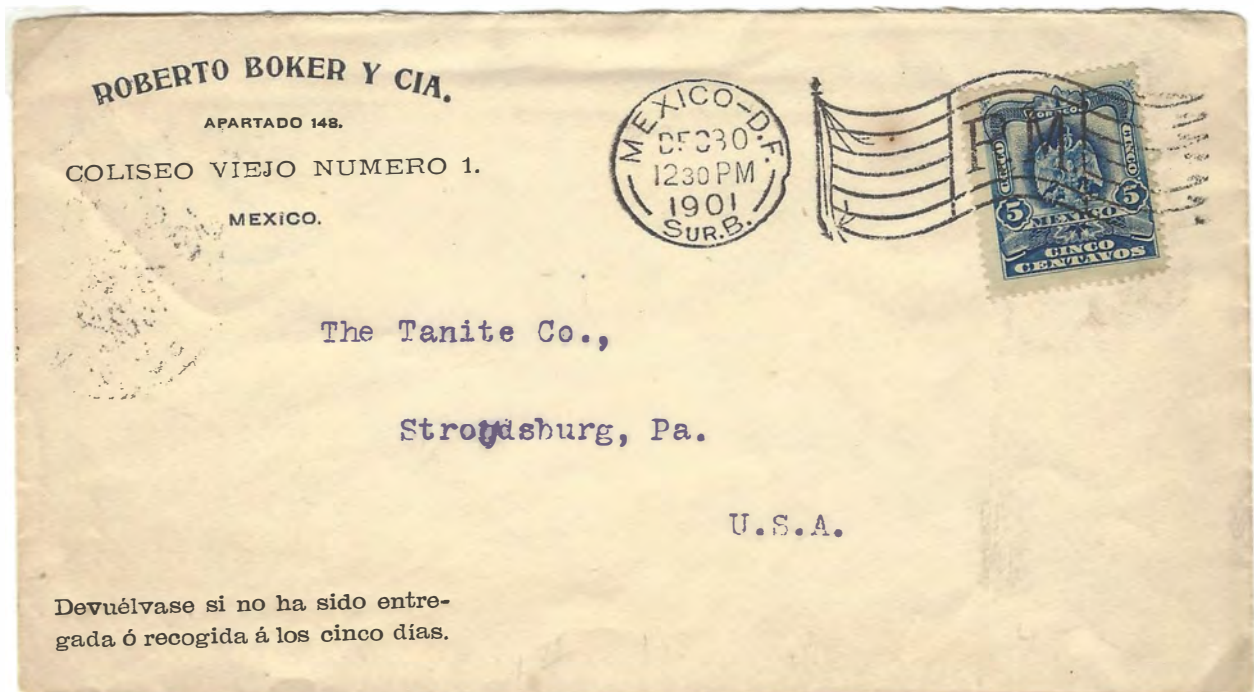
The cancellation designs of the first machine in Mexico closely resembled designs already in use within the United States, as the pair of Chicago Barr-Fykes below demonstrates.



