

The "RESELLADO" Surcharge¹

by Arnold H. Warren



Figure 1

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Figure 1 shows a specimen of stamped paper of the regular issue of 1896-97 which bears two surcharges. At the left of the stamp is an oval surcharge which reads: "Habilitado Para El Bienio de 1898-99" (Made Valid for the Biennial Period of 1898-99). This surcharge, undoubtedly, was applied by the Spanish Government prior to the occupation of Manila by the American Forces in August, 1898. Across the face of the stamp is a second surcharge, which reads: "Resellado Para 1898-99" (Re-stamped for 1898-99). This Resellado Surcharge, which occurs in several different forms and is also found on adhesive revenue stamps and on postage stamps, has been the subject of considerable controversy among collectors of Philippine postage stamps. It appears, however, that at the time this controversy arose, the fact was known that the "Resellado" surcharge existed on adhesive revenue stamps and on stamped paper. If this fact had been known, it might have altered the conclusions of those who have claimed that the "Resellado" surcharge which occurs on the Spanish-Philippine postage stamps of the issue of 1898 is a "fake" surcharge.

[**Figure 2** shows an example of the postage issue from the collection of Robert Yacano. The "C" in the upper left is for "Correos", or postage, and the "T" on the lower right stands for "Telegrafos" or telegraph.]



Figure 2

The revenue stamps and revenue stamped papers of the Philippines were not in demand among collectors in 1898. Consequently, there could have been no incentive to produce a "fake" issue of revenue stamps and stamped papers because there was very little likelihood that such a "fake" issue of revenue stamps and stamped papers could be sold to collectors. Furthermore, if the alleged promoters of the so called "fake" issue of postage stamps bearing the "resellado" surcharge had applied the "resellado" surcharge to revenue stamps and stamped papers as a spurious means of giving the appearance of authenticity to the "resellado" issue of postage stamps, full publicity would have been given by them to the "resellado" surcharge as it occurs on revenue stamps and stamped papers. Yet, the existence of the "resellado" surcharge on revenue stamps and stamped papers seem to have been entirely unknown to those who engaged in the controversy over the authenticity of the "resellado" issue of postage stamps.

The story of the "resellado" issue of postage stamps told by Major F. L. Palmer on the "The Postal Issues of the Philippines" (J. M. Bartels Co., 1912) is as follows: "With the arrival of American troops at Cavite on July 15, 1898, an American Post Office was established temporarily on one of the ships in the Bay, and, on July 30, on shore at Cavite. From this date until the end of the following year, a veritable philatelic chaos existed in the Philippines. Mails were received and forwarded as opportunity offered, by all of the numerous "governments" involved, each of which used the stamps which were most available at the time. As a result, there were numerous vagaries in matters philatelic, and certain so called philatelists contributed their aid (through not without hope of reward) toward rendering confusion worse confused. Thus, we are compelled to consider not only the Spanish issues but also those of the United States for the American Forces, the stamps issued by the Revolutionary Government, and certain "provisional" issues for the Philippines and other islands formerly controlled from Manila. Of the Spanish issues, it is sufficient merely to add (to what has already been noted) that they continued in use where available, until replaced by those of the govern-

ment which later came to exercise actual control. The issues of the Revolutionary Government will be treated in a separate chapter and those of the United States will follow"

Of the other issues referred to, the first to claim consideration, through priority in date, is the fake "provisional issue" for Zamboanga, a city in the island of Mindanao, which has been listed by Kohl and Galvez. As the true story of this issue seems never to have been printed and is by no means without its humorous side, it will be given in detail as related to the writer by one of the two promoters thereof, who will be referred to as Messrs. A, and B."

"A. and B., both well-known philatelists of Manila, realized that Manila must sooner or later surrender to the Americans, that Spanish rule would pass away, and that philatelic changes must ensue. Wishing to take time by the forelock, in order that any profits obtainable might not pass them by, they conceived a shortage of stamps at Zamboanga, where Mr. B. had a personal friend in the Postmaster. Mr. A. was a former Spanish official who had friends in high places in Manila, as he procured through them a decree providing for surcharging of stamps for use at Zamboanga on the plea of the alleged shortage."

