

MAIL USED BY THE PHILIPPINE REVOLUTIONARIES IN NORTH-EAST LUZON

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This article studies mail used in the North-East part of Luzon when it was under the control of the Nationalist (Aguinaldo) forces.

Covers were franked in three ways:

using Philippine Republican (Aguinaldo) adhesives;

using adhesives of the Spanish period;

by a handstamp inscribed "Provisional".

It had previously been believed that the provisional handstamp was used prior to the Aguinaldo adhesives. Evidence is put forward in this article that the handstamp was used after supplies of the adhesives were exhausted.

The author proposes that the 10 centavo Aguinaldo stamp was used to prepay registration with advice of receipt.

After four centuries of rule by Spain the Philippines gained independence in 1898, and set up a government under President Aguinaldo. A postal service was set up and stamps were issued in late 1898.

Forces of the United States of America were present in Manila from July 1898. From March 1899 hostilities broke out between the USA and the Philippines. Within months, the USA had seized control of most of the provinces near Manila but did not gain complete control of the Archipelago until 1903. One of the areas of strong resistance was the mountainous North-East Luzon.

Covers used in North-East Luzon under the control of the Nationalist government are interesting for study purposes for many reasons.

- * *Aguinaldo stamps.* The majority bear the stamps of the Philippine Revolutionary Government. The President was Aguinaldo and these stamps are often called Aguinaldo. (See Cover 1).
- * *Franking Handstamp.* A few are franked with a handstamp. (See Cover 2).
- * *Spanish Philippine Adhesives.* I even have one cover which is franked with a stamp from the Spanish era. (See Cover 3).
- * *Cancellations.* The covers are cancelled with attractive, large town postmarks. A town canceller is often applied at the destination town and at transit towns.
- * *Undated.* A challenge is provided because these town cancels bear no dates.
- * *Illustrations.* They are sufficiently rare, unusual and attractive that they are usually illustrated in auction catalogues when offered for sale.

Main Towns

There are five main towns which are spread along the main road which follows the Cagayan River. In order from Manila, they are:

Bayombong	Nueva Vizcaya province
Ilagan	Isabela province
Tuguegarao	Cagayan province
Lal-loc	Cagayan province
Aparri	Cagayan province.

All but one of the eighteen covers in my records involve mail travelling only between these five towns. The practice in the Philippines was to write the province of the destination at the top. Unfortunately the compiler of the Christie catalogue assumed this destination province to be the town of origin!

The Provisional Sello Handstamp

This handstamp was recorded by Hurt who claimed it was in use prior to the issue of the Aguinaldo adhesives. I claim that the handstamp was not used until after the supply of Aguinaldo stamps was exhausted.

Hurt describes two covers bearing this handstamp. A further five covers were offered by Christie's including Cover 2. Three were addressed to Lal-loc, two to Ilagan, one to Aparri and one to Tuguegarao. This strongly suggests that it was applied only in the North-East towns, mainly Lal-loc and Tuguegarao.

The adhesives were first issued in late 1898. If the handstamp was used prior to the adhesives this would have been before the war and before the Army operated in this area. However, four of the seven covers were addressed to officers of the Philippine Army, and the other three to a provincial Governor, a local president and a Red Cross official.

The town cancels of Lal-loc, Ilagan and Tuguegarao are reported on these covers. The handstamp and the town cancels bear many of the motifs present on the adhesives — a face in the sun, a large triangle and the KKK inscription. It is hard to believe that these town cancels and handstamp were all prepared in a remote backwater before the adhesives.

It is known that in 1899, the USA seized the printing presses where the adhesives had been produced. It is safe to believe that the provisional handstamps were used to frank mail after the supplies of adhesives were exhausted. Its design was based on motifs and symbols present in the adhesives.

The Cover Bearing the Spanish-Philippine Adhesive

This cover (Cover 3) was definitely used after the Spaniards had left. The town cancels of Tuguegarao and Bayombong incorporate the letters KKK, and the Spanish authorities imposed the death penalty to members of the KKK secret society.