First Contract Machines in Mexico City



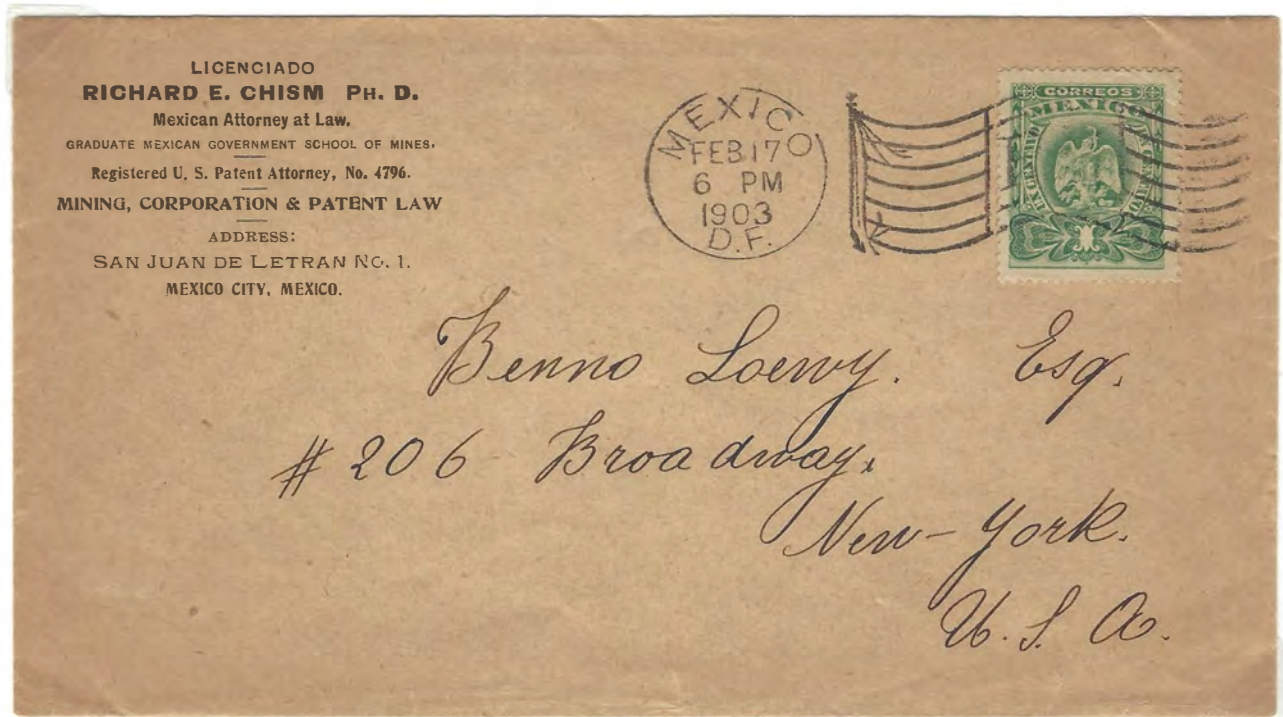
Successful evaluation of the trial machine in Mexico City led to a series of small contracts for the Barr-Fyke Machine Company to install several more machines in Mexico over the next few years. One of the changes made on these first machines was to incorporate a bold R.M. (Republica Mexicana) into a tassel flag design. One of the first two machines produced the markings above, which had a dial for marking both incoming and outgoing mail.



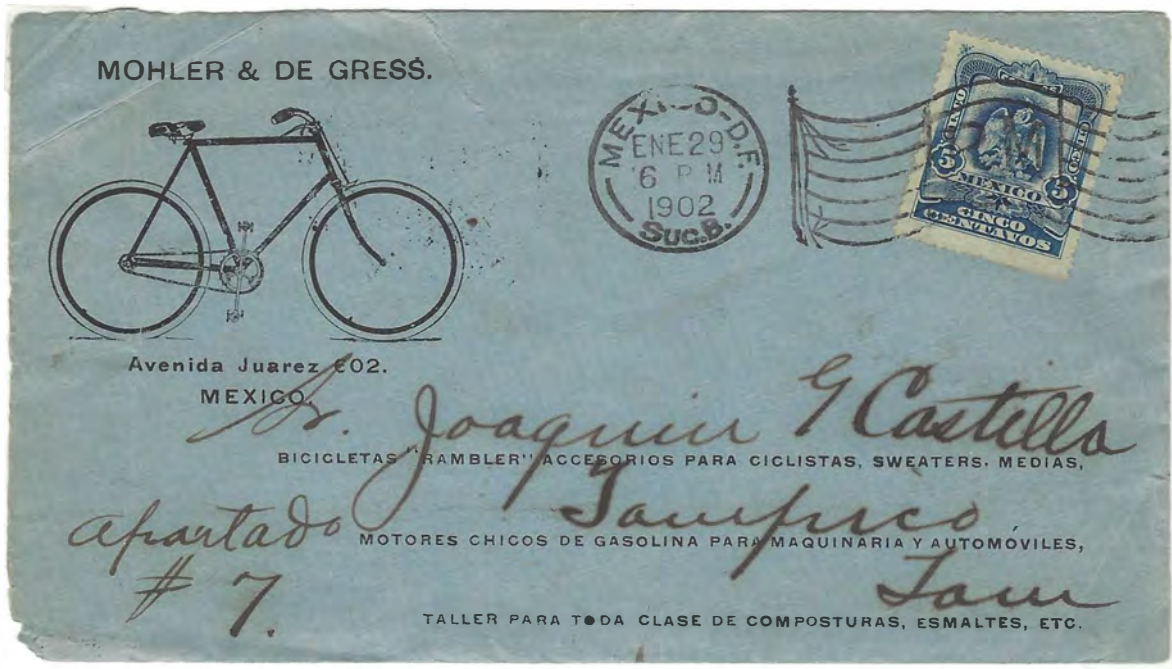
The second of the initial machines was used at Station B in Mexico City for a period of about six months.



