

Postal Card Forerunners

By Douglas K. Lehmann

It took me over 16 years to finish this short, mostly picture, article. I will explain the delay later but let me describe first the topic.

Forerunners are the non-overprinted postal cards used in the Philippines prior to the arrival of overprinted cards. They are known to have been used from August 1898, through 1899, with a few sporadic uses to mid-1900. They were believed to be available for sale at the Manila Post Office, brought in by soldiers, or sent in by stamp collectors for favor cancellations. No records have ever been found to substantiate quantities shipped and sold by the Manila Post Office. Overprinted cards are recorded used from May 1900 onwards.

There are only three known US postal card forerunners (using Scott numbers): UX6, UX12, and UX14.

(1) In 1898, only the US 1c Jefferson UX12 postal card was available for use. This rate covered domestic use so a 1c stamp was added for international use. **Figure 1** shows such a use (all

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figures from the author's collection). A 1c blue Franklin (264) brings the card up to the 2c international rate. This card has an August 23, 1898 postmark and is addressed to York, P A. The purple postmark reads PHILIPPINE STATION, // SAN FRANCISCO, CAL. This card is blank on the reverse and the earliest date I have recorded. It may represent the date they went on sale in Manila. The majority of surviving UX12 examples, that I have seen, are uprated for international use. Local use cards are rarer.

(2) The UX6 2c blue Liberty card was available early 1899 to correctly satisfy international use. **Figure 2** shows one post-marked December 4, 1899 addressed to Yonkers, NY. The year "99" is inverted and appears to read "66". The sender (red handstamp) is a Major Arthur, an Army Surgeon. The black postmark reads MIL. STA. NO.1 MANILA // PHIL. ISL'DS.

(3) UX14, the 1c blue revised Franklin card, is the third and last forerunner. Jefferson's head faces slightly left and is the same size portrait as on UX12 but the surrounding wreath and lettering is larger on UX14. However, the positive versus negative UNITED STATES OF AMERICA lettering is a the easiest identification factor. **Figure 3** shows a local use dated April 30, 1899. The purple postmark reads MIL. P. STA. NO. 1, // MANILA, P.I. This card is the earliest I have recorded for this Scott number. However, both this card and U X 12 have recorded uses during 1900.

How scarce are these cards? A specialized dealer might have or find one of the three for you. I expect it is a lucky year that an auction somewhere has a single lot of one the three for sale. The collectors seeking these cards usually are postal history specialists interested in Military Station cancels. However, there were two auctions that went against this course of events. **Table 1** summarizes the results.

Major Auctions of Forerunners

Scott#	Fricke (1987)	Merit (1991)	Totals
UX6	6	1	7
UX12	5	3	8
UX14	1	1	2

Table 1

The Earl P. L. Apfelbaum, Inc. firm sold 12 cards at its Public Auction #573, on October 16, 1987. All 12 cards were from the Charles A. Fricke collection of US postal cards. Fricke still specializes in postal cards and postcards and is a frequent philatelic author on this subject. Of these 12 cards, all but two were for international use to 8 different countries.

The next auction was the Irwin Siegel Sale Number 34 auction of December 19, 1991. This auction sold 5 cards from the Chuck Merit collection. Merit collected all of the Philippines and postal cards were his favorite area. The 5 cards his heirs had for sale were all addressed to Germany.

I think it is noteworthy that these two collectors never found more than these three types. They spent decades looking when other collectors were not. There were other US postal cards in use within the United States at this time but I can find no record of their use in the Philippines as either of these distinguished philatelists did. UX6 was issued in 1879 and then again in 1897 as UX13 with larger margins. However, post offices only had copies of UX13 if they requested them. My theory is that the San Francisco Post Office provided the cards to Manila and shipped what they had-mainly UX6. Another

prospect (but never recorded) is UY2r. This would be the reply half of the 1893 Liberty issue. A US collector need only have mailed a double card to the Philippines requesting the recipient to post the reply half back. But only UX6, UX12, and UX14 remain recorded, unless you own another type?

As can be seen from Table 1, UX6 and UX12 are more common than UX14, which is the tough one to find. In 1990, these cards averaged \$150-250 each. Demand sets the prices and one of Merit's 5 cards sold for \$625. This sale was a UX12 with Scott US #264 (to Germany) plus an unneeded and invalid but tied Spanish era #197. This card had an early August 27, 1898 postmark but seems philatelic to me.

