

PUERTO RICO POSTAL HISTORY 1778-1900



INTRODUCTION

Puerto Rico is an island located in the northeastern Caribbean Sea, east of the Dominican Republic and west of the Virgin Islands. Columbus arrived in Puerto Rico during his second voyage in 1493 and named the island San Juan Bautista. Eventually, visitors came to refer to the entire island as "Puerto Rico", and "San Juan" became the name of the main port. In July 1898, during the Spanish-American War, Puerto Rico was invaded by the United States.

POSTAL HISTORY

Before 1765, the Spanish crown was entirely in charge of, and responsible for, communications between Spain and Puerto Rico, there was no specific mail service as such, and communications with the mother country were very irregular.

A Royal Decree of the 6 August 1764 established the "Correos Maritimos del Estado" (Government Maritime Mail service), which was to provide a monthly voyage between Spain and Havana, Cuba, by contracted or Naval vessels, with calls at Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo.

The Correos Maritimos del Estado used the following postal markings: "ESPAÑA", "YSLAS", "YNDIAS", "DE YNDIAS" and "ISLAS DE BARLOVENTO". Initially they were used in Spain, but soon most of them were copied and sent out to the colonies as well. Therefore it is in many cases difficult to know which of these markings were used in Spain or in one of the colonies. Some of the markings were in use until about 1865, regardless of which maritime service or kind of ship was taking the mail.

In April 1802, the Correos Maritimos del Estado officially ended, and mail was carried by Naval vessels as available, but it was a very irregular service. When the ports were opened up to foreign ships in about 1815, the situation became a little better, but the Spanish Government wanted a service under its own control.

In 1827 the "Empresa de Correos Maritimos" (Maritime Mail Enterprise) was established by a group of Havana merchants, and they were granted a semi-monopoly by Royal Decree. By 1849 the company was in financial difficulties and it was closed down in 1851. The British Royal Mail Steam Packet Company had been established in the West Indies since 1842, and became the dominating mail carrier to Europe, and mail to America was carried by packets or merchant ships.

In 1844 the first British Consul was established in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and he acted as a British Postal Agent as well. He used special postmarks on the mail, and in 1865 British stamps were put on sale at the Consulate.

In 1872 British Postal Agencies were opened at the Consulates in Arroyo, Aguadilla, Mayaguez and Ponce, and in 1875 one was opened in Naguabo. All these Agencies used distinctive postmarks. They were all closed when Puerto Rico joined the UPU on 1 May 1877.

In 1865, when French packets started to call at Puerto Rico, a Postal Agency was established at the French Consulate in San Juan, and French stamps and special postmarks were used. There was also a French Agency at Mayaguez. Both these Agencies closed on 1 May 1877, but French Paquebot markings can be found on mail from Puerto Rico after 1877 since much mail was sent on French packets by the Puerto Rico Post Office, and the postal clerks on board these packets used a set of "Ligne" (Line) postmarks.

The first stamps used in Puerto Rico were the Antillas issues, for use in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines from 1855, and it was not until 1873 that the first proper Puerto Rico stamps were issued. This was continued until Puerto Rico was taken over by USA in 1898.

In connection with the Spanish-American War in 1898, stamp shortages arose in various town, and a number of interesting provisional and emergency issues were produced.

After the American take over, US stamps were introduced and the Puerto Rico postal system became a part of the US Post Office Department.

REFERENCES

Literature used includes "Prefilatelia Española" (Tizon&Guinovart, 2004), "Sellos y Marcas de Puerto Rico" (García-Lomas, 1977), "A Caribbean Neptune" (R Stone, 1993), and much personal research.

THE EXHIBIT - PLAN AND DETAILS

This exhibit is a very comprehensive study of the postal history of Puerto Rico, starting with the earliest known mail to and from the island, and showing examples of virtually all the different types of postal markings used throughout the pre-stamp period. There is a detailed section of the postmarks used by the British and French Post Offices, followed by a study of the stamps used under the Spanish Administration, arranged by issue and showing correct postal use of as many different denominations as possible. The final section deals with the US Administration during and immediately after the Spanish-American War.

EARLY OVERSEAS & INLAND MAIL (frame 1)

1778, the **earliest known letter** to Puerto Rico; 1789, the **earliest known letter from** Puerto Rico; 1793, the **earliest known letter transiting through** Puerto Rico. Letters with YSLAS (**two known**), YNDIAS, DE YNDIAS, ISLAS DE BARLOVENTO, Pto RICO FRANCO (**two known**), Pt RICO FRANCO, PUERTO RICO FRANCO (**three known**), PUERTO-RICO 65mm (**unique**). Empresa mail showing two letters with "EM" (**rare**) and one with "NEM" (**two known**).

DIFFERENT POSTMARKS INCL ORIGIN MARKINGS (frame 2)

Letters with Town, Franco, Sin Cargo, Registered and Abono markings, including the **highest recorded rate** on a Puerto Rico cover (510Reales). Origin markings CUBA (**very rare**), S.TOMAS (**rare**) and ESPAÑA (**very rare**).

BRITISH AND FRENCH POST OFFICES (frame 3)

1845 letter (**earliest known use**), red and black Crowned Circles, eight C61 San Juan covers, covers from Arroyo (F83), Aguadilla (F84), Mayaguez (F85), Ponce (F88), as well as Arroyo Unpaid (**two known**), Mayaguez Unpaid, and Ponce Unpaid (**two known**). Four St Jean de Porto Rico covers incl the very famous mixed franking with Spanish stamps (**unique**), St Jean Paquebot (**two known**), Mayaguez Paquebot (**rare**) and three Ligne covers.

ANTILLAS ISSUES 1855-64 & OFFICIAL STAMPS (frame 4)

The first (1855), second (1857) and third (1858) issues, showing a wide variety of rates and combinations, including 2RPF 1855 (**rare**), combination cover with GB stamp (**rare**), the **highest known franking** with 107 2RPF stamps, registered with 14 2RPF stamps. Spanish Official stamps used in Puerto Rico including covers with 4onzas and 1Libra (**three known**), mixed frankings with regular stamps, and to and from Spain and Cuba. Two mixed frankings between 1858 and 1864 issues (**rare**), and two combination covers with French (**rare**) and Barbados (**unique**) stamps.

ANTILLAS 1868-73 & PUERTO RICO 1873-76 ISSUES (frame 5)

Frankings and rates, including the **rare use** of 5c 1868 and 12½c 1873, 1872 combination cover with GB stamps, 1875 with Italian Postage Due stamps, and mixed frankings between 1876&1877 issues (**unique**).

PUERTO RICO ISSUES 1877-98 (frames 6-7)

Frankings and rates, including mixed frankings between 1878&1879 issues (**unique**), 1878&1880 issues (**very rare**), 1880&1881 (**unique**) and three 1882-87&1890-97 issues. 1879 stamps used as postage due (**unique**). Avis de Reception mail including two Return Receipts, as well as 1898 correct use of War Tax and Habilitado issues.

THE US POSTAL SYSTEM 1898-1900 (frame 8)

Covers with the Ponce Provisional (**less than five known**), Coamo Provisional in pair (**unique**), Yauco Provisional (**two known**), Adjuntas Emergency (**unique**). Military Station mail (numbered and un-numbered) including registered mail, as well as stamps and postal stationery overprinted PORTO RICO or PUERTO RICO.

THE POSTAL MARKINGS

The first postmarks to have been used in Puerto Rico were "YSLAS" and "ISLAS DE BARLOVENTO", which would have been introduced in the late 18th century. The first markings with the wording Puerto Rico were introduced in the early 1800's. Markings used in the Spanish Post Offices after stamps were introduced in 1855, are not included in the listing below.

Markings introduced by the Correos Maritimos del Estado 1765-1802, used on mail to and from Puerto Rico:

ESPAÑA YSLAS YNDIAS DE YNDIAS ISLAS DE BARLOVENTO.

Markings used by the Spanish Post Offices in Puerto Rico 1802-1855 (and later):



Markings used by La Empresa de Correos Maritimos 1827-1851:



Markings used by the British Post Office in San Juan 1844-1877:



Markings used by the other British Post Offices in Puerto Rico 1872-1877:



Markings used by the French Post Offices in Puerto Rico, and on packets via Puerto Rico 1865-1877 (and later):



THE EARLIEST KNOWN MAIL

Because there was no postal service until 1765, mail before 1800 is very rare in connection with Puerto Rico, only about a handful of letters are known. The earliest known letter to Puerto Rico is from 1778, and the earliest known letter from Puerto Rico is from 1789, outside of Institutions, Museums and Archives, and both of those are shown in this exhibit.

1778 (28 May) From Barcelona to Puerto Rico - the earliest known letter to Puerto Rico



1778 - the earliest known letter to Puerto Rico!
ESPAÑA marking applied in La Coruña

1793 (10 August) From Havana, Cuba, to La Guayra, Venezuela, via Puerto Rico, with YNDIAS marking applied in Puerto Rico



1793 - YNDIAS, the earliest known use in Puerto Rico!

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1789 (21 July) From Puerto Rico to the Canary Islands - the earliest known letter from Puerto Rico



The ISLAS DE BARLOVENTO marking probably applied in Puerto Rico.

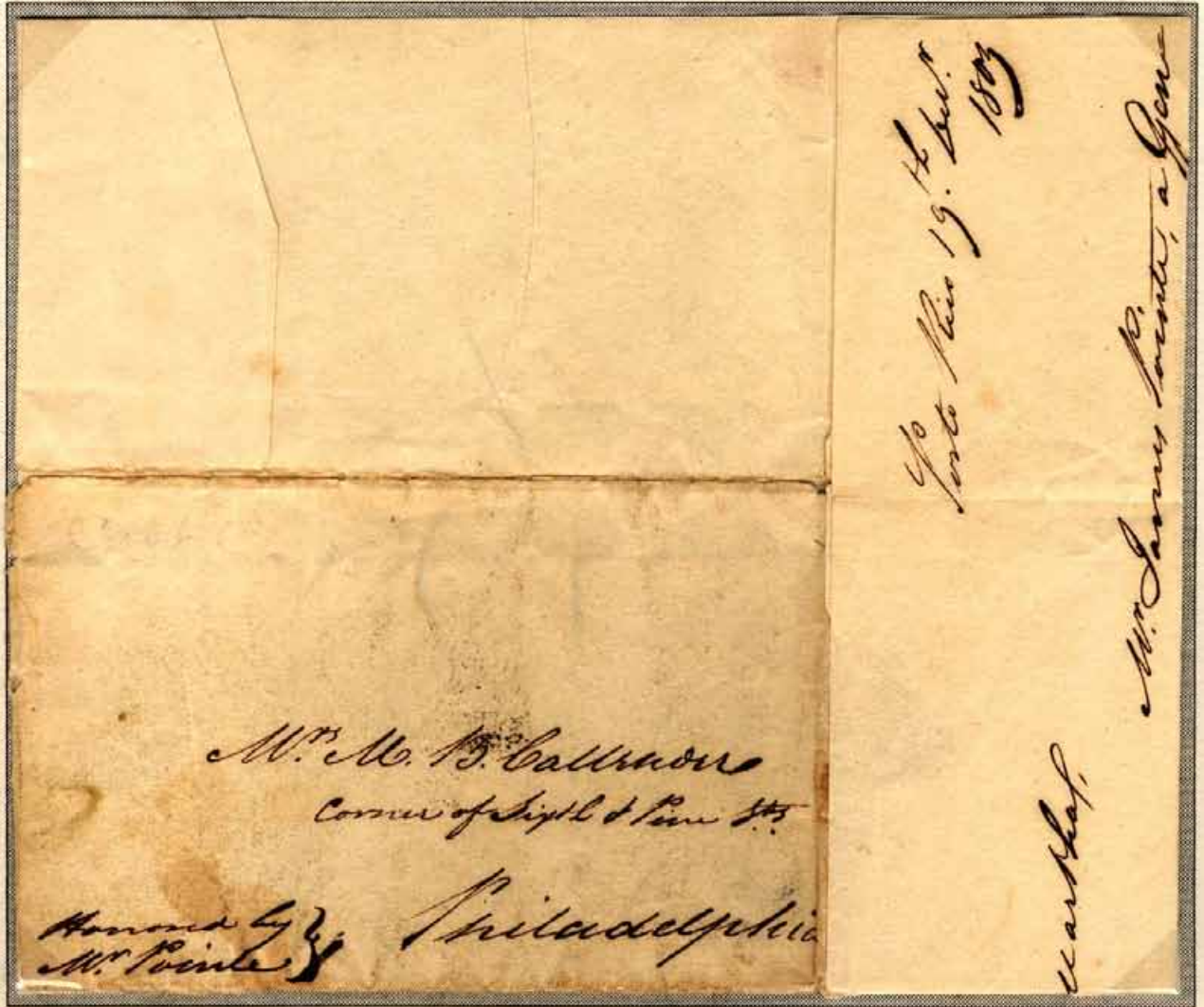
1789 - the earliest known letter from Puerto Rico!

EARLY MAIL TO FOREIGN COUNTRIES

In the early part of the 19th century, trade between Puerto Rico and foreign countries started to increase, but it did not grow to any great extent until the first foreign consulates were established in the 1840's.

1803 (19 December) From Puerto Rico to Philadelphia, USA

1803 - early mail to USA



1805 (4 August) From Mayaguez to France

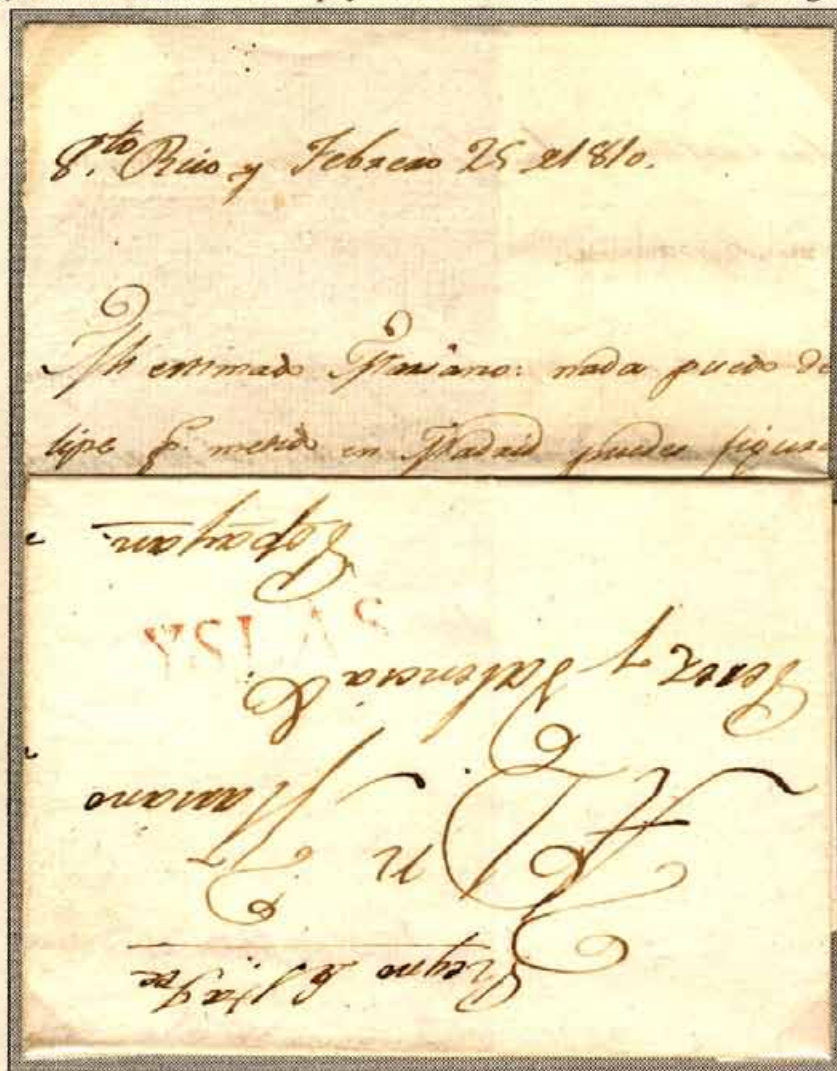


1805 - early mail to France

OVERSEAS POSTAL MARKINGS - YSLAS

With the introduction of the Royal Overseas Postal Service in 1765, a new group of postal markings was created which were to signal out mail to and from the Colonies. These markings were used both in Spain and in the Colonies. The YSLAS markings are only known to have been used in Veracruz (Mexico) and Cartagena (Colombia) and are therefore very rare.

1810 (25 February) From Puerto Rico to Popayan, Colombia, with YSLAS marking applied in Cartagena



Very rare -
only two examples of the YSLAS markings are known on mail from Puerto Rico

OVERSEAS POSTAL MARKINGS - YNDIAS

“Indias” was the general Spanish term for its Colonies in the New World, and the YNDIAS markings were used both in Spain and in the Colonies to indicate origin or destination of mail. Several different types were in use. It is not known if the different colours of these markings have any specific significance or meaning.

1819 (25 February) From Puerto Rico to Valencia, with YNDIAS marking in yellow

**YNDIAS marking
in yellow**



**YNDIAS
marking in red**

1849 (26 April) From Puerto Rico to Cadiz, with YNDIAS marking in red



OVERSEAS POSTAL MARKINGS - YNDIAS / DE YNDIAS

For some reason DE YNDIAS was used instead of Yndias in two towns in Spain, in Santander and in Bilbao. The translation of this is "From the Indies" so these markings would only have been used on arriving mail.

1849 (18 April) From Mayaguez to Barcelona, with YNDIAS marking in blue



**YNDIAS
marking
in blue**

1840 (10 April) From Puerto Rico to Madrid, with DE YNDIAS marking



**DE YNDIAS
marking**

OVERSEAS POSTAL MARKINGS - ISLAS DE BARLOVENTO

ISLAS DE BARLOVENTO (Windward Islands) was the most frequently used Spanish term for the islands in the West Indies, and these markings were used in Spain as well as in Cuba, Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo. Several different types were in use.

1829 (25 September) From Puerto Rico to Valencia, with ISLAS DE BARLOVENTO marking in red



ISLAS DE BARLOVENTO
in red

1841 (10 May) From Puerto Rico to Madrid, with ISLAS DE BARLOVENTO marking in blue

ISLAS DE BARLOVENTO
in blue



THE EARLIEST KNOWN PUERTO RICO MARKING

The first distinct Puerto Rico postmark was the oval P.^o RICO FRANCO marking in red, which is known to have been used as early as 1802. Only two examples of this marking are recorded and the example below, although undated, is addressed to the Postal Administrator Tomas Hernandez, who was in office until 1820.

1810 (c.) From Puerto Rico to Madrid, with the oval P.^o RICO FRANCO marking in red - one of two known



**The first distinct Puerto Rico marking -
Very rare - only two examples known!**

THE SECOND PUERTO RICO FRANCO MARKING

The second Puerto Rico Franco postmark was in use between 1828 and 1836 and the text was changed to P.^o RICO FRANCO. It can be found in black, brown or red ink and it is a very scarce marking.

