

Evolution of Nicaragua 1924 León and Granada Commemorative

Purpose and Scope:

This 3-frame traditional exhibit explores the production and use of the 1924 Nicaragua León and Granada Commemorative honoring Francisco Hernández de Córdoba's founding of the cities in 1524. The material includes pre-production, archival, and postal use. The use of the original issue along with overprints from 1928 and 1931 are within scope of this exhibit.

Background:

On September 19, 1923, Nicaragua requested a new stamp issue by the American Bank Note Company (ABNCo). The request was a set of four denominations honoring the 400th anniversary of the establishment of the cities of León and Granada by Francisco Hernández de Córdoba. Nicaragua asked that the order be rushed to be available for the quadricentennial of the founding of the cities in January 1924. The design was left to the ABNCo., though a rough sketch was provided by Nicaraguan officials. The order did not ship from New York until February 21, 1924 and the earliest known use is May 22, 1924.

The issue quantity for the set was small (100,000–200,000) of each stamp. A remainder of 10c issues was overprinted in 1928 to revalidate the stamp after the 1926-27 Civil War. The stamps were overprinted again in 1932 after the Managua earthquake that destroyed the central post office. These overprints resulted in a number of overprint varieties.

Plan:

- Page 1-9 Pre-Production/Archival
- Page 10-16 Postal Use
- Page 17-20 Postal Overprint
- Page 21-23 Overprinted Officials
- Page 24 Epilogue



León and Granada are located in southwest Nicaragua. Managua, the capital of Nicaragua is located between the cities.

Access the synopsis and references at:



Nicaragua is a Central American country located between Honduras and Costa Rica

Request for stamp issue from Nicaragua to the ABNCo. Stamp to honor Francisco Hernández de Córdoba's founding of León and Granada in 1524. **UNIQUE ITEM**

Request provides suggested designs in pencil and pen along with example of an ABNCo issue from Panama overprinted for the Canal Zone.

| Denomination | Quantity | Color |
|--------------|----------|---------|
| 1 centavos | 200,000 | Per UPU |
| 2 centavos | 200,000 | Per UPU |
| 5 centavos | 100,000 | Per UPU |
| 10 centavos | 100,000 | Per UPU |

Items considered significant are noted in red frame.



Magnifying glass denotes original discovery

Pre-Production: Die Order

7151

STEEL Postage Stamps

Date 10/24/23 Schedule No. 12480

Model Wanted _____ Model to H.J.B.

Title in full República de Nicaragua

General Description and Style 1 color stamp in 4 denominations, one design and vignette

Words Un centavo de Córdoba Dos - Cinco - Diez Centavos de Córdoba

Denomination Numerals 1 2 5 10

Quantity _____

Color _____

Size: Work 1 inch high by 7/8 inch wide

Trimmed _____

Number On _____

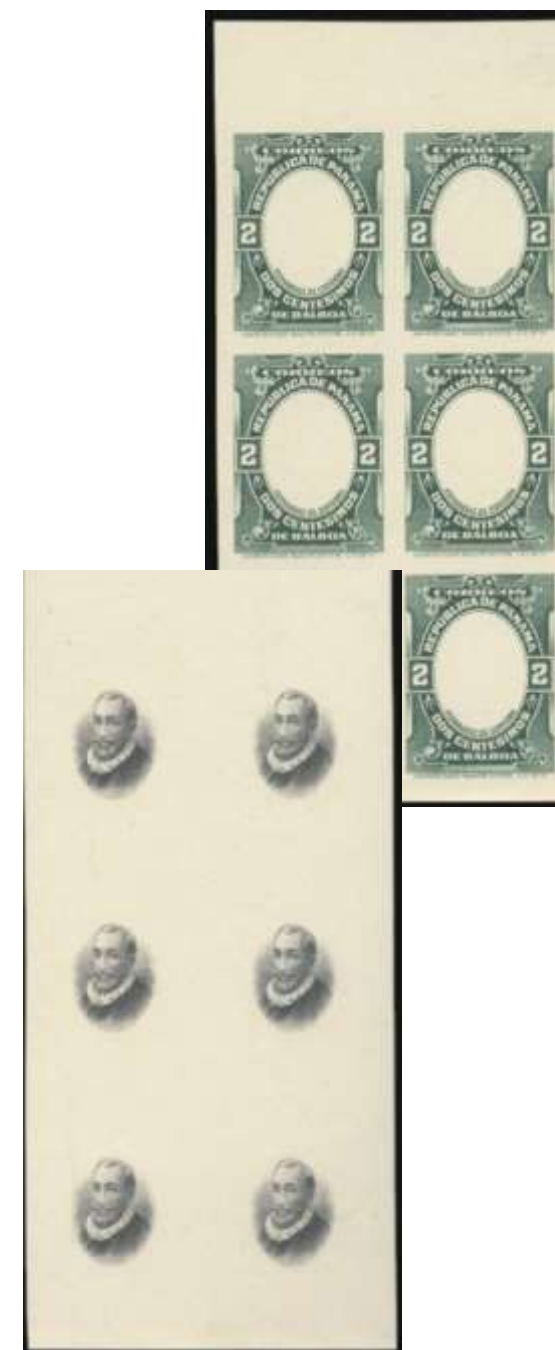
Text as per sketch herewith

Vignette Portrait of Cordoba in stock

Border left to you

FACE

The original die order from the ABNCo Foreign Order Department to the die maker. Mentions text from the Nicaragua request, but leaves design to the die maker. The vignette is listed as "Portrait of Cordoba in stock." This was likely the 1908 sketch provided by Panama to the ABNCo used for Panama vignette die C-312.



ABNCo Panama trial color proof and vignette die C-312 (V42593*) and frame C-816 (26315*)

*In 1924 the ABNCo renumbered all dies.

Córdoba Who?



Hernández de Córdoba

Francisco **H**ernández de Córdoba (1475-1526) – Founded Leon and Granada in what became Nicaragua. In 1526, he was beheaded in Nicaragua by order of Pedro Arias de Ávila the Spanish Governor of Panama as an insurrectionist.



Fernández de Córdoba

Antonio **F**ernandez de Córdoba (? – April 8, 1673) - In 1672, oversaw the planning of what would become the current location of Panama City which was founded on January 21, 1673. The original Panama City was burnt in January 1671 before being attacked and looted by pirate Henry Morgan.

Pre-Production: Approval Model

Prior to 1924, the ABNCo Foreign Department assigned order numbers for each proposed order. The order started with a F and was numbered sequentially across all foreign orders regardless of country of origin.

This order was assigned F7451 which is found on all documents, pre-production material, and production material.

