

# Overview of the Puerto Príncipe Surcharges—Printings and Settings

By Ernesto Cuesta and Robert Littrell

The Puerto Príncipe surcharges were provisional surcharges applied on some low denomination Alfonso XIII Spanish Cuba newspaper stamps of 1896 and 1898 and on the 1 cent stamp of the 1898 Alfonso XIII issue. These surcharges were produced in the city of Camagüey, Cuba, then known as Puerto Príncipe, while waiting for the U.S. Postal Administration to provide the U.S. stamps surcharged for use in Cuba that became the first definitive issue by that administration for Cuba. The Puerto Príncipe stamps were surcharged very crudely in rows of five stamps each in a total of five separate printings starting with the first one on December 19, 1898, and ending with a fifth printing on January 11, 1899. Three settings of the surcharge types were used for the five printings. The first and second printings shared the same setting and the third and fourth printing shared the second setting; the third setting was only used for the fifth and last printing. These stamps were only used in Puerto Príncipe and vicinity, so they are considered to be a local provisional issue.

Since the printings were quickly and crudely executed, all positions in each strip of five stamps in all five printings that were executed are individually identifiable. The following printing charts and setting diagrams identify the stamps belonging to each printing and show the individual characteristics of each of the five positions in each of the three settings that were used to print these surcharges. These printing charts and setting diagrams have been taken from the auction catalog of “The Peter A. Robertson Collection of Cuba—Insurrection and Puerto Príncipe Issues” documenting the sale of that great collection by the Christie’s-Robson Lowe auction house on March 15, 1988. A notable difference with the charts in the auction catalogs is that the third and fourth printing have been interchanged to be consistent with their identification in previous literature on these issues. Additionally, the printing charts have been annotated with the dates of the printings, Scott and Edifil catalog numbers have been added to the setting diagrams, and some other minor editorial corrections have been made to enhance their ease of use.

## **Resumen de las Sobrecargas de Puerto Príncipe—Impresiones y Moldes**

Por Ernesto Cuesta y Robert Littrell

Las sobrecargas de los sellos de Puerto Príncipe fueron sobrecargas provisionales que se le aplicaron a sellos de denominaciones bajas para impresos de las emisiones de Cuba española de Alfonso XIII de 1896 y 1898 y al sello de 1 centavo de la emisión de 1898. Estas sobrecargas provisionales se confeccionaron en la ciudad de Camagüey, Cuba, conocida entonces como Puerto Príncipe, mientras se esperaban las remesas de sellos de los EE.UU. sobrecargados para su uso en Cuba que la administración postal americana introdujo como primera serie oficial de esa administración. Los sellos de Puerto Príncipe fueron sobrecargados crudamente en filas de cinco sellos a lo largo de cinco tiradas de imprenta, empezando con la primera el 19 de diciembre de 1898 y terminando con la quinta el 11 de enero de 1899. Tres moldes se usaron para las cinco tiradas de imprenta. La primera y segunda tiradas usaron el primer molde y la tercera y cuarta tirada usaron el segundo molde; el tercer molde solo se usó para la quinta y última tirada. Estos sellos se usaron solamente en Puerto Príncipe y cercanías y por lo tanto se consideran como una emisión provisional de tipo local.

