

The Cuban Philatelist

Vol. VI No. 16

July-August, 1994



Registered cover from Italy to
Habana, via New York.
January 14, 1924

The officially sealed cover suffered large
tears throughout its surface during transit
arriving in this condition in Havana.

Cubierta certificada enviada de Italia
a La Habana, vía Nueva York
14 de enero de 1924

Fue oficialmente sellada porque sufrió
rasgaduras en la travesía y llegó en esas
condiciones a La Habana.

Sellado Oficial

OFFICIAL SEALING

Por Silvia García-Frutos

Ignacio Prats

Alfredo Valdés

Los sellos para el cierre oficial no se pueden catalogar como sellos postales, ya que no se paga para que realicen el servicio postal de transportar y entregar correspondencia. Tampoco se pueden clasificar como tasa por cobrar, pues no ha habido deficiencia por parte del remitente.

En muchas oportunidades los empleados de correos se han visto obligado a forzar la correspondencia. En algunas ocasiones para buscar la dirección del remitente si no encontraban al destinatario. En otras ocasiones podían abrir una carta por error. Pero en la mayoría de los casos se trataba de correspondencia que llegaba rasgada, rota o en malas condiciones.

El reparar este tipo de eventualidad por una persona autorizada fue utilizado en Estados Unidos, Canadá y, por supuesto, en Cuba que, desde principios de siglo, le siguió los pasos a los métodos implantados en Estados Unidos como adelantos para lograr un mejor servicio de correos. Quizás por esta razón es que algunos catálogos como Ivert Tellier, Gálvez, Guerra, Unificado y, últimamente, Jones & Roy han incluido el sellado oficial, considerando que está de alguna forma relacionado con la filatelia.

Estos catálogos no siempre han coincidido en como clasificar, ordenar y, mucho menos, el diseño de estos «sellos». Esto último debido a que su descripción siempre resulta monótona por la similitud de los mismos.

En esta oportunidad hemos hecho un estudio más detallado de estos «sellos» ya que cada uno presenta características propias. Hemos procurado señalarlas y describirlas de la forma más simple para su fácil identificación. No debemos

The stamps for the official closing of mail can not be classified as postal stamps, since there is no payment for the postal service of transporting and delivering mail. Neither they can be classified as postage due stamps since there has not been postage deficiency by the sender.

In many cases post office employees have to open correspondence. In some occasions in order to search for the address of the sender when they have not been able to find the addressee. In other occasions a letter could have been opened in error. But in most cases the letter arrived ripped, torn or otherwise in poor conditions.

Correcting this type of problem by an authorized post office employee was done in the United States, Canada and, of course, in Cuba. Since the beginning of this century, Cuba followed the methods used in the United States in order to achieve a better mail service. Maybe this is the reason why some catalogs like Ivert Tellier, Gálvez, Guerra, Unificado and, lately, Jones & Roy have included official sealings, considering that some way they are related to Philately.

These catalogs do not have always agreed in how to classify and list and the design of these "stamps". Basically due to the fact that these "stamps" are very similar and describing them is always monotonous.

At this time, we have made a more detailed study of these "stamps" since each one of them has its own characteristics. We have tried to indicate and describe them in a simpler way to facilitate their identification. We should not end this para-

OFFICIAL SEALING

terminar este párrafo sin añadir que debido a que este servicio era gratuito, los papeles utilizados para la impresión de estos «sellos» fueron de baja calidad y sin marca de aguas. Se pudiera decir que se hacían con cualquier papel sobrante que se le pudiera echar mano.

También debemos anotar que el acto de sellar oficialmente la correspondencia dañada, o abierta por alguna otra razón, no tiene nada que ver con las cartas abiertas para su censura. Estas últimas se sellaban con una cinta especial que tenía el número del censor a cargo. Un ejemplo de este procedimiento lo presentamos más adelante.

(También colaboraron en este artículo Ernesto Cuesta y José Ramírez)

graph without adding, due to the fact this service was free, the paper used for the impression of these "stamps" was of low quality and without any watermark. We could say they were printed on any available paper.

We should also indicate that the act of officially sealing damaged, or for any another reason, opened correspondence have nothing to do with letters opened for censorship purposes. The latter were sealed with a special tape that had the in charge censor identification number. An example of this procedure is shown below.

(Ernesto Cuesta and José Ramirez also contributed to this article.)



