

Spanish Philippines

Reprints of the “HABILITADO POR LA NACION” Handstamp

by Don Peterson

Almost 140 years ago, the “HABILITADO POR LA NACION” (HPLN) handstamp was first used to overprint Philippine stamps, and, in the half century that followed, the philatelic event was described in detail in classic studies by Mencarini (1896), Bartels et al. (1904), Hanciau (1905), and Palmer (1912). Since then, almost nothing new has been added to the story about the Philippine HPLN overprints. This article, however, provides new information about the overprints — that is, the existence of reprints.

Historical Background

As a result of the 1868 Spanish revolution, the ineffectual Queen Isabella II was deposed and a republic was declared. A provisional government was established, but people were willing to see a constitutional monarchy established and after much deliberation, Amadeo of Savoy, the second son of Victor Emmanuel, king of Italy, was elected king of Spain on November 16, 1870. Although he abdicated the throne less than three years later (ultimately to be replaced by Alfonso XII, the son of Isabella), the republican legacy persisted.

**HABILITADO
POR LA
NACION.**

Original HPLN type (actual size) used in the Vizcaya Province of Spain and in the Philippines.

On September 30, 1868, the Revolutionary Committee in Madrid ordered that the legend “Habilitado por la Nacion” (“Made Valid for the Nation”) be overprinted on all postage, telegraph, and other stamps of Spain and her colonies. It further directed the National Stamp Factory (Fabrica Nacional del Timbre) in Madrid to prepare “dies” (a printing term often incorrectly confused with the term “handstamp”) for this purpose. On October 21, 1868, twenty-seven handstamps were sent to the Governor-General of the Philippines. They arrived in December 1868 and were used to overprint the stamps on hand.

In his 1912 publication *The Postal Issues of the Philippines*,¹ F.L. Palmer stated that all twenty-seven handstamps sent to the Philippines were identical “so there were no varieties of type to complicate these surcharges.” In an earlier publication, *Postage Stamps of the Philippines*² (1904), J.M. Bartels and his co-authors F.L. Palmer and F.A. Foster reported that

all of the handstamps sent to the Philippines were the “so-called Vizcaya type,” but provided no explanation of what this meant. Antonio Fernandez Duro, in his 1881 work *Reseña Historico-Descriptiva de los Sellos de Correo de España*,³ described the various HPLN handstamp types used in Spain, of which there were at least eight different types. These types were prepared by the National Stamp Factory in Madrid and distributed to one or more of Spain’s provinces for use with the existing postage stamps already on hand. The “Vizcaya” type cited by Bartels in 1904 is believed to be the “Vizcaya” type earlier identified by Fernandez and used in the Vizcaya Province in the Basque region of northern Spain. This was the only Spanish type similar to the original HPLN Philippines type cited by Bartels.

On January 24, 1872 (and again in 1873 and 1874), the same handstamps, now somewhat worse for wear, were used to overprint some of the older, obsolete issues, supposedly to offset shortages of on-hand stock. In the *Scott Catalogue*, the HPLN-overprinted postage stamps are listed as Scott 24A–38. The overprint also occurs on several Philippine revenue and telegraph stamps and on revenue-stamped paper (*papeles sellados*).

Identification of HPLN Reprints

After inspecting literally hundreds of HPLN-overprinted stamps from the Philippines, it became evident to me that another very distinct type of the overprint exists. The differences between what I hereafter refer to as *original* and *reprint* HPLN handstamps are listed in Table I. All of these differences generally can be observed with the naked eye or with low magnification. It is the first two differences, however, that are considered the most important indicators for determining whether the HPLN overprint is an original or a reprint.

A word of caution about comparing one handstamp with another: the *original* HPLN handstamps show considerable variations in the shape of the lettering between stamps (e.g., breaks or no breaks in the letters, presence or lack of serifs, etc.). These variations are caused by the amount of ink present on the device, how hard (or soft) it struck the stamp, and the angle at which it struck the stamp as it was applied to each of the stamps in a full sheet. These variations often are evident in large multiples of HPLN-overprinted stamps. Of-

ten the “H” and “A” are completely filled in with color, whereas the other letters sporadically range from completely filled to open. Another example is the lower curve of the “C” in “NACION,” which can end in either a point or a rough serif, depending on the amount of ink present. Further, postal employees in Manila often applied the *original* HPLN handstamps “sloppily.” Overprints from Manila occur right-side up, upside down, diagonally, sideways reading up (or reading down), as multiple strikes, or as heavy- or light-inked strikes.