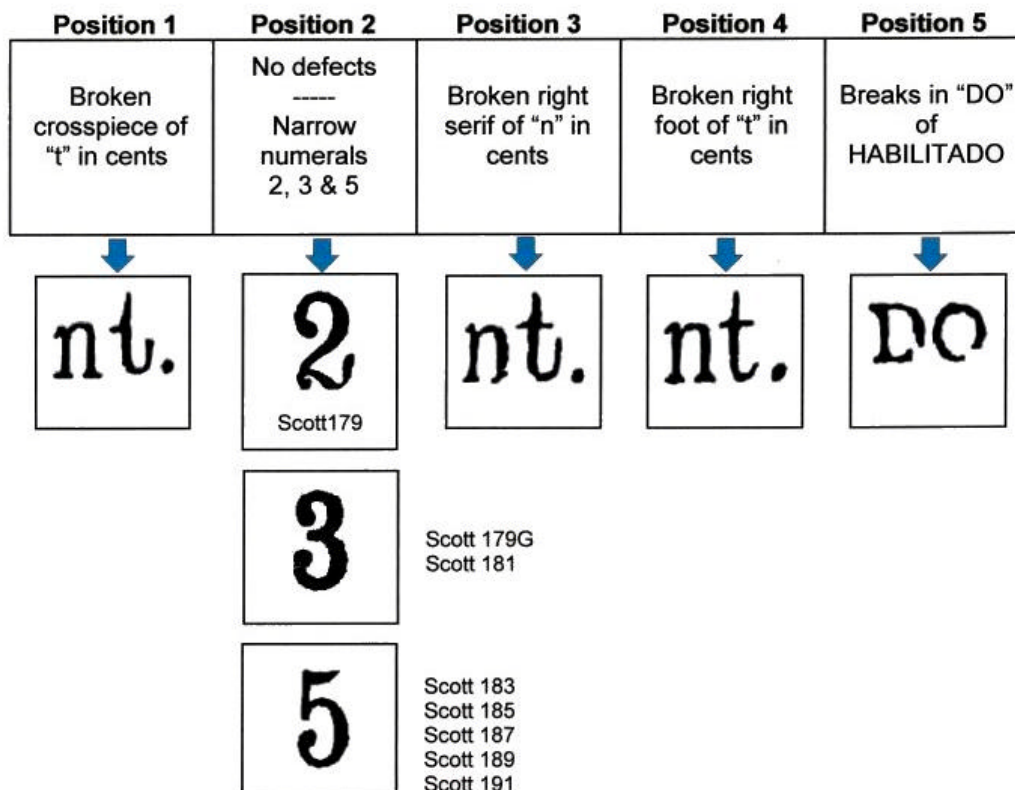
Debido a que estas impresiones fueron ejecutadas de manera rápida y cruda, todas las posiciones en cada fila de cinco sellos de las cinco tiradas de imprenta que se llevaron a cabo son identificables individualmente. Las siguientes tablas y diagramas identifican los sellos correspondientes a cada impresión y muestran las características de cada posición en la fila de cinco sellos que corresponden a cada uno de los tres moldes utilizados. Estas tablas y diagramas han sido tomadas del catálogo de la subasta de la gran "Colección de Cuba de las emisiones del Correo Insurrecto y de Puerto Príncipe de Peter A. Robertson" que fue subastada por la casa de subastas Christie's-Robson Lowe el 15 de diciembre de 1988. Una diferencia notable con ese catálogo es que se han intercambiado la tercera y cuarta impresión para que concuerden con su identificación en la literatura filatélica antecedente. Además, se han añadido las fechas de las tiradas de imprenta a las tablas correspondientes, se han añadido números de catálogo Scott y Edifil a los diagramas de los moldes y se han hecho otras correcciones editoriales menores para facilitar su uso.

**PUERTO PRÍNCIPE (now Camagüey) ISSUES OF 1898 - 1899**  
**First Printing - December 19, 1898**  
 Scott — Edifil

Position No.:	1	2	3	4	5
"1 cent" on 1 m (Scott 156) exists inverted surcharge	176 1	176 1	176 1	176 1	176 1
"2 cents" on 2 m (Scott 157) exists inverted surcharge	178 2	179 2A Thin Numerals	178 2	178 2	178 2
"3 cents" on 3 m (Scott 158) exists inverted surcharge	180 3	181 3A	180 3	180 3	180 3
"5 cents" on 5 m (Scott 160) exists inverted & double	188 4	189 4A	188 4	188 4	188 4

Characteristics: Printed in dull black ink; surcharge measures 17½ mm high.