No. 1

1902

Color: Light blue
Perf.: 11½
Star: Canted
Rays: 3

Coat of Arms:
Oval key let
Thin and tall
palm tree
Wide white strips



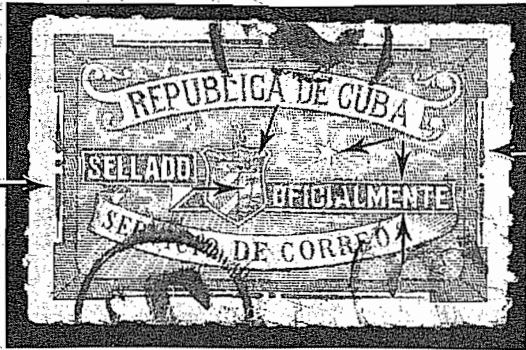
No. 2

1910

Color: Light blue
Perf.: Roulette 7
Star: Canted
Rays: 3
"OFICIALMENTE"
smaller than No. 1

Coat of Arms:
Different shape
Oval key let with
period inside
Small palm leaves
Narrow white strips

SELLADO OFICIAL



No. 3

1912

Color: Blue gray
 Perf.: Roulette 7
 Star: Canted
 Rays: 3
 "OFICIALMENTE" smaller
 than Nos. 1 and 2

Coat of Arms:
 Different shape
 Oval key let
 bigger than No. 2
 Shorter palm tree
 Background is different

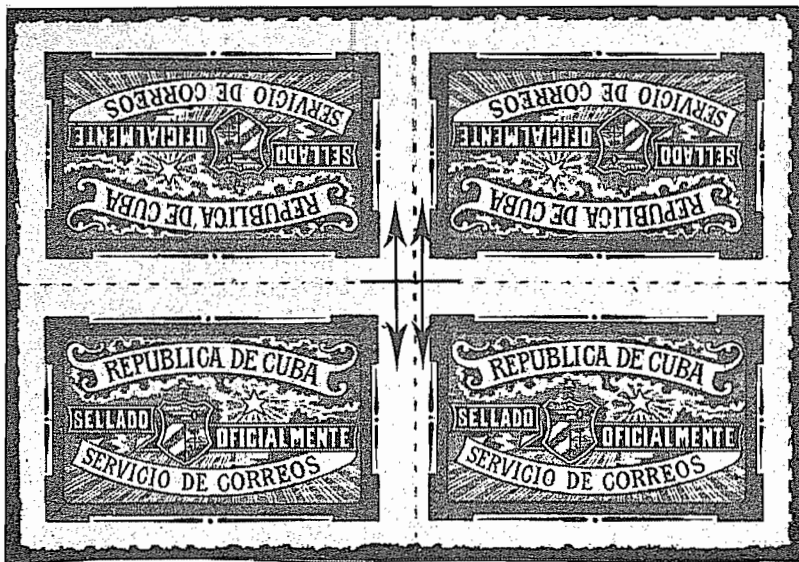


No. 4

1915

Color: Dark blue
 Perf.: Roulette 7
 Star: Trough plumb
 and bigger
 Rays: 6

Coat of Arms:
 Oval and bigger key let
 Tall and thin palm tree
 Background mountains
 are smaller
 Wide white strips