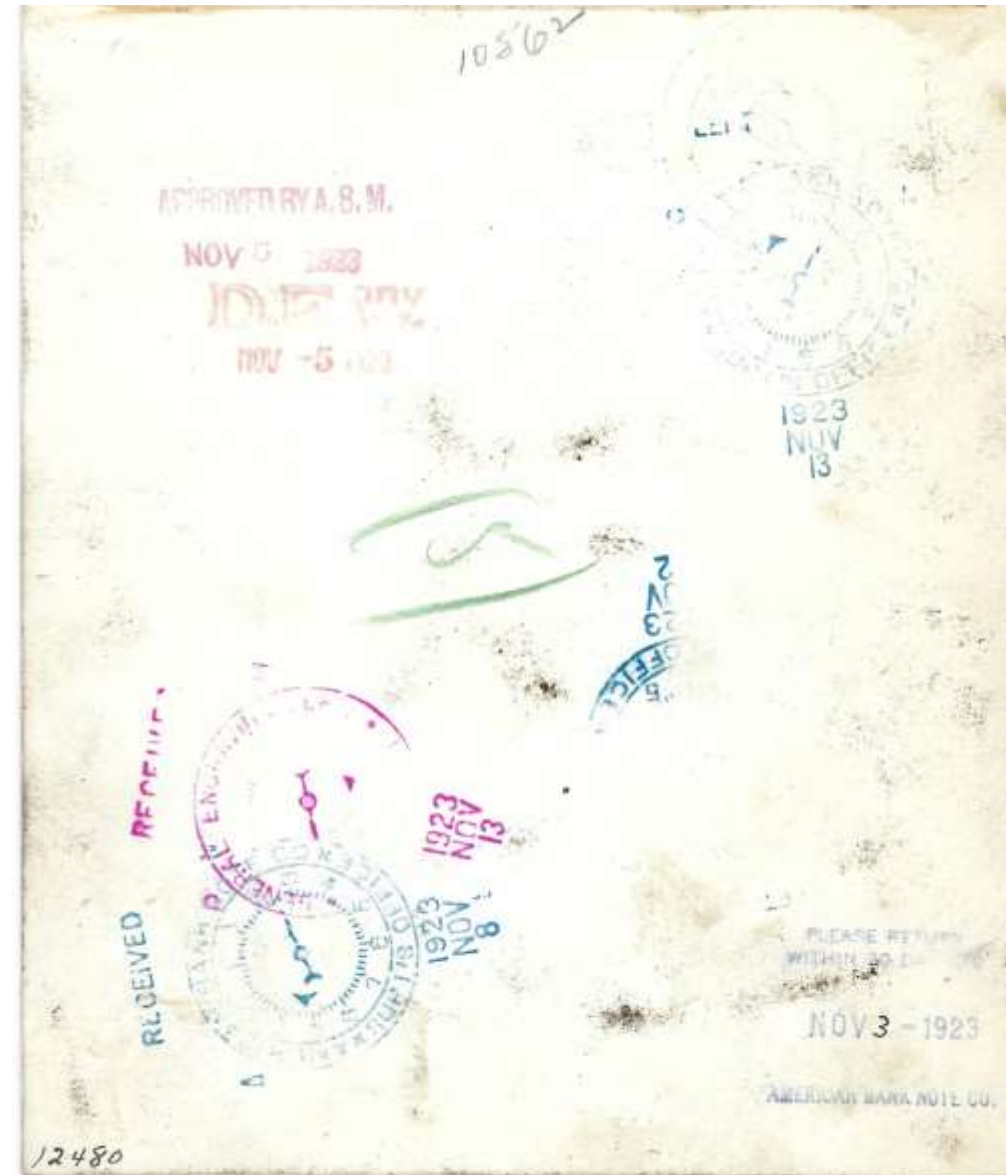
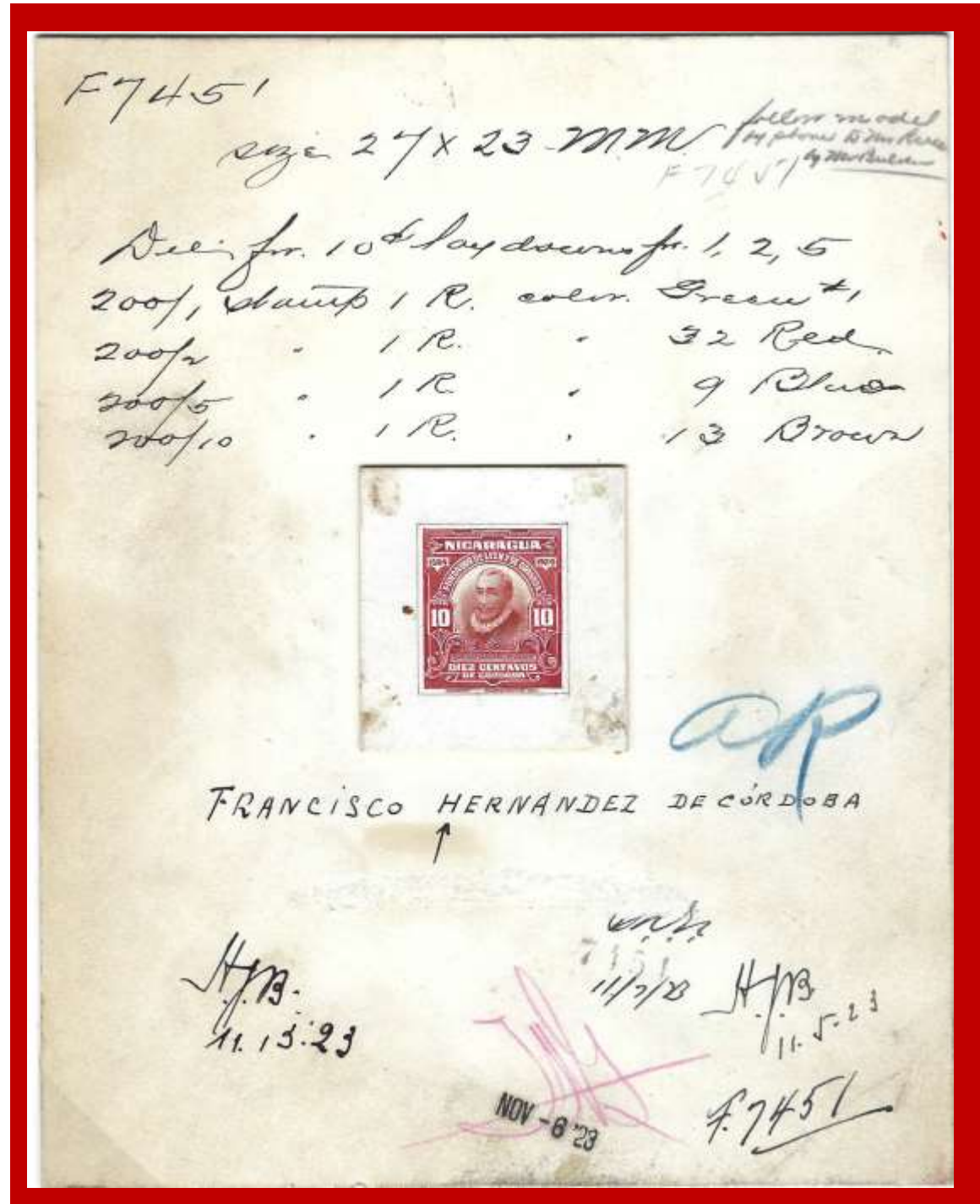


Image of reverse with additional approval stamps. Approval stamps and initials range from November 5th to November 13th. HJB is the first and last to sign the model.

Composite engraved vignette and hand painted frame with Chinese white lettering produced by the ABNCo. Includes desired size of issue (24mm x 23mm), plate size (200) and assigned colors.

- 1c Green #1
- 2c Red #32
- 5c Blue #9
- 10c Brown #13

Notation with arrow to **H** in Hernandez, note below scratched off. There is no documentation in the ABNCo communication archives regarding the Hernandez vs. Fernandez spelling question.

UNIQUE ITEM

ABNCo approval notations on models.

- DEW—Daniel E. Woodhull, ABNCo President
- HJB—H. Joseph Bagley, ABNCo Vice President
- ASM—Alfred Saxony Major, Head of Engraving
- AR—Arnold Reese, Manager of Engraving Division - Bronx
- FWG—Frank W Gullet, Foreign Sales Manager

Pre-Production: Approved Models



Photographic models of the 1c, 2c and 5c denominations with value tablets hand painted. Notation to reverse the contrast on the 1c and 2c value tablets.

Again attention brought to the **H** in Hernandez.

UNIQUE ITEM



Stamp on back of photographic models to return within 30 days.



Additional approval notations on back of photographic models

Pre-Production: Die Proofs



1c green sunken die proof in issued color on India paper. Hand stamped "FOR APPROVAL" and dated January 11, 1924.



Back of 1c green sunken die proof with approval stamps.

Pre-Production: Die Proofs



2c red and 5c blue sunken die proof in issued color on India paper. Hand stamped “FOR APPROVAL” and dated January 11, 1924.

Approval stamps on back

UNIQUE ITEMS



10c brown sunken die proof in issued color on India paper. Hand stamped “FOR APPROVAL” and dated December 17, 1923.

