

"Anderson-Neary, Jones & Company" by Greg Balagian

Bogus stamps have always had a following of a fairly small group of enthusiastic stamp collectors while the rest of philatelic community has always looked down on all bogus issues. I must agree that with recent flood of bogus issues it is definitely justifiable, but in my opinion there is definitely room for us to collect classic bogus issues, as most of them are surprisingly difficult to obtain. Apparently they were issued in very small quantities and have been discarded and destroyed over the years.

Recently I was lucky to come across and purchase scarce stamp from a set of three bogus stamps released in 1904 by "Anderson-Neary, Jones and Company" of Alexandria, Egypt, and the little information I was able to find comes from Mellville's "Phantom Philately" which is considered to be a bible for collectors of classic bogus stamps is used to write this article.

The company had branch offices in various parts of the Ottoman Empire in Asia. Mellville cites the circular issued by the manager of the company where according to the manager the postal service in many parts of the Ottoman Empire was very poor and local Turkish (Ottoman) post offices often ran out of postage stamps making it difficult to customers to mail their letters or packages.

To remedy the situation "Anderson-Neary, Jones & Co." proposed to operate its own postal service whenever there was a breakdown in the government run service. Such an enterprise would obviously need postage stamps. The stamps were designed and printed, but so far not a single postally used cover bearing these stamps has been found. The stamps were chronicled in the contemporary philatelic press at the times, but the editors were quick to denouncing the issue much to the embarrassment of company's manager. Sales of these stamps cannot have been too big, as these stamps are rarely found today.

The set consisted of three stamps with similar design but each stamp was printed in black on different color paper with names of ARMENIA, MESOPOTAMIA and KURDISTAN on top. The design is crowded and includes a British lion, an eagle, a star and a crescent, a pyramid and a monolith. The manager stated that he was Irish-Anglo-American and desired to include as many symbols of different countries as possible.

The ARMENIA stamp is printed on rose-red paper, MESOPOTAMIA on brownish paper, and KURDISTAN on greenish paper. Stamps have perforation 11, but there are few stamps found that are imperforate. The idea was to use stamps in different sanjaks, or provinces whose name they carry. Each stamp has the denomination of 1 p.t. which Melville believed was one Turkish piaster. All stamps also exist with the overprints "1 groosh" and "girshein", so there was three different denominations of each stamp making it a set of nine stamps. The term "Inter-official Postage" is a quite puzzling aspect and perhaps refers to the postage paid for carriage between the company's various offices.

There is a document on the paper with company's letterhead was found with the set of three stamps purchased by a stamp collector where someone from the company has tried to explain the purpose of the stamps. Unfortunately it is not dated and the handwritten text is as follows: "Proofs of stamps supplied to Asiatic Turkish Postmaster when they can't or won't give real Government ones".



C. W. ANDERSON NEARY
AGENT

Alexandria
EGYPT.

Anderson-Neary, Jones & Company (1904)**Armenia (RRR)****Kurdistan (RR)****Mesopotamia (RR)**

Proofs of stamps supplied to Asiatic Turkish Postmaster when they can't or won't give real Government ones.

The "Anderson-Neary, Jones & Company" bogus stamp issue definitely ranks among the most interesting classic philatelic phantoms, and it is for sure fantastic addition to my collection as it fits my both main collecting interests – Armenia and Felines.