This dial design was in use from mid 1901 until late 1905. Dial and flag die wear progression is very evident in this early and latest recorded use of this dial die. By the time of the December, 1905 use shown above, the Barr-Fyke contract in the United States had expired and all machines located in the United States were withdrawn from service.



A variety that included a D.F. in the dial was also in use during years 1903 and 1904.



Only two examples of this SUC.B (Branch B) dial variety have been recorded, dated January 29-30, 1902. It is unknown why it was used for such a short time, when the REC variety shown below was in use for about a year.



The SUC.B.REC variety, while seemingly intended for use as a rec'd marking, is only seen on outgoing mail. Virtually all known copies of the SUC.B.REC. dial variety are very poor impressions. This interesting use to the United States is an exception, with a very fine impression of the dial and flag die.

Mexico City Weather Forecast Flag Cancels



The Barr-Fyke weather forecast flags are among the most fascinating of all machine cancels.

Postal records from Mexico indicate 40 dies were produced, but barely half have been found, and most are quite scarce. They were in use from April 1903 until late 1904.

Several nice impressions are shown on the next two pages.

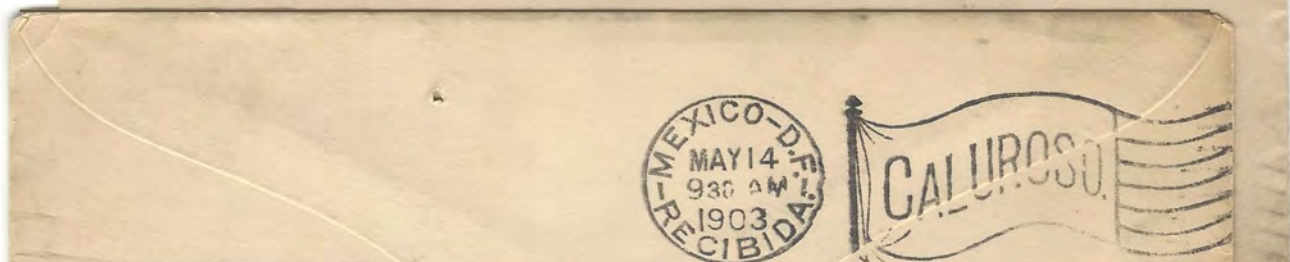
This April, 1903, use is a very early example of a weather forecast flag. This is a transit use on postal card from Venezuela to Germany.

GOOD WEATHER A.M.

RAIN P.M.