No. 4a

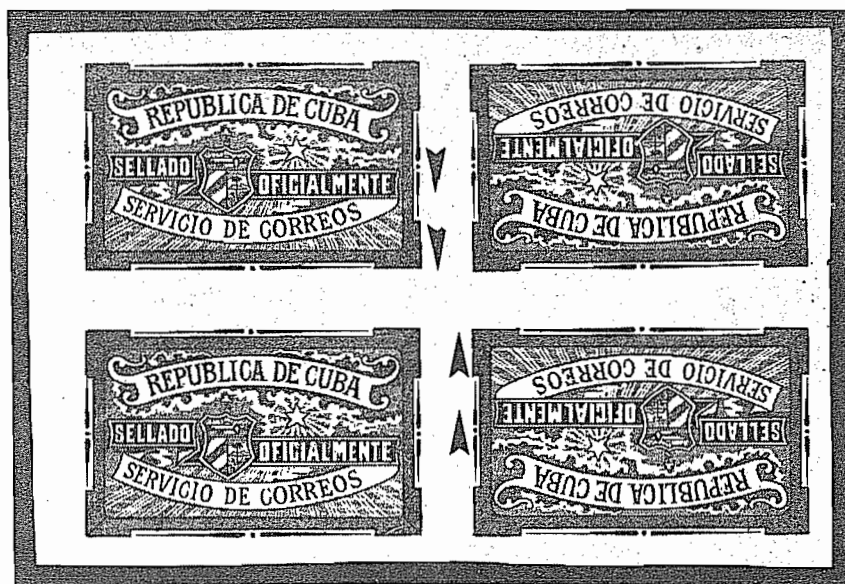
1915

Color: Dark blue
 Variety: Roulette 7
 Tete-beche

OFFICIAL SEALING

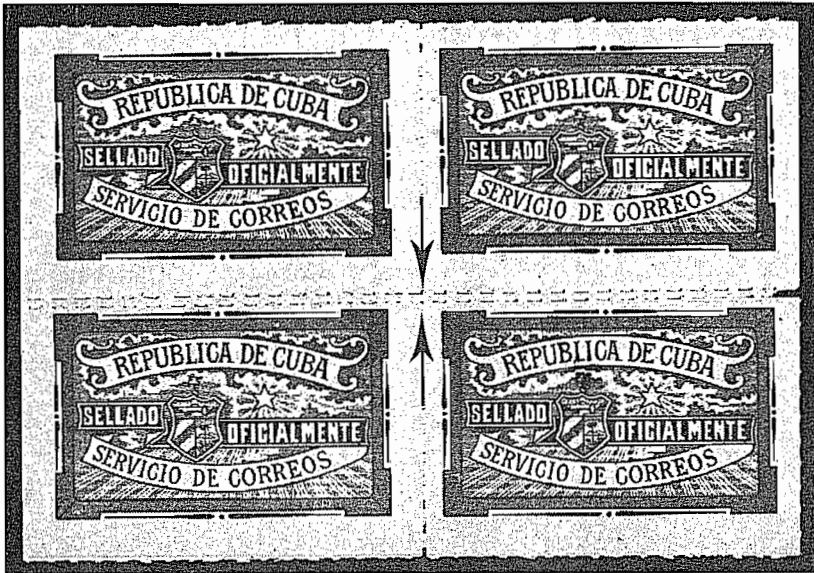


No. 4b 1915
 Color: Dark blue
 Variety: Imperforate



No. 4c 1915
 Color: Dark blue
 Variety: Imperforate
 Tete-beche
 Medium weigh
 paper

SELLADO OFICIAL



No. 4d

1915

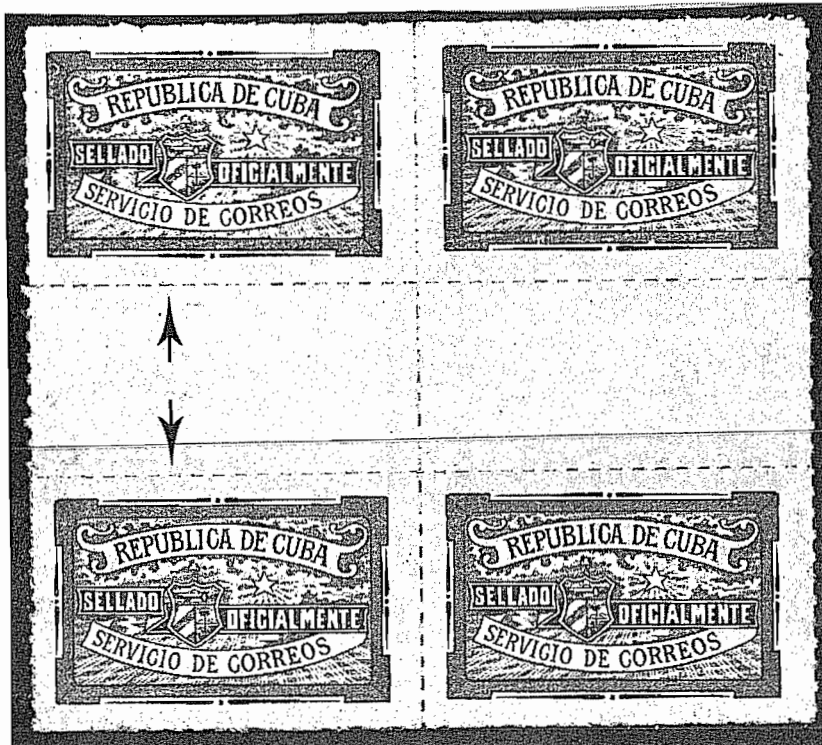
Color:

Dark blue

Variety:

Horizontal

Double perforation



No. 4e

1915

Second retouch

Color: Blue

Gutter in between

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No. 4f

1915

Second printing

Color: Blue



No. 5

1915

Color: Gray blue

Perf.: Roulette 7

Star: Trough plumb,
two smaller
lower points

Rays: 4

Coat of Arms:

Thick and tall palm trees

Two clear background
mountains

Large oval key let

Fine impression



No. 5a

1915

Color: Light blue

Variety: Transfer on reverse

SELLADO OFICIAL



No. 5b 1915

Color: Light blue
Variety: Perforation 12½



No. 5c

Color: Light blue
Variety: Imperforate



No. 5d 1915

Perf.: Roulette 7
Variety: Color Greenish blue

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No. 6

1921

Color: Gray blue
Perf.: Roulette 7
Fine impression

No. 6a

1921

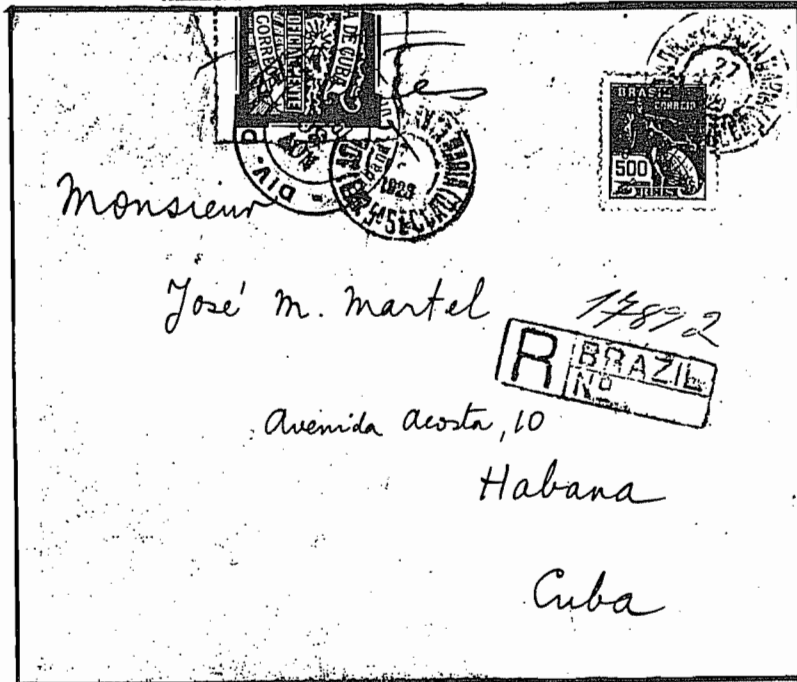
Color: Gray blue
Perf.: Roulette 7
Blurry impression



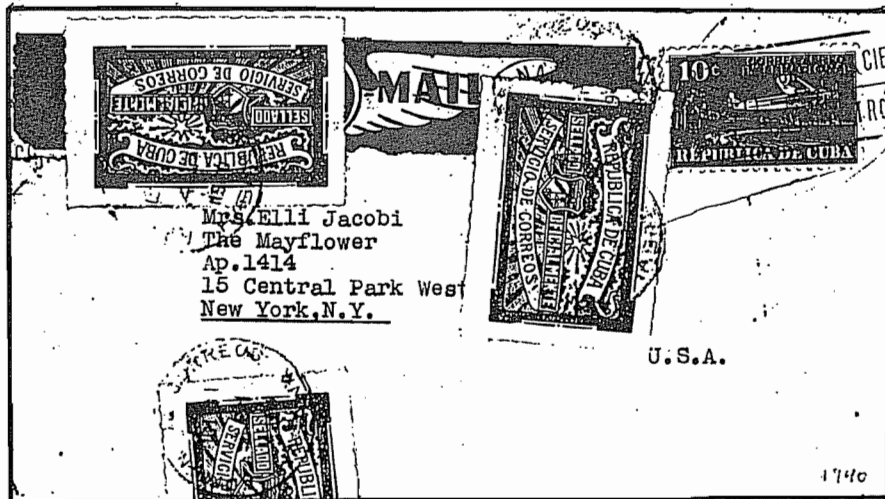
* Lower left and right ornaments under "REPUBLICA DE CUBA" are of different shape on almost all issues.