This cover would have been used when there was a shortage of other means to pre-pay postage. The most likely such time was immediately after the Aguinaldo adhesives were exhausted, and before there was time to prepare the provisional sello handstamp. This cover has cancellations of Tuguegarao and Ilagan, both of which are known with two different types. This may allow a more precise dating when further information becomes available.

Different Types of Town Cancels

A starting point for obtaining the relative date of these covers is the difference in types of the town cancels.

The Ilagan canceller applied to the adhesives on Cover 1 is inscribed "ILAGAN" and "CORREO". On the back of Cover 3, it is inscribed "YLAGAN" and "CORREOS" (the usual Spanish word to denote postage).

The two Tuguegarao cancels on Covers 1 and 3 are different. On the back of Cover 3 the triangle is equilateral, "KKK" appears in the vertices of the triangles, and the outside lettering is larger.

The 10-Centavo Brown Stamp

There has never been any confident explanation of the purpose for the 10-centavo brown value in the Aguinaldo issue. It is seldom seen on cover.

The standard letter rate was 2 centavos, and the rate for registration/certification was 8 centavos in addition to postage.

I claim that the 10-centavo rate was paid for registration with advice of receipt. The correct rate for this service would be the standard postage plus 10 centavos being 8 centavos registration and 2 centavos for returning a card advising receipt to the sender. The tear at the side of Cover 1 may have occurred when such a card was detached.

The inscription "RECIPOS" (receipt) is consistent with such an explanation.

The Town of Lal-loc

The dominant town on this mail is Lal-loc. There is probably only one letter that did not pass through Lal-loc. The Lal-loc canceller is more ornate than those of the other towns. The other four towns are still provincial centers. The town is now called Lal-lo. The Spanish called it Nueva Segovia and it was the main Spanish stronghold in the Cagayan Valley, and one of the earliest Spanish settlements in the Philippines.

References

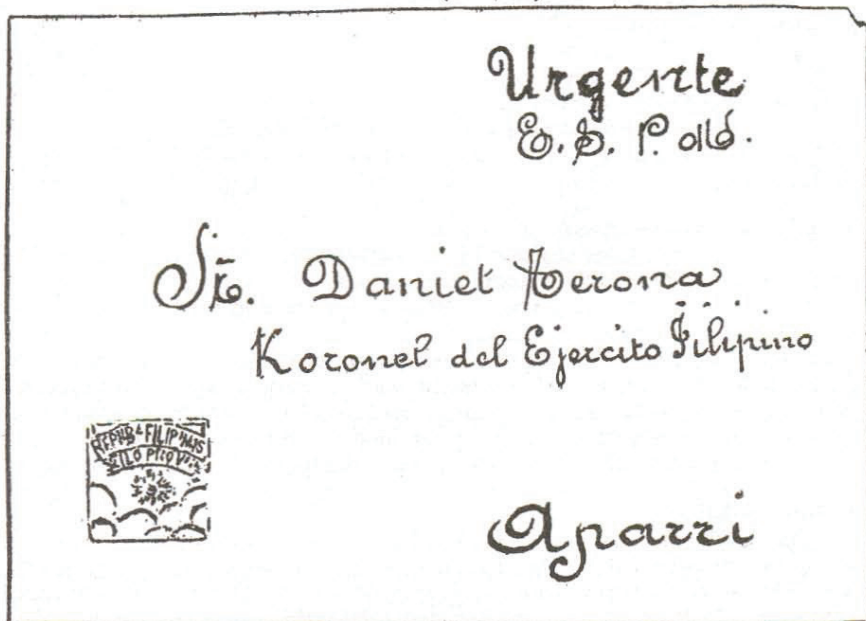
This article is a revised version of an article of the same name which appeared originally in the November 1985 issue of "THE N.S.W. PHILATELIST".

E.F. Hurt, Aguinaldo's Post 1898-99, The Philatelist, 1944, pages 38-39 and 58-61.