All copies of the Philippine HPLN *reprints* are mint. There are no genuine examples known of used reprints with clearly identifiable Philippine cancels. Although a few reprint singles and blocks are known with a black padilla cancel, the cancel and/or the circumstances regarding its application are questionable. No reprints are known on Philippine covers or on Philippine papeles sellados. The *original* HPLN-overprinted handstamp, on the other hand, is well-known on Philippine stamps, covers, and papeles sellados. In fact, I would estimate that there are more than a hundred Philippine covers known with the *original* HPLN handstamped issues affixed.

Reprints of the HPLN overprint exist for all of the *Scott Catalogue*-listed HPLN postal issues, and for some of the Warren-listed⁴ HPLN-handstamped fiscal stamps. Mint reprints, particularly those of the high-valued HPLN-overprinted stamps, occasionally are found in international auctions. To further complicate the issue, all sixteen illustrations of the HPLN type in Edifil’s *Catálogo Unificado Especializado*⁵ are examples of the *reprinted* HPLN type. With no explanation provided in that catalogue, this has created a source of confusion for collectors and dealers. The illustration of the HPLN overprint in the current *Scott Catalogue* is the *original* type. It is possible that other cataloguers, such as Edifil, may have inadvertently selected *reprint* types for



(Left) *original* HPLN (Scott 34) and (Right) *reprint* HPLN (Scott 29).

catalogue illustrations, since they are crisp images; whereas, it remains difficult to find a “good looking” example of the blotchy *original* type.

Handstamp Production

Information regarding the production of the HPLN handstamps is meager. What we do know comes mostly from Spanish Antilles philatelic references, which, I believe, also are applicable to the Philippine HPLNs. For example, Fernandez⁶ stated that the electrotype printing process was used by the National Stamp Factory in Madrid for producing the Cuba HPLN handstamp. Specifically, he calls the process “galvanoplastia y fueron,” which is synonymous with electrotyping. An article regarding the HPLN-overprinted stamps of Cuba by Barreras⁷ stated that the handstamps sent from Spain were made of bronze (an alloy of copper and tin). It is likely that, in 1868 and through the early 1870s, the National Stamp Factory used the same printing process to produce the HPLN handstamps for Spain and for the colonies.

Given the small amount of philatelic information available on the Philippine HPLN handstamps, I decided to investigate the handstamp production process from a printing standpoint, as it would have occurred in the mid to late nineteenth century. With reference to the research cited above, two assumptions were made: (1) the electrotype printing



Cover sent from Manila to Puerto de Santa Maria, Spain, in 1870. Two original (blotchy) 6-2/8 centavos stamps affixed to satisfy the 12-4/8 centavos overseas single-weight rate to Spain.



Comparison of the *original* Scott 30 (left) and *reprint* of Scott 25 (right) HPLNs using Crimescope CS-16

process was used to produce the Philippine HPLN handstamps, and (2) the twenty-seven handstamps sent to the Philippines were made of bronze. Based on these assumptions, plus printing information found in Baxter,⁸ Williams,⁹ and other references,¹⁰⁻¹² the following is my assessment of how the original and reprint HPLN handstamps could have been produced. At several points in this assessment, optional printing techniques are identified, which also could create differences between the original and reprint HPLNs. The preparation of the HPLN handstamps can be condensed into two stages.

First stage. The *first stage* for developing the HPLN design involved the preparation of an etched engraving or line block (usually for designs with straight, curved, and filled-in lines) from an artist's original design or drawing. The line block is actually a type of engraved design that is etched into a hard, end-grain block of wood or metal. In this stage, the engraver cuts away parts of the wood or metal that will be white or non-inked, producing the HPLN design — a form of relief printing.