Since initial work was done on the 10c, the complete die was made first and approved before creating the other denomination by changing the value tablet.

UNIQUE ITEM



Additional ABNCo approval notations

SHL—Sanford H Lane, ABNCo

GWTC—Gilbert W.T. Combs, Assistant Foreign Department Manager

HRT—Henry R Treadwell, ABNCo VP

Archival: Plate Proofs

Complete set as imperforate plate proofs
in issued color on card in key positions.

Top right corner blocks of 6 with F-7451 order number and
lower right corner block of 8 with approval dates and initials.
Lower right blocks of 8 are **UNIQUE ITEMS**.

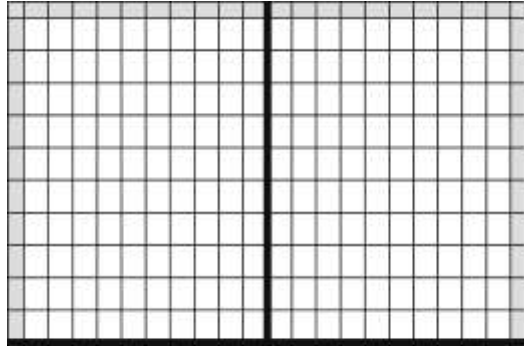
10c brown approved January 10, 1924 prior to the approval of
the other denomination sunken die proofs on January 11, 1924.
Other denomination plate proofs approved January 25, 1924
after the sunken dies.



Archival: Plate Proofs and Specimens



Complete set as imperforate plate proofs in issued color on card with gutter separating blocks of 4 from each pane.



Plates were created as two panes of 100 (10x10) divided vertically.



On February 21, 1924, the ABNCo shipped the complete order to Corinto, Nicaragua on the *S.S. Colombia* leaving New York City. Total cost of die, plates and printing was \$1,468.13.

Issue quantities delivered:

1c red and 2c green: 200,000 each

5c blue and 10c brown: 100,000 each

Prior published literature suggested as few as 15,000 of each stamp were issued.

Source: ABNCo Achieves, American Philatelic Research Library (APRL)



Hole punch specimens overprints for ABNC archives. Engraved in recess, rotary printed, and perforated after printing with gauge 12 perforations.



Archival: Die Proofs and Issued Stamps



1c green as issued.



2c red as issued



Sunken Die proof of 2c red in color as issued, ABNCo
50077 from American Bank Note Archives

Sunken Die proof of 1c green in color as issued, ABNCo
50078 from American Bank Note Archives

Archival: Die Proofs and Issued Stamps



5c blue as issued



10c brown as issued



Sunken Die proof of 10c brown in color as issued, ABNCo C1490 from American Bank Note Archives

Sunken Die proof of 5c blue in color as issued, ABNCo # 50076 from American Bank Note Archives

Postal Use

Postal Rates and Fees April 1, 1921 through September 14, 1930

| | Internal and UPAE | UPU |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-----|
| Post Card | 1c + 1c tax | 6c |
| Letter (1st 20g) | 2c + 1c tax | 10c |
| Letter (additional 20g) | 2c | 6c |
| Printed Matter (1st 50g) | 1c | 2c |
| Registration Fee | 3c | 10c |
| A.R. Fee | 2c | 5c |

Postal Union of the Americans and Spain (UPAE) - Regional postal union consisting of United States, Spain and most Central and South American countries.

In 1921 the Managua Post Office burnt to the ground. A 1c per item postal tax was added to all local mail and mail within the UPAE. The postal tax was used to rebuild the post office with 10% deposited in the Savings, Pensions and Insurance Fund of the employees of the communications branch. (Castellon Morales, May 30, 1921)



May 28, 1924

Local commercial use Masaya Mayo to Managua

1c green paying postal tax on 1c domestic postal card.

Commercial domestic postal cards are rare. Card requests the purchase of 12 burners.



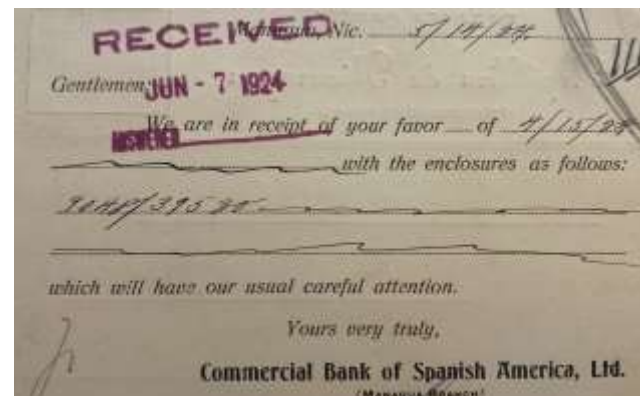
Back at 50%

Earliest Known Use of any León and Granada Commemorative: May 22, 1924

May 22, 1924

Commercial use from Corinto to the New York City in the United States.

1c green paying the 1c UPAE post card rate of 1c, but unpaid 1c postal tax.



Back at 50%

Postal Tax

While specific postal tax stamps were issued for use in Nicaragua, it is very common to find the tax paid with general issue postage stamps.



Postal Use



August 31, 1924

Printed Matter Corinto to Lille, France

1c green with 1/2c additional postage under paying the printed matter rate to France.

“Impreso” designates printed matter rate.



February 10, 1925

Printed matter rate Managua to London, England, via Corinto. Arrival mark in London March 7, 1925.

1c green x3 plus additional 2c paying 4c foreign printed matter rate up to 100g + 1c postal tax (not required for UPU mail).



July 29, 1924

Registered cover Managua to Limbach, Germany

30c green overpaying the 40g rate (16c) + 10c registration by 4c. Appears to pay a full 10c for the 2nd 20g versus the discounted 6c.

The 4-bar cancel was mobile mailbox-related. The stamps were likely added on the train. A stock of 1c stamps kept by the conductor on the train could theoretically pay any rate.

Block of 18 is largest used multiple of the León and Granada issue know to author.



Reverse at 75%

Postal Use: 1c and 2c



October 13, 1924

Valor Declarado domestic cover from Boaco to Nandaime.

1c green x20 + 1c postal tax stamps overpays rate by 1c. Rate 20c as 2c letter rate + 3c registration + 1c postal tax + 14c to insure 7 pesos.

Boaco is a scarce origin.

Valor Declarado — Is an insured registered cover. In this example the insurance cover 7 pesos cash for 14c or 2% of value.



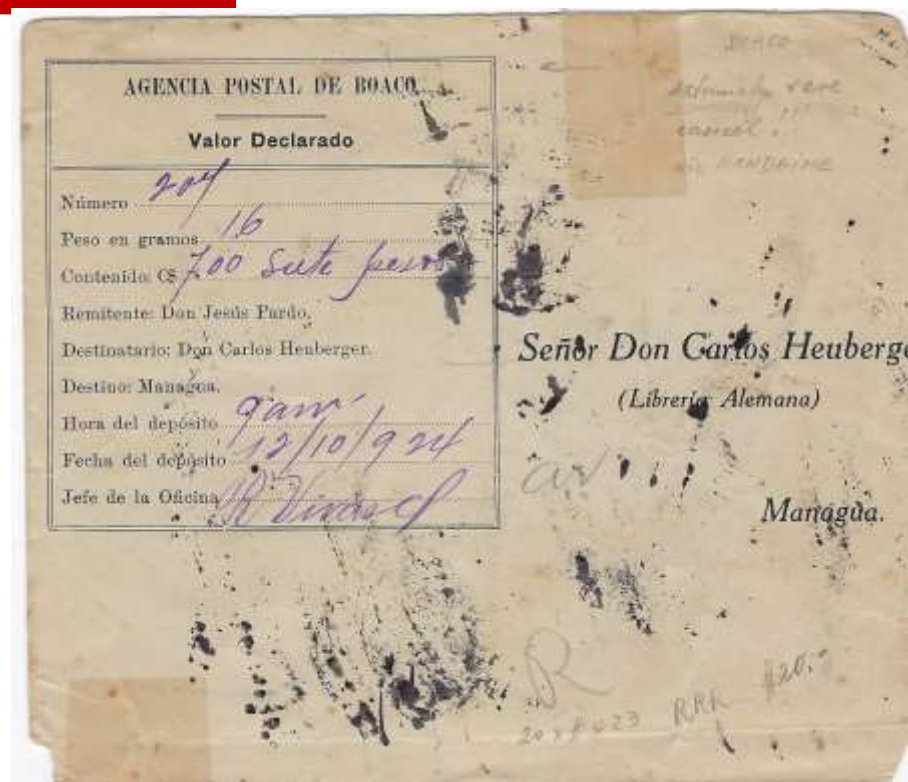
July 9, 1924

Commercial UPU cover Managua to Berne, Switzerland, via Corinto.