1832 (28 August) From Puerto Rico to Madrid, with the oval P.^o RICO FRANCO marking in black



P.^o RICO FRANCO in black

1834 (25 August) From Puerto Rico to Barcelona, with the oval P.^o RICO FRANCO marking in brown



P.^o RICO FRANCO in brown

THE THIRD PUERTO RICO FRANCO AND THE OVAL PUERTO RICO MARKINGS

The third and last Puerto Rico Franco postmark was introduced in 1841 but was probably only in use for a short time - only three examples are known. The text is now PUERTO RICO FRANCO. The oval PUERTO RICO marking without the word Franco is much more frequent, although it was only in use between 1838 and 1842.

1841 (13 August) From Puerto Rico to Barcelona, with the oval PUERTO RICO FRANCO marking in red



PUERTO RICO FRANCO - very rare, only three examples known!

1841 (11 December) From Puerto Rico to Madrid, with the oval PUERTO RICO marking in red



PUERTO RICO oval marking

STRAIGHT LINE PUERTO RICO MARKINGS

Between 1819 and 1844 at least four different straight line PUERTO RICO markings were in use. They are all very scarce and do not seem to have been used much. Other markings must have been preferred by the postal officials.

1828 (10 October) From Puerto Rico to Madrid, with 65mm PUERTO-RICO marking



The only known example of the 65mm PUERTO-RICO straight line

1826 (9 November) From Puerto Rico to Harwich, Mass, USA, with 50mm PUERTO RICO. marking



50mm PUERTO RICO. straight line

LA EMPRESA DE CORREOS MARITIMOS - E.M.

In 1827 the Spanish Crown authorized the formation of La Empresa de Correos Maritimos (The Maritime Mail Enterprise) in Havana, Cuba, a private company carrying mail between Spain and the Colonies in the New World. The company was closed down in 1851. They used their own postal markings and all of those used in Puerto Rico are very scarce.

1842 (c.) From Puerto Rico to the Canary Islands, with "E.M." applied in Puerto Rico, as well as a Puerto Rico marking



"E.M." applied in Puerto Rico on departure - very scarce

1844 (11 July) From Mataro, Spain, to Ponce, Puerto Rico, with "E.M." applied in Puerto Rico



"E.M." applied in Puerto Rico on arrival - very scarce

LA NUEVA EMPRESA DE CORREOS MARITIMOS - N.E.M.

In February 1847, La Empresa de Correos Maritimos was reformed and renamed La Nueva Empresa de Correos Maritimos, and in Puerto Rico a new marking was introduced, *N.E.M.* This is a very rare marking, only two examples are recorded.

1848 (20 February) From Mataro, Spain, to Ponce, Puerto Rico, with "*N.E.M.*" applied in Puerto Rico



"N.E.M." applied in Puerto Rico on arrival - very rare, only two examples known!

1841 (2 May) From Puerto Rico to Cuba, with "*E*" (Empresa) applied in Havana, as well as a Puerto Rico marking



"E" applied in Cuba on arrival from Puerto Rico

THE FIRST PUERTO RICO DATESTAMP

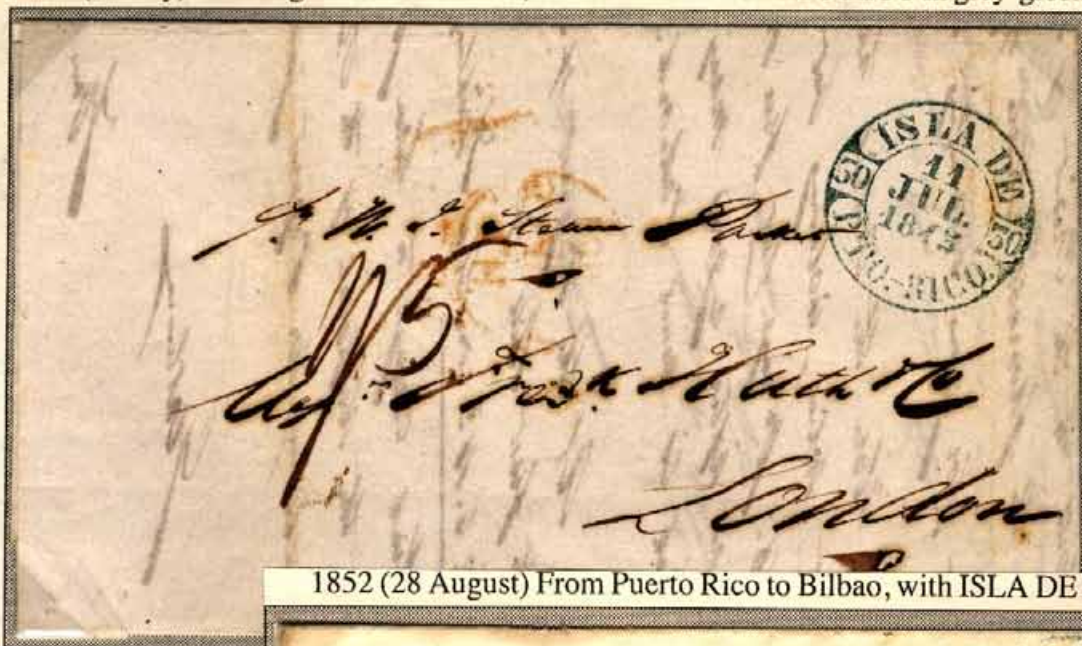
The first datestamp used was the ISLA DE PUERTO RICO 30, where the "30" refers to the Postal District number allocated to Cuba and Puerto Rico in the Spanish Postal System which includes Spain and its Colonies. The marking was in use between 1842 and 1855 both on internal and external mail, and it can be found in red, grey-green and blue.

1843 (15 March) From Puerto Rico to Cadiz, with ISLA DE PUERTO RICO in red



ISLA DE PUERTO RICO in red

1845 (11 July) From Aguadilla to London, with ISLA DE PUERTO RICO in grey-green



ISLA DE PUERTO RICO in grey-green

1852 (28 August) From Puerto Rico to Bilbao, with ISLA DE PUERTO RICO in blue



ISLA DE PUERTO RICO in blue

STRAIGHT LINE TOWN MARKINGS

Straight Line Town markings were introduced in the 1840's and almost every Post Office had their own marking. They were in general use until the introduction of stamps in 1855, but in some towns they remained in use, on and off, well into the 1880's, possibly as temporary replacements for worn out datestamps.

1849 (23 October) From Caguas to Guayama with CAGUAS straight line, charged 1 Real

CAGUAS straight line



1850 (c) From Cabo Rojo to San Juan, with CABO ROJO straight line, marked "Sincargo"

CABO ROJO straight line



FRANCO MARKINGS

“Franco” markings were used to indicate that the postage had been prepaid, both on inland and overseas mail. Many of the Post Offices in the towns had their own Franco markings, and many of these markings are very scarce.

1842 From Puerto Rico to Corsica, France, with YAUCO FRANCO as well as a Puerto Rico marking, charged 44 decimes



YAUCO FRANCO

1850 From Puerto Rico to France, with GUAYAMA FRANCO marking, charged 15 decimes



GUAYAMA FRANCO

SIN CARGO MARKINGS

“Sin Cargo” markings indicate that there was no charge and in most cases these markings were used on Official Mail. Many of the Post Offices in the towns had their own Sin Cargo markings, and many of these markings are very scarce.

1850 (c.) Official cover from Mayaguez to San Juan with SIN CARGO marking, rated 3 Reales



**Mayaguez
SIN CARGO**

1859 (3 July) Official cover from San Juan to Barcelona with SIN CARGO marking, rated 1½ ounce



**San Juan
SIN
CARGO**

THE HIGHEST RECORDED POSTAL RATE

The highest recorded postal rate on any item known from Puerto Rico, is this item, which has an indicated weight of 135 ounces (almost 4kg) and a rate of 510 Reales. This amount, which equals 63.75 Pesos, was twice the monthly salary of the highest official in the Postal Administration at the time! An enormous amount for a piece of mail.

1850 (c.) Official cover from Caguas to Ponce, rated 135 ounces, charged 510 Reales

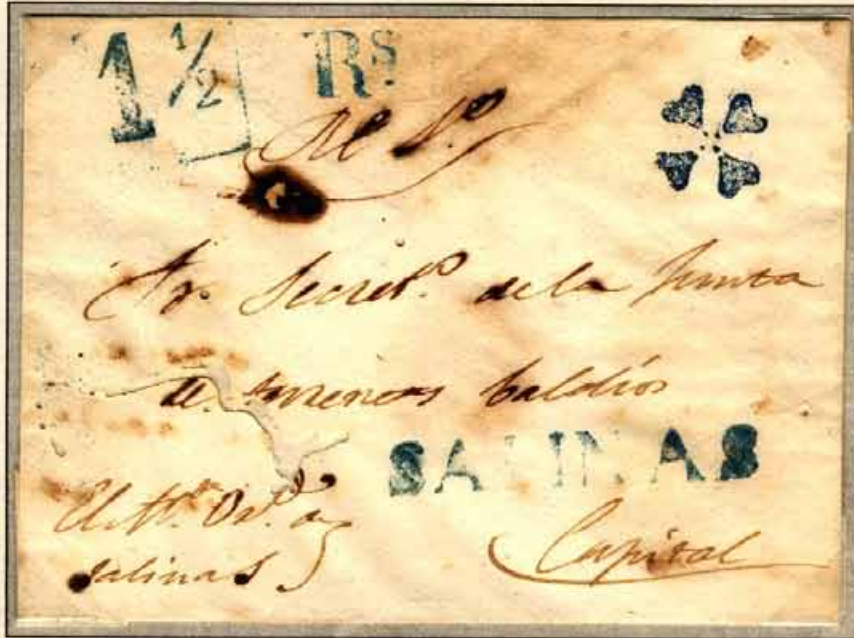


510 Reales - the highest recorded postal rate from Puerto Rico!

REGISTERED MAIL

Before the introduction of proper registration markings in the 1850's, registered mail was marked either with a trefoil- or with a "0"-marking, which was handstamped once or several times on the letter. This is a most peculiar way to indicate that a letter was registered.

1850 (c.) Registered official cover from SALINAS to San Juan, with Trefoil registration marking, charged 1½ Real



Trefoil Registration marking

1850 c. (3 December) Registered cover from MAYAGUEZ to Aguadilla, with "0" registration marking, charged 16 Reales

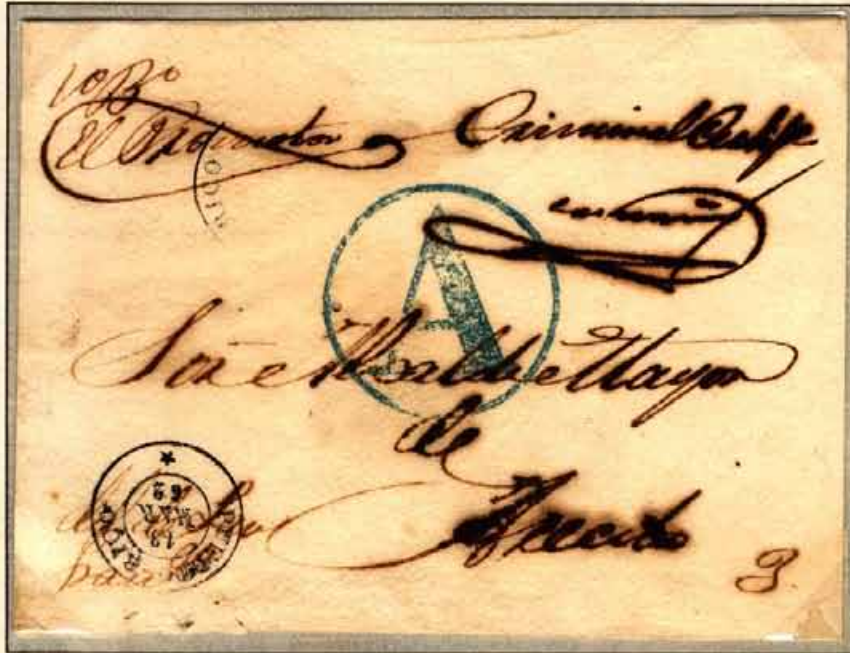


"0" Registration marking

ABONO MARKINGS

Certain Government Departments could send their letters without stamps, and charge the cost to their account. These covers have an Abono-marking, normally the letter "A", stamped on the front of the envelope. Many of the Post Offices in the towns had their own Abono markings, and many of these markings are very scarce.

1862 (13 March) Official cover from San Juan to Arecibo, with "A" Abono marking



Encircled "A" Abono marking

1865 (28 July) Official cover from Arecibo to Hatillo, with "A" Abono marking



"A" Abono marking

NO HAY SELLOS - WE HAVE NO STAMPS

At times, there was a shortage of stamps at different Post Offices and Government Departments. By Royal Decree dated the 15 February 1856, article 4, senders were therefore authorized to write "No hay sellos" (We have no stamps) on the envelope, and let the recipient pay the postage.

1867 (8 March) From Guayama to Cidra marked "No hay sellos" and "½ oz", postage paid by recipient with 1864 ½ R1 stamp

"No hay sellos" - postage paid with stamp by recipient



1863 (11 August) Official cover from Aguadilla to Aguada marked "No hay sellos"



"No hay sellos"

FORWARDING AGENTS CACHETS

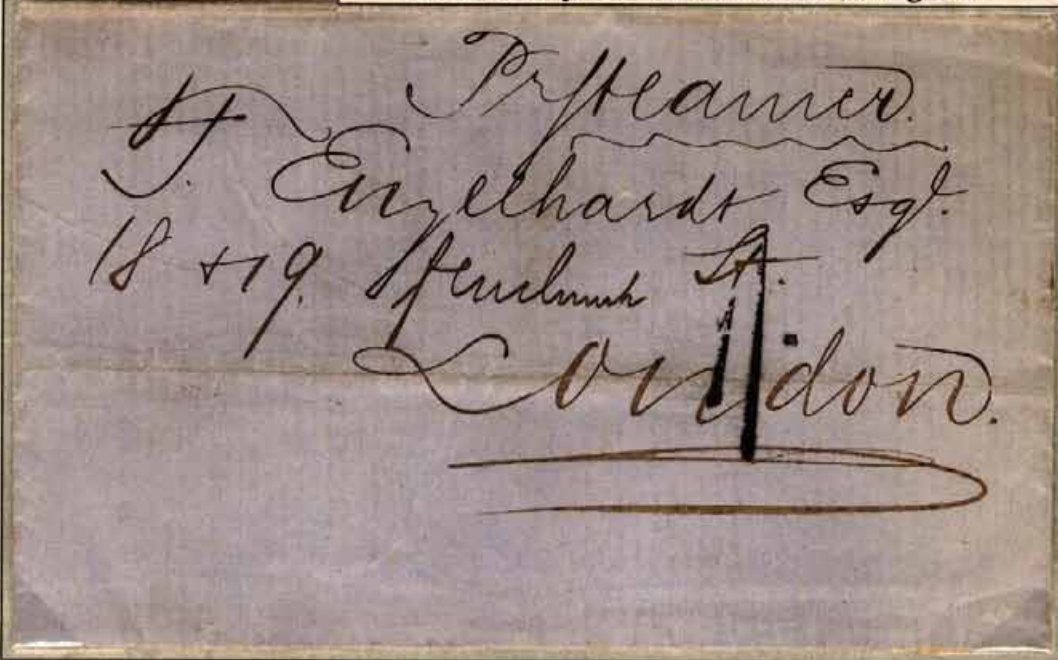
A Forwarding Agent is a person or firm who undertakes to see that the goods or correspondence of another is transported without himself acting as the carrier. In Puerto Rico there were many companies operating as Forwarding Agents, and many of them used cachets on the mail they handled, to indicate that they had assisted.

1844 (26 June) From Guayama to Martinique, forwarded by "Carreras e Hijos, San Juan", charged 60 centimes

Forwarded by
"Carreras e Hijos,
San Juan"



1870 (24 April) From Aguadilla to London, forwarded by "De Vias, San Juan", charged 1/-



Forwarded by
"De Vias, San Juan"

ORIGIN MARKINGS - CUBA & S.TOMAS

The San Juan Post Office used a number of different markings on incoming mail to indicate the country of origin. Most of these markings were only in use for a short time, or on very few items, and are very rare.

1847 (15 March) From Havana to Puerto Rico, with "CUBA" origin marking applied in San Juan, charged "2" over "1½" Real



"CUBA" origin marking applied in Puerto Rico - Very rare!

1848 (24 July) From St Thomas to Puerto Rico, with "S.TOMAS" origin marking applied in San Juan



"S.TOMAS" origin marking applied in Puerto Rico - Rare!

ORIGIN MARKINGS - ESPAÑA

The San Juan Post Office used a number of different markings on incoming mail to indicate the country of origin. Most of these markings were only in use for a short time, or on very few items, and are very rare.

1852 Official cover from Spain to Puerto Rico, with "ESPAÑA" origin marking applied in San Juan, rated 4 ounces



"ESPAÑA" origin marking applied in Puerto Rico - Very rare!

RATE MARKINGS ON INCOMING MAIL

Before the formation of the UPU in 1877, it was in many cases not possible to prepay the postage all the way to the destination; at best it was possible to pay to the border of the destination country, and the addressee had to pay the remaining postage. To indicate the amount due, special rate markings were handstamped on the mail.

1855 (14 September) From France with 10c+20c+40c+80c, to Puerto Rico, with "3Rs" due marking

"3Rs" rate marking applied in Puerto Rico



1854 (15 June) From Paris to Madrid, re-directed to Puerto Rico, with "4" Reales due marking, re-directed to Cuba with "6 Rs" due marking



"4" Reales rate marking applied in Puerto Rico

1848 (15 February) From Spain to Puerto Rico, with "5½" Reales due marking



"5½" Reales rate marking applied in Puerto Rico

EARLY INCOMING MAIL

Pre 1860 mail addressed to Puerto Rico is very scarce. The tropical climate in Puerto Rico has not been kind to mail, and other documents, kept in archives there, and there was very little mail sent to Puerto Rico initially.

1835 (January) From Cuba to Puerto Rico, with HABANA straight line

1835 - from Cuba to Puerto Rico



1856 (22 December) From Nova Scotia to Puerto Rico via Bermuda and St Thomas, with Halifax Paid marking



1856 - from Nova Scotia to Puerto Rico

UNPAID SHIP MAIL TO USA

Trade with the United States grew slowly during the first half of the 19th century, but picked up after that and became very important and dominated trade from Puerto Rico during the second half of the century. With all this trade, a lot of private ships ran between the two countries, and these ships also carried ship mail in both directions.

1860 (21 January) From Naguabo, Puerto Rico to New York, with "SHIP LETTER" marking applied in San Juan, charged "6" cents



"SHIP LETTER" marking applied in San Juan

1861 (2 November) Ship letter from Ponce to New York, "FORWARDED BY L TORO, PONCE", charged "5" cents



Ship letter "Forwarded by L. Toro, Ponce"

UNPAID SHIP MAIL TO USA

Trade with the United States grew slowly during the first half of the 19th century, but picked up after that and became very important and dominated trade from Puerto Rico during the second half of the century. With all this trade, a lot of private ships ran between the two countries, and these ships also carried ship mail in both directions.