**FIRST SETTING**  
 FIRST & SECOND PRINTINGS  
 17½ mm tall surcharge



**PUERTO PRÍNCIPE (now Camagüey) ISSUES OF 1898 - 1899**  
**Second Printing - December 24, 1898**  
 Scott — Edifil

Position No.:	1	2	3	4	5
	Thin Numerals				
"3 cents" on 2 m ( Scott 157)	179F no Edifil #	179G no Edifil #	179F no Edifil #	179F no Edifil #	179F no Edifil #
"5 cents" on 1 m (Scott 156) exists inverted surcharge	182 6	183 6A	182 6	182 6	182 6
"5 cents" on 2 m (Scott 157)	184 7	185 7A	184 7	184 7	184 7
"5 cents" on 3 m (Scott 158) exists inverted surcharge	186 8	187 8A	186 8	186 8	186 8
"5 cents" on 5 m (Scott 160) exists inverted and double	188* 9	189* 9A	188* 9	188* 9	188* 9
"5 cents" on ½ m (Scott P25) exists inverted and double	190 5	191 5A	190 5	190 5	190 5

Characteristics: Printed in shiny black ink. Surcharge measures 17½ mm high.

\* The 5¢ on 5m from the second printing can only be distinguished from its first printing counterpart by the shiny ink. It is the only one of the Puerto Principe issues produced in two different printings. The second is decidedly rarer than the first, although the Scott Catalog makes no price separation.

**PUERTO PRÍNCIPE (now Camagüey) ISSUES OF 1898 - 1899**  
**Third Printing - December 24, 1898**  
 Scott — Edifil

Position No.:	1	2	3	4	5
"1 cent" on 1 m ( Scott 156) exists inverted surcharge	177 10	177a 10Ahz Broken "1"	177 10	177 10	177 10
"3 cents" on 1 m (Scott 156) exists double surcharge	179B 11	179B 11	179B 11	179D 11A Thin Numerals	179B 11
"5 cents" on 5 m (Scott 160)	—	—	189C*	—	—
"5 cents" on ½ m (Scott P25)	192 12	193 12A Thin Numerals	192 12	192 12	192 12

Characteristics: Printed in shiny black ink. Surcharge measures 19½ mm high.

\* Only one fully authenticated copy is recorded of the 5¢ surcharge on 5m Orange Brown from the third printing (the tall surcharge versus the previous printings of this value).










## SECOND SETTING

### THIRD PRINTING

Same Type as First Setting

19½ mm tall surcharge

Position 1	Position 2	Position 3	Position 4	Position 5
Broken crosspiece of "t" in cents	No defects in surcharge letters; Broken "1" and narrow numeral 5	Broken right serif of "n" in cents	Broken right foot of "t" in cents; narrow "3"	Breaks in "DO" of HABILITADO
	 Scott 177a  Scott 193		  Scott 179D	