WARM



NORTHERLY (GULF)
WINDS TOMORROW



Mexico City Weather Forecast Flag Cancels



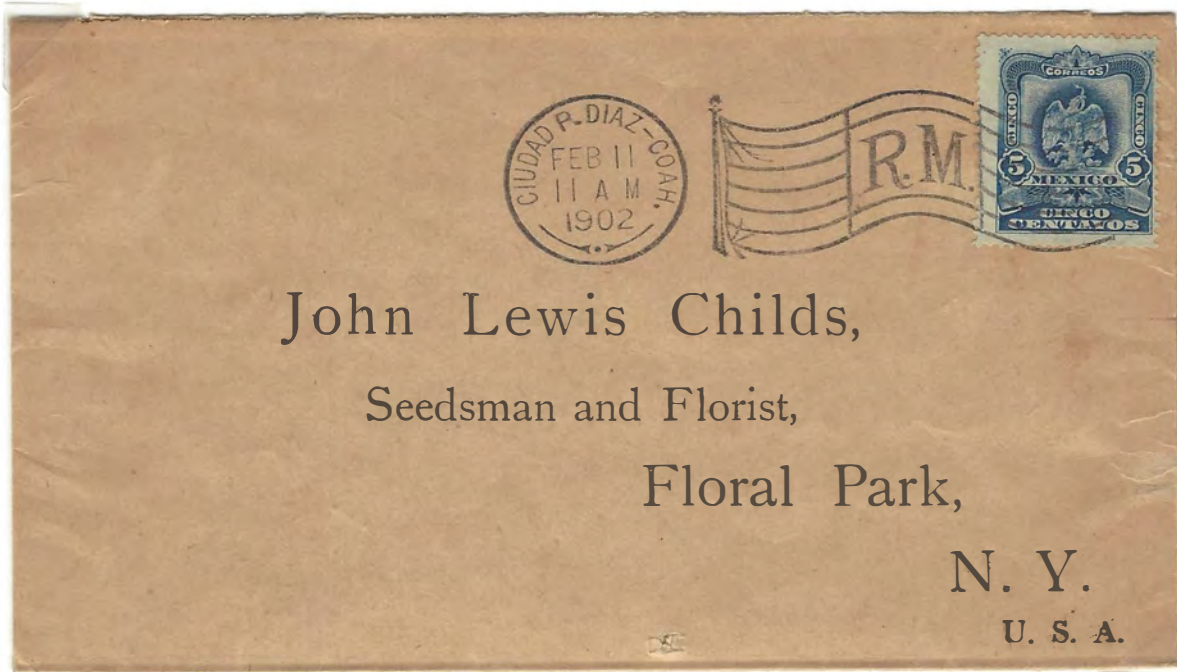
Many of the existing weather flags are partial impressions and hard to identify, especially later in 1904 when dial and flag die wear was evident. This example is fairly typical of mid to late 1904 impressions.



The Apr 4, 1902 use shown above is the earliest listed use from Ciudad Juarez, and the use of a Barr-Fyke machine continued for about two years in this city.



Ciudad Juarez was also supplied with a REC die for marking incoming mail. However, only a couple examples of the REC dial have been recorded, and most incoming mail matter was simply postmarked with the regular die intended for outgoing mail. Both are shown above.



Though the recorded dates of use for the Barr-Fyke machine in Ciudad P. Diaz go from early 1902 until late 1904, very few examples are known. This Feb 11, 1902 example is the earliest known date.



A dial only REC marking is known for several months in 1904, with an early use shown above, along with the regular die used as a transit marking on a postcard to Germany.



Guadalajara used three different varieties of dials between mid 1902 and early 1906. The pair of items above shows a very early use on an outgoing postcard, and the cover on top shows the latest known use, Jan 04, 1906, of a Barr-Fyke machine in Guadalajara.



This is the discovery copy of the Guadalajara, Jal with REC in the dial, and is the only known copy. Ironically, though REC dials normally intended for marking incoming mail, it is used here on an outgoing foreign letter.



The last contract between the Mexico Post Office and the Barr-Fyke Machine Company resulted in the delivery of two machines that produced markings known as the 'midget' tassel flags. The distinctive small dials make them very easy to identify. The Merida shown above is one of two known copies, both recently discovered, with the other dated Jun 16, 1905.



The midget tassel flag in Tampico was used for several months starting in June 1905, and is seen on both outgoing and incoming mail.