1867 (28 March) Ship letter from Mayaguez to New York, via New Haven, charged "6" cents

**Ship letter to New York
via New Haven**



1879 (9 December) Taxed ship letter from San Juan to New York, with 10c US Postage Due stamp (repaired)



**Ship letter with US
Postage Due stamp**

SHIP MAIL TO USA WITH US STAMPS

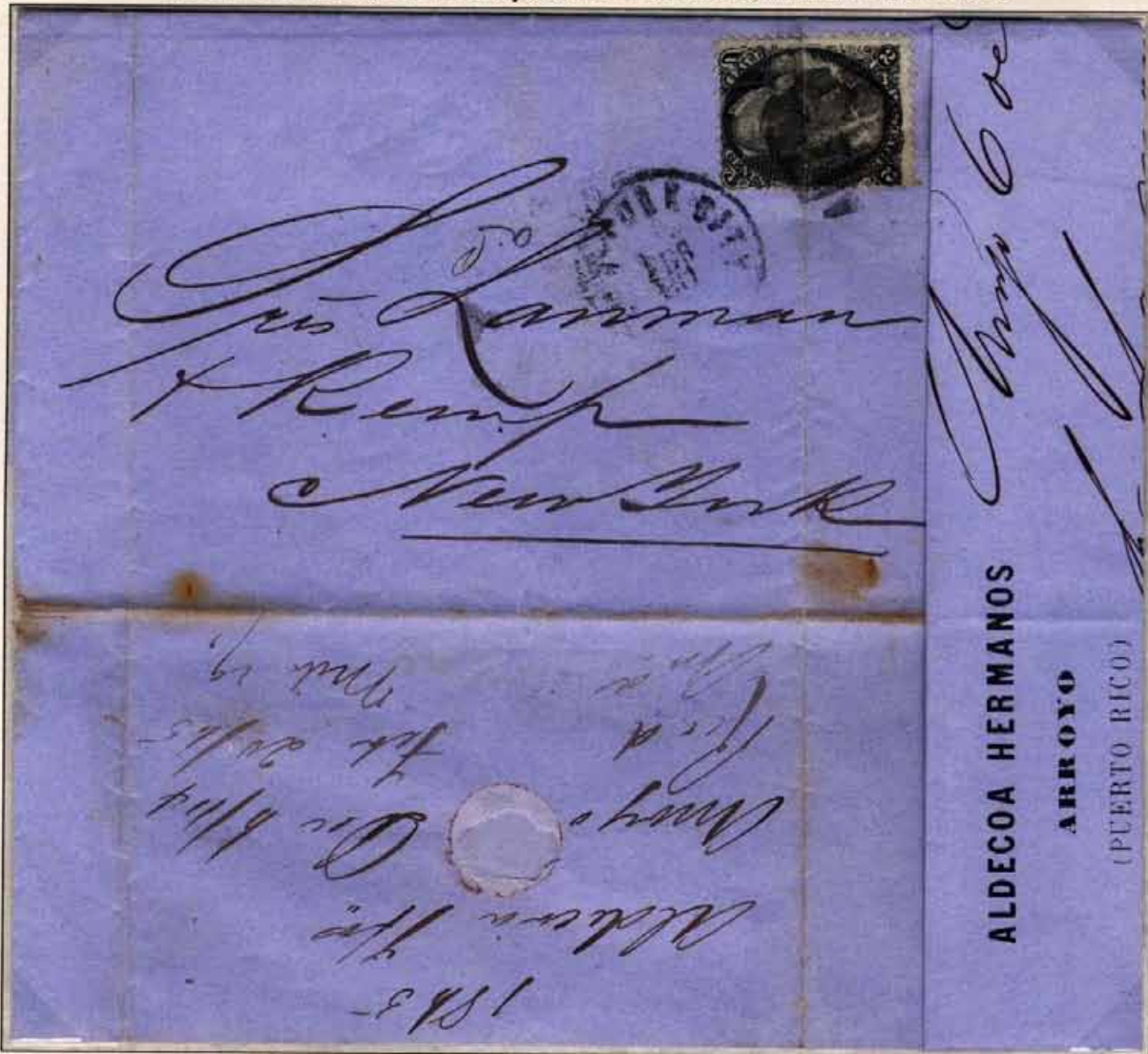
Ship mail was also handled by agents, both Forwarding Agents and other companies, and some of them franked the mail with US stamps to make the handling quicker and less expensive. These stamps were either added in Puerto Rico, in transit, or in the USA, and because of varying routes, many different rates can be found.

1874 (10 April) From Arecibo, via St Thomas 13/4, to New York 20/4, with US 1870 10 cents stamp, marked "10¢ Paid"



**From Arecibo,
via St Thomas, with
US 10 cents stamp**

1865 (6 December) From Arroyo to New York 20/2, with US 1861 2 cents



**From Arroyo,
with US
2 cents stamp**

SHIP MAIL TO USA WITH US STAMPS

Ship mail was also handled by agents, both Forwarding Agents and other companies, and some of them franked the mail with US stamps to make the handling quicker and less expensive. These stamps were either added in Puerto Rico, in transit, or in the USA, and because of varying routes, many different rates can be found.

1877 (29 May) From San Juan, via New York 16/6, to Nova Scotia 20/6, with US 18706 cents



**From San Juan to Nova Scotia,
with US 6 cents stamp**

1878 (17 January) From San Juan, via New York 28/1, to Nova Scotia, with US 18703 cents, forwarded by "Gossler, NY"



**From San Juan to Nova Scotia,
with US 3 cents stamp**

1885 From San Juan to New York with US 18832 cents stamp and cachet "Mailed at St. Johns P.R. under cover addressed Postmaster New York City"



**Under cover mail
from San Juan to
New York - Rare!**

BRITISH POST OFFICES - SAN JUAN - DATESTAMPS

In 1844, Puerto Rico opened its ports to foreigners, and the first British Consulate was established in San Juan in July 1844. The Consulate was also a British Postal Agency and handled mail as a sub-office of the GPO in London, all mail being shipped via St Thomas. The earliest known use of a postmark is from December 1845.

1845 (12 December) The earliest known use of the SAN JUAN PORTO RICO cds, to London, charged 1s.5d.



**SAN JUAN
PORTO RICO cds**
- the earliest known use

1874 (10 December) The second cds PORTO-RICO, to France, charged 24 decimes



PORTO-RICO cds

BRITISH POST OFFICES - SAN JUAN - DATESTAMPS

The second datestamp "Porto Rico", was in use between 1862 and 1877, but for some reason, a third datestamp with the wording "Puerto Rico" was introduced in 1866. It was never used much and was discontinued in 1874.

1868 (10 August) The third cds PUERTO-RICO, from Mayaguez to London, charged 1/-

PUERTO-RICO cds



1870 (10 August) PORTO-RICO cds, to Italy, charged 10 decimes, with 1 Lire Postage Due stamp



PORTO-RICO cds on cover with Italian Postage Due stamp

BRITISH POST OFFICES - SAN JUAN - CROWNED CIRCLES

The Crowned circle "Paid at San Juan Porto Rico" was also delivered when the postal agency opened in 1844, although the earliest known use is in 1846. It remained in use until 1863 and examples may be found applied in red or black ink. It is not known why black ink was used, since red normally indicated that postage was prepaid.

1849 (August) Red Crown Circle to Cuba, rated 1/- in red, with yellow EMPRESA Acks

1846 (22 December) Red Crown Circle from Mayaguez to Martinique, rated 1/- in red, forwarded by "Mason, San Juan"



Red Crown Circle to Cuba, with yellow EMPRESA marking - Rare!



1846 - Red Crown Circle - very early use

1853 (14 December) Black Crown Circle to New York, rated 1/- in red, charged 10 cents



Black Crown Circle

BRITISH POST OFFICES - SAN JUAN - "C61" type 1

British postage stamps were supplied to the British Consulate in San Juan in 1865, and the use of the stamps required a cancelling device, so they were issued with the horizontal "C61" obliterator. The first type remained in use until the postal agency was closed when Puerto Rico joined the UPU on 1 May 1877.

1870 (8 February) C61 on 4d. from Ponce to New York, forwarded by "Toro & Co, Ponce"



"C61" to New York

1873 (26 March) C61 type 1 on 10d. to Madrid



"C61" to Madrid

1877 (12 February) C61 type 1 on 1½d.+1/- to Genova, Italy



"C61" to Italy

BRITISH POST OFFICES - SAN JUAN - "C61" type 2

The second "C61" obliterator was the first of three vertical devices, but type 2 only has three bars above and below "C61", whereas types 3 and 4 have four bars. Type 2 was introduced in 1873 but was never used much.

1875 (13 December) C61 type 2 on 4d. to New York, charged 5 cents



"C61" to New York

1874 (12 November) C61 type 2 on 3d.+4d. to Paris



"C61" to Paris

1875 (12 September) C61 type 2 on 4d. to St Thomas



"C61" to St Thomas

BRITISH POST OFFICES - SAN JUAN - "C61" type 3 & type 4

Type 3 and type 4 of the "C61" obliterator are very similar, the only difference being that type 4 is a duplex marking with a cds next to it. Type 3 is very scarce and is only known to have been used in 1872. Type 4 was delivered to the GPO in London in July 1873 and remained in use until the postal agency was closed in 1877.

1872 (11 January) C61 type 3 on 6d.(x2) to Italy, charged 17 decimes, with three Postage Due stamps (one repaired)



**"C61" type 3 to Italy
with Postage Due
stamps**

1873 (26 December) C61 type 4 on 4d.(x2)+1/- to Spain



"C61" type 4 to Spain

BRITISH POST OFFICES - ARROYO

The postal agency in Arroyo was opened at the British Consulate on 24 October 1872, and the cancelling device issued was the "F83" obliterator, together with two datestamps, Arroyo Paid and Arroyo Unpaid, the latter being very rare. A fire in 1876 destroyed everything, and a new obliterator "F83" and datestamp, Arroyo, were supplied. The agency was closed in May 1877.

1873 (24 June) F83 type 1 on 1/- from Arroyo to England



"F83" Arroyo type 1 to England

1877 (11 February) F83 type 2



"F83" Arroyo type 2

1875 (December) Arroyo Unpaid to France, charged 17 decimes



ARROYO UNPAID
Very rare -
only two examples known!

BRITISH POST OFFICES - AGUADILLA & NAGUABO

The postal agency in Aguadilla was opened at the British Consulate on 24 October 1872, and the cancelling device issued was the "F84" obliterator, together with two datestamps. In December 1875, a postal agency was opened in Naguabo, and they were issued with the "582" obliterator. Both agencies were closed in May 1877.

1873 (11 December) F84 on 1/- from Aguadilla to London

"F84" Aguadilla to London



Naguabo to London, before P O opened

1847 (21 August) Naguabo to London, via St Thomas, before British P O opened



BRITISH POST OFFICES - MAYAGUEZ

The postal agency in Mayaguez was opened at the British Consulate on 24 October 1872, and the cancelling device issued was the "F85" obliterator, together with two datestamps, Mayaguez Paid and Mayaguez Unpaid, the latter being very scarce. The Mayaguez agency handled more mail than any of the other agencies, except San Juan. The agency was closed in May 1877.

1873 (11 December) F85 on 4d.+1/- from Mayaguez to Italy

"F85" Mayaguez to Italy



1876 (10 January) Mayaguez Unpaid with Puerto Rico 1876 25c.(x6) to Spain, charged 1pt 10c.



MAYAGUEZ UNPAID and Puerto Rico stamps, to Spain

BRITISH POST OFFICES - MAYAGUEZ

The postal agency in Mayaguez was opened at the British Consulate on 24 October 1872, and the cancelling device issued was the "F85" obliterator, together with two datestamps, Mayaguez Paid and Mayaguez Unpaid, the latter being very scarce. The Mayaguez agency handled more mail than any of the other agencies, except San Juan. The agency was closed in May 1877.

1873 (11 March) F85 on 2d.(x2) to New York, with Mayaguez Unpaid and Paid cds



**"F85" to New York
with Mayaguez
UNPAID and PAID**

1875 (11 December) Mayaguez Unpaid to Italy, charged 18 decimes, with three Postage Due stamps



**MAYAGUEZ UNPAID
to Italy with
Postage Due stamps**

BRITISH POST OFFICES - PONCE

The postal agency in Ponce was opened at the British Consulate on 24 October 1872, and the cancelling device issued was the "F88" obliterator, together with two datestamps, Ponce Paid and Ponce Unpaid, the latter being very rare. As with all the other agencies in Puerto Rico, this agency was also closed in May 1877.

1877 (24 March) F88 on 4d. from Ponce to St Thomas



"F88" Ponce to St Thomas

1875 (26 January) Ponce Unpaid to Corsica, France, charged 12 decimes



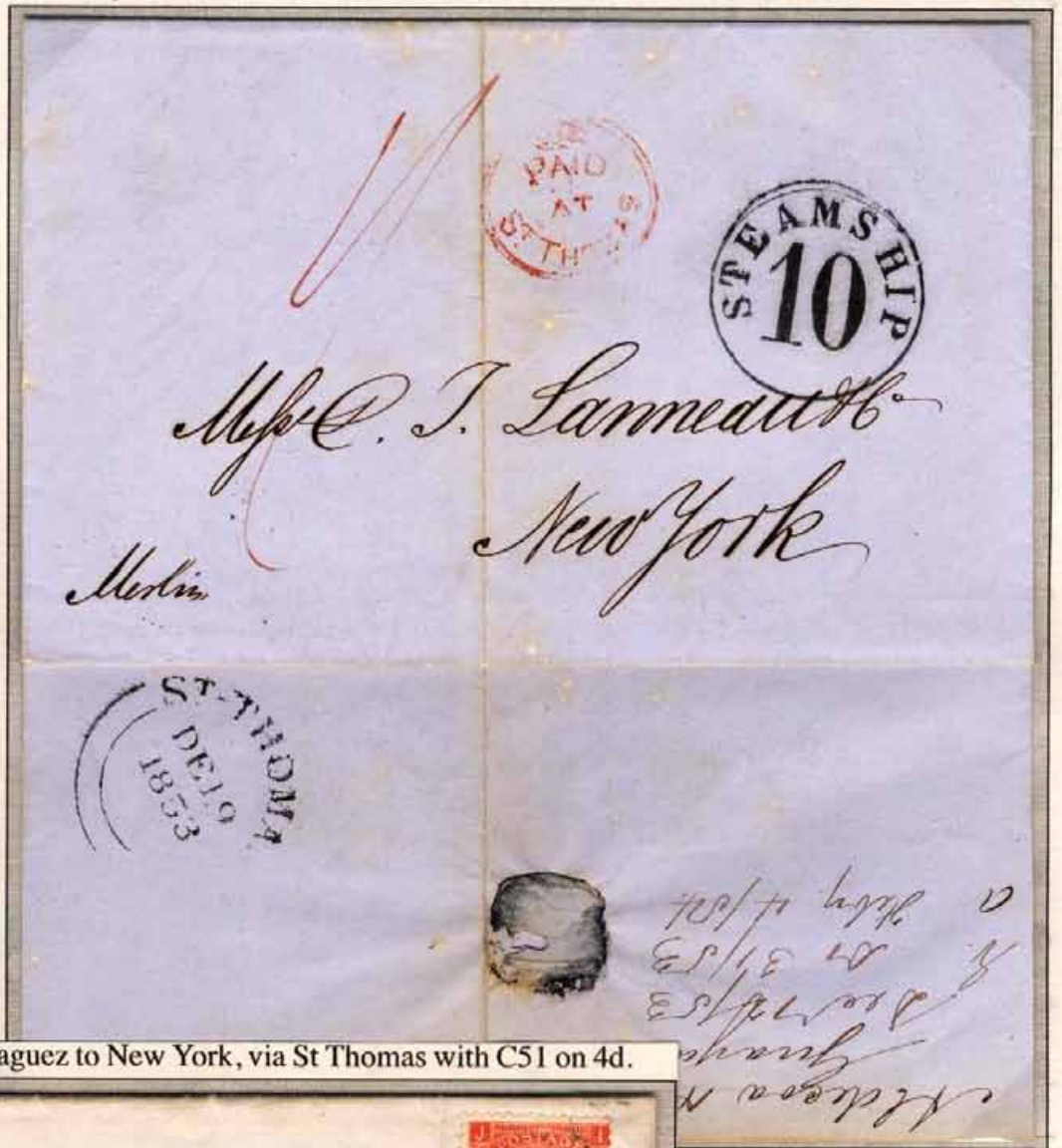
PONCE UNPAID
Very rare -
only two examples known!

MAIL THROUGH THE BRITISH POST OFFICE IN ST THOMAS

The British Mail Packets from St Thomas were the fastest mail steamers in the West Indies, and mail was sent privately with smaller ships, or with travelling friends and relatives, to catch these packets. Mail sent this way does not show any postal markings prior to entering the postal system in St Thomas.

1853 (12 December) From Guayama to New York, with Paid at St Thomas Crown Circle, marked 1/- in red

**From Guayama with
Paid at St Thomas
Crown Circle**



1872 (10 July) From Mayaguez to New York, via St Thomas with C51 on 4d.



**From Mayaguez
to New York,
with "C51" (St Thomas)**

FRENCH POST OFFICES - SAN JUAN

In 1862 the French Mail Packet system was extended to the West Indies, but it was not until 1865 that French packets started to call at Puerto Rico. A Postal Agency was established at the French Consulate in San Juan, which handled mail carried by the packets. French stamps were used and a postmark "St Jean de Porto Rico" was in use until 1875.

1866 (24 June) St Jean de Porto-Rico and 80c.(x2) to Spain, charged 8 Reales

**St. Jean de Porto-Rico to Spain.
Rate: 80c per 10g (1866-71)**



1866 (24 June) St Jean de Porto-Rico on unpaid cover to France, charged 10 decimes



**St. Jean de Porto-Rico to France. Unpaid rate:
1Fr per 10g (1866-71)**

1873 (25 November) St Jean de Porto-Rico and 30c.(x2)+40c. to France

**St. Jean de Porto-Rico to France.
Rate: 1Fr per 10g (1871-76)**



FRENCH POST OFFICES - SAN JUAN

The postal rates from the French Postal Agency to France and Spain was 80 centimes per 10 grams between 1866 and June 1871, and 1 Franc per 10 grams from July 1871. The postal rate to Spain was to the border only, and the Spanish Post Office would charge the Spanish share, which the addressee had to pay.

1866 (22 April) St Jean de Porto-Rico and 10c.(x16) to Spain, charged 8 Reales and with 1866 20c.(x4) as Postage Due



Rate: 80c per 10g (1866-71); Postage due 8 Reales = 80 centimos de Escudo

St. Jean de Porto-Rico to Spain, with 16 French 10 c stamps, and Spanish stamps paying the postage due.

Unique - one of the most important and spectacular items in the philately of Puerto Rico!

FRENCH POST OFFICES - SAN JUAN PAQUEBOT & MAYAGUEZ PAQUEBOT

The French West Indies network was developed into a set of six major lines (Lignes), A to F. Between 1879 and 1886, Ligne B called at San Juan and the French Consulate used postmarks "St Jean Porto Rico P Fr B". Also between 1879 and 1886, Ligne F called at San Juan and Mayaguez and the French Consulate in Mayaguez used a postmark "Mayaguez Paq Fr F".