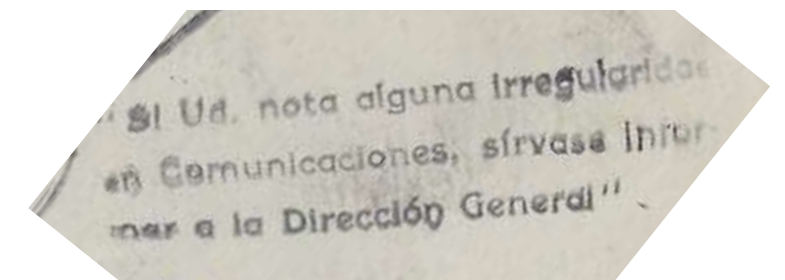
2c strip of 5 paying 10c UPU letter rate up to 20g.

Earliest use of 2c red known to author.

1 of 2 known Valor Declarado covers from the 1920s and the only example with a León and Granada issue.



Reverse at 75%



Auxiliary marking states to report any irregularities to the postmaster.

Postal Use: 2c



July 30, 1924

UPAE cover Corinto to Chicago, Illinois.

2c red paying UPAE letter rate up to 20g with 1c postal tax stamp.



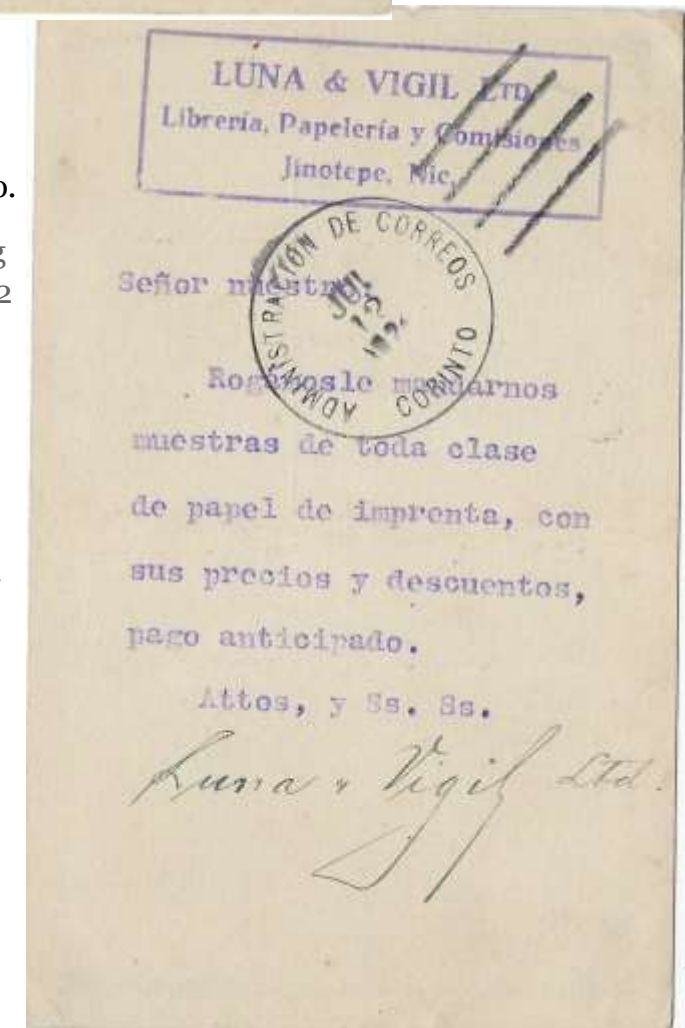
July 11, 1924

Commercial Overseas Reply Card from Jinotepe to Esslingen, Germany, via Corinto.

2c red uprating a 1c postal reply card paying the 3c rate. Overseas reply card rate was 1/2 post card rate

Jinotepe is a scarce origin.

Card requests samples of printing paper along with prices and discount information.



July 13, 1924

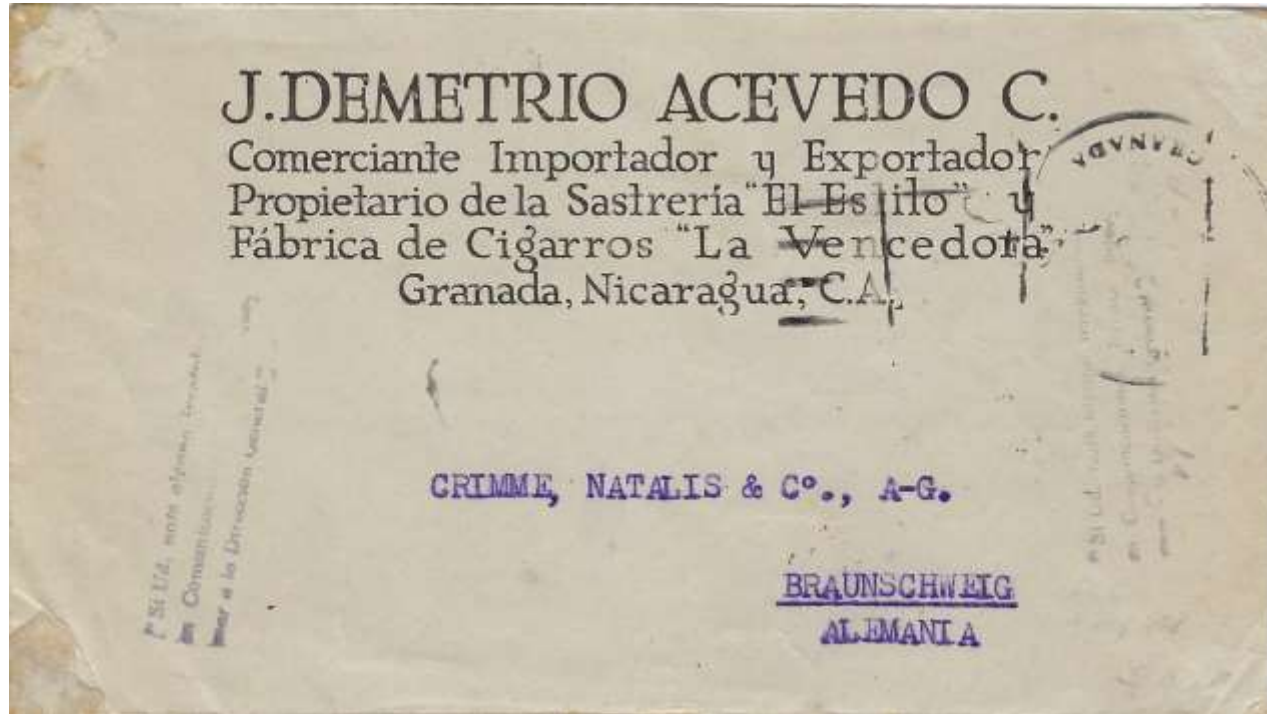
UPAE cover Managua to New York City via Corinto.

2c carmine paying 2c UPAE letter rate up to 20 gram, but under paid the 1c Postal Tax.

Black "T" (Tax-Underpaid) hand stamp with 2c notation.