I first planned to publish this information in 1990 for the *Possessions* journal. However, I only owned two of the three cards. I asked the editor if he could furnish photos of any of the forerunner cards. This distinguished editor, during his 60 years of collecting, had never heard the term "forerunner" described for US postal cards used in the Philippines! When the two of us agreed on our philatelic terms, I still only had two of three photos.

I have been looking since then for my third card. I decided I would write this article with illustrations from my own collection. Well, it took a while but on June 1, 2003, I was the successful bidder for my third card. It was lot #109, Bayanihan Collectors Club Incorporated (BCCI), 24th Anniversary Expo Auction, Metro Manila Philippines. I think the lot was offered and went unsold in a previous BCCI auction with no photo, so I was unable to tell if it was UX12 or UX14.

If you thought my missing card was UX14, you would be wrong. My first acquisition was UX6, source unknown. Next was UX14, a proper bid on the Fricke collection card. However, I was the under bidder for a Merit UX12 in 1991. It took the next dozen years before UX12 was mine.



Fig. 1 (UX12)

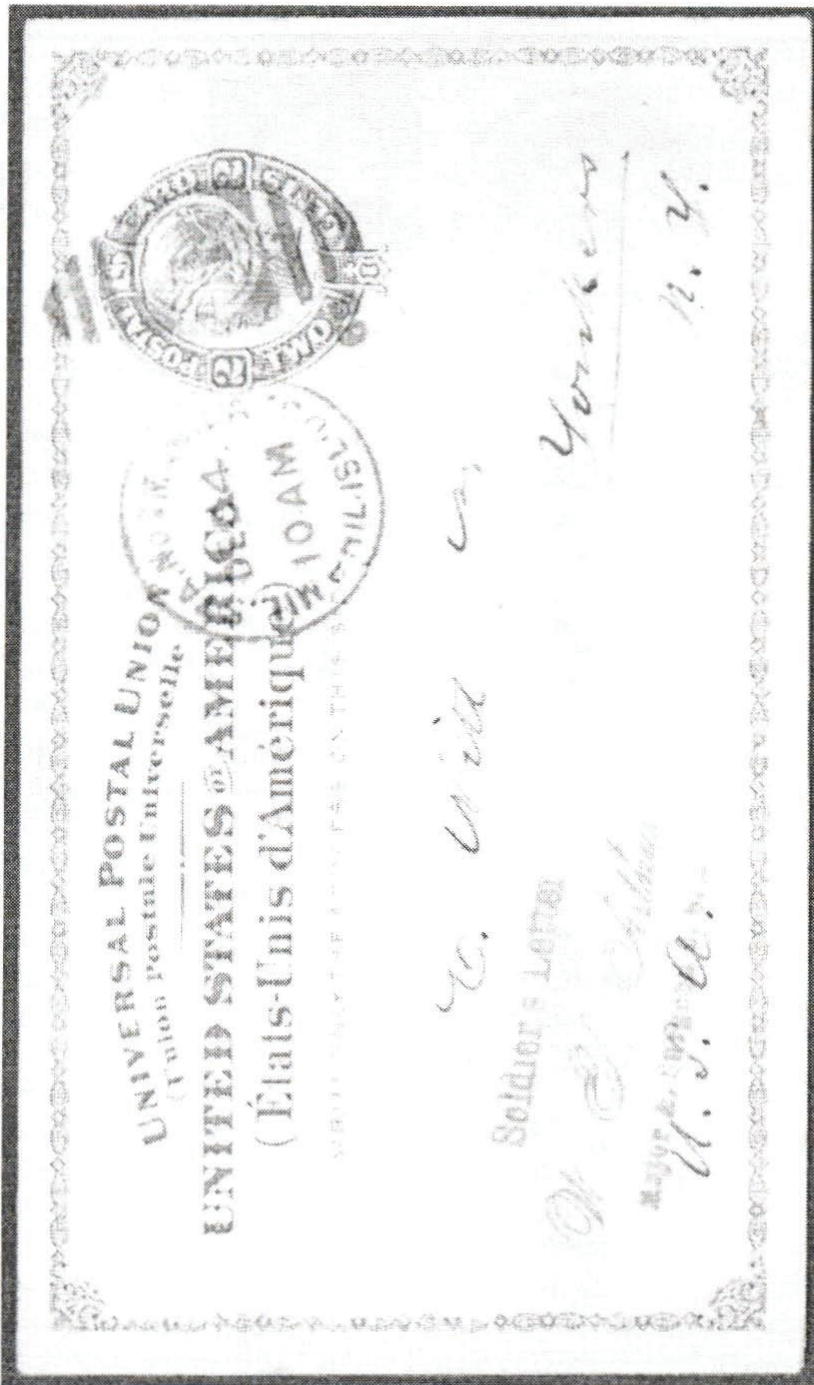


Fig. 2 (UX6)