1885 (26 April) St Jean Porto-Rico P(aquebot) Fr(ancaise) B No.4 on Puerto Rico 1882 8c, to France



St Jean Porto-Rico P(aquebot) Fr(ancaise) B No.4 to France.

Very rare, only two covers known and this is the only one on a stamp!

1879 (22 April) Mayaguez Paq(uebot) Fr(ancaise) F and Puerto Rico 1879 50c(x2), to France



Mayaguez Paq(uebot) Fr(ancaise) F to France - Rare!

FRENCH POST OFFICES - LIGNE B, LIGNE E & LIGNE F PAQUEBOTS

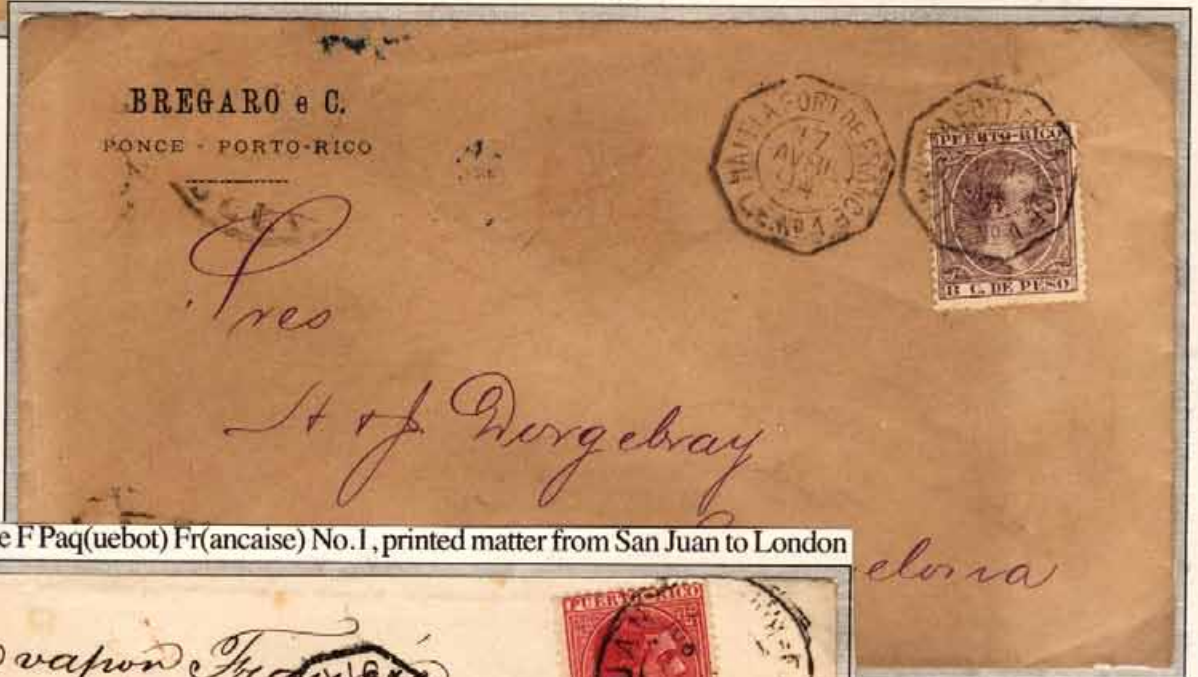
The French West Indies network was developed into a set of six major lines (Lignes), A to F. Between 1879 and 1886, Ligne B called at San Juan and Ligne F called at San Juan and Mayaguez. Between 1886 and 1897, Ligne E called at San Juan, Ponce and Mayaguez. The postal clerks working on board the packets used their own postmarks inscribed "Ligne" and the letter, but on Ligne E it was inscribed "Haiti a Fort de France".

1882 (April) Ligne B Paq(uebot) Fr(ancaise) No.3, from Arroyo to Paris



**Ligne B Paq(uebot)
Fr(ancaise) No.3
to France**

1894 (17 April) Haiti a Fort de France L(igne) E No.1, from Ponce to Barcelona



**Haiti a
Fort de France
L(igne) E No.1
to Spain**

1889 (21 July) Ligne F Paq(uebot) Fr(ancaise) No.1, printed matter from San Juan to London



**Ligne F Paq(uebot)
Fr(ancaise) No.1
to London**

1855 - THE FIRST STAMPS - FIRST ISSUE wmk loops (*filigrana lazos*)

The first stamps used in Puerto Rico were those issued by Spain for its colonies in the West Indies (Cuba and Puerto Rico) as well as the Philippines. Specific stamps for Puerto Rico were not issued until July 1873. The first known use of stamps in Puerto Rico is from June 1855. The first issue was printed on blue paper with watermark loops.

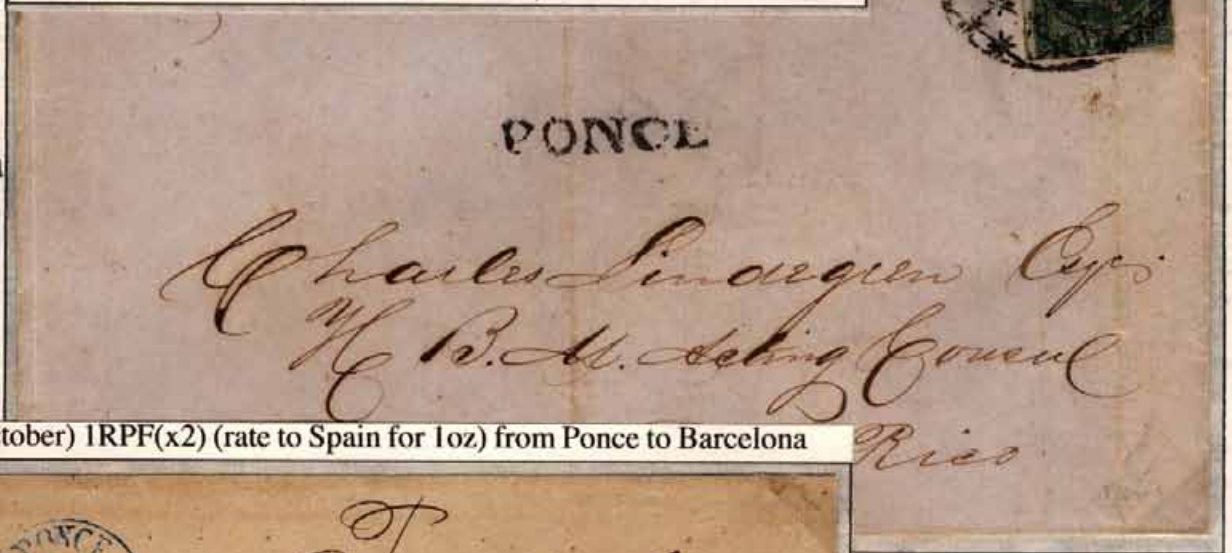
1856 (7 January) ½RPF (inland rate for ½oz) from Guayama to France, charged 15 decimes



½RPF to France with rare Guayama cds

1856 (11 June) 1RPF (inland rate for 1oz) from Ponce to San Juan

1RPF to San Juan with Ponce straight line



1861 (22 October) 1RPF(x2) (rate to Spain for 1oz) from Ponce to Barcelona



1RPF(x2) to Spain

1855 - THE FIRST STAMPS - FIRST ISSUE wmk loops (filigrana lazos)

Although generally replaced with the second issue in 1857, stamps from the first issue may be found used as late as October 1861. Mixed frankings with the second and third issue are known, but they are very scarce. The 2RPF from the first issue is rare on cover - only a few examples are known.

1856 (29 August) $\frac{1}{2}$ RPF (inland rate) to Spain, with Paid at San Juan Crown Circle



$\frac{1}{2}$ RPF to Spain through the British Post Office, with Paid at San Juan Crown Circle

1858 (25 December) From San Juan to Rio Grande, charged $1\frac{1}{2}$ RPF ($1\frac{1}{2}$ oz), with 1RPF first issue + $\frac{1}{2}$ RPF third issue

Mixed franking:
1RPF first issue +
 $\frac{1}{2}$ RPF third issue.
Rare!



1859 (26 January) From San Juan to Rio Grande, charged 3Rs (3oz), with 1RPF + 2RPF



2RPF (rare on cover)
+ 1RPF

1857 - THE FIRST STAMPS - SECOND ISSUE wmk crossed lines (filigrana líneas cruzadas)

The second issue was printed on yellowish paper with watermark crossed lines. Although printed in 1856, it is not known to have been used in Puerto Rico until 1857, and since it was soon replaced by the third issue, it is quite scarce on cover.

1858 (11 November) ½RPF (inland rate) to France, through the British Post Office, charged 8 decimes

½RPF from Humacao to France through the British Post Office



1857 (24 January) ½RPF (inland rate) to Spain, with Paid at San Juan Crown Circle



½RPF to Spain through the British Post Office, with Paid at San Juan Crown Circle

1860 (2 August) 1RPF (rate to Spain) to Mallorca

1RPF to Mallorca



1858 - THE FIRST STAMPS - THIRD ISSUE no wmk (*sin filigrana*)

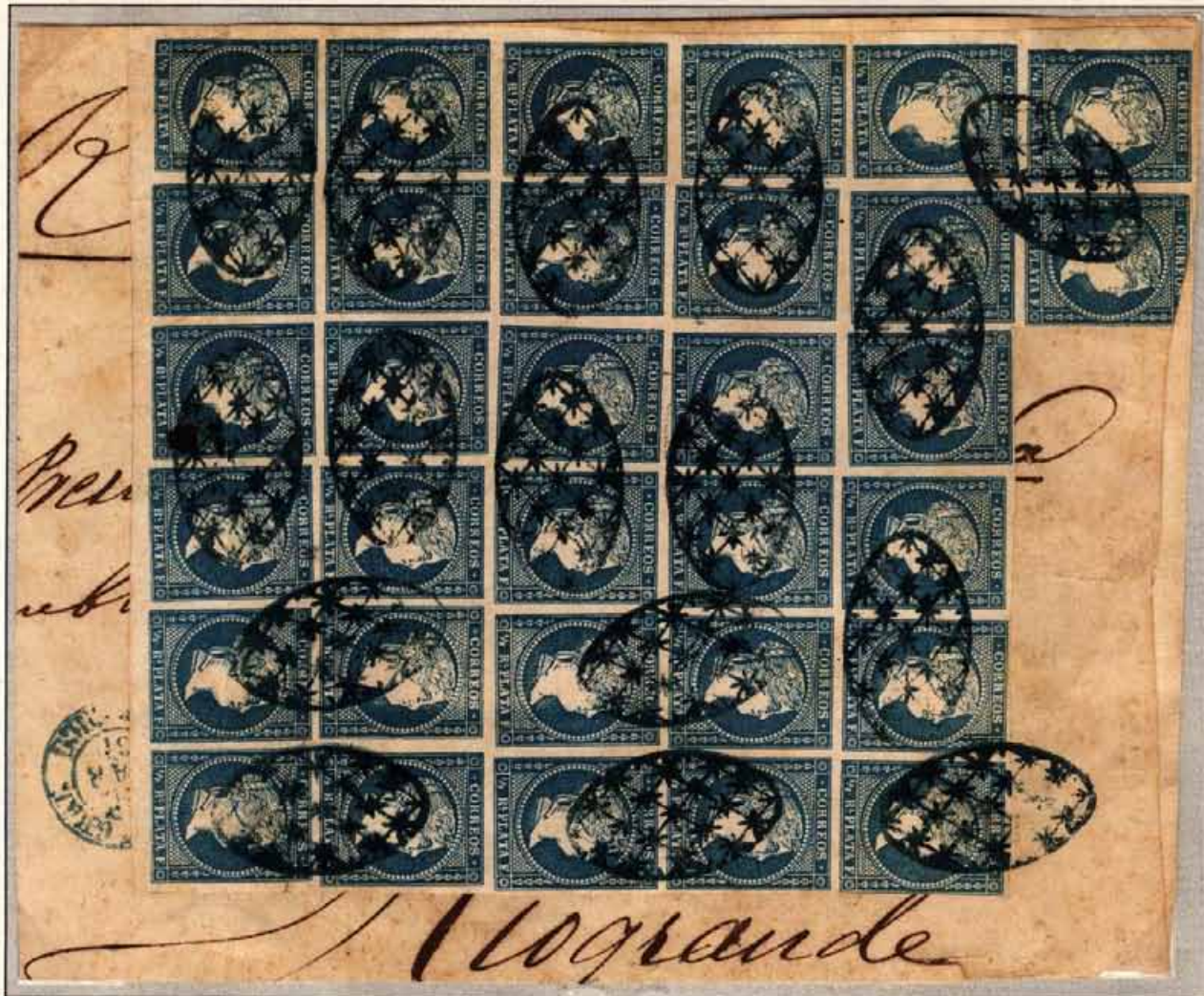
The third issue was printed on white paper without watermark. Printed in 1857, examples are not known to have been used in Puerto Rico until March 1858. Although replaced in 1864 by a new issue, examples are known to have been used as late as 1869. $\frac{1}{2}$ RPF was the denomination mostly used, and large multiples may be found.

1859 (13 February) $\frac{1}{2}$ RPF(x3) (inland rate for 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz) to Spain, with Paid at San Juan Crown Circle, rated 7s.6d. in red

$\frac{1}{2}$ RPF(x3) to Spain
through the
British Post Office,
with Paid at San Juan
Crown Circle



1861 (20 March) San Juan to Rio Grande, charged 16 RPF (16oz), with $\frac{1}{2}$ RPF (x32)



$\frac{1}{2}$ RPF(x32)

1858 ISSUE - OVERSEAS MAIL

Mail sent between Puerto Rico and overseas countries could not be prepaid all the way, except for mail to Spain and its Colonies. For other countries, the recipient always had to pay the inland charges of his country.

1864 (2 August) IRPF to New York, charged 10 cents

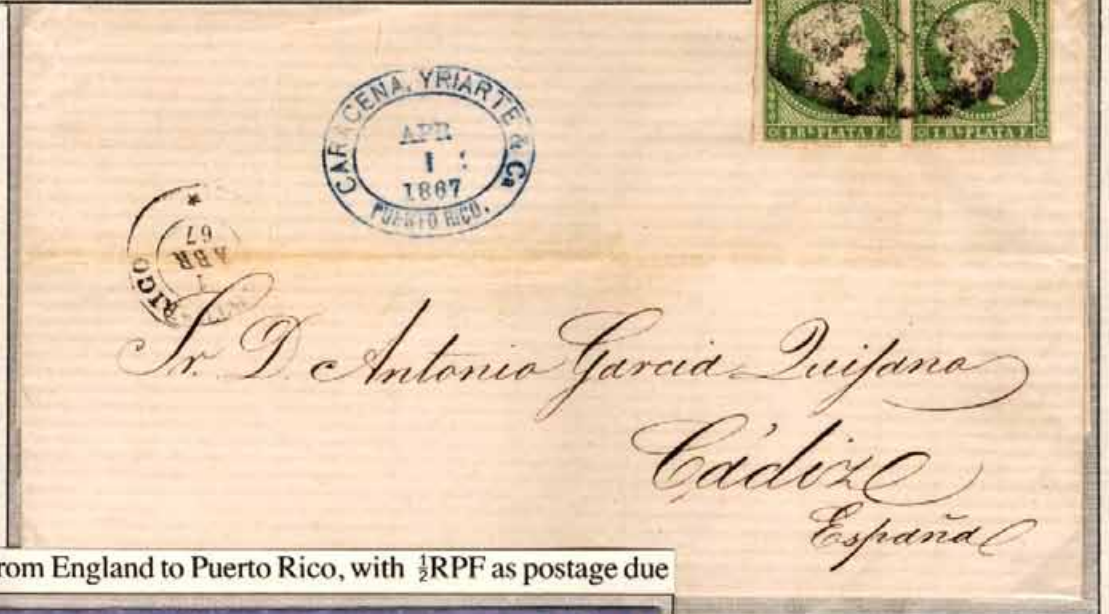


IRPF to New York

1867 (1 April) IRPF (x2)
(rate for 1oz) to Spain



IRPF(x2) to Spain



1864 (16 November) 1/- from England to Puerto Rico, with ½RPF as postage due



½RPF as postage due on cover from England - Rare!

1858 ISSUE - THE HIGHEST KNOWN

The highest recorded franking on any item known from Puerto Rico, is this item, which has
 The weight of this item would have been 213 ounces (almost 6kg) since the postal rate was 1
 1865 (18 May) 2RPF (x107, consisting of a block of 80 and a block of 27) Registered from San



FRANKING FROM PUERTO RICO

has an amazing 107 2RPF stamps, making the total rate 214RPF, which equals 26.75 Pesos. 1RPF per ounce and the registration fee was 1RPF. An enormous amount for a piece of mail. San Juan to Ponce (213oz + Reg fee 1RPF)



Registered mail
with 2RPF(x107).
Very rare - the highest known franking
from Puerto Rico!

1858 ISSUE - 2 Reales de Plata Fuerte

As with the previous issues, the 2RPF denomination is scarce on cover. In most cases, $\frac{1}{2}$ RPF stamps were used in multiples rather than using higher denominations. It is quite possible that many of the Post Offices and Government Departments only had $\frac{1}{2}$ RPF stamps in stock, since that was the one mostly used.

1864 (29 November) 2RPF (rate for 1oz) to Habana, Cuba



2RPF to Cuba

1865 (20 June) 2RPF (x14) Registered from Humacao to San Juan (27oz + Reg fee 1RPF)



Registered mail with 2RPF(x14). Rare!

1858 - OFFICIAL STAMPS OF SPAIN

A Royal Decree was issued in Madrid on 23 January 1857, introducing the use of Spanish Official stamps in the Colonies (Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines) as of the 1 January 1858. Prior to 1858, Official stamps had only been used in Spain (including its Territories) and on mail sent from Spain to the Colonies. The use of these stamps was discontinued on 1 August 1866.

1859 (30 December) Media Onza from San Juan to Mallorca

**½ ounce from
Puerto Rico
to Mallorca.
Rare!**



1865 (17 May) Una Onza from Cabo Rojo - Poverty mail "De parte pobre"



Poverty mail 1 ounce from Cabo Rojo

1858 - OFFICIAL STAMPS OF SPAIN

The Official stamps have their denomination in weight rather than in currency; $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce, 1 ounce, 4 ounces and 1 pound (= 16 ounces). The use in Puerto Rico of the high values, 4 ounces and in particular the 1 pound, is very scarce.

1864 (8 August) Media Onza (x6) + Cuatro Onzas from Mayaguez



4 ounces + $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce(x6) from Mayaguez

1862 (20 February) Cuatro Onzas + Una Libra from San Juan



1 Pound + 4 ounces from San Juan. Very rare - only three covers known with 1 Pound used in Puerto Rico!

1858 - OFFICIAL STAMPS OF SPAIN - MIXED FRANKINGS

Although the Official stamps were taken out of service as of the 1 August 1866, they continued to be used by some Government Departments. When this happened, the addressee had to pay the postage with regular stamps. Underpaid covers could be taxed and the addressee then had to pay the postage due with regular stamps.