SELLADO OFICIAL

No. 4
On a cover from Brazil to Habana
November 27, 1923

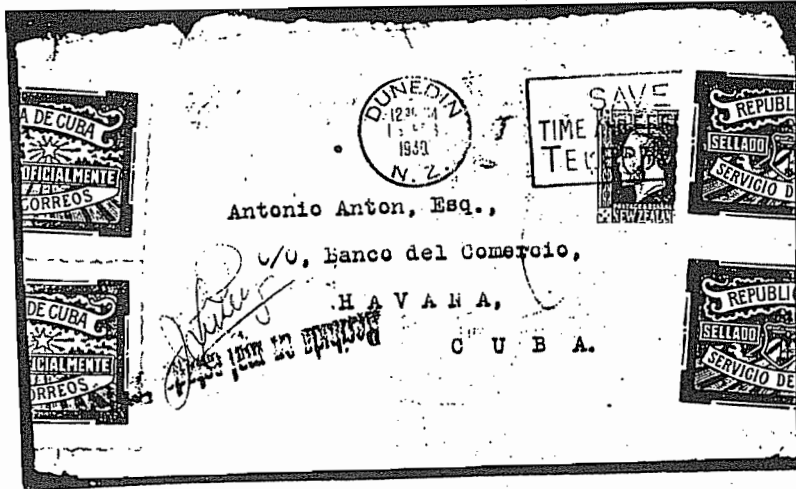


No. 5
On a cover from Habana to New York
1932

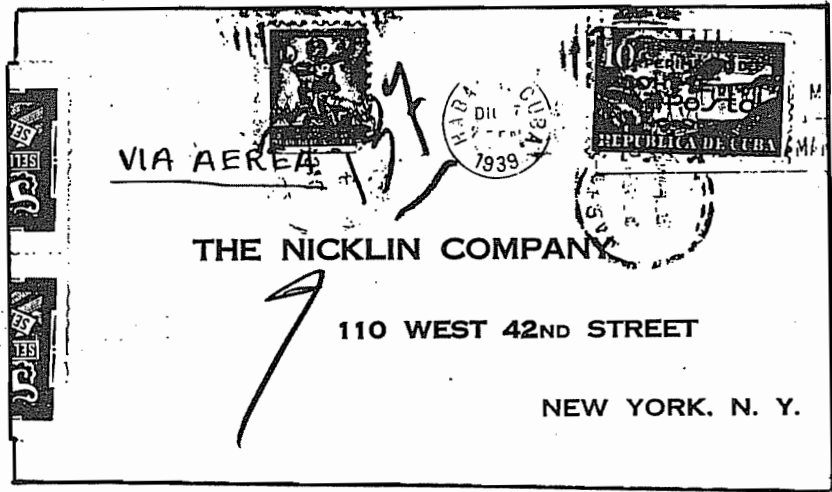


OFFICIAL SEALING

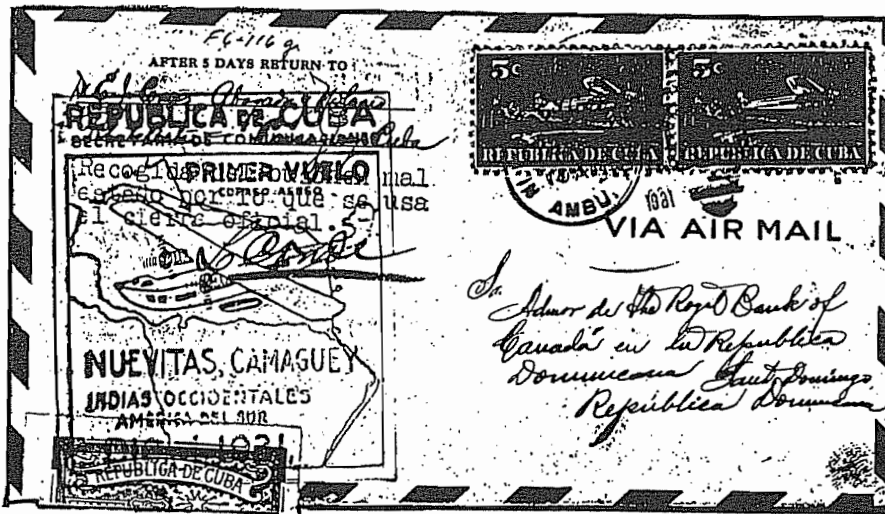
No. 6
 On a cover from Italy to Habana
 February 13, 1930



