

Aug 1877

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The Surcharged Stamps of Puerto Principe.

For some time we have been considering the publication of a list of these interesting stamps, together with a memorandum of the varieties that have been discovered, but we preferred to delay such publication until a sufficient number of specimens had been seen to insure practical accuracy and completeness. While a few varieties may still be discovered which have not as yet seen the light of day, the list which we publish herewith embraces all that have, up to this moment, come under the notice of the collectors and dealers who have made somewhat of a specialty of these issues.

Early in December of 1898 it became apparent that the supply of stamps in the post office at Puerto Principe would not be sufficient to meet the postal needs of the city and the surrounding districts until the occupation of the province by troops of the United States. There was on hand a fair stock of the milesimas stamps of the 1898 issue of Cuba and also a smaller lot of the milesimas and the 1 centavo stamp of 1896. The shortage consisted of stamps of the values of 1, 2, 3 and 5c and, in order to supply postal needs, the Mayor of the town decided to resort to surcharging in order to supply the deficiency. A trial setting was made of a strip of five stamps arranged as follows :

3	3	2	1	5
cent	cent	cent	cent	cent

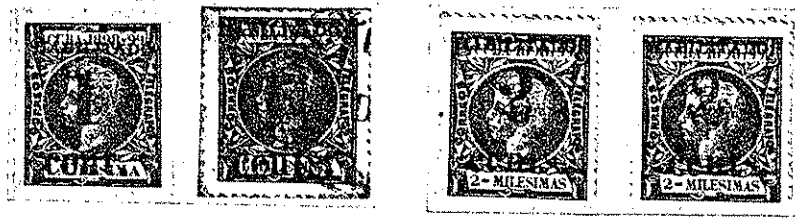
As we are informed, only two impressions were made from this setting and submitted to the authorities who had ordered the surcharge. The first regular issue appeared on December 19, and consisted of the surcharges 1, 2, 3 and 5c on the 1, 2, 3 and 5 milesimas stamps of 1898.

The quantities printed were as follows :

1c	3,000
2c	3,900
3c	3,000
5c	1,000

We have information of only one printing on the orange brown stamps of 1898, but there must have been two settings as the 1c appears with the word spelled "cent" as well as "cents" and another peculiarity lies in the fact that all numerals "1" of the stamps surcharged "1 cent" are perfect, whereas in the setting of the surcharge "1 cents" the second stamp has a broken figure 1. Of the numerals 2, 3 and 5 only four were found in stock of the type determined upon, and, in order to supply the fifth stamp required for printing in strips of five, a different numeral was used, in each case on the second stamp from the left, so that we have two varieties each of the 2, 3 and 5c on the milesimas stamps. All later printings were set up in a similar way so that of all other issues there were four times as many stamps of the regular type as of the type with the smaller numeral. Although no official notice was published of the existence of such varieties, we have seen specimens of the 3c on 1 milesima orange brown as well as of the 5c on 1, 2 and 3 milesimas orange brown. The type of the 5c surcharges is the same as that employed.

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July 1899



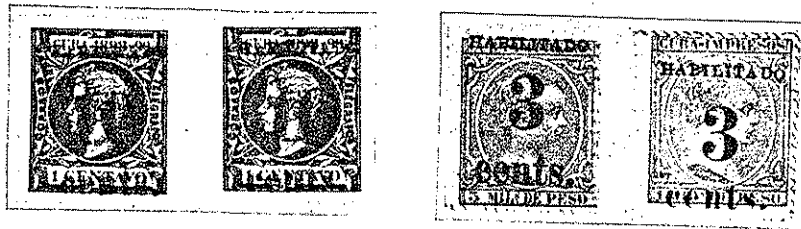
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in the issue of December 19, whereas that of the 3c on 1 milésima orange brown corresponds exactly with the setting employed on December 27 in printing the third issue. We are, therefore, unable to exactly classify the chronological order of these errors, but for the sake of convenience we class the 5c stamp with the first issue and the 3c stamp with the third issue already referred to.

The second printing took place on December 24 and consisted of 800 stamps of $\frac{1}{2}$ milésima green, surcharged "5 cents." Of this surcharge two varieties are known, the first corresponding to the surcharge of December 19 and the second to that of December 27. Judging from the numbers of specimens received we should say that the surcharge with wide space is about three times as rare as the surcharge with the narrow space, so that the quantity printed of each variety may be assumed to be about 600 of the narrow surcharge and 200 of the wide.

The third printing, or the third issue, was made on December 27 and this time the 1c black violet stamp of 1896 was employed, and the new values created were the 3, 5 and 10c. The 3c now appears in the wide surcharge and the 5c in the same variety, so that we must assume that the second setting was of this type and that a change was made while the 800 stamps of the issue of December 24 were being created. The 10c stamps are also set in strips of five, the fourth stamp from the left showing the broken figure 1 which appears in the 1c stamps of the first issue.