1867 (1 March) Media Onza + 1864 ½RPF on rose paper from San Juan



½ ounce + ½RPF on rose paper from San Juan

1866 (16 April) Una Onza from San Juan, taxed "½"oz, with 1864 ½RPF as postage due



1 ounce from San Juan with 1864 ½RPF as postage due

1858 - OFFICIAL STAMPS OF SPAIN - MAIL TO PUERTO RICO

Official stamps were also used between Puerto Rico and Government Departments in Spain and the other Colonies. All inter-island or overseas use of Official stamps to or from Puerto Rico is very scarce.

1860 (18 July) Media Onza + Una Onza (x2) from Barcelona to Puerto Rico

½ ounce +
1 ounce(x2)
from Spain
to Puerto Rico



1866 (November) Una Onza from Habana to Puerto Rico via Madrid



1 ounce
from
Havana
to Puerto
Rico via
Madrid

1858 ISSUE & 1864 ISSUE - MIXED FRANKINGS

Although the 1858 issue was generally replaced with a new issue in 1864, stamps from the 1858 issue can be found used as late as 1869. Mixed frankings between the 1858 and 1864 issues are known, but they are very scarce.

1866 (11 June) 2RPF (1858) + 1RPF (1864) to Spain via London, charged 2 Reales



Mixed franking: 1858 2RPF + 1864 1RPF to Spain. Rare!

1867 (30 April) 1RPF (1858) (x10) + ½RPF (1864) (10½oz) from San Juan to Fajardo



Mixed franking: 1858 1RPF(x10) + 1864 ½RPF. Rare!

1864 ISSUE

The 1864 issue was based on a new design, and it was the last issue in the Reales de Plata Fuerte currency. The earliest known use of this issue in Puerto Rico is from August 1864. They were in use until the end of 1867 when a new currency was introduced. As with previous issues, the 2RPF denomination is particularly scarce on cover.

1867 (10 June) 2RPF to Madrid via England



2RPF to Spain via England

1867 (7 September) 2RPF (rate for 2oz) from San Juan to Gurabo



2RPF from San Juan to Gurabo

1865 (27 October) 1RPF (x3) to Spain via England, charged 2 Reales



1RPF(x3) to Spain via England

1864 ISSUE USED AS POSTAGE DUE ON INCOMING MAIL

Before Puerto Rico joined the UPU in 1877, the postage for mail from foreign countries to Puerto Rico could only be paid to the border, and the addressee had to pay the inland rate as a form of postage due. At times this was paid with stamps which were added to the letter and postmarked, but in most cases it seems to have been paid in cash.

1866 (29 June) 80c. from Paris to Puerto Rico, charged "½"oz, with 1864 ½RPF as postage due



½RPF as postage due on cover from France - Rare!

1865 (9 June) (1d.)+(4d.) from Barbados to Puerto Rico, charged "1"oz and with "S.TOMAS" marking, with 1864 1RPF as postage due



1RPF as postage due on cover from Barbados - The Barbados stamps replaced but still unique!

1864 ISSUE - CAPITANIA GENERAL DE PUERTO RICO MAIL

The Capitanía General de Puerto Rico was the highest official in charge of the army, the defence of the colony and the territory in general. It was a very important position and the Capitanía General had more power than the Governor of the island. Mail from the Capitanía General is very scarce as it would mainly have been sent to other officials.

1867 (10 August) From Capitanía General to England with 1RPF (x2), through the British Post Office, charged 1/-

From Capitanía General to England with 1RPF(x2)



1868 (April) From Capitanía General to England with "Franco" marking, via Spanish Consulate in New York, taxed "2"d.



From Capitanía General to England via New York without stamps

1868 ISSUE

In 1868 the currency was changed to Centimos and Escudos, with 100 Centimos = 1 Escudo, and the exchange rate with the previous currency Reales de Plata Fuerte was 1RPF = 25 Centimos. The new inland postal rate became 10c per half ounce. The 5c stamp of this issue was only issued in Cuba, but examples used in Puerto Rico are known.

1868 (4 March) 5c(x2) (rate for ½oz) from San Juan to Cabo Rojo. 5c is rare used in Puerto Rico



5c in pair from San Juan. Rare!

1868 (22 January) 10c(x7) (rate for 3½oz) from San Juan to Guayama



10c(x7) from San Juan to Guayama

1868 ISSUE

This issue consisted of four denominations, 5c, 10c, 20c and 40c. The 5c and 40c values are very scarce on covers from Puerto Rico. The issue was only in use for one year and was replaced at the end of the year.

1868 (10 February) 20c(x2) (rate to Spain via England) to Madrid, through the British Post Office

**20c(x2) to Spain
via England**



**40c(x2)+20c from
San Juan to Juana Diaz.
40c very scarce on cover!**

1868 (14 May) 20c+40c(x2) (rate for 5oz) from San Juan to Juana Diaz



1869 ISSUE

The 1869 issue is very similar to the 1868 issue, except that it has the year 1869 instead of 1868 in the value tablet. The colours of the denominations were changed as well, 10c from blue to red, 20c from green to orange, and 40c from rose to violet.

1869 (18 November) 10c(x2) (rate by Spanish mail) to Spain



**10c(x2) to Spain
by Spanish mail**

1869 (10 November) 40c (rate to Spain via England) to Malaga, through the British Post Office



**40c to Spain
via England**

1870 (10 January) 20c(x2) (rate to Spain via England) to Cadiz, through the British Post Office



**20c(x2) to Spain
via England**

1869 ISSUE

This issue only consisted of three denominations, 10c, 20c and 40c. The 40c value is scarce on covers from Puerto Rico. The issue was only in use for one year and was replaced at the end of the year.

1869 (14 October) 10c(x3) (10c for ½oz + 20c registration fee) registered from Arecibo to San Juan



Registered mail with 10c(x3)

1869 (24 October) 20c (rate for 1oz) from San Juan to Yabucoa, stamp with Mayor's Seal



20c cancelled with Yabucoa Mayor's Seal

1870 ISSUE

The 1870 issue also consisted of three denominations, 10c, 20c and 40c. The 40c value is very scarce on covers from Puerto Rico. The issue was only in use for one year and was replaced with an issue in a new currency at the end of the year.

1870 (21 April) 10c(x3) (10c for ½oz + 20c registration fee) registered from Arecibo to San Juan



Registered mail with 10c(x3)

1870 (10 April) 20c+40c (rate for 3/4 oz?) to Cadiz, through the British Post Office



20c+40c to Spain via England

1871 ISSUE

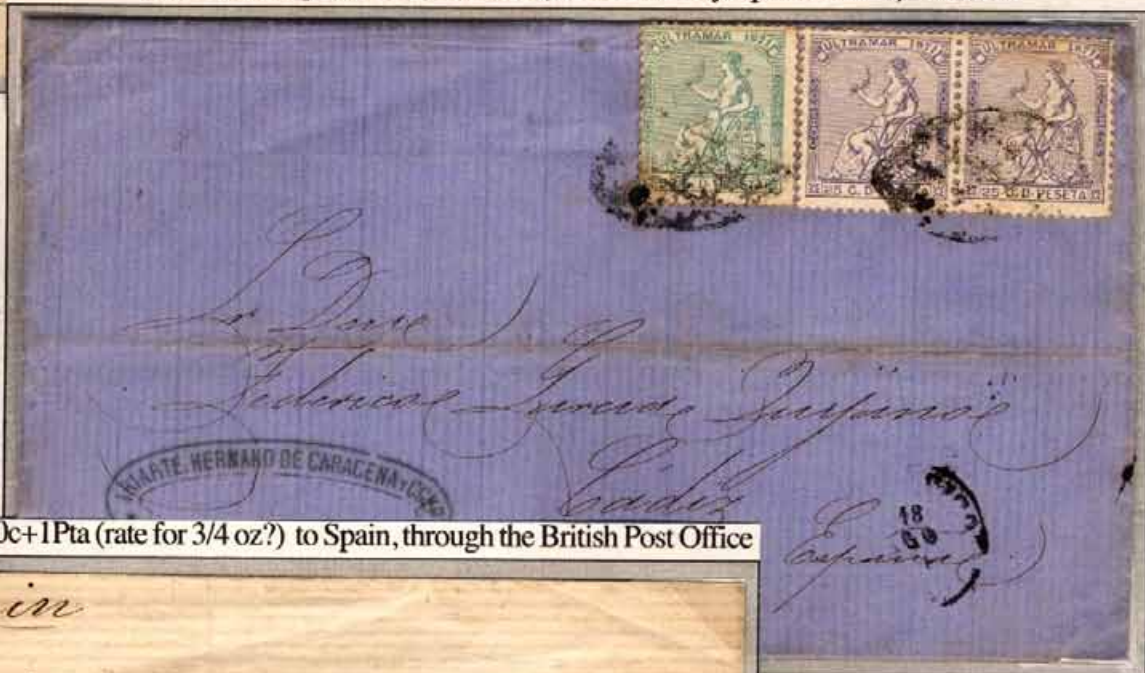
In 1871 the currency was changed to Centimos (de Peseta), and Pesetas, with 100 Centimos = 1 Peseta, and the exchange rate with the previous currency Centimos (de Escudo) was 10 CdE = 25 CdP. The new inland postal rate became 25 CdP per half ounce. This issue was in use for two years and was replaced by a new issue in 1873.

1871 (2 November) 25c(x2) (rate by Spanish mail) to Cadiz



**25c(x2) to Spain
by Spanish mail**

1871 (18 August) 25c(x2)+50c (double rate by Spanish mail) to Cadiz



**50c+25c(x2) to Spain
by Spanish mail**

1871 (11 September) 50c+1Pta (rate for 3/4 oz?) to Spain, through the British Post Office



**50c+1Pta to Spain
via England**

1871 ISSUE USED AS POSTAGE DUE ON INCOMING MAIL

Before Puerto Rico joined the UPU in 1877, the postage for mail from foreign countries to Puerto Rico could only be paid to the border, and the addressee had to pay the inland rate as a form of postage due. At times this was paid with stamps which were added to the letter and postmarked, but in most cases it seems to have been paid in cash.

1872 (30 March) Prepaid from Germany to Puerto Rico via England, charged "1" rate, with 1871 25c as postage due



25c as postage due on cover from Germany - Rare!

1872 (15 April) 6d.(x2) from England to Puerto Rico, charged "1" rate, with 1871 25c as postage due



25c as postage due on cover from England - Rare!

1873 ISSUE

The 1873 issue was the last of the joint issues used in both Puerto Rico and Cuba. This issue consisted of three denominations, 25c, 50c and 1 Peseta. They were only in use for some seven months in Puerto Rico, since they were then overprinted with a signature, thus creating the first true Puerto Rican stamp issue.

1873 (16 July) 12½c(x2) (rate for ½oz) from San Juan to Yabucoa, stamps with Mayor's Seal



12½c stamp used in Puerto Rico.

Unique - the only known example!

1873 (3 September) 25c(x2) (inter-island rate) to Santo Domingo, stamps with Maltese Cross



25c(x2) to Santo Domingo, with Maltese Cross

1873 (13 May) 50c(x2) (rate via England) to Cadiz, through the British Post Office, sent by Postal Administrator



50c(x2) to Spain via England, with Maltese Cross and Postal Administrator's mark

1873 - THE FIRST PUERTO RICAN STAMP ISSUE

The local currency used in Puerto Rico had become worth much more than that used in Cuba, and this created an illegal trade of stamps from Cuba to Puerto Rico. To prevent this, Puerto Rico started to issue their own stamps as of July 1873. The general issue of 1873 was overprinted with the signature of the Interventor General of Puerto Rico.

1874 (26 June) 50c(x2) (rate to Spain via England) to Cadiz, through the British Post Office



**50c(x2) to Spain
via England**

1875 (27 January) 1Pta(x2) (double rate via England) to Cadiz, through the British Post Office



**1Pta(x2) to Spain
via England**

1874 (c.) 1Pta(x2)+25c(x3) (double rate via England+75c registration fee) registered to Spain



**Registered with 1Pta(x2)+25c(x3)
to Spain via England.
Rare!**

1874 ISSUE

The 1874 issue was also produced by overprinting the general issue (used in Cuba), but now two signatures were overprinted, those of the Interventor General and the Capitan General of Puerto Rico. This issue only consisted of one value, 25c, which was the internal letter rate per half ounce.

1875 (17 February) 25c(x2) (rate by Spanish mail) to Spain

25c(x2) to Spain
by Spanish mail



Registered mail
with 25c(x5)

1874 (2 November) 25c(x5) (75c rate for 1½oz + 50c registration fee) from Mayaguez to San Juan



1875 ISSUE

The 1875 issue was the third issue produced by overprinting the general issue (used in Cuba), and again two signatures were overprinted, those of the Interventor General and the Capitan General of Puerto Rico.

1875 (20 October) 25c(x2) (underpaid, rate was 1Pta via England) to Italy, taxed "18" decimes, with three Postage Due stamps

25c(x2) to Italy via England, taxed and with Postage Due stamps



1875 (2 January) 50c (rate for 1oz) from Juana Diaz to Ponce

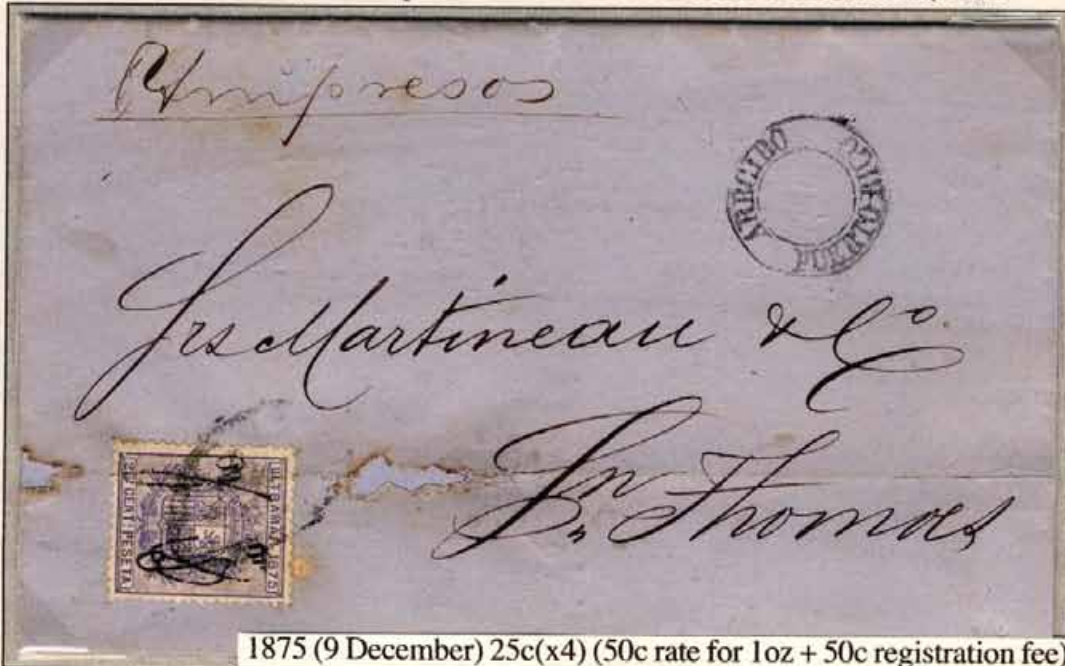


50c from Juana Diaz to Ponce

1875 ISSUE

This issue consisted of three values, 25c, 50c and 1 Peseta. The 1 Peseta value is very scarce on cover. The issue was in use for one year only, and was replaced by a new issue at the end of the year.

1875 (14 October) 25c on printed matter from Arecibo to St Thomas, DWI



**Printed Matter
to St Thomas, DWI**

1875 (9 December) 25c(x4) (50c rate for 1oz + 50c registration fee) from Mayaguez to San Juan

**Registered mail
with 25c(x4)**



1875 (28 December) 1Pta to Mexico, by British mail, charged "25cs"



**1Pta to Mexico
by British mail**

1876 FIRST ISSUE

The first 1876 issue was the fourth issue produced by overprinting the general issue (used in Cuba), and again two signatures were overprinted, those of the Interventor General and the Capitan General of Puerto Rico. There were three denominations, 25c, 50c and 1 Peseta. This issue was replaced by the second 1876 issue in June 1876.

1876 (3 June) 25c(x2) (inter-island rate) to Santo Domingo



25c(x2) to Santo Domingo

1876 (27 March) 1Pta (rate to Spain via England) to Cadiz, but taxed "1.10" Ptas



1Pta to Spain via England

1876 SECOND ISSUE

The second 1876 issue was produced because a large number of stamps from the first 1876 issue were stolen at the main Post Office. Therefore the first 1876 issue was invalidated and the remaining stock of that issue were overprinted with a third signature, and they were issued in June 1876. Only the 25c and 1 Peseta values were produced.

1876 (16 September) 25c(x2) (rate by Spanish mail) to Spain



**25c(x2) to Spain
by Spanish mail**

1876 (27 August) 1Pta (rate to Spain via England) to Cadiz, but taxed "1.10" Ptas



**1Pta to Spain
via England**

1876 (10 November) 1Pta(x2) (double rate to Spain via England) from Mayaguez to Spain



**1Pta(x2) to Spain
via England**

1876 SECOND ISSUE & 1877 ISSUE - MIXED FRANKING

Although the 1876 issue was invalidated by the end of the year, before the 1877 issue was in use, one example of a mixed franking between these two issues is known anyway. Obviously the 1876 stamp was accepted by the Post Office despite the fact that it was no longer valid.

1877 (6 August) 25c (1876-II) and 10c+15c (1877) (inter-island rate) to St Thomas, DWI



Mixed franking: 1876-II 25c + 1877 10c+15c.

Unique - the only known example of mixed franking between these issues!

INWARD MAIL FROM THE AMERICAS

Mail from North America and other islands in the West Indies, could only be prepaid to the border, and the addressee had to pay the inland rate as a form of postage due. At times this was paid with stamps which were added to the letter and postmarked, but in most cases it seems to have been paid in cash.

1865 (10 June) From New York, posted in Cuba with 1864 IRPF(x2), to San Juan



**From New York,
posted in Cuba**

1872 (27 November) From Martinique with 25c(x2) to Guayama, by British mail, charged "20" c



**From Martinique
by British mail,
charged "20" c**

1873 (22 February) From USA with 1870 3c(x6) (18c rate 1867-75) to Mayaguez, charged "2" rates



**From USA to Mayaguez,
charged "2" rates**

1877 ISSUE

The 1877 issue was the first with stamps inscribed "Puerto Rico", but the design is based on the previous issue. There were five denominations, 5c, 10c, 15c, 25c and 50c. Again, it was only in use for one year.

1877 (19 November) 5c(x2)+15c (inland rate) from Mayaguez to San Juan



5c(x2)+15c from Mayaguez

1877 (24 October) 25c(x2) (inter-island rate) from Mayaguez to St Thomas, DWI



25c(x2) to St Thomas, DWI

1877 (13 May) 50c (ship rate) to Italy, by British mail, with Postal Administrator's mark



50c to Italy, with Postal Administrator's marking

1877 ISSUE - OVERSEAS RATE CHANGES

On the 1 May 1877 Puerto Rico joined the GPU (forerunner of the UPU), and this affected the overseas rates to other GPU countries. The rate to Europe was first reduced from 1Pta to 85c, and later to 50c, per half ounce.

