

# OFFICIAL SERVICE STAMPS USED IN CUBA (1858 – 1868)

**PURPOSE:** This Traditional 1-frame exhibit will show the production and use of official service postage stamps from 1858 to 1866. These four stamps were released in Spain to comply with the Royal Order of June 22, 1855 and used three years later in Cuba to prepay all official correspondence. The stamps had denominations of ½ ounce, 1 ounce, 4 ounces, and 1 pound which represent the maximum weight allowed for the letter to circulate in the regular mail.

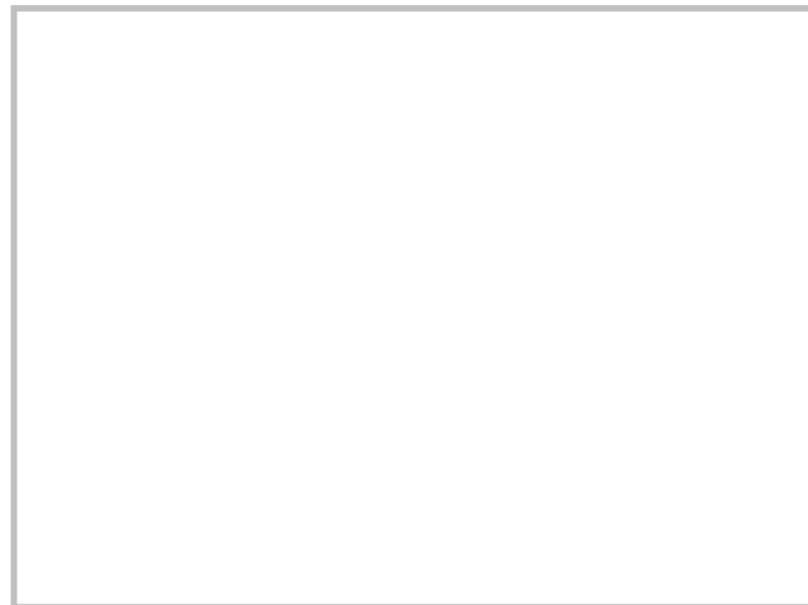
**TREATMENT:** The treatment is divided into two chapters. The first is dedicated to the stamps themselves, including pre-production and varieties. The second describes their postal use, separated by destination: Domestic mail (within Cuba); and National mail (from Cuba to Spain and its Colonies).

**IMPORTANCE:** Official correspondence in Cuba, as in Spain, was sent via regular mail through the use of free franking and was distributed throughout the whole national territory. However, by the early 1850's, the Spanish Government became aware that this service was also being used for private letters. This situation created a significant increase in the volume of correspondence, thereby affecting operations of the regular mail. Cuba, as part of the Ultramar Province was also contributing to the problem. As such, the Royal Order of March 16, 1854 was issued establishing the mandatory use of special postage stamps for official correspondence. On June 22, 1855 the Governor Captain General of the Island of Cuba was informed of this decree, though in practice this policy was not implemented in Cuba until January 1, 1858. Due to a shortage of these special stamps, in 1860 all four values of stamp were reprinted in Havana even though there was no official authorization to do so. These reprints were commissioned by the colonial government in an effort to comply with the 1854 decree, even after the official issue ran out.

On August 1, 1866 by the Royal Decree of July 4, 1866, the use of stamps on official service mail was abolished and instead the "Parrilla" canceller postmark was used.

**RARITY/CONDITION:** The exhibit includes pre-production stamps such as color essays and paper varieties. Also present are reprints made in Havana using a lithographic technique due to limited stamp availability. These stamps and their use are extremely rare. Numerous exceptional covers are also shown in this exhibit such as the only known official letter transported by railroad, the only known cover bearing a Havana's 4 ounces stamp, covers addressed to and from Spain, the only known cover bearing all four values, and many multiples on cover. A study of Havana's stamps is also included.

Earliest known use of these stamps



Matanzas to Cardenas

January 7, 1858

\*Rarity statements are based on the community of Cuban collectors' collective knowledge.  
 \*Generally, Cuban stamps of this period are not well centered.  
 \*Postmark reproductions are scaled from the original size.