"This decree is said to have been issued on August 12, the day before the surrender of Manila; apparently, the dies had been prepared and the stamps obtained in advance, for the surcharging was done that night by the promoters themselves. Later, and when opportunity offered, these supplies (except those retained by A. and B. for their own philatelic uses) were forwarded to Zamboanga where they were (more or less) placed in use. In March, of 1899, Mr. B. was in Zamboanga on business and his friend, the postmaster, then provided him with covers bearing these issues, which the postmaster obligingly cancelled as of quite a range of dates, presumably to avoid the monotony of one date only. Mr. B. thoughtfully placed a full set of this issue on a cover which he sent by registered mail to himself at his Manila address, and which was forwarded by the same boat on which he returned. This letter was duly delivered to him in Manila, without any other

stamps or postal charges, through the American post office, thus furnishing undeniable (?) proof of recognition by the American postal authorities of the validity of this issue."

"Upon investigation by the writer at the post office, it was found that this letter (identified by its serial number) had been received and delivered without charge, though no memorandum existed as to what stamps it had borne. In reply to questions, the postmaster, who had also been an employee in 1898-99, further said that in those early days and until the American offices were established throughout the islands, the postal authorities felt themselves compelled to receive and deliver, or forward, all mails arriving at Manila, without regard to what stamps were used from points where American offices (and stamps) were not available to the senders. He added that even letters bearing stamps of the Revolutionary Government had been so received and delivered. Such delivery or forwarding, therefore, amounted merely to passing such matter through the mails without postage and on account of the emergency rather than to any official recognition of the validity of any stamps actually used. In further pursuance of his investigation, the writer visited the Bureau of Archives where search was made for the decree (or some record of it) authorizing this issue; no trace of it could be found, but this does not disprove the issuance of such a decree, a failure to which is readily explicable as due to the carelessness of employees in a time of so great turmoil."

In spite of the fact that it is difficult to believe that a person who, had promoted such an issue of postage stamps for his own profit would deliberately jeopardize his chance of profit by telling such a story to Major Palmer, nevertheless, the good faith of Major Palmer can scarcely be questioned. It may be assumed to begin with, therefore, that some such story was actually told to Major Palmer and that Major Palmer was convinced of the veracity of the teller. But the story was undoubtedly told to Major Palmer a number of years before he recorded it in his book and in the retelling of it, Major Palmer, without intending to do so, may have altered some of its details. Furthermore, it is evident from a statement which appears on page 54 of Major Palmer's book, that the

story was told to Major Palmer by Mr. B. But according to the story, it was Mr. A. who induced a high Spanish official to issue the decree which authorized the "resellado" surcharge. Thus, it is possible that Mr. B. may not have reported the details of the story correctly and, in fact, may not have known the exact manner in which Mr. A. induced the high Spanish official to issue the decree. Because the Government had been defrauded of revenue by the use for postal and telegraph purposes of forgeries of the surcharged stamps which were current between 1881 and 1889, Governor General Weyler issued a decree, which was finally made effective on August 1, 1889, forbidding the use thereafter of any stamp bearing a surcharge.²

While it is true that some surcharged stamps were issued subsequent to that date, surcharges were authorized only in case of some compelling emergency, and even then, only by the Governor-General himself.

Major Palmer implies, but does not directly state, that Mr. A. gave a possible impending shortage of the current issue in Zamboanga as his reason for proposing to the officials of the Spanish Government that the current issue of postage stamps should be surcharged "Resellado Para 1898-99" for use in Zamboanga. This does not seem to be a very plausible reason for proposing that the stamps be surcharged and it does not seem probable that a decree authorizing the surcharge would be issued on such flimsy pretext. A shortage could be remedied by simply sending an additional supply of the current issue, without going to the trouble of affixing a surcharge.

