

Report of a stolen used Cuba Edifil #1 postcard


by Ernesto Cuesta

In August of 2004 I won in an eBay auction the used Cuba Edifil #1 postcard that is illustrated in this article from a seller in England. Since it was a rare and important item, I asked the seller to send it via the British Royal Mail International Mail Signed For service which is the equivalent of registered mail. Unfortunately, the item was lost in transit, and a subsequent investigation by the British Royal Mail traced the last known routing record of the item to New York City. I contacted the American Philatelic Society's Stamp Theft Committee to report the presumed theft and was informed by the committee chairperson, Ephraim W. Day, Jr., that they had had other reports of thefts of mail in transit through New York City. I sent front and back images of the card to the APS Stamp Theft Committee and the missing card is now on record in their files as a stolen item. If you should happen to see the card on display at a philatelic exhibition, please report it to the exhibition authorities and tell them to get in contact with the APS Stamp Theft Committee at stamptheft@msn.com. If the item is offered to you for sale, please also report the fact to the same committee. Please be advised that if you were to buy the item, you would be buying stolen property subject to confiscation. I would also appreciate personally receiving any information that you may come across about the whereabouts of this item. You may contact me at ecuesta@philat.com.

The rarity of used 1878 postcards stems from the fact that these postcards were the first postcards issued in Cuba to send open messages and their use had not gained widespread public acceptance. Very few were actually used and the ones that have survived are great rarities. This particular postcard is especially important because it is the only known sample to have been used in 1878, the year it was issued. The card is hand dated on September 28, 1878, from the Sarrá farmaceutical company in La Habana and did not get cancelled at its origin. It is addressed to the Lanman & Kemp firm of New York City and received a "New York Foreign Mail 6" cancellation in front on top of the stamp and a duplex "New York Oct 3 Paid B All" on the back upon receipt at the post office in New York City. The message on the card acknowledges receipt of a telegram in response to one the Sarrá company had sent them. It also cancels a previous order replacing it with a new one. This card is a jewel of Cuban postal stationery and any information about its whereabouts would be tremendously appreciated. The hope is that it was really stolen and will eventually resurface and not that it was really lost forever to Cuban philately.



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 *Sore 25/78.*

Acabamos de recibir su telegrama, contestacion al nuestro. Anulen por el de la suelta y vengan los 500 pesos así que los reciban
Jarra's C
H. Ant. S. Gonzalez