One printing option is that the *original* HPLN could have been produced from an etched engraving, whereas the *reprint* could have been produced from a line engraving. In a line engraving, the lines can diminish gradually to a fine point (e.g., the fine lower curve of the "C" in "NACION" of the reprint), which is problematic when using the etched engraving process. Additionally, in the 1890s a new line block technique called photographic engraving frequently was used, which could produce a sharper image. Thus, since the *reprints* are crisper than the *originals*, the reprints could have been produced in the 1890s or later from either a line engraving or by the photographic engraving process. The final product of this first stage is a die of the HPLN design that reads from right to left (mirror image).

Second stage. The *second stage* involved the electrotyping process. This requires pressing wax onto the die of the HPLN design to form a mold. The wax impression is next coated with an electrically-conducted substance, such as graphite. The mold is then immersed in an electrolytic bath and, in the case of the original HPLN, a bronze coating is deposited on the surface. Finally, the wax is removed, revealing a bronze plate of the HPLN overprint (reverse image).

A variation on this process involves using lead rather than wax to make the first impression, which can result in a sharper image. Thus, it is possible that the *original* HPLN was created from a wax mold, whereas the *reprint* could have been created from a lead mold. This option, along with the use of the photographic engraving process, more likely would have been used in the 1890s and later, rather than in 1868 when the original handstamps were produced.

In both cases, the final product would be a metal plate of the HPLN. The bronze plate then would be attached to a handstamp application device, which was a wooden handle (as illustrated in Barreras).

There are several methods for producing additional handstamps. The most likely of these would be to use the die from the first stage repeatedly to produce identical molds. For the Philippines, twenty-seven identical bronze plates were produced of the *original* HPLN die. As discussed later in the article, I believe that only one handstamp (i.e., mold) was produced of the *reprint* HPLN.

It is my belief that the original and reprint HPLNs probably were produced from an engraving process. Under high magnification, the *reprint* HPLNs show occasional lines and dots in the letters, whereas the *original* HPLN letters usually were filled or solid. This indicates that a more advanced or refined printing process was used to produce the reprints.

Forensic Analysis of HPLN Overprints

To further facilitate this analysis, I submitted examples of stamps with the *original* and *reprinted* HPLN overprints to the American Philatelic Expertizing Service (APEX). The stamps included Philippine postal and revenue HPLN issues of both types, and an example of the original type on revenue stamped paper. Mercer Bristow, Director of APEX, photographed the examples using a state-of-the-art Crimescope CS-16. The Crimescope utilizes various light sources (ultraviolet, infrared, and visible), filters, a monochromator, an imaging device (video camera and monitor), and two recording devices (video tape recorder and paper printer). It tests luminescence and frequencies of reflected, transmitted, and absorbed light. The equipment can identify tagging, the backs of stamps on paper, watermarks of stamps on paper or covers, cleaned cancellations, altered or enhanced postmarks, and counterfeit overprints.

Using the Crimescope CS-16 equipment, a series of photographs was produced. Analysis of these photographs confirmed that the original and reprinted handstamps were produced from the same design or die. For example, although the edge of the letters and inking is more defined on the reprints, the originals are similar, in spite of the fact that the letters are blotchy (interior spaces are generally filled with ink, which often spills out of the letter). The letters of both types are nearly exact "twins" in design. To illustrate that the original die also was used for the production of the reprints, note the similarities of the "L" of "HABILITADO," the word

“POR,” and the “AC” of “NACION,” as well as the spacing between the letters of both types.

