

POSTAL CARDS OF SPANISH COLONIAL CUBA, PHILIPPINES AND PUERTO RICO

EDITOR

ROBERT LITTRELL

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

**ERNESTO CUESTA
OCTAVIO CABRERA**

SECTION AUTHORS:

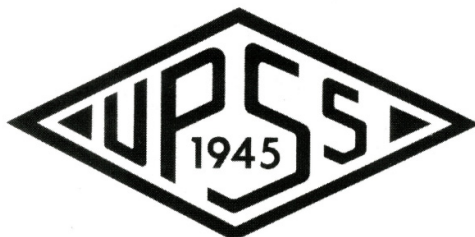
CUBA — ROBERT LITTRELL

PHILIPPINES — DONALD PETERSON

PUERTO RICO — BYRON MITCHELL

FIRST EDITION
MAY, 2010

Published by
UNITED POSTAL STATIONERY SOCIETY
P.O. Box 3982
Chester, VA 23831



Copyright 2010 by the United Postal Stationery Society

ISBN: 9780980011241

Library of Congress Control Number: 2009943907

SPECIAL NOTICE AND WARNING

Permission is hereby given to publishers of newspapers, magazines and periodicals, and to dealers and collectors, to use all material (except illustrations) contained in this, provided acknowledgment of the source of the material so used is given. Illustrations may be reproduced by special permission only.

No use of the UPSS catalog numbers, letters or symbols, employed herein, shall be made unless the words 'UPSS No.' or similar identifying reference shall be used in connection therewith.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION	1
CUBA	4
1878 - Cuba's First Postal Card	5
1879 - Cuba's Second Postal Card	9
1880 - 1881 - 1882: Cuba's Universal Postal Union Cards	14
1882 - Cuba's Third Interior Postal Card	23
1888 - Alfonso XII, deceased, Cards	31
1890 - A Baby King portrayed	33
1892 - Variations on the Baby King	36
1894 - More Variations on the Baby King	37
1896 Reprints - Two Repeats on Different Colored Paper	39
1898 - The Sun Sets on Spanish Cuba	41
Pre-Production Material and Specimens	48
Other Factors Concerning Collectability	50
Significant Postal Rate Changes	50
Appendix 1 - Cuban Price List for all Issues and Major Variations	52
Appendix 2 - Cross Reference from UPSS Numbering to Other Catalogs	53
PHILIPPINES	55
Introduction Regarding Postal Rates and Printing	55
1878 - First Philippine Postal Card	61
1879 - Surcharged Philippine Card	64
1880 - Philippine Universal Postal Union Card	66
1889 - Philippine Interior Postal Card	68
1889 - Philippine Message - Reply Card	70
1892 - 1896: King Alfonso XIII Postal Cards	72
1898 - The Final Spanish Philippine Cards	79
Appendix 1 - Philippine Price List for all Issues and Major Variations	85
Appendix 2 - Cross Reference from UPSS Numbering to Other Catalogs	87
PUERTO RICO	90
1878 - First Puerto Rican Card	90
1885 - Puerto Rican Universal Postal Union Card	92
1886 - Puerto Rican Universal Postal Union Card	95
1890 - Puerto Rican Universal Postal Union Card	97
1892 - Puerto Rican Card	98
1894 - Puerto Rican Cards	99
1896 - Puerto Rican Cards	101
1898 - The Final Spanish Puerto Rican Cards	105
Appendix 1 - Puerto Rican Price List for all Issues and Major Variations	116
Appendix 2 - Cross Reference from UPSS Numbering to Other Catalogs	117
FERNANDO POO	118
REFERENCES / BIBLIOGRAPHY	119

Publisher's Preface

The United Postal Stationery Society is an international organization of collectors of worldwide postal stationery. A major objective of the Society is to publish books and other reference materials of value and importance to the philatelic community. These publications represent significant contributions to philatelic knowledge and are devoted primarily, but not exclusively, to postal stationery.

This book represents one of the many publications supported by the Lewandowski Fund. The Fund is a result of a generous bequest of the United Postal Stationery Society from Arthur Lewandowski, a member of the Society.