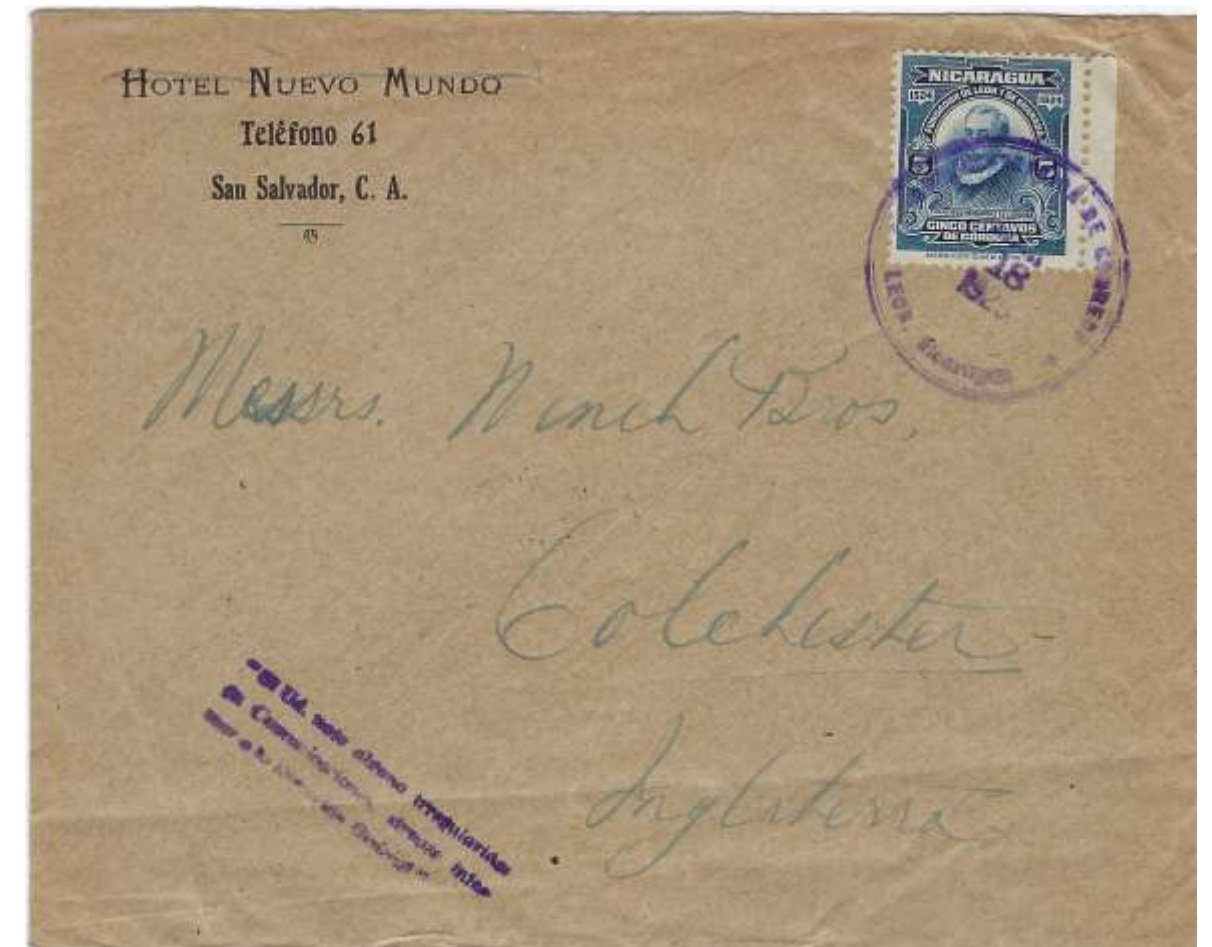
Postal Use: 5c



July 29, 1924

Commercial UPU letter Granada to Braunschweig, Germany, via Corinto.

10c UPU letter rate paid with 5c blue along with addition 1/2c x10.



March 18, 1925

UPU Printed Matter Leon to Colchester, England, via Corinto.

5c blue paying printed mater rate up to 100g + paying 1c postal tax (not required for UPU mail.).



January 21, 1925

UPU surface cover Granada to Milano, Italy, via Corinto

5c blue x2 paying 10c UPU letter rate.

Postal Use: 1c and 5c



September 19, 1924
 Registered Commercial UPAE
 letter Bluefields to San Francisco,
 California, Via New Orleans.
 5c blue paying 2c letter rate plus
 3c registration, 1c green paying
 postal tax.



November 24, 1924
 Registered UPU letter León to Linköping, Sweden, via Corinto.
 5c blue x2 paying foreign registration fee of 10c with additional 15c
 underpaying the up to 40g UPU rate by 1c.
 Julian Quant was a stamp dealer in León, Nicaragua. Mr. Allard
 was a known stamp collector in Sweden.



Reverse at 50%



Reverse at 50%

Red London transit marking on reverse with Linköping
 receiving mark.



April 13, 1925
 Paquebot Mail El Bluff to Chicago, Illinois, via
 New Orleans
 5c blue pays the 4c letter rate up to 40g plus 1c
 postal tax. Possible letter was normal rate, but
 5c blue was only stamp available on ship.

PAGUEBOT

PAQUEBOT — misspelled. Marking was used
 in New Orleans from 1925—1964.

Postal Use: 5c and 10c



November 20, 1924
 Consulate cover Managua to London, England via Corinto.
 Diplomatic mail not charge letter rate, but changed for extra services.
 10c brown pays foreign registration rate. The addition 1c unnecessarily paying postal tax.
 Blue cross on cover used in England to designate registered mail. Registered envelope in England commonly printed with blue cross in design.

Earliest Known use of 10c brown. 1 of 3 covers known with use of 10c brown.

British Consulate marking on front (at 150%) and embossed seal on back flap.



October 24, 1924
 Registered UPAE León to Los Angeles via Corinto and New Orleans.
 5c blue paying 2c letter rate and registration with additional 3c of postage paying 2c AR and 1c postal tax.

Overprints: Revalidating of 1928 and 1931

1928 Overprints



Correos
1928



In 1928 the remaining 10c brown issues were overprinted "Correos 1928" in violet to revalidate the stamp during the 1927-1933 civil war. Sandino guerilla fighters were stealing stamps from post offices and selling them for cash to fund their efforts.

The number overprinted is unknown and **there are no known remaining covers.**

1931 Overprint Errors

A number of overprint error occurred with the 1931 overprints that were printed locally in Managua.



Correos
~~1928~~
1931

2c surcharge omitted. Reported to be one sheet of 100.

1931 Overprints



₡ 0.02
Correos
~~1928~~
1931



Surcharge in red

Surcharge in brown

On March 31, 1931, an earthquake in Managua destroyed the central post office. To meet postal needs, a request was made for all outlying post offices to return the 10c brown 1928 overprints to Managua.

The issue was overprinted a 2nd time. The 1928 was obliterated with a black bar and 1931 added. The issue was also surcharged to 2c in red or brown. At this time 2c stamps were in high demand as the domestic and UPAE post card and letter rate.

The overprinted issue was released May 29, 1931.



Surcharge in Red

20.0 \$
Correos
~~1928~~
1931

Inverted surcharge



Surcharge in Brown



₡ 0.02
Correos
1928

Missing Bar and 1931



Overprints

Reconstructed complete sheet of 100 of 1931 overprint from two 1/2 panes separated from being folded.