No. 6
 Habana - New York
 December 17, 1939

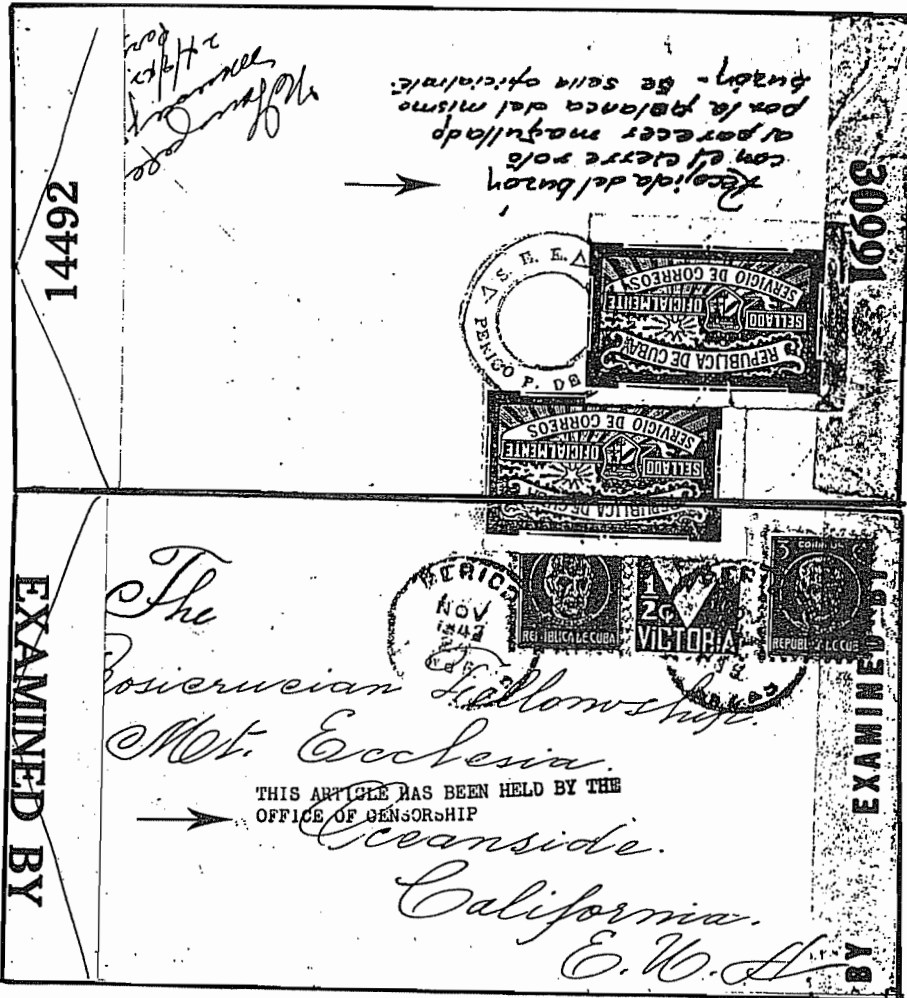


Not even the "Cohete Postal" or a First Flight Cover could avoid being damaged



No. 6
 First Flight Cover
 December 4, 1931

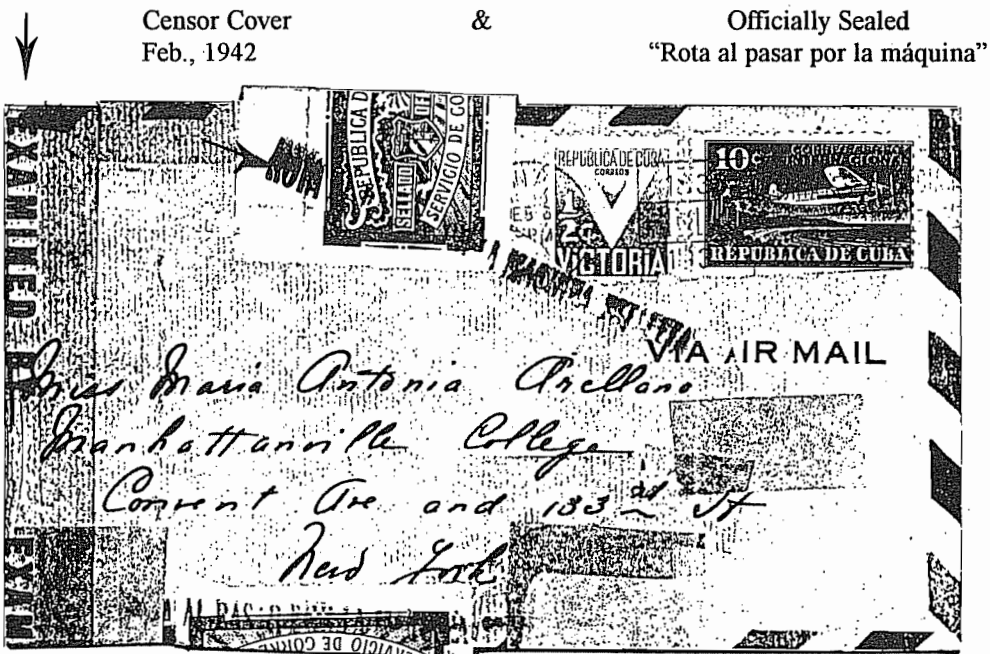
SELLADO OFICIAL



(1) CENSOR COVER

November 24, 1943
From Perico, Matanzas
To California, USA

(2) Officially sealed
because the top flap was
damaged