1877 (13 April) 50c(x2) (pre GPU rate to Spain via England) to Cadiz



**50c(x2) to Spain
via England**

1877 (26 May) 10c+25c(x3) (85c GPU rate) to Italy, via England



**10c+25c(x3)
to Italy via England**

1877 (26 May) 10c(x2)+50c(x3) (170c, double 85c GPU rate) to Spain, via England



**10c(x2)+50c(x3)
to Spain
via England**

1878 ISSUE

The 1878 issue was based on the 1877 design, but with a changed year, and the five denominations were not all the same and they were also in different colours, 5c, 10c, 25c, 50c and 1Pta. As with the previous issue, it was only in use for one year. Apparently most of the stock of the 10c stamp was lost in a fire in the Main Post Office.

1878 (9 December) 25c(x2) (50c GPU rate) to New York



25c(x2) to New York

1878 (20 September) 50c (GPU rate) on hand illustrated cover to Madrid, via England



50c on hand illustrated cover to Spain

1878 ISSUE - OVERSEAS RATES

The packet rate to GPU/UPU countries in Europe was established to 50c per half ounce, or 1 Peseta per ounce. A lower ship rate of 25c per half ounce also starts to appear, especially to North America, but also to other countries.

1878 (3 June) 25c(x2) (50c GPU rate) to Spain, by German mail

**25c(x2) to Spain
by German Mail**



1878 (20 March) 25c(x4) (double 50c GPU rate) to Italy, via England



**25c(x4) to Italy
via England**

1878 (11 August) 50c(x2)
(double 50c GPU rate) to Italy

**50c(x2) to Italy
via England**



1878 & 1879 & 1880 ISSUES - MIXED FRANKINGS

Despite the fact that the issues of 1878, 1879 and 1880 were only valid for one year, mixed frankings between these issues exist. They were obviously tolerated by the Postal Officials but are all very rare!

1879 (10 November) 50c (1878) & 10c+15c (1879) (rate for 3/4oz?) to Spain. Unique - the only known 1878+1879 mixed franking



Mixed franking: 1878 50c + 1879 10c+15c.

Unique - the only known example of mixed franking between these issues!

1880 (9 November) 5c (1878) and 10c(x2) (1880) (25c ship rate) from Mayaguez to Canada. Very rare!



Mixed franking: 1878 5c + 1880 10c(x2) - Very rare!

1879 ISSUE

The 1879 issue was a continuation of the previous issues, again with a changed year, but now with six denominations as well as different colours, 5c, 10c, 15c, 25c, 50c and 1Pta. This issue was also only in use for one year.

1879 (13 September) 1Pta (double 50c UPU rate) to Spain, via England



1Pta to Spain via England

1879 (18 June) Official mail from Spain to Puerto Rico, sent without stamps, taxed "60"¢ because sent by French mail, with 10c+50c as Postage Due



10c+50c used as Postage Due on taxed Official cover from Spain - Unique!

1879 ISSUE - RATE CHANGES

The overseas rate to other UPU countries was reduced further, from 50c to 40c per half ounce. The rates to non-UPU countries varied depending on the destination, but one rate was 90c per half ounce, more than twice the UPU rate.

1879 (11 November) 15c+25c (40c UPU rate) to New York

**15c+25c
to New York**



1879 (24 July) 5c(x6)+10c+25c(x2) (90c non-UPU rate) to Haiti



**5c(x6)+10c+25c(x2)
on 90c rate cover
to Haiti.**

Rare!

PRE-UPU INWARD MAIL

Mail from overseas countries could only be prepaid to the border, and the addressee had to pay the inland rate as a form of postage due. At times this was paid with stamps which were added to the letter and postmarked, but in most cases it seems to have been paid in cash. The UPU changed all this, so from May 1877 the postage could be paid all the way.

1874 (16 February) 1/- (x2) (double rate 1863-77) from Manchester to San Juan, charged "3" rates

**From England to
Puerto Rico
charged "3" rates**



1877 (16 February) 1Fr from Le Havre to San Juan, charged "2" rates



**From France to
Puerto Rico
charged "2" rates**

1877 (15 February) 10Pf+50Pf(x2) from Bremen to San Juan, charged "1" rate

**From Germany
to Puerto Rico
charged "1" rate**



1880 ISSUE

The 1880 issue introduced a new design which was to be used throughout the 1880's. It was also the last issue to use Centimos and Pesetas as the currency. This issue consisted of 13 denominations between 1/4c and 1Pta. This is another issue which was only in use for one year.

1880 (August) 5c+10c+25c (40c UPU rate) to Italy, via England

**5c+10c+25c
to Italy**



1880 (22 March) 40c
(UPU rate) to England



40c to England

1880 (14 July) 25c (ship rate) from Mayaguez to Boston

25c to USA



1880 ISSUE - PRINTED MATTERS & MIXED FRANKING WITH 1881 ISSUE

The exact rates for printed matters to other countries is not known but the example below shows a rate of 7c. Mixed frankings between the 1880 and 1881 issues are very rare - only one example has been recorded!

1880 (15 November) 3c+4c on printed matter from Mayaguez to Montreal



Printed matter with 3c+4c to Canada

1881 (15 March) 5c+15c (1880) and 8c (1881) from Mayaguez to San Juan



Mixed franking: 1880 5c+15c and 1881 8c.

Unique - the only known example of mixed franking between these issues!

1881 ISSUE

The 1881 issue introduced a new currency, Milesimas, Centavos and Pesos, with 1,000 Milesimas = 100 Centavos = 1 Peso. The exchange rate with the previous currency was 5 Centimos de Peseta = 1 Centavo de Peso. This issue was also the last of the ones used for one year only and it consisted of 13 denominations, ½m to 20c.

1881 (March) 1c+2c+5c (8c UPU rate) from Arecibo (straight line postmark) to Paris, by French mail via New York



1c+2c+5c to France, by French mail

1881 (August) 8c(x6) (48c, 6-fold UPU rate = 3 ounces) from Arroyo to France



8c(x6) 6-fold UPU rate to France

1881 ISSUE - REGISTERED MAIL

Registered mail to foreign countries became more frequent with the UPU membership. Fixed registration fees were introduced and apparently they were 10c inland and to North America, and 20c to other countries.

1881 (23 July) 5c(x3) (5c ship rate + 10c registration fee) registered from Mayaguez to Canada



Registered to Canada with 5c(x3)

1881 (18 December) 3c(x5) (5c ship rate + 10c registration fee) registered from Mayaguez to Canada



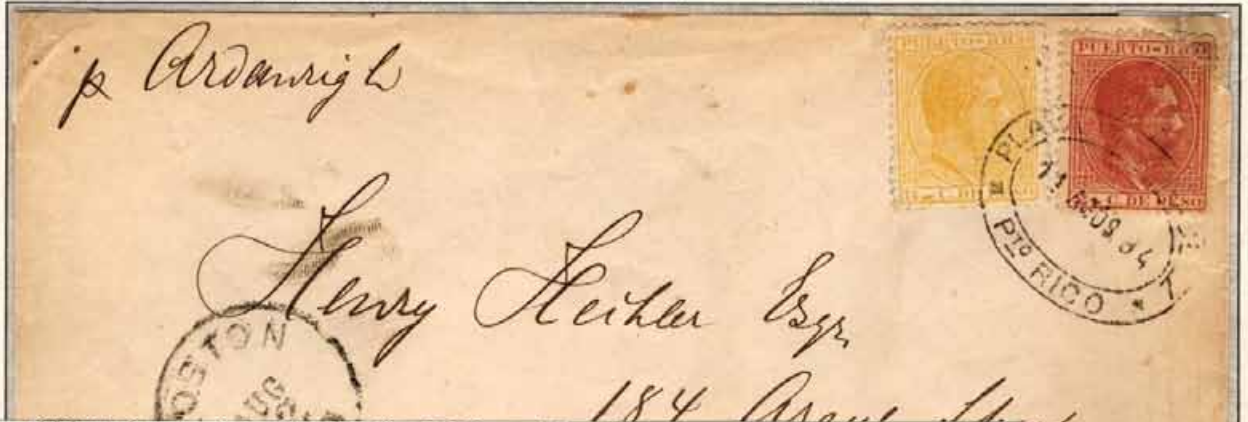
Registered to Canada with 3c(x5)

1882-87 ISSUE

The 1882-87 issue consisted of 15 denominations, ½m to 80c, issued in 1882, and a number of later reprints. The design does no longer incorporate the year of issue, which had been the case since 1868. This issue remained in use throughout the 1880's and was not replaced until 1890.

1884 (11 August) 2c+3c (5c ship rate) from Mayaguez to Canada

2c+3c
to Canada



1888 (7 October) 1c+2c+5c (8c UPU rate) from Ponce to France



1c+2c+5c
to France

1888 (8 January) 1c+3c+5c(x4) (24c, triple UPU rate) from Ponce to Hamburg, by Spanish mail

1c+3c+5c(x4)
triple UPU
rate to
Germany



1882-87 ISSUE - REGISTERED MAIL

Registered mail to foreign countries became more frequent with the UPU membership. Fixed registration fees were introduced and apparently they were 10c inland and to North America, and 20c to other countries.

1890 (20 April) 5c(x2)+10c (2x5c double ship rate + 10c registration fee) registered to New York



Registered to USA with 5c(x2)+10c

1888 (19 December) 1c+5c(x7) (16c double UPU rate + 20c registration fee) registered to Argentina



Registered to Argentina with 1c+5c(x7), with DWI Registration and French Ligne F Paquebot markings

1882-87 ISSUE - RETURN RECEIPTS (AVIS DE RECEPTION)

Return Receipts (Avis de Reception), which allowed the sender of a registered letter to receive, on payment of an additional fee, an acknowledgement that the letter had been safely delivered to the addressee, were introduced when the GPU/UPU was formed in 1875. In Puerto Rico the fee for this service was 2c.

1883 (23 August) Avis de Reception with 1c(x2) from Mayaguez to Hannover

Avis de reception with 1c(x2). Rare!



1887 (25 December) Avis de Reception with 2c, attached to registered cover with 1c+8c(x3) (15c triple ship rate + 10c registration fee) to Canada

Avis de reception with 2c attached to its original registered cover to Canada with 1c+8c(x3).

Very rare!



1882-87 ISSUE & 1890-97 ISSUE - MIXED FRANKINGS

Mixed frankings between the 1882-87 and 1890-97 issues are quite scarce. The 1882-87 issue was not invalidated when the new issue was released in 1890, although old stocks were withdrawn. But any old stamps in the hands of the public were allowed to be used.

1891 (26 July) 3c(x2) (1882-87) + 2c (1890) (8c UPU rate) from Ponce to Paris

**Mixed
franking:
1882-87 3c(x2)
and 1890 2c**



1891 (12 September) 3c (1882-87) + 5c (1890) (8c UPU rate) from Yauco to Paris



Paris

**Mixed franking:
1882-87 3c and 1890 5c**

1891 (22 May) 1m(x2) (1882-87) + ½m (1890) (inland rate) printed matter to Aguadilla

**Mixed franking:
1882-87 1m(x2) and 1890 ½m**



INWARD UPU-MAIL

When Puerto Rico joined the GPU/UPU in May 1877, postal rates became less complicated, and mail addressed to Puerto Rico was normally paid all the way. Thus the addressees no longer had to pay for the inland delivery.

1879 (13 September) 40centesimi from Genova to San Juan

From Italy to Puerto Rico



1879 (3 March) 12cents (inter-island rate 1878-79) from St Thomas to San Juan



From the Danish West Indies to Puerto Rico

1881 (11 March) GB 4d. from Port-au-Prince to San Juan

From Haiti (British Post Office) to Puerto Rico



POSTAL STATIONERY

Postal Stationery cards were introduced in 1877, when Puerto Rico joined the GPU/UPU. The first issue was not used much, but the 1885-86 and 1890-96 issues were more popular with the public and businesses. 1884 (31 December) 3c card (1885 issue) (inland rate 1881-89) from Añasco to Mayaguez



3c 1885 postmarked the day before it was issued!

1893 (23 November) 3c card (1892) (UPU rate 1890-98) from Mayaguez to Hamburg



3c 1892 to Germany

1894 (26 November) 2c card (1894) (inland rate 1890-98) from San Juan to Mayaguez



2c 1894 to Mayaguez

FOREIGN REPLY POSTCARDS SENT FROM PUERTO RICO

When Puerto Rico joined the GPU/UPU in 1877, according to GPU/UPU rules, the reply section of foreign postcards could be used from Puerto Rico. As with most small countries, foreign reply cards used in Puerto Rico are very scarce.

1885 (25 October) German 10Pf Reply card (1878) from San Juan to Germany



German Reply card from Puerto Rico to Germany

1896 (30 September) German 10Pf Reply card (1889) from Mayaguez to Hamburg



German Reply card from Puerto Rico to Germany

1893 "BARQUITO" ISSUE - THE ONLY STAMP EVER PRODUCED IN PUERTO RICO

In 1893 a stamp was issued to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the discovery of Puerto Rico by Columbus. The stamp was produced in San Juan and was only valid for one day, on 19 November 1893, and on inland mail.

1893 (19 November) 3c 1893 "Barquito" from Santurce to San Juan



From Santurce to San Juan

1893 (19 November) 3c 1893 "Barquito" from San Juan to Vega Baja



From San Juan to Vega Baja

1890-97 ISSUE

The 1890-97 issue was in fact four different issues, each consisting of 13 to 15 values between 1/2 milésima and 80 centavos with changed colours, and they were issued in 1890, 1891-92, 1894 (no 80c value) and 1896-97.

1898 (14 January) 6c 1897 (x4) (24c triple UPU rate) from San Juan to Barcelona

6c(x4)
triple UPU
rate to Spain



1894 (11 June) 4c(x2)+8c 1894 (16c double UPU rate) from Mayaguez to Egypt



ONA.

1895 (16 Dec) 3c 1891+
1c+4c 1894 to Austria

4c(x2)+8c double
UPU rate to Egypt

1c+3c+4c single
UPU rate to Austria



1890-97 ISSUE - SHIP MAIL

Apart from the regular UPU rate of 8c per 15 grams (from 1890), there was also a ship rate of 5c per 15 grams, which seems to have been used mainly to North America, although it is known to other destinations as well.

1892 (16 September) 2c+3c 1891-92 (5c ship rate) from Arroyo to New York



2c+3c
ship rate to USA

1896 (November) 5c 1896-97 (5c ship rate) on Paquebot cover from San Juan to New York



Paquebot cover
to New York

1891 (13 July) 5c(x2) 1890 (10c double ship rate) from Ponce to Paris



5c(x2)
double ship rate
to France

1890-97 ISSUE - TAXED MAIL

Ship mail franked with 5c was sometimes taxed if it was thought that the full UPU should have been paid. In the case of mail to North America, the tax marking was occasionally obliterated when it was found that the ship rate was correct.

1892 (11 December) 5c 1891-92 (8c UPU rate!) taxed with "T" and "3"c, to Berlin



Taxed to Germany

1897 (31 October) 5c 1896-97 (5c ship rate) with obliterated "T", to New York



Obliterated Tax marking to New York

1893 (26 July) 1c 1890 + 2c(x2) 1891-92 (5c ship rate) with obliterated "T", to New York



Obliterated Tax marking to New York

1890-97 ISSUE - PRINTED MATTERS

The rates for printed matters were quite low; in the mid 1890's the inland rate was 1 milésima per 50 grams, and the foreign rates were 1 centavo per 50 grams for ship mail, and 2 centavos per 50 grams full UPU rate.

1894 (c.) 1m 1894 with Periodicos Franco marking, to Canovanas

Inland printed matter with 1 milésima



1896 (May) 1c(x2)+2c 1896-97 (4c double UPU rate) with Franco marking, to Paris



1c(x2)+2c printed matter to France, double UPU rate

1890 (c.) 1c 1890 (1c ship rate) with Franco marking, to New York



1c printed matter to New York, ship rate

1890-97 ISSUE - REGISTERED MAIL

In 1890 the registration fee was reduced from 10c/20c to 5 centavos, both inland and to all foreign countries, and registered mail could be used for ship mail as well as normal UPU mail.

1895 (17 April) $\frac{1}{2}m(x2)+1m+2m(x4)+2c(x3)+3c(x2)$ 1894 (8c UPU rate + 5c reg fee) to Austria



Registered to Austria with $\frac{1}{2}m(x2)+1m+2m(x4)+2c(x3)+3c(x2)$

1895 (7 October) 40c(x3) (1894) (23x5c ship rate + 5c reg fee) package from Mayaguez to Baltimore



Registered package to USA with 1894 40c(x3) - a very rare stamp on cover!

1890-97 ISSUE - MAIL WITH RETURN RECEIPTS (AVIS DE RECEPTION)

Return Receipts (Avis de Reception), which allowed the sender of a registered letter to receive, on payment of an additional fee, an acknowledgement that the letter had been safely delivered to the addressee, were introduced when the GPU/UPU was formed in 1875. In Puerto Rico the fee for this service was 2c. 1897 (8 April) 1c+40c(x2) 1897 with "A R" (Avis de Reception) marking, from San Juan to Spain



Registered with Return Receipt "A R", to Spain

Registered with Return Receipt "A R", to France

1895 (3 May) 2c(x2)+4c(x4)+6c 1894 with manuscript "A R Cayey" (Avis de Reception), from Cayey to France

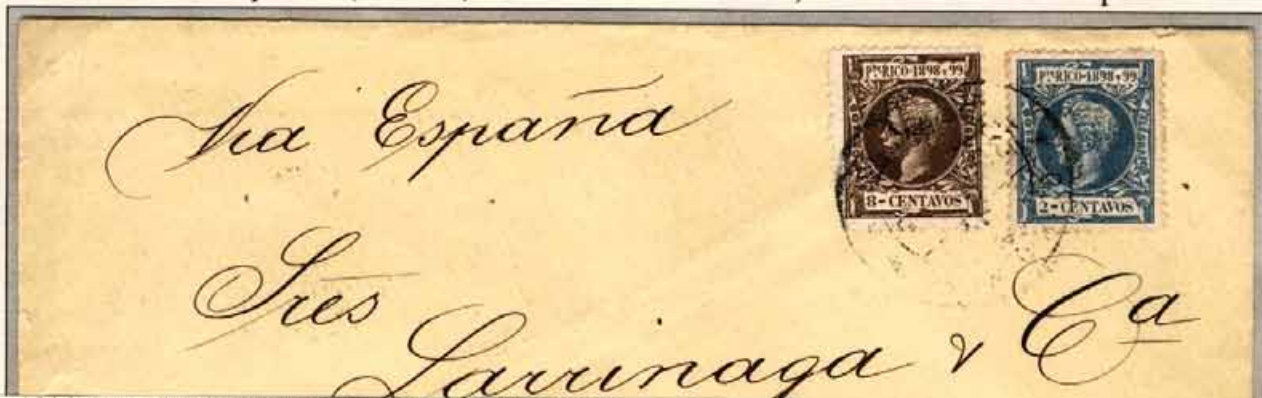


1898 ISSUE

The 1898 issue consisted of 20 denominations between 1 milésima and 2 Pesos. It was only in use for 9½ months and was used together with the Habilitado-overprinted stamps between June and October.