There was, however, a valid reason for affixing a surcharge to any of the current Spanish-Philippine stamps which might continue to be used after the surrender of Manila in those portions of the Philippines where the local Spanish Government still remained in control. There was ample authority in Spanish law for holding that after the Central Spanish Government at Manila had fallen, the stamps which it had issued would no longer be valid. Spanish laws required that whenever a new Sovereign ascended the throne

of Spain, the current stamped paper must be surcharged "Valid for the reign of _____". When Queen Isabela II was deposed by the revolution of 1868, the provisional government which succeeded her caused all Philippine stamps to be surcharged "Made Valid by the Nation". Hence, by analogy, it might be held that after the Central Government of the Philippines had fallen, the surviving local Governments must surcharge the current issue of stamps in order to make it valid for further use. Such was evidently the opinion of the Spanish-Governor of the Marianas Islands, which were at that time, a dependency of the Philippines and used the current issue of Philippine stamps. When a ship reached Guam, the capital of the Marianas, with news that Manila had surrendered to the American Forces, the Spanish-Governor immediately caused the current Philippine postage stamps to be surcharged "MARIANAS ESPANOLAS". Stamps bearing this surcharge were affixed to all mail which was dispatched from Guam to Manila by the same ship which had brought the news of the surrender of Manila. The authenticity of this issue of postage stamps has never been questioned, although, because of the change in the sovereignty of the Marianas which occurred shortly thereafter, these surcharged stamps were never again used for postal purposes.

In the Philippines, however, there were several districts outside of Manila where Spanish garrisons were maintained and where the local Spanish authorities might be expected to remain in control for some time after Manila had surrendered. It would, therefore, be convenient to apply to the current issue of Philippine stamps a surcharge which would serve to make the stamps valid for use in any district where they might be required. This would seem to be the logical reason for omitting from the "resellado" surcharge the name of the district where the stamps were to be used. Furthermore, since the dies for this surcharge probably could not be made outside of Manila, and in view of the impending fall of the Central Government in Manila, it would be of material assistance to the surviving local Governments to prepare the surcharged stamps in advance in Manila, to be forwarded to the local Governments as soon as the fall of Manila became an accomplished fact. Under such conditions, the dies might have been prepared several days in

advance, but the issuance of the decree authorizing the surcharge, and hence the actual surcharging of the stamps, would be deferred until it became absolutely certain that Manila must fall. This would explain the fact, if it is a fact, that the decree authorizing the surcharge was issued on August 12, the day before the such conditions, the dies might have been prepared several days in advance, but the issuance of the decree authorizing the surcharge, and hence the actual surcharging of the stamps, would be deferred until it became absolutely certain that Manila must fall. This would explain the fact, if it is a fact, that the decree authorizing the surcharge was issued on August 12, the day before the fall of Manila, and that the surcharging was hastily done that night. In the midst of such turmoil, the fact, if it is a fact, that the man who proposed the issue were permitted to do the actual surcharging of the stamps, and that the stamps were committed to their care after the surcharging was done, is not particularly surprising. They were undoubtedly man of good repute in the community and it appears that one of them, at least, was a businessman who probably had access to the means of forwarding the stamps to Zamboanga without so much likelihood of their being intercepted by the American forces as would have been the case if they had been dispatched by one of the Spanish officials.

It is, of course, possible that Mr. B. may not have told the entire truth, and that Mr. A. and Mr. B. may have surcharged the stamps entirely upon their own initiative, without benefit of any official decree, and may have then forwarded the stamps to the postmaster of Zamboanga, who put them on sale in the post offices there, either upon his own initiative or upon the initiative of the local Spanish Governor.

The manner in which the surcharging of the stamps was accomplished, however, would appear to be immaterial, and the fact, if it is a fact, that the surcharging was originally conceived by Mr. A. and Mr. B. primarily for personal gain, is also immaterial. The essential fact is that these stamps, whatever the manner of their surcharge may have been, *were subsequently used for legitimate postal purposes.* [Italics added by editor.] Donald Peterson pro-

vided **Figure 3** that shows a February 9, 1899 single-weight registered internal letter with the correct rate of $15c + 2c = 17c$ sent from Zamboanga to Manila. This is lot #987 from a Soler y Llach auction catalog. This fact is generally conceded and there are quite a number of covers which the stamps are still affixed and which are still affixed and which bear indisputable evidence of having passed through the mails. It is true that the number of stamps affixed to some of these covers was apparently *in excess of the required postage and hence, such covers were probably "philatelic" covers prepared by, or for, stamp collectors of that era.* [Italics added by editor.] Donald Peterson provided **Figure 4** that shows a letter from Zamboanga and received in Manila April 10, 1899. This letter is obviously overpaid bearing a $40c + 80c =$ from Zamboanga and received in Manila April 10, 1899. This letter is obviously overpaid bearing a $40c + 80c = P1:20$ in postage. It is lot 138 in the Afinsa Auctions catalog of October 12, 2000.] But the validity of this issue of postage stamps would not be thereby impugned. This preparation and mailing of "philatelic" covers is much more common today than it was then and no one suggests that any of the current issues of the postage stamps are made less authentic today. The vital fact in every case is whether or not, the issues in question was actually used by the duly constituted postal authorities of the district where it was used for legitimate postal purposes. And it does appear to be a fact that the "resellado" issue of Philippine postage stamps was actually used for legitimate postal purposes for a short time immediately following the surrender of Manila to the American Forces.

