

CUBA

THE STAMPS OF KING ALFONSO XII

1876 to 1888

Starting in 1876 and until they were replaced with the stamps of Alfonso XIII in 1890, all of the postage stamps printed in Spain for use in its colony of Cuba bear the profile of Alfonso XII, King of Spain from 1874 until his death in 1885. From 1876 to 1881 a new set of stamps was printed each year in different colors from those of previous years and bearing the corresponding year date in a cartouche at the top. These stamps were only valid for use from January to December of each year. The intent of these yearly issues was to thwart the counterfeiting of the stamps for postal use—a common problem at the time.

In 1882 the year date was removed with the intention of using the stamps printed that year for several years thereafter. However, the theft of a large stock of 5, 10, and 20 centavos stamps discovered in April 1883, made necessary their replacement and gave rise to the surcharged and overprinted stamps of 1883 as temporary substitutes while a new printing of stamps was ordered and received from Spain. The first replacement stamps received were retouched 1882 5c. stamps that arrived in September 1883. Thereafter, during the years 1883 to 1888, several other values of retouched or new color stamps were put in circulation.

The intent of this exhibit is to show all of the Cuban stamps of King Alfonso XII and their major varieties and to provide a good overview of their usage in the franking of correspondence.