



PLATING THE 1/2 REAL ON COVER USED IN CUBA

1855 – 1864

In 1855 Spain issued the first stamps for its major colonies: Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. Three values made up the set of these stamps: the 1/2 Real, the 1 Real, and the 2 Reales. Their use extended from 1855 to 1864, a whole decade, and different papers and printings resulted from ten years of continuous usage. The First Day of usage for this issue is April 25, 1855, and the official last day of usage is August 31, 1864

*For the **FIRST PRINTING** in 1855, a watermarked paper with “LOOPS” was used.*

*In the **SECOND PRINTING** of 1856, a different watermarked paper with “CROSSED LINES” was introduced.*

*Finally in the **THIRD PRINTING** of 1857, the paper had no watermark at all, but it should be noted that certain paper varieties do exist as well as variations of the ink color.*

These Stamps were printed in sheets of 170 stamps arranged in 10 horizontal rows of 17 stamps each, and there was a heading on the sheet describing the denomination of those stamps in the sheet.

***THREE** distinct PLATE SETTINGS were used for the printing of the 1/2 Real Stamp:*

*The **FIRST PLATING** was used for all three issues from 1855 through 1858.*

*The **SECOND PLATING**, 1858 through 1861, was a result of the cleaning and repairs of the copper clichés, and 40 stamps clichés changed positions in the plate.*

*The **THIRD PLATING**, 1861 through 1863, was again a result of cleaning and replacement of damaged clichés, thus 12 “NEW CLICHES” were used to replaced the worn ones.*

*In 1862 this plate was **acid cleaned**, which resulted in a very noticeable widening of the “white” areas, making all the copy thicker, highlighting strokes, and erasing some of the outer border lines of the design frames and is distinctly known as **PLATE 3A**.*

The 1/2 Real stamp paid both the Domestic and International single letter rates to Spain & Puerto Rico, until September 1, 1859 when this rate was raised to 1-Real for Spain & Puerto Rico.

In the case of CUBA, covers with more than 3 or 4 stamps in strips or blocks are much rarer to find unlike these usages are in Puerto Rico or the Philippines, large block usages on cover are RARE.

LAYOUT OF THE EXHIBIT

*Each stamp position and its print plate are identified, and referenced to their Printing Plate grid. The **first page** of this exhibit starts with Postion I-1 (First Row-Position 1) and continues, whenever possible, by ROW position to the **last page** of the exhibit showing X-17 (Last Row-Position 17.)*

Important consideration has been given to the Rates, Routing Usages, and Postal Markings in order to accentuate the POSTAL HISTORY value of the covers shown.