Furthermore, it is worthy of note in this connection, that this "resellado" issue has always been listed as a legitimate postal issue of the Philippines by the Cataloge Especial de los Sellos de Correos y Telegrafos de Espana, Colonias y Ex-Collonias, published by M. Galvez in Madrid, Spain.

There remains the question of the origin of the "resellado" surcharge which is found on Spanish Philippine revenue stamps and stamped papers. Assuming that the story told by Major Palmer of the origin of the "resellado" issue of postage stamps is more or

less true, it may reasonably be supposed that the local Spanish officials of Zamboanga, and possibly of other districts where the local Spanish authorities were still in control, decided, after the postage stamps bearing the "resellado" surcharge had been received, that a similar surcharge should be applied to revenue stamps and stamped papers. The revenue stamps to which this surcharge is known to have been affixed are those which it is probable were most frequently used in the smaller seaports such as Zamboanga.

The Spanish authorities of the Philippines retained control of Iloilo until **December 24, 1898**, of Jolo until **March 19, 1899**, and of Zamboanga until the latter part of May, 1899. Thus, it is possible that stamps bearing the "resellado," surcharge were used in Jolo and Iloilo, as well as in Zamboanga, during the period between August 13, 1898 and the end of May, 1899.

Hostilities between the Americans and the Spaniards were suspended immediately after the surrender of Manila by the Peace Protocol which was signed at Washington on August 12, 1898. By the terms of this protocol, pending the conclusions of a treaty of peace, Spain was to retain de jure sovereignty over the Philippines and the Spanish authorities of the Philippines were to retain control of all parts of the Islands except Manila and Cavite, which were at that time, actually held by the American Forces. The Filipino insurgents, however, forced the Spanish authorities to withdraw from all parts of the Philippines, except Zamboanga, Jolo, and a small military post at Baler on the island of Luzon, before the end of 1898. During this period, the American Forces in the Islands was too small to render the Spaniards any assistance, being fully occupied with the campaign the insurgent force of General Emilio Aguinaldo on the island of Luzon. Thus, the Filipino insurgents took control of the government in the districts from which the Spaniards withdrew. The Treaty of Paris, by which Spain ceded the Philippines to the United States, became effective on March 18, 1899, the date on which it was formally ratified by the Spanish Courts. In recognition of this fact, an American Force relieved the Spanish garrison at Jolo on that day. There was no