Scan for more detail



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

The reference material used in this exhibit include "A Handbook of the Stamps of Cuba" by William McP. Jones and Rudy J. Roy Jr., published by Cuban Philatelic Society of America, "Legislacion Ultramarina 1865" by D. Joaquin Rodriguez San Pedro, "Catalogo Especializado Sellos de Cuba" published by EDIFIL, "Reseña Historico-Descriptiva de los Sello de Correos de Espana 1881" by Antonio Fernandez Duro.

## PLAN OF THE EXHIBIT

### I. THE STAMPS.

- I a - Pre-Production & Varieties.
- I b - Spanish Stamps.
- I c - Havana's Re-Print.

### II. POSTAL USE.

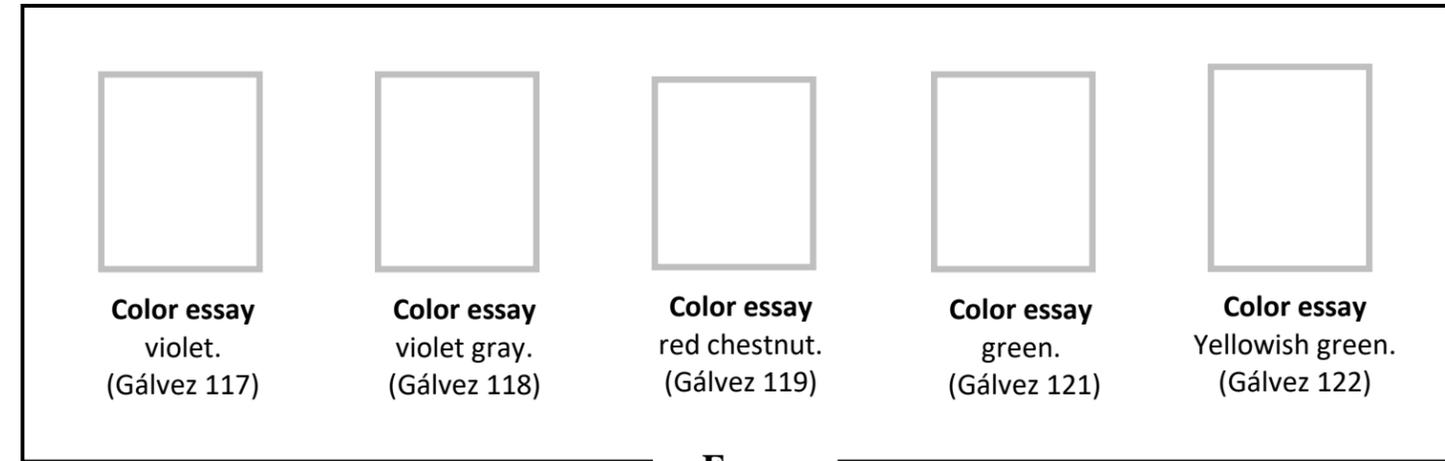
- II a - Domestic.
- II b - Nacional.

## PRESENTATION

- Left headings: current chapter's name.
- Right headings: remarkable information.
- **Bold titles:** beginning of a new issue.
- **Bold line:** remarkable material.
- **Unique materials are highlighted in red.**
- © : authenticity certificate included.
- 📄 : author's research or findings.

## I. THE STAMPS

I a - Pre-Production & Varieties



**Color essay**  
violet.  
(Gálvez 117)

**Color essay**  
violet gray.  
(Gálvez 118)

**Color essay**  
red chestnut.  
(Gálvez 119)

**Color essay**  
green.  
(Gálvez 121)

**Color essay**  
Yellowish green.  
(Gálvez 122)

## Essay



½ Ounce  
Original



**Paper variety**  
yellow mellow.



**Paper variety**  
salmon.



**Paper variety**  
light yellow.



1 Ounce  
Original



**Paper variety**  
salmon.



**Paper variety**  
lilac.



**Paper variety**  
light pink.



**Paper variety**  
green.



**Paper variety**  
light olive.



4 Ounce  
Original



**Paper variety**  
light green.



**Paper variety**  
light green.



**Paper variety**  
pink.



**Paper variety**  
green-blue.



1 Pound  
Original



**Paper variety**  
light blue.



**Paper variety**  
blue-green.