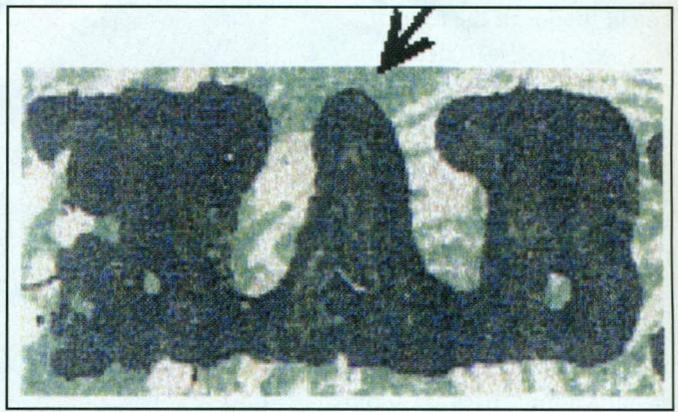
Under high magnification, the ink in the *reprinted* HPLN usually remains within the boundary of the letter, although it often thickens somewhat on the letter's edges, creating the appearance of a defined border. The reprinted HPLN letters often have erratic, minute white spots and thin white lines on parts of many of the HPLN letters. The reprints generally appear crisp and clear. This analysis did not reveal any noticeable differences of the inks between the original and reprint HPLNs, suggesting that the same or similar ink was used for both. My own analysis, using hand-held ultra-violet fluorescent (long wave) and phosphorescent (short wave) lamps, led me to the same conclusion.

The most interesting characteristic of the *reprint* that occurs in most, but not all, of the HPLN reprints is the occurrence of a broken first “A” in “HABILITADO.” It is an important mark for identifying most of the reprints. While this flaw can usually be seen with the naked eye, it is most evident under magnification. This flaw does not occur in the *original* HPLN type.

The broken first “A” in the reprint appears to be a progressive flaw — gradually deteriorating during the handstamping process, thus creating repetitive but changing examples. It first occurs, although apparently only briefly, as an unbroken “A” on the reprints. Very few of the unbroken “A” reprints are known, which leads me to believe that the “A” began deteriorating very early in the handstamping process. In the early stage of deterioration, the top right part of the “A” is missing, giving it the appearance of a shorter, but pointed “A.” In the late stage of deterioration, the top of the “A” is worn down, giving it a round or blunt appearance. Occasionally, in the late stage, the center portion of the shortened “A” is missing, thus resembling a “cup.” Throughout the deterioration process, the “A” appears shorter than the adjacent letters. The condition of the “A” is not the result of under-inking, since the flaw on all of the reprints inspected is consistent with the stages described above. The progressive nature of the flaw and its prevalence suggest that only one handstamp application device was used to produce the reprints.

Under high magnification, the “HAB” of the *original* HPLN overprint typically has “blotchy” letters. The ink tends to fill in all or most portions of the letter and sometimes overflows the boundary of the letter. Whether over-inked or not, it is easy to see that the first “A” of the *original* “HABILITADO” is the same height as the other letters.

How could this “flaw” occur? I believe that the “A” simply wore down or broke early in the handstamping of reprints. A number of causes are possible. For example, Williams¹³ stated that when lead, rather than wax, is used in the mold, internal stresses can occur — such as the weakening of part of the design (in this case the first “A”), if the lead is not pure. This is a plausible explanation for the deteriora-



“HAB” of “HABILITADO” in the *original* HPLN (Scott 34) showing the first “A” to be the same height as the other letters.



Highly magnified views of the “HAB” of “HABILITADO” from *reprinted* HPLNs depict (top) an unbroken first “A” (Scott 38); (middle) early stage deterioration (Scott 29) with top right part of the “A” missing; and (bottom) late stage deterioration (Scott 29) with all of the top missing.



tion of the "A" in the reprint.

Like medical decisions, I needed a second opinion. I compared the original and reprint overprint types using the Smithsonian National Postal Museum's recently acquired VSC6000 (video spectral comparator) system for philatelic research. This apparatus has a magnification range up to 140 optical magnification, uses a sophisticated light source to discriminate between inks and ink colors, has multiple filters that provide a total of 80 wavebands of available illumination, and has a lensing system to provide either broad beam or focused light. Sounds complicated? Thanks to the assistance of Tom Lera, Blount Research Chair

at the NPM, we compared the stamps by creating a variety of images of the overprints. The result confirmed APS's CS-16 findings, that the original and reprinted HPLN handstamps were produced from the same design/die.

When Were the Reprints Produced?