## PUERTO PRÍNCIPE (now Camagüey) ISSUES OF 1898 - 1899

Fourth Printing - December 27, 1898

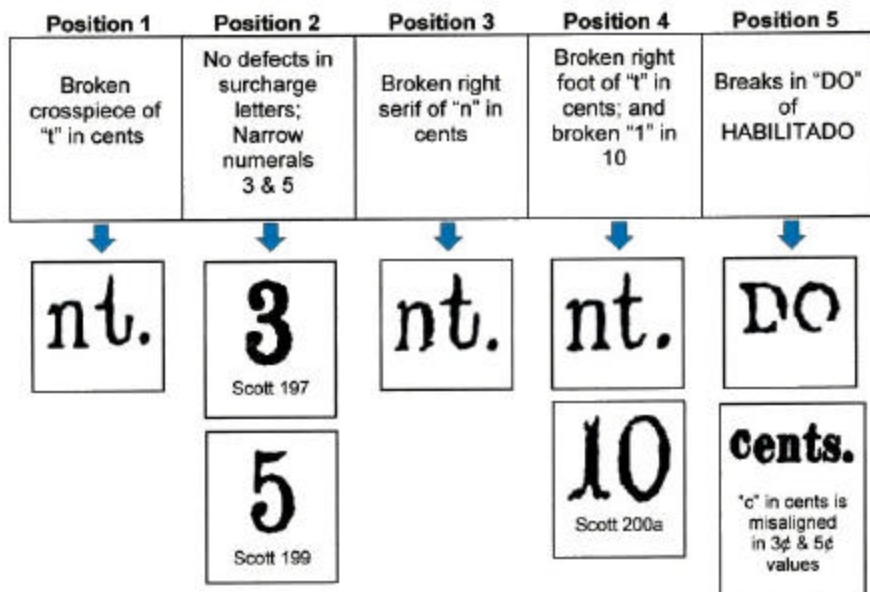
Scott — Edifil

Position No.:	1	2	3	4	5
"3 cents" on 1 c exists inverted surcharge	196 13	197 13A Thin Numerals	196 13	196 13	196 13
"5 cents" on 1 c exists inverted and double surcharge	198 14	199 14A Thin Numerals	198 14	198 14	198 14
"10 cents" on 1 c	200 15	200 15	200 15	200a* 15hp Broken "1"	200 15

Characteristics: Printed in red ink on 1¢ **Scott 161** issue of 1898. Surcharge measures 19½ mm high. The 10¢ surcharge was applied only in this printing.

\* Position No. 4 has the broken figure "1" which is listed only as a variety of the basic stamp.

**SECOND SETTING  
FOURTH PRINTING**  
Same Type as First Setting  
19½ mm tall surcharge






**PUERTO PRÍNCIPE (now Camagüey) ISSUES OF 1898 - 1899**  
Fifth Printing - January 11, 1899  
Scott — Edifil

Position No.:	1	2	3	4	5
			"eents"	Thin Numerals	
"3 cents" on 1 m ( Scott P26) exists inverted surcharge	201 16	201 16	201b 16he	202 16A	201 16
"3 cents" on 2 m (Scott P27) exists inverted surcharge	203 17	203 17	203a 17he	204 17A	203 17
"3 cents" on 3 m (Scott P28) exists inverted surcharge	205 18	205 18	205b 18he	206 18A	205 18
"5 cents" on 1 m (Scott P26)	211 19	211 19	211a 19he	212 19A	211 19
"5 cents" on 2 m (Scott P27)	213 20	213 20	213a 20he	214 20A	213 20
"5 cents" on 3 m (Scott P28)	215 21	215 21	215a 21he	216 21A	215 21
"5 cents" on 4 m (Scott P29) exists inverted surcharge	217 22	217 22	217a 22he	218 22A	217 22
"5 cents" on 8 m (Scott P30) exists inverted surcharge	219 22B	219 22B	219b 22Bhe	220 22C	219 22B

Characteristics: Printed on Scott P26 to P30 newspaper stamps of 1896 in shiny black ink. Surcharge measures 19½ mm high. A total of 500 of the 3¢ surcharge (nos. 201 - 206) stamps was made (100 impressions). A total of 300 of the 5¢ surcharge (nos. 211 - 220) stamps was made (60 impressions). It is not known exactly how many of each base value were surcharged. The third position has the "eents" instead of "cents" error.

**THIRD SETTING**  
**FIFTH PRINTING**  
 19½ mm tall surcharge

Position 1	Position 2	Position 3	Position 4	Position 5
Nicks in bottom of "e" and lower serif of "s" in cents	No defects in surcharge	"eents" error instead of cents	Narrow numerals "3" & "5"	Nick in "n" of cents
↓			↓	↓
		Scott 202 Scott 204 Scott 206		
		Scott 212 Scott 214 Scott 216 Scott 218 Scott 220	