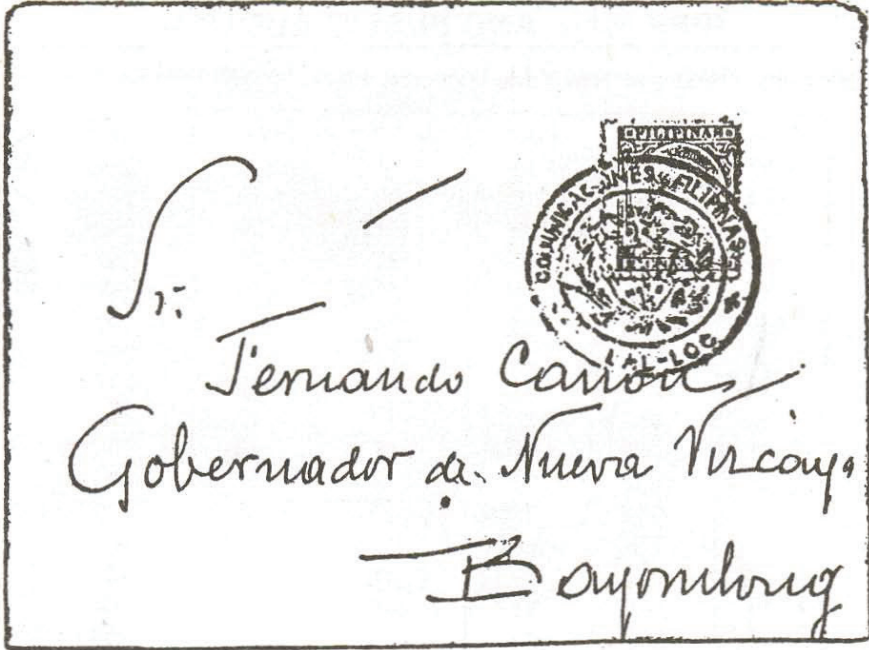
Christie's auction catalogue, New York, December 12-13, 1984.



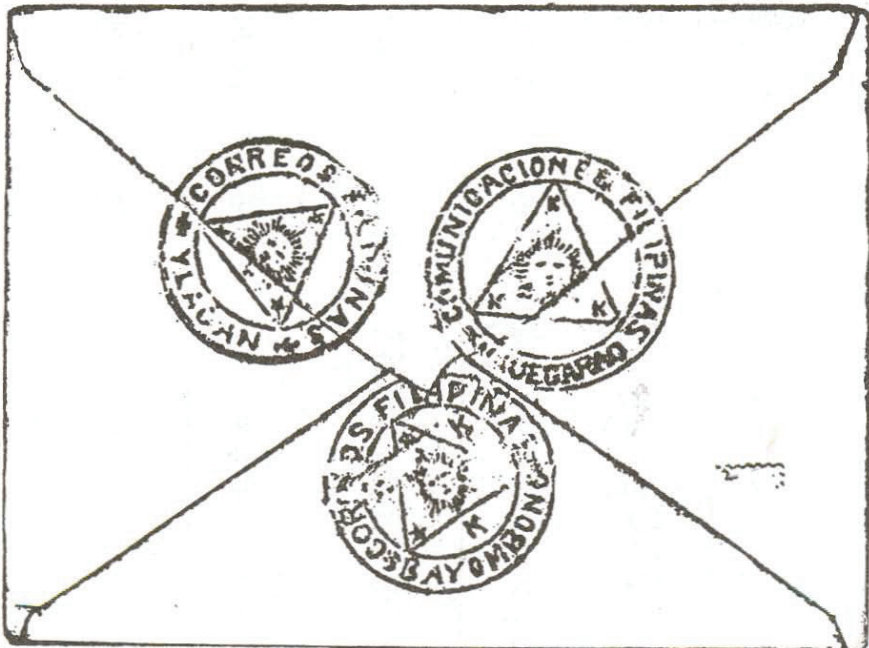
COVER 1 (Obverse).



COVER 2 (Obverse).



COVER 3 (Obverse)



COVER 3 (Reverse)