There are several clues that indicate when the reprinted HPLNs were produced. First, because the reprints have crisp, sharp letters, they were likely produced from a photographic engraving process that was not commonly used until the 1890s. Secondly, my review of stamp catalogues (*Moens, Stanley Gibbons, Scott, Friederich, etc.*) and articles on file at the American Philatelic Research Library revealed that no reprints were illustrated in any catalogue prior to 1894. Although illustrations of both the original and reprint HPLNs were found in these early catalogues, no catalogue specifically stated the existence of HPLN reprints. There was no evidence, then, in any published account, that cataloguers were aware of reprints. The existence of reprints simply



Same design/die confirmed by using VSC6000 by superimposing portions of the original HPLN (in black) of Scott 34 over the reprint HPLN (in green) of Scott 25.

wasn't on their "radar." I believe that the reprints most likely were produced about 1893.

There is no mention in any early Philippine philatelic writings about the reprints. Juan Mencarini, in his classic catalogue,¹⁴ does not mention them. Nor do Bartels, Hanciau,¹⁵ or Palmer mention them — either as regular issues or forgeries, which Bartels covers in great detail. Yet, these writers were known to have been meticulous in recording postal events in Manila. Two reasons are possible for this omission. *First*, the reprints were not included in their catalogues because the stamps were never sent to the Philippines as regular postal issues. *Second*, even if they

were aware of these differences between the overprints, they simply may have brushed them off as variations or nuances caused by the handstamping process.

Where Were the Overprinted Stamps Produced?

The *original* HPLN handstamp application devices discussed by Bartels and Palmer were produced in Spain and sent to the Philippines, where the overprinting was done in the late 1860s through the mid 1870s. The fact that the *original* devices were produced in Spain is confirmed by Provanza and Rojas,¹⁶ Fernandez, and Barreras. As discussed earlier, since the *reprints* were produced from the same design or die used for the *originals*, it is reasonable to assume that they were produced at the National Stamp Factory in Madrid where the handstamp design and die were located. However, unlike the *original* handstamps, no handstamp application devices of the *reprints* were sent to the Philippines. Mint Philippine stamps that received the reprinted overprint were collected in Spain where the reprinted overprint was

Comparison Between Original and Reprint HPLN Handstamps

Original HPLN Handstamps

1. HPLN overprint letters botchy.
2. Full-sized first "A" of "HABILITADO."
3. Bottom curve of "C" in "NACION" *usually* thicker and occasionally ends in a serif.
4. HPLN overprint *usually* sloppily applied on the stamp, often in a variety of positions.

Reprint HPLN Handstamps

1. HPLN overprint letters crisp and sharp.
2. Top of first "A" of "HABILITADO" *usually** broken off and looks like a short "A."
3. Bottom curve of "C" in "NACION" *usually* ends in a very fine point.
4. HPLN overprint *usually* applied on the stamp neatly, with great care, and often diagonally, so that the handstamp does not overlap onto another stamp.

*My use of the terms "usually" and "often" means that the vast majority of examples inspected fit the stated description, but that exceptions exist. There are no discernible differences between the measurements of the original and reprint HPLN overprints.

applied. This would have included stamps originally printed in Manila (such as Scott 1, 4, 5, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16–18, 20, and 20a), as well as stamps originally printed in Madrid (such as Scott 8, 9, and 21–24). Although the Madrid printings easily could be obtained from dealers or collectors in Spain (probably as holdovers from stocks at the National Stamp Factory), I believe the Manila printings also were obtained easily from dealers or collectors in Spain, where the stamps are known to have been widely circulated. As stated earlier, no confirmed Philippine cancels are known on stamps with the reprints. Likewise, none of the reprints exist on Philippine covers or on Philippine papeles sellados.

Reprints or Forgeries?

Should the reprints be considered forgeries? H.E. Harris¹⁷ defined a reprint as “a stamp printed [or overprinted] from the original plates (usually after an issue has become obsolete), but not intended for postal [or fiscal] use.” A number of factors suggest that the HPLN-overprinted stamps with a crisp, broken “A” are reprints. First, both the original and reprinted HPLN overprints appear to have been produced from the same handstamp design or die. Second, if they were produced from the same design or die, then it is reasonable to assume that they were produced at the National Stamp Factory in Madrid where the design and die were located. Finally, these stamps were never used or sent to the Philippines, as was typical of most reprints and proofs of other Philippine stamps produced at the National Stamp Factory as “favors.”