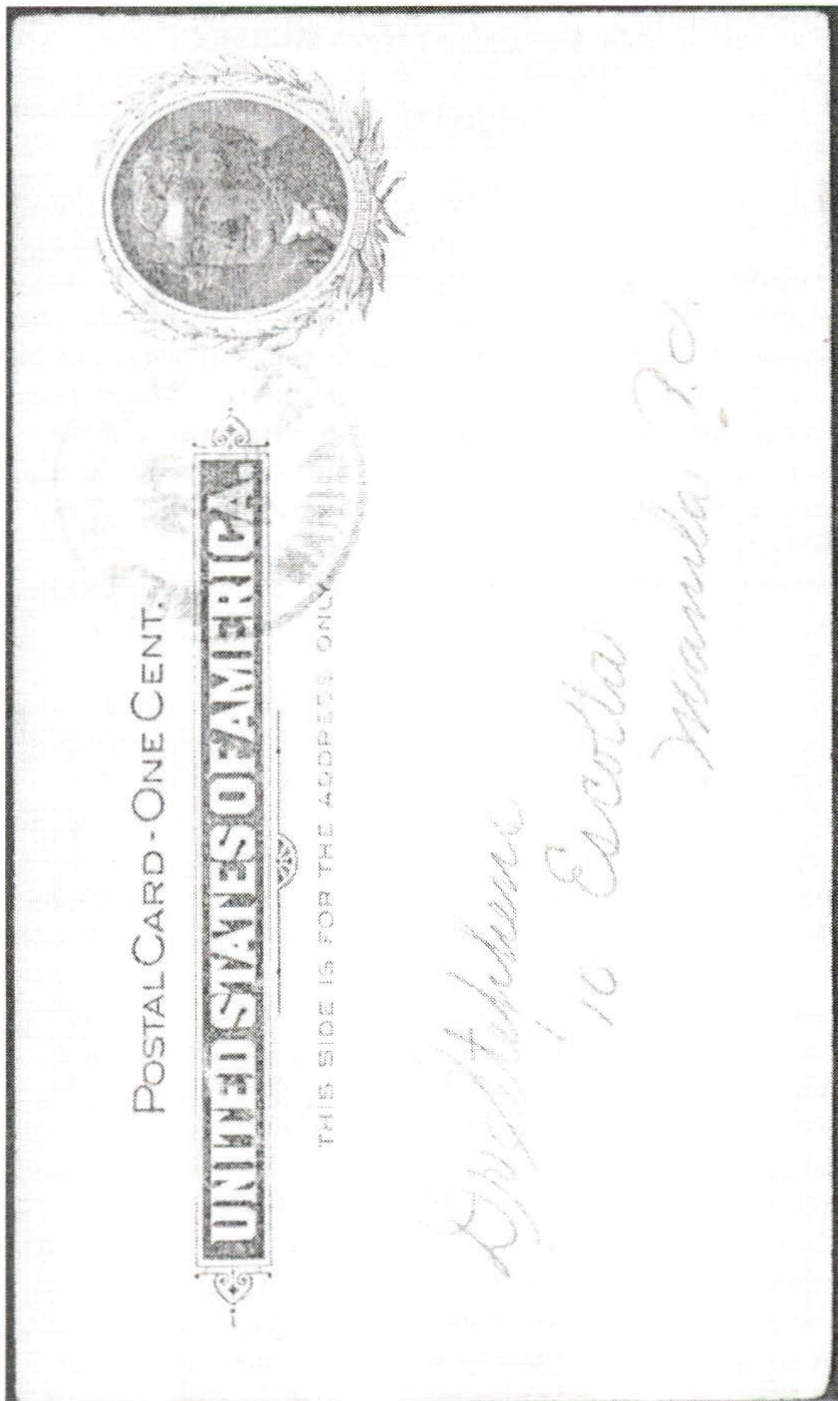


Fig. 3 (UX14)