1898 (8 September) 2c+8c (8c UPU rate + 2c War Tax) from San Juan to Liverpool

2c+8c
UPU rate
+ War Tax
to England



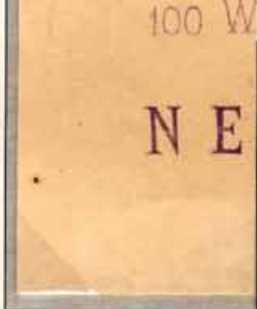
1898 (March) 3c+5c (8c UPU rate) to New York



3c+5c UPU rate to New York

100 W

1898 (8 August) 3c+20c (16c double UPU rate + 2c War Tax + 5c reg fee) to Spain



Registered
to Spain
with 3c+20c

1898 ISSUE - POSTAL STATIONERY

As with the 1890-97 issue, postcards were produced for the 1898 issue as well. For the first time, Puerto Rico issued reply postcards, and these are very scarce in used condition. All these cards were only in use for some 9 months.

1898 (12 February) 2c card (ship rate) to Madrid



2c card to Spain

1898 (27 August) 3c card (UPU rate) to Germany

*Sr. D.
Sabarrat
Barguon*



1898 (10 July) 1c reply card with 2c (3c UPU rate) to Germany

TAL

3c card to Germany



1c Reply card with 2c stamp to Germany. Rare!

En este lado debe escribirse solamente la dirección.

La otra tarjeta es para la respuesta.

1898 - WAR TAX (IMPUESTO DE GUERRA)

On 5 May 1898, a War Tax of 2c for letters and 5c for telegrams was introduced. 2c and 5c stamps of the 1890-97 issue were overprinted IMPUESTO DE GUERRA and some values were surcharged 2c or 5c as well. The War Tax was dropped in September.

1898 (29 May) 2c Impuesto de Guerra + 2c+6c 1898 (8c UPU rate + 2c War Tax) from San Juan to Spain



2c Impuesto de Guerra + 2c+6c to Spain

1898 (31 August) 5c Impuesto de Guerra + 2c+8c(x2) 1898 (16c double UPU rate + 2c War Tax + 5c reg fee) to New York



5c Impuesto de Guerra + 2c+8c(x2) registered to New York

1898 - HABILITADO PARA 1898 Y 99

Because of the Spanish-American War, supplies from Spain were irregular, including those of stamps, so stamps from the 1890-97 issue were brought back into use by overprinting them HABILITADO PARA 1898 Y 99 (valid during 1898 and 99). These overprinted stamps were only in use between June and October 1898.

1898 (14 July) 4c(x2) Habilitado (3c inland rate + 5c registration fee) registered from Ponce to Santurce



**Registered with 4c(x2)
Habilitado para 1898 y 99**

1898 (21 September) 8c Habilitado + 5c Impuesto (8c UPU rate + 5c reg fee) registered from Santurce to Italy



**Registered to Italy
with 8c Habilitado
para 1898 y 99 +
5c Impuesto de
Guerra**

REGISTERED OFFICIAL MAIL

Most Official mail during the 1880's and 1890's was franked with stamps. Only occasionally was Official mail sent without stamps, and it is quite exceptional to find registered Official mail without stamps.

1897 (4 December) Registered Official cover from the Post and Telegraph Administration in San Juan to Madrid



1898 (28 March) Registered Official cover in connection with election to the Cortez, from Isabela to Quebradillas



1898 - THE SPANISH AMERICAN WAR

American troops landed in Puerto Rico on 25 July 1898 and occupied about half the island before a peace treaty was signed on 13 August. Puerto Rico was not handed over to the United States until the 18 October 1898, so between these two dates, mail was transported across the "border" between the two halves of the island.

1898 (7 October) 3c Habilitado + 2c 1898 (3c inland rate + 2c War Tax) from Spanish San Juan to US Ponce

Across the line with 3c Habilitado para 1898 y 99 + 2c 1898



1898 (16 August) 2c(x2)+5c(x4) Impuesto (24c triple UPU rate) from US Ponce to New York, invalid, taxed with 3x 10c Postage due stamps



From US sector, with Puerto Rico stamps which were not valid, taxed with postage due

THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SYSTEM IN PUERTO RICO

Soon after US troops landed at Guanica on 25 July 1898, Puerto Rico's Spanish postal system began to come under the control of the United States. Control of the entire island was not taken by the United States until the 18 October 1898, and during this three month period, three postal systems operated simultaneously in the US occupied areas.

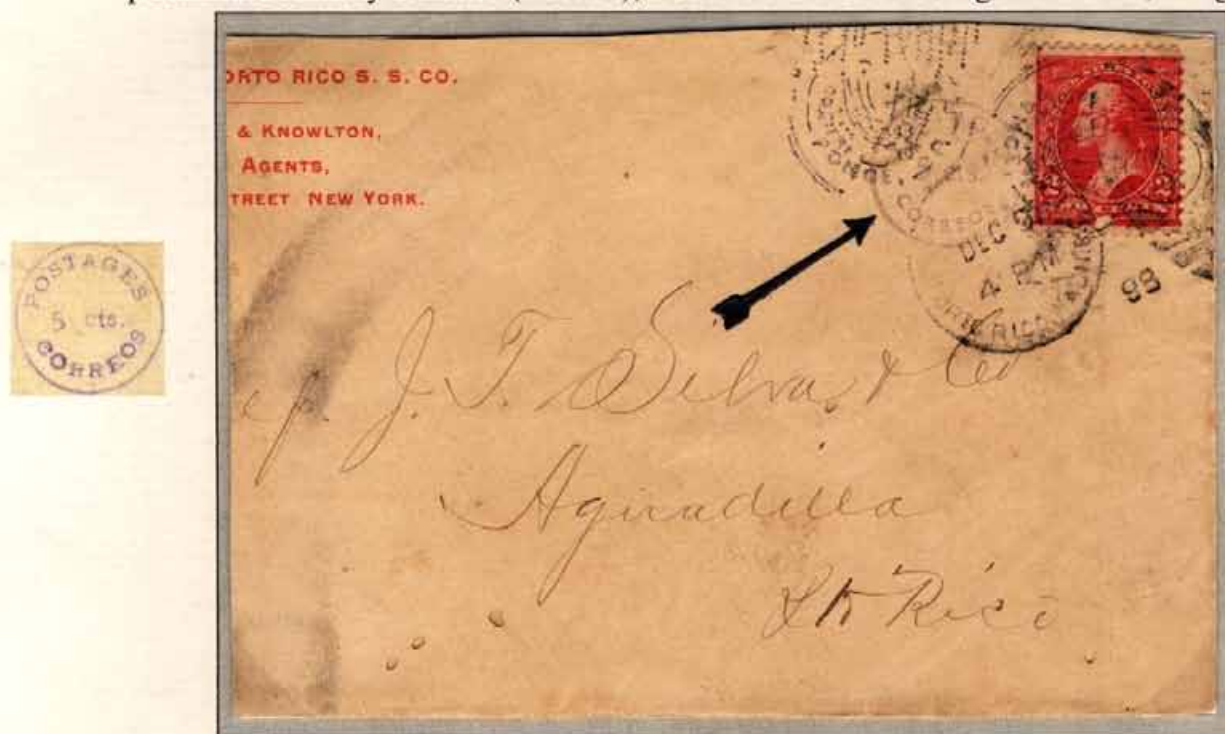
1. The US Military Station system operated each Post Office as a branch of the Washington DC Post Office. Military Station #1 opened at Playa de Ponce on 3 August 1898, and as more territory became occupied, the system expanded to eight numbered and thirteen un-numbered Post Offices.
2. To meet the needs of the civilian population, several local municipalities opened "local" mail services. While outside the Military mail system, they operated by authority of the Army commander. These municipalities issued their own stamps and/or markings.
3. A semi-autonomous Postal system also provided civilian mail service. Based on the old Spanish mail routes, it consisted of those towns in US occupied territory which had not been integrated into the Military Station system. After the 4 September 1898, these towns were required to use US stamps, but were not issued postmarks. These Post Offices used Spanish postmarks which had been left behind.

On 15 March 1899 the Military system was terminated and Puerto Rico's Post Offices no longer functioned as Washington branches, and the Department of Posts of Puerto Rico was established. On 1 May 1900 the Military Government ended and the Civil Government began with the Department of Posts becoming part of the US Post Office Department.

1898 PONCE PROVISIONAL

On 4 August 1898, 10 days after the US troops had landed, a special provisional 5 cents stamp was issued in Ponce, under the authority of the US Military Government, because of the lack of regular stamps. A rubber marking with the wording POSTAGES 5 cts. CORREOS was stamped on gummed paper, or directly on the covers, together with the control mark of the town Mayor. The 5 cents paid the local carrier fee between towns in Puerto Rico, or a municipal postal fee. Less than a handful of covers are known with this provisional, all with the marking stamped directly on the cover.

1898 (9 December) 5c Ponce Provisional marking + 2c US stamp (5c carrier/postal fee + 2c inland rate) postmarked Military Station 1 (= Ponce), from Porto Rico S S Co Agent in Ponce, to Aguadilla



Ponce Provisional - very rare, less than five covers known!

1898 COAMO PROVISIONAL

On 13 August 1898, a special provisional 5 cents stamp was issued in Coamo, under the authority of the US Military Government, because of the lack of regular stamps. A total of 500 stamps were printed, with the wording CORREOS 5 CTS. COAMO, in sheets of 10, and they all have the control mark of the town Mayor F Santiago. Only four covers are known with this provisional, three with a single stamp and one with a pair. Of these four covers, only two have the stamps tied by a postmark, on the other two the stamps are uncanceled. The stamps were only in use until the 4 September 1898.



The pair on the cover below is from position 8-9 in the sheet.

1898 (2 September) 5 c Coamo Provisional in pair (double UPU rate to USA) from Coamo to San Francisco via Ponce and New York, postmarked Military Station 1 (= Ponce), with New York Sep 10 98 and San Francisco Sep 15 98 markings



Unique - the only known pair of the Coamo Provisional on cover!

This is considered to be the most important and valuable item in Puerto Rico philately!

1898 YAUCO PROVISIONAL & ADJUNTAS EMERGENCY MARKING

In mid August 1898, a special provisional 5 cents stamp was issued in Yauco, under the authority of the US Military Government, because of the lack of regular stamps. A rubber marking with the wording POSTAGES 5 CENTAVOS CORREOS was stamped directly on the covers. The 5 cents paid the local carrier fee between towns in Puerto Rico, or a municipal postal fee. Only two covers are known with this provisional. Several other towns used the Mayor's Seal as an emergency marking to indicate that they did not have any stamps.

1898 (23 August) 5c Yauco Provisional (5c carrier/postal fee) via Guanica 23.AGO.98, to Mayaguez



Yauco Provisional - Very rare, only two known!

1898 (28 July) "Alcaldia Municipal Adjuntas" Mayor's Seal, manuscript "No hay Sellos en la expendencia" (There are no stamps in the expedition) and Adjuntas 28.JUL.98 cds, to Ponce, both towns in the US sector



Adjuntas Emergency marking - Unique!

MILITARY STATION # 1 - PONCE

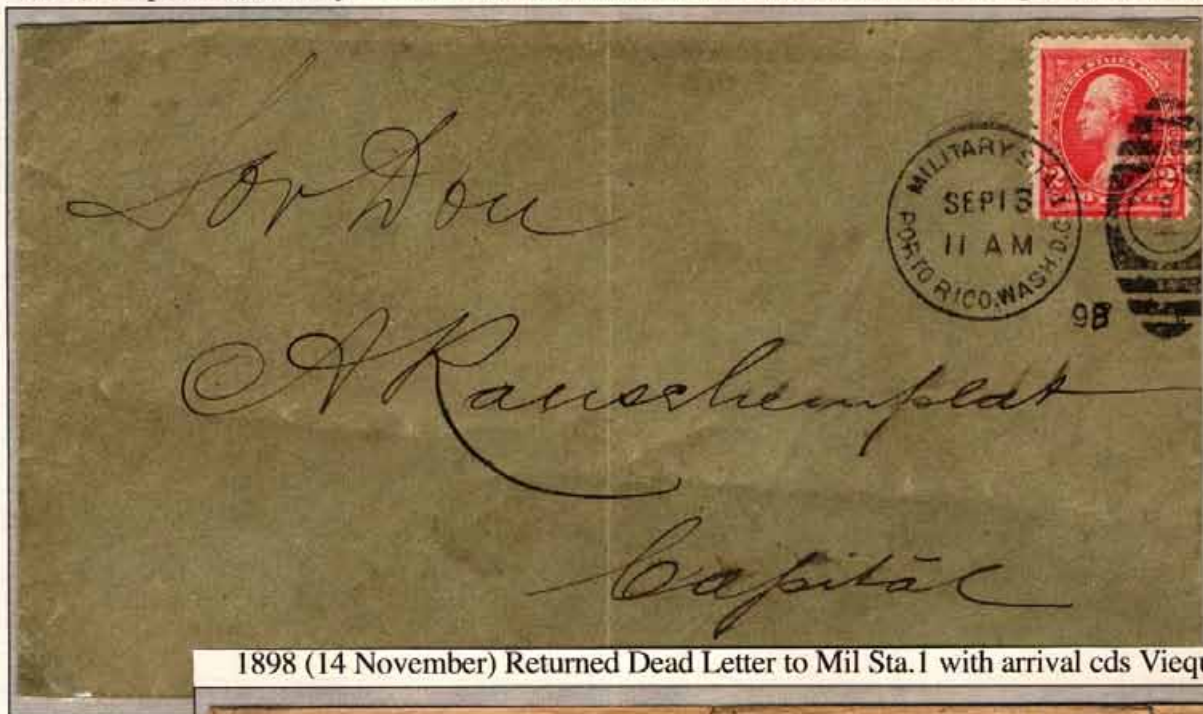
The Military Authorities opened Post Offices, "Military Stations", in the US sector of the island. The first Military Station was opened at Playa de Ponce, on the South coast, on 3 August 1898. It was moved to the town of Ponce on 17 September 1898.

1898 (4 August) M Sta No. 1 (skeleton type, second day of use) on 1c postcard (Soldier's rate) from Ponce to USA

M.STA.NO 1
skeleton type marking



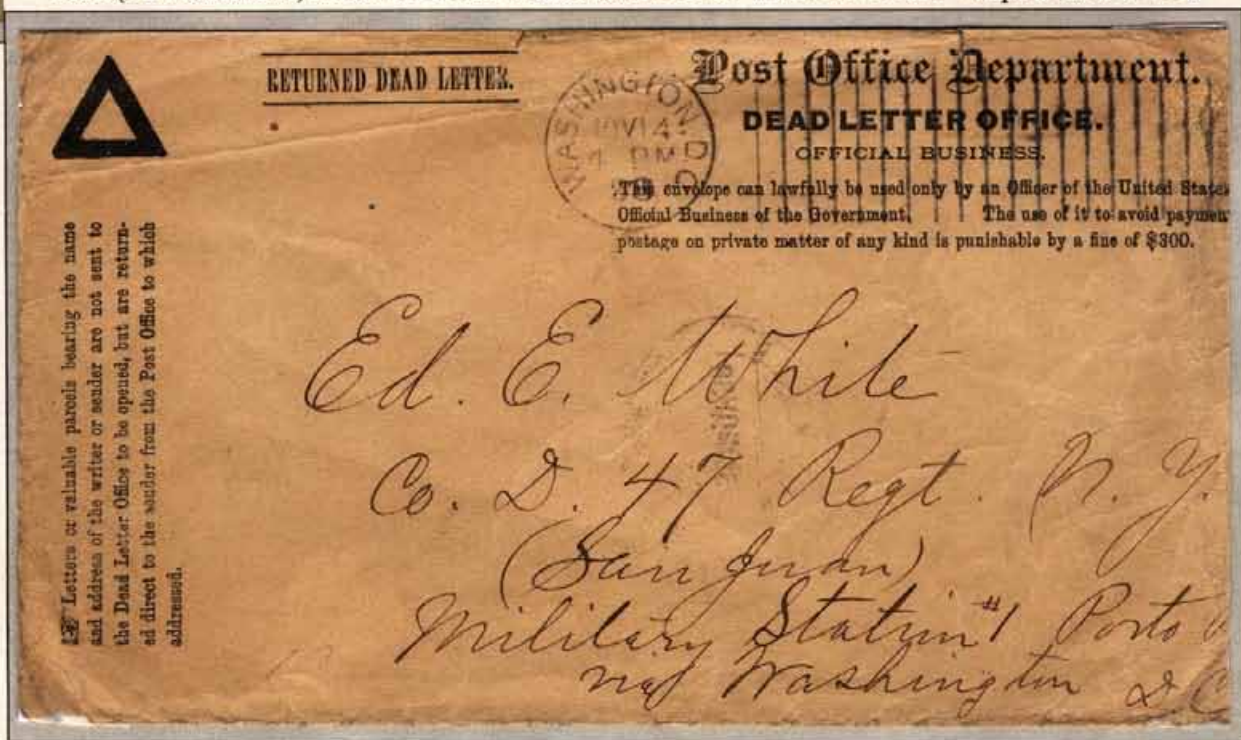
1898 (13 September) Military Sta. 1 on 2c (inland rate) across the line from US Ponce to Spanish San Juan



Across the line
from US Ponce
to Spanish
San Juan

1898 (14 November) Returned Dead Letter to Mil Sta. 1 with arrival cds Vieques 30.NOV.98

Returned
Dead Letter
to Military
Station #1



Letters or valuable parcels bearing the name and address of the writer or sender are not sent to the Dead Letter Office to be opened, but are returned direct to the sender from the Post Office to which addressed.

The envelope can lawfully be used only by an Officer of the United States Official Business of the Government. The use of it to avoid payment of postage on private matter of any kind is punishable by a fine of \$300.