Figure 3

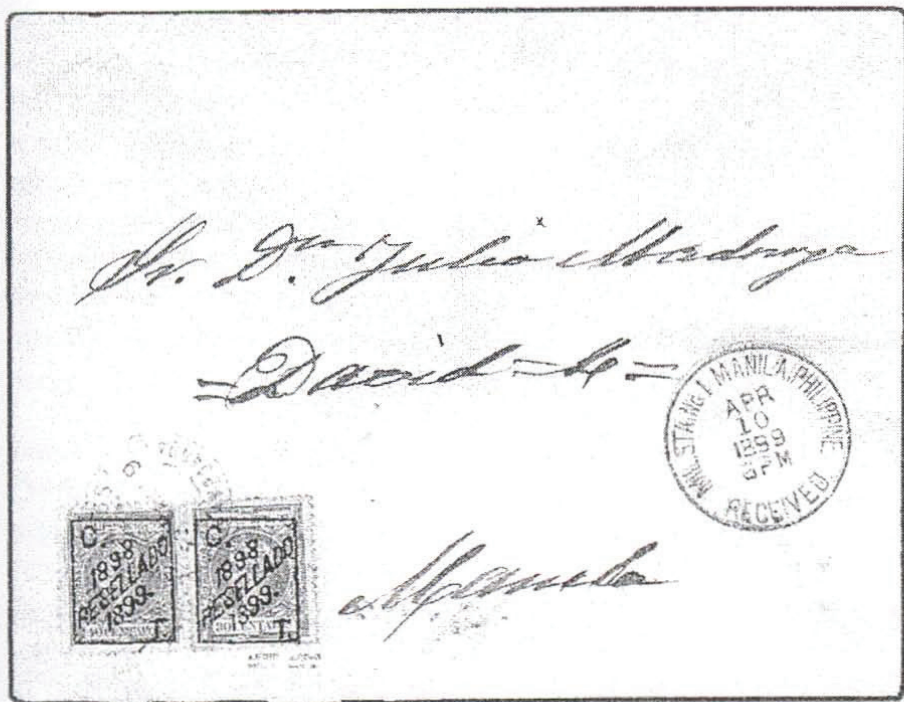


Figure 4

American Force available at that time, however, to relieve the Spanish Force at Zamboanga and the Spaniards were compelled by the Filipinos insurgents to evacuate Zamboanga in May, 1899, before the American Force could be sent to take over that city.

The Catalogue de Timbres Fiscaux by A. Forbin, published by Yvert & Tellier in 1915, lists the following GIRO stamps of the issue of 1897, which bear the surcharge "RESELLADO 1898-99" within a rectangular frame: 30c, 60c, 80c, 1.80p, 2p, 2.40p, 4p, and 5p. These were the denominations of Giro, stamps which were required for drafts and bills of exchange ranging from 400 to 7,000 pesos in amount. The same authority lists as bearing the surcharge "RESELLADO PARA 1898-99" within a rectangular frame, the 50 cent adhesive SELLO stamp of the issue of 1898-99. The law specified that this stamp should be affixed to each inward and outward foreign manifests which passed through a Customs House. The writer has seen both unused and used specimens of the 10 cent TIMBRE MOVIL stamp of 1898-99 which bear the surcharge "M RESELLADO PARA 1898-99" within a rectangular frame. This stamp was required on all receipts and statements of account for 15 pesos or more. It is probable that the letter "M" of the surcharge stands for "Movil". In so far as the writer is aware, the 10 cent TIMBRE MOVIL stamp bearing the "resellado" surcharge has never hitherto been listed by any authority on Philippine stamps. It is therefore possible that the "resellado" surcharge was applied to still other Philippine revenue stamps which have so far not been recorded as bearing this surcharge.

[By 1967, Warren gave number W-269 to the 10c Timbre Movil stamp described above and W-268 to the 5c value. **Figure 5** shows the 5c Timbre Movil stamp from the collection of Douglas K. Lehmann. The 5c fee paid for coastwise trade and export invoices. Also by 1967, the 15c, 20c, and 7p values of the Giro series were added to the values Warren listed here in 1941 and given numbers between W-236B and W-244B. Warren gave the 50c Sello stamp number W-292. The Sello surcharge appears to be the same as used on the papel sellado shown in Figure 1 and is

superimposed on that figure. This superimposed image comes from *The American Philatelist* serialization of Warren's work in 1967-68. Since Warren, the "resellado" surcharge has been discovered on the 10c Sello value and assigned W-291A by the IPPS.]



Figure 5

The specimen of stamped paper bearing the "resellado" surcharge which is shown in Figure 1, is at this writing [circa 1940-41], the property of Mr. P. Jerome Pasch, an attorney of Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A., who sent to the writer the photograph from which Figure 1 was taken. Revenue stamped paper was required for judicial actions and many other legal documents. A portion of a line of large letters may be seen below the stamp.

Footnotes:

1. From the unpublished "Stamp Taxes of the Philippines" by Arnold H. Warren. From the personal library of Linda Stanfield. Editorial notes and additions inclosed within [brackets] are supplied by Douglas K. Lehmann.

2. The decree of Governor General Weyler prohibiting the use of surcharged stamps after August 1, 1889, was published on page 863 of the *Gaceta de Manila* for May 24, 1889. But on page 43 of *The Postal Issues of the Philippines* by F. L. Palmer, it is stated that the effective date of the prohibition of the use of surcharged stamps was postponed until August 10, 1889.