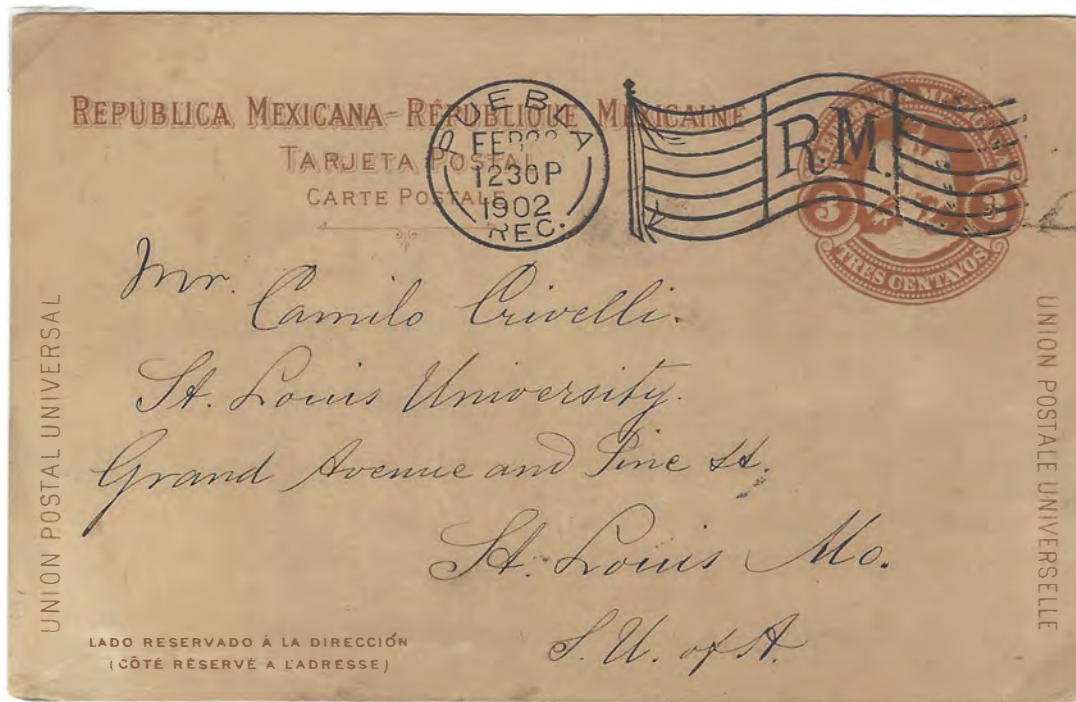
Monterrey used three different dial varieties. The type above, on a cover used to France, went into service in late March 1902 and was used for about two years.



The REC dial is frequently seen on both incoming and outgoing mail in Monterrey.