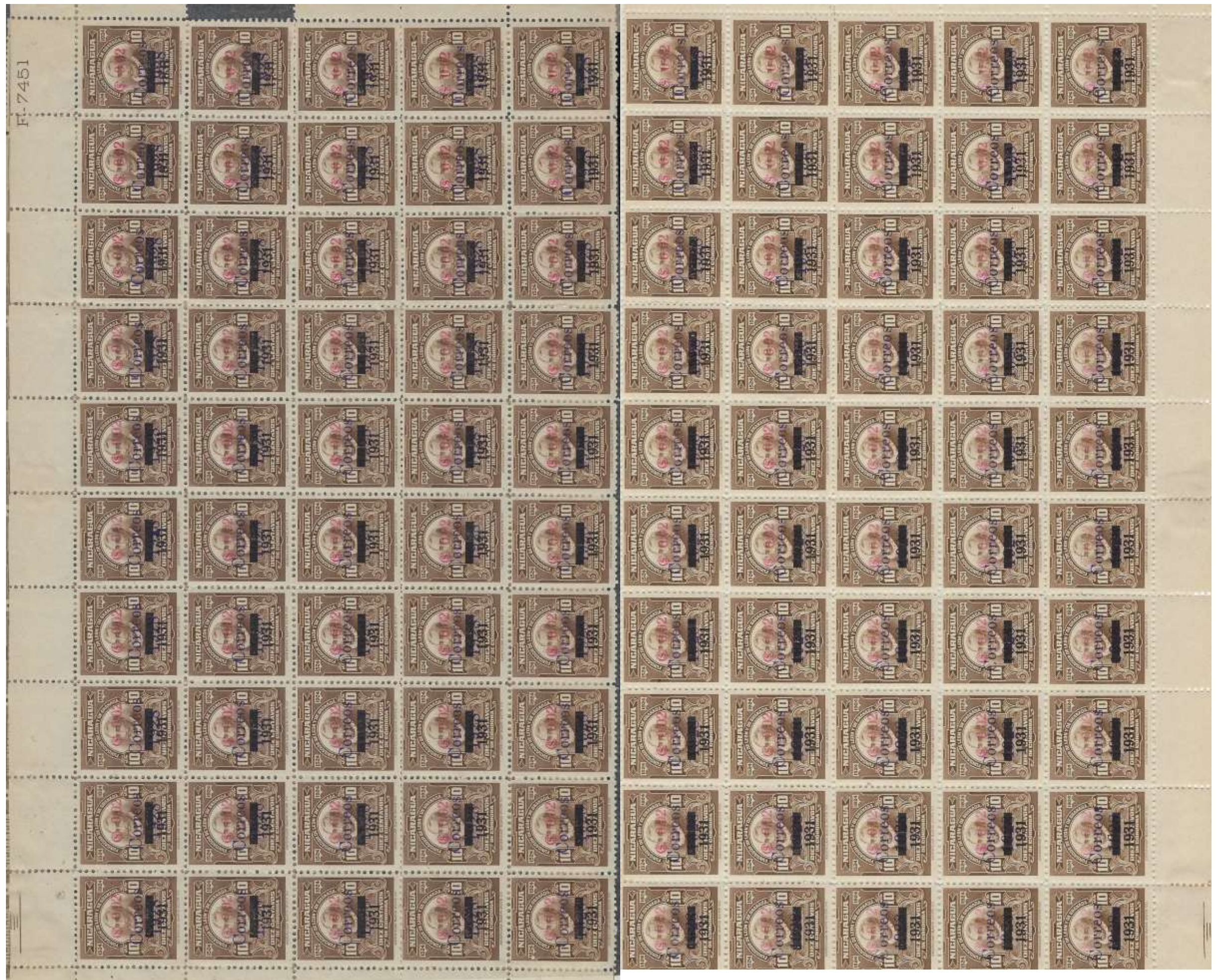
0.02
Correos
~~1920~~
1931

Double Surcharge



0.02
Correos
~~1920~~
1931

Double Surcharge,
One Inverted



Overprints: Postal Use

Surface Rates and Fees September 15, 1930 through August 15, 1937

| | Internal and UPAE | UPU |
|-------------------------|-------------------|--------|
| Post Card | 2c + 1c tax | 4 1/2c |
| Letter (1st 20g) | 2c + 1c tax | 7 1/2c |
| Letter (additional 20g) | 2c | 4 1/2c |
| Printer Matter | 1c | 1 1/2c |
| Registration Fee | 3c | 10c |
| A.R. Fee | 2c | 5c |

In 1921 the Managua Post Office burned to the ground. A 1c per item postal tax was added to all local mail and mail within the Postal Union of the Americas and Spain. The postal tax benefited the postal workers' retirement fund.

Postal Union of the Americans and Spain (UPAE) - Regional postal union consisting of United States, Spain and most Central and South American countries.

The shortage of postage stamps due to the March 31, 1931, earthquake was not solved with the 2c overprint alone. The lack of 1c stamps to pay the 1c postal tax and fractional rates required the use of bisects.

Use of mutilated stamps was illegal under UPAE rules for foreign mail. During this Earthquake Emergency period there was use of bisects of the León and Granada overprints along with Palace and Cathedral issues.



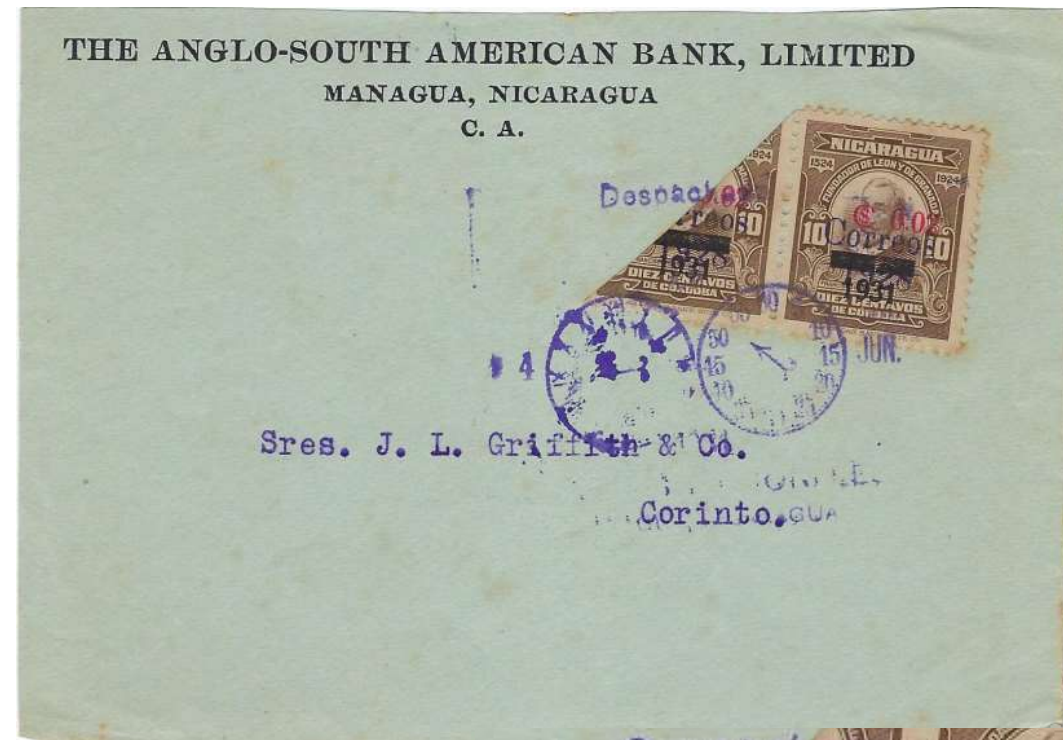
May 31, 1931

Managua to San Diego via Corinto

UPAE rate of 2c paid with 2c overprint and 1c postal tax paid with bisect

Earliest Known Use to author

Illegal use of bisect stamp on foreign mail.

