

Postal Stationery of the United States Intervention in Cuba - 1898 to 1902

SNSE, 2026

S Y N O P S I S

TREATMENT & IMPORTANCE

• **Purpose/Scope** - To show US postal stationery used in/from Cuba and the postal stationery post office items (postal cards, envelopes and newspaper wrappers) issued by the United States for use in Cuba during its occupation/administration of the island. Exhibit spans the 4 years between the establishment of the first Military Station, in 1898, and the end of the U.S. Administration on May 20, 1902.

• **Organization** - The Exhibitor has chosen a traditional chronological presentation. The story is presented in four chapters. Chapter I is a sampling of U.S. postal stationery used from Military Stations in Cuba, until about March of 1899. Chapter II shows the overprinted U. S. stationery issued between February and July of 1899, as an interim measure until the specially designed stationery for Cuba could be produced. Chapter III shows the Columbus issues that started appearing in August of 1899. Most of these issues remained in circulation years after the start of the Republic. The fourth Chapter introduces the Special Request envelopes.

• **Development/Importance** -

This exhibit is the most complete showing of the subject, to date. It covers the U.S. involvement in Cuba from the start of the Spanish American War (SAW) to the end of the U.S. Administration, a logical time span. Every value, color, size, and knife variety issued during the U.S. Administration is fully described and represented. Information on printers, watermarks, and quantities issued is included. The better-known varieties are also shown. There is one envelope variety that is not known used. That is the 1¢ Columbus green on blue, size 10. Aside from the aforementioned use only one regularly issued item is missing from the exhibit, a mint example of the 2¢

Columbus envelope on amber paper, legal size (though both the ERP, Earliest Recorded Postmark, and a rare use to Hungary are shown).

There was not an abundance of pre-production material from this era, however, the exhibit contains much of what is known. There were five major errors produced during this era (the double overprints). Three of those five errors can be found in this exhibit. The exhibit also features a number of ERP items.

The issues are presented in chronological order to ensure an easy to follow presentation.

Each issue is fairly represented. That balance extends to the usages, where the exhibitor strives to show the intended use, as well as, uses displaying the many new products and services introduced by the U.S., such as, Special Delivery, Postage Dues, Rail Mail Service, Wrappers and Special Request Envelopes.

This is an exhibit of postal stationery, as such, fully describing the postal stationery aspects is the main emphasis of the exhibit, and that includes their use. The Exhibitor has managed to showcase items bearing a variety of postmarks, auxiliary markings, special services (i.e., Registration, Special Delivery, Acknowledgment of Receipt, etc.), methods of transportation (i.e., railroad, river steamers), unusual destinations, as well as, the widest variety of postal rates possible. The explanation of the applicable rate, is quite often accompanied by information on rate changes, rate duration, authorizing orders, etc.

A short statement about difficulty of acquisition is in order, at this point. The postal stationery shown herein, was, for the most part, produced in small quantities. While collecting this material will not "break the bank," anyone interested in pursuing it, better be rich in Patience. Anyone could put together a compilation of the common material in short order, however, assembling a collection of this caliber is guaranteed to take several years.

The U.S. Occupation/Administration era was short in

duration, but long on impact. In terms of the postal service, this was the most important time in its history. Cuba's colonial post office was antiquated and offered poor service. The Department of Posts - Cuba, patterned after the U.S. Post Office Department, was modernized and became a most efficient service. This exhibit shows that transformation through the lens of its postal stationery. In terms of its subject, postal stationery of the U.S. Intervention, this is the most important exhibit shown to date.

KNOWLEDGE & RESEARCH

The exhibitor has been collecting the postal stationery of Cuba for the past forty plus years and exhibiting it for the past thirty. As a result of the knowledge gained during those forty years, the exhibitor was asked to participate as an associate editor for four (4) recent United Postal Stationery Society (UPSS) publications, the two most recent editions of the U.S. Possessions catalog (the book cited in the Bibliography), the book on the postal cards of Spanish Colonial Cuba and the Republic's Postal Stationery catalog. The 2009 edition of the U.S. Possessions catalog compiled, for the first time, a listing of Earliest Reported Postmarks (ERP) and tables of postal rates. For the 2015 edition, the exhibitor added a listing of Special Request envelope orders found in the Travers Papers, as well as, an expanded/revised tabulation of postal rates. The exhibitor has additionally written a number of articles documenting the dates of issue of the overprinted postal cards, the discovery of the rare used knife 57 envelope, the identification of the Type 3 Miro y Otero corner card, the Martinez Otero view cards, the Special Request orders found in the Travers Papers, and many other topics dealing with Cuba's postal stationery of this era.

Original research is denoted by the icon:



CONDITION & RARITY

The material in the exhibit is in the best condition available. Two facts should be noted, however: 1. Some of the items in the exhibit come from a war-ravaged zone, not fresh out of some post office, and 2. Cuba's hot humid weather makes the card stock/paper brittle, weathered and susceptible to breaks and discoloration.

Most rarity statements are per the UPSS publication

cited herein. Some of the items in the exhibit that can be considered rare include: the wartime uses of U.S. stationery from various Military Stations, the double overprints on the 2¢ Washington on white and on amber, the double overprint on the 1¢ Franklin (only one reported), the size 18 Treasury envelope (only one reported), the albino proofs of embossing (less than five each), the Ultramar 5¢ envelope (only one reported), the 1¢ Columbus envelopes, knife 57 mint (one of eight) and used (one of two reported), the 1¢ and 2¢ Post Office Sample Wrappers (only ones reported), and the various ERP uses. Some additional rare items, based on the Exhibitor's educated opinion, are the various Ultramar specimens, all of the Special Delivery postings, the registered uses with a "Havana" registry label (three of thirteen recorded by the Kugel Census), the Special Request Envelopes and a number of other unusual uses and/or destinations.

Rare, or significant items are denoted by The Great Seal of the United States:



PRESENTATION

To assist the viewer, prominent page headings follow a uniform format. The left heading lists the date and issue. The right heading gives a brief description of the item(s) on the page. An underlined page heading signals the start of a new item. Envelope knives and sizes follow the latest UPSS numbering. Scans are identified as such to prevent their being mistaken for actual items.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The most authoritative writing on the subject is the Cuba Section of the "*Postal Stationery of Cuba and Puerto Rico Under United States Administration*" 2nd Edition 2015, published by the UPSS, to which this exhibitor contributed as an Associate Editor.

For a quick overview of material available from this era, judges may find it very helpful to refer to www.cubafil.org/MemberPages where presentations on: Cuba's envelopes, postal cards and earliest reported postmarks are displayed.