Dan Undersander
UPSS Publication Manager

Publications of the United Postal Stationery Society currently in print include the following:

- The United States Postal Card Catalog
- Postal Cards of the World's Columbian Exposition
- United States Multiple Advertising and Discount Postal Cards
- Historical Catalog of U.S. Postal Card Essays and Proofs
- Catalog of the 19th Century Stamped Envelopes and Wrappers of the United States
- Catalog of the 20th Century Stamped Envelopes and Wrappers of the United States
- Catalog of United States Envelope Essays and Proofs
- Cutting Knives of the 19th and 20th Century Stamped Envelopes and Wrappers of the United States
- U.S. Specimens: Stamped Envelopes and Wrappers
- Thomas Leavitt, History and Postal Markings, 1875-1892
- Catalogue of Propaganda-Advertising Postal Cards of the U.S.S.R., 1927-1934
- The Postal Stationery of the Possessions and Administrative Areas of the United States of America, 3rd Ed., 2009

Three additional UPSS publications currently out of print but usually available through philatelic literature dealers that provide valuable collateral material:

- A Contemporary Account of the First United States Postal Card 1870 - 1875
- Plating of the First United States Postal Card
- The United States International Postal Cards of 1879-1897-1898, Volume 1 Plating

For additional information on these and other publications and activities of the Society write to:

UPSS Publications Office
P.O. Box 3982
Chester, VA 23831

or go to the UPSS website at: <http://www.upss.org/>

Editor's Notes:

This project got off the ground in Pittsburgh at the annual convention of the American Philatelic Society in August, 2009. Several people I talked to were in favor of doing a work on Spanish colonial period cards. Ronald Gonzáles mentioned to me that Byron Mitchell had published in the area of Puerto Rico. George Krieger, the Editor with whom I had worked on the *Postal Stationery of the Possessions of the U.S.A.*, Cuban Section, was supportive. He followed it up with an email to me saying he had confirmed that the UPSS would be interested in publishing a book on the postal cards of the Spanish period of Cuba, Philippines and Puerto Rico. Ernesto Cuesta then pointed me in the direction of Donald Peterson to work on the Philippines. The knowledgeable and professional team was assembled.

Donald Peterson lives in Washington, D.C. He retired from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2004. He is an international authority on Spanish Philippine philately topics. He has had many articles and three books published in this area. Don worked with the Philippine Consulate in Washington, DC, and with the Philippine Bureau of Posts, on a trip to Manila in 2002 to promote Philippine stamp collecting. In 2008, Don became the Overseas Coordinator of the International Philippine Philatelic Society, which led to re-organization of the Society, implementation of new efforts to promote Philippine stamp collecting, expanded the awards program, and issued a color technical journal. He was President of the Collectors Club of Washington and led the formation of the Washington Stamp Collectors Club in 2006, where he served as its first President.



Byron Mitchell was born and raised and continues to reside in Puerto Rico where he recently retired after managing an AM/FM Radio broadcasting concern for over thirty years. He started stamp collecting at the age of twelve and has been at it ever since. In the late seventies he decided to specialize only in Puerto Rico postal history with emphasis on the postal stationery that Spain issued for the island. He served as president of the Puerto Rico Philatelic Society in 2006-07 and has exhibited cards a few times in the States. He writes articles for his monthly bulletin. He tells me he likes discovering a card which has traveled to an unusual destination.



I am retired too. I refer to myself as a “recovering attorney”. I have come to the field of postal stationery more recently than my brethren on this project. Like Don, I am not Hispanic, but I love Cuba philately and have poured myself into its study for a number of years and now claim a degree of expertise. My most recent project for UPSS was co-authoring the *Postal Stationery of the Possessions of the U.S.A.*, Cuban Section. I manage a website which deals exclusively with the postal stationery of Cuba. I would like to thank **Octavio Cabrera** with whom I have collaborated on a couple of published articles on the U.P.U. cards of Cuba and who has provided valuable editing suggestions.

Thanks also to **Ernesto Cuesta**, Cuban collector extraordinaire, who has provided most of the new positions of Cuba UPSS 1 and 2 not identified by Laiz, translated and refined the definitions and characteristics of the plate positions from Edifil, encouraged me to plate all Cuban issues and then help me identify new plate positions on those issues, provided lots of scans from his extensive collection and assisted me in the editing with countless hours of effort. Finally, thanks go to Jim O'Donnell of the National Postal Museum, Jose L. Gonzales and Mark Tyx for their contributions to the cause.

This book cannot be the last word on the subject. Discoveries and research reveal new information and, alas, humans do err. Please feel free to contact me if you have new or different information. My email: robert.littrell@comcast.net

Robert Littrell, Editor

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The authors of this volume welcome you to what we consider an interesting pursuit: the study of postal stationery. In this case, postal cards produced in Spain for their colonies of Cuba, Philippines and Puerto Rico. The term “postal card” is purposefully employed to denote prepaid franking of cards purchased from postal authorities, as opposed to “postcard” which has no prepaid franking and which would apply to any commercially available outlet and most likely illustrated by pictures. Before we diverge into the separate colonies, some words are in order about things in common. Because all stamps and postal cards for Spain and her colonies were printed at the *Fábrica Nacional del Sello* and, after 1893, the *Fábrica Nacional de Moneda y Timbre* in Madrid, Spain, and because in most instances the same printing plates were used to print all the cards in a year by changing the denominations and print color, and were similarly reused for other colonies by replacing the colony’s name in the indicia, one often observes the same plate defects across colonies in any given year’s issues. To the extent possible, we have tried to minimize the duplication of efforts. Some of the common topics follow:

Postal Cards and the Universal Postal Union

It was in 1869 that Austria produced the first postal card in the world. Many other European countries followed that lead in the first years after that. The U.S. issued its penny post card in 1873 and Spain joined their company that year also.