Conclusions

Based on the evaluation presented in this article, I draw the following conclusions:

1. The *original* HPLN-overprinted stamps were produced between 1868 and 1874, whereas the *reprinted* stamps likely were produced about 1893.
2. The *original* and *reprint* HPLNs were produced from the same design or die.
3. The *original* HPLN handstamps could have been produced from an etched or line engraving or from a wax mold; whereas the *reprinted* HPLN handstamp could have been produced from a line or photographic engraving or from a lead mold, which could have resulted in the differences between the original and reprint HPLN types.
4. Twenty-seven identical handstamp application devices were used to produce the *original* HPLNs, whereas only one handstamp device likely was used to produce the *reprinted* HPLNs.
5. The *original* HPLNs were handstamped in Manila, whereas the *reprinted* HPLNs were handstamped at the National Stamp Factory in Madrid.
6. There are notable differences between the *original* and *reprinted* HPLN overprints, the most prominent being the broken first “A” of “HABILITADO”

on most of the reprints and their crisp, sharp impressions.

7. The *reprinted* HPLN handstamp and the resulting overprinted stamps were never sent to nor used in the Philippines, which explains why such stamps have never been found with confirmed Philippine cancels on covers or papeles sellados.

A Comment on the HPLN Issues of Cuba and Puerto Rico

HPLN handstamps also were prepared in Spain and sent to Cuba and Puerto Rico. Like the Philippines, both blotchy and crisp HPLN-overprinted handstamps exist on Spanish Antilles stamps. Although not a focus of this study, it is possible that these HPLNs also are reprints. In that regard, I hope my study of Spanish Philippine HPLNs is helpful to other researchers.

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank Douglas K. Lehmann for encouraging me to undertake this study and for invaluable assistance in providing highly magnified pictures of the reprints; and Ernesto Cuesta, a Spanish Cuba specialist, for providing access to and translating Spanish Antilles references. I thank Mercer Bristow, Director of American Philatelic Expertizing Services, for his expertise and use of the Crimescope CS-16 forensic equipment to analyze the HPLN overprints. Finally, I wish to thank the helpful staff at the American Philatelic Research Library (APRL) for providing access to mountains of information.

Endnotes

1. F.L. Palmer, *The Postal Issues of the Philippines* (New York: J.M. Bartels Co., 1912), page 22.
2. J.M. Bartels, F.A. Foster, and F.L. Palmer. *Postage Stamps of the Philippines* (Boston: J.M. Bartels Co., 1904), page 26.
3. Antonio Fernandez Duro, *Reseña Historico-Descriptiva de los Sellos de Correo de España* (Madrid: Imprenta Central A Cargo de Victor Saiz, 1881), pp. 137–40.
4. Arnold H. Warren, “Fiscal Stamps of the Philippines: Handbook-Catalogue, 1856 to Date,” *The American Philatelist* (serialized monthly from October 1967 through July 1968).
5. Edifil, *Catalogo Unificado Especializado Sellos de España, Tome IV Dependencias Postales* (Madrid: Edifil, 1965–2002 catalogues).
6. Antonio Fernandez Duro, *op. cit.*, page 136.
7. Antonio Barreras, “Los Sellos ‘Habilitados por La Nacion’ de Cuba,” in *Revista de la Sociedad Filatelica de Cuba* (Madrid), Vol. 1, No. 3 (June 15, 1902): 36–37.
8. J.H. Baxter, *Printing Postage Stamps by Line engraving* (Lawrence, MA: Quarterman Publications Inc., 1981), pp. 4–19.
9. L.N. Williams, *Fundamentals of Philately* (State College, PA: American Philatelic Society, Inc., 1990), pp. 114–15, 200, 207, 231–32, 435–567.
10. For a discussion of printing techniques, see Cedric Green, “Etching Without Acid” (2006); www.greenart.info/galvetch/contfram.htm.
11. For a discussion of printing techniques, see “Dime Novels and Penny Dreadfuls; Guided Tour of Print Processes, Black and White Reproduction” (2006) <http://library.stanford.edu/depts/dp/pennies/print>.
12. For a discussion of printing techniques, see David Bull, “Woodblock Printmaking” (2006); www.woodblock.com/encyclopedia/entries/011_03/chap_2.
13. L.N. Williams, *op. cit.*, pp. 468–70.
14. Juan Mencarini, *Catalogo Descriptivo de los Sellos de Correos y Tarjetas Postales de las Islas Filipinas* (Manila: Imprenta de la Revista Mercantil de Don José Loyzaga y Ageo, 1896), pp. 6–8.