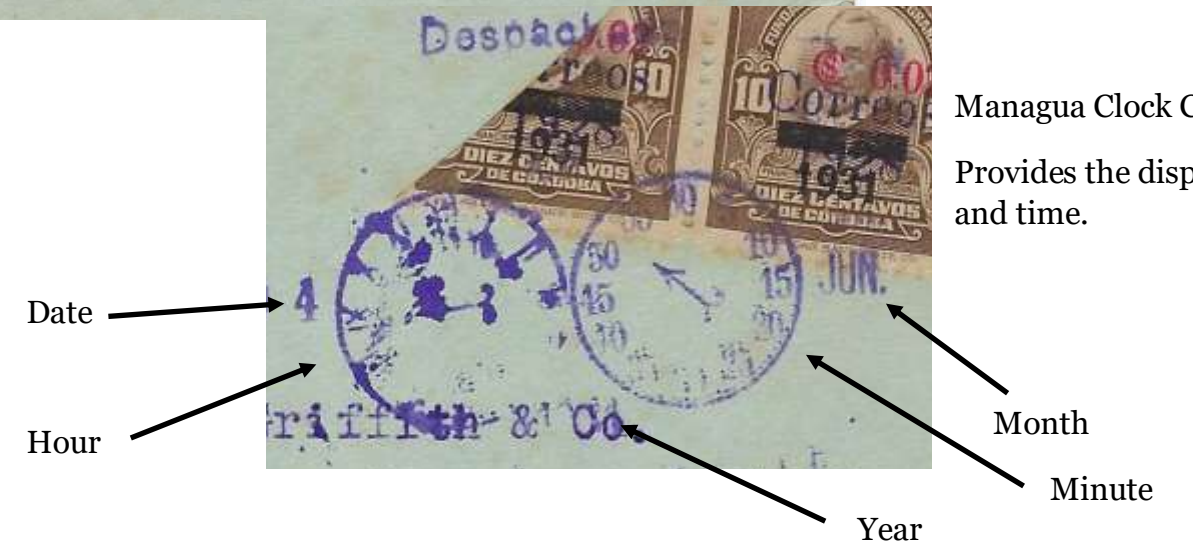


June 4, 1931 9:50 AM

Managua to Corinto

Local rate of 2c paid with 2c overprint and 1c postal tax paid with bisect.

Few local covers remain in Nicaragua. 1 of 2 local covers of 2c overprint located by author.



Managua Clock Cancel

Provides the dispatch date and time.

Date

Hour

Month

Minute

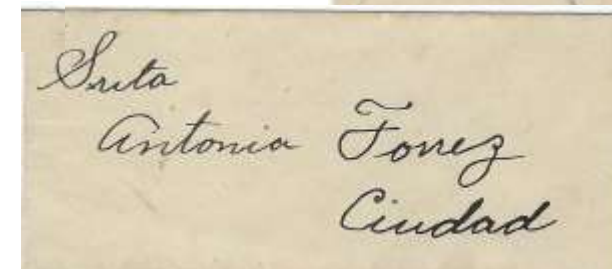
Year



June 1931

Local Corinto

Bisect 2c overprint paying the 1c printed matter rate for an announcement card.



Address lists only Ciudad, which is Spanish for City. Delivered locally.

Overprints: Postal Use

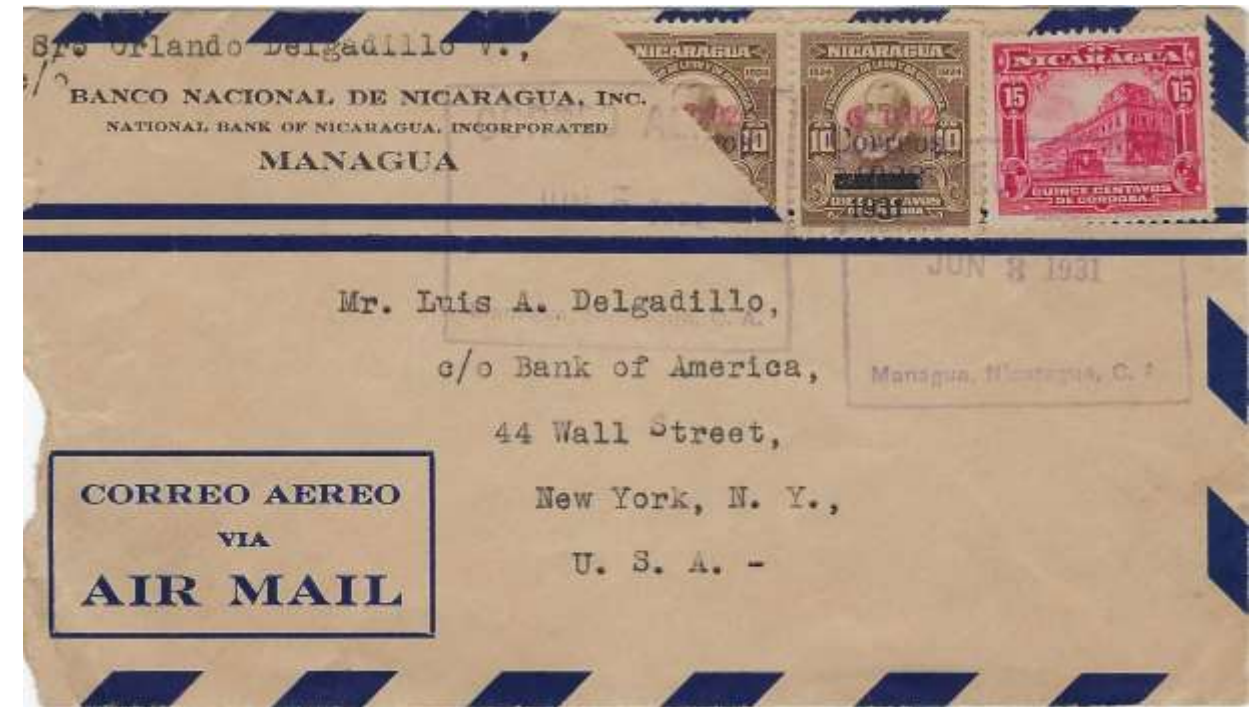


June 3, 1931

Airmail Managua to Burbank, California

2c UP AE surface letter rate + 15c airmail to North America + 1c postal tax correctly paid with 2c overprint x8 and 4c bisect.

Rare use of general postage stamps to pay airmail rate during earthquake emergency.



June 8, 1931

Airmail Managua to New York City.

2c UP AE surface letter rate + 1c postal tax paid by 2c overprint and bi-sect. Airmail to North America 15c paid with additional 15c.

National Bank of Nicaragua corner card, but not sent as official mail.

1931 Earthquake Emergency

During the aftermath of the 1931 earthquake, a shortage of postage stamps led to an interesting period of postal history.

General postage stamps were used to pay airmail on the two covers above. This was an exceptional use as airmail stamps were required on such letters. Pan-American Airlines received proceeds from the sale of airmail issues to compensate for their services.



June 21, 1931

Airmail Managua to Leipzig, Germany via Miami and New York

First day of issue for 15c on 20c on 25c airmail overprint.

Proper rate for registered airmail to Germany: 7 1/2c surface + 15c airmail + 10c registration. Cover over paid by 1 1/2c.

From stamp dealer Ernesto Hammer to stamp dealer Gebrueder Senf.

Provided airmail to Miami and then surface to Europe.

Many of the remaining covers utilizing the 2c overprint were posted by stamp dealer Ernesto Hammer of Managua.



Reduced to 75%



The cover has three 1931 double overprints on 1914 5c issue. Cropped from cover at 125%.

Overprinted Officials

May 29, 1931, an official surcharge version of the 1928 overprint was issued.