Spain was an early proponent of uniform standards and participated in the Postal Convention of Paris in June 1863, an early precursor of the eventual General Postal Union. The G.P.U. was the result of the Treaty of Berne signed on 9 October 1874. Spain signed the treaty along with the United States and 19 other countries. This, likewise, was a forerunner of the series of multilateral conventions and came into force in the following year, when the union was formally established on 1 July 1875 to administer its operative regulations. On 1 June 1878, the Second Congress changed the name to "Universal Postal Union". It was this Congress in Paris which instigated the use of postal cards by Spain’s colonies. It provided uniform postal procedures for transmitting international mail among its member nations. It established rules for sending and receiving mail, as well as the postal rates. Indirectly, it also affected procedures and postal rates for international mail between non-member countries and for interior mail as well (Peterson and Lewis, 2000).

In Spain, the new treaty rates and procedures were promulgated on 1 July 1876 as a result of a royal order from Madrid dated 15 July 1875. Inclusion in the G.P.U. and subsequent changes to rates and procedures were not immediately applicable to the colonies. On 18 January 1876, the G.P.U. members called for a special conference in Berne, Switzerland to consider the admission of new applicants. At that conference, the Spanish delegate announced the intention of his government to request admission for the Spanish colonies. Although British India and most French colonies were admitted, the British refused to discuss the admission of any additional colonies. However, restrictions were relaxed and a number of colonies were allowed to join. Although the G.P.U. allowed each colony to join independently, in reality, it was the authorities in Spain that made this decision for her colonies. On 1 May 1877 all Spanish colonies including Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines joined the G.P.U.

It was in 1878 that the postal card was introduced in Cuba, Philippines and Puerto Rico. Its use was sparse, though, and used postal cards of the early years are exceedingly rare. The reasons for the lack of use were that people were loath to print their personal matters open to the public view and the fact that there was no initial difference between letter and postal card rates making it even less attractive.

In 1880 U.P.U. postal cards were printed in Spain for use in Cuba and the Philippines to take advantage of the new treaty. Puerto Rico was not furnished with them until 1885. The benefits provided by the treaty included:

- there should be a more or less uniform flat rate to mail a letter or postal card anywhere in the world;
- postal authorities should give equal treatment to foreign and domestic mail; and
- each country should retain all monies it collected for international postage.

On 21 March 1885 the Congress of Lisbon dealt with, among other things, paid reply postal cards. The U.P.U. countries agreed that the Convention of Paris of 1 June 1878 would be altered as follows:

- All the contracting countries were not bound to issue cards with paid reply halves, but they assume the obligation of returning the reply halves of cards received from other countries of the Union.
- Correspondence consisting of the reply halves of double postal cards, returned to the country of origin, were exempt from all charges for territorial or sea transit.
- The tariff for post cards was 10 centimes (2 cents in U.S. currency) for single cards or for each of the two halves of cards with reply paid.

In the Vienna Congress of 1891 it was determined that the sender could add his own name and address to the address side of the card relaxing previous restrictions. But it was not until 1 October 1907 when the U.P.U. Congress in Rome made it permissible to send cards with a communication on the address side to any country in the world at the postcard rate.

Card Stock, Color and Time

People purchasing postal cards these days can expect a certain uniformity in the card stock color, thickness, size and stiffness. Not so in the 19th century and, in particular, 19th century Spain. First of all, the card stock varied in all of these attributes. Catalogs sometimes attempt to classify the cards into “buff” or “cream” or “amber” or “yellow”. To some extent this was necessary because quite distinct cards can be and were produced on different colored paper. But add to that the element of time and today, over 100 years later, we are dealing with a different situation. Each of our countries is in the tropics. Tropicalization of cards is the result of heat and humidity. To that add sunlight, acidity and quality of the original cardstock used. All affect the way the cards appear today. Identically produced cards may appear drastically different today depending on their conditions of storage. Likewise, the color of the indicium also is affected by these same processes. Although such differences may be substantial, cards are not generally collected for these differences.

Printing Conditions

Lithography was not available to the printers at the Fábrica Nacional del Sello. Each card was individually typeset and engraved from bins of individual letters which were sorted by size, letter, and case. Twenty of these cards were then assembled in a pattern four cards across and five cards down. Because each card was individually typeset, variations are inevitable. Study of whole sheets that have survived have allowed us to state with certainty where a particular card was in the scheme of things. Whole sheets exist for 1878, 1879 (plate 1 of 2) and 1899 Fernando Poo which turned out to be the same as 1898 Cuba and Puerto Rico. (As we will see later, the 1892 - 1898 cards of Cuba and Puerto Rico were printed in sheets of 10 instead of 20).