15. L. Hanciau, "The Postal Issues of the Spanish Colony of the Philippines," *Stanley Gibbons Monthly Journal* (July 31, 1905): 8–10.
16. José María Provanza and Fernández de Rojas, *Habilitaciones del Papel Sellado en España y Sus Dominios* (Madrid: Imprenta y Estereotipia de M. Rivadeneira, 1872), pp. 20–31.
17. H.E. Harris, *The Harris Stamp Collector's Guide and Companion* (Boston, MA: H.E. Harris and Company, 1974), page 128.

References

- Friederich, Rudolf. *Die Postwertzeichen Spaniens und seiner Kolonien* (Berlin: H. Brendicke); 1894 catalogue.
- Gibbons, Stanley. *Catalogue of Postage Stamps* (London); 1893–1897 catalogues.
- Harradine, Peter W.A. *Philippine Postage Stamp Handbook, 1854–1982* (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland and Company, 1987).
- Lehmann, Douglas K. "Philippine Fiscals of Spain's First Republic," *Philippine*

- Philatelic Society Journal*, Vol. XI, No. 3 (September 1988).
- . "Two Revenue Multiples and One Single Fake," *Philippine Philatelic Journal*, Vol. XVII, No. 1 (First Quarter 1995): 1–4.
- Moens, J.B. *Catalogue Prix-Courant de Timbres-Poste* (Brussels); 1883–1892 catalogues.
- Scott, J.W. *Scott Catalogue* New York: J.W. Scott Co., Ltd.; 1890–1914

The Author

Don Peterson is a member of the International Philippine Philatelic Society. He has collected Spanish Philippine stamps and covers for more than forty years, and has written three books and more than 260 articles on the topic. Don has won many Gold awards, including a Grand Award for his Spanish Philippine postal history exhibit.

Doug & Patricia Lehmann

From: "Barb A. Boal" <baboal@stamps.org>
To: "Doug & Patricia Lehmann" <dougklehmann@verizon.net>
Sent: Wednesday, December 15, 2010 1:59 PM
Subject: RE: Letters to the Editor

Hello Doug,

Thanks for your Letter to the Editor.

Happy Holidays,

Barb

From: Doug & Patricia Lehmann [mailto:dougklehmann@verizon.net]
Sent: Wednesday, December 15, 2010 1:31 PM
To: Barb A. Boal
Subject: Letters to the Editor

Editor:

I enjoyed seeing in print Don Peterson's ...*Reprints of the "HABILITADO POR LA NACION"* *Handstamp* article in the December 2010 issue. It reminds me of Lincoln's quote that ends with "... but you can't fool all of the people all of the time." However, 117 years to get it right is sure one heck-of-a-time! Truly landmark research by Don.

One cannot dispute Don's conclusion that these overprints are reprints. One can question whether they are government or privately produced. The latter, if true, would make them fakes. I and a few colleagues believe they should be cataloged as the latter. We have no proof except the circumstantial lack of evidence of the Spanish Government acknowledging their creation (how many government reprints go unannounced!). Countering this is the circumstance that no dying-bed confession arose from the producers or a younger generation of their acquaintance. The Philippine stamp community has placed the facts on the table; it would be nice for others to pick up the mantle and take the solution to the next level. I should also add that the resolution of this situation affects a small group of dealers and collectors with heavy investment of capital in what may well be junk. *Caveat emptor.*

I applaud Don for his scholarship and remind him of Robert Browning's words "*So absolutely good is truth, truth never hurts The teller*" (*Fifine at the Fair, XXXII*).

Douglas K. Lehmann
Falls Church, VA