Surcharge in Red

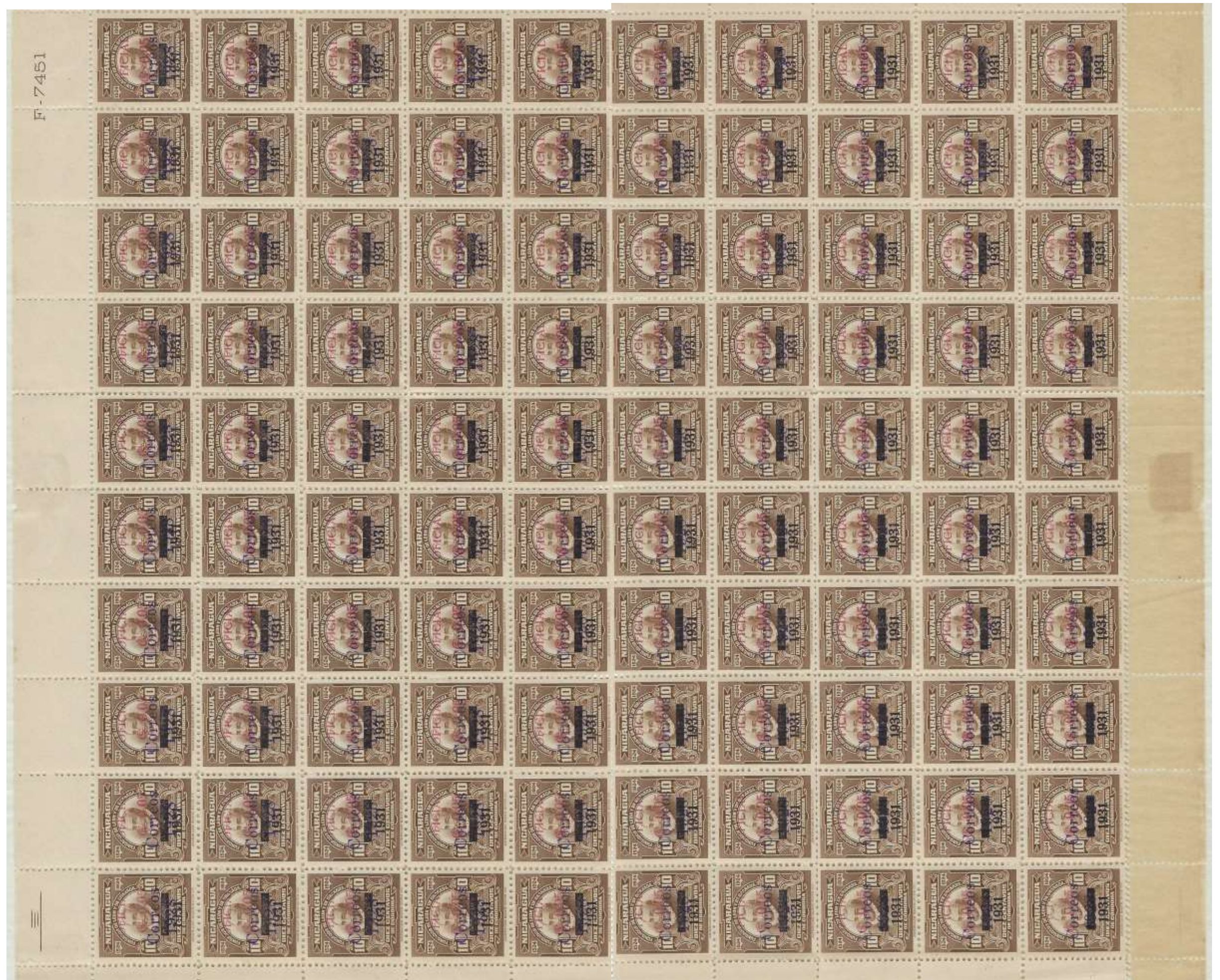


Surcharge in Brown



Surcharge in Black

Complete pane of 100 as issued with official surcharge.



Overprinted Officials

On March 31, 1931, an earthquake in Managua destroyed the central post office. To meet postal needs, a request was made for all outlying post offices to return the 10c brown 1928 overprints to Managua.

The issue was overprinted a 2nd time. The 1928 was obliterated with a black bar and 1931 added. The issue was also surcharged to Official 5c in red, black, or brown.

The overprinted issue was released May 29, 1931.



OFICIAL
\$ 0.05
Correos
1928



OFICIAL
OFICIAL
\$ 0.05
\$ 0.05
Correos
1928

Inverted Surcharge, Bar and 1931 missing—Black

Unlisted Error

Double Surcharge, Bar and 1931 missing

1931 Official Overprint Errors

A number of overprint error occurred with the 1931 overprints that were printed locally in Managua.



\$ 0.05
OFICIAL
Correos
~~1928~~
1931



OFICIAL
\$ 0.05
Correos
1928



Missing Bar and 1931—Red, Black and Brown

Unlisted Error in Black



OFICIAL
OFICIAL
\$ 0.05
\$ 0.05
Correos
~~1928~~
1931

Inverted Surcharge—Red and Black

Double Surcharge—Red

Unlisted Error

Overprinted Officials: Postal Use

Official mail service was free and letters rarely paid the correct rate. In most cases a single stamp was placed on the letter regardless of the services or destination to meet the UPU requirement for a stamp on international mail.

July 9, 1931

Registered Official Airmail
Managua to New Jersey.

Normal rate would be 2c surface + 3c registration + 30c airmail (14g-28g rate).
Actual postage paid 15c with 5c brown strip of 3.



Blue Nicaragua Official Seal Handstamp along with transit marking from Miami, Atlanta Airmail Field and Maplewood, NJ registry arrival cancel.



July 12, 1931

Official Mail Managua to New York City via Corinto.

Normal rate would be 2c UPAE surface rate. Overpaid with 5c official overprint.

Tied with Managua cancel along with Ferrocarril del Pacifico official handstamp. Official handstamp signed.

Ferrocarril del Pacifico de Nicaragua (Nicaraguan Pacific Railroad) - the nationalized railroad connected the inland cities of Leon, Granada, and Managua to the Pacific port city of Corinto.



February 15, 1932

Granada to Nassau, Bahamas via Corinto

Normal rate would be 7 1/2c UPU surface rate. Under paid with 5c official overprint.

National Bank official handstamp with signature.

February 15th transit markings from Corinto and March 30, 1932 receiving mark in Nassau.

Cover forwarded to Downingtown, Pennsylvania with no further markings or postage.

Epilogue: Plate Destruction

Top margin block of imperf proofs perforated with SPECIMEN A.B.N.Co. to document the destruction of the dies and plates on March 22, 1949. The order to destroy the material was given the number F12885. **UNIQUE ITEMS**

Destruction was accomplished by scoring the plates and dies with a grinder or other tool to prevent future printing.



On January 21, 1949, the ABNCo received notification from the Nicaragua Minister of Finance Elias Serrano that Agustin Vanegas Pallais, Chief of the Office of Control of Postal Stamps and Philately and Consul General of New York Juan Jose Morales Marengo will schedule a visit to the ABNCo plant to witness the destruction of all dies and plates on hand.

ABNCo estimated it would take 3 weeks to cancel all Nicaragua dies and plates in the vault. Plates and dies were on hand from 1862 to 1944. Pallais arrived at the ABNCo February 28, 1949 after his arrival on the *Queen Mary* from London on February 25th. Prior to arriving in New York, Pallais had visited Waterlow & Sons in London.

Source ABNCo Archive, APRL.

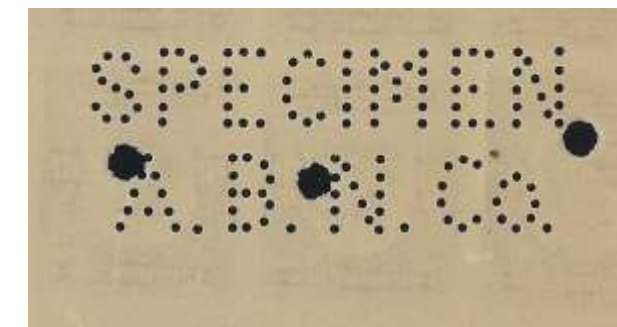


Image of perforated cancel from back of sheet.



Plates and Dies Destroyed March 22, 1949

- Die 50078—1 Centavo
- Die 50077—2 Centavos
- Die 50076—5 Centavos
- Die C14490-3848—10 Centavos
- 200—1 Centavo plate
- 200—2 Centavos plate
- 200—5 Centavos plate
- 200—10 Centavos plate