There are double and triple impressions on a single card from printer's waste or trials that are useful for plating studies when the multiple impressions are inverted with respect to one another since such cards identify the relative position of two cards on the plate. If the paper was turned around by 180 degrees and placed under the same press (as would happen with an inverted printing), then Position 20 would be the inverted printing on Position 1. Position 19 would be the inverted printing on Position 2. This would continue all the way down to Position 11 being the inverted printing on Position 10. Thus one can see why a number of inverted cards could be used to help reconstruct original plating positions.

Position 1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20

Scheme for printing 20 cards on a single sheet

As earlier stated, the printers in Madrid saved time by merely substituting the indicia (with a different colony's name) and ran the next batch. This is why there is so much similarity between a number of the issues of the three colonies. Similarly, they substituted different indicia for the same country and changed the color of the ink used to change from one denomination to the next. Later on when they produced double cards they took it one step further by inverting every other row of cards to print the tête-bêche double cards. It was after printing so many cards that the quality deteriorated to the extent that a new plate was needed and the process of substitution started all over again.

Condition and Prices

Prices for mint and used cards are listed for all issues and major variations of those issues at the end of each colony's section. A more complete listing of variations can be found with the presentation of each issue in the tables with the yellow background.

It is important for the collector to keep two very important considerations in mind when estimating the value of any of the postal stationery listed and priced in this catalog:

1. **CONDITION.** Mint or unused prices are for fresh, clean, not creased and all corners perfect condition. Used copies are priced not only for showing postal service with a clear legible strike, but bearing full postal markings and properly franked. Items that are torn, soiled, creased or "dog-earned" are worth only a fraction of the listed prices except those unique items that exist only in these conditions or where the known number is so small as to make the above rigid standard on condition inapplicable.

2. **PRICES.** Prices are normally based on current market prices, with a small markup to cover minor fluctuations in dealers' prices. On items never before catalogued, prices are weighted average valuations, being the opinion of the experts in the field, based on the latest and best information concerning known quantities, and as such, should not be considered as a "fixed" price but rather as a guideline. Used prices are for the most common cancellation. Small towns, instructional markings, added stamps for added fees (such as for registration) usually command a premium to the price listed.

Special Acknowledgment

Ángel Laiz Castro was and remains the preeminent authority on the postal cards of Spain and her colonies. His detailed and well illustrated publications, which include the Spanish Philippines, Cuba and Puerto Rico, are a source of much of the information contained in this book and are listed in the References at the back of this volume.

POSTAL CARDS ISSUED BY SPAIN FOR USE IN CUBA

by Robert Littrell, with Octavio Cabrera on the U.P.U. cards

Recently in the mail I received three used postal cards from Cuba during its colonial period. Registered items from Spain. I was thrilled. That thrill is a continuation of many years of collecting stamps. I still have the album I started when I was in junior high school. I can tell that because the date of the last illustrated stamps in the album was 1959. I continued after that faithfully for a few years, but then got busy earning a living. That doesn't mean that I did not regularly tear off the mint plate block of four every time I went to the post office for the years after that.

I went to Cuba in 1998. Though the trip had absolutely nothing to do with stamp collecting, I found myself on my return collecting some baby-head (Alfonso XIII) stamps at first, then almost everything from 1855 to 1958 after that. Postal stationery wasn't far behind.

Upon my retirement five years ago, things got into full swing. Among the things I collect are the different plate positions of the postal cards of all Spanish issues. That collection is reflected in what I present to you in this section. It is also what is reflected on the International Cuban Philatelic Society website (<http://www.philat.com/ICPS/MemberPages/Littrell/PC/Frameset.html>) Not only do I collect just each card, I endeavor to collect all twenty (or ten, as the case may be) of the variations in each card.

There is a wide variety of collecting interests. Some collect plate varieties as I do. Some collect different franking, or destinations, or time periods, or specimens, or advertising cards. It is my hope to inspire you, whatever collecting you do. Better yet for you to start out in new directions. I hope that you find collecting postal stationery as fascinating and thrilling as I do.



Cuba's first postal card - 1878

A series of postal cards was issued for use in Cuba from 1878 to 1898. The issues will be discussed and illustrated in as much detail as possible:

1. 1878 Interior (meaning within Cuba or Spanish empire)
2. 1879 Interior
3. 1880 - 1881 - 1882 Universal Postal Union single and double (paid reply) cards
4. 1882 Interior
5. 1888
6. 1890
7. 1892 (and 1896 reprint of the 2 centavos card)
8. 1894 (and 1896 reprint of the 4 centavos card)
9. 1898 single cards and double (paid reply) cards