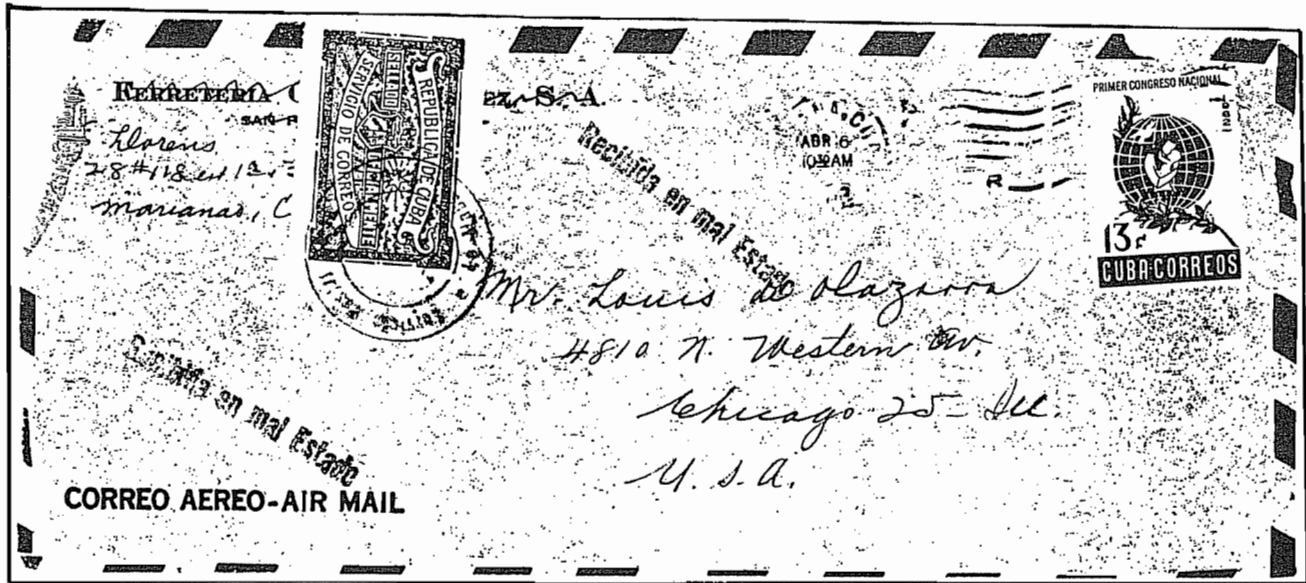
Censor Cover
Feb., 1942

&

Officially Sealed
"Rota al pasar por la máquina"

OFFICIAL SEALING

No. 6a
 Blurry Impression
 Large cover from Habana to Chicago
 April, 1963



USA Officially Sealed
 used in Cuba in 1904
 See the rubber hand stamp
 (Color: Violet)

Last Official Seal, as far as we know,
 are using now.
 Colors: Red, white and blue
 We have not seen this stamp on cover

Enlarged photo