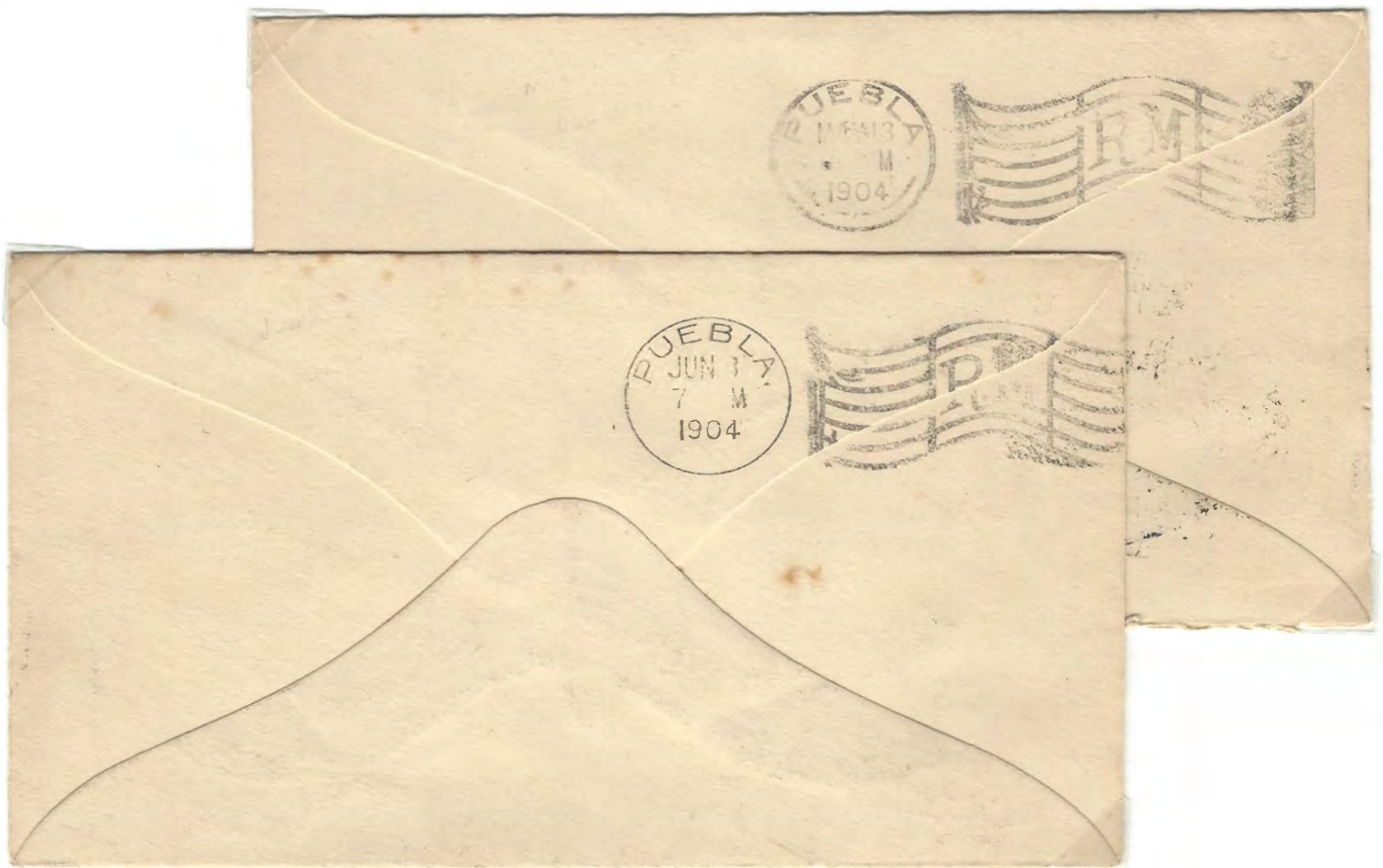
Two Monterrey N.L. dials are shown here to show an interesting anomaly in the date format. From 1904-1906, the standard four digit year date was used, but in 1907 and 1908, a single digit year date was used, as shown with the '7' for 1907 in the top cover.



Puebla used three different dial varieties from 1902 to 1904. This Feb 1902 dated cover is the earliest recorded use of a Barr-Fyke machine in Puebla.



Here is a nice combination item with the regular outgoing dial used on a postal card and postmarked by another Barr-Fyke machine upon arrival in Mexico City the next day.



Like several other cities using the Barr-Fyke machines, the outgoing dial was frequently used to mark incoming mail. By early 1904, the dial and flag die were showing considerable wear. The bottom cover is a unique use of an apparent provisional or locally made dial die used to replace the very worn die that was in use for over two years. **It is the only recorded example.**



Top card shows regular dial used as rec'd marking on postcard from England and bottom cover shows a transit use of REC dial on cover to Germany.



Nuevo Laredo used a dial only marking with REC in dial for marking incoming and transit mail for about three months in 1902, and again from 1904 until 1906.

The top card in this pair is from the 1902 period and used a full four digit year date and the bottom card from 1906 used a single '9' for the year date.



This interesting pair of items shows an early and late use in 1907, with the single '7' used as a year date in January, but a complete 1907 in use by later in the year. Nuevo Laredo used dial only markings quite extensively



This dial only variety from Nuevo Laredo, dated Apr 1908, is the latest known use of a Barr-Fyke machine in Mexico, and almost three years after the last Barr-Fyke machine was used in the United States.