MILITARY STATION # 2 - GUAYAMA

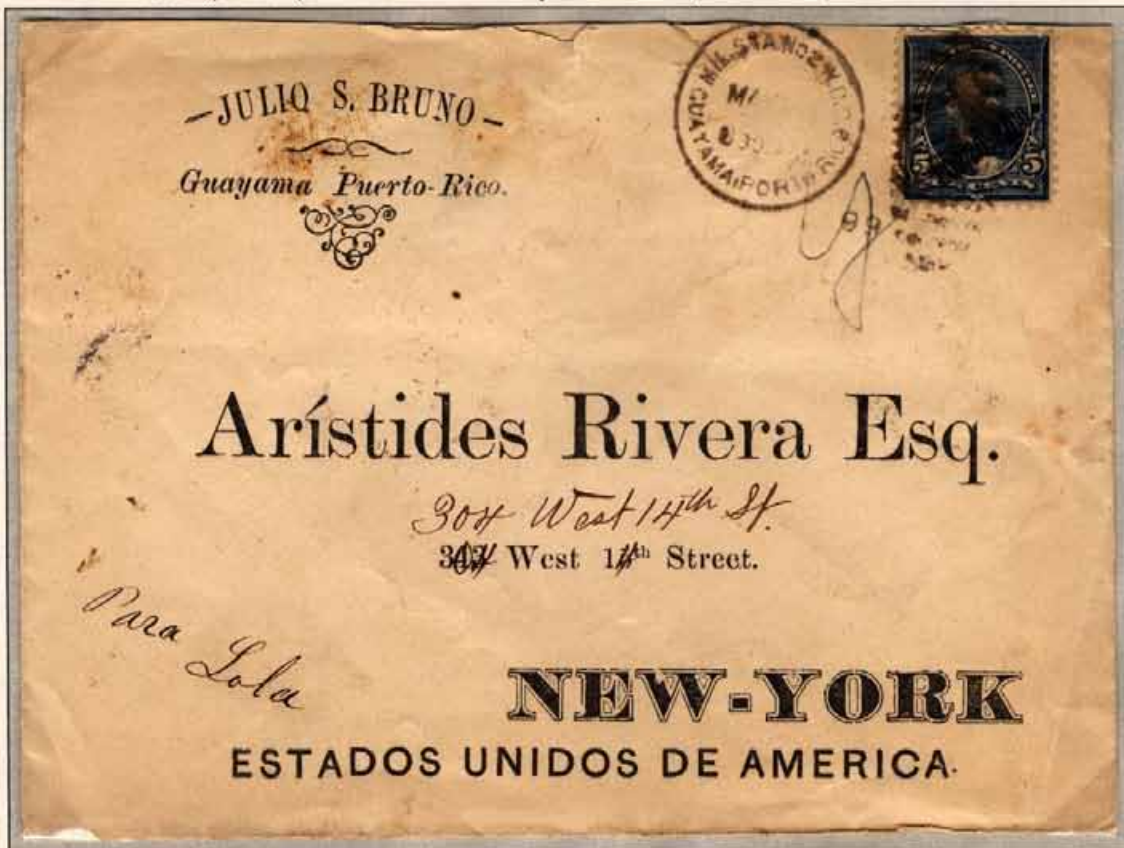
The second Military Station Post Office was opened in Guayama, in the South East of the island, on 23 August 1898.

1898 (11 October) Mil.St. Guayama (skeleton type) on Soldier's letter to USA, with 2c Postage Due stamp (soldier's rate)



MIL. ST. GUAYAMA skeleton type marking

1899 (March) Mil.Sta.No.2 Guayama on 5c (UPU rate) to New York



MIL. STA. No.2 GUAYAMA marking

MILITARY STATION # 3 - MAYAGUEZ

The third Military Station Post Office was opened in Mayaguez, on the West coast, on 23 August 1898.

1898 (20 September) Mi.St. Mayaguez (skeleton type) on 1c (printed matter rate) to New York



MI. ST. MAYAGUEZ skeleton type marking

1899 (16 February) Mayaguez Mil.Sta.No.3 on 5c (UPU rate) to Hamburg



MAYAGUEZ MIL. STA. No.3 marking

MILITARY STATION # 4 - SAN JUAN

The fourth Military Station Post Office was opened in San Juan, on the North coast, on Transfer Day, the 18 October 1898.

1898 (20 October) Mil.St. San Juan (skeleton type) on 2c (inland rate) to Aguadilla

MIL. STA. SAN JUAN
skeleton type marking



1899 (16 March) Mil.Sta.No.4 San Juan on 5c (UPU rate) to Barcelona



MIL. STA. No.4
SAN JUAN
marking, to Spain

1899 (28 February) Mil.Sta.No.4 San Juan on 2c+3c (5c UPU rate) to New York



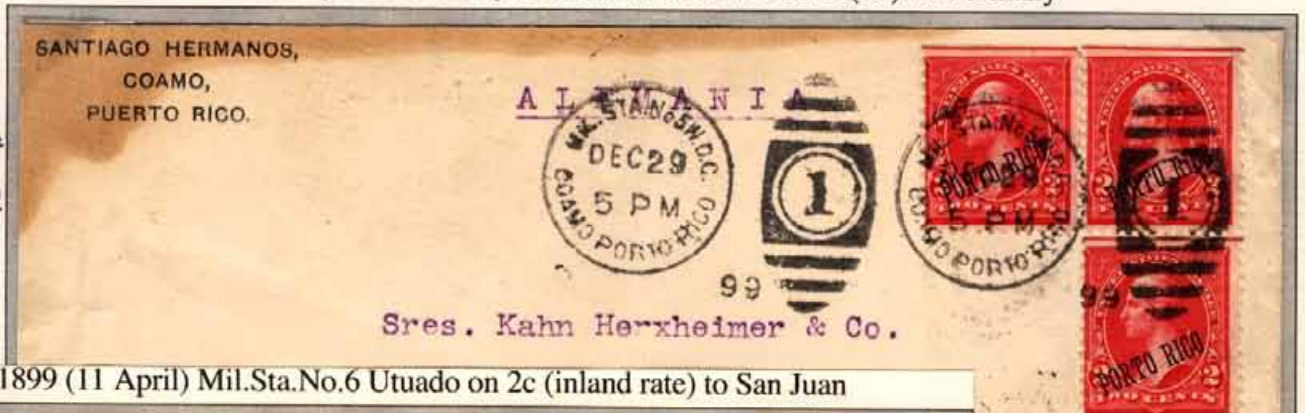
MIL. STA.
No.4
SAN JUAN
marking,
to USA

MILITARY STATION # 5 - COAMO; # 6 - UTUADO; # 7 - YAUCO

The fifth Military Station Post Office was opened in Coamo, in the South of the island, on 9 September 1898. The sixth Military Station Post Office was opened in Utuado, in the centre of the island, on 9 September 1898. The seventh Military Station Post Office was opened in Yauco, in the South West of the island, on 9 September 1898.

1899 (29 December) Mil.Sta.No.5 Coamo on 2c(x3) to Germany

**MIL. STA.
No.5
COAMO
marking**



1899 (11 April) Mil.Sta.No.6 Utuado on 2c (inland rate) to San Juan



**MIL. STA. No.6
UTUADO marking**

1899 (15 February) Mil.Sta.No.7 Yauco on 1c+2c(x2) (2x5c double UPU rate) taxed to New York



**MIL. STA. No.7
YAUCO marking**

MILITARY STATIONS - UN-NUMBERED

The un-numbered Military stations, a total of thirteen Post Offices, started to be opened from the 1 October 1898.

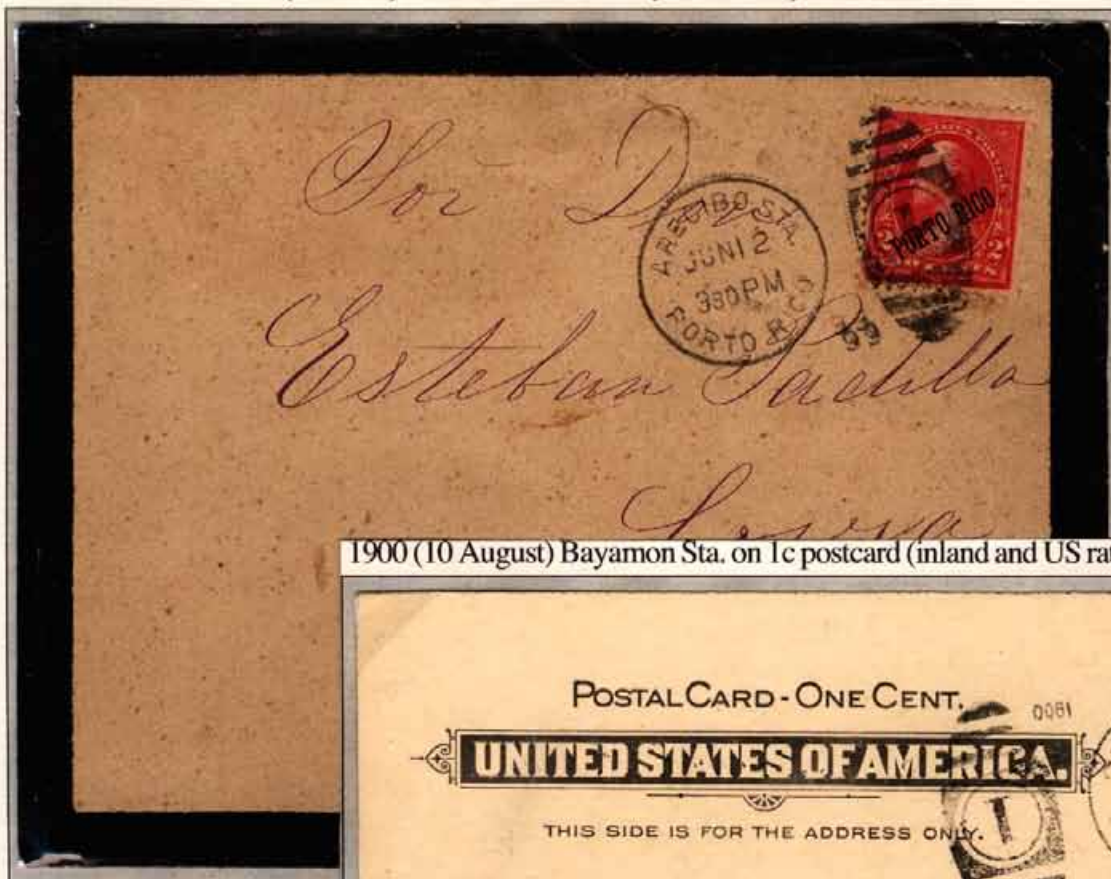
1899 (14 September) Humacao Sta. on 2c envelope (5c UPU rate!) taxed to Washington

**HUMACAO
STA.
marking**



1899 (12 June) Arecibo Sta. on 2c (inland rate) to Loiza

**ARECIBO STA.
marking**



1900 (10 August) Bayamon Sta. on 1c postcard (inland and US rate from May 1900) to USA

**BAYAMON STA.
marking**



MILITARY STATIONS - REGISTERED MAIL

The Military Stations had special handstamps for registered mail, which included the date, the Military Station number, and "Porto Rico".
1899 (18 February) Reg Mil Sta No.4 San Juan with 5c(x4) (10c double UPU rate + 10c reg fee) to New York



**REGISTERED
Military Station No.4
SAN JUAN marking**

1899 (12 January) Reg Mil Sta No.3 Mayaguez with 2c+10c (2c ink and rate + 10c reg fee) to San Juan



**REGISTERED
JAN 12 1899
Military Station No. 3, Washington, D. C.
MAYAGUEZ, PORTO RICO.**

Capital

1898 (3 September) Reg Mil Sta No.1 (Ponce) with 5c(x3) (5c UPU rate + 10c reg fee) to New York



**REGISTE-
RED Mil-
itary Station
No.3 MA-
YAGUEZ
marking**

**REGISTE-
RED Mil-
itary Station
No.1 (Ponce)
marking**

**REGISTERED
SEP 3 1898
MILITARY STATION No.1,
PORTO RICO.
WASHINGTON, D. C.**

175
L. W. P. Amatory,
100 Wall St., 21590
13370 New York,
city
W.S.A.

OVERPRINTED STAMPS

In 1899, US stamps for use in Puerto Rico were overprinted "PORTO RICO" (later "PUERTO RICO"). Regular stamps of the denominations 1c, 2c, 5c, 8c and 10c, as well as 1c, 2c, and 10c Postage Due stamps were overprinted. The overprinted Postage Due stamps are particularly scarce on cover, only a few examples are known. 1900 (7 May) Porto Rico Postage Due 2c(x2, one 25°+one 36°) on taxed cover (2x2c inland rate) from San Sebastian to San Juan



1900 (8 December) Porto Rico 10c + 2c(x2) (7x2c 7-fold rate) from San Juan to New York



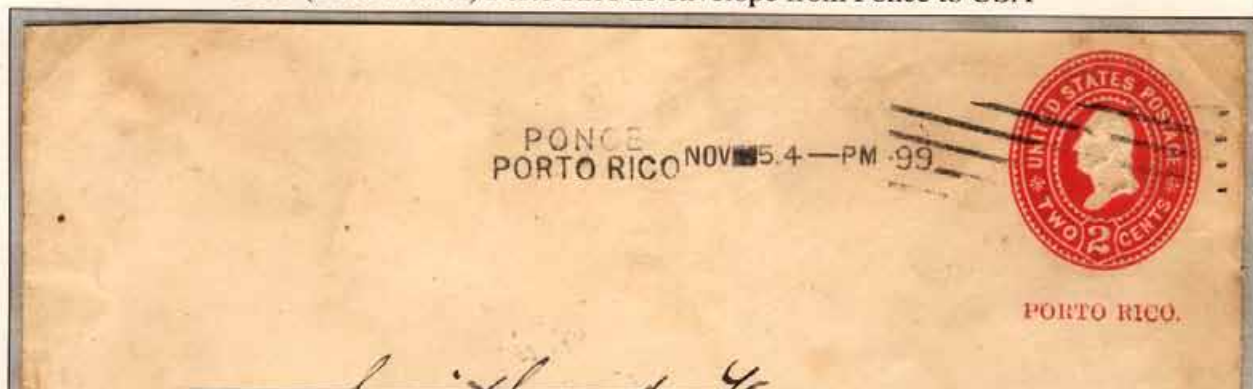
OVERPRINTED POSTAL STATIONERY - WRAPPERS & ENVELOPES

US Postal Stationery for use in Puerto Rico was also overprinted "PORTO RICO" (later "PUERTO RICO").
1900 (25 April) Porto Rico 1c wrapper (printed matter rate) from Mayaguez to Austria

PORTO RICO
1c wrapper



1899 (5 November) Porto Rico 2c envelope from Ponce to USA



PORTO
RICO 2c
envelope

1900 (16 October) Puerto Rico 5c envelope (UPU rate) from Mayaguez to London



PUERTO
RICO 5c
envelope

OVERPRINTED POSTAL STATIONERY - POSTCARDS

US Postal Stationery for use in Puerto Rico was also overprinted "PORTO RICO" (later "PUERTO RICO").
1900 (21 April) Porto Rico (thin type) 1c postcard (inland rate) from Coamo to San Juan

PORTO RICO
(thin type)
1c postcard



1900 (19 August) Porto Rico (thick type) 1c postcard + 1c (2c UPU rate) from Mayaguez to Austria



PORTO RICO
(thick type)
1c postcard

1900 (23 June) Puerto Rico 1c postcard + 1c (2c UPU rate) from Mayaguez to Germany

PUERTO RICO
1c postcard



PROVISIONAL USE OF SPANISH POSTMARKS

Many towns were not issued with US postmarks initially, and in these towns, the Spanish postmarks were used until new ones arrived. During this period, the US stamps were normally cancelled with an obliterator.

1899 (28 February) Santurce (Spanish type) on 2c envelope with 3c (5c UPU rate) to USA



SANTURCE
(Spanish
type)
to USA

1898 (3 October) Vieques (Spanish type) on US 2c, via Humacao
4.OCT (Spanish sector) on Puerto Rico 1c, on Soldier's letter to USA



VIEQUES (Spanish type)
Soldier's letter to USA

1899 (4 March) Barceloneta (Spanish type) on reg cover with 2c(x5) (2c inland rate + 8c reg fee) to Ponce



BARCELONETA
(Spanish type)
registered to Ponce

INSTRUCTIONAL CACHETS

With the American Postal System, many new cachets were introduced, first those used by the Military Station Post Offices, and later civilian markings. Many of these cachets are instructional in their nature.

1898 (11 August) Advertised Mil Sta No.1 Ponce and Mil Sta No.1 Ponce with pointing hand on cover from USA to Santiago, Cuba, forwarded to Ponce, Puerto Rico, and returned



“ADVERTISED Military Station No.1 PONCE” & “Military Station No.1 PONCE” with pointing hand. Unique - the only known use of both these cachets!

1900 (20 March) “Ship’s Letter” on 2c envelope (inland rate) from Ponce to San Juan, per “Pto Rico”

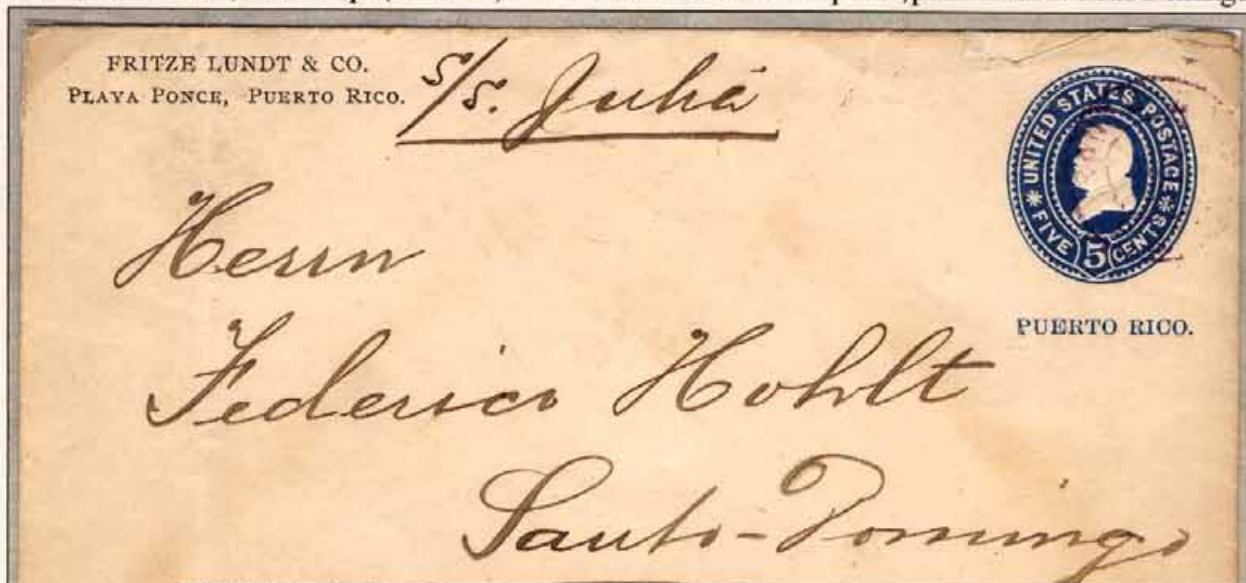


“Ship’s Letter” cachet - one of three known on inter-island mail

SHIP MAIL

Many letters were posted to or on ships going from Puerto Rico to overseas destinations. This mail was handed over and postmarked in the next port of call, and interesting combinations can be found.

1900 (26 November) 5c envelope (UPU rate) from Ponce to Dominican Republic, postmarked in Santo Domingo



Santo Domingo
cds. from Ponce
to Dominican
Republic

1900 (March) 5c envelope with 5c (double UPU rate) from Ponce to London, postmarked in Las Palmas



Las Palmas
cds.
from Ponce
to London

1898 (25 November) 1c+2c(x2) from Ponce to Hamburg by Italian mail, postmarked with Italian ship marking



Italian ship marking,
from Ponce to Germany