The quantities printed were as follows :

3c	3,000
5c	3,000
10c	1,000

The fourth and last printing took place on January 12 and consisted of only a small lot of 3c and 5c stamps, in order to tide over postal needs until the arrival of the regular supply on the advent of the American authorities. This time the 1, 2, 3, 4 and 8 milésimas green stamps of 1896 were drawn upon, 500 being surcharged 3c and 300 5c. Up to the present we have not seen a single specimen of the 3c on 4 mil. or 3c on 8 mil., and although it is claimed by some that these values were thus surcharged we are inclined to doubt it and shall omit the varieties from the list until specimens have really turned up in the hands of collectors. We have no record of the numbers surcharged on each one of the five values, but as there were only 500 of the 3c and 300 of the 5c, the latter appearing on five different values, it is unnecessary to state that all of these varieties are of a high degree of rarity. A new setting was employed for this surcharge, as all values have been seen with the error "cents," for "cents," this variety appearing on the fourth stamp from the left.

These stamps were used in Puerto Principe, Minas and Nuevitas. Four different styles of hand stamps were used in the town of Puerto Principe,—the regular cancellation mark of the post office, the oval military station cancellation, and two different varieties of the round military station cancellation. The Minas cancellation resembles the normal type of Puerto Principe with the words "Min. de Principe." We have not as yet seen specimens of the Nuevitas cancellation and cannot therefore give a description of it.

As might be expected in issues of this character, a number of the surcharges are to be found inverted and in the list which we publish below we give only such as have actually come under our notice. No doubt others must have existed on account of the manner in which the stamps were printed.

For instance, in the 3c on 1c blue green the error "eents" is known to exist and inverted surcharges of the normal type may be found in collections. It is, therefore, certain that the error "eents" existed with inverted surcharge, but we refrain from chronicling it and many other similar varieties, as there may have been only one or two specimens of a kind which perhaps have been destroyed after paying postage; hence, the addition of these varieties would simply cause collectors to search for them without any hope of success.

We present herewith a half-tone plate of the different varieties of surcharge, as well as a list of the stamps known to collectors, which will serve as a reference list for those who are desirous of completing their collections of these highly interesting stamps.

December 19th, 1898.

Black Surcharge.

1c on 1m orange brown, surcharge a
 1c on 1m orange brown " b
 a. Broken figure 1
 b. Inverted surcharge
 2c on 2m orange brown, surcharge c
 a. Inverted surcharge
 2c on 2m orange brown, surcharge d
 a. Inverted surcharge
 3c on 3m orange brown, surcharge e
 a. Inverted surcharge
 3c on 3m orange brown, surcharge f
 a. Inverted surcharge
 5c on 1m orange brown, surcharge g
 5c on 1m " " " h
 5c on 2m " " " g
 5c on 2m " " " h
 5c on 3m " " " g
 5c on 3m " " " h
 5c on 5m " " " g
 a. Inverted surcharge
 5c on 5m orange brown, surcharge h
 a. Inverted surcharge

December 24th, 1898.

Black Surcharge.

5c on ½m blue green, surcharge g
 a. Inverted surcharge
 5c on ½m blue green, surcharge h
 a. Inverted surcharge
 5c on ½m blue green, surcharge i
 5c on ½m " " " j

December 27th, 1898.

Black Surcharge.

3c on 1m orange brown, surcharge k
 3c on 1m " " " l

Red Surcharge.

- 3c on 1c black violet, surcharge k
 - a. Inverted surcharge
- 3c on 1c black violet, surcharge l
 - a. Inverted surcharge
- 5c on 1c black violet, surcharge i
 - a. Inverted surcharge
 - b. Vertical surcharge
 - c. Double surcharge
- 5c on 1c black violet, surcharge j
 - a. Inverted surcharge
- 10c on 1c black violet, surcharge m
 - a. Broken figure 1

January 12th, 1899.

Black Surcharge.

- 3c on 1c blue green, surcharge k
 - a. Inverted surcharge
 - b. EENTS for CENTS
- 3c on 1m blue green, surcharge l
 - a. Inverted surcharge
- 3c on 2m blue green, surcharge k
 - a. EENTS
- 3c on 2m blue green, surcharge l
- 3c on 3m " " " k
 - a. Inverted surcharge
 - b. EENTS
- 3c on 3m blue green, surcharge l
 - a. Inverted surcharge
- 5c on 1m blue green, surcharge i
 - a. EENTS
- 5c on 1m blue green, surcharge j
- 5c on 2m " " " i
 - a. EENTS
- 5c on 2m blue green, surcharge j
- 5c on 3m blue green " i
 - a. EENTS
- 5c on 3m blue green, surcharge j
- 5c on 4m blue green " i
 - a. EENTS
- 5c on 4m blue green, surcharge j
- 5c on 8m " " " i
 - a. Inverted surcharge
 - b. EENTS
 - c. EENTS and inverted
- 5c on 8m blue green, surcharge j